

place, *there is an evidence of mutual respect between supervisor and teacher.* Respect, on the one hand, suggests confidence and this, on the other, implies professional integrity without which the work of supervisors and teachers becomes as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." Projects undertaken by the teacher were usually begun after a personal conference with the supervisor who suggested rather than directed the procedure. But there is no evidence anywhere of the old, traditional concept of supervision where the supervisor not only initiated projects but hovered over the teachers with advice until they were consummated. The supervisor rather *gives evidence here of faith in the ability of a teacher to carry through.* The teacher is treated

with the consideration and appreciation which is the due of a trained professional worker serious about the improvement of her work. And finally, *the focal point of curriculum improvement is placed in children.* Practice rarely goes awry in curriculum improvement when teachers are sincerely interested in the welfare of individual children. This means, of course, that both teachers and supervisors will make an effort to know the children in relation to their interests and needs. And it means they will attempt to understand child behavior which teachers and supervisors know never happens but is always caused. When such an intelligent approach is made to curriculum construction, success will surely crown the efforts of both supervisor and teacher.

## We Look at Ourselves

What happens when a supervisor—or a principal—or a curriculum director sits down with himself and carefully examines the way in which he has worked with teachers for a period of time. How does he feel about his successes and failures? How does he evaluate his achievement in terms of working with teachers? We asked some of these people to engage in such a self-evaluation—with particular emphasis on relationships with beginning teachers. Their self-analyses point out some aspects of the supervisory relationship which are basic in any program of cooperative planning.

### Me Talking To Me

Miss X, a curriculum director, takes a look at herself and asks herself what she did to help new teachers move ahead: the one with imagination and vision, the one who needed new materials, and those with varieties of personal problems. She invites us to sit in on this self-examination session.

"Hmmm. Do those ASCD people realize what this assignment means?"

"It means you are forced to evaluate what you do."

"Why this job is making me face unpleasant facts."

"How have I failed beginning teachers?"

"You don't even know.

"Well, think about it.

"It's much easier to recognize when other people fail.

"How did *you* fail?

"Well, you can think about how you succeeded.

"Do your dirty work first.

"How did *you* fail?

"What about that good, new teacher over at Birch School? The one whose life was made miserable in and out of school by subtly cruel, pseudo-helpful remarks made 'sweetly' by the teachers who'd 'been there for years and had found out that these new ideas just wouldn't work.' The ones who from fear—or jealousy—or insecurity, killed by glances, by well-timed sighs, and by autocratic control of the children, a new teacher's chances to reap satisfaction from her work?

"I did try to help her. I talked to her and to her principal.

"Yes, but you were two months too late. Her confidence had been destroyed. She didn't believe you. You left her too long to the claws of bitter oldsters.

"Well, how else have you failed? Did you get to know the individual needs and interests of last year's new teachers?

"No.

"Why not?

"Because I tried to do too much.

"You criticize teachers for a 'once over lightly' kind of education. Now if you don't take time—make time—to know these new teachers you're failing again!

"Were you sure that all the beginning teachers were at least secure in the routine management of their chil-

dren in lunch rooms, assemblies, which entrance their children were to use, and about keeping their registers?

"That's the principal's job.

"Yes, but you know that one school opened up with only a head teacher 'cause the principal had had an accident.

"Were you there that first week?

"No.

"Where were you?

"In the office.

"Failed again. You shouldn't have been. Besides, you know that some principals need to be helped to help the teachers. Face facts!

"Did you ever fail to publicly and verbally support new teachers for what you knew to be the expression of a good point of view? Did you fail to support them in the face of criticism and opposition?

"Well, I'm not afraid. I think I can be proud of an honest 'no' in answer to this question which could be a most uncomfortable one.

"What about getting materials to new teachers? Did you dodge this one by blaming the budget? the principal? *You* know how to use your imagination to find materials. Did you help them to know how? Did you use your own initiative for them?

"Sometimes.

"Well, you know that *some* teachers were neglected. Maybe you'd better plan a few regular but informal meetings for all new teachers and take care of these problems. Maybe the new teachers themselves would like to organize such a meeting.

"What did you do about the principal who always told new, young teachers 'not to be too good too fast' or it would be resented by older teachers?

"Well, —  
"You're squirming, aren't you? Another failure.

"What about this particular article? Did you do it all by yourself?"

"No, I had to ask the help of a first grade teacher.

"Then, already you've gotten too far away from how a teacher feels, what she needs, and how you *must* help.

"Well, what are you going to do about your failures?"

"Get out of the office and into the classrooms.

"Well, see that you don't forget!"

### Enough Rope

The principal of an elementary school went directly to three of her teachers and asked them to help in this matter of self-evaluation. From their statements she comes to the conclusion that the important thing is to give the particular kind of help each teacher needs at the time when that help is needed. She shares with us what three of her teachers had to say.

"Much initial strain could have been spared me if you had given me more information," says Miss N, who has come in from another system. "I had to ask about many things, such as fire drill exits, health inspection, whether or not to communicate directly with parents, just where to find materials, such as the visual aids equipment, and when and how one might use it. All this could be put in a mimeographed bulletin. I should have liked, too, to have known more about what is expected in the school.

"There should be conferences, frequent and over a fairly long period of time for the teachers new to a building,

including both group and individual conferences. It is hard to know how much responsibility to take in a new situation, hard to feel confidence in what one is doing. When school begins the principal is too busy with too many things. The teacher flounders while she waits for specific help.

"The new teacher needs to know whether she can come to the principal for help on specific discipline or other problem cases. She should know what philosophy governs the school procedure, and whether formal or informal teaching is expected. To start in one's own way and then to find that the school as a whole does it very differently—well! that is a cause for chagrin!"

But Miss L, new to the system also, with two years experience says, "The relationships among staff members here makes it easy to find your way quickly. I liked the freedom to get things in hand by myself. The new teacher has to adjust to a new environment and different conditions. The thing she needs most is the chance to know her children. She shouldn't have to be studying the principal or the supervisor at this time. It is better to make a few mistakes at first than to be confused by what someone else wants done."

### We Shatter a Myth

A supervisor in a city system, herself removed just four years from the classroom, takes a look at the teachers with whom she worked during a summer workshop and finds her faith in teachers renewed.

"There were forty of us—thirty-nine teachers and I, their teacher—working together for two hours a day in a university summer session. We represented

all possible types of experience—"little Miss Craig" with her one year in a three-pupil school, five boys home from the service, seven Negro women from the south, four principals, four 'housewives' returning to teaching on emergency certificates, several young and delightful girls not long out of training school. The rest of us were nice, middle-aged first, fourth, or sixth grade teachers from Florida, Nebraska, Idaho, and points east and west. We fairly well represented the American school teacher, and, insofar as we did, my faith in children, teachers, and 'progressive education' was renewed and strengthened.

"Current educational articles popularly feature our 'starry-eyed young people just out of college' and lament the weary, deep-in-a-rut creatures they become a few years later. In that group this summer we shattered that myth. Many of those young people fresh from their first difficulties in a classroom were the ones somewhat distrustful, lacking in faith, wanting prescriptions and panaceas, and more ready to turn back to 'the way they did things when I was in school.' As we discussed children's interests, learning as behavior change, our responsibility to all children whose lives we touched, the work, the satisfaction, and the challenge of teaching these children, the *starryest* eyes, the most eager expressions, the most enthusiastic comments were those

of the teachers whose years of experience had given them faith in children and a vision of what we should be doing for them."

#### "Because Of" or "In Spite Of" Me

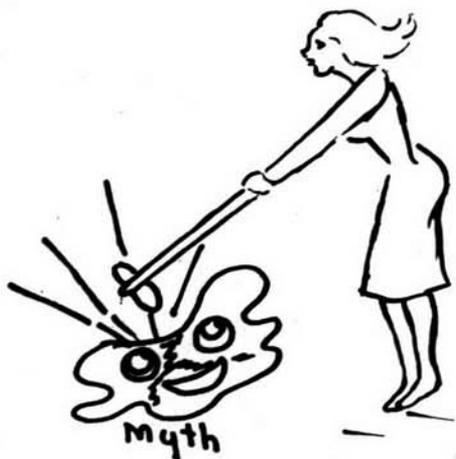
The elementary principal who says she's tried to help the beginning teachers laugh at their mistakes and not take themselves too seriously is one, we are sure, who has a concept of what ingredients go into a working situation in which human relationships flourish. In her statement we find further evidence of a concept of human relationships that includes both children and adults.

"I like to think that the few beginning teachers with whom I have worked are better because of me, although sometimes I'm afraid it is in spite of me.

"In happier moments I can see evidences that might indicate I have helped them establish a place for themselves as members of the staff. I've tried to give the new ones opportunities to work with the experienced teachers most likely to welcome new blood. I've tried, too, to help the new ones appreciate the work of the oldtimers. I have sought

to protect them from the domineering veterans who would mold them to their own narrow little patterns.

"Perhaps I have helped the community accept them and helped them, in turn, appreciate the community with its standards and customs so different from their



own protected lives. Perhaps, too, I've helped them understand their role in a complex city system, which, however kindly, hardly allows individuality in curriculum, methods of reporting, and the like.

"In low moments, however, I am sure that they are better in spite of me. Emergencies that must be met immediately invariably interfere with promises to demonstrate a teaching technique or to observe them at their request for a particular purpose. Or, I have had to prod them for reports or return reports for corrections when there were so many more interesting things for them to do with children.

"My conscience would be easier if we were able to eliminate all responsibilities except those that directly concern the development of children. Then the help that I should be able to give all teachers, but doubly needed by the inexperienced, would be available."

### Take Time for Help

The pace of modern living is, too often, carried over into the rush—rush—rush of our relationships with teachers thinks another elementary school principal. She says:

"I have learned that beginning teachers like to have you devote some time to them; that they want you to greet them with the attitude that you have 'time to listen.' The hurried trip through the hall with 'I'll talk about that later' dampens the enthusiasm of the beginning teacher.

"A friendly conversation where you do *not* lay down rules of what is right and what is wrong but, rather, help the teacher to do the talking and where you watch for cues for further understand-

ing is worthwhile. 'How can I help you?' brings questions small to you in importance but ones that loom large to her. Too often questions about daily routine such as attendance procedures or playground duties are considered lightly when, in reality, they sometimes harass the new teachers into nervous reactions that do not make for basic confidence and ease in going on into instructional planning.

### Enthusiasm Plus Security

"Was this too much help?" asks a secondary school curriculum director as she reviews the steps in the process of helping a teacher grow in ability and confidence. We think not. What would you say to the procedure described in her account?

"One of the teachers of our newly organized core program in junior high school had taught three years in a very traditional set-up. She was eager to try 'something new' because she realized that the way she had been teaching was pretty sterile and that the seventh graders' enthusiasm for learning was practically nil. She was very interested in working with the other seventh grade teachers in planning the core program. She contributed much at our regular weekly meetings, and showed a basic interest in children. However, she had not learned, in her teachers college, anything concerning pupil-teacher planning, group work, or student evaluation. Most of the other teachers had at least a speaking acquaintance with these terms, and a few had experience in working with children in this manner.

"When I visited her classroom the first time there was plenty of enthusiasm, but also a great deal of disorder

and confusion. She was discouraged! In talking with her I discovered that she was not only trying to do the professional reading that we recommended, but was taking three courses to 'make up subject matter deficiencies.' Our state requires certification in both social studies and English for teachers of core curriculum. Such a situation gave her very little time to gather and organize materials and to do the careful planning needed for a core course.

"These are some of the things I did to help her. Maybe you would call it 'spoon feeding,' but by the end of the year she was no longer discouraged and had become one of the most ardent supporters of the program.

- I praised her to the skies any time I saw interesting developments in the classroom.
- I went through materials and got lists of movies and other materials for her particular unit.
- I asked the librarian to give her extra help in selecting student material at various reading levels.
- I made an appointment for her to talk with the school psychologist regarding three students who were definitely problems.
- I helped her work out a plan chart which would give students a share in planning, and yet help her to see that there was "direction" in this kind of teaching.
- Because the students accepted me as a frequent visitor, I often took part in the classroom discussion and helped her see ways of relating the sporadic comments of the students to the over-all purpose of the activity.
- I lent her some of my own books for her courses, and read and criticized some of her papers.
- I went to bat for her when the principal felt that she should not be permitted to teach the "new way" because she was having a little difficulty with "dis-

cipline." His solution had been that she go back to assigning day by day lessons in the grammar and spelling book.

- In our weekly meetings I encouraged her to talk about both her successes and difficulties and, consequently, several of the other teachers shared materials and gave helpful suggestions.
- At a dinner party with several seventh grade parents I told about the splendid dramatizations I had seen in her room and about the fine way in which she was helping the timid children.

"Too much time for one teacher? Perhaps, but she wanted help then, and she now needs very little!"

### Consider the Personal

Many of the problems which teachers face in the classroom or in school situations can be traced directly to personal problems originating in the home or to a teacher's degree of emotional maturity. An elementary principal in a city system on the east coast and an elementary supervisor from a west coast city reveal these aspects as they analyze the cases of teachers they feel they "failed" in some degree.

"I was unable to help Mrs. Brown last year. During our first conference she impressed me as being a calm person, with an understanding of children's needs and a desire to provide rich and varied experiences to meet their needs. Reading through the records of her year's work I can see that she continued to give that impression for the first month. Then things came to a standstill. Her work followed a pattern which offered so little to children that they became bored and problems developed.

"As the children caused trouble she displayed quick and uncontrolled periods of temper which, in turn, caused

more trouble. She was often irritable and very sarcastic with them. During our conferences to talk or plan together she was always on the defensive and very critical of the children's behavior, the courses of study, the necessary clerical work, and the school system in general.

"I met her husband toward the end of the year and found him to be rather anti-social and inclined to treat Mrs. Brown with the same irritable and sarcastic manner she used with her children. He is also the kind of person who is never wrong.

"Mrs. Brown is with me again this year but in a different grade for which she feels she is better qualified. As I think through our experiences of last year, evaluate them, and make plans for helping her, several things stand out in my mind—

- ✦ Home conditions influence the behavior of everyone; the more knowledge we have the better we can help the person.
- ✦ It is necessary for a person to feel secure in order to succeed.
- ✦ It is important to find something to praise about a person's work. Sincere praise, but praise no matter how small the thing is, does help."

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"Miss L. had fine papers: her scholarship was excellent, she had a Master's degree, a fine background in guidance, and splendid recommendations from four of her university instructors. She came to school the first day with youthful ideals, enthusiastic interest, apparent willingness to work, and knowing she wanted to be liked by the children.

"She found the youngsters in her

classroom more difficult to guide than she anticipated and that the children displayed very little or no liking of her.

"Her pride interfered with her seeking help. She tried all the tricks she knew to win the youngsters' cooperation. She became silently frustrated. She found an outlet for her emotions one day. It happened the day the principal noticed this teacher's youngsters engaged in petty quarrelling on the playground. The principal stopped and helped the youngsters organize a game and played with them.

"Miss L. resented it whole-heartedly, claimed that the principal interfered and took the control from her, and generally projected the blame for her poor classroom control from herself to the principal.

"Time elapsed. After many hours of re-hashing the incident, profuse apologies, and the like, the teacher still resented the action of the principal, and continued to do so the whole year. In fact, from that point forward there were many up and downs, as is the case in the life of many new teachers.

"I believe that, somehow, someplace, and in some way, as a third party, I should have been able to have helped her see this in the right perspective. It should have been realized early that her fine background was incongruous to her own emotional maturity. Maybe a direct attack, maybe taking her to see or helping her to learn of the struggles of all new teachers might have helped her regain confidence and face. Perhaps seeking her strengths and giving satisfaction would have been helpful. Or perhaps, an added responsibility such as checking youngsters as they came in the cafeteria, something where she could see

some success and approval and then realize wherein she needed help, would have been the solution.

### Teachers Give the Cues

There are statements, too, in which we find germs of suggestion for "succeeding." A secondary curriculum consultant says that the comments which individuals made following a two-day pre-school session for substitute and beginning teachers were revealing in terms of suggested procedure. Said the teachers:

"Now I know that there are real people in administrative jobs who actually care about what happens to the new teacher."

"I can never feel so insecure again after those discussions of discipline and classroom management with other people who, before the conference, were as scared as I was."

"Those awful forms—I'm so glad I've seen them, heard them explained. Now I have an idea of how to fill them out instead of being completely bewildered by them on my first day in school."

"I'd never have dreamed that I could get so much help from divisions like visual education and the curriculum office in trying to make my work interesting to the pupils. And the way those directors of health and of counseling and research talked made me feel that it is part of my job to know something about the boys and girls as people—not just whether each one did his homework the night before."

### A Suggestion Bears Fruit

An elementary principal gives a suggestion on how to cement teacher-parent relationships.

"One of our beginning teachers came into the office early in the year with a poorly written letter to one of the parents, trying ineffectually to explain a classroom situation which involved one of the children.

"I really don't know what to do to get the parents to understand," she said. "Do you think this letter is all right?"

"Why don't you invite the parents to school and teach for them some morning? We can send the children to another room for the last hour and have a conference with the parents. That would be an excellent way of helping the parents understand a great many of the classroom problems and give them an opportunity to see their children in relation to the others. American Education Week is coming soon. It would be an opportune time for it."

"The young teacher demurred at first, thought it over, came back for suggestions, and together we planned the morning and the conference.

"The parents attended enthusiastically, were greatly pleased with the morning, asked intelligent questions which the young teacher, her special supervisor, and I helped answer, and left satisfied that their children were receiving good instruction and fair treatment. The young teacher faced the rest of the year with courage and confidence in herself.

### Accent on Youth

What happens to relationships with boys and girls when an individual loses sight of the things that are really important in the teaching-learning relationships? Are lesson plans, perfect procedures, or a give-and-take with adolescents most important? Probably good balance of all

is necessary. That's what a new supervisor found out one summer.

"I was teaching at a summer demonstration school when the news came that, beginning with the new fall term, I was to be supervisor of history in that community—Neutral City. I had had a right good time that summer up to that point. We had planned together and taken a number of class excursions during hours, and quite a few informal historical trips after school. Some of the ninth grade boys and I had our regular recess-time cokes and 'reform world' discussions. There was an informality and camaraderie which was more typical of the summer camp than the school.

"The news of my appointment was rather sudden. Of course I was pleased. I was going to show these beginning teachers, who observed me rather regularly at the demonstration school, that they hadn't seen anything yet. There was still three weeks to go and I would 'shoot the works!'

"A whole week-end elapsed between the time the news got out of my appointment and the beginning of classes on Monday. There weren't many of those sixty-five hours that weren't spent on lesson planning. I wrote down what I was going to say every minute of the next week and what the students were expected to respond. Yes, this was to be *letter perfect* now—after all, wasn't I a supervisor! I just couldn't take a chance *now*.

"So it went all that week. There was no time for recess cokes with the ninth grade gang. The informal after-school trips with Bill and Frank and Mary had to go, too. I needed all that time for lesson planning.

"Two weeks had gone by since the

news of my appointment, and nearly every hour had been spent on making formal lesson plans or in carrying them out. The boys stopped asking me to join them at cokes and adopted a beginning teacher who replaced my status with the gang.

"So it would have gone for the final week, and possibly for some time beyond that, had two remarks not been made. As the boys left for the store one day I heard, 'Don't ask him anymore, he's a supervisor now.' That hurt!

"But the blow which knocked me out was Bill's. He was arguing with Frank, and loyal as ever. 'He's still O. K. It's these orders he gets from the fellows higher up. Notice how he looks at those sheets of papers every now and then. I saw them. They even tell him what he's got to say to us and what we have to answer. I tell you all supervisors have to take orders.'

"Fortunately there was one week left. One week-end for soul-searching and relaxation! When Monday came I made a clean breast of it. I asked the recess gang if they would take me back. When my ninth grade class came I told the students I had a job to perform in front of them—a sort of camp punishment. I asked Bill to help me with the ritual. It was a public destruction of about one hundred sheets of 'orders from the fellows higher up'—what the trade called *lesson plans*."

### Using Teacher Problems

A supervisor of language arts for the primary grades takes the suggestions of teachers, and from them develops plans for an in-service program based on needs which the teachers revealed. They said:

- We need more help in working with slow-learning pupils. We need materials which meet the needs of the over-age pupils and that are of high interest level and low vocabulary.
- We need meetings which have a direct bearing on our different curriculum areas, and demonstration lessons in which desirable teaching techniques are developed.
- We need more appreciative comments from principals and supervisors. Frequently both leave our classrooms without any comment—either encouraging or suggestive.
- We need supervisors who will teach classes occasionally to show the development of certain desirable learning situations.
- We need supervisors who are human, understanding, and willing to accept teachers where they are, and provide such further training as may be needed. We want constructive suggestions, *not merely criticism.*
- New teachers and those having new assignments for the first time need special assistance in becoming acquainted with school policies and curriculum development.

## Freeing Creative Group Power

HAROLD G. SHANE

In many schools today an effort is being made to provide more opportunities for teachers to plan together the means of solving instructional problems. Harold G. Shane, superintendent of schools, Winnetka, Illinois, tells how a group of teachers started with a specific problem and moved ahead in the various steps of group planning.

CURRICULUM, community relations, administrative policy, and a thousand similar matters which confront educators! These are matters of common concern in places where experienced teachers meet—graduate classes or educational conferences, for instance—to talk over ways in which school staffs can work together democratically. In such informal conversations there is likely to be as much or more interest in what teachers are actually doing to work together effectively than in theories as to how cooperative work *might* be carried forward.

### HOW GROUP PLANNING MOVES FORWARD

The following paragraphs contain a simple account of how our staff at-

tempted to bring their values, including a strong faith in the importance of doing things together, to bear upon the well-worn problem of curriculum revision. No particularly new, unusual, or unexplored practices marked our procedures, but we did confirm our belief that it is more desirable to free group creative power than to delegate to a select few the planning and action involved in decisions and policies by which a teaching staff is expected to abide.

### Starting With a Specific Problem

A year ago last September the director of the Winnetka Educational Press, which stocks teaching aids written and used locally, reminded us that most of the books and materials used

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