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SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 3
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PRESENT CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS
FOR LOWER GRADES
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

DISPOSITION

Tabled	To Committee	Accepted as Read	Accepted as Amended	Deferred (to Session)	Rejected	Noted not Considered
B-1-69	11-1-69			June Session		

Present Curriculum Developments
For Lower Grades In The Northwest Territories

At the 37th Session, Council adopted a motion requesting a detailed report on present curriculum developments for lower grades in the Northwest Territories, and information on specific proposals to increase the local culture content at the primary level.

The Northern Education Division of the Indian Affairs and Northern Development Department has assembled and prepared the following information covering both matters which are closely related at the operational level. All pupils must study the basic courses. Many pupils study adaptations of these courses and special courses as well: in both cases as means of providing local culture. (In addition, compensatory education is often required to ensure adequate readiness for basic studies of any kind.)

I. Pre-School

Thirteen communities are now served by pre-school classes. Focus in curriculum is on helping all pupils make an effective transition to regular school studies. Bilingual classroom assistants work with the teacher performing a number of complementary and supplementary services. (For example, they help to encourage pupils in use of the vernacular; they act as a cultural informant, provide liaison services between home and school, and teach lessons concerning local language and culture). Introduction to English is gradual and informal. Readiness experiences are provided for in both first and second languages. Provisions for compensatory and intercultural experiences are required.

Pre-school classes are now operating in the following communities:

Government Operated Pre-school Classes:

Arctic District

Frobisher	2
Dorset	1
Pangnirtung	1
Baker Lake	1
Eskimo Point	1
Pond Inlet	1
Rankin Inlet	1

Mackenzie District

Fort Simpson	1
Fort McPherson	1

Total - 10

Government operated classes - 10

Privately Operated:

Mackenzie District

Inuvik	1
Yellowknife	3
Hay River	1
Ft. Smith	1

Total - 6

Privately operated - 6

Grand Total - 16

The director of Education does not know of any privately operated pre-school classes in the Arctic District.

II. Basic Courses

As the result of convention, three "basic courses" are used in the Northwest Territories for pupils in Grades I to XII. These are as follows:

Mackenzie District - Alberta courses

Arctic District

Keewatin	-	Manitoba courses
Frobisher	-	Ontario courses

In all cases, Grade I-VI teachers are expected to adapt these basic courses to provide for inclusion of elements of local culture and environment. How effective such adaptations are depends on a number of factors, for example: the teacher's knowledge and objectivity about the cultures involved; the classroom assistant's competence and the use made of her potential; supply and use of appropriate materials; effectiveness of professional supervision.

III. Northern-Oriented Courses

All aforesaid "basic" courses are developed outside the Northwest Territories. All are intended for use in southern situations based on the dominant, English-speaking culture. Moreover, these courses are based on philosophical emphases which vary to some extent.

None of these "basic" provincial courses take cross-cultural education into account. Nor do they make significant provision for compensatory education. Therefore "adaptations" and various forms of "new" curricula are essential.

During the past ten years, efforts have been made at the elementary level to gradually develop a common "northern" basic course - one which also provides for problems of diversity. Towards this end, two approaches have applied. First, under specialist leadership, program development and staff training have been combined in the form of local curriculum study and experimentation, workshops, and special courses. Second, specialists (former northern staff) themselves have prepared some materials. However, in all cases, programs and related materials have been subject to constant evaluation by northern teachers.

In each subject area described reference is made to two aspects:

- (a) achievements made;
- (b) proposals for the future.

1. The Language Arts

This terminology is used in the context of Northwest Territories elementary education to involve both English and the vernacular languages; to apply to the areas of:

- oral speech,
- reading,
- printing and writing,
- spelling.

a) Achievement

A new introductory program for teaching English as a second language was prepared during the past year to ensure a more effective beginning in bilingualism for native-speaking pupils (about three-quarters of the beginning pupils). This program is intended to follow a period at the pre-school level of formal use of the vernacular and informal use of English.

Articulated with this oral program are a number of other special northern-oriented materials: the Arctic Primary readers, printing and handwriting workbooks, and a model supplementary speller for local experimentation.

These materials will be added to others prepared previously, e.g. ten supplementary primary reading booklets, the Mackenzie District Language Arts Curriculum (Grades I-VI) and various remedial resources.

Eskimo Games has been translated. Experiments in the use of syllabics and the new orthography have been designed.

b) Proposals

The following general tasks are planned, namely:

1. Preparation of language tapes to accompany the NEW Let's Begin English program.
2. Illustration and printing of remaining titles in the 16-book Arctic Reading series, preparation of texts in 35 mm. film for teaching machine use.
3. Experimental preparation of audio-visual cards (for teaching machine use) - in English and vernacular languages.
4. Continued experimental use of simple language laboratory equipment.
5. Translation of selected parts of new (and existing) northern reading materials into the vernacular (where possible).
6. Feasibility study in regard to the preparation of a parallel set of northern-oriented readers more suited to Western Arctic population of Indian and Metis origins.
7. Development of means of improving the quality of speech in the vernacular.
8. Search of all available commercially - prepared reading materials on the topic of Indian cultures of North America.
9. Defining standards and means whereby adequate competency in a vernacular language may receive credit at the higher grade levels.

2. The Social Studies

This terminology is used here to refer to a composite treatment of aspects of:

- history
- geography
- "civics"
- economics
- social-anthropology

- a) Achievement - Experimental course outlines have been prepared for the Arctic and Mackenzie Districts respectively - as the result of local curriculum committee study and subsequent workshops. (In both cases direct reference is made in courses to elements of local culture and environment and provision is made for periodic revisions).

During the past year, a revision of the Arctic Course was carried out and arrangements were made for the printing of a set of wall charts on the history of government in the Northwest Territories. A set of three filmstrips on this theme have been prepared. A set of three filmstrips on co-operatives is being produced.

- b) Proposals - Among ideas being considered are the following:

- (1) Preparation (and adaptation of existing data) of the histories of northern peoples;
- (2) Using application of technology as an example, a resource unit (in elementary terms) on how the ways of living of people are affected;
- (3) Preparation of geography materials on the North suitable for senior elementary pupils;
- (4) Experimental design of a simplified course to introduce senior elementary pupils to basic ideas in sociology;
- (5) Preparation of a resource unit for senior elementary pupils on the basic rights, -privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship in the Northwest Territories.

3. Health and Physical Education

Health is defined broadly and takes into account related problems of language, culture and socio-economics.

- a) Achievement - In the Arctic District an experimental course in physical education was developed by means of staff participation in workshops. Recently, two new publications resulted: Eskimo Games and Arctic Physical Education Illustration (an activity program in card set form).
- b) Proposals - Analyses of Health course, materials and special northern problems were undertaken in preparation for revision of a Northwest Territories course of studies for Grades I - VI. A draft will be completed before April 1, 1969.

A field project is being conducted at Inuvik on an experimental basis this year for the purpose of developing family life education curricula. It is expected that some elements of this work will be incorporated in the revised elementary Health course.

4. Mathematics and Science

A Northern-oriented publication to introduce modern mathematics to beginners has been in use for two years. Follow-up materials are to be prepared.

In co-operation with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, (as a Centennial project) each school was presented with a minerals kit. During the coming year various new and existing materials on northern flora and fauna will be organized for use at the elementary level.

5. The Fine Arts

Reference here is made to the following fields, namely:

- art
- crafts
- music
- literature
- drama

Information on arts and crafts has been available to northern teachers for some time. This information is to be revised for the purpose of ensuring greater appreciation and development of Eskimo and Indian cultures. (One venture will involve encouragement to make and use puppets and marionettes to tell native stories).

Provision has been made to include some northern myths in the Arctic Readers. More such work, in English and in translation, is to be encouraged. Attempts will also be made to obtain tape-recordings of northern story-telling, vocal and instrumental music. One modest project will be continued: the making of an annual calendar based on the theme of northern cultural activities.

6. Pre-School Curricula

"Curricula" - broadly speaking what is learned and how it is learned - will involve focus on the child in an "integrated" setting. "Areas" of program emphasis, for the time being at least, will be as follows:

- play
- compensatory experiences
- intercultural activities
- use of the vernacular
- informal introduction to English
- various kinds of academic readiness activities
- appreciation of school as an exciting place in which to live.

To achieve these program goals it is expected and required that teachers, classroom assistants, and parents work together.

Materials prepared in experimental form to make this possible include the following: a pre-school handbook, a classroom activities guide, readiness workbooks in printing, arithmetic, and reading. These materials will, of course, be revised as required and, in the meantime, more new resources will be prepared.

7. Special Services

Reference here is made to the following matters:

- Tests and measurements
- Guidance
- Audio-Visual education
- Library services
- Classroom Assistants
- Teacher Education

Tests and Measurements - In the past few years ability and achievement tests have been given for the purpose of statistically determining "norms" which apply to the North. At the same time, no pretense has been made to accurately determine the learning potential of children of non-English speaking origin. For these pupils especially, efforts have been made to find less verbal means of assessment. (Research being conducted at the University of Ottawa in this regard is an example).

Guidance - There are divers kinds of "guidance" programs. However, what interests curriculum specialists most are the problems of transition which face northern pupils as they change: from childhood to adolescence; from dependence in elementary grades to independence in higher, more specialized curricula in secondary grades; perhaps, from living at home to living elsewhere.

The objectives here are centred on determining basic social, academic and communication skills required of youth who are becoming bilingual and bicultural.

Audio-visual Services - All kinds of materials, equipment, and techniques are appraised. The purpose is to recommend resources suitable for general and specific use in northern schools. In future this will involve increased emphasis on improving pupils' "visual literacy" and on using teaching machines of various kinds.

Library Services - Resources are appraised for purposes of recommendation. Support services for research are provided. Staff is advised on organization of school libraries. During the past year, for example, three publications related to these problems were prepared: Librarian's Handbook, Reference Books for Educators, and Library Books (recommended for use).

Classroom Assistants - Such personnel have been employed by the Arctic District since 1957 and the Mackenzie District since 1966. In both cases provisions have been made for training courses of varying durations. However, recently a tentative plan for more extensive training (and qualification) has been drawn up. Included in this plan is provision for these aides to learn how to perform duties of two kinds:

- (a) those complementary to the basic tasks of teaching
and
- (b) those "supplementary" to those tasks - i.e. services directly related to local language and culture.

Teacher Education - Pre-service and in-service training are involved. Both are essential. Teaching staff are trained outside the Northwest Territories - in all provinces and in various countries. For years participation in programming has been one valuable means of training staff to cope with the complex circumstances and work involved. Recently, as the result of an increasing number of courses being offered by universities in inter-cultural education, many of these teachers have been able to do such studies before and during their northern tenure.

- (a) Achievements - Eskimo language tapes and manuals have been made available to teachers on request. (Last year sets were sent to 20 communities). Professional reading kits on second language instruction have been sent to each Regional Education Office. A four-volume series entitled Northern Settlements has been prepared from Carrother's Commission data and some more recent data for use by northern teachers. Short courses have been organized. Professional bulletins have been prepared.

In the Mackenzie District, an experiment in teacher training is being conducted at Yellowknife.

IV. Summary

Problems of curriculum development and instruction in the North are unique. The quality of achievement in both cases is of crucial importance to the children and youth concerned. These pupils need the kind of basic education which will give them a choice of working and living where they wish. Many of these pupils also need compensatory education. Above all, many of these pupils need educational experiences which recognize and permit development of their linguistic and cultural heritages.