

sion periods were favored for clarifying problems and receiving suggestions for their solution. Also, more time was desired for personal conferences with individual faculty members. The teachers felt they had profited from demonstrations designed to illustrate the problems met in the classrooms.

It was extremely gratifying to learn from those in attendance that their principals were enthusiastic about the Clinic. Many of the supervisors made valuable suggestions to these beginning teachers as to problems and topics to be discussed at the Clinic. Even the crucial problem of finding substitutes kept only a few of the teachers away. Some were unable to attend because of the distance from the college and lack of transportation.

The follow-up study made late in the spring on the more permanent outcomes of the Clinic indicated that most of the problems presented had been solved or that the causes of the difficulties had been discovered and therefore could be prevented another year. Because of the small percentage of

questionnaires returned and the lack of controls, one cannot attribute, with any degree of assurance, this achievement to the help given at the Clinic.

Planning for the Future

On the basis of the statements made at the close of the Clinic and the letters received afterwards, it was felt that the project was sufficiently worthwhile to continue another year. Not only all the beginning teachers in this area will be invited but also all the principals and elementary-school supervisors. The teachers and administrators will meet together for the opening and closing sessions and for luncheon. It is hoped that by bringing these two groups together a more wholesome understanding will emerge.

It seems quite within the realm of possibility that similar conferences may eventually be held in all the schools at which time experts in the field of elementary education may be invited to discuss the crucial problems. Through this cooperative enterprise both the schools and the colleges should benefit.

Make Them Feel at Home

WALTER TROTT AND ADELENE E. HOWLAND

Orientation of the beginning college student to his new environment is, at present, a well-established practice in most institutions. A similar orientation of the beginning teacher in his new working situation is, too frequently, completely overlooked by school systems. Des Moines, Iowa has experimented in past years with such a procedure. Walter Trott, director of elementary education, and Adelene E. Howland, assistant director of elementary education, tell how one phase of this type of program is planned and carried through.

A SERIES of group meetings planned to continue over a three-year period is only one part of the Des Moines induction program for beginning elementary

teachers. The total induction program provides for guidance in various phases of social, personal, and professional adjustment. The group meetings are a sig-

nificant phase of that part of the program which deals *particularly* with professional adjustment.

During their first three years of service all elementary teachers are members of small working groups. Basis of group organization is length of service in Des Moines. Each group is fairly stable in that teachers who are first-year teachers one year meet as second- and third-year groups during succeeding years. Only occasionally do groups meet together. It seems advisable to keep the groups separate because it has become apparent that different problems tend to become group concerns at various points along the way. In addition, the limited size of each group aids in making each person feel a vital part of the group.

Basic to the total induction program and to the activities of working groups are four underlying principles.

1. Induction begins with the first contact which the new teacher has with a school system and extends through an indefinite period. It is not limited to the first month or two of service, although this is often the most crucial time.
2. The fundamental factor in the induction of a new teacher into a school system is the element of personal friendship which will lead the teacher to feel that he is wanted and needed in the new situation. This means that the members of the group longer in service must recognize the unique contribution which each new teacher can make, not only to the school system, but to other individuals of the staff.
3. A sound induction program must continuously provide opportunities for the new teacher to participate actively in the life of school and community.
4. The induction of a new teacher is the professional responsibility of all members of the teaching group, although of necessity the responsibility for cer-

tain aspects of the process must be assumed by certain individuals.

First-Year Teachers Want Specifics

September—Orientation and Planning for Future Meetings. Since this was the first meeting, emphasis was upon getting acquainted, developing plans for future meetings, and considering the general philosophy of the Des Moines schools. Growing out of the first and second points a list was made of some of the topics which the group thought important. Other topics of importance to first-year teachers were added by the director and the assistant director and the entire list was sent to all first-year teachers to be rated in order of importance. The results of this informal study were given serious consideration in making definite plans for subsequent meetings.

Judging from the expressed reaction of some of the first-year teachers this first meeting can be classified as "collective handholding." For the people involved some of the problems of the first month disappear when they find that others are concerned about the same things. Considerable assurance is gained from just being together as a group when all are in the "same boat."

October—Schedules and Time Allotments. This item was mentioned and checked more frequently than any other by beginning teachers. The group met as a whole for some background information and preliminary discussion and then divided into two groups based upon specific grade levels. The point established was that a schedule is an example of good planning and is therefore necessary, and at the same time should be flexible enough to take advantage of every worthwhile educational opportunity. However, here again the

greatest value growing out of this meeting was not any definite statement regarding schedules or time allotments but rather the feeling of belonging to a group in which common problems could be discussed without fear of misunderstanding.

November—Philosophy and Practices Which Affect Promotion and Retention. The following questions were prepared before the meeting and were used as the basis for discussion:

1. What part does a teacher's educational philosophy play in determining whether to pass or retain a child?
2. What factors as to a child's growth and development should a teacher keep in mind before making a decision concerning the promotion or retention of that child?
3. What is the place of test results in determining promotion or retention for a child?
4. What part should a parent have in deciding whether his child should be passed or retained?
5. Is it ever defensible to make a decision regarding promotion or retention on any basis other than the welfare of the individual child?

Emphasis in the discussion was upon the complexity of the process and the many factors to be considered in making a decision rather than any specific policy. As such, it was clearly brought out that such decisions cannot wait until the last week in the semester, but that careful groundwork must be built up with the parents just as soon as there is any reason to believe that a repetition would be desirable.

January—Des Moines School Organizations. At this meeting representatives from each of three large organizations for Des Moines teachers appeared before the group. Since these organiza-

tions are made up of teacher representatives and affect policies and procedures in the Des Moines schools, it is important that new teachers know of them and come to learn their responsibility toward them. The representatives described the work of each of their groups and helped teachers see the part which they might play in improving and perpetuating these groups.

February, March, April, and May—To each of these meetings a supervisor of a special department was invited to describe his particular department and to discuss with the teachers the help which could be given and the available resources. These meetings help teachers to get acquainted with the people with whom they work closely so that they become persons rather than names. Meeting with staff members in small groups has been one of the advantages of the teacher meetings.

Interests Broaden During the Second Year

September—An evaluation of Last Year's Meetings and Planning for the Current Year. To a large extent this meeting was an informal get-together of people glad to see each other after a year of working together. The evaluations were equally informal, consisting largely of a few testimonials and a great deal of nodding of heads. Members of the group were given the opportunity to indicate some problems they wished to discuss during the coming year. Responses were tabulated, organized, and mimeographed, and teachers were asked to rank them in the order of importance. On the basis of these results, the program for the year was organized.

October—An Examination of the

Social Studies Program in Terms of Present-Day Needs. In their first meeting, the second-year teachers expressed real concern about the effect of the war on elementary-school pupils and whether or not the present social studies program was flexible enough to include the many new demands being made upon the school. It is interesting to note here the difference in the nature of the problems suggested by first- and second-year teachers. Those suggested by the first-year teachers are likely to be fairly specific and concerned largely with items of information which they think important to know right away. In contrast to this, the problems submitted by the second-year teachers are much more general in nature and concerned with some of the more fundamental issues in education. Apparently by the end of the first year they feel reasonably secure in the specifics of the situation and are by then attempting to relate these to underlying principles. With malice aforethought, no study sheet was prepared to guide the discussion of the second meeting of second-year teachers. As a result, the discussion was not "in the groove," leading to certain very definite conclusions and recommendations, but rather of an exploratory nature so that the final result was a definition of a problem rather than the solution. Certain tentative conclusions *did* come from the discussion, the most important being that our present social studies setup can be adapted, through consultation with the principal and others concerned, to include almost any problem related to youth.

November—Special Activities. At this meeting, which had been announced ahead of time and about which teachers

had been asked to think, the topic of worthwhile activities for unsupervised groups of children was discussed. No attempt was made to establish certain definite procedures or types of material which were better or worse than others, but suggestions of educational activities and some plans for the selection and use of materials resulted.

January—Oral and Written Language. At this meeting the teachers discussed the language program in the Des Moines schools and the activities in which children might engage which would further their language development. Inasmuch as language is an integral part of the total program, emphasis was placed on the experiences which children receive in this area if teachers are alert to possibilities.

February, March, April, and May.—The teachers had again expressed a desire to meet more of the supervisors and these meetings, like those of the first year, were attended by supervisors of various departments who had not met with the teachers during their first year.

Third-Year Activities Reflect Many Needs

By the time a teacher is beginning her third year in Des Moines, the help which she can gain from meetings is very different from that which newer teachers receive. The meetings for third-year teachers differ widely from year to year. The teachers assume more responsibility for planning and carrying forward the meetings and frequently spend the assigned meeting time working on group problems which will be helpful to them and in some instances helpful to others. There is more continuity to meetings of third-year teachers. There is less regularity of meetings because the

program itself determines the frequency with which they are held. Third-year teachers usually meet one afternoon a month after the close of school.

Due to the variety of interests it seems advisable to list the activities in which various groups of third-year teachers engaged, rather than outline the program for one year. For instance, one group evolved a form that could be used when teachers write to parents which would provide a duplicate and would also make it easy for parents to respond. Another spent considerable time with staff members from the Department of Pupil Adjustment, discussing the children who vary somewhat from the normal, and the part which the classroom teacher can play in helping children adjust to individual problems. Still a third group spent a good share of their meeting time, discussing educational problems by means of assigned topics and panel discussions which the teachers themselves organized and carried forward. Organizing all the materials which they felt should be available to new teachers was a task for a fourth group. In some instances this meant merely cross-referencing available material. It also included making plans for the presentation of materials to teachers at different times. Often the last meeting of the third-year teachers is a picnic meeting with a program planned by the teachers.

Certain Conclusions Result

Any induction program of this type must be flexible enough to allow for changes to meet unanticipated needs. However, there are certain constants which can be planned for from year to year. These involve general problems which are common to all grade levels.

The proper balance between the constants and variables will make for a program which has continuity but which can also be adapted to include new problems as they arise.

One must strike while the iron is hot. If certain problems are not considered during the first year of probation or even during the early months of the first year, the psychological time is past for doing so. This state of readiness is especially important in certain essential matters concerning the resources available to new teachers.

The opportunity for a small group to meet with supervisors is appreciated and considered important by beginning teachers. The overviews presented during the year help greatly to clarify the thinking of teachers in seeing their contribution in light of the total program and knowing more exactly what is expected in the various special fields.

The various groups should have a share in planning the program for the year and the amount of responsibility should increase with service. After all, no one is as much aware of the problems bothering him as the teacher himself, and to overlook the importance of his contribution would be a serious mistake. On the other hand, it would be just as serious a mistake to assume that only the topics suggested by teachers should be included in the year's program. In many cases the limited experience of teachers constitutes a factor which would cause certain problems of fundamental importance to be overlooked.

All attempts to make the induction period a successful, profitable experience for new teachers are well worth any amount of time and energy.

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