

beyond the four walls of the school and the material immediately at hand to include widespread use of community resources. It involves the use of many types of resource materials, teaching materials, reading and reference materials, visual and auditory aids, as well as materials for manipulation and construction. It is evident that this type of curriculum endeavor requires continuous growth in service if teachers are to cope with constantly arising problems, if they are to be prepared to set new educational goals, and if they are to provide more socially significant educa-

tional experiences for boys and girls.

This movement in curriculum development gives rise to the establishment of the curriculum laboratory as a means for implementing the program. It is an essential part of the modern curriculum, and, if operated at its best, will go far in giving teachers a means for developing dynamic philosophies, based upon a constant acquaintance with current problems and a forward looking viewpoint which recognizes the fact that in no institution of society is change more important and necessary than in education.

*The Instructional Service Center*_____

ALICE H. HAYDEN

The ways and means of establishing "instructional service centers" or "curriculum laboratories" are discussed by Alice H. Hayden, director of educational research, University of Washington, Seattle. Miss Hayden discusses problems of organization, provision of service, and personnel in terms adaptable to all schools regardless of size, nature, or locale. Those interested in giving teachers aid in the field of materials will find valuable guides to action in her article.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID and written about instructional materials, but the degree to which these materials are used effectively in the classroom is in large measure dependent upon the type and amount of *service* available with the instructional materials. Mere provision of teaching aids is no guarantee of effective utilization in the classroom. Actually, most teachers have access to many more fine teaching materials than they use. What then, are some of the reasons why teachers aren't making

better use of these aids? Stated briefly, the principal causes are:

The teacher may not know what is available.

The room facilities may not permit the use of some types of auditory or projected materials.

The procedure necessary to obtain equipment and materials may be too involved and time-consuming.

Certain materials may have to be scheduled so far in advance that the teacher cannot always tell whether the group will have reached or gone beyond the point where

the material would best fit into the work of the class.

The teacher may not know how to operate certain types of equipment and may be afraid of damaging equipment or materials.

Contacting and surveying local industries, points of historical interest and other community sources of educational value, and arranging for field trips may involve too much teacher time and work.

Some teachers may be reluctant to try new devices and techniques.

The teacher may consider the physical energy required to obtain and transport various materials and so-called "portable" equipment to the classroom "not worth the effort."

The school may not provide the encouragement and leadership necessary to stimulate teachers to try to improve instruction.

Although these problems may loom large, they are not insurmountable. Many school systems and school districts have already established instructional material bureaus or centers in order to centralize teaching aids and equipment so these may be more readily available to all teachers. A few of these bureaus have supplied instructional service to teachers along with their other wares, but in most instances the major emphasis has been on equipment and materials rather than on service.

The suggestion offered here is that all school systems, small or large, consider the idea of emphasizing instructional *service* to accompany readily accessible materials and equipment. Requisite, of course, to any functioning service program is the school philosophy that all staff members—administrators, teachers, and specialists—are working toward one goal—to *help boys and girls attain the skills, processes, and attitudes which will permit them to lead richer, healthier,*

happier, more peaceful, and more useful lives.

What Is Instructional Service?

The most important contribution of an instructional service center is its function of helping teachers to help themselves. The center can do this through a number of channels such as:

Providing information relative to materials and equipment available.

Suggesting criteria for the selection and evaluation of different types of materials. Helping teachers to correlate instructional activities.

Assisting teachers in working out special teaching problems.

Suggesting techniques and methods for most effective utilization of materials.

Offering instruction on the operation of new equipment.

Facilitating ordering and scheduling of special materials and equipment.

Suggesting pertinent professional studies and articles relative to the improvement of instruction.

Motivating teachers by giving them help and encouragement in their work. This may sometimes be accomplished through conferences, institutes, and in-service programs.

Providing demonstrations of new materials and equipment.

Encouraging teachers to make suggestions regarding special application of materials and equipment to their particular grade level or subject-matter area.

Giving recognition to superior teaching and providing opportunities for exchange of information among teachers through group or committee activities.

Why Is Such Service Desirable?

The distribution of work so that trained individuals may spend time and effort to help the teacher do a better job in the classroom is predicated on the idea of efficiency and in no way implies

that teachers are incapable of ferreting out their own materials, arranging for their use, and utilizing them in class work. The object of the instructional service program is to make the classroom teacher more resourceful and to help her improve instruction.

The sources of materials are abundant, the diversity is great. The problem of measuring materials against reasonable criteria for the selection of printed materials, audio-visual materials, and direct experiences entails more work and attention to detail than most teachers can add to their already full teaching loads.

Beginning teachers or teachers who have been out of service for a considerable period may be particularly desirous of obtaining help in the development of their units of work and in learning about materials and techniques which will help them do a better teaching job. Such individuals have great potentialities and with encouragement and help may develop into strong teachers who will serve the profession well. Far too little guidance has been given to beginning teachers in most school systems. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why many young teachers leave the profession after a short trial period. Had there been a specific plan of service to assist these teachers and to help them become oriented to their work, they might have found teaching a happier occupation and might have remained in the profession.

No one questions the fact that our libraries are much more valuable to us because of the service of our librarians. Most of us who use the library to any extent realize how many services are available to us through these specialists

and how their guidance helps us to utilize printed materials to better advantage.

How Can the Service Be Made Available to Teachers?

The pattern for providing instructional service to teachers will vary considerably according to the size of the school system and the special qualifications of the administrative and teaching personnel. One thing, however, is paramount. There must be coordination of all the instructional services available to teachers. Curriculum directors, librarians, audio-visual directors, and other specialists must work together to provide the best service possible. Lack of coordination represents inefficient use of special assistance and may result in misunderstandings and duplication of effort.

Even in small schools where responsibilities for the library and audio-visual materials need to be allocated as part of regular teachers' loads, it is essential to have close cooperation on the part of these teachers to insure coordination of the service program.

Any school program needs the whole-hearted support of the administration. Bulletins, faculty meetings, in-service programs, workshops, conferences, and institutes can give information about and impetus to the instructional service program. Wherever possible, meetings should be arranged for on school time.

Workshop space for the operation of such a program is also necessary. Teachers should be able to work individually or in groups with materials and equipment. The atmosphere of the instructional service center should be pleasant and should invite good work habits.

School administrators should make the purpose and function of the instructional service center clear to all their staff members and should urge teachers to take advantage of the excellent services provided for them. Administrators should be as concerned about teacher growth as about student growth for the two are in many ways reciprocal.

Who Should Render Instructional Service?

The administrative pattern for providing instructional service may vary considerably according to the size of the school system and its needs. In any case, assignment of specific responsibilities for the work seems to be highly desirable. Some school systems have an assistant superintendent in charge of instruction. Specialists such as directors of excursions and audio-visual materials and librarians work directly with him in making the program function.

In smaller schools, a committee made up of all who contribute to the service program may function with a chairman selected from their own group or with an administrator acting as chairman.

But no matter what pattern is established for the operation of the program, it is essential that all those working in it approach their task understanding the basic principle that has been advocated for all teaching—start at the level of the individual with whom you are working. The training, experience, and background of teachers vary markedly. If we would help teachers to help themselves, we must begin where we find them and assist them in progressing from that point.

Such work requires sympathetic understanding on the part of the service

personnel. There are those who say that such service should be divorced from supervision in order to encourage teachers to seek assistance more freely. The teacher attitude toward supervision is important. It should not deter teachers from obtaining assistance which they need. Each school district needs to consider this problem in the light of its own situation. Properly administered, good supervision is service of a high type; but if poor supervision has created a bad impression in the minds of teachers, it should be stressed that the service program is not supervisory in nature.

The personnel engaged in instructional service should possess qualities of leadership and understanding. They need specialized knowledge about their particular work and they should have had practical teaching experience so they will be better able to understand the problems classroom teachers face. They should be neither too aggressive nor too retiring. Their personalities should be pleasant, their judgment good, and their patience abundant. In addition to all these factors, they need to be resourceful and enthusiastic, and to possess an aptitude for hard work and the ability to get along with people. Combine all these qualities with a good sense of humor and you have the master teachers who can really make a service program function.

Did a voice echo—"but where are you going to find such people?" To such we reply, "We've got more of them in the teaching profession than most people suppose and with good instructional service programs we can develop more."

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