

A TEACHER'S

GUIDE TO INTEGRATED EDUCATION

A Set of Operational Principles
for the Teacher Which Provides
Continuity Between the Supreme
Court Desegregation Decision,
The Integration Policy of the
Board of Education, and the
Teacher's Development of an
Integrated Educational Program.

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The Board of Education in echoing the desegregation order of the Supreme Court in the May 17, 1954, Brown vs. Topeka, case has stated: "Whether school segregation is the effect of law and custom as in the south, or has its roots in residential segregation, as in New York City, its defects are inherent and incurable. In education there can be no such thing as 'separate but equal.' Educationally as well as morally and socially, the only remedy for the segregated school is its desegregation."

The decision to acknowledge de facto segregation to be equally detrimental as de jure segregation in its effects upon the educational development of our youth has stimulated the emergence of corollary problems such as: What constitutes the integrated educational experience? What is the role of the teacher in the desegregated school? And, are there any guiding principles which the teacher can utilize in facilitating the understanding of integration? Educators, human relations specialists, sociologists, social psychologists and everyone interested in the development of a citizenry capable of subsisting in, and perpetuating a democratic society are thinking through answers to these difficult questions.

The Commission on Human Rights' survey of educational material has uncovered a vast reservoir of supplementary curriculum materials published by a host of educational and intergroup organizations. The material is designed to aid the teacher in the desegregated schools in the development of a meaningful educational program, and in developing a positive intergroup climate.

What was not uncovered, and appears to be lacking, is a set of operational principles for the teacher, which unites the Supreme

Court decision and the integration policy of the Board of Education with the use of available curriculum material.

The Commission on Human Rights has prepared this Guide to Integrated Education as a resource for teachers in the desegregated schools. In a sense, it represents the statement and analysis of a series of principles which a teacher must know and understand if he is to provide students, participants in desegregation, with a truly integrated educational experience.

The Guide to Integrated Education is not designed to articulate the specific curriculum a teacher should utilize; nor how he should function in any given situation. Rather, it postulates the component elements in the integration process in the form of principles. The integrated educational process in one sense is conceptualized as an interger, of which the school principal, teacher, curriculum and students constitute equal parts; and in another sense as a social psychological process within the classroom.

Finally, the Guide to Integrated Education represents the application of prevailing theories and principles from the field of education, psychology, social psychology, sociology, and human relations; and the experiences of school personnel in communities throughout the country where desegregation is in progress.

PRINCIPLE 1

Desegregation is an objective, logical and legal process removing the roadblocks to equal rights guaranteed to Negroes under the Constitution of the United States.

In the north the desegregation process is stimulated by the realization that the effects of de facto segregation are similar

to the effects of de jure segregation in the south.

Desegregation is not integration. If the teacher does not clearly understand this distinction, he will assume his responsibility ends when administrative procedures are available to desegregate his school. He will also assume that it's "business as usual" in the new classroom situation, and that he has confirmed the Supreme Court's decision that all men are equal by pursuing curriculum in the same manner and employing the traditional teaching techniques.

Desegregation does not, of itself, solve the educational problems resulting from segregation. It only provides the atmosphere and environment for conscious pursual of integration.

PRINCIPLE 2

For the school superintendent, integration is an organic concept. It is the uniting of the principal, teacher, curriculum and student in such ways as to provide the integrated educational experience necessary to produce individuals capable of subsisting in an integrated, equalitarian, democratic society.

The history and philosophy of public education has developed exclusive of the Negro and his role in the social order. The success of integration will depend on a reconceptualization of the nature of education in an integrated democratic society.

This reconceptualization should be reflected in the pattern of school organization and in curricula changes.

It demands a clear understanding of the goals of education; or at least those goals perceived by the society to be worthy of pursuance. In our society, which is becoming increasingly more

integrated, the goals include the development of a citizenry capable of understanding and interpreting democratic ethics, and being able to communicate and relate to individuals of varying cultural backgrounds without feelings of fear, hostility and prejudice.

Plans should be prepared which will spell out how the school and its program will be organized in order to achieve such an experience for the students.

PRINCIPLE 3

For the teacher, integration is the process of changing the student's attitudes, beliefs, values and frame of reference for his behavior so as to conform with the equalitarian attitudes, beliefs, values and norms inherent in a democratic society.

Integration in the classroom is a process of attitude, belief, value and norm adjustment. As such, it is essentially a social psychological process. It involves the breaking down of inferior and obsolete attitudes, beliefs and values adhered to by students and the replacing of them with equalitarian and democratic norms.

The teacher must open up channels of communication and interaction between himself and the students so the desirable norms may be developed. However, the teacher's actions impress the students far more than his words. For him to be successful in the communication and interaction process, he must have a philosophy of respect for the individual and manifest it in his actions. The teacher must also have developed an awareness of the injustice, and discrimination which exist in the society so as to be able to discuss them intelligently.

PRINCIPLE 4

Teachers can establish equalitarian attitudes, beliefs, and values even if they differ from the student's general prior practice. These equalitarian attitudes, beliefs and values can become the established and accepted norms for the group.

What teachers may have least understood in the past, but is increasingly clear as we understand the dynamics of group interaction is that students can bring to the classroom and the group behavioral patterns representing norms of other membership groups, but still evolve separate and distinct attitudes and behavioral patterns for the classroom. These new behavioral patterns can be consonant with equality norms if the teacher has articulated the desired attitudes and values inherent in a democratic society.

The need here is for the teacher to exploit, to the fullest, the effects which equalitarian norm orientation of the student can have in his other membership groups.

In a democracy it is permissible for institutions like the Family and Religion to maintain a biased orientation. Education as an institution purports to be the center of truth objectivity and the scientific approach.

Rather than decry the orientation of other societal institutions which affect the student's attitudes and values, the teacher must provide the norm foundation for the student's effecting of his other membership groups.

PRINCIPLE 5

The teacher's equalitarian attitudes, beliefs and values must be presented not as a mere personal preference, but as having its

foundation in the democratic ethics and traditions of our society if the student is to perceive the school as the frame of reference for his behavior in other group situations.

Students are members of varying social groups both primary and secondary. These groups include family, both nuclear and extended; clubs, religious organizations, teams and peer group affiliations. However, not all of these groups provide the frame of reference for the student's behavior in a given specific situation. Usually an individual will exercise the norms of a group only in that group situation. In different groups, the particular group norms will prevail.

The teacher should encourage the student to utilize as a frame of reference for his behavior in other membership groups, the equalitarian norms developed and adhered to in the classroom. The realization that such attitudes and values are inherent in democracy and are supported and transmitted by the school through the teacher, rather than just a personal opinion of the teacher, aids in strengthening the class and the school as the frame of reference for equalitarian behavior in other groups.

PRINCIPLE 6

Integration is impeded if the teacher ignores individual and group differences and treats all students as if they were alike.

Teachers must not attempt to conduct "business as usual" in the desegregated classroom. Such statements as "They are all the same to me" ignore the real differences in customs, values and beliefs which have reality and essence in the sub-culture from which the students emanate. It tends to lead to the lack of knowledge and

understanding of cultural attributes worth preserving in the minority group.

The goal is to treat students with equality. Equality does not necessarily imply similar treatment. Equality of treatment is the result of recognizing real ethnic group differences and attempting to understand within the context of tradition and cultural experiences, the student's specific needs.

PRINCIPLE 7

The teacher's recognition and discussion of human differences can open a whole world of learning for teachers and students alike.

Rational, objective and scientific thinking about each other on the part of students aids in the replacing of stereotype thinking and the closed mind.

Adjustment in the thinking process leads to modification of student attitudes and values with resultant positive effect on social behavior. Behavior which was previously guided solely by tradition, superstition and even fear, is subsequently determined by knowledge, understanding and intelligent discrimination. This provides the foundation for the student's perception of the world and the people in it. It provides the basis for wise decision making in the student's estimate of himself, his classmates, and the people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds which he will encounter in the adult world.

PRINCIPLE 8

In a democratic society the public school represents the primary institution for the development, perpetuation, knowledge and understanding of equalitarian attitudes, values and norms.

"The goal of American education is to promote the maximum growth of the individual in the democratic society." The public schools with their diversity of students of different races, creeds, colors and national backgrounds provide the ideal setting for the pursual of such a goal. Unbiased by private considerations of religion, race or other possible vested interest groups, the school can proceed to serve the equalitarian needs of the democratic society. The classroom can contribute to better understanding and relationships between these diverse groups, in part as a contribution to community life and citizenship and also as a means of improving education itself.

One could well ask oneself the question: If the public schools are not to be the primary institutions for the development and pursual of equalitarian attitudes and values, where else are they to be developed? No other institution in our society can postulate such a broad sweeping commitment to equalitarian ideals. In a democratic society the educational institutions of public origin should provide the necessary supports to students so that the equalitarian norms are transferable to other group situations.