

ALL IN THE LINE OF DUTY

E. LOUISE NOYES

SUPERVISION, LIAISON, guidance—who can say where one begins and the other ends? In the course of any day a department head does much of all three, with supervision getting the largest amount of time. His work as supervisor brings him in touch with four groups: students, teachers, administrators, and community members.

From students come such questions as, "Shall I take newswriting or speech as my elective next year? What will I get in each of them?" "Why do we have to take English at all?" "Why don't they teach us more grammar? My mother thinks I ought to know how to diagram!"

And there is the increasingly large number of letters from boys in the South Pacific, Italy, or France, all asking what they can do to make up the English needed for graduation, and all answered in detail after joint decision by the principal and the department head. (Nothing is said here about the checking that must be done when the results come back or of the evaluation of the letters from C.O.'s!) To the department head come also the requests for methods of making up work lost by transfer from other systems or by the student who somehow

managed to get into his junior year with some earlier English uncompleted.

Curriculum Planning as Supervision

Working together on curriculum problems is, of course, the biggest part of the work done by department head and teachers. Scheduled twice-a-week conferences on the joint problems encountered in the tenth-grade work, which centers in personal adjustments and adjustments to a world point of view, helped tremendously to give a feeling of security and of desire to go further into new fields. Many hours are spent with committees meeting regularly to plan eleventh-year work so that the result would be not "just another course in American literature," but a genuine adventure in experiencing our cultural heritage and in widening mental horizons. Ferreting out with the librarian all books which could possibly be of value for the special slow-reading groups and for the continuation boys and girls who must get all their school experience in a few hours each week, and then sharing those finds with the teachers of these groups is a continuous task. Constant revision of bibliographies for all levels, all done through student and teacher committees, adds to the list of jobs.

Informal help is asked by teachers—the teacher of social studies working in the core classes and needing a "good teacher book on the English language" or the teacher of Bob, "who ought to be in the special classes, but is determined to do the regular work even if it kills him!" or the perplexed teacher who says, "What can I do with Mary, who is interested in nothing?"

A department head a supervisor?—Yes, in a hundred different ways! It is the department head who saves eleventh-grade English from being "just another literature course," who settles the troubles between Dan and his English teacher, and who acquaints a PTA study group with the school's new program for speech improvement. In this article E. Louise Noyes describes a few of her supervisory responsibilities as head of the department of English in Santa Barbara (Calif.) High School.

Special Plans for Special Needs

With the administration—in this case represented by the principal—the head must take up questions of long-term policies and of special plans to meet special needs. What can we do to help ensure greater continuity in students' English experiences from seventh through twelfth grades? How can we improve reading ability so that each student goes out better equipped as a citizen? The director of testing is brought in on this discussion because of the unusually large number of people in next year's senior class who are too much below their grade level in reading, and also because of the fifty "special promotion" people who are part of next year's incoming sophomore group.

"Dan isn't doing well in his English, and he always has before this year. I'm sure it is the teacher's fault. Dan just cannot get along with Mr. Blank." Somehow the department head must see not only the mother, but also Dan and Mr. Blank, then try to see the whole picture, and help work out a solution fair to everyone concerned. If the question gets too complicated, it means a trip to the counselor as well.

In the evening there is a meeting of the East-West Association, the English-

Speaking Union or other such groups to see how the English work can be tied in with efforts toward world understanding. British students want to correspond with American ones. Books-Across-the-Sea is helping build up lists of such Pen Pals. Will the English head help? Yes, of course, for what lover of the humanities and of humanity can refuse such a plea? PTA study groups want to know what the school is doing for their children in speech, or in encouraging reading, or any of a dozen other things. These matters, too, fall to the lot of the English head.

No mention has been made of the routine requests for "bibliography forms" or "soldier inventory" sheets, or "What do you know about so-and-so's work before he came to us?" for these are all mere clerical work—or are they?

No mention has been made either of the quite considerable amount of work involved in helping new teachers get oriented, nor even of the occasional summer workshop in which one is "on the job."

Of all such is the work of at least one head of a department. Mere clerk? No! Guidance worker? liaison officer? supervisor? Let those who read supply the answer.

◀ *A consultant as supervisor*

TROUBLE-SHOOTER AND EYE-OPENER

G. FRANKLIN STOVER

THEY CALL ME a consultant, a resource person available at the request of the teacher, supervisor, or administrator and clearly not in a position to impose procedures, influence salary schedules, or make assignments. The role of the consultant is, therefore, one in which title or position does not enter to prevent cooperative effort as equals. For this I am thankful.

In private conference teachers report their difficulties, reveal their fears, and ask for help in matters which they might conceal from "superiors" in their own school systems. For example, teachers very frequently mention lack of time, of equipment, and finances, as factors which make certain curriculum adjustments difficult.

The following problems were raised in a school to which the writer was invited:

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