

November as the third school camp project. The sixth graders of this year are already making plans for their camp this spring.

Resource persons utilized in the three school camp experiences included: A county agent and a farmer; three soil conservationists; the state geologist; two state foresters (of South Carolina); the superintendents of the State Park and of the National Monument; consultant in guidance of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; the director and a consultant of the North Carolina School-Health Coordinating

Service; county nurse and county health educator; a regional biologist and a regional game manager of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission; two members of the Education Division of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission; two resource specialists of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; an extension entomologist of the North Carolina State College.

Plans have been developed for a number of special resource projects in classes and schools at home as a result of the three camps.

Role of the Consultant in Curriculum Improvement

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The effective curriculum consultant must be competent both in his area of specialization and in the area of consultation for curriculum improvement. Marcella R. Lawler is Associate Professor of Education and Executive Officer of the Curriculum Service Center at Teachers College, Columbia University.

IN school situations and in professional literature the word "consultant" is an increasingly popular term. Some school systems are designating as consultants their special subject-matter resource people and general supervisors. State departments of education are likewise using the term for staff members. Both local school systems and state departments are using the term for specialists brought in for a particular work conference or an individual meeting. In colleges and universities throughout the country where cooperative research pro-

grams are being developed or where other kinds of in-service education are under way the "field workers" are generally known as consultants.

In this discussion the consultant is the resource person who comes from outside a school and who has a continuing relationship with a faculty group. "From outside a school" may mean from outside the school system; it may mean from the central office. The problems which will be dealt with in this article are considered to be applicable to either situation.

Consultant as Resource Person

Simply stated, the role of the consultant is to act as a resource person in helping a teacher and administrative group to deepen understandings and become proficient in the use of new techniques necessary to develop the most desirable kind of school program with children. To do this it is important that he bring to the job, first, competency in his area of specialization with a workable knowledge of what constitutes a desirable educational program for children and youth; and second, a special competency in the area of consultation for curriculum improvement.

It is assumed in this discussion that a person working as a consultant in a special area or at a particular level has a background of training and experience that provides him with special competency in that area. In this discussion, attention will be given to the way the consultant works with teachers and administrators in a particular situation.

WHO EXTENDS INVITATION TO CONSULTANT?

The assistance which a consultant is able to give a group is directly related to the group's willingness for and interest in receiving assistance. The consultant should therefore be brought into a situation only upon invitation by the staff. It is not necessary that a total district or school staff participate in work on curriculum programs with a consultant. It is necessary that those who do participate do so freely and willingly, without any kind of pressure—salary increases, administrative edict or prestige factors.

The consultant should make clear to

those who invite him into the school that he will work with them only if the teachers are really interested in having assistance. Even with an initial visit in the situation, it is not always easy for the consultant to discover whether there is teacher interest and willingness. Consultants who have honestly tried to learn whether or not there was teacher interest and readiness for consultant assistance have sometimes failed. Such questions from teachers as, "*What will you want us to do?*" or "*What is your program?*" should be explored satisfactorily. If this kind of question is asked by many teachers, it may be evidence that teachers did not participate in the decision to request consultant help.

AT WHAT POINT DOES CONSULTANT ENTER THE PICTURE?

For Initial Exploration

It is desirable that the consultant go into a situation prior to his actually beginning work in order that he may have an opportunity to look at the situation and in order that the local staff may have an opportunity to know him. On this initial visit he may see teachers who wish to have him visit their rooms, observe materials and facilities available, see the school in operation and observe relationships. It is well also for the consultant on such an initial visit to have opportunity for conferences with the staff.

Through such an initial visit the consultant can see the actual situation in which he will be working and the staff can observe the consultant at work. If opportunities for working in a situation do not meet his expectations or if a local staff feels he is not the person to

do the job that needs to be done, it is better that the decision be made before work is begun rather than have a program of study disintegrate because of factors that might have been identified prior to the beginning of work.

For Consideration of Area for Study

It is very important that a consultant be with a group when they are exploring the area on which they wish to begin study. Whether or not all those who will work on a project have opportunity to present their ideas for consideration is significant in the development of the study. The thinking of the group in relation to certain points in the area is important. In order that consultant and group may work toward common goals it is essential that they see the same problems and issues in the area identified for study.

Recently a consultant was brought into a high school to work with the staff on a curriculum improvement program. He was told by the principal that in a meeting the staff had voted to begin the work with a study of the home room. There was a home room period but it was really a roll-taking period. In an attempt to orient himself to what teachers saw as problems in the home room, the consultant suggested he meet with groups of staff members throughout the day. The principal efficiently and willingly set up the schedule, helping to cover classes himself. At the end of the day the teachers had not identified the home room problem as either their chief interest or concern. When asked what their chief problems were, teachers through six hours of conferences had identified these: (1) children do not take responsibility; (2) children are in-

different; (3) children's citizenship is poor; and (4) children copy.

When asked what they saw as problems in the home room, teachers said the home room period was too short; they could only take roll; and children were called out continually by other teachers, the office, doctor or nurse. Many staff members countered, however, with such questions as: *If the home room is only for study, why lengthen it? What do you think is the purpose of a home room? Citizenship isn't the responsibility of the home room teacher, is it? What do you do in a home room?*

Change in Problem Emphasis

What caused the change in problem emphasis? Did the consultant in the way he asked questions or pointed the discussion place consideration of problems in an entirely different framework from that in which the previous discussion had taken place? He thought he had left the discussion open, but at the end of the day teachers had not indicated the home room as their chief concern for the instructional program. Did the change in leadership of the group from the principal, who was chairman of the first meeting, to the consultant, who was chairman of the second meeting, account for the change in problem areas identified?

The same kind of problem arising from similar circumstances has been repeated many times. If the role of the consultant is to deepen understanding and help people develop new techniques for working, it is important that he understand where teachers are encountering problems and what they see in the situation. This means he must come

into the work with the staff at the beginning of the exploration of the area for study.

DOES THE CONSULTANT TELL US OR WORK WITH US?

New insights which we have concerning the importance in the learning process of people's setting their own goals, planning their course of action, exploring ideas together and coming to decisions, makes the role of the consultant at the present time more difficult. The consultant's responsibility to the group is to help them study and grow in the most effective way. However, experience is causing many consultants, who find themselves in a situation where teachers have always been "told" by the supervisors and the outside specialist, to question seriously the advisability of moving abruptly into the stage in which teachers are expected to plan and to explore ideas together.

Teachers will say, "We've listened to one another's ideas for ten years. We know what we think. We want to know what you think." There is a very real problem at this point of transition in building background with a group so that understandings will be deepened and new areas opened. In this way group members are not re-exploring their ten-year-old ideas, but rather are looking at problems from a new orientation.

It may at times be profitable to open an area for consideration with a twenty- or thirty-minute presentation by the consultant. This is especially true in the early days of a program. Following such a presentation, questions and discussion will point the way for study, for development of work plans, for use of resource

people within the school or community, for other school or classroom visitation within the same building and possibly for testing of some ideas in classroom situations.

The idea that a consultant never formally opens up an area for consideration with a school staff would seem to be erroneous. Certainly this should not be the usual way of working, but neither should it be eliminated as one possible approach. There is a problem here of timing, of meeting group needs. The movement should unquestionably be away from the "experts telling" and to cooperative exploration of problems and making of plans for moving ahead, but the group's level of expectation must be recognized and plans made accordingly. The transition must be a studied and thoughtful one so that the school group will move ahead as smoothly and effectively as possible.

HOW DOES THE CONSULTANT'S WORK AFFECT THE ENTIRE SCHOOL PROGRAM?

The consultant must work in relation to an entire school program. He must be a *unifier*, not a *segmenter*. He must be able to see the implications of what he is doing for other areas and levels of the school program.

The consultant working in the field of English and believing the socio-economic status of the community has definite influence on the speech pattern of the child may suggest that the staff and children plan a study of the community. What implications does such a study have at the high school level for departments other than English? Would it be beneficial to include teachers and students from all high school departments—especially social studies, mathematics.

science and health? What are the possibilities? What are the ways of working together on the project?

The consultant working at the high school level with teachers on how to study children often begins by asking teachers what information is now available about the pupils. This naturally leads to an examination of records kept in the elementary school. Oftentimes such a study leads to a system-wide examination as to information needed about children in order to develop an adequate school program, with the result that a total school rather than a segment of it becomes involved in the study. It is important that the consultant see such possibilities.

WHAT IS FORWARD-LOOKING EDUCATION THEORY AND PRACTICE?

The consultant's responsibility for deepening insights and developing skill in the use of new techniques necessitates his knowing frontier theory and practice. It is no longer enough for a curriculum consultant to go into a school and assist teachers in rearranging subject-matter content of a course of study. In his dual role as a specialist in a particular area and a specialist in offering consultation to the staff, he must help teachers become acquainted with frontier thinking and practice in the field. For example, what are the concepts of child growth and development which might influence teaching in elementary and secondary education today? What implications do studies in anthropology hold for teachers working to improve the instructional program for their schools? What does psychological research say is the best method for teaching spelling? At what stage and how

should laymen be included in curriculum planning?

IS THE CONSULTANT RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKING WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION?

The curriculum consultant's role requires that he work with any problem that impinges upon the curriculum. There are many points upon which the administration and teacher group must have common agreement with the consultant if a program of curriculum improvement is to show results in classroom practice. For example,

¶ Is there freedom for critical examination of classroom practice and freedom to try new ideas as they are discussed and developed by the group? The principal, the superintendent of schools, the school board must be willing to say, "We will allow teachers to try ideas which have been mutually agreed upon by teachers, parents, students, principal and consultant working together." If administrative sanction other than that of the building principal is involved, those people should likewise be included in the planning from the beginning. Nothing will destroy teachers' interest more quickly than for them to work long on a program, and then have the administration refuse to let them go ahead to try ideas. The curriculum consultant's role requires that he anticipate the need for exploration with administration of problems that may arise as the teachers move into changes in classroom procedures.

¶ This entire discussion of the role of the consultant is predicated on the idea of the consultant's planning cooperatively with teachers in development of the curriculum. If this procedure is followed in the work done on curriculum

with the consultant, it should be followed by the administration in its work with these teachers in other aspects of the school's program. The teacher who is planning with other teachers on ways to improve the instructional program for children will wonder why he should continue to be concerned about the school program if he receives through the mail from the administration an announcement which nullifies much of the work which has been done. The consultant is obligated to help the administration understand that if he is going to work cooperatively with a staff on curriculum problems it is important to support this with a cooperative approach in all areas of activity.

¶ Much of the security of the teacher who is trying to improve the learning experiences of children depends upon the interest and support of the principal, fellow workers and parents. Ways of insuring this interest and support should be developed as the curriculum study progresses. Because the consultant recognizes the importance of teacher security to the success of the instructional improvement program, he should work with the building principal and with the district administrative officers on ways to assure teacher security.

¶ A curriculum improvement program for which continuing consultative help is sought does not imply that these are teachers who do not know how to teach. It does say, "Here is a group of teachers interested in doing the best possible job for these children. They have asked for help." The fact that a supervisor from the central office is willing to spend a day or two a month with them is not a criticism of the group, but rather a compliment. The consultant should work with the administration on ways to develop this understanding among children and parents. If the question, "Don't our teachers know

their business?" is asked a few times by parents, a study program may disappear.

¶ Curriculum improvement programs require much time and effort by a school staff. It is often necessary for teachers to have a block of four or five hours together in which to work. Occasionally at least part of this time should come from a school day. Work to improve the learning situation for children is an important part of the professional job of a teacher, and occasional in-school time should be allowed for that job. If there is not a policy in a district which provides that teachers may be released from teaching occasionally in blocks of time for concentrated work, if there is never provision for planning time in a school day, the consultant is responsible for calling this problem to the attention of the administrative officers and for trying to begin to plan with the administration toward improving the situation.

Space does not permit development here of many other areas for which the school administration in a school system must be responsible but which directly affect the curriculum and therefore are of concern to a consultant as he works in a school. Some of these areas are materials and facilities for instruction, coordination of work between the consultant's visits, communication within a building and within a system concerning work under way, ways of working which involve substitutes for teachers, shortened school days, and lay participation in curriculum planning.

In summary, this discussion has pointed out that the consultant must be competent in his area of specialization. It has then developed the idea that just as important as competency in his area of specialization is his ability as a

worker for curriculum improvement. In this capacity he must:

- Take steps to be as certain as possible that teachers wish to work on an instructional improvement program.
- Provide opportunity for staff members who wish to work on the program to become acquainted with him before the time when they must make the decision on consultant personnel.
- If possible be present at the discussions in which teachers identify the area or areas for study so he will understand their interests and concerns in those areas. If this is not possible, he should purposely create an occasion when he will have opportunity to gain the necessary background.
- Be aware of the readiness of the group for the cooperative study and development of the particular area to be considered.
- Move gradually with the group from their level of expectation to a more sophisticated level of planning and study.
- See the implications of what is being done in any one area for the entire school program.
- Provide teachers with opportunities to explore frontier thinking and practice.
- Be aware of and work with the school administration on areas usually thought of as administrative which affect teachers in their work for curriculum improvement.

Effective Teachers Follow Through

TOM GARDNER

The effective teacher's classroom methods must be consistent with his stated philosophy. Tom Gardner, teacher in East High School, Denver, Colorado, discusses the necessity for such 'follow through' if ideas are to find expression in action.

"THE TEACHER, in the final analysis, determines the content of any course he is conducting. If he sees that students are in danger of choosing a topic which he feels is not suitable, he must steer the thinking of the group toward choice of a more suitable topic."

The speaker was a participant in a workshop on problems of general education held during the summer of 1949. The leader of the workshop did not reveal his own thinking on the topic raised by the speaker. Many of the other participants, however, found difficulty in restraining themselves from open

and arbitrary opposition to the point of view being expressed.

This article is not intended as a polemic on the advantages or disadvantages to be derived from pupil participation in planning. It is, however, a plea for honesty on the part of the teacher who may have decided to experiment with the idea of "allowing" the boys and girls of his junior or senior high school class, or the young men and young women of his college class, to have a voice in the determination of the content of the course of study which they will follow for the ensuing days

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