

ized assistance completely free from the expense of consultative or travel fees.

¶ The services of outstanding educational authorities from all parts of the country are made available for short periods of time—and again without cost to the school systems involved.

¶ Staff members team up, regardless of their university affiliations, to bring together their respective competencies for attack upon the problem at hand.

¶ Regular faculty members of college education departments are kept constantly in close contact with teachers' current problems. Undoubtedly, there is a carry-over in practicality to the campus courses of these instructors as a result of their participation in the in-service program.

Helping Systems Help Themselves

It must be emphasized that the Atlanta Area Teacher Education Service in no way substitutes for the planning

and initiative of school personnel in the cooperating systems. It takes part in the educational enterprises of these systems only when invited to do so. Members of its staff go to meetings of teachers or inside the classrooms of teachers only on invitation. Courses are set up with the approval of the school systems involved through their representatives on the Advisory Committee.

The Service is truly a service—it exists for the sole purpose of helping existing educational systems to do better the jobs they must do anyway, with or without the existence of the Atlanta Area Teacher Education Service. Its presence, however, is further evidence of the spreading belief that all agencies engaged in education can do a better job cooperatively and coordinately.

'She Went and Comes'

ALICE MIEL

Alice Miel, associate professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, examines professional diaries in which supervisors show what they try to accomplish and how they work.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD Mary Ann was discussing the adults in her nursery-school world: "I have Miss Miller, she's my teacher; and then I have Miss Parks, she's the mother teacher."

"And what does Miss Parks do?" asked Mary Ann's mother.

"Oh, she went and comes."

All in all, this is a pretty good definition of a supervisor—whether he or she be the director of a nursery school, the principal of an elementary or secondary school, a general or special supervisor, or a department head. A supervisor is a person who does not

stay with a group of children or youth; she "went and comes."

Let us see what some of this coming and going is all about, by turning to professional diaries in which supervisors show what they were trying to accomplish and how they worked.¹

The Job of a Department Head

A department head whose responsibility it was to supervise the science

¹ For the examples in this article the writer is indebted to Maurice A. Dawkins of New York City, Walter H. Hellmann of Fairfield, Connecticut, and James Murray of Pierce County, Blackshear, Georgia.

teachers in one senior- and four junior-high schools tells first of his leadership in preparing a course of study which the superintendent had requested of each department. For example, when the group fell to arguing about what a course of study should contain, the leader suggested that action be deferred until all could read something on the subject in several appropriate books he had had the foresight to procure. He also helped the group make a plan for future meetings which included work on the course of study, reports by group members on current literature of science teaching, reports on their own teaching procedures, activities of professional societies, experimental teaching and simple research, and professional writing they might be doing.

In addition, the science department planned to work toward integration with other departments by initiating joint projects and by inter-visitation. They wanted to organize a reference center and to study and use community resources.

The department head offered to work with subject groups within the department as units were being developed, and to have material duplicated and get supplies, audio-visual aids, and resource personnel.

The science supervisor sums up his usual way of working as follows:

I visited classrooms about once a month and, in general, I thought our program was working out fine. I always knew what the teacher was doing because I had been in on the planning. The teacher knew I was interested in finding out how the work was going. We talked over later how things were going, what new material either of us had found, and exchanged ideas and suggestions for improvement for future use.

Our department meetings always included coffee and doughnuts and those that smoke were free to do so.

Diary Entries Show Progress of an Idea

A new venture in leadership for this supervisor came after he had done some reading about teacher-pupil planning. Since he taught a ninth grade class in general science, the supervisor decided to try this way of working with the next unit. He announced to the other science teachers that he was going to be a "lighthouse." "The rest agreed to go along with the regular method," the department head writes, "while I tried the new one. All seemed interested and liked the idea, but wanted to see how it would come out before trying it."

A later entry in the supervisor's professional diary shows how the experiment with cooperative planning affected one of the teachers:

Jack N., one of our new science teachers, is quite interested in the group idea and asked me to explain more about it. I gave him some suggestions and lent him my pamphlet, *Group Processes in Supervision*.² I also invited him in to my class to see it in action. Later he said that since he was an inexperienced teacher, he would use a modified plan.

One other entry shows the gradual spread of the idea the supervisor was demonstrating through his own teaching:

Two teachers are extending the group idea to sections of their work but do not seem to feel secure enough yet to go all the way. I am not going to push them for I think the idea will sell itself as they become more familiar with it.

² Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1948.

A Rural Supervisor at Work

The diary of a supervisor in a different part of the country, concerned with the entire twelve-grade curriculum, and responsible for working with 105 teachers in twenty schools, shows many contrasts with the activities reported above.³ The accounts of how two days were spent by the rural supervisor will illustrate the nature of the diary.

September 11 (in a one-teacher school):

This was my first visit with Miss A and her group of boys and girls. I was greeted by the teacher and received a warm welcome from the group to join them and work with them during the school day.

My purpose was to give the reading readiness test to the first and second grades. As a means of warming up and getting each one to relax and feel his best and not look on me as a stranger, we worked first with some art. . .

Miss A assisted me in playing the picture and word games with the first and second grade. The pupils seemed to enjoy the little test. I instructed the teacher how to score the papers, and will discuss the scores and their uses with her in my office within the week.

As I observed the classroom I felt that much valuable time was being lost due to lack of planning by the teacher. Having six grades demands a planned schedule flexible enough to make adjustments from day to day.

I suggested that the teacher read *My Country School Diary* by Julia Weber.⁴

The *January 20* entry shows a day of great variety:

After a brief stop in the office to pick up books to be delivered to the school I was to visit in the afternoon, I drove to a seven-

teacher school. I called on Mrs. C, one of the seventh grade teachers, who is doing effective teaching. We discussed the reading program and I was pleased to see that the reading center in the classroom contained books ranging from the third grade level through the eighth. We discussed the science center and the social science interests of the group. The pupils spoke of their achievements as they looked back over the fall term's work.

I visited Miss D and her sixth grade. We thought for a few minutes in terms of the reading ability and interests of the group. Miss D plans to devote additional time to the science interests of the group.

I reached the second school at 11:30 and remained for the rest of the school day. First, I visited with Mrs. E and her group of third, fourth, and fifth grade boys and girls. We recalled some days last fall when we had looked at some of the pupil difficulties in reading and had planned to meet their needs. In the intervening time they have improved and today, as evidenced by pupil participation in classroom activities, they are growing and achieving along desirable lines.

I talked with the first and second grade teacher. She has done a remarkable job with her group. The first grade children have changed so much during the past two months. I recalled different ones and their problems at the time of my last visit.

In summarizing his diary at the end of the year the rural supervisor found that he had distributed his time among (1) school visits; (2) individual and group conferences; (3) meetings; (4) work in the county education office; and (5) professional reading and "thinking through."

School visits. The supervisor visited schools and classrooms to see results of work done and to help individuals or groups with special problems such as health education, teaching science, making use of resource persons and materials, thinking together in terms of

³This diary was kept for one year when the supervisor was serving as an intern under the direction of the University of Georgia and the Georgia State Department of Education.

⁴Harper & Bros., 1946.

enrichment of children's reading experiences, and teaching social studies.

He distributed reading matter that might provide some insight into personal teaching problems. He did some demonstration teaching, helped teachers and pupils in working out better schedules for use of their time in school, and helped teachers begin to formulate a set of values to guide them in their work. The supervisor also planned with teachers and pupils for improving lighting and color in classrooms and with principals for better use of available space. He helped teachers, pupils, and parents plan for school lunchrooms, and he helped with the selection of teaching aids of all kinds.

Conferences. Conferences were held to help plan county teachers' meetings. The supervisor met with faculty planning groups to set up objectives for the year. He helped with the planning of community meetings and with ways of using service organizations and persons in the county. A lighting specialist was secured from a glass company; a consultant on color schemes was furnished by a paint company; piano teachers and former teachers with varied talents in the community were used to enrich the school program.

Meetings. State and district conferences and lectures were among the meetings attended by the supervisor during the year.

County education office. Besides assisting the county superintendent in making out textbook orders in accordance with recommendations of teacher groups, the supervisor held planning and evaluation conferences with the county superintendent as a means of securing support of the supervisory pro-

gram from the superintendent and the county board of education.

A report on one such session is included in the diary.

February 28, (Conference with county superintendent):

We thought in terms of how near we have come toward reaching our goals as they were set up in our county-wide pre-planning session.

The total program in our county has been strengthened through county-wide planning, individual schools working through their own problems, teachers and pupils working and thinking through issues that concern them. At all levels of the county program the supervisor has either contributed to the success or failure of the job or has assumed a position of leadership.

We have strengthened our program in the classroom through the use of many books on levels suitable to the needs of the pupils. We have placed much reading material on many subjects in the classrooms. Science centers have been promoted on a wide interest basis. Field trips have been taken as a means of seeing at first hand many of the things about which the pupils have been concerned in their science studies.

The school plants in many communities have been improved in a large measure through community participation in the school, planning and working together to solve the problems confronting the groups. Supplies and equipment in varying amounts have contributed in a large measure to the success of our school program. Most of this material came by way of local effort on the part of parents and interested citizens.

Professional reading and thinking through. One of the most valuable features of his plan for time use, according to the supervisor, was the setting aside of Wednesday as a day in the office to read, to gather materials promised to different teachers, to study his diary, and think through what had been accomplished and what needed to be done next.

The rural supervisor summed up his way of working with teachers by saying that he tried to help each one see that the teacher is a "vital person in the school program." He also lent help to teachers when it was needed, "not always waiting to be asked but being sensitive to the needs of the staff."

Recent Trends

The work of the two supervisors reported in this article represents many desirable trends in supervision. There was provision for both teacher and supervisor growth, and teachers and pupils were helped to look back to see the distance they had traveled. There was work with both individuals and groups, with group planning of the large framework within which all would work. The supervisors described performed specific services to facilitate the educational program at every possible point. They also encouraged teachers to try new things and provided for the spread of good ideas.

Further Study Needed

Brief excerpts from professional diaries do not give a complete picture of a person's work. To suggest that the

supervisors in question make improvement at certain points would be presumptuous. However, it is the writer's belief that there is general need for study of three phases of supervision.

The first is to acquire more and more skill in helping teachers clarify and plan to attack the problems they see in their situations. This can be done more readily if some one person does not set for the group tasks like writing a course of study or introducing more science into the curriculum. The ideas of an individual may or may not be worthy; that is beside the point.

The second area needing more thought is the effectiveness of direct advice-giving. Are there other and better ways of helping people solve problems?

The third area for study is how to encourage thoughtful, group-planned experimentation which is designed to improve practice as widely and rapidly as possible.

There will always be a great deal of going and coming to the job of supervision. Any supervisor may feel some satisfaction if only teachers and pupils are glad to see him come and sorry to have him go.

Bibliography on Elementary Education and Related Fields

The 1950 edition is off the press and on sale for 50 cents. This revised bibliography has almost 300 annotated items in such varied fields as: child development, health, music, art, reading, arithmetic, science, rural education, psychology, audio-visual, and teacher education, with lists of pamphlets and indexes. This bibliography will be invaluable to all persons working with elementary children. Order your copy from:

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