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ABSTRACT

Two hypotheses were tested in this research: 1) Groups of parents, teachers, students, and administrators share similar attitudes concerning the worthwhileness of selected school activities; and, 2) The factors of process objectives, active student roles, informal evaluations, and timeliness contribute significantly to predictions of judgments made by the reference groups of selected school activities. Procedures involved the construction of 24 curriculum activities (included in an appendix), sampling from the various reference groups, and the development and administration of a research instrument (a Likert-type scale). The first hypothesis is partially supported by the data (partially because of the clustering of the groups in five distinct groupings). The second hypothesis is supported by the data. While these factors do not contribute a great deal individually in the explanation of group judgments, they do yield significant multiple correlations and serve to separate out the policies of the nine reference groups into five distinct clusters. Several recommendations for curricular decisions are made based on these findings. One of these is that since parents agreed with parents, students with students etc., curricular decisions must not be made by one person or group, but ways must be found to have all groups contribute to such decisions. (Author/AWW)

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
AND FIELD SERVICES
College of Education
University of Maryland

# A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF NINE REFERENCE GROUPS WITHIN THE LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT TOWARD SELECTED SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

by

James Raths and John Fanning

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One way to gauge the value of school experiences assigned to students is to assess their efficacy for attaining educational objectives. Using this framework, an educator would judge an activity that led to desired ends as a good one and assess an activity that did not succeed as a poor one. For various reasons, relying solely upon this approach for evaluating school experiences raises some difficult issues. First, the "end justifies the means" nature of the reasoning in a sense legitimizes almost any method a teacher might choose to use regardless of its side effects. Second, with the exception of some tool subjects such as reading and writing, it is difficult to defend the significance of any particular objective; thus while the ends might justify the means, nothing in turn may be offered to justify the ends.

It has been argued that there are characteristics of activities assigned in schools that are prized in and of themselves regardless of the specific goals to which they are directed or of the efficacy with which they lead to the attainment of those goals. (3) The central purpose of this research activity was to assess the extent to which students, parents, teachers and administrator groups agree in their judgements about the worth of selected curriculum activities. A second purpose sought to explain as much variance in attitudes as possible by taking into account various characteristics of the activities. Thirdly, this project was designed to provide an inservice activity for selected staff members dealing with curriculum design and instructional planning. The products of the workshop, 24 descriptions of curriculum activities, were distributed to a relatively wide segment of the professional staff for their utilization in program planning.

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* The computer time for this project was supported in full through the facilities of the Computer Science Center of the University of Maryland.

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this research:

1. Groups of parents, teachers, students and administrators share similar attitudes concerning the worthwhileness of selected school activities.

2. The factors of process objectives, active student roles, informal evaluations, and timeliness contribute significantly to predictions of judgements made by the reference groups of selected school activities.

## Procedures

Three steps were needed to implement the testing of the hypotheses. First, curriculum activities needed to be constructed. Second, subjects from the various reference groups had to be sampled, and third, the research instrument had to be developed and administered to the subjects. Each of these steps is described in the narrative which follows:

Writing Curriculum Activities. A production committee of six teachers was appointed by the Deputy Superintendent to assist in the project. The six teachers, whose names and school affiliations appear in Appendix A, represented the faculties of several schools within the school district and several disciplines within the social studies. While some of the teachers were quite experienced and others were almost new to the teaching profession, they all shared a common interest in improving the quality of education in their schools. As a group, the production committee was given the following instructions:

> The committee must develop 24 learning activities that fit specific dimensions described below. All of the activities must be stimulating and provocative - ones that you would be proud to use in your classroom.
>
> The activities will be constructed to reflect either the presence or absence of four characteristics.
>
> Factor 1: Process Objective: If this factor is absent, the activity will have as a goal a description of what the learner is to learn, eg. the student will identify causes of the Civil War.

If this factor is present, the activity will have as a goal a description of the process the student is to experience, eg. the student will read about the Civil War from primary sources.

Factor 2: Active Roles:

If this factor is absent, the activity will assign tasks to the student that place him in "passive" roles, such as filling in ditto sheets, listening to lectures, reading texts, writing answers to questions, etc.

If this factor is present, the activity will assign tasks to the student that require him to take on active learning roles, such as interviewing, acting, painting, experimenting, etc.

Factor 3: Informal Evaluation:

If this factor is absent, the activity will convey the idea that the work of the student is to be graded by some arbitrary standard yielding formal marks or scores such as A's, B's, or C's or equivalent scales.

If this factor is present, the activity description will convey the idea that the work of the student will not be graded formally by an arbitrary standard, but merely checked as having been completed.

Factor 4: Timeliness:

If this factor is absent, the emphasis of the activity will be to learn facts related to events found in the past; to learn skills that are unlikely to be useful in a student's life; or to be involved with ideas that are isolated from today's issues.

If this factor is present, the emphasis of the activity will be to draw on facts to illuminate social problems; to deal with ideas from the social sciences that are related to current issues; or to teach skills that are likely to be applied to a wide variety of situations relevant to growing up in Lower Merion.

A code of 0's (to indicate absence of the factor) and 1's (to indicate presence of the factor) was developed to describe the activities needed for this project. The first digit of the code stood for factor one; the second for factor 2; the third for factor three; and the fourth for factor four. Thus, an activity with a code of 1101 would be a learning event with a process objective; with active student roles; with student work graded formally; and with emphasis placed on current happenings. If all of the four factors under investigation in this study were varied systematically, sixteen different activities would be needed to represent the range of possibilities from 0000 to 1111. For the purposes of this project, twenty-four activities were actually generated. Eight codes were randomly selected from the original sixteen to be duplicated in the series to check out the reliability of the groups' responses to the factors. Thus, for instance, there were two activities developed for the code 1101, and two for the code 0000, etc.

The committee worked on its task for the better part of five days. The progress of various group members was shared and critiqued by the rest of the group. By the close of the last day, 24 activities meeting the requirements specified by the codes had been developed. The activities are included in Appendix B of this report.

Selection of Subjects: Random samples of thirty students, parents and teachers from Lower Merion High School and from Harriton High School were selected to receive the research instrument. In addition to these six groups, members of the Inter-School Council, a group of thirty parents representing the Home and School Associations of the various schools found in the district was invited to share their judgements. Also included in the study was a group of administrators composed of the elementary and secondary principals and the assistant principals from the two senior high schools. Finally, members of the Board of Education were invited to participate in the study. Only three members of the Board found the time to complete the instrument. Table I indicates the number of persons invited to participate in the study and the number who returned usuable research forms to the project. Except for the groups marked with an asterisk, the persons selected were chosen through the application of random selection procedures from the entire reference group.

TABLE I

NUMBERS OF PERSONS SELECTED TO RECEIVE THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND NUMBERS OF PERSONS RETURNING THE INSTRUMENT FOR EACH OF THE GROUPS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

| | Group | Number Selected To Receive Instrument | Number Returning Instrument |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inter-School Council (Parents)* | 30 | 11 |
| 2. | Board Members* | 9 | 3# |
| 3. | Harriton High School Parents | 30 | 25 |
| 4. | Harriton High School Teachers | 30 | 25 |
| 5. | Harriton High School Students | 30 | 25 |
| 6. | Lower Merion High School Parents | 30 | 21 |
| 7. | Lower Merion High School Teachers | 30 | 29 |
| 8. | Lower Merion High School Students | 30 | 26 |
| 9. | Principals* | 17 | 17 |

* Sample was not randomly selected from a larger reference group.

\# This small number suggests that any findings associated with this group be regarded with some circumspection.

Developing and Administering the Instrument. The research instrument for recording the reactions of group members to the activities constructed for this project was a Likert-type scale which provided each subject the opportunity of rating the activities from a high score of 5 ("I

would definitely like to see this type of assignment in my school") to a low score of 1 ("I would definitely not like to see this type of activity in my school"). The research instrument is included in Appendix B of this report. Space was provided on the bottom of the form for each subject to identify his reference group membership. The instrument was attached to a booklet containing descriptions of the twenty-four activities constructed by the production committee. The booklet and the instruments were distributed to the subjects in the fall of 1970. By December 1, all of the returned forms were collected and the ratings analyzed to test the hypotheses stated earlier in this report.

## Findings

Within each group, the activity ratings received were averaged and the averages were ranked from 1 to 24 with the rank of 1 going to the activity receiving the lowest mean rating and the rank of 24 going to the activity given the highest mean rating. The ranks of each activity assigned on the basis of the average ratings it received within each reference group was the criterion variable of this experiment. The following sections present the data concerning the reliability of those measures and the testing of the hypotheses.

Reliability. Eight different activities had exactly the same codes. To test the reliability with which the groups responded to activities which were coded identically, the ranking given to the first activity of a pair appearing in the list of 24 activities was coupled with the score given to the second activity of the pair in all eight cases. Spearman rank order correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the reliability of the group's responses to these similar items.

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR NINE REFERENCE GROUPS' RESPONSES TO CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES WITH SIMILAR CODES

| Group | Spearman Rank-Order Coefficient (N = 8) |
|---|---|
| 1. Inter-School Council (Parents) | .59 |
| 2. Board Members | -.59* |
| 3. HHS Parents | .70 |
| 4. HHS Students | .62 |
| 5. HHS Teachers | .69 |
| 6. LMHS Parents | .81 |
| 7. LMHS Students | .59 |
| 8. LMHS Teachers | .61 |
| 9. Principals | .54 |

*Again, the low number of members of this group (N = 3) may account for the low reliability reported here.

The median coefficient in this analysis was .61 with the coefficients ranging from a low of negative .59 to a high of .81. The low coefficient associated with the Board members suggests either that they were not attending to the factors build into each activity in making their responses or were doing so in an unreliable way. The former explanation seems to be the more reasonable. The remaining coefficients seemed sufficiently high to place some confidence in the findings of this research.

Findings Related to Hypothesis One: Hypothesis one is directed toward an investigation of the similarities in judgements found between the reference groups involved in this study. The rankings assigned to each activity by the reference groups are reported in Appendix C. That section also summarizes the general topic to which the activity was primarily addressed and the distribution in each instance of the presence and/or absence of the predictor variables. Table III is an intercorrelation matrix of the ratings given by each of the nine reference groups. The coefficients range from a low of .17 (between Board members and students of HHS) to a high of .87 (between parents on the Inter-School Council and HHS teachers). The median of this set of 72 coefficients is .67 indicating considerable agreement among these groups in making judgements concerning the curriculum activities presented to them.

TABLE III

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN REFERENCE GROUPS ON RATING THE WORTHWHILENESS OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES *

| | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inter-School Council | 100 | 34 | 76 | 87 | 83 | 52 | 74 | 78 | 81 |
| 2. | Board Members | | 100 | 25 | 35 | 17 | 26 | 32 | 28 | 23 |
| 3. | HHS Parents | | | 100 | 81 | 54 | 74 | 62 | 58 | 83 |
| 4. | HHS Teachers | | | | 100 | 79 | 72 | 71 | 83 | 75 |
| 5. | HHS Students | | | | | 100 | 45 | 69 | 84 | 64 |
| 6. | LMHS Parents | | | | | | 100 | 65 | 66 | 62 |
| 7. | LMHS Teachers | | | | | | | 100 | 70 | 81 |
| 8. | LMHS Students | | | | | | | | 100 | 64 |
| 9. | Principals | | | | | | | | | 100 |

* decimal places omitted in the table.

To test this hypothesis in a different manner, the data were analyzed by a judgement analysis program developed by Bottenberg and Christal.(2) By comparing the weights each group implicitly gave to each factor in effecting their judgements, the program assigns groups to clusters. Groups assigned to clusters are judged to have similar philosophies insofar as their use of the four predictor factors in making their ratings is concerned. The findings of this analysis are found in Table IV. The judge-

TABLE IV

CLUSTERS OF POLICIES OF NINE REFERENCE GROUPS CONCERNING THE WORTHWHILENESS OF SELECTED SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES AND THE PERCENT OF VARIANCE IN THE POLICIES EXPLAINED BY THE PREDICTOR VARIABLES

| Clusters | | Predictor Variables | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Process Objective | Active Student Role | Informal Evaluation Provided | Time-liness | Total Variance Explained (Proportion) |
| **Cluster 1** | | | | | | |
| Students-HHS | (N = 25) | 4% # | - | 12% | 34% | .494 * |
| Students-LMHS | (N = 26) | 3% # | - | 6% | 40% | .502 * |
| **Cluster 2** | | | | | | |
| Teachers-LMHS | (N = 29) | - | - | 16% | 16% | .333 * |
| Principals | (N = 17) | - | - | 8% | 20% | .282 * |
| **Cluster 3** | | | | | | |
| Parents-HHS | (N = 15) | - | 8% # | - | 35% | .425 * |
| Parents-LMHS | (N = 21) | - | 3% # | - | 25% | .290 * |
| **Cluster 4** | | | | | | |
| Teachers-HHS | (N = 25) | - | 6% # | 3% | 37% | .462 * |
| Inter-School Council | (N = 11) | - | 3% # | 10% | 34% | .475 * |
| **Cluster 5** | | | | | | |
| Board of Education | (N = 3) | - | 2% # | - | 2% # | .057 |

# indicates that predictive weight is negative.

* indicates associated multiple correlation coefficient is significant from zero.

ment analysis program identified the two student groups as having policies distinctly different from the other reference groups. The second set of similar judgements identified in this analysis was that effected by the teachers. These findings suggest that while the overall correlations between groups might be modestly high (reported above as a median of .67), the ways the groups utilized the various factors in the design are somewhat different.

Findings Related to Hypothesis Two: To test the hypothesis that the factors of process objectives, active student roles, informal evaluations, and timeliness contribute significantly to predictions of judgements made by the reference groups of selected school activities, a separate regression analysis was run between the judgements and the predictors for each reference group. The purpose of this analysis is to relate the judgements made by each group to the predictor variables which characterize the curriculum activities. If the factors identified in hypothesis two are really crucial in the eyes of the members of the reference groups, then knowing whether or not those attributes are present or absent in a given activity would allow for an efficient prediction to be made about the rating that activity would receive from the group. On the other hand, if those factors were of little importance, then the predictive efficiency of those factors would be close to zero. The computer program, in short, assesses the efficiency of the predictors for each group. The efficiency of the predictors for yielding an accurate prediction of each group's ratings is given by a multiple correlation coefficient squared in the last column of Table IV. This figure estimates the proportion of the total variance found in the ratings given by each group that is "accounted for" by the predictor variables. The proportions range from a low of .057 (for members of the Board of Education) to a high of .502 (for the LMHS students) with a median value of .425. A proportion of .425 corresponds to a multiple correlation coefficient of approximately .65. Also reported in Table IV is the amount of the total variance accounted for by the individual predictors themselves. These proportions are reported in the body of the table for each of the reference groups.

Whether the objectives of the activity were stated in terms of what the student would learn or in terms of what the student would do had little bearning on the ratings given to the activity. This factor explained only 4% and 3% of the variance respectively in the HHS students and LMHS students judgements and zero per cent variance in the other groups.

The factor associated with the kind of student role, active or passive, associated with the activity also had little predictive effect. For the Board of Education members, for the faculty at HHS, for the Inter-School Council members, and for parents from each high school, the more active the student roles, the less they liked the activity, but the power of this predictor was very small explaining only between 2% and 8% of the variance observed.

The quality "informal evaluation" was more predictive than the first two characteristics of the ratings given to the activities by the group members. This factor explained up to 16% of the observed variance for the faculty group of Lower Merion High School and 12% of the variance associated with the rankings given by students from Harriton High School. The principals, the students at Lower Merion High School, members of the Inter-School Council, and the teachers from Harriton High School all seemed to evaluate "informal evaluation" positively but the predictive value was quite low.

The most powerful predictor was that of timeliness. With the exception of the Board members who were slightly negative toward this factor, all the other groups viewed timeliness as important in making their ratings. The more timely the activity, the higher the rating the activity received. This factor accounted for almost one-third to two-fifths of the variance among the other reference groups, overlooking the faculty of Lower Merion High School. Members of this latter group, while viewing timeliness as positive, did not weight this factor as highly as did the others.

## Conclusions

1. The hypothesis that groups of parents, teachers, students, and administrators share similar attitudes concerning the worthwhileness of selected school activities is partially supported by the data of this project. The conclusion is reached by observing the reasonably high intercorrelations between the rankings given to the activities by the various reference groups. The low correlations associated with the

rankings given by members of the Board of Education are discounted because of the small N associated with that group. The qualification "partially" is called for by the clustering of the groups in five distinct groupings.

2. The hypothesis that the factors of process objectives, active student roles, informal evaluations, and timeliness contribute significantly to predictions of judgements made by the reference groups of selected school activities is supported by the data of this experiment. While these factors do not contribute a great deal individually in the explanation of group judgements, they do yield significant multiple correlations and serve to separate out the policies of the nine reference groups into five distinct clusters. Again, this conclusion in the main ignores the findings associated with the Board of Education because of the small N associated with that group.

Discussion

On the whole, the predictors identified for use in this experiment were quite weak in allowing for accurate estimations of ratings for the reference groups. Ward(3) surmised that at least three factors might account for the low power of the predictors:

1. The persons made judgements in random manners.
2. The persons who are making the judgements are using other factors than the ones included in the hypothesis in making their ratings.
3. The persons' judgements are so complicated in terms of the ways they are considering the predictors that a regression system cannot represent the judgements.

The explanations taken in order are discussed in the following paragraphs.

It is hard to believe that the ratings given to the activities were given on a random basis. First, the modest but reasonably high reliability coefficients reported in this paper gainsay the contention that the ratings were made at random. Second, the fact that the correlations between groups were modestly high suggests that systematic judgements were being effected.

While the factors associated with each of the activities were built

into the activity descriptions, there is no way of knowing whether or not those factors were indeed the ones on which the ratings were based. Indeed, the low correlations and weights assigned to these factors suggest that they were not decisive in determining the group judgements. When inspecting the activities which had similar codes but highly divergent rankings, it was possible to detect some aspects of each activity which might have triggered reactions that were not included in the predictors. An activity holding a focus on black authors and black points of view was rated lower than a similar activity with no reference to blacks. An activity asking students to complete an income tax form received especially high ratings while its equivalent received lower ratings. Finally, two similar activities received vastly different ratings with the one more approved dealing with intellectual skills while the other dealt with a rather mundane task of constructing graphs. This discussion is not meant to assert that the difference identified in the preceding sentences do in fact account for the differences in ratings. Instead, it is to suggest that even with similar attributes insofar as the predictor variables are concerned, the activities differed considerably and it is very likely that the group members were using criteria other than those posed in the second hypothesis in making their judgements.

The third explanation offered by Ward for the low power of the predictors utilized in this study deals with the complexity of the decision making process. It may well be that making decisions about curricula is too complicated a process to capture in a regression equation. It was felt that at the core of the difficulty is the problem of conceptualizing the tasks. Some groups seemed to perceive the goals, others the topics, while a third reacted to the student roles. Analogous perhaps to the blind men and the elephant, group members were commenting on parts which touch their sensibilities while missing the essential wholeness of the phenomenon they were examining.

In addition to the explanations advanced by Ward, at least two others come to mind. First, the activities were for the most part

interesting ones. While there were some exceptions to this judgement, most of the activities were given a rating of at least three by the members of all the groups. The one principal exception to that observation was activity number 20 dealing with learning the names of inventions and inventors. In any process in which correlation is used, a lack of variance on the criterion handicaps the power of that statistical tool. Perhaps if the activities had represented a wider range of quality so that judges would tend to use the full five point scale on the research instrument, more powerful predictions could have been made.

Second, the low reliabilities, especially for the Board of Education members, suggest that the group scores contained too much of an error component to be used effectively as predictors. While this explanation of the low predictive power of the variables is attractive, it seems much more likely that factors other than those hypothesized in this study were the ones used in making judgements about the worthwhileness of the activities.

Finally, a word about the generalizability of the findings of this study. First, the clustering of groups into sets based upon their judgements is only relevant to the characteristics built into the activities as predictors. So while for this set of predictors, several groups were clustered together it might be that for other predictors the analysis would yield different clusters. In addition, this project made use of secondary social studies materials. English, science, or mathematics activities might have yielded different results. Of course, there is also a possibility that the samples drawn for use in this project are not representative of the groups to which they belong. All of these factors, common to most research studies, must be considered in making recommendations based on the conclusions of this project.

## Recommendations

Of course, the recommendations must be made from the authors' value base. Persons with other biases may make vastly different recommendations from the same data.

1. While there seemed to be some agreement among the reference groups in terms of their attitudes toward the curriculum activities utilized in this study, the manner in which the groups were clustered by the judgement analysis program is a bit disquieting. Parents were grouped with parents, students with students, and essentially teachers with teachers. Such an observation suggests that much more needs to be done in the Lower Merion School District to communicate and to receive communication from various reference groups in making plans for instruction with the school. What has been observed in this study may be a national situation - with parents, professionals, and students having widely differing views about schools and schooling. Clearly no one group should prevail in making curricular decisions. Equally clearly, ways must be found to have all groups contribute to such decisions.
2. A second matter which may merit some attention is the separation in terms of clustering of the parents who represent schools on the Inter-School Council apart from parents selected at random from the populations of parents of the two senior high schools. Evidently those groups represent, according to the findings of this study, different philosophies. Several obvious factors may account for the separation of these parent groups. First, the Inter-School Council has on it many representatives of elementary schools. Second, persons who volunteer for service with the Home-School Association may be oriented differently toward school matters than the other parents in a community. Nevertheless the schism seems to warrant investigation in trying to find more representative groups with which to deal about secondary school affairs.
3. The low-esteem with which almost all the groups represented in this study had for activities which place students in active learning roles needs the attention of the educational leaders of the district. These findings suggest, ~~ever so mildly~~, that teachers, parents and students alike view schooling as basically

lesson-giving and recitations. While care should be given not to disparage persons holding views such as this, a vigorous program designed to encourage members of the community to inquire into the worthwhileness of these approaches must be initiated.

4. Students and teachers seemed to be put off by formal evaluation procedures. Since there is more and more data available to indicate that grades merely predict future grades and that future grades predict nothing about performance in life, perhaps the Board could give some attention to modifying its present grading scheme to make it even more informal.

5. The high values placed on timeliness by all the reference groups save the members of the Board of Education suggest that budgets need to be prepared which will provide the staff with the planning time and the resources to make the curricula more relevant to Lower Merion. This finding might suggest that Lower Merion participate in national curriculum studies by modifying the products of those studies for local use to a greater extent.
6. Finally, it is recommended that the findings of this study be presented to various groups within the District. Citizens of all ages and community roles should be invited to advance explanations for the clusterings reported in Table IV. Discussion on this theme might give rise to interesting and productive hypotheses leading to further studies and a fuller participation of the community in the affairs of the schools.

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APPENDIX A: Production Committee
Appointment Letter

# LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

ARDMORE, PA.

July 31, 1970

Dear

Welcome aboard. We are pleased that you will be able to join us during the week of August 24 and can guarantee that you will have one of the most exciting and satisfying professional experiences possible.

Just a word about the logistics of the week's work. We will meet in the library of Lower Merion High School at 9:00 A.M. on Monday, August 24. Daily sessions will conclude at 3:00 P.M. Lunch arrangements will be decided by the group but, for the first day, it is suggested that you plan to bring your own. All participants will be from the teaching staff of the secondary schools of Lower Merion School District. Reimbursement will be at a rate approximately 1/6 of a regular summer curriculum committee salary. Final day of activity should be Friday, August 28. Enough of that.

The purpose of this research project is to determine the extent to which students, parents, teachers and administrators agree on their judgments of the worthwhileness of selected educational activities. Attributes of the various samples of individuals who participate in the research project will be analyzed to determine which factors explain variance in the judgments offered. The project plan has been developed by Dr. John Fanning, Deputy Superintendent of Lower Merion Schools. The actual research activities will be under the direction of Dr. James Raths, Professor of Education and Director of the Bureau of Research and Field Services of the University of Maryland.

We will see you on the 24th and again we welcome you to a very select group.

Research participants

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ✓ Mr. Dan DiBono | - | Lower Merion High School | 1/6 of 1364.67 |
| ✓ Mr. Mike Wallace | - | Lower Merion High School | # 227.78 |
| ✓ Mr. Richard Leitham | - | Harriton High School | |
| ✓ Mr. Nate Shrager | - | Ardmore Jr. High School | |
| ✓ Mrs. Regina Madway | - | Welsh Valley Jr. High School | 1/6 of 1266.67 |
| Administrative Intern | - | To be announced | 211.11 |
| ? Mr. Albert Hubbard | - | Bala Cynwyd Junior High School | |
| NO Mrs. Kathleen Gross | - | Welsh Valley Junior High School | |
| NO Mr. Paul Ruda | - | Welsh Valley Junior High School | |

Sincerely,

Eugene R. Kessler

Eugene R. Kessler
Assistant to the Superintendent for
Instructional Services

## APPENDIX B: The Research Instrument

# Directions for Judging Activities

We all have ideas about the kinds of activities we would like to see in our schools. While all programs need balance, and no program would be successful if only one kind of assignment were always given to students, some activities do seem more appropriate than others. You are being asked to judge the following activities in terms of your general views about education. Consider each activity individually as an example of a type of assignment that might be given in a secondary school class room. Would you like to have this activity predominate in your school? Score the activity as follows:

a 5 if you would definitely like to see this type of assignment in your school;
a 4 if you would ~~only~~ like this type of activity;
a 3 if you are undecided;
a 2 if you would not like to see this activity in your school;
a 1 if you would definitely not like to see this type of activity in your school.

The scale is reproduced at the top of the page for your convenience.

| Activity | Rating | Activity | Rating | Activity | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 4 | 9. | 5 | 17. | 5 |
| 2. | 3 | 10. | 4 | 18. | 5 |
| 3. | 5 | 11. | 4 | 19. | 5 |
| 4. | 4 | 12. | 4 | 20. | 1 |
| 5. | 3 ~~2~~ | 13. | 3 | 21. | 3 |
| 6. | 4 | 14. | 2 | 22. | 3 |
| 7. | 2 | 15. | 3 | 23. | ~~4~~ 3 |
| 8. | 5 | 16. | 2 | 24. | 2 |

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Check one of the following:

Parent_____ Teacher ✓ Student_____ Administrator_____

Name of Lower Merion School L-C or your location_____.

APPENDIX C

RANKINGS BY REFERENCE GROUPS OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN PART BY FOUR PREDICTOR VARIABLES

| Activity Number | Topic | Predictors | | | | Rankings of Activities from One (Low) to Twenty Four (High) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Objective Stated | Active Student Role | Precise Evaluation | Relevant | HHS Students | HHS Parents | HHS Teachers | LMHS Students | LMHS Parents | LMHS Teachers | Faculty Council | Principals | School Board |
| 1 | Governments | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | 13 | 21 | 20 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 20 | 22 | 16 |
| 2 | Power Politics | No | Yes | No | No | 21 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 7 | 23 | 15 | 20 | 10 |
| 3 | Facts and Opinions | Yes | No | No | Yes | 14 | 24 | 24 | 20 | 24 | 23 | 22 | 24 | 22 |
| 4 | Federal Income Tax | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | 17 | 18 | 23 | 20 | 22 | 15 | 14 | 9 | 22 |
| 5 | Civil Rights | No | No | No | Yes | 22 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 4 | 9 | 18 | 11 | 6 |
| 6 | Civil War Issues | Yes | Yes | No | No | 14 | 11 | 11 | 14 | 10 | 21 | 16 | 15 | 24 |
| 7 | Historical Hypotheses | Yes | No | Yes | No | 2 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 22 |
| 8 | Analogies | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | 19 | 19 | 20 | 22 | 18 | 18 | 21 | 23 | 10 |
| 9 | Propaganda | Yes | No | No | Yes | 20 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 22 | 23 | 16 | 17 | 3 |
| 10 | Graphs | Yes | No | No | No | 5 | 17 | 10 | 6 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 19 | 10 |
| 11 | Law and Order | No | No | No | Yes | 24 | 15 | 22 | 24 | 12 | 14 | 24 | 15 | 16 |
| 12 | More graphs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 9 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 2 |

RANKINGS BY REFERENCE GROUPS OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN PART BY FOUR PREDICTOR VARIABLES (continued)

| Activity Number | Topic | Predictors | | | | Rankings of Activities from One (Low) to Twenty Four (High) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Objective Stated | Active Student Role | Precise Evaluation | Relevant | HHS Students | HHS Parents | HHS Teachers | LMHS Students | LMHS Parents | LMHS Teachers | Faculty Council | Principals | School Board |
| 13 | Local social problems | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | 18 | 10 | 13 | 19 | 21 | 19 | 12 | 14 | 16 |
| 14 | Monroe Doctrine | No | No | No | No | 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| 15 | Indetifying Artifacts | Yes | Yes | No | No | 11 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 12 | 10 |
| 16 | Inductive Thinking | No | Yes | Yes | No | 3 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| 17 | Capital Punishment | No | No | Yes | Yes | 23 | 21 | 17 | 23 | 19 | 16 | 23 | 20 | 16 |
| 18 | Summarizing Views | Yes | No | Yes | No | 12 | 23 | 15 | 8 | 19 | 13 | 12 | 17 | 6 |
| 19 | Republican Party | No | Yes | No | Yes | 6 | 6 | 2 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 1 |
| 20 | Inventors | Yes | No | Yes | No | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 21 | US-Japan Relations | No | No | Yes | No | 9 | 15 | 11 | 11 | 17 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 16 |
| 22 | Construct maps | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 16 |
| 23 | Visit to Jamestown | No | No | No | No | 7 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 24 | Working with Generalizations | Yes | No | No | No | 16 | 8 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 19 | 18 | 13 | 16 |

# APPENDIX D: The Activities

# WORTHWHILE

# SOCIAL STUDIES

# ACTIVITIES

# FOR

# SECONDARY SCHOOLS

? ? ? ? ? ?

LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT
300-Montgomery Avenue
Ardmore, Pennsylvania 19003

November, 1970

ACTIVITY # 1

PURPOSE

Students will develop and participate in governments organized after the ideas of Hamilton, Jackson, and Jefferson.

PROCEDURE

1. The class will be divided into three committees of ten members each.

2. Each group will study the ideas of either Hamilton, Jackson, or Jefferson and propose a form of government for the class to use in organizing itself for "self-rule."

3. Each group will impose its form of government on the rest of the class for a day's period. All "governments" will deal with an identical agenda of problems prepared by the teacher. This will include selecting leaders, proposing activities, and distributing the rewards and punishments deemed suitable by the teacher.

EVALUATION

Students will visit an open meeting of a branch of local government - the Board of Education, the Zoning Commission, etc., and classify the techniques apparent in the running of the meeting as most like one of the three demonstrated in class. In a final report students will include the reasons for their classifications. Grades will be determined by the skill in which the classifications are defended with specific observations.

ACTIVITY # 2

PURPOSE

To involve students in a game which illustrates situations of power politics typical of Europe in the 18th century.

PROCEDURE

1. The class will be divided into teams of five members each and the students will take on the roles of king, military commander, naval commander, economic advisor, and ambassador.

2. Each team will be required to represent a country assigned to it by the teacher. Following the rules of the game, each team will try to increase its wealth and power by negotiating advantageous military and trade agreements.

EVALUATION

Each student will be asked to list several generalizations about 18th century power politics that were supported by the various teams participating in the game. No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 3

PURPOSE

Given statements selected from newspapers, students learn to distinguish assertions of fact from statements of opinion.

PROCEDURE

1. From a list on the blackboard, the teacher will discuss with the students which statements are fact and which are opinion.

2. Students will be given copies of The Main Line Times, Main Line Chronicle, and the LMHS Merionite, in which articles appear concerning one event. (Example: flag burning incident) Using definitions, students will write their own account based on "facts" from the three articles.

3. Students will exchange papers with each other and they will make a list of facts and opinions from essays they read.

4. Teacher will lead a discussion of the papers and lists written by students.

EVALUATION

Students, at home, will use the Philadelphia Inquirer and draw up a list of ten facts and ten opinions, and their criteria for classifying them as such. Teacher will discuss individual papers with students who have not acquired the objective. No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 4

PURPOSE

Students learn to complete a Federal Income Tax form from data given concerning income and expenses of a fictional family.

PROCEDURE

1. Each student will be given a data sheet which includes information concerning the income and expeditures of a family of a given size. The student is asked to complete a Form 1040 computing the federal tax this family should pay.

2. The teacher will review the work handed in by the student for accuracy and to be sure that the computed tax is a legal minimum.

EVALUATION

Students will be given a new data sheet, different from the one they practiced on, and will attempt to accurately compute the tax based on the new data. Answers will be graded on a scale from A to E.

ACTIVITY # 5

PURPOSE

To read poetry and prose and to listen to records and tapes describing the developments of various ideologies in the Civil Rights movement.

PROCEDURE

1. Class will read poems about Booker T. Washington and William E. DuBois to note differences between the two.

2. Class will listen to a record of Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech.

3. Class will listen to tapes of Malcolm X's "Message To The Grass Roots."

4. Class will read selections from Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice.

5. Teacher will lead a discussion to note similarities and differences in the evolving ideologies.

EVALUATION

Informal evaluation of each student's work will be based on contributions made to the class discussions. No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 6

PURPOSE

Students learn to summarize accurately in written form the salient arguments supporting the various Northern and Southern arguments concerning Civil War issues that were current circa 1860.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will be assigned to prepare a role of a leading personality of 1860. Each student will be interviewed by members of the class in a mock "Meet The Press" format.

2. The "Meet The Press" interviews will be taped and replayed at the discretion of the teacher so that he and the rest of the class can raise questions about the positions taken by the role-playing students.

EVALUATION

An essay examination, graded as pass or fail, will be given asking students to summarize two different positions that were characteristically held in 1860. If an essay is judged to be of low quality, students will be asked to take the examination again until an accurate summary is produced. No letter grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 7

PURPOSE

Given selections from historical sources, students learn to identify hypotheses which explain specific historical events.

PROCEDURE

1. Students are given Sir George Peckham's pamphlet and are asked to identify hypotheses based on the reading that might explain why settlers came to the New World.

2. Students will then examine their history texts for data that either support or refute the hypotheses they have advanced.

EVALUATION

Students will be given a second document - Samuel Flagg Bemis' study of Jay's treaty - and attempt to identify hypotheses which explain why England signed the treaty with the United States. They will be asked to judge the reasonableness of their hypotheses using data found in other sources. The papers will be graded on a scale from A to F based on the clarity of each student's thinking.

ACTIVITY # 8

PURPOSE

Given an analogy dealing with current issues, students learn to analyze the argument by challenging the comparison or by extending the analogy.

PROCEDURE

1. Class will focus on the similarities and differences between the position of the United States in the present Viet Nam conflict and the position of the British in the American Revolution.

2. Students are asked to accept pro or con roles in a debate on the following topic:

> Resolved: That the present American position in Viet Nam is similar to the British position in the American revolution morally, geographically and politically.

3. Working in groups, students research their positions and anticipate the arguments of their opponents. Elected members from each group will represent their groups in a debate observed by all 11th graders.

EVALUATION

Students' work will be rated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory based on their participation in the group activity. No letter grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 9

PURPOSE

Given a statement in which a series of words and phrases is underlined, the student learns to select those which best illustrate the use of a propaganda device.

PROCEDURE

1. The teacher distributes copies of an editorial from The Main Line Chronicle dated August 27, 1970 concerning an article entitled, "Promoting the Peace Swastika" in which a series of words or phrases will be underlined. (Permission to duplicate the passage will be obtained from the publisher before it is distributed.)

2. The teacher then leads a discussion of each of the underlined words or phrases to view the implications of each word or phrase in the overall sentence or article. Students will discuss their opinions of each.

EVALUATION

Each student will be asked to select five words which, in his opinion, strongly reflect propaganda and five words which do not, and explain his decision for each. No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 10

## PURPOSE

Given data in pie graph form, the student learns to interpret the display by answering factual questions relevant to the data.

## PROCEDURE

1. Teacher distributes ditto sheet #1 on which a pie graph shows the breakdown of average family expenditures in 1967. The sheet also has ten questions which can be answered from the graph.

2. The teacher shows the same pie graph on an overhead projector and explains how to read the graph.

3. The ten questions are answered orally by students in a discussion session.

4. The teacher distribures ditto sheet #2 which shows proposed government expenditures of rax dollars based on the average tax burden per family for 1970. The same sheet also contains fifteen questions based on the pie graph.

5. The teacher assigns the questions on sheet #2 as homework and requests students to start answering the questions during class. The teacher will help individuals as needed.

## EVALUATION

The assignment will be judged satisfactory if a student's attempt to answer ten questions is evident on the homework paper. No letter grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 11

PURPOSE

To study the issues of law and order by comparing the events of the Boston Massacre of 1770 and the Kent State incident of 1970.

PROCEDURE

1. Students are shown tapes of TV newscasts and are given copies of the U. S. Commission on Events at Kent State report.

2. Students are shown the film, "Profiles in Courage" about the Boston Massacre of 1770.

3. Students study both accounts and note similarities and differences.

4. Teacher will lead a discussion of the findings and opinions of the students, and the relationships of these events to the principles of law and order.

EVALUATION

Student will complete the assignment satisfactorily by submitting a short paper stating his opinion of how events related to the issue of law and order. The paper will not be formally graded.

ACTIVITY # 12

PURPOSE

Given data relevant to a controversial social issue, students learn to construct graphs to display the data in a form which advances their convictions.

PROCEDURE

1. Examples of various types of graphs will be posted on the bulletin board for study. Teacher will explain advantage of each and answer student questions.

2. The class will prepare data relevant to the following position:

Negroes represent a crime-class in the United States.

3. Students will gather data either to support or refute this position, and prepare the data in the chart form which best advances their arguments.

4. Finished charts will be displayed and serve as a basis for assigning grades.

EVALUATION

Charts will be graded from A to E based on accuracy and the extent to which they support the student's position.

ACTIVITY # 13

PURPOSE

To identify and describe a current social problem found in Lower Merion. Descriptions will make use of multi-media techniques produced by the students.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will work in groups on this project.

2. Each group will identify a social problem found in Lower Merion which lends itself to a multi-media treatment.

3. Each group will develop a multi-media project using videotape, movie film, audio-tape, slides, etc., to communicate issues associated with the problem.

4. Products will be shared and discussed in school assembly programs.

EVALUATION

Individuals will be assigned grades based on the quality and quantity of their contributions to the group effort.

ACTIVITY # 14

## PURPOSE

To have students listen to a lecture on the Monroe Doctrine for the purpose of understanding the events causing its pronouncement.

## PROCEDURE

1. Teacher's lecture will include information on:

    a. Spain's rules for its New World colonies.

    b. Effects of the American and French Revolution.

    c. Napoleonic Wars in Europe.

    d. The establishment of the Holy Alliance and its New World aspects.

    e. England's attitudes toward New World markets.

2. Teacher will state principles of the Monroe Doctrine and explain the relationship of each of the above to the Doctrinal pronouncements.

## EVALUATION

Each student will show his understanding by turning in a newspaper account that might have appeared in the United States, England, or Latin American Republic in 1823. No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 15

PURPOSE

Given an historical artifact, students will learn to describe the need it met and to place it accurately on a time line.

PROCEDURE

1. Each student will bring in one object (artifact) dating from before the turn of the 20th century.

2. Class will divide into groups based on interest.

3. The groups will examine the artifacts contributed by class members and attempt to date them by referring to text books, almanacs and other sources.

EVALUATION

The teacher will make pass-fail judgments of each student's work through observing his participation in the group. No letter grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 16

## PURPOSE

To undertake problems requiring the application of induction as a reasoning process applied to historical data.

## PROCEDURE

1. Working in groups, students will be presented with data indicating the voting patterns of U. S. Senators on a particular issue. From the data, students will be asked to hypothesize which issue was under consideration at that time.

Example: This vote was taken in a Senate that was composed of 38 senators. The vote was 30 for the motion and 18 against. (Following would be a summary of the votes made by the senators from each state, viz., New York - 2 voted aye, Massachusetts - 2 voted nay, Georgia - split vote.)

2. Students will write their conclusions based on their library research. They will use university libraries, newspaper accounts found in the morgues of Philadelphia papers, and any other sources they may wish to use. Students should share the burden of the research by making use of all the resources found in their group.

## EVALUATION

The students will receive a letter grade depending on the accuracy of the group's hypotheses.

## PURPOSE

To clarify attitudes toward punishment as a deterrent for crime using the issue of capital punishment as a focus of study.

## PROCEDURE

1. Students are given research data on major crime statistics in one state which allows capital punishment and one which has outlawed it. The material on the latter state will show statistics before and after the abolition of capital punishment.

2. The class will observe a videotape of a debate between W. F. Buckley and Truman Capote on the issue of capital punishment.

3. The class will discuss the ideas expressed in the debate and analyze the material presented on the selected states.

## EVALUATION

Students will submit a paper expressing their attitudes toward capital punishment. They will support these attitudes through arguments presented in the debate, and statistical support furnished in the data from the states. Letter grades will be assigned on the basis of the logic of the students' arguments and how will the conclusions can be factually supported.

ACTIVITY # 18

PURPOSE

Upon hearing a presentation by a public official, students learn how to summarize the views expressed with accuracy in newspaper style.

PROCEDURE

1. A leader from the community - a member of the Board of Education, a local political figure, etc., will be invited to present his views on a current controversial topic to the class.

2. Students will be invited to ask the guest questions which will serve to clarify his views.

3. Students will write "newspaper articles" reporting the views presented by the guest speaker.

4. The articles will be read to the class and critiqued by the students for accuracy and distortion.

EVALUATION

A second speaker will be invited and the class will have a chance to listen to his views on a controversial topic. Again, in a "newspaper article," students will attempt to summarize the views expressed. The papers will be rigorously graded on an A to E scale applying criteria of accuracy.

ACTIVITY # 19

PURPOSE

To study the role that tne local Republican party plays in making decisions concerning the quality of life in Lower Merion - decisions about education, zoning, tax rate, etc.

PROCEDURE

1. The leadership of the local Republican party will be identified by name. The leaders will be interviewed to identify their occupations, business connections, memberships in clubs, and associations with banks and businesses through connections on boards of directors, etc.

2. Initial information will be sorted on a total class basis and sub-areas for investigation will be determined by the group. For instance, some students might be interested in Board of Education issues, others in zoning decisions, etc.

3. Each of the sub-groups will report to the school, and to the community, the findings of its study.

EVALUATION

Students will summarize their subjective learnings individually in a written essay entitled, "How the Republican Party Affects Me and What I Can Do About It." No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 20

PURPOSE

Given the name of one of 100 important inventions in the life of our nation, students learn to identify the inventor.

PROCEDURE

1. Students are given a list of 100 important inventions drawn from various phases of American life.

2. Each student finds the inventors of the listed inventions and writes a one-sentence summary of pertinent facts.

3. Any factual disputes among students is settled by the teacher.

4. Students form groups of three and drill each other on correctly matching inventors and inventions.

EVALUATION

Students will be graded on the basis of their score on a matching test of the 100 inventors and inventions. Grades will be determined as follows:

A - 95 - 100
B - 85 - 94
C - 75 - 84
D - 65 - 74
F - 0 - 64

ACTIVITY # 21

PURPOSE

To study the relationships between the United States and Japan from 1884 to 1941.

PROCEDURES

1. Each student will prepare a chronological time line which organizes every formal contact between the two nations from 1884 to 1941.

2. Each student will pick one of the events on his time line and attempt to explain the behavior of each country in terms of what was gained and what was lost in the exchange.

3. Students will consider two sweeping generalizations about history: (1) the times themselves determine history and (2) the men in leadership positions "control" the events under their purview. Students will then explain which generalization best accounts for the event they have chosen to explore.

EVALUATION

Students' responses will be given in essay form complete with footnotes. Grades will be given based on the accuracy and completeness of their time lines and the logical development of their conclusions.

ACTIVITY # 22

PURPOSE

Given sets of geographical data, students learn to construct maps which display those data accurately according to specified conventions.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will research climate factors for Brazil.

2. Students will make a set of four maps:

    a. Rainfall map must be a dot map.

    b. Temperature map must be a shaded map.

    c. Altitude map must be a contour map.

    d. The fourth map must describe all three factors. (Any type of map may be used to display the three factors.)

EVALUATION

The set of maps will be graded on neatness, accuracy, and appropriateness of the technique utilized.

ACTIVITY # 23

PURPOSE

A multi-media approach will be employed to orient students to Jamestown, Virginia.

PROCEDURE

1. In a three-period orientation program:

   a. The curator of the Independence Hall National Historical Park will present a lecture with visual aides on Jamestown Island.

   b. The teacher will present his own artifacts, pamphlets and brochures to supplement the guest lecture.

EVALUATION

Students will submit an outline covering the history of Jamestown Island. No grades will be given.

ACTIVITY # 24

PURPOSE

Given a generalization, a student learns to demonstrate a procedure for testing its validity in specific situations.

PROCEDURES

1. Students consider the following generalization from John Dryden:

"War seldom enters but where wealth allures."

2. Students are then given three periods in the library to research the validity of the statement as it pertains to the War of 1812.

3. Students will hand in written reports which accept, modify, or challenge this statement based on the evidence they have gathered.

EVALUATION

Paper will be returned with comments concerning whether they are satisfactory or not. Teacher will then lead a discussion applying a new generalization to a specific situation. No letter grades will be given.