

# How a Coordinator Works with Teachers and Principals

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The charts and the content of this article were originally prepared in response to a request from a local PTA unit asking the intermediate coordinator to interpret her services. The talk was later repeated for the Modesto, California, PTA Council. It represents an account of the various ways in which the coordinator, as one member of a city staff, served during the year, 1951-1952.<sup>1</sup>

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY of the Educational Services Division of the Modesto City Schools is to contribute such service to teachers and principals that all Modesto children may grow successfully (Chart 1). Toward accomplishment of this goal, all proudly serve.

In the fall of 1951, with two out of five of the teachers new to the system at the elementary level, it was felt that a two-day orientation meeting for new teachers only (Chart 2) should be held. At this time emphasis was placed on the teaching of the "Three R's." New teachers had the opportunity to handle basic books, to receive pamphlets and bulletins, to see exhibits of student-made materials and to participate in group discussion. All principals were

## How A Coordinator Works With Teachers And Principals To Help Children Grow Successfully



CHART 1: Cooperative planning promotes successful growth.



CHART 2: New teachers attend orientation meeting

encouraged to attend these meetings. The following day new teachers met their co-workers in their respective buildings. On the fourth day all teachers in the system from junior college to kindergarten attended an Institute session. Other courtesies extended to new teachers were the services of the Modesto Teachers Association in helping them find new homes and a reception

<sup>1</sup>In Modesto, California, there are fifteen elementary schools (Kg.-VI), eleven elementary principals, and one hundred and eighty teachers. During the year, 1951-52, one hundred teachers taught grades III through VI. Of this group forty teachers were new to the system. The intermediate coordinator is responsible for coordination of the Audio-Visual program throughout the elementary schools, the oral and written Language, the Social Studies, Science, and Art program in grades III through VI.



CHART 3: Teachers and others make early survey of immediate needs.

by the PTA Council. With some modifications, a similar procedure is being followed again in the fall of 1952.

Immediately with the opening of school, the Division of Educational Services planned a quick survey of immediate needs (Chart 3). Three members of the Division visited approximately five schools each. *It is interesting to note that the services varied according to the needs as principals saw them.* In many cases, however, the principal, coordinator and new teacher had a conference. By this contact the services became individualized. Talks centered around the planning for a balanced program, setting up attractive and challenging room environments, arranging for organization that would provide for democratic living, and selecting a wide variety of instructional materials. Working in this capacity, the coordinator became a resource person as she contributed to the pre-planning of new teacher and principal.

Immediately following this visitation, a written report was made for the Curriculum Director. After reading all reports, the director called in all members of the Division for an informal meeting

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(Chart 4). In each situation where need seemed most acute, responsibility for help was delegated to an appropriate member of the Division. This quick survey, made within a period of two weeks, revealed a composite picture of immediate needs and gave direction for classroom visits and help. Periodic meetings were held throughout the year to solve problems and coordinate services.

It has been noted that emphasis at the orientation meeting was placed on the teaching of the Three R's. Early in the fall an approach in another field came through an invitation to attend grade-level meetings (Chart 5) in the field of Social Studies. These meetings were held after school and lasted approximately an hour. They were attended by principals and *all* teachers within a given grade level.

Accounts of curriculum work accomplished during the preceding spring were shared by members of the committee, exhibits of related art and



CHART 4: Educational Services Division plans classroom visits and help.

## Grade Level Meetings Social Studies

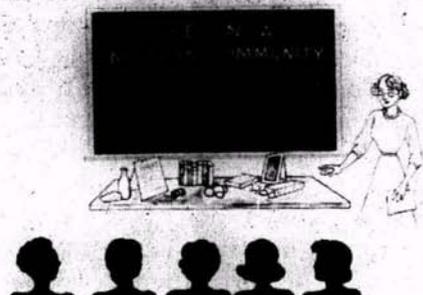


CHART 5: Teachers participate in grade-level meetings.

language work done by the boys and girls during the past year were on display, new instructional materials were shown, and some ways for working in the immediate future were planned. Teachers repeatedly expressed the satisfaction they received from attending the grade-level meetings. As one teacher put it, "I really had no notion of how to begin my Social Studies work until I attended the meeting for fourth grade teachers."

### Long-Range Curriculum Planning

In the fall of 1951 the county and the city school systems agreed to long-range planning in curriculum development in the field of Social Studies, Science, and Health (Chart 6). The services of a consultant from San Francisco State

College were secured to help launch the program. All teachers, attending the four meetings under the guidance of this consultant, received Institute credit. During the first year the major task was to develop the science concepts relating to the Social Studies Framework for the State of California. In the interlude between general meetings, the work was carried forward by local consultants and sustaining teacher committees. Many teachers new to the system made significant contributions to the groups.

The work of the coordinator had many facets. It involved many meetings with the steering committee for the pre-planning of each general session. It meant working with sub-committees to develop a tentative set of science concepts for the respective grades. Other committees met to examine instructional materials (books, study prints, strip films, slides and films) and to make recommendations for purchase. There were still other committee meetings to formulate the tentative structure for the first written draft. Various members contributed to the writing of the resource units. To

*Illustrations used in this article were drawn by Bessie Heller, staff artist, Bureau of Audio-Visual Education, State Department of Education, Sacramento, California. Photographs for the half-tones were made by Manuel Dias, photographer, Office of County Superintendent of Schools, Stanislaus County, Modesto, California. The illustrations and photographs are used with their kind permission.*

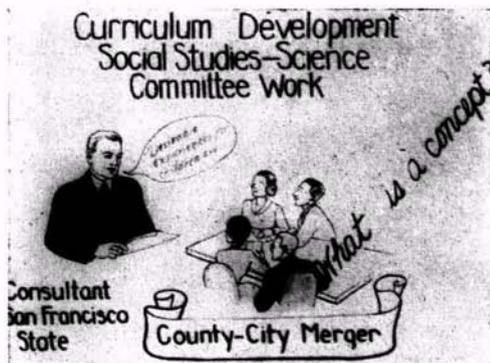


CHART 6: A consultant helps make long-range plans for curriculum development.

distribute the working load, the county and the city curriculum department each agreed to assume the responsibility for completing the first draft for two grade areas. This project, working to develop resource materials reflecting the integrative point of view in the content areas, will continue for at least two more years.

Last year a very significant move and one that had much bearing on curriculum development was the audio-visual film merger between the Modesto City Schools and the Stanislaus County Schools. An advisory council committee of five members was organized to give direction, to solve difficulties, and to work for smoother coordination between city and county. Teacher committees, under the direction of the County Audio-Visual Director, worked in geographical areas to preview, select and recommend for purchase new films according to needs. Other visual materials including study prints, strip films, recordings and slides, were also selected. However, the circulation of these materials was not a part of the merger. Teachers and children also aided in the selection of these materials. It is a

part of long-range planning that minimum kits be purchased for each school as soon as adequate funds are made available. The problem of light control, the selection of minimum equipment and good classroom utilization were other phases of the programs. All requests for audio-visual materials were cleared over the coordinator's desk. Careful consideration to the purchase and use of instructional aids is a definite part of curriculum development and implementation and requires the closest coordination.

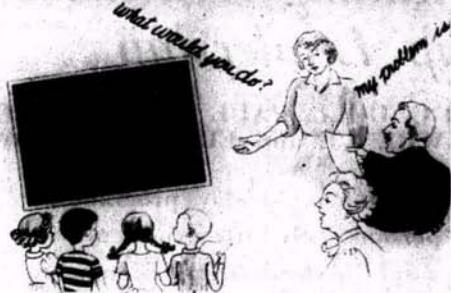
### Working at the Building Level

Another aspect of the service of a coordinator came as she met with individual staffs at the Monday faculty meetings (Chart 7). For example, during the past year much work was done to implement the Language Arts Guide now in its first revised form. Samples of work included in the guide by Modesto boys and girls helped the new teacher see what was meant by the integrated approach to language. In order to help the teachers understand the guide, they were encouraged to keep a class scrapbook containing samples of written work throughout the year. Last year the making of a series of tape recordings showing various phases of oral language was begun. It was felt that this technique not only helped the boys and girls recognize their needs but the recordings themselves served as excellent teacher-education material. Real progress is being made in the field of Language Arts where principals undergird the program. One teacher characterized her growth from participating on the Language Committee by saying, "I needed this. I was getting in a rut."



CHART 7: Work at the building level is most effective.

## Classroom Visitation And Teacher Conference



### Principal and Consultant Observe Together

CHART 8: Important gains come through classroom visitation and teacher conference.

It will be noted that much stress has been placed on ways of working with groups, but the supervisory technique of classroom visitation (Chart 8) has not been ignored. Perhaps first consideration was given to those teachers in their first three years of teaching. However, the more experienced teacher was not forgotten. The need for approval, encouragement and recognition is also important for her continued success. Her contributions were invaluable.

In schools where greatest gains came from classroom visitation, the following procedures were observed. A schedule was prepared in advance by the principal. Each teacher knew when the coordinator was coming. Usually some aspect of the program for which the coordinator was responsible was in progress. The principal observed, also, and the observation was followed by a conference including all three members. Thus, common problems were shared and a kindred feeling of concern and understanding was established. Many teachers have said that the personal conference technique was the most helpful of all meetings. Following the

classroom visitation a report was made for the director of curriculum and a copy sent to the principal. These were often shared with the teacher.

Throughout the fall various members of the Educational Services Division interpreted their work at meetings of the Board of Elementary Principals. Later each principal was invited to meet with members of the Division to evaluate progress and to set goals for his individual school. In situations where this was done most effectively each principal met with his staff and talked over each phase of the program. This included everything from keeping records to interpreting the school to parents. The principals then summarized the thinking of the staff and shared the resulting inventory and goals with members of the Division. This aided various coordinators to plan with principals by giving support to each school and staff according to individual goals.

Supervision is a service for the growth of boys and girls. The teacher is the greatest single contributing factor to a child's progress in school. In the Modesto schools great effort is made to help the teacher become more successful through attending orientation meetings, through personal conferences following classroom visits, by participating in curriculum planning and development, and by setting goals and measuring progress.

This article is a progress report. Through reviewing her services in retrospect, the writer's vision for the new year has become clearer. It is imperative that the coordinator, too, evaluate progress and set new goals.

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