We talk about in-service experiences for teachers. Certainly those who are in instructional leadership positions need such experiences, also. These four contributors—two curriculum consultants, and an elementary and a secondary school principal—indicate what experiences they have had in their positions over the period of a year which they believe constitute in-service growth for them.

REFLECTIONS OF A CURRICULUM CONSULTANT

Alexander Frazier, curriculum consultant in the Phoenix Union High Schools and Phoenix College, Arizona, emphasizes the importance of working with groups as an in-service experience.

THE SCHOOLS OPEN next Monday, September 13. Looking at the stacks of materials that have been cleaned up over the summer, the curriculum consultant says to himself, “Here are a few days before it begins. What have I to think about, to think through?”

More than anything else, he reflects, he needs to think about how to help groups become aware of their problems. His services are set up on a request basis. “Is there something on which you need help?” he is to ask. “How can I help?” And that means that somehow problems and needs must be felt before he can be of use.

Progress Was Made Here

He recalls a conference last fall with a department chairman. Yes, they had problems. Here was a list of them, compiled the preceding year for a meeting with colleagues in another unit. It had been a good, practical meeting, the chairman remembered. The list dealt mostly with handling supplies and equipment.

Other problems? Well, teachers had been complaining about students who didn’t fit in. Perhaps... And the meeting—the excitement of helping isolate the problem. Where were students not fitting in? One symptom of maladjustment would be the percentage of failures, the group agreed, and sounded off: three percent, two, fifteen, five, twenty. At the close of the roll call the group saw that failures in the most populous course in the department were running from fifteen to twenty-five percent. It had caught sight of a real problem. The teachers involved went to work on it.

He thinks, too, of another meeting equally dramatic for him. Here was the data from a survey of reading and arithmetic skills. The situation could be grasped at a glance. And the self-direction of the group as it framed the questions that led to six or seven meetings upon individualizing instruction, the setting up of an all-school approach to reading, and the building of an orientation course for ninth graders.

Still another meeting of all the teachers of a particular subject. In one hour the group had analyzed what it had long known to be its most acute...
problem. This analysis had gone back into the units with each teacher. Work later undertaken in two schools bore reference to it.

Some Weren't So Successful

But the times, too, when the problems never emerged, or emerged only to escape. There was the mature group in which out of a brilliant and intense self-analysis there suddenly appeared an hypothesis that was genuinely a group invention, a possibility of reconciling hostile forces in the school. He recalls the failure to hold that hypothesis in the group—the lateness of the hour, the need for relief from tension, and, frankly, the ineptitude of the consultant. Can he improve his understanding of ways by which a group may clinch its thinking once it has found its problem?

Or the department that tried to find a problem—for the consultant. It was not accustomed to meeting except when new textbooks were to be examined or semester tests revised. But it wanted to welcome the new consultant. It met, and somehow the consultant found himself in the role of presenting and defending an approach unfamiliar to the group. He recalls the shock of sensing that he was alone, that there was no need for all this or for any talk, no need of any kind yet—and the climaxing moment of dead silence, the stray comment or two, and the gentle-hearted little woman who came up afterward and offered to work with the consultant on his problem.

Or the new group that found a problem, but too soon. It was a big problem. Its selection came before the group had really become a group. Those who engineered the choice made it out of their experience, not the group's. And the year-long study by a group-that-was-not-a-group of a problem-that-was-not-a-problem. The evaluation of the experience by those who survived in the group, and the deepened understanding of reasons for group failure that came to them out of that long session that late April afternoon.

Self-Appraisal at This Point

How to help groups become newly aware of their problems... The problems are there, adjusted to or buried under or long since projected into aggressions against surface frustrations. We have lived so long with our problems in the secondary school, the consultant begins to think, that we are not right, many of us, in relationships with students and colleagues, or even with ourselves.

He begins to think in terms of therapy, of the curriculum worker as not so much an agent of change as an agent of insight, the insight that demands and determines change. He checks himself. Is the situation that which is sick? Or is the consultant projecting upon it his own frustrate fancies, born of ignorance or incapacity? The need of self-knowledge...

Meanwhile, the schools will open Monday. The groups that know they have problems will begin to call upon the consultant. He will have more chance this year than last to learn from working in groups. He must reorganize his notes from the month of summer study, the notes that try to bring up-to-date his continuing intention to deepen insights into group work and find new ones.
As a last gesture of appraisal, he thumbs through the first year's report of his activities. In how many meetings did he sit as observer, consultant, member, or leader? One hundred sixty-four!

From all that experience he should have learned more. He will learn more this year, he vows; and suddenly he decides—if he possibly can he will get to New York in February.

**FIVE AREAS OF GROWTH FOR ME**

Mary Beauchamp, educational assistant in the city schools of Pasadena, California, outlines the types of experiences which were valuable to her and how they were made possible.

LOOKING BACK over the past year as curriculum consultant in the Minneapolis public schools, five types of experiences stand out as contributing a major part to my in-service growth. Each experience is valuable in itself, but only through their combination did the year add up to my most significant growing year. Space allows me only to sketch in broad outline the areas. The first area is developed with a specific illustration; each would profit from such a treatment.

*Working with teachers.* Perhaps the greatest single strand in the chain of in-service growth comes to a consultant as he works with groups of teachers in the solution of their problems. Two words tell the story—*with* and *their*.

There's no experience which gives a consultant the exhilaration that comes from sitting down with a group of teachers to tackle a problem about which all are concerned and the solution to which all are confident will emerge. The only other experience that can match it occurs when a group decides to act and, with unified vigor and enthusiasm, sets forth to carry out the results of group thinking.

December 1948

It was my lot to work with a committee of teachers whose job was to develop a scope and sequence for the emerging common learning program of Minneapolis. This was untried ground. None of us approached our task with a preconceived program. We had a common philosophy. We had the accepted objectives of the Minneapolis public schools, and we knew the program had to rest squarely on the needs of children and society if it were to be sound.

At first we groped, but we recognized the magnitude of our task. Having school time for consideration of the problem helped keep us going. Little by little through talking, reading, evaluating, listening, and summarizing we came to some decisions. None of these decisions could have been reached by any *one* person. Nor could they have been reached if the group had had to limit its meetings to an hour's session after school.

*Working with teachers* on their problems in such a way that group thinking and action has a chance to function—there’s no experience to equal it as a factor in the growth process.

*Working in a variety of situations.* Every supervisor or consultant should
have the chance to work in many different kinds of situations if he is to continue to grow at a maximum rate. He should have a chance to work with groups that cut across subject matter lines, groups that represent all levels of the school system, groups in which he is primarily a learner rather than a teacher, groups that represent community interests. Every consultant should have some system-wide duties over and beyond his own area of interest so that he may gain an understanding of the total school program. Consultants should be pushed to be generalists, to develop a concept of the learning process which extends from pre-school age to adulthood.

Experimenting in new fields. Perhaps this experience is part and parcel of the previous one. It seems important enough, however, to merit separate consideration. We say we believe that learning is an evolving process; that the education of a decade ago, however fine, is not good enough today. Yet in no area of American life is it as hard for a new idea to flourish as in education. As consultants we may be even more prone than teachers to follow well-established trails, to be skeptical of an idea which springs up from an inexperienced, untried teacher.

Education demands new ideas; it needs just as urgently skilled technicians who know what to do with new ideas. It is paramount, then, for consultants to be constantly experimenting with new techniques in their own fields and in those areas which represent the frontiers of American living.

We need consultants who are eager to expend “sweat, blood, and tears” in order to find out how we can live together more happily and productively. We need consultants who are eager to help teachers guide high school students in operating a real community school. We need consultants who are eager to explore the possibilities of a twelve-month school and the important contributions camping and outdoor education has for youth. Yes, we need consultants who are eager to experiment with their use in a modern program of education.

Participating in community living.

Too long the program of the school has been inbred and isolated. The school program will be functional to the degree that it is tied in with community life. The consultant’s activities in the community serve not only as a broadening experience for the consultant but also to enrich, validate, and bring to realization the school program itself. Participation in Girl and Boy Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, labor organizations, chambers of commerce, church, professional and service clubs is more than desirable—it is imperative!

The degree and kind of participation is important. Too often the educator comes to such groups in one of two capacities—either as a speaker for a special occasion or as an observer only. These relationships are good but obviously are limited in their outcomes. Consultants need to take an active and continuous part in a few community groups—to take some of the hard knocks that come from such participation.

Experiences on a wider level. As a leader, a consultant is supposed to inspire and stimulate as well as to guide and to do. It’s imperative, then, to have
opportunities to renew one's own source and supply of inspiration. This comes as a result of the foregoing activities, to be sure; but there is often a felt need to get far enough away from the job at hand to gain perspective and renewed vigor.

Experiences on a state and national level serve to supply this need. For one consultant it may be attendance at national meetings where one gains new ideas from all over the country. For another it may be a workshop experience in another school system. It may be a visit to other schools to find out what they are doing about certain vital problems. Whatever the source, we all need a chance to refuel.

You may be saying, "This is a Utopian Dream." Perhaps, but it isn't impossible. It requires more time than is available to most of us. It requires a different type of organization among consultant groups. The line-staff scheme doesn't fit. It requires a unity of purpose among coworkers. It requires the understanding of administrators. Each of these can be gained if the desire of consultants to so operate is strong enough. At any rate, it adds up to a program of maximum in-service growth for one consultant.

PEOPLE ARE THE PRIME CONTRIBUTORS TO GROWTH

Helen A. Bertermann, principal of Central Fairmount and Theodore Roosevelt Schools in Cincinnati, stresses the importance of people in learning and broadening on the job.

PEOPLE. No one sees them, studies them, affects them, is affected by them more than are elementary school principals. People in classrooms guiding young people, people in and out of the office all day, people in meetings, people at the other end of the telephone wire. In low moments a desert island becomes a favorite dream.

Certainly there is no area of development that needs a principal's attention more than helping children, teachers, and parents grow in understanding one another—and through that process increase his own stature.

A Sampling of Contacts

A small school offers opportunities for frequent contacts with the same people day in and day out. Hearing problems discussed by children, teachers, and parents brings renewed faith in human nature, but also disappointments.

There was the father whose wife neglected their home and children; the mother who poured out a true prayer of thanksgiving for her son's understanding; the boy whose father threatened to take away his dog unless his grades improved; the three little sisters whose mother would not get rid of the nits but thought they should; the father who brought his child to the door and shouted, "Here's the brat. Keep her. I don't want her."

The teacher who reported with joy the signs of deviltry in the boy who
was too good; the confidences of birthday and Christmas plans in many families; two PTA presidents always ready to help; the meetings to prepare for the Memorial Day parade, and the parade itself when the people of many fraternal, religious, and community groups joined together; the daily jokes that come when congenial folks work together; the induction of a fine young man into the duties of an assistant principal.

These experiences and countless others became a part of this principal's store house of knowledge of human nature.

Conferences Clarify and Cement

The child study program of the Upper Grade Study Council, now in its fourth year, has helped greatly to focus the study of children through analysis and objective criteria. The consultants for this program in addition to the regular group leaders chosen from the membership provided challenging guidance. To one who has participated in the small study groups, listened to the consultants discuss their particular areas of interest, and read selected reference works, this program has provided a practical and rich source of professional nourishment. The people make the program live.

Scheduled monthly conferences with colleagues, in which principals and supervisors met in small groups and freely discussed problems suggested by their elected planning committees, not only clarified policies, procedures, and plans, but added immeasurably to understanding of group processes.

Conferences with book company representatives and their reading specialists, in the course of arriving at committee recommendations for primary readers, and the subsequent discussions with able committee members, gave an overview of trends in reading methods that would have been difficult to gain in other ways. People helped to make subject matter live.

Appreciating Our Associates

How may the qualifications of assistant principals be appraised? The committee assignment in the Elementary Principals Club, and later in a committee appointed by the superintendent of schools, necessitated a most critical study and analysis of what makes a good potential principal. Oral interviews, the final step in the process set up following committee recommendations, offered a rare opportunity to know fine professional people, their backgrounds and interest in children. People make the profession.

Growing Through Group Acquaintance

Writing checks for organization dues can be an easy way (in pre-inflation days, at least!) to extend professional interest. Opportunities to plan for and participate in national conferences where people with like and unlike interests and problems worked and played together extended horizons and gave a general lift as well as practical help in understanding the needs of children and teachers.

Opportunities for knowing colleagues in the state came in full measure through planning with other executive board members for state meeting programs that would meet the needs of the membership. This board had the responsibility of planning for the Association...
meeting during the 1947 summer convention of the NEA and also for local arrangements for the ASCD annual convention. People make such associations.

Democratic living, a phrase mouthed so freely in our circles, took on a new meaning when the Denver Summer Workshop was seen inside out. Teachers and administrators could and did plan together for the five weeks’ program, worked in groups with mutual respect, praised and griped, and evaluated. It was rich professional fare.

A review of the year, unusually packed with professional experience though it was, cannot fail to bring regrets, too. The hasty word spoken in irritation, the unspoken word of encouragement, a letter to a friend unwritten are but a few. Professional obligations, however pleasant and rewarding, so easily become all absorbing. There was too little time for a visit with old friends, a movie with the family, books that looked inviting. But it was a good year made richer by working closely with people.

A LOCAL WORKSHOP PUTS THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Paul E. Smith, principal of Hayes Junior High School in Youngstown, Ohio, looks at a specific workshop which was a valuable experience for him.

OUTSTANDING as a means of achieving the democratic objectives we so often speak of is the workshop. Often, however, these workshop programs are devoted to problems of such broad areas of administration or teaching that they are of value only in developing a wide framework in which most any activity can be counted as acceptable.

My own experience with such activities has been of little value or significance in helping me do a better job as a junior high school principal. After all, my main concern is with the improvement of specific problems of our local situation. With the purpose of providing encouragement and opportunity for all school principals to study common problems of our school system, an administrative workshop was arranged to evaluate the quality of the teaching services of the Youngstown public schools.

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Are We Teaching Usable Skills?

Statistics revealed that from 1936 to 1948 the average number of pupils enrolled in the first grade was 2,394. For the same period the average number enrolled in the eighth grade was 2,359. Yet the average number of high school graduates was 1,720. These facts presented the first problem—do Youngstown pupils receive the kind of education which best fits them for life in Youngstown? The following questions were considered:

A. Why the great loss from first to eighth grade? From eighth to twelfth grade?
B. Are the pupils in Youngstown given the kind of education which best fits them for life today and the future?
1. Do pupils who finish high school have the minimum skills necessary to find their initial employment?
2. Are the pupils who do not complete high school adequately prepared?
We Examine the "Extras"

A problem closely related to this was a discussion of the adequacy of special services for the needs of pupils. Among the questions considered in this area were:

1. What special and related services are available at present?
2. Are there fields of need for which no service has been provided?
3. How can the existing services better meet the needs of pupils?
4. Do all teachers know about and understand the available services?
5. Would another type of internal organization facilitate the use of such services?
6. Do we need all of the special services? Upon which of the special services, if any, should less emphasis be placed?
7. Is there evidence that the best interests of the child are sometimes forgotten?

Another problem area discussed was that of the supervisory services and their relationship to the effectiveness of teaching. Among the problems considered were:

1. How can supervision become a process of guidance and growth for the teacher?
2. How can supervision encourage teachers to begin conscious study of children?
3. Need a supervisor occasionally observe, first hand, the work of the teacher?
4. How far does the responsibility of the supervisor go for curriculum improvement?
5. How much responsibility does the supervisor have for the evaluation of the work of the teacher?
6. Can the supervisor help the teacher to evaluate her own work?
7. What are some techniques by which supervisors can assist teachers in their teaching procedures and results?

The final area to be discussed was that of administration and its promotion of the greatest growth of teachers and pupils. Again a variety of questions indicated the concern of teachers about the importance of administration.

We Go On From Here

A local workshop of this sort, with no special consultants or experts present to distract the attention of the participants from the local problems, allows the participants to play a more active and constructive part and still retain a considerable control over the nature and solution of the problem. Such a workshop depends upon local people and they, in turn, reinforce one another because they have in common a more complete understanding of the local situation.

We trust the time will soon come when all school personnel will be under twelve-month contract with emphasis placed on the responsibility of each staff member to spend some time in a local workshop. Thus educational theory can be more closely in touch with active practice and will accelerate the modernization of our public school programs.