People with leadership responsibility in all walks of life are vitally interested today in materials that give suggestions for effective group interaction in the solving of problems. In this brief article Leo J. Brueckner, professor of elementary education at the University of Minnesota, gives a concise analysis of the factors involved in democratic cooperation, and suggests sources for further guides in this area.

INDIVIDUALS who work together for a common end are said to cooperate. There are, however, many different kinds of cooperation. A low level exists when a number of individuals rush to the assistance of someone in danger. When people, because of fear, carry out the directions of a dictator, there is a different kind of cooperation. And when a group of people voluntarily work together to consider and to devise methods of dealing with some problem of common concern, the highest level of cooperation that has been devised exists—namely, democratic cooperation.

It is significant that in recent years a great deal of attention has been given to the study and development of methods of democratic cooperation in dealing with problems in the fields of educational administration and supervision. A survey of available literature dealing with these endeavors shows that the following steps constitute the elements of democratic cooperation:

I. Sensing and defining of a problem.
   A. Any individual can bring conditions that appear to present a significant problem to the attention of a group or its leaders.
   B. Steps should be taken by those concerned to define and clarify the problem and to make its significance evident. Continuing self-surveys are essential.

II. Considering, by the entire group, of methods that may be used to attack the problem, leading to the formulation of a plan of attack.
   A. All members of the group, each one functioning as a potential leader, should be free to make suggestions as to possible procedures and should feel obligated to participate actively in the planning.
   B. When factors outside the school’s control seem to be contributory to the condition, the social or governmental agencies concerned with this phase of the situation should be invited to participate in the discussion and planning of the improvement program.
   C. The group can consider alternative proposals formulated by smaller committees delegated to devise plans of attack after a preliminary group discussion.
   D. The group should then adopt a tentative program that seems to be most practical and feasible.

III. Carrying out the plan adopted by the group.
   A. The group should delegate to some individual or a number of individuals the responsibilities of
leadership in directing and carrying out the wishes of the group.

B. The leaders should plan the carrying out of the details of the program in such a way that all who are competent through training or experience or who have a special interest in the problem can make contributions. The plan should provide activities that will contribute to the growth of all participants. It is especially desirable that at this point the possible contributions of social agencies outside the school to the solution of the problem be given careful consideration.

C. Each individual should then adjust his activities so as to make whatever contribution he can to the carrying out of the purpose of the group, either voluntarily or on assignment.

D. Provision should be made for means whereby changes in details of the plan can be made as the occasion may demand.

IV. Evaluating the program by the whole group.

A. After the program has progressed, the whole group should again meet to consider the results of the plan that was adopted, as reported by those to whom was assigned the responsibility of carrying it out.

B. After a period of reflection, generalizations may be made and conclusions drawn.

C. The group can then consider and approve any changes in the plan deemed necessary or decide on any further steps that should be taken in the light of conditions that are revealed.

The selected bibliography given here consists of books in which these techniques of democratic cooperation are described in detail. In each group books are starred which contain extensive references to original sources and magazine articles which should be consulted by those interested. Lack of space makes it impossible to list these.

I. Administration


II. Supervision

Alexander, W. M. State Leadership in Improving Instruction. Teachers College Contributions to Education. No. 820. New York: Bureau of Publica-
tions. Teachers College, Columbia University.


### III. Curriculum


### IV. Instruction and Teacher Education


V. School and Community


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