

# Tools for Learning

## MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION—THE JOB OF THE SUPERVISOR

Fay Kirtland

The advertisements of materials included in this issue are particularly pertinent to the theme of the entire issue, "Materials of Instruction." Therefore, as our introduction to this section, we present—not a discussion of the use of materials with children, but rather a consideration of the supervisor's responsibility as a resource person in the materials field. Fay Kirtland, instructional supervisor in the Monroe County Schools, Monroeville, Alabama, makes pointed suggestions in this area relative to the improvement of instructional programs through the joint effort of teachers and supervisors.

EDUCATION FOR A NEW WORLD is indeed a challenge to all educational workers. In order to meet the needs of modern society we need schools which provide children and youth a well-rounded program of living. Such schools call for a variety of adequate and appropriate materials such as radios, films, newspapers, pictures, slides, creative and constructive materials, toys and games, materials of the environment, and a variety of books. In the light of these needs, schools will require much help in making provision for the needed materials of instruction. It is the job of the supervisor to assist the school in working on this problem.

Supervisors are faced with several important problems relative to guiding groups in the selection and use of instructional materials. In the first place, teachers have had little or no opportunity to deal with materials as they relate to the kind of program that is needed in modern society. Many teachers are not aware of the needs for a variety of materials. They do not know a large variety of materials and, consequently, are handicapped in making basic selections. Perhaps the biggest task of the supervisor is to help teachers sense the need for various materials, to guide them in selecting materials, and to help them to use materials effectively.

A second problem relates to the many new materials that are being created. Teachers do not have time to become acquainted with many of these materials.

Supervisors must constantly be on the lookout for new materials, experimenting with and evaluating them preparatory to calling them to the attention of teachers who are not in a position to keep abreast of all new developments. And finally, there are many problems that need immediate action but there are no materials available for beginning an attack on these problems. When the needs arise, supervisors must be ready to guide teachers and children in the production of new materials.

What are some effective ways of working with teachers in the field of instructional materials? The individual conference is well known. Through these conferences teachers can be helped to sense the needs for materials and to realize that the selection and use of materials have an important role in developing a functional learning situation. Teachers may be helped to choose goals and make plans for selecting and using materials in achieving these goals. Group conferences are helpful when materials to be shared are exhibited and their uses explained and demonstrated. Visits to situations where materials are being used effectively by classroom teachers are very worthwhile. Films which show good practice in the use of materials are beneficial.

The provision for real work experiences with materials is of unquestionable value to teachers. In most situations, teachers are expected to use materials expertly. Too often, however, they have

had no experience in working with the materials they are to use. In order to overcome this lack, it is well for supervisors to plan with teachers, just as the teacher plans with children, experiences for becoming acquainted with and using materials. The workshop is a good type of procedure for this kind of experience. The program can duplicate that of the teacher and a class situation. Opportunities may be given to the group for planning experiences and choosing, using, sharing, and evaluating materials. Here teachers may paint, model with clay, go on field trips, perform experiments, examine books, or use films.

Experimentation with the use of new materials in classroom situations offers a splendid means of working with teachers. Teachers grow as they share in the selection and use of materials. The supervisor may help a group share findings with fellow teachers through reports and bulletins.

The production of new materials may be undertaken by some teachers who have a need for particular types of materials that are not available. The supervisor should be ready to give encouragement and assistance when obstacles are present.

Finally, and, perhaps most important of all, faculty groups will work on individual school problems that have to do with materials. This is an important experience which is needed by all teachers. Here teachers, children, parents, and the principal plan together for the selection, the use, the sharing, and the care of the materials which are to serve members of the school group in working on some of their chosen problems. The supervisor will serve as a consultant on materials for this situation, working with the members of the group both individually and collectively.

Thus, the job of supervisors is to know many materials and to be ever ready to stimulate teachers to select and use these materials effectively. They must constantly be on the lookout for new materials, experimenting with and evaluating them. They must be ready, when needs arise, to assist in constructing new materials. In the last analysis, supervisors must serve as instructional materials experts.



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## SOMEDAY SOON

when they are planning social-studies units on the community and its workers. This book follows **Peter's Family** (Grade 1) and **Hello, David** (early Grade 2) in the Curriculum Foundation Series social-studies program by Hanna, Anderson, Gray.

Easy-to-read stories . . . vivid illustrations full of teaching possibilities . . . work pages . . . are grouped around five interest centers:

### Firemen Are Needed

(Workers Who Protect Us)

### Food for Everyone

(Workers Who Produce Our Food)

### Going Places

(Workers Who Help Us Travel)

### From One to Another

(Workers Who Carry Messages)

### Fun for Everyone

(Workers and Community Facilities That Help Us Play)

The title story brings every boy and girl into the picture right from the start: It begins with David telling Tom, "When I am big I am going to have a farm." "Not very soon," laughed Tom. "Sooner than you think," called David as the school bus began to move. "My father said so." Tom started to think. First he thought he'd like to be a fireman. "Firemen are needed," he said. What Tom discovered about the many kinds of work and workers needed in a community, other children will enjoy discovering, too.

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