

the findings of this survey, evade the enduring problems of pupil discipline, teaching methods and techniques, and individual differences.

### The Place to Begin

Perhaps the implication that stands out most clearly is found nowhere in the findings of this survey but in the approach itself. We need to be more concerned with implementing the principle and utilizing the process of tailor-

ing supervision to the problems of teachers. We must pin-point the trouble or friction areas, we must locate the blocks and problems which teachers face and give particularized help as needed. The supervisor who does not begin with the problems of teachers may find himself in the unenviable position of a leader without followers. Our concept of supervision and democratic leadership must become one and the same.

## *These Changes Helped* \_\_\_\_\_

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This article is based on a study of ways of working and the curriculum being carried on by the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, Teachers College, Columbia University. All three authors have been associated with this study. Ruth Cunningham is associate professor, Teachers College, and research associate of the Institute. Stanley Applegate, now executive officer, Communication Materials Center, Columbia University, and Pauline Hilliard, formerly Bureau of School Service, University of Kentucky and currently a student at Teachers College, have both been research assistants in this study.

"WHAT CHANGES in your school within the past three years have been most helpful to you for doing a better job of teaching?" Eight hundred fifty teachers in six school systems answered this question.

### Omissions Tell a Story

Perhaps more significant than the answers of those who responded were the blanks left by those who had nothing to say. Forty-four percent (372 of the 850 teachers) could think of no change—no change at all—which, within three years, had been of help to them in carrying out their professional re-

sponsibilities. The easy explanation would have been to suggest that those who didn't respond were the "sore heads" and unadjusted individuals. This easy explanation had to be discarded when it was found that lack of responses clustered around certain schools. In several schools, one hundred percent of the teachers suggested helpful changes which had occurred; while in one school, eighty-four percent gave no response. Eighteen teachers (two percent) reported that there had been no helpful changes. Twelve of these eighteen teachers were in the school in which eighty-four percent gave no

response. One teacher in this school was more explicit. He said, "There have been changes, but the changes all made it harder for me to be a good teacher."

Thus, it wasn't possible to take the easy way out and blame the *teachers* when responses were lacking or negative. Evidently there were factors in the *situation* which made the difference. A study of responses made by those who could report helpful changes gave some clues.

### Examining the Responses

The categories of responses, with illustrations drawn from specific answers, and the percent of teachers responding to each were as follows:

<u>Changes</u>	<u>Percent of Teachers</u>
Administration (new principal; better understanding).....	21
In-Service Education, Curriculum Improvement (opportunity to work in teacher groups; more freedom from curriculum requirements).....	15
Physical (new building; more supplies).....	8
Time (to plan work; to meet with parents)	4
Class-size (fewer pupils per class).....	3
Salary (increased salary associated with less worry).....	2
Other Teachers (increased understanding, rapport).	2
Pupils (better prepared; more friendly attitude).....	1
Personal (better health; happier living conditions).....	1
Parents and Public (better cooperation; increased recognition of importance of education).....	1

Of the 492 responses, 302 had to do with administration, supervision, in-service education, and curriculum improvement. A further examination of this last item (curriculum improvement) indicated that such improvement was closely associated with cooperative teacher endeavor. Thus it may be valid to suggest that the major area recognized by teachers as being helpful is that which is related to staff relations.

Quite apart from the responses of teachers, a jury group, composed of the staff of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, ranked the school systems in terms of their potential for curriculum improvement. There was almost complete consensus concerning the ranking. It was not surprising to find that in schools where the jury felt the potential for improvement was high, teachers tended to respond by citing changes which they felt made them better teachers, and, in schools where the jury felt the potential low, teachers tended to report no helpful changes or to suggest that the changes made were hindrances rather than helps.

Another aspect of the study was to discover teachers' opinions and attitudes concerning a wide range of problems with reference to the situations in which they worked. It was of interest to compare some of the responses on a three-point scale (Yes, No, ?) of a school (School A) where helpful changes were reported by all teachers, with those of teachers in the situation (School B) where eighty-four percent gave no response and others provided negative reactions.

A few dramatic examples are given on the next page.



*Percent of Responses*

Yes	No	?
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Question

Are you expected to carry out plans for school-wide or city-wide programs without adequate instruction or explanation?	School A	8	87	5
	School B	33	58	9
Does your principal ever blame the teachers for matters which are his own fault?	School A	18	72	10
	School B	25	51	24
Do you feel you know where you stand in the opinion of your principal?	School A	76	10	14
	School B	51	30	19
Is it true that unless a teacher pretends to agree with the principal he hasn't a chance for recognition or advancement?	School A	7	87	6
	School B	22	59	19
Do you have sufficient opportunity to work with other teachers on significant problems?	School A	75	25	0
	School B	45	53	2
Are you given an adequate opportunity to help in policy making for the city or county school system?	School A	57	22	21
	School B	34	58	8
Are you given an adequate opportunity to help in making decisions about what happens in your school?	School A	91	2	7
	School B	47	35	18
Do you receive adequate recognition for your work?	School A	74	24	2
	School B	24	29	47

Again the factor of inter-personal relations was high-lighted.

**The Teachers Suggest**

As a further aspect of the study, interviews were held with teachers in each of the school systems. Teachers were questioned as to why they felt the teachers in their school had responded as they did, and were asked for suggestions as to what they felt could be done to improve the situation, if responses had been negative.

The matter of recognition may serve as an illustration of the diversity of response between Schools A and B.

In School B (where few responded with helpful changes), when the question was asked, "What kind of recognition do you now receive?" every teacher interviewed mentioned notes from the principal, but no teacher mentioned any other form of recognition. One teacher added, "We know that the principal sends out so many notes a

day. When we get one it merely indicates that it's our turn to get one. We all know it doesn't mean anything." Another adds, "We only get notes about things that 'show,' such as an assembly program or a bulletin board. We get no recognition for the *real* job of teaching."

On the other hand, in School A (where all teachers responded by reporting helpful changes), recognition was suggested under these categories of sources, in this rank order:

1. General feeling of cooperation; good will among teachers
2. The help of counselors, supervisors
3. Parents, community, the general public
4. The principal
5. The central office (of the school system)
6. Children
7. Financial recognition (salary).

How different is the situation in which "notes from the principal" (rec-

ognized as formal and superficial) from that in which teachers see recognition coming from other teachers, parents, community, the central office, and from children, as well as from the principal? What makes the difference? The people who made this cooperative study<sup>1</sup> believe they have some clues, but that is another story, though perhaps the most significant one.

#### Results of the Study Show . . . .

The purpose of the current report is to make these points, which the results of the study indicate as important:

<sup>1</sup> To be published by Teachers College Bureau of Publications in 1951, with the title, "Ways of Working and Curriculum Change."

☛ The total situation, the ways of working of a school, determine the perception of teachers concerning helpful changes.

☛ Inter-personal relations, teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator-and-supervisor, teacher-pupil, teacher-community, are of major significance in relation to the potential for curriculum improvement.

☛ Although it is difficult to marshal precise evidence, all the evidence available tends to indicate that teachers respond to feelings of "belonging," of importance, of making a contribution to their chosen field of professional endeavor. Teachers seem to react to these aspects with greater force than they do to those more commonly considered as paramount, such as salary. Such a statement in no way negates the importance of salaries, but indicates that teacher welfare, professional competence, and personal adjustment are bigger, by far, than the salary check.

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