Supervision as Co-operative Action.


Muriel Crosby in her book, Supervision as Co-operative Action, has delved into the richness of her background of experience and brought forth many helpful ideas and suggestions for educational leaders who are attempting to translate theory into practice. From the beginning her readers are assured that the action which she describes was developed with real people through actual supervisory experiences.

The author, while acknowledging that there may be an opposing point of view, supports the thesis that supervisors are special people with an important function in present day education. She describes modern supervision as a service to the teacher and states that it is not "a retread of an old worn-out function; it is a new service founded on research into the ways people learn and the dynamics of human relationships." To perform this service for teachers the supervisor must bring to her job "a wealth of knowledge about children and curriculum, an understanding of the role of education in modern living, skills in working effectively with people, and an aptitude for creating situations which make it possible for teachers to help themselves solve their problems."

The early chapters of this book present in interesting and carefully chronicled detail the work of Amy Slowe, helping teacher in the Alden School District, as she works with new teachers, both experienced and inexperienced, helping them to identify their problems and to plan a proposed solution. By sharp contrast in supervisory procedures is the brief but striking appearance in the narrative of Mrs. Fast, "a supervisor in the next school district."

Miss Crosby has attempted to epitomize through Mrs. Slowe the patient, friendly, human relations approach to more effective teaching. Mrs. Slowe believes firmly that a teacher becomes a better teacher by becoming a better person. As much as she desires to transform individuals under her supervision into extremely successful teachers, Mrs. Slowe realizes that, in her own words, "You cannot hurry growth" even in teachers. Growth must occur through "doing something with" them rather than "doing something to" them. Research has shown that teacher attitude is a major factor in bringing about desired changes in instruction, she contends, and this knowledge must affect procedures in supervision.

The major portion of the book is devoted to a discussion of the usual and the unusual techniques of modern supervision: conferences, observations, demonstrations, curriculum development, action research, and the like. The author has included a wealth of practical helps for beginning supervisors and for experienced supervisors, who have caught a
vision of the possibilities of a human growth and development approach to supervision. There are excellent guides prepared by Mrs. Slowe for the use of beginning teachers and an aid which might be used in analyzing the problems of a beginning teacher. Also included are Charts I and II which were developed and used in Wilmington, Delaware, as a basis for building a curriculum to meet the needs of children.

Other items which may be of special or particular interest to readers are: a guide to the evaluation of the quality of learning characteristic of a group of children; a guide for the use of principals in self-analysis; an interpretation of the self-contained classroom; suggestions for improving articulation between different levels of a school system; an excellent account of how a teacher used grouping as an instructional procedure. Chapter 11 gives a detailed description of a system-wide curriculum development program extending over a period of three years, led by the supervisor and the Elementary Curriculum Planning Committee. As a result of this experience Miss Crosby repeats convincingly, “One of the greatest stimulants to creative teaching emerges through participation in continuous curriculum development.”

The author devotes nearly a third of the book to a careful treatment of the recurring concerns and issues in supervision. Among these are: working more closely with teacher preparation institutions; looking critically at the tools the teacher uses; grouping children; clarifying the roles of the different individuals and their responsibilities in administration and supervision; working with parents; and finally, evaluating learning.

The final chapter provides study aids and a comprehensive list of selected references for students of supervision.

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—Reviewed by Rowannetta S. Allen, assistant superintendent of schools—Elementary Education, Public Schools, Prince George’s County, Maryland.


To the limited number of helpful books devoted to core programs of the secondary schools, Developing A High School Core Program is a welcome addition. The diverse professional backgrounds of the authors provide a fortunate blending of experience from the public schools and from the experimental school of a large university. Miss Lurry’s work as Supervisor of the Core Program in Prince George’s County, Maryland, places her in a position to report accurately and authoritatively on the problems and possibilities facing local staffs in core program development. The leadership in this field by the Ohio State University School, toward which Mrs. Alberty has contributed richly, is reflected in the basic pattern of development and in the numerous examples of good practice. Those familiar with the core movement will recognize that this volume, as an effective restatement of his basic point of view, places in high relief the influence of Harold Alberty on a generation of curriculum workers whose graduate studies have profited by his direction.

What the authors have set out to do is to show that a core program can be designed with a content that, while encompassing the broad values of good general education, can also provide for teaching that is psychologically sound and sensible in respect to what we know about the adolescent and the way he learns. The effectiveness with which this is done is due in large measure to the clear delineation at the outset of a dozen or more Problem Areas proposed as the scope of a good core program. Succeeding chapters develop the implications of such a design for the organization of resource guides, the choice of learning units and the definition of roles of special-interest teachers. The account of the learning unit, "What Are the Major Problems Facing American Education Today?" offers a pointed example of this intermeshing of design, materials and practice. Here the core teacher, drawing heavily upon a resource guide, Problems of Education in American Democracy, plans cooperatively with her class a series of experiences related tangibly to a number of basic problem areas. Few writers in the field of curriculum have been able to relate descriptive accounts and proposals for classroom practice so effectively to an over-all curriculum design.

In accomplishing these things the book necessarily omits material appropriate to those core programs where the structure is oriented to the integration of subject matter or where no pre-planned structure is evidenced. A chief difficulty in writing about core programs is to do so in a manner which makes clear the kind of core program under study. This difficulty is met in this volume by a clear preference for a program that “consists of broad, pre-planned problem areas defined by the faculty in terms of the common personal-social needs, problems, and interests of adolescents in this society.” Such a view is necessary if, to use the authors’ words, “we intend anything really serious in the way of core program development.” Viewed from the position that core consists of a number of allied
disciplines this book will appear to suggest a radical departure from conventional practice. On the other hand, by those who take a skeptical view of any curriculum structuring in advance of the on-going classroom process, the book’s emphasis upon a definable scope of problem areas will be contested.

The book is perhaps least successful in meeting current arguments that present school trends, including the core movement, place undue emphasis upon group identification and membership. To take a single instance the reader might consider the learning units described in the chapter, “A Core Program in Action in the Classroom.” A glance at the activities, conducted primarily by student committees, suggests a heavy commitment to group experience. To vitiate a possible emphasis on the “Organization Pupil,” documentation of pointed examples where the learner was a “unifier” of his experience as well as a “participant” in it would have been helpful. However, these are marginal comments on a single chapter, for one finds in the resource guides and elsewhere a sufficient balance of learning activities that are characteristically individual enterprises offering high potential for self-fulfillment and creativity.

—Reviewed by Victor B. Lawhead, associate professor of education, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana.


It is refreshing, indeed, to find a text which openly, consistently and conclusively draws upon the contributions of research, experience, and modern psychological theory in searching for solu-
tions to critical problems of science teaching.

Against a backdrop of perpetual and persistent problems of social, technological and pedagogical origin, Burnett hastens to establish goals of science teaching in today's schools. These goals are: (a) college preparation, (b) functional knowledge, (c) critical thinking, and (d) emotional and ethical maturity. Next, and logically so, these goals are carefully synthesized in terms of "the old" and "the new" types of science teaching. These two concepts are clearly defined and widely separated yet the author remains mindful of the truism that perhaps no one program at any one time can be accurately labeled as completely one or the other type. Thus, the first section is appropriately labeled, "The Redirection of Science Teaching."

The second part of this text is concerned with certain foundations of modern science teaching. At the very great risk of becoming labeled "sheer duplication" or dismissed by the notion that "We've had this," a careful, detailed résumé of the history of science teaching in the United States is presented. This broader treatment quickly narrows as the author presents an exciting and fruitful application of research findings as a solid basis for modified practices in the teaching of science. Following closely is a psychological basis for modern science teaching including various ramifications —purposive nature of learning, concomitant learning, the "disagreeable task" myth, transfer of learning and motivation. This skillful blending of research findings and psychological principles as applied to the teaching of science in the secondary school leaves little to the imagination. The "new type" teaching is, unmistakably, the only type.

The prospective science teacher's impatient thirst for firsthand know-how in science teaching is satisfied, perhaps at long last, in part three of this text. Chapter six in this section discusses a new pattern of course offerings and after carefully identifying certain guide-post criteria, Burnett gives (page 162) a recommended general program of science for a typical high school. This program represents an interesting innovation from the usual high school pattern of science courses. Two years of science centered in problems pertinent to general education values are suggested. One year of the required sequence might be in the life sciences and the other in the physical sciences. Even more forward-looking is the thought that the work for both years might be developed on the basis of functional units without regard to the distinction between physical and biological topics. In addition to this sequence of science of a general nature Burnett would have every school also offer intensive instruction in specialized science such as physics, chemistry, botany, zoology (or perhaps advanced biology) on an elective basis.

In the next several succeeding chapters come, in rapid order, many specific suggestions for classroom teaching including ways to provide functional experiences through laboratory, lecture, discussion, evaluative, and audio-visual activities.

Part IV of the text presents separate chapters written by experienced teachers illustrating the problem approach to science teaching. The units described on a this-is-how-we-do-it basis include, among others, a unit on atomic energy, and a unit on mental health.

This text is concluded with a critical analysis of the profession of science teaching, its present status and future hopes. The major national organizations and societies whose work is directed toward the advance of science teaching are described. Each science teacher is
urged to find a "professional home" with such organizations as he feels he can support both financially and through personal efforts.

Because of the very excellent research findings and psychological know-how combined in developing an unusually clear and functional philosophy for effective science teaching this book should find its way to the desk of every science teacher interested in continued professional growth. This text, also, should be extremely useful to a prospective science teacher as he struggles to develop a working philosophy and attempts to implement this philosophy with methods, techniques and skills for day-by-day classroom teaching. While every student will not peruse the entirety of the rather lengthy portion of this text devoted to foundations, historical development and psychological bases, its inclusion is justified perhaps by the few who will find in it an abundance of personal enrichment.

Reviewed by Orval L. Ulry, assistant director of Summer Session, College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

(Continued from page 195)

fit from reading this newsletter. The general program at RPI is known as "Project Reward." Some of the areas reported on are: production of instructional films, television activities, and audio-visual projects; experiments in class size in teaching mechanics; honors course in analytical chemistry; and visual teaching in engineering drawing. Numerous faculty committees have been formed to study such items as: class size, experiments in science instruction, and teacher effectiveness in mechanical engineering. There are indications that "Project Reward" will bring some interesting results and observations. Probably most encouraging is the curriculum planning being practiced by teachers in higher education.

Following are two announcements of awards:

Eunah Temple Holden, international executive secretary, the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, announces that the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, International, Educator's Award of $1,000.00 will be given for the most significant contribution to education written by a woman between April 1956 and April 1, 1958. The work must have been printed prior to April 1, 1958, in order to be entered in competition. This is the seventh award offered by the Society.

The Reverend Joseph M. McKee, Centennial Coordinator of Shattuck School, Faribault, Minnesota, announces that as part of the observance in June 1958, of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Shattuck School, awards will be made to the 100 living persons who have made outstanding contributions toward the advancement of secondary education through public, parochial, and/or independent schools. Any person living in the United States or territories is eligible for the awards except anyone having a past or present connection with Shattuck. Nominations may be made by sending the name and address of the person making the nomination and the name and address of the person nominated together with a brief statement of the reason for consideration to the Centennial Office, Shattuck School, Faribault, Minnesota.

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