

ticipation of at least two persons in at least four definite ratings of the teacher under consideration. Obviously such a process as this would be costly, but it would probably be less costly, if applied to only a few teachers, than the present system of unnecessarily rating all teachers, by much less sound methods.

Rating of this nature might come to be viewed as a privilege to be enjoyed and applied for, not an imposition to be endured. The teacher on probation has a right to expect it as a basis of decision of her fate; the teacher desiring promotion might request it, as a sort of civil service examination; to many teachers it might have value similar to a thorough physical examination, although its findings would be not as reliable, our present measures being what they are. Is it not reasonable to say that no teacher should ever be rated except for such purposes as these, by the best methods available, and with her full cooperation?

As rating is conducted today, there is no evidence that it serves supervisory ends, but rather that it is a hindrance to effective

supervision. It is essentially an administrative function in any case. Whether the supervisor should participate in it is a debatable question, with arguments for and against. On the whole it is probable that, when for administrative ends some rating has to be made of some teachers, there should be available for the purpose a specially qualified committee of teachers and administrative staff, with the supervisor as a member only when conditions seemed especially to require his participation.

All this is not to say that there are no supervisory values in the outlines which teachers and supervisors develop together for the study and evaluation of *teaching*. Some of these analyses are of great value in improving the work of the classroom. But these are a different matter, although it is they which some persons have in mind when they claim that rating teachers improves their efficiency. Means and methods of evaluating one's own work, and help in doing it, are not to be confused with teacher-rating, and their discussion is outside the province of this article.

Understanding and cooperation replace inspection

THE "SUPERVISORY VISIT"

ELSIE COLEMAN

THERE WAS A DAY when visiting classrooms, taking notes, and conferring with individual teachers was the sum total

There are no benefits derived from awed, embarrassed silences, from painful minutes that stretch interminably, or from youngsters' frightened, stilted responses. Yet some "supervisory visits" may be summed up in just that way. The answer is not to throw out the "visit" entirely, but rather to employ it in a more significant way and to place it in its proper light as merely one segment of the whole supervisory plan. In this article, Elsie Coleman, who is elementary supervisor of Chesterfield County (Virginia) schools, makes some sound suggestions for effective use of the "visit."

of supervision. Fortunately, for the supervisor in a modern school system that day is long since past. The old type of "supervisory visit" has broadened to include a wide program of in-service education and cooperative planning. This does not mean that supervisors never visit classrooms. Quite the contrary. They do visit, and often. But seen as a part of a larger plan, the visits take on a new aspect.

The supervisor today recognizes the complexity of a visit to the teacher, and utilizes every possibility to make it a mutually satisfying and worthwhile ex-

perience. Such a concept of the "supervisory visit" involves understanding the individual teacher and building readiness for supervision, as well as sharing experiences with teacher and children.

Understanding the Teacher

The first fundamental in understanding the teacher is making a continuous study of every affective factor, keeping in mind the principle that the teacher is a person, different from every other person, living in an environment which affects and in turn is affected by that person.

Even before the supervisor and the teacher meet, the supervisor may study available records and discover some interests and aptitudes, as well as the type of training the teacher has had. This visit *in absentia* may well form the basis of the first planning with the teacher, planning that may even be initiated through correspondence before schools open.

When teacher and supervisor meet, such understanding aids in the establishment of that friendly situation without which full cooperation and maximum growth are impossible. It helps to be able to say to a new teacher, "I understand that you attended X— College. Did you know Prof. Z—?"

Experienced teachers are also affected by summer school or workshops and a genuine educational experience may make such a change in attitude that unbelievable growth is possible under guidance and encouragement. The wise supervisor is alert to such experiences and their results, and utilizes them in guiding the work of the teacher.

Community life and attitudes are prime factors in understanding the teacher. Visiting the home of a child is considered valuable in understanding him. Would visiting the home or boarding place of a teacher sometimes help the supervisor to

understand also? Attending the local church may be as helpful in understanding as a conference, helpful even if the teacher is not present, helpful if the teacher's name is not even mentioned. Friendly talks with people in the community may give insight into community attitudes that explain many problems of the school. Such insight may be invaluable in planning with the teacher for the utilization of community resources and for closer cooperation between the home and the school. We might paraphrase Walt Whitman:

"There was a teacher went forth
every day
And what she saw that she became."

As we study these factors we are visiting the teacher in many experiences of her life.

Building Readiness for Supervision

Since understanding is basic to any cooperative effort, the beginning of readiness is made as the supervisor studies the teacher and her environment. Specific experiences also build the understanding and confidence that make a teacher ready for guidance. As the teacher and supervisor visit together in many ways, sometimes sharing professional materials, sometimes in individual or group conferences on problems of the individual or the group, or in consideration of state or local courses of study, there comes an understanding of philosophy of education and of life that makes for readiness.

Other shared experiences initiated by either teacher or supervisor are satisfying. A visit to another teacher at work, attending a concert, visiting an art exhibit, even shopping in the same department store, develop a sense of fellowship that helps to further a human relationship.

A certain university professor in a group conference with supervisors made a challenging point. He said that supervisors in

their genuine desire to give to the teacher and to help sometimes forgot that the teacher, too, has a fundamental need to give and to help. Perhaps finding some good thing which the teacher may share with others—the supervisor, another teacher, a community group—may be a most effective way of building readiness for further guidance from the supervisor.

Sharing Experiences With the Teacher

Why does the supervisor visit and share experiences with the teacher in the classroom? The visit itself may be purposed by the principal, the teacher, a child, a member of the community as well as by the supervisor.

Some of the many purposes may be: planning with teacher and children for a long-time program of work; participating in activities in which the supervisor may have special abilities; evaluating growth in specific abilities; acting as "audience"; or sharing the joy of success in some fields of endeavor. If misunderstandings regarding the school program have arisen, the supervisor may visit to protect the teacher through clarification of the situations involved or through suggestions for improved practices.

If the supervisor is studying the teacher and if there is readiness on the part of the teacher for guidance, visits seem to be mutually purposed. As one enters the home of a beloved friend, for the joy of the companionship—sure of a welcome, sharing both happy and unhappy experiences, helping and being helped—so the supervisor visits teacher and children and shares experiences with them.

The supervisor's techniques of visitation then are based upon understanding the teacher, building readiness for guidance, and the mutual purposes of the visit.

The best visit to the teacher is sometimes the visit to the principal. Principal-

supervisor understanding and cooperation are essential to the growth and security of the teacher and so to the children. Recognizing the principal as head of the school and responsible for its program, the supervisor utilizes these visits to discover specific and general programs, points of view, possibilities, and needs within the school. It is then possible to relate the individual teacher's program to the general plan with a maximum of satisfaction to all concerned.

In the classroom, which may be playground, cafeteria, shop—any place in which teacher and boys and girls are working together—the supervisor is no longer "a piece of furniture" or an outsider with notebook and pencil, waiting to record something that goes wrong, but is instead an integral part of the situation.

Techniques differ according to the individual supervisor and teacher, and the supervisor utilizes those that seem to fit best into the situation. If a panel discussion is being held, there may be an opportunity to ask a pertinent question which will broaden the point of view; if speech skills are being improved there may be possibilities of contributions of techniques and materials; if a mural is being planned, there may be need for evaluation of previous efforts in order to plan for improved concepts and skills. There also may be need only for an appreciative audience for some lovely poem or a new song which the group wishes to share with its friend—the supervisor. Sometimes the group is busy with independent work and the teacher and supervisor have a moment for conference on materials or on general procedures.

✓Whenever possible, such a visit should be followed by a conference in which teacher and supervisor may analyze and evaluate plans and procedures, select materials, clear up uncertainties, and provide for future growth. Here problems of in-

dividual children are discussed, individual records studied, and programs selected to meet individual possibilities and needs.

Sometimes the teacher, too, needs to talk over personal and professional problems and receive the release that comes from burdens shared. In such a conference the supervisor helps and is helped in building human relationships, as well as in the coordination of educational theory and practice.

The amount of participation by the supervisor is a consideration that requires joint planning and evaluation. There must be no inclination on the part of the teacher to step out of the picture and leave full responsibility to the supervisor nor of the supervisor to take the group away from the teacher, challenging as it is to work directly with a group of boys and girls. The supervisor merely supplements in whatever ways may seem best and never supersedes the teacher. Participation is justified only insofar as it results in a challenge to thought in improved techniques of instruction and in improved human relationships between teacher and children, teacher and supervisor, and children and supervisor.

Many teachers seem to be afraid of paper and pencil in the hands of the supervisor, probably a carry-over from the days of student teaching and grades on teaching. This fear may sometimes be overcome by a discussion of the purposes of such note-taking and by sharing the notes with the teacher at the end of the visit. If the teacher finds, over a period of time, that the notes are always shared with her, that they are always positive, dealing with procedures, materials, studies of the individual child, or of group behavior, and the like, this fear disappears.

The length and frequency of visits, too, should be planned together, as individuals differ in their attitudes in this area. The teacher should understand the supervisor's time limitations, and the supervisor should understand the teacher's attitudes, if there is to be mutual satisfaction.

So the supervisor visits the teacher in many ways, within and without the school, understanding needs and possibilities, building human relationships, using procedures that are cooperatively planned and evaluated, becoming counselor, guide, friend, and the "supervisory visit" is increasingly welcome and fruitful.

Looking Toward 1946

The status and function of supervision will be the subject of the yearbook of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development in 1946. Already at work on the book are the co-chairmen—Lelia Ann Taggart of the Santa Barbara County department of education, Santa Barbara, Calif., and Fred T. Wilhelms, assistant director of the Consumer Education Study of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, Washington, D. C. A tentative plan for the yearbook calls for presenting this survey of supervision under the following headings:

- I *The American Dream: The Culture for Which We Strive*
- II *The School: An Instrument Used by a Democratic People to Achieve the American Dream*
- III *The Role of Leadership in Developing the Kind of Education Needed by a Democratic People to Achieve the American Dream*
- IV *What Is the Present Status of Supervisory Service?*
- V *Proposals for a Supervisory Program of the Immediate Future Which Would Take Off From Where We Are and Move in the Direction of the Principles*

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