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The core curriculum - Delaware Valley U.S.A

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Thesis

THE CORE CURRICULUM - DELAWARE VALLEY U.S.A.

Submitted by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I. THE CORE CURRICULUM - DELAWARE VALLEY	1
Background of Delaware Valley	1
Statement of problem	2
Justification of the study	2
Definition of core curriculum.-- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary	3
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
An old concept revised	6
Staffing the program	7
Content of the core program	12
III. PROCEDURE	15
Questionnaires and interviews	15
IV. INTERPRETATION OF DATA	18
Area with a future	18
Importance of the Junior High Schools	18
Tabulated results	19
V. SUMMARY - CONCLUSIONS	38
Major conclusions of the study	40
Limitations of the study	40
Recommendations for further research	40

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Tabulated Returns of Response to the Study	16
2. Number of Schools in the States of the Delaware Valley Using the Core Curriculum	20
3. School Enrollments	21
4. Grades in which Core Curriculum is Being Used in Schools Reporting	22
5. Number of Teachers on Staff	23
6. Subject Combinations that Make Up the Basis of the Core	24
7. Equipment and Materials Found in the Core Classrooms	26
8. Length of Core Period	29
9. Number of Times Per Week the Core Class Meets	31
10. Volumes in School Library	33

CHAPTER I

THE CORE CURRICULUM - DELAWARE VALLEY U.S.A.

Background of Delaware Valley.-- In recent years a great deal of attention has been focused upon the Delaware Valley, that section of our country which includes the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. The many resources of the area like coal, soil, climate and general location have resulted in a great increase in its industrial wealth. Manufacturers are looking forward to this section as one with a great future. The industrial wealth of the area has increased and there has been a rapid growth in its population.

During the war years industries in the Delaware Valley were busy turning out war materials and many defense workers migrated to the area from various sections of the country to participate in the war effort. The post war years find two things occurring. First, many of the manufacturers have recognized this as an ideal location for the production of their goods and have decided to locate here permanently. The Delaware River with its outlet on the Atlantic Ocean serves as an excellent distribution point for both the import and export of materials. Secondly, the population of the four-state area has grown from over 16,000,000 in 1940 to over 18,000,000

in 1950. This has been due to the fact that many of the war workers who came to the area between 1942 and 1945 have decided to settle here permanently.

Major problems were created as a result of this change in the make up of the Delaware Valley community. There was the problem of adequate housing facilities for the many new families and also there was the problem of adequate educational facilities for the thousands of new children in the area.

Statement of the problem.-- Meetings were held by administrators to discuss the issues and committees were formed for the purpose of studying the results of research in the field of curriculum organization. As a result of these studies many felt that the core curriculum offered the best possible approach to learning for secondary school students. Since 1946 this curriculum has been employed on an experimental basis in many of the schools of the Delaware Valley. The problem of this study then is: (1) to determine the extent to which the core curriculum is being used on the junior high school level and (2) to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the needs of students in the Delaware Valley.

Justification for the study.-- It is important that any educational system be evaluated periodically to determine to what extent it is meeting the needs of the students to live in a dynamic society.

It is also important that at regular intervals studies be made to determine the success or shortcomings of pre-

sent curriculums and to make the necessary adjustments as indicated. A review of recent literature and research in the field of education will do much to help American education keep pace with the approaches, methods of instruction, new theories etc. that make teaching more effective.

A study of this nature in the Delaware Valley can be justified by the fact that the core curriculum is a relatively new approach to learning. It is important to evaluate this program in terms of its merits and demerits as expressed by administrators and those responsible for determining the patterns of education in the area.

If this program has been successful in terms of student growth then it should be continued and expanded. If it has not met with the desired success then it should be abandoned and a new and more effective program initiated.

Definitions of core curriculum.-- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines core as "the central part of anything," and defines curriculum as "the whole body of courses offered in an educational institution, or by a department thereof."

Apparently there is common agreement among educators that the core constitutes all or part of the curriculum which is required of all students at a given grade level. The following are four interpretations as to the meaning of the core, with emphasis as presented by Dr. Harold Alberty:

1. The core consists of a number of logically organized subjects or fields of knowledge each one of which is taught independently.
Example: English, world history, and general science are required at the ninth grade level. They are taught without organized attempt to show relationship.
2. The core consists of a number of logically organized subjects or fields of knowledge, some or all of which is taught independently.
Example: American history and American literature are required of all twelfth grade students. When history is dealing with the Civil War, the English teacher introduces the literature of the period.
3. The core consists of broad problems, units of work, or unifying themes which are chosen because they afford the means of teaching effectively the basic content of certain subjects or fields of knowledge. These subjects or fields retain their identity but content is selected and taught with special reference to the unit, theme, problem.
Example: Living in the community is selected as a unit of work for the twelfth grade. The unit is then organized in terms of science, art, social studies, etc., and taught by specialist, or by one teacher.
4. The core consists of a number of subjects or fields of knowledge which are fused (eg. history) and serves as the unifying center.
Example: American history and American literature in the eleventh grade are unified through a series of epochs such as The Colonial Period, The Westward Movement, The Industrial Revolution. The unification may be extended to include other fields such as the arts, science, and mathematics.

The need for inter-field correlation has resulted in various kinds of core curriculums.

The essence of the program consists of a block of required activities, and materials which seem to meet the minimum needs for all students. The fact that it is

1/Harold Alberty, Reorganizing the High School Curriculum, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1953, pp. 154-157.

required is defended on the ground of social needs. This program occupies the major share of the student's time in Grades VII and VIII and decreases as they ascend the grade scale. In Grade VII, for example, the students' whole program may be given over to the core curriculum; by the time he reaches Grade XII only one period may be prescribed. The program outside the core consists of a special education, that which presumably meets the particular needs of individual students, such as various aspects of science, mathematics, art, music, and vocational information.^{1/}

Considering the United States as a whole, a survey in 1949 made by the U.S. Office of Education^{2/} indicated 833 of the total 23,947 American secondary school was experimenting with the core organization; the survey states that comments from high school principals indicate that "interest in the core is spreading."

Various titles have been given to the core curriculum, for instance, names such as "General Education," "Unified Studies," "Basic Living" and "Basic Education." They all, however, seem to adhere to the same general definition.

1/Edgar B. Wesley, Teaching Social Studies in High Schools, D.C. Heath and Company, Boston 1950, p. 181.

2/Roy O. Billet, Fundamentals of Secondary School Teaching with Emphasis on the Unit Method, D.C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950, pp. 507-508.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An old concept revised.-- The core curriculum as an educational concept is not an entirely new procedure. There is evidence which indicates that it has been used for a number of years. The German psychologist, Herbart, must receive credit for the first important demand in modern times that a unity be achieved among the learning of school youth. The Herbartian doctrine of correlation was introduced into this country near the close of the nineteenth century by Charles De Garmo and Frank and Charles McMurray. These men and later John Dewey, continually indicated the lack of unity in the school experiences of school youth. The influence of the Herbartian doctrine of correlation led to experimentation with new curricula which involved organized classroom attacks upon whole systems of related materials instead of piecemeal mastery of single items of knowledge. Out of this came the beginning concept of the modern "unit."^{1/}

No specific information was found on the use of the core curriculum in the Delaware Valley. A check of the files at

^{1/}Harris Harvill, "Origins of the Core Concept," Social Education (April, 1954), 18:161-163.

the Universities of Delaware, Maryland, Rutgers, and Pennsylvania revealed that no one has undertaken a study to determine the extent to which the core curriculum is employed and to what degree of success, if any, it is experiencing. However, the author did check the writings of numerous writers on the subject of the core curriculum and though there was a great deal of similarity in their writings he did find that there was some differences among them as to just what constitutes a core curriculum.

As one writer puts it, the need for inter-field correlation has resulted in various kinds of core curriculums. The essence of the program consists of a block of required activities, and materials which seem to meet the minimum needs of all students. The fact that it is required is defended on the ground of social needs. This program occupies the major share of the students time in Grade VII and VIII and decreases in extent as they ascend the grade scale. In Grade VIII, for example, the student's whole program may be given over to the core curriculum; by the time he reaches Grade XII only one period may be prescribed. The program outside the core consists of special education, that which presumably meets the particular needs of individual students, such as various aspects of science, mathematics, art, music, and avocational information.^{1/}

1/E.B. Wesley, Teaching Social Studies in High Schools,
D.C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1950, p. 181.

Today theoriest^{1/} cannot find sufficient justification for the core correlation alone, for we have come to see that correlation is an inescapable part of good teaching; correlation is not the peculiar property of the core alone. In fact, it is the authors opinion that over emphasis on correlation has actually retarded development of core programs, for this over emphasis has too often beclouded the core's fundamental and primary aim of citizenship education. The core organization and philosophy urges and makes possible an increased emphasis on the process of democratic living and learning, thus implementing in the field of citizenship education the pragmatic concept of "learning through living."

The core program, because of its time allotment and purpose (citizenship education), is well adapted to the problem-approach, a methodology which in a natural way invites the correlation of the subject matter from many academic fields.

The general trend seems to be toward the adaptation of the core curriculum to the junior high school. According to the only national survey, made in 1949 by the United States Office of Education gives some indication of the trends and developments. In actual practice the core curriculum today is a junior high school development, junior high schools having 86 per cent of all core offerings. Thirty-six per cent in

1/Harris Harvill, "Eight Advantages of the Core Organization," Social Education (January, 1954), 18:4-5.

the eighth, and 20 per cent in the ninth, with senior high schools (10-12) having only 14 per cent.

Out of 1,119 core courses reported, the combination of subjects was predominantly English and social studies - 813 courses or 73 per cent of the total. In the few three period combinations, science was included in seventy-five schools, mathematics in forty-six, and science and mathematics in twenty-nine. Core programs which are unifications of subjects other than English and social studies comprise but 8.1 per cent of the total.

Sixty-eight per cent of the core classes meet 10 periods per week, while the three period combinations was reported by 16.4 per cent of the total number. Nearly half of the core courses meeting for more than ten periods a week were two subject combinations.

The author surmises that these figures seem to indicate a general trend, on a national scale, toward the adaptation of some type of unified course of study based on the fusion of English and social studies in our secondary schools.

This brings us to a discussion of those actually responsible for the application of this unified program, namely the classroom teacher and the school administrator. The teacher of the core group^{1/} is responsible for multiple learnings. He

1/Gertrude Noar, The Junior High School Today and Tomorrow, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1955, pp. 155-156.

must devise teaching-learning situations to meet the needs that his pupils have in common as well as those which are peculiar to the individual, in unspecialized areas of learning. Included among these are the needs for individual and group guidance, for remedial and developmental work in the language arts (English) for increased skills, appreciations, and information about the democratic way of living and governing (social studies), and for increased knowledge and control of the natural environment, science.

Staffing the program.-- The administrator is left with the task of selecting suitable personnel, qualified to adequately apply the concepts of the core curriculum. He must arrange his standards of requirements in such a manner that the core personnel selected have had or have been exposed to a large variety of either teaching or practical experiences based on the subject matter fields around which the core curriculum will be built. The author conducted several personal interviews with junior high school principals in the area of Wilmington, Delaware. It was found that the general opinion concerning qualified core teachers at the present, is that it is most difficult to contact persons with either adequate teaching experience or college training that would enable them to experience success in a core type situation.

By and large teachers^{1/} are not prepared for core curriculum work. This calls for an in-service program of teacher education, as well as for shifts in emphasis in teacher-education programs in the colleges. However, even under present conditions, schools are finding it possible to staff the core satisfactorily. Several plans are in use, depending largely upon local conditions. The co-ordinating teacher plan is fairly common. A teacher of broad training and experience is responsible for bringing together those members of the staff whose fields have major contributions to make to the unit which is to be taught, for pre-planning and for specialized instruction. Thus, in a unit on housing, the co-ordinating teacher, who might represent the field of home economics, would draw upon specialists in the fields of industrial arts, social studies, fine arts, science, mathematics, and health, to secure help in building resource materials, in planning the unit, and in giving specialized instruction at appropriate points. The more general instruction would be given by the co-ordinating teacher. Some schools have found it very satisfactory to employ the one teacher plan, in which a single teacher gives all of the instruction, and is responsible for counseling. Needless to say, such a teacher should have broad understandings. A third type has become

^{1/}Harold Alberty, Reorganizing the High School Curriculum, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1949, p. 178.

known as the multiple-teacher plan. In this scheme, the instruction is carried on by two or more teachers, representing different fields of specialization. These teachers have joint responsibility for teaching and counseling. Usually, when this plan is used, the size of the group increased considerably in order to avoid increasing the cost of instruction.

Content of the core program.-- The content of the core program is very highly selective. In what some have termed "the original core," no course of study is previously outlined. The teacher enters the classroom with no preconceived plan except that of a background of experience with other classes. The teacher and the pupils work cooperatively.^{1/} The work to be taken arises spontaneously from the needs and interests of a class. It may seem that under such a scheme the work for each class would differ. However, pupils in the various classes have similar needs and interests, even if there are differences.

The advocates of the core plan are aware that the public education plan is not meeting the needs of youth in one great area of learning. This important area is the education and training of students for more active and effective participation in democratic action, the acquiring of better knowledge

^{1/}Arthur C. Bining and David H. Bining, Teaching the Social Studies in Secondary Schools, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952, pp. 179-180

and understanding concerning the problems connected with living in a democracy, and the development of the desire in students to contribute intelligently to the solution of social, civic, and economic problems. The educators who have established the core curriculum are experimenting in an attempt to find a means of overcoming the shortcomings of the standard curriculum in the field of citizenship training.^{1/}

The goals of every core plan, as evidenced by the topics of their units clearly indicate that definite attempts are made to organize those areas of educational activity through which better citizenship qualities may be developed in the students who participate.

The core curriculum has some degree of success in developing better citizenship and qualities within the students. When teachers and supervisors are available who are trained in the teaching of core activities, and when more accurate evaluation measures are developed, the success of the core curriculum plan in meeting the needs of youth can be more closely estimated. The experiments are continuing and an increasing number of schools may be expected to adopt a core plan of curriculum organization. It is through experimentation and evaluation of the results obtained that educational plans evolve and develop. These core plans may be-

^{1/}John Glenn, The Core Curriculum, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Boston University, 1948.

become more numerous if the evaluation of pupil attainment is proven more conclusively.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Questionnaires and interviews.-- In approaching the problem of the core curriculum in the Delaware Valley the author felt that the questionnaire and personal interview would provide the best media through which the desired information could be ascertained.

A questionnaire was constructed dealing with some of the many pertinent areas in the teaching of core classes in the junior high school.

Upon receiving from the state boards of education of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania the names of the junior high schools, their principals and addresses, 155 forms were sent out, accompanied by a letter of explanation and a self-addressed envelope to be used in returning the completed questionnaire.

As the forms were returned they were first arranged by states. It was noted that the greatest response came from the state of Delaware, out of 25 questionnaires sent, 16 were returned for a total of 64 per cent. New Jersey was next percentage wise, showing a return of 63 per cent of the number sent. Maryland and Pennsylvania completed the

returns with 53 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. See Table 1. The general response of 52 per cent was most gratifying to the writer. It was indeed significant of the vast amount of interest that exists among educators of not only the states being studied but the nation at large on the subject of the core curriculum.

It was then necessary to determine from the questionnaires received how many of the principals reporting used the core curriculum in their schools and how many did not. After this was done the results were tabulated and the tables were constructed, the results of which will be discussed Chapter IV.

As the questionnaires were coming in the writer was busy arranging and holding conferences on the subject with principals in the area of Wilmington, Delaware. At this point, the writer would like to acknowledge with a deep

Table 1. Tabulated Returns of Response to the Study

States included in study	Questionnaires sent	Questionnaires received	Percentage
Delaware	25	16	64
New Jersey	30	19	63
Maryland	50	26	52
Pennsylvania	50	19	38
Total	155	80	52

respective schools. Also, the author wishes to extend his appreciation to all who participated in making this thesis possible.

CHAPTER IV
INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Area with a future.-- Delaware Valley, U.S.A. is rapidly gaining a place of prominence both nationally and internationally as an industrial area with a future. The Wilmington, Delaware area, sometimes referred to as the "Chemical Capital of the World," has become in recent years a mecca for young men interested in the field of chemistry. Job opportunities of all descriptions are becoming available, from the most unskilled to the very highly skilled technicians. This presents an enormous challenge to all of the schools in the area from the elementary to the college level. How are they meeting this challenge? Are they giving the very best that modern education has to offer? Finally, and most important, are they preparing these children of this vital community to live in it and serve it productively? The answers to these questions are found in a close and unbiased study of the curriculum.

Importance of the Junior High Schools.-- The author feels that of all the years a child spends gaining an education, the three years in grades 7, 8, and 9 or the junior high school are by far the most important. These

years represent a very critical section in the lives of growing boys and girls. In the 7th grade there is the pre-adolescent usually bewildered, uncertain and often vaguely aware of what may be ahead. By the time he passes through grades 8 and 9 he has had time to become somewhat adjusted to the age of adolescence and by the latter part of the third year in the junior high school he is able to make some attempt, with proper guidance, at selecting a vocation or the pursuance of a field of interest that may lead to a lifes work.

The junior high school then is faced with the responsibility of molding, assisting and guiding this young student through what probably is the most important period of his life. It is then also the responsibility of the junior high school principals and teachers and all concerned to compile the best possible programs of study that will satisfy their needs and help them to become productive and useful citizens in the communities in which they will reside.

Tabulated results.-- In tabulating the results of the responses to the questionnaires, the author found many revealing facts about the core curriculum in the four state area.

Maryland showed that out of 26 schools reporting 22 or 85 per cent are using the core, while Delaware showed a percentage of 44, Pennsylvania 53 per cent and New Jersey 47 per cent. Of the total number of schools reporting,

which was 80, 48 schools or 60 per cent of the total indicated use of the core curriculum. See Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Schools in the States of the Delaware Valley Using the Core Curriculum

States	Questionnaires received	Schools with Core	Schools without Core	Percent with Core
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Maryland.....	26	22	4	85
Pennsylvania.....	19	10	9	53
New Jersey.....	19	9	10	47
Delaware.....	16	7	9	44
Total.....	80	48	32	60

Total enrollment is often an important factor in determining the type of curriculum to be offered. Opinions were very much mixed among the administrators on total enrollment and its relationship to subjects taught. It is felt by some that schools with small enrollments in turn have smaller classes and can thereby present a more effective program, especially using supervised research and group work, on the other hand others feel that the core curriculum easily lends itself and is even more beneficial to school situations where the enrollment is abnormally large.

Of the states reporting 25 per cent showed that the core curriculum was being used in schools with enrollments of less

than 500. See Table 3. Forty-four per cent indicated its use in schools with enrollments of between 500-1000 and 31 per cent in schools with student populations of over 1000.

Table 3. School Enrollments

School Enrollments	Maryland	Pennsylvania	New Jersey	Delaware	Per cent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Less than 500.....	8	1	2	1	25
500-1000.....	10	-	5	6	44
Over 1000.....	4	9	2	-	31
Total.....	22	10	9	7	100

In some areas outside of the Delaware Valley the core curriculum is also being used on an experimental basis and is therefore confined to one or possibly two grades. The writer found that this was not true in the area being studied. Of the schools reporting 93 per cent favored the teaching of core in grades 7, 8, and 9 inclusively. Only 4 per cent are using the core curriculum in grade 7 exclusively and 3 per cent in grades 7 and 8. See Table 4.

Table 4. Grades in which Core Curriculum is Being Used in School Reporting

Grades	Mary-land	Penn-sylvania	New-Jersey	Dela-ware	Per cent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
7.....	2	-	-	-	4
7 and 8.....	-	-	-	1	3
7, 8, and 9.	20	10	9	6	93
Total....	22	10	9	7	100

To give the reader a better perspective of the sizes of the schools under consideration, in terms of staff, a question on the number of teachers employed was included in the questionnaire. The responses were tabulated and placed in Table 5. Seventy-five per cent of the total number of schools reporting indicated a faculty of over 21 teachers, while 10

Table 5. Number of Teachers on Staff

Number of Teachers	Mary-land	Penn-sylvania	New Jersey	Dela-ware	Per-cent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Less than 10.	3	-	-	2	10
11 - 15.....	-	-	-	-	-
16 - 20.....	5	-	1	1	15
Over 21.....	14	10	8	4	75
Total....	22	10	9	7	100

per cent showed their staff consisted of less than ten. The remaining 15 per cent having faculties ranging in number between 16-20.

There seems to be a great deal of conjecture as to just what constitutes the ideal subject or subjects upon which to base the core program. This is very definitely illustrated in Table 6. Fifty-eight per cent of the school principals in the Delaware Valley using some version of the core curriculum seem to favor the social studies, language arts combination as the basis for their core program, around which revolves the remainder of the curriculum. Twenty-three per cent felt that the social studies, language arts, and science afforded the best foundation upon which to build their core curriculums. Then, as shown in the table opinions were rather dispersed. Two schools in Delaware indicated that their core consisted of all subjects, while one school in New Jersey used just one subject, social studies, as the basis of the core program.

Equipment and materials are most important features in any classroom situation. Without these, the teacher's job becomes one like reference books, encyclopedias, current magazines etc. are of the greatest value in the core classroom and should be of the program. The core curriculum by its very nature is designed to cover a vast area of any given topic and therefore invites the student to exercise his own

Table 6. Subject Combinations that Make Up the Basis of the Core

Subject Combinations (1)	Maryland (2)	Pennsylvania (3)	New Jersey (4)	Delaware (5)	Number of Schools (6)
1. Social studies and language arts.....	12	7	5	4	28
2. Social studies, language arts, science.....	6	1	2	2	11
3. Science and arithmetic.....	-	-	-	-	-
4. All subjects....	-	-	-	2	-
5. Social studies, science, industrial arts, and arithmetic.....	3	-	-	-	3
6. Social studies, science, language arts and guidance.....	1	-	-	-	1
7. Social studies, science, language, and industrial arts...	-	-	1	-	1
8. Social studies..	-	-	1	-	1
9. Social studies, language arts and arithmetic.....	-	1	-	-	1
10. Social studies, science, language, arithmetic.	-	1	-	-	1

initiative in gathering materials and utilizing them. It is most encouraging when this search for information can begin in the classroom.

The furniture plays a most important part in all classroom activities. It has been an accepted fact, especially in the past decade, that movable type furniture is much more acceptable to the many and varied activities of the classroom than the stationery desks and chairs that were found in the traditional type situation. This seems to be especially true in the core class. Group work, panel discussions, project displays, student demonstrations etc. are vital parts of the core program and the classroom furnishings should be such that they will accommodate these activities easily. Work benches, tables, adequate bulletin board space, chalk boards and outlets for audio-visual equipment are all essential factors in a well balanced core classroom. To determine to what extent these and other features are found in the classroom. For the responses to this question see Table 7.

Table 7. Equipment and Materials Found in the Core Classroom

Equipment and Materials	Maryland	Pennsylvania	New Jersey	Delaware
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Reference Books	19	9	8	7
Encyclopedias	16	1	4	4
Magazine racks	5	2	1	4
Work tables	19	7	6	5
Movable furniture	21	8	7	7
Bulletin Boards	22	10	8	7
Chalkboards	22	10	9	7
Audio-Visual facilities	19	7	9	7

All schools appear to be very well equipped with movable furniture, bulletin board space, chalkboards and facilities for audio-visual equipment.

Only Delaware showed the presence of reference books in the core rooms of schools reporting. Pennsylvania showed 9 out of 10, New Jersey 8 out of 9, and Maryland 19 out of 22 in this respect. Encyclopedias were present in 4 out of 7 schools in Delaware, 4 out of 9 in New Jersey, 16 out of 22 in Maryland and 1 out of 10 in Pennsylvania. Magazine racks were present in 4 out of 7 schools in Delaware, 1 out of 9 in New Jersey, 5 out of 22 in Maryland and 2 out of 10 in the state of Pennsylvania. Work tables were found in 5 out of 7 classrooms in Delaware, 6 out of 9 in New Jersey, 19 out of 22 in Maryland and 7 out of 10 in Pennsylvania.

Reviewing the data on equipment and materials the author would assume that the average core classroom in the four state area is sufficiently equipped to carry on a reasonably effective core program.

The generally accepted time allotment for the core period is two 50 minute class periods running consecutively which is often referred to as a "block of time" in the students schedule of classes. The reason for this being that longer periods are needed to carry out the various activities of the core program. However, there is a great deal of variation in this respect, depending on the policies and practices of the school in terms of curriculum organization. As shown in Table 8 the larger number of schools (22) in the Delaware Valley tend to accept the afore mentioned time allotment. Only 4 schools devote one class period ranging in length from 41 - 50 minutes.

Table 8. Length of Core Period

Length of Period	Mary-land	Penn-sylvania	New Jersey	Dela-ware	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
30 - 40 minutes	-	-	-	-	-
41 - 50 minutes	1	2	-	1	4
51 - 60 minutes	6	-	1	-	7
90 minutes	3	4	4	2	13
100 minutes	10	3	4	4	20
150 minutes	2	1	-	-	4
Total	22	10	9	7	48

Seven schools use one period of from 51 - 60 minutes in length. Thirteen schools are close to the accepted 100 minutes by making the core period 90 minutes in duration. Twenty schools in the four state area use the generally accepted time allotment of 100 minutes or two 50 minute class periods running consecutively. Four of the schools allot three 50 minute periods running consecutively for a total of 150 minutes.

Administrators and teachers are in accord on the fact that the additional time for the core class is more suitable. This allows adequate time for student-teacher planning, unhurried research on the part of the student, ample time for assembling class projects and experiments and a workshop atmosphere in the classroom. The author found that greater

time allotments are afforded at the seventh and eighth grade levels and diminishes as the student progresses in grade.

The only national survey, made in 1949 by the United States Office of Education, gives some indications of the trends and developments. In actual practice the core curriculum today is a junior high school development, junior high schools having 86 per cent of all offerings in core. Thirty-six per cent of all core offerings are in the seventh grade, 30 per cent in the eighth, and 20 per cent in the ninth, with the senior high schools (10-12) having only 14 per cent.

On frequency of class meetings the response was split definitely between the core class meeting daily and five times per week, the latter would indicate that in some instances the class would be scheduled more than once on a given day. See Table 9. Thirty-three schools of the total reporting showed the core class meeting on a daily basis, while 13 favored the five times per week scheduling. Only two schools in Delaware indicated the core class meeting four times per week.

Table 9. Number of Times Per Week the Core Class Meets

Number of times per week	Maryland	Pennsylvania	New Jersey	Delaware	Number of Schools
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Daily	16	8	6	3	33
Twice	-	-	-	-	-
Three	-	-	-	-	-
Four	-	-	-	2	2
Five	6	2	3	2	13
Total	22	10	9	7	48

If there is to be continuity in the core program then, frequency in class meetings is important. It is interesting to note that in no instance did any school indicate that the core class met two or three times per week.

The school library is definitely the nerve center of any school. It is a vital part of any institution of learning and its relationship to the core program is one of major importance. A well stocked school library gives great assistance to both the student and teacher in doing necessary research as it relates to units of study. To determine the size in terms of volumes of the schools in the study indicating the use of the core curriculum a question on the subject was included in the questionnaire. For the results see Table 10.

Table 10. Volumes in School Library

Number of volumes	Maryland	Pennsylvania	New Jersey	Delaware	Number of schools
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Less than 1000.....	4	-	-	1	5
1001 - 1999..	1	-	-	-	1
2000 - 2999..	5	4	-	3	12
3000 - 3999..	7	2	4	1	14
4000 - 4999..	-	1	1	-	2
5000 - 5999..	4	-	2	-	6
6000 - over	1	3	2	2	8
Total	22	10	9	7	48

Fourteen schools indicated that the volumes in their libraries numbered between 3000 - 3999 and 12 schools indicated the size of their libraries as between 2000 - 2999. Eight schools were 6000 - over, while 5 schools showed less than 1000 volumes in the library. Since a well stocked library in a junior high school should have at least 5000 volumes on its shelves these figures tend to indicate that the average library in the average school of the four state area is insufficient. There are exceptions, as the table shows, with 8 schools falling into the 6000 and over bracket.

To determine the kinds and types of units being studied by junior high school students of the Delaware Valley the principals were asked to list the titles of at least three units studied in the core classrooms of their respective schools. Following is a partial list, by state of the 144 titles received.

Core Topics - Delaware Valley

Delaware

Knowing Our Community
 This is Our Country
 Living and Working Together
 South America
 Men at Work
 Westward Ho
 Where Do Our Traditions Come From
 Why Do Certain Regions Have Particular
 Intergroup Problems
 How Can We Tell Whether a Local Community
 is Fulfilling Our Basic Needs
 Making the Most of Ourselves
 Our Study of Maps
 Selecting a President

New Jersey

Countries of Europe
 American History and Life
 Child Care
 Education and School
 National Bodyguards
 Orientation to School
 Our Heritage
 Contributions of All Races to
 Our Civilization
 The World of Work
 Knowing Your School
 Current Events in the News
 Middle East Countries
 Health in Our Times

New Jersey (continued)

Gearing to Success
 Juvenile Delinquency

Maryland

How the Frontier Moved Westward
 How People of Many National and Racial
 Cultures are Making a Unified Nation
 Getting Along with Others
 Living in the World Today
 Conservation of Natural Resources
 Conservation of Human Resources
 Our Neighbors
 Our Community
 Selecting a Vocation
 Understanding Myself and My World
 Living, Working and Participating
 Effectively in a Democratic Society
 Seeing Maryland as America in Miniature
 Understanding Myself
 Our American Heritage
 Our Shrinking World

Pennsylvania

The School
 Home and Family
 Government
 How to Get Along with People
 United Nations
 How Can I Become a Better School Citizen?
 Earning a Living in the Delaware Valley
 The People of Pennsylvania Govern Themselves
 The Family
 The School as an Institution
 The Home and Family Relations
 Preparation for Vocational Choice
 School Orientation
 The Home as a Social Institution
 The Community
 Industry
 Government
 Health
 The Atmosphere

From these headings the reader may at a glance ascertain the type of work being carried on in the core program. He will notice that a large portion of the titles deal with functional as well as personal issues like, understanding oneself, getting along with others, living in the community, selecting vocations, current events, child care, etc.. These and other things are needed by junior high school students at the junior high level. Discussions of such topics give a great deal of aid at the time it is needed most.

If these and other units are pursued to the utmost, according to the principles of the core, then we might assume that the junior high school students residing in the area of the Delaware Valley are reaping some benefits from the core curriculum. They are gaining valuable information and guidance in the solution of problems of every day living. Also, they are in the process of laying a sound foundation upon which they will build their futures and eventually develop into useful and productive citizens of the communities in which they will live, be it the Delaware Valley or elsewhere.

In regards to the overall confidence of the school principals in the core course as a means of meeting the immediate needs of the student at the junior high school level in the Delaware Valley. All but one responded in the

affirmative to the inquiry, "Considering the variety of vocational offerings of the Delaware Valley do you feel that the core curriculum is a good approach to the effective teaching of junior high school students."

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY - CONCLUSIONS

This study has been concerned with a particular concept in education as it is applied in the secondary schools in a significant section of our country. The fact that the Delaware Valley abounds with future possibilities as an industrial area makes this thesis important. For, if it is ever to realize its potentialities, if its factories and plants are going to produce up to their capacities, then it follows that the people who live there must be capable of exploiting these resources to the fullest. This can be accomplished to a great extent through the training programs of the various institutions of learning found in the Delaware Valley. These institutions should offer the optimum in terms of curriculum, beginning at the elementary level and extending through college. Modern concepts, theories and practices should be tried and when found applicable should be tried and when found applicable should be inculcated into the training programs of the institutions.

The author has attempted in this study to examine an important segment of the total educational program, that being the junior high school in terms of its offerings.

Since the core course has in the past decade gained recognition as a modern concept of notable worth among educators, the question of its application to schools in the Delaware Valley should be considered. Advocates of the core course feel that it offers the type of program that is not only designed to meet the needs of the individual students but it also gives essential training in such areas as human relations, citizenship, personality development, health etc.

It was found in the study that over 50 per cent of the schools reporting are either experimenting with the core course or have actually adopted it or are using some phase of it in their school programs.

In summarizing, the author reports that the fact that the program is experiencing some success is indicated by the great vote of confidence given it by the administrators.

These junior high schools appear to be reasonably well, equipped, with the possible exception of adequate library facilities in most of the schools, with materials and personnel to carry on effective core programs. Using the titles of units studied in the core classrooms and the time allotted to them in the various school situations as a yardstick, the writer feels that the students of these schools are receiving valuable learning experiences through this program.

Major conclusions of the study.--

- (1) The core course is gaining in recognition in the junior high schools of the Delaware Valley.
- (2) The administrators are confident that the core course does offer valuable learning experiences to the student participating.
- (3) The schools are reasonably well equipped to carry out the core course.
- (4) The library facilities are limited in terms of volumes per school.
- (5) The units being studied are designed to give the maximum learning experiences in such areas as personality development, health, vocational education, citizenship, etc.

Limitations of the study.-- The author has selected to study the core curriculum from the view point of the school principal. By omitting two other important parts of the school program, the student and the teacher, the study therefore has its limitations. However, the writer feels that the school administrator is the most important part of the total school program. He occupies a very influential position when it comes to either initiating or deleting ideas from the school curriculum. His opinions cannot be overlooked and should be considered when the school program is to be evaluated.

Recommendations for further research.-- It would be interesting if in the next five years a similar study is done on the Delaware Valley to see if there is a noticeable change in the

percentage of schools using the core curriculum.

The writer would recommend a more inclusive study. For example, a study could be made to examine more closely the units used in terms of content and time allotment. Student reaction to various units could be studied and evaluated. This would tend to give an even more concise view of the merits or demerits of the program.

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