

Adjustment . . .

Through Administrative Arrangements

WHEN it is meaningful in describing an educational program, *adjustment* refers to the changes in the program which are continually necessary as a result of the changes in society and in the needs of the learners who live in the changing society. The rapidity of change in today's world requires more effective use of the ability potential of each learner; much of this potential now often remains dormant. As used in this symposium, therefore, adjustment means the individual's becoming the best that he can be; it refers to education for individual excellence with emphasis on the individual's worth and dignity.

To achieve learning of this high quality for each individual in our schools today requires skillful teachers who have every opportunity to utilize their energy, initiative and imagination. When these qualities are brought into effective use administrative arrangements are characterized by: (a) the democratic value system, (b) cooperative use of the process of problem solving, and (c) constructive human relationships. We will examine these characteristics of administrative arrangements which provide for maximum adjustment and individual excellence in the paragraphs which follow.

The Democratic Value System

Democracy emphasizes the supreme and equal moral worth of each individual and the free play of intelligence in dealing with problems. Administrative ar-

rangements which are built on these values allow the free use of intelligence and the fruitful participation of the total teaching staff in planning, carrying out plans, and evaluating what is done.

Administrative arrangements for teaching which enable each individual to become the best that he can be reflect the democratic value system through provisions for the study of each learner. Teaching which releases the learning potential of each child requires a maximum of understanding for each boy or girl. In schools where such understanding is now achieved each child is studied precisely and extensively. Administrators and teachers in these school systems see that such knowledge of children and their learning is achieved only by classroom teachers who have a day-to-day continuous relationship with the group of children whom they are studying. In these schools administrative arrangements provide for classes of reasonable size so that teachers may study individual children and their potential. Special assistants for this study such as guidance counselors or psychologists are provided when needed. Adequate cumulative records are kept for each child throughout his educational career.

Administrative arrangements which emphasize the worth of each individual also provide for a continuing interest in the graduates of the school. Many schools are now seeking to improve the learning opportunities they provide

through continuing follow-up study of graduates. This study is planned with the help of teachers and pupils. One phase of the curriculum development program is based on the results of this study of graduates. Administrative arrangements are also made for the regular study of drop-outs and this study, too, results in program improvement.

When administrative arrangements are characterized by the democratic value system, provision is made for achieving a maximum of understanding for each learner and the participation of the total teaching staff in dealing with all learning problems. The application of the democratic value system to administrative arrangements is one of the ways in which our schools today assist individual learners in becoming the best that they can be.

Cooperative Use of Problem Solving

To enable teachers to exercise their intellectual and creative capacities, administration and staff in many schools see leadership as a function of all individuals concerned through the cooperative use of the process of problem solving. They see that it is unintelligent to call for intellectual competence, creativity and critical thinking for children and to disregard the nurture and development of the same qualities among the members of the staff. To achieve these goals requires opportunities for service through planning, experimentation and responsibility for every staff member. As teachers and administrators work together in identifying what is necessary in a particular school for learning of high quality, administration works to provide the arrangements and resources necessary to achieve this end.

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This type of leadership utilizes the creativity of every member of the school staff. It recognizes that a deep sense of shared task-involvement and the development of close interpersonal relationships are important in releasing potential. Involving new teachers in planning and problem solving keeps them alive and alert. Experienced teachers are revitalized by these experiences. The sharing of leadership responsibility in these schools means that problems are analyzed cooperatively and that recognition is provided for emerging leadership.

Many school systems are now avoiding mistakes such as failure to furnish needed supplies, equipment and resources by enabling teachers to participate extensively in the formulation of school system policies. Total school staffs share with principals the job of deciding administrative policies in individual schools. Representative teachers from all buildings meet with directors of instruction, superintendents, budget directors, and school boards to share in the formulation of system-wide administrative and instructional procedures. These groups have such names as teachers council on instruction, employees council, or superintendent's central committee. Vast improvement in policy formulation and instructional programs in many school systems is achieved through these arrangements.

There is nothing that thwarts teachers so much as the lack of necessary resources. All too often learning opportunity is hampered because of the lack of the necessary supplies of tools or materials. Actually, supplies of this kind are a minor item of expense in most school budgets. One school board recently decided to provide each teacher with everything he requested of this nature. This school system found that

this procedure increased its school budget by less than one per cent. The results in heightened teacher morale and improved learning opportunity were very substantial. If we truly want a maximum development of each child's learning potential, we will stop hampering teachers by being niggardly in our administrative arrangements for the furnishing of needed supplies. Most especially we will permit creative and unusual requests, for it is often through such requests that creativeness and unusual needs are met.

In providing the necessary material resources for the maximum development of each child many school systems now work to develop community understanding that the school budget is a financial plan which represents the aspirations the community has for its children. It is a financial interpretation of the educational program which provides the maximum of opportunity for each child. Administrative arrangement often provides that the budget start with requests from each classroom teacher and other operating employee; these requests are made by each teacher in terms of what is needed to provide for the potential growth of the particular group of children with whom he works. Knowledge of what is needed is gained through group planning and consultant assistance. Requests are consolidated from each classroom for the total budget.

Administration which has a concern for individual excellence in learning provides for the careful recruitment and assignment of staff members with a high potential of intelligence and creativity. Many administrators now recognize the importance of wide participation of staff members in the recruitment and selection of new staff members. This permits proper attention to capacity for stimulating maximum attainment, as well as

ability to become an effective member of a work team. Studies in both education and industry indicate that relationships with one's colleagues are major factors in high morale. For most people there is no motive more important to satisfy than that of interacting with other people whom they value.

For maximum achievement of learning potential, many school systems recognize that the individual school constitutes a major educative influence in the lives of children or young people over a considerable period of time. Teachers usually perform their roles in, or as part of, a single school. The way in which one teacher performs his functions reacts on the performance of others in the school. Therefore, authority and responsibility are now often delegated to the school faculty as a group and not just to the principal alone. In its policy-making functions the school faculty is careful to provide opportunity for participation by pupils and parents, and other interested citizens. The development of the maximum potential of each child demands the time and interest of parents and lay citizens as well as all school staff members.

For the maximum growth of the school staff, administrative arrangements and teaching staffs often now make available and welcome comment and stimulation from many other persons. Through the continuous use of outside human resources the staff and the administrator extend vision and knowledge of what is needed and what will be useful. This growth often comes about through administrative arrangement for visiting consultants, use of community resources, and suggestions for improvement received from parents and other citizens.

One of the liabilities of education today is that it has contributed to a danger-

ous compartmentalization of knowledge. This is dangerous because what is most needed now is an understanding of the interconnections and interrelationships of organized learning. This does not mean that specialization must give way to superficial general study. We need excellence in both specialization and general learning for achievement of maximum potential. The need for greater interrelationships and interdependence in knowledge is especially found in the area of man's social problems. To meet this need, administrative arrangements and cooperative staff planning in many schools are now providing for larger blocks of time and curricular arrangements that provide opportunity for developing interrelationships. In some communities these arrangements have been called the core curriculum, general education, or unified studies. These arrangements have made available the larger blocks of time and resources which are needed for a teacher to interrelate several subject fields and to deal with the common problems which face boys and girls.

It is characteristic of the growing, advancing individual that he continuously sets for himself new levels of accomplishment that are above those of his present achievement. An educational program that seeks to achieve the maximum potential for all its students therefore provides regular opportunities for the growth of the teaching and administrative staff. This may be done through pre-school conferences, new teacher orientation workshops, opportunity for attendance at state and national conferences, or at summer workshops which grow out of staff planning for work on school problems.

In the preceding paragraphs we have examined a number of examples of ad-

ministrative arrangements achieved as a result of the cooperative use of the process of problem solving. When this process characterizes the administrative procedures in a school, learners are more likely to become the best that they can be. Education for individual excellence is more likely to be found.

Constructive Human Relationships

In order to do skillful teaching, teachers need to believe in themselves. Self-confidence is now achieved in many schools through freedom to think, to express opinions, to make decisions and to take action. Administration in these schools helps teachers to discover their own best way of working by demonstrating the belief that good teachers follow no one set of techniques in teaching but use those means that seem best to them to help learners to become effective members of a democratic society. In these situations administration helps teachers to feel free to use teaching procedures which seem to work best for a particular combination of individuals and circumstances. Administration which wants staff members to grow and to do creative teaching helps them to feel important and to carry responsibility.

In assisting teachers to achieve their greatest potential, administrative provision is made for making group membership a satisfying experience for the members of the group; frequent attention is given to facilitating the group's acting as a unit rather than as separate individuals. Without this attention, there often is much in the school situation that cuts teachers off from one another. What goes on in the name of discussion, committee meetings, faculty meetings may not bring people emotionally together but may be conducted in such fashion as to keep them apart. Group commit-

ment to tasks which are significant does much to aid group members in giving their best. Perhaps the greatest responsibility of administrative leadership is in this area of achieving genuine group commitment to tasks which are important. Administrative arrangement for keeping the group working together and its members satisfied is of great significance in aiding each learner to become truly adjusted, to become the best that he can be.

Administration now frequently and actively seeks to provide for each learner's becoming the best that he can be. When this adjustment of learning for individual excellence occurs we have seen that administration is characterized by democratic values, cooperative problem solving, and constructive human relationships. Learning which capitalizes on the ability potential of each learner is dependent on administration-staff relationships with these qualities.

KIMBALL WILES

Adjustment . . .

Through Curricular Offerings

THROUGH his experiences in school a pupil should become an effective working part of his society. In some countries this means the young person is taught what he should believe, what he should do and how he should do it. He adjusts to society by conforming to the status quo or the established plan. In the United States, however, the effective citizen is one who is in good mental health, who is committed to democratic values and who seeks to develop to the fullest his individual potential for socially acceptable contributions. Schools that have attempted to produce an individual who will be adjusted in our society have programs designed to promote mental health, an understanding of the way each individual can contribute to our emerging pattern of life and the development of individual talents.

Schools that seek to produce adjusted people do not try to get all people to be alike. Their programs increase likeness in some areas and increase differences in others. On one hand, the further students go through the school the more they achieve a sense of personal worth and a commitment to basic democratic values. Also, the longer students remain in school, the greater become the differences among them in intellectual attainment in the skills of leadership and democratic participation. The schools that reverse this pattern are failing to provide the offering that makes it possible for each person to contribute his maximum potential, to be an adjusted person in our democratic culture.

What are schools doing to produce the desired results?

Faculties recognize that the curricular

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