

fields, and to provide assistance in experimental study of local problems. Short-time seminars on immediate problems, rather than classes given year after year, are one form of direct response to need. In addition, the institutions mentioned need to do more to develop in their regular students the desire and ability to continue research beyond the student career, as witnessed

by the large number of people who publish a single study in education.

These eight propositions suggest the attack is many-pronged. Using research to point the way in curriculum change is a cooperative endeavor involving many talents. It is an enterprise which, in itself, should be tested and expanded by research methods, for only beginning proposals are stated here.



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ORGANIZING for Effective Instruction

The problem of how best to organize the school or school system for effective instruction is still a central question. This article discusses several basic principles which should govern in setting up an organization to improve instruction.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION is one of the major current problems in education from the kindergarten through the graduate college. Good teaching has always been the principal measure of the success of any school or school system. In recent years the rapid growth in enrollments, the broader demands upon schools, and more critical examination of school programs by the general public have

intensified the quest for better methods of teaching.

Research in many fields has thrown new light upon the teaching-learning process. The child study movement that hit its stride during the 1930's has influenced practice in the better elementary schools. It has been reported that 2700 studies of reading and 1100 studies of arithmetic are now available. How can classroom procedure be brought into line with what is known about child growth and development? What changes in organization and procedure are needed before the findings of research can be used to best advantage?

The nature of groups, group proc-

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esses and group leadership has been studied extensively both in education and in industry. It has been found, for example, that the productivity of workers is influenced more by giving them a voice in policy making than by changes relating to physical working conditions. How can the results of extensive research and experimentation in human relationships be utilized to the best advantage in the instructional program and in staff relationships? These examples point to the need not only for effective organization but for skillful, democratic leadership as well.

Organizing for Cooperative Action

Organizing schools for effective instruction involves several related problems. Organizing the staff for cooperative action, organizing learning experiences, organizing the class for living and learning, and organizing citizens for active participation in school improvement—each of these presents a challenge to educational leadership. This article deals primarily with the first of these problems.

The Primary Purpose of Staff Organization is To Facilitate the Attainment of Educational Objectives. The improvement of instruction is a cooperative enterprise. Teachers contribute more to the enterprise when they have a part in developing objectives, in planning programs, and in evaluating outcomes. It is the function of educational leadership to help the staff develop an organization through which each member can participate in the manner best suited to his talents.

An organization of faculty commit-

tees sometimes comes out of the office of the administrator without previous consultation relating to the objectives that members of the faculty would like to attain through cooperative action. An organization of this kind may actually hinder the attainment of the real objectives accepted by the faculty and consume valuable time and energy that might otherwise be used in constructive directions. How can the administrator work with the entire staff in developing a functional organization for the improvement of instruction?

Organization Should Provide Clearly Defined Channels for Faculty Participation in Policy Making. Our system of public education places a great deal of responsibility for policy making in the hands of the local administrative unit. The administrator may establish policies on his own initiative; he may even label them "our policies." This procedure, however, does not seem to work out well in practice. The principle of the consent of the governed is deeply embedded in our culture. The democratic process, although slower and more difficult to manage, seems to get better results in the long run in education as well as in government. How can members of the staff be made to feel that the objectives are *our* objectives and the program is *our* program? What attitudes and skills on the part of the administrator are required?

Organization Should Serve To Release the Potential Abilities of Individuals. In almost any school there are some teachers with much experience, others with little; some with one type of preparation, some with another. All

have talents they can share, all have limitations, and all need to grow. The organization in which they work may stimulate growth, encourage initiative, and release potential abilities. On the other hand, it may stifle growth, discourage initiative and reduce individual effort to a mere routine of conforming to imposed patterns. How can each member of the staff be encouraged to make his own unique contribution and still work as a member of the team? To what extent does this depend upon an administrator who has a broad understanding of human relationships and skill in working with people?

The Success of Any Type of Organization Depends upon the Climate in Which It Exists. A democracy, no less than a dictatorship, requires organization. The organization in a dictatorship exists in a climate of fear and distrust, of arbitrary authority and of forced conformity. In a democracy the organization must exist in a climate of mutual respect and confidence, of authority derived from the consent of the governed, and of willingness to work for the success of plans agreed upon by the majority.

It can be assumed, of course, that the administrator will be concerned with developing an organization for the improvement of instruction that is in harmony with the general policies of the school system. It is also important that he take into consideration the points of view of members of his own staff. This is true because the success of the organization depends to a large degree upon staff morale. Morale is the factor that enables individuals to live up to their highest possibilities.

When the morale of the group is low, each member contributes only a small fraction of what he has to give; when morale is high members of the group work together in goodwill and with enthusiasm.

Effective staff relationships are impossible unless the administrator demonstrates that group morale is one of his major concerns. Morale grows slowly in an atmosphere of mutual respect and confidence. It can be severely stunted by one false action that shows that the administrator has no respect for decisions reached by the faculty. The situation cannot be remedied merely by developing a new type of organization on paper. It can be remedied only by the slow process of rebuilding staff morale.

How can communication difficulties arising from differences in the preparation of teachers and administrators be overcome? Should the preparation of teachers and administrators have more elements in common?

Organization Should Recognize the Local School as the Principal Unit for Initiating Changes. The policy of having changes in the instructional program developed by the central office or by committees appointed by the central office has not worked out well in practice. Each school has its own staff, student body, and special problems that differ from those of other schools in the system. When changes are made in response to a recognition by the local staff of problems it is facing, the newly developed policies and practices are much more likely to be effective in individual classrooms.

Another advantage of recognizing

the local school unit as the principal agency for initiating changes lies in the fact that it is easier to achieve full participation and to move toward consensus in a small group than in a larger one. Even within the staff of an individual school it may be useful to establish small committees that can operate on a face-to-face basis in giving preliminary consideration to problems that are later brought to the total staff for action.

How can the active participation of all members of a staff be obtained? What provisions are needed to secure continuity in the program? What provision needs to be made for released time to work on curriculum improvement?

Provision Should Be Made for System-Wide Coordination of Programs.

As the faculties of individual schools have worked on their programs for the improvement of instruction they have found that they have many problems and needs in common with other schools in the system. Recognizing the individual school as the principal operational unit does not imply that each school will go its own way without regard for the others. System-wide coordination is needed to facilitate the interchange of promising practices. For this purpose an organization is needed that facilitates communication from the individual schools to the central office and back to individual schools rather than communication that originates in the central office as is frequently the practice.

Such matters as the broad objectives of the school system and the over-all design of the curriculum may need to

be handled on a system-wide basis. Other matters such as specific methods and materials of instruction may be handled better by the staff of the local school unit. System-wide organization is needed, not for the purpose of providing uniformity from school to school but for the purpose of interpreting to the public the reasons for differences among schools.

The need for coordination of programs is met through the organization of central committees or steering committees composed of representatives of the several building units and through the staff of the central office. What special resources need to be provided by the central office? How can the central office provide favorable working conditions to help individual school faculties in curriculum planning?

Staff Organization Should Be Flexible Enough To Permit Groups of Teachers To Work on Problems of Real Concern to Themselves. Organization is a means of achieving real purposes, and when it gets in the way of teachers who have important work to do it should be examined critically. For example, teachers of young children may want to come together to discuss the characteristics of children at that stage of development, instructional materials that have proved to be useful, and ways of working with parents. Teachers of older children may want to work on an entirely different set of problems. How can the organization be flexible enough to permit these activities? Can the administrator become so engrossed with the organization itself that he loses sight of its functions?

An Important Phase of Organizing for Effective Instruction Is That Which Takes Place in the Classroom.

The procedures that are employed by the better classroom teachers as they work with groups of children to release potentials, to develop group morale, to foster initiative and self-direction, and to keep the enterprise moving in fruitful directions are primarily the same as those used by the administrator as he works with the faculty. In either case the problem is to discover the methods of democracy and put these to work in human relationships.

The over-all organization of the staff is only a means to an end; the classroom is the place where the actual improvement of instruction takes place. The problem of organizing the class for effective learning and living involves understanding and skill in the area of human relationships, in providing a good environment for learning, and in fostering the type of discipline required of free men.

How can the findings of research in the area of group dynamics be made available to teachers in a form that they can understand and use? How can teachers become more effective in developing a good environment for

learning? What does research have to offer on the results of different types of classroom control?

Organization for Effective Instruction Should Make Provision for Community Participation. The education of all American children and youth is not a job for the schools alone; it requires the combined efforts of home, school and community. The last few decades have, therefore, witnessed unusual efforts on the part of educators to secure the cooperation of lay citizens in the formulation of school policies, in the actual instruction that goes on in the classrooms, and in the evaluation of school programs. Examples of this can be found in a recent publication of the Metropolitan School Study Council, *Fifty Teachers to a Classroom* (Macmillan Company, New York) and in the work of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools.

Is there a danger in submitting to citizens the solution of problems for which the layman has little technical preparation? How can this problem be solved and still provide opportunities for lay citizens to participate in policy making?



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