

Teaching of Cooperation*

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IN discussing this subject, I would like to make reference to Bureau of Public Schools Memorandum 130, s. 1956 entitled **Outline Guide on the Teaching of Cooperation in the Elementary and Secondary Schools**. This memorandum is significant for two reasons. First, it makes official the teaching of cooperation in the elementary and secondary schools; second, it makes tacit recognition that the development and promotion of business cooperatives cannot truly prosper without the complementary assistance of education through the medium of public schools. It will not be an idle talk to mention in passing that this idea is the newest slant in the cooperatives program in the Philippines which may be found to be the missing factor for its successful prosecution.

The Objectives

With this introduction I would like to go over with you the objectives on the teaching of cooperation in the elementary and secondary schools in their synthesized form from the memorandum mentioned above. Briefly they are the following:

1. To understand how we live by cooperation and the importance of cooperation in human relations.
2. To acquire some elementary knowledge or ideas of the beginning, principles, practices and benefits of cooperatives.
3. To learn general techniques of organizing and managing cooperatives.

These three-fold objectives are my own extraction from the three specific objectives of cooperation on the elementary level, and the five specific objectives on the secondary level. It should be noted that the first objective deals with cooperation as a way of human relations which means in the home, in the school and in the community. This is the social

aspect of cooperation education — the aspect which serves as the base of all other aspects of cooperation. The last two objectives bring us to the beginning or immediate threshold of business cooperatives, their values and their techniques. This is the economic aspect of cooperation education which has to do with making life fuller and more satisfying economically.

For the purpose of this seminar, I would like to call attention to my simplification of the objectives of cooperation education. By reducing 8 specific objectives to three, I wish to establish and promote the way of thinking that underscores the concept that economic cooperation or business cooperatives have to begin at the grassroots of cooperation education as a way of life and the cornerstone of human relations. This concept is equally important in establishing the principle that cooperatives cannot be successfully established and made a part of the democratic way of life without education in cooperation.

Having laid down this concept and principle, we may now proceed to the presentation of what I consider the preparatory phases that have to be undertaken by the academic supervisors and cooperation leaders, for the proper launching and implementation of the program. They are:

1. Preparation of resource, or teaching units following the outline guide under Memorandum No. 130 s. 1956.
2. Preparation of suggestive teaching techniques or approaches in cooperation education.
3. Establishment of an organization or a machinery for the preparation of these materials and the implementation of the program.

In the following discussion, I shall describe briefly the nature and scope of these three preparatory phases.

Materials of Instruction

The preparation of needed materials of instruction will have to begin with the examination of the

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graded objectives from grade I through 4th year high school. The idea is to minimize their duplication or overlapping. Then also their sequence will reveal the whole idea of cooperation education in stages of conceptual development from the elementary through high school. This whole view is necessary for a proper orientation on cooperation education. An illustration of this procedure is my extraction of the specific objectives which I reduced to three out of the eight from both the elementary and secondary levels. However, since the examination of the objectives will be done for all grades and years and not by school levels, the evaluation of the sequence of the grade objectives will take much more time than what I required in evaluating those for the school levels. Once the values and sequence of the objectives by grades are determined, the next step to take is to list the cooperation activities which again need careful screening as to values and sequence. These activities should be suggestively concrete by reducing them to projects. Each project should be described briefly so as to determine its nature and scope. Each should be followed by suggestive directions to carry it out and a listing of references to textbooks and supplementary readers now in use and available including those in the library. This study may be simplified by preparing write-ups of a series of activities involving cooperation for each grade level except that in the higher grades where the principles of cooperation and organization of cooperatives and their practices have to be taught directly special resource units have to be prepared. At this juncture, I should like to point out that there is no period for teaching cooperation education in the class schedule. And because of this, any prepared material as suggested above cannot be used in a regular sequence as a teacher would teach subject matter from a book. It is obvious, therefore, that the teacher has to earmark what materials he would need from the resource or teaching units when he considers the lessons or projects in the regular subject fields particularly in the core subject areas of Language Arts, Social Studies, and Work Education. In the case of teaching units, I am afraid that their preparation has to be deferred until the use of the resource materials have been tried out. The implication of teaching units is that the teacher should teach it as is; and even with some modifications, it will mean that the teacher is teaching cooperation instead of any of the regular subject areas. While this may be done for a teaching unit, the practice may be an exception rather than a rule. This is all that may be said about the preparation of instructional materials. Our time is so limited as to permit us only to investigate its general scheme which I believe is sufficient to show the immediate line of action to take with our teachers.

I shall now proceed to the second phase — The preparation of suggestive approaches or teaching techniques in cooperation education. You will note that the nomenclature cooperation education carries with the conotation of action. This means that cooperation education calls for performance and application more than indeterminate assumption and discussion which we know for a fact as in character education, to be ineffective as an approach. The ineffectiveness of verbalism seems to have the corroboration of men and women who have been engaged in the promotion of cooperatives in our country. We also have heard of action research, and so getting the cue from this, I propose that we adopt **action approach** as our general technique in cooperation education. In this connection, I suggest that you consider here the preparation of a general outline of action approach which should serve as the basis of a little pamphlet or series of pamphlets which you may prepare with the assistance of all concerned in your respective divisions. Among the topics to be included in **action approach** are (a) class organization, school clubs, subject clubs, etc., (b) field trips, (c) excursions and picnics, (d) community drives and services campaigns, (e) class stationery store for the elementary, (f) school coop for elementary and high schools for consumer goods, garden products, shop articles, etc., (g) school paper, (h) school government and other group activities. All these isolated activities, valuable as they are in themselves as media of education, are to be integrated and interpreted as approaches to cooperation education. The integration may be achieved by making the following elements run through these activities; cooperation in all group undertakings; cooperation is the way of happy human relations; cooperation is give and take. Besides the recurrent and persistent theme of cooperation expressed in various ways, these activities should serve as devices in teaching the fundamental subjects. Then also, the pupils participation in these activities including their planning and management should receive paramount consideration. There are several standard books that discuss the **action approach** with very good examples of group activities. The Bureau of Public Schools has issued to the field attractive booklets among which are "**Field Trips**" and "**Juan de la Cruz Goes to the Polls**" which though intended for purposes of instruction more than for cooperation education will serve as good examples.

Simultaneously with the determination of the media of **action approach** is the canvas or survey of local cooperation groups. The family is one of these groups which should not be taken for granted. Then there are local associations, clubs or societies of various kinds which need to be catalogued and identified as to their composition and service functions. The cooperation coordinators or school administrators are

to establish relations with these groups for the purpose of using them not only as instruments of practical cooperation education, but as units of community school organization. I wish to advert here that cooperation education, according to this scheme, is to be promoted through two media; the school and the community as represented by its service groups. More will be said about this.

Let us now go to the third phase of the preparatory phase of cooperation education — its organization and administration. There are to be two interesting units in this; the school on one hand and the community or any particular service group on the other. Needless to say the cooperation leaders or school administrator should build the bridge of relationship with the community unit.

There is to be a school cooperation committee of teachers, as representatives from each grade, with the principal as the coordinator. This committee will plan the total cooperation program — its projects, materials, facilities and relations. If the committee has more than ten members, this should be reduced to a smaller group by getting only one representative from each grade level, not section. After the relations with the community unit have been sufficiently well established, representatives from the lay group should be chosen to serve in the committee. I do not find it necessary at this stage to suggest the function of the committee beyond planning, preparation of materials, and establishing relations. The coordinator has to see to the implementation of the projects and related matters through all the teachers, community workers, and participating lay groups.

In the administration as well as in the teaching of cooperation education, the starting point of actual implementation is indeed difficult to locate. Assuming that the three preparatory phases as indicated above have been attended to which may take from 1 to 3 months the bothersome question that may be asked is at what point in the class schedule will the teacher teach cooperation education. We are all aware of what we call incidental teaching and formal teaching which has always proved endless debates as regards their respective merits. We are going to dispense with the debate here — and say that both techniques should be used at every opportunity in cooperation education. The teacher who is properly oriented in cooperation education should not only seize every opportune situation but create opportunities in core subjects to teach it formally. For this latter purpose, there should be available resource and teaching units on some typical cooperation endeavors and cooperative societies in the locality. One of these may be the bayani or community work, the local ACCFA, and FACOMA, the rural bank, the local bus transportation,

consumers' and producers' cooperative, credit union, etc. — and teach these directly as the content of the lessons in social studies, language arts, arithmetic, work education, etc. Tie up with these lessons the pupils' information about the participation of their parents in these services, the benefits received, the contribution to the country, wealth and development — how these services make it possible for the children to be in school. Here we teachers should not be imagining or speaking in generalities. It is common observation that teachers have taught children to say they drink milk or eat breakfast, etc. when in truth they don't. In this down to grassroots program of cooperation education, let us teach and talk about the facts of the cooperation activities as the children know them as are benefited by them with techniques or curriculum devices I have no doubt that cooperatives education will find inclusion in the lessons as if it were listed in the class schedule. Then if at appropriate times you bring in resource persons at either the regular convocations or special days and in the classroom, cooperation education will be a reality.

Before we close let us gather the principal threads of this discussion. We began with the objectives of cooperation education so as to orient ourselves with its concept and goals. Keeping clearly in mind the need for having a working blue print to serve as a frame of reference when you build an action program in your respective divisions, we laid out three preparatory phases. These include the preparation of teaching materials, the establishment of approaches and techniques and the creation of an organization or machinery to implement the program.

I wish to conclude by saying that while all schools in the division may conduct some form or version of cooperation education, I wish to recommend that you establish at least one pilot school in each district. Teachers around may be sent to see this school about November, 1957, for purposes of orientation in concept, materials, organization or techniques. If the pilot schools are well established and the visiting teachers are properly guided, the division, in a year's time, will have been well launched in cooperation education. Then we shall have added a new program which will increase the potency of the Philippine community school as a unique experiment in social living.

Let us plant the seed of cooperation education very carefully. When Filipino specialist in cooperatives outside the Bureau of Public Schools see in the community school the instrument that yet bring about a fuller and more satisfying life to the masses particularly in the rural communities, I feel that their trust is not misplaced and we are committed to live up to that trust.