

visiting Miss Bessie's room, and the pat on the back Miss Bessie had given to that "dummy" George. She remembered how "the shy one" had smiled when the group had said he had done well as a group leader. She remembered how Susan, "the smarty," "the high I.Q.," had taken pleasure in helping Eloise with penmanship. "*Penmanship—horror!*" thought Polly. "*There were penmanship, and phonics, and drill in the multiplication table!*"

Slowly as a drowning person, Polly

emerged to the light. Miss Bessie was standing beside her. Polly looked up and said, "Miss Bessie, it's *kids* that matter most, isn't it!"

Miss Bessie nodded agreement, saying, "Yes, of course. And it'll be your turn next—next year." Miss Bessie knew what she meant, but Polly didn't. Polly was busy with dreams. She smiled as she saw next year's headlines: "Crusader for Children Elected President." And in small letters, far down in the article, was the name of Polly Pratt.

Curriculum Research

Column Editor: C. W. Hunnicutt
Contributor: Merle A. Stoneman

IMPROVING INSTRUCTION IN RURAL AREAS

PROVIDING adequate supervisory service in small towns and rural areas is largely a matter of encouraging and providing for effective group activity. Assembling groups of teachers with similar interests and aims is perhaps a bit more difficult here than in larger centers of population with centralized school administration. Cooperation among numerous small administrative units calls for a type of planning and an element of understanding not required elsewhere. To complicate the situation further, obstacles of distance and the customary lack of trained personnel remain to be overcome.

Many educators have shown that improvement of instruction through in-service training of teachers depends largely upon sufficient group activity under capable leadership. To achieve this result in rural areas may require close cooperation among several school

systems as well as between them and the regional teacher-education institutions. In some instances county superintendents or rural supervisors are taking the lead in planning and implementing in-service training programs. Unfortunately, however, many rural areas still exist where local educational leadership is proving inadequate.

Guides to Improvement Developed

In many rural areas teachers have no opportunity to meet together for cooperative planning and evaluation of their work. This is equally true in villages and small towns where young, inexperienced, and but partially trained administrators and teachers need effective leadership and encouragement. Any meetings held are likely to be annual or semi-annual institutes or conferences devoted chiefly to lectures or demonstrations.

To help teachers meet the social needs of six-year-olds—

TOM AND SUSAN

Social Development Primer

by Paul R. Hanna and Genevieve Anderson Hoyt

Here is a new contribution toward helping teachers meet the needs of six-year-olds for learning how to get along happily in group situations. We know that the six-year-old is often self-centered, interested primarily in "me" and "my," and still quite dependent on others for what they can do for him. It's important for him to begin finding real pleasure in group undertakings, to start thinking in terms of "we" and "our," and at the same time to become more independent in solving his own problems and making his own contribution to the group.

The Teacher's Edition of *Tom and Susan* provides an informal account of how one teacher undertook this forward-looking social-development task. It shows how she studied her group to determine their individual needs, how she got them started working together, how she used the true-to-life pictures and easy-to-read stories in *Tom and Susan* to help achieve the results she was seeking. You see her experiment with simple socio-dramas; you see her study the children's dramatic play for what it can tell her about them; you see her reach out and bring the parents into the picture—in simple conferences and get-togethers that other teachers could arrange.

This whole Teacher's Edition—with the beautifully illustrated pupils' text included—could be resource material for a stimulating workshop or study group on social development. It's coming from the press early in 1951.

Examination material on request

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Several guides to effective improvement of small school situations are emerging as a result of various experiences of teacher groups. Most valuable results seem to appear when:

- Teachers meet periodically in groups and all contribute ideas. Acceptance and implementation of ideas as plans of action follow more naturally when these ideas originate in a cooperative group. Such an approach enables teachers better to understand and encourage one another.
- Groups meet frequently; as often as every two to four weeks.
- Participation is voluntary, since compulsion of any type inhibits creative thinking and cooperative action.
- Planning is largely concerned with programs that can be implemented directly in the classroom. Theoretical programs all too frequently have been found not to extend beyond the discussion stage or the printed page.
- Plans are put into practice and records are kept of results.
- Results are promptly evaluated. The same group that formulated the plans evaluates the results.
- Wherever possible, planning and evaluative activities are part of the school time of the teacher—not an added professional burden.
- There is effective coordination of pre-service and in-service training agencies. A large proportion of teachers in rural and small-town schools have only partially completed the academic educational program established for fully qualified teachers.

Better Leadership Available

Leadership in these programs is being provided in a variety of ways. As the office of the county or rural area superintendent receives more professional assistance, better leadership is becoming

Educational Leadership

available. Another important source of leadership is the teacher-education institution. Ideas tested by immediate classroom application in public schools are often more effective than traditional instruction in the atmosphere of the college classroom and the campus demonstration school. These field activities help the college staff members better to understand various community problems, teacher difficulties, and pupil characteristics. Restriction to campus activities has a narrowing effect upon those responsible for college instruction. The opportunity afforded a college to carry on effective on-the-job research is a strong argument in favor of a cooperative relationship between college and community.

Organization of teacher groups may have important geographic and administrative implications. Cooperation among several more or less independent school districts can be brought about only through effective leadership and can be continued only by demonstrated accomplishment. The county is sometimes the natural unit of organization, while individual school districts are adequate in other cases. The nature of each situation should determine whether the planned activity ought to be of a "credit" or "non-credit" type. There is a place for each type of in-service training experience.

Coordination of the efforts of small town and rural area administrators, teachers, county and state department personnel, and regional teacher education institutions for improving instruction offers a rich field for experimentation in an area far too frequently neglected.

Little research has yet been reported and few if any principles have been established under carefully observed conditions. This is a field that is well adapted to action research. If the many

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college people and public school leaders now engaged in field programs keep careful records of their experiences with attendant successes and failures, evaluations and implications, knowledge

may be rapidly advanced. The outcome can do much to improve the quality of instruction available to youth in smaller communities.—*Merle A. Stone-*
man, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Letters from Abroad

Column Editor: Gertrude H. Fitzwater
Contributor: Immanuel Yafeh

EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

Education is full-time partner to the pioneer in the settlement and construction programs of the world's youngest democracy. Immanuel Yafeh, contributor of this month's letter, is headmaster, Elementary Division, Reali School, and Lecturer on Method and Supervisor of Practice Teaching, Teachers College, Haifa, Israel.

Mr. Yafeh is a graduate of Hebrew Teachers College, Jerusalem, and has studied at the Institute of Education, University of London. Most of his twenty-one years in professional work have been spent in elementary education. He is author of four books for children. At present, Mr. Yafeh is observing schools in the United States under sponsorship of the Department of State and of the Office of Education.

HEBREW educators in what was, until 1948, Mandatory Palestine, could boast several outstanding achievements.

Foremost among these was the revival of the Hebrew language, which in two generations ceased to be a dead, classical language like Latin or Sanskrit. It became a living language, in use at home and in the streets, in kindergarten and university, in newspapers, in research and in literature.

Another achievement was establishment of a system of public schools which provided education to practically every Jewish child in the country. This system, in 1948, provided for about 100,000 pupils, enrolled in kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, continuation schools, vocational schools and teacher-training institutions. A Hebrew university, a technical college of university standard, and an institute for research and post-graduate studies were established also. Illiteracy was practically nonexistent. All

this was accomplished without the authority of a government, without a law of compulsory education, and often without adequate funds and under adverse conditions.

The Jewish youth of the country were from an early age taking active part in the life and aspirations of the young, democratic community. They were inculcated with constructive and positive ideas, they were bent on pioneering and settlement, and they acquired a peaceful approach to international problems and a proper esteem for other cultures and peoples. These were the qualities which enabled the youth of Palestine, and later Israel, to do their part in the resettlement and rebuilding of the country, and (this is not a paradox) to win their war.

With the establishment of the State of Israel great progress could be expected. One of the early steps of the new government was to introduce compulsory education, free of charge, for

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