

## Learning to Be a Supervisor

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MARY BROWN is a bright young woman of 25. She received her public school and college education in Georgia and began teaching after two years of college. Later she was awarded a scholarship and returned to college to complete her bachelor's degree. After graduation, Mary continued to teach, spending the summer months going to school and traveling in this country and abroad.

Mary Brown is one of a number of promising young teachers in Georgia who are being especially trained to help in a statewide program of community building.

For nearly a decade Georgia has attempted to improve the quality of living in its rural communities through special attention to the education of instructional supervisors. The educational program of a state is particularly complex and intricate because of the numerous social and economic differences within the area. There is a pronounced need for a unifying and coordinating force between the school and other social institutions of a community and between the local unit and larger divisions.

### *A Training Program Begins*

Initial efforts toward establishing a state supervisory program were made at Georgia Teachers College in Statesboro. Approximately sixty teachers from the public schools of the state were selected by that institution over a period of several years and given one year of study terminating in the bachelor's degree. Emphasis was placed on helping Georgia's rural children live more abundantly

through improved health conditions, higher standards of living, greater appreciation and better use of natural resources, and mastery of the tools of learning. The rural counties in the immediate vicinity of the college were used as demonstration centers and laboratories for the student supervisors.<sup>1</sup> Later the University of Georgia extended an invitation to this group of supervisors for a year of graduate study.

Increasing interest in supervisor training led the State Department of Education to appoint a committee of educators at the University of Georgia to plan and direct a state supervisory program. Out of the work of this committee has come the opportunity for teachers like Mary Brown to spend a year in preparing themselves to become supervisors.

### *Mary Brown Helps Plan*

Along with other teachers selected for training as student supervisors, Mary Brown arrives at the University of Georgia campus one week prior to the

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<sup>1</sup> Franseth, Jane: "Educating Helping Teachers," *Peabody Journal of Education*, XV, May 1938, pp. 351-6.

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*Convinced that good supervision is too important to be left to chance, Georgia educators have inaugurated a comprehensive program of supervisory education which gives teachers in service an opportunity to spend a year in study and training, learning to become supervisors. The program is carried on through the cooperative efforts of the University and state teachers colleges, working with the State Department of Education and other governmental and public groups. Details of the plan in operation are described by Rachel S. Sutton of the University of Georgia.*

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opening of the fall quarter. She and the others begin their work by appraising personal abilities, using a criterion of supervisor competencies set up by themselves and the committee. In this appraisal they employ tests of personality, mental alertness, achievements, attitudes, interests, and projection, and personal conferences with members of the committee and other students.

Mary finds the planning of the year's program of study to take care of individual and group needs a significant experience in democratic living. Members of the college faculties from all subject fields—social science, natural science, language and literature, fine and industrial arts, agriculture, business administration, and education—are on hand for seminars and personal conferences. Traditional courses are disregarded except as they meet a particular need.

State departments, such as health, education, wild life, libraries, and the like, are eager to help Mary and her co-workers by supplying information about the services of each department to rural communities. The student supervisors visit the headquarters of these agencies during the year and become well acquainted with their work through use of their services in the field.

#### *Field Work Gives Training Wide Scope*

The student supervisors spend not less than two months out of the twelve at teacher-education institutions other than the University. Staff members from these colleges, the state departments, together with the instructional supervisors on the job visit Mary's group on the University

campus, at work in the field, and accompany the students on educational trips in and out of the state.

The field and campus experiences are so closely interwoven it is difficult to say where one begins and the other ends. Throughout the twelve months of training Mary goes on call to nearby schools to work with teachers individually and in groups. She participates in forums and clinics on community problems. At some time during the twelve months, she works closely with one of the experienced supervisors in the field until such time as she assumes full responsibility as an instructional supervisor. The period of observation and participation varies according to individual growth needs.

Through the supervisory training program, teacher education in Georgia has become a continuous process, a cooperative project shared by the state department, colleges and universities, and the local community. Through actual participation in the services of the teacher-training institution, the student supervisor learns the advantage of maintaining close contacts with these schools.

Study and direct contact with the functioning of social institutions removes the education of supervisors from the narrowly practical to broader human values and far-reaching social situations. Actual experience in the analysis of a community's needs through exploration and fact-gathering, critical planning for its improvement, and the translation of plans into action by direct community concern reveal to the student supervisor the interrelatedness of social problems and the real need for coordinated activity.

IN THIS SCHOOL of dealing with men I have often noticed this flaw, that instead of gaining knowledge of others we strive only to give knowledge of ourselves, and take more pains to peddle our wares than to get new ones.—From *Essays*, "Of the Education of Children," Michel de Montaigne, 1580 (translation by Donald M. Frame).

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