

New Frontiers for Supervision

PROBABLY never in the history of American education have so many exciting frontiers been developing simultaneously. In fact, never in world history has any nation had so much to build on educationally—thousands of highly trained, professionally motivated persons, an interested citizenry believing in the importance of education, and a rich tradition of continuous, thoughtful study to improve the quality of educational opportunity for all children and youth.

Historically the supervision role has encompassed two functions: (a) providing leadership for developing, improving and maintaining effective learning opportunities for children and youth—which means giving attention to content selection, teaching methods, materials and evaluation, both inside and outside the classroom; and (b) providing leadership in designing effective ways of working with teachers and other members of the school staff to achieve the first function.

Emerging Curriculum Developments

Changing and intensifying emphases for a changing society: The central purpose of education in the United States of America has always been to develop

children and youth able to function at a high level as citizens of our society. This has involved developing people intellectually but at the same time giving much attention to personal-emotional-social development so that individuals could operate as high level human beings in the best tradition of our society.

Exciting frontiers are opening for consideration in both the planning for what to teach and the planning for the human beings we teach.

Expanding emphases in our cultural heritage: In line with our expanding national purposes, which indicate a new role for us as leaders in a world society, we are attempting to work with children and youth so they will better understand the peoples of the world as well as the general world scene. Knowledge and understanding of religions, literature, music, international economics, and languages of nations around the world are widening the horizons of American students. Depth study of our unique American purposes, ideals and contributions to civilization, along with study leading to new insights into the world scene, is causing many American students to assume a new stance in their considerations of social and political world problems. Education for our national purposes demands that our programs be thus extended and deepened.

We still have much upward mobility in our population. In a society whose democratic origins have sometimes been indicated by the saying, "A poor boy from an unknown family may become President," we need to be very careful in schools that we do not label groups and then deny them rich educational opportunity. Havighurst reports that in 1920, twenty percent of our population was identified as lower-lower class. In 1920 and 1940, zero percent of that population entered college. However, in 1948, six percent of the males entered college; in 1958 six percent males, zero percent females; in 1960, ten percent males and five percent females. Of the forty percent of the population in the upper-lower class, in 1920, two percent entered college; 1940, five percent; 1948, males, fifteen percent; 1958, twenty percent males, seventeen percent females; 1960, ten percent males and five percent females.¹

Changing emphases in subject-matter disciplines: The explosion of knowledge has caused scholars in each subject-matter discipline to explore new approaches to the organization of the discipline in an effort to discover improved ways of knowing. Scholars of the disciplines and educators are striving to find ways to teach students the tools of the disciplines. This exciting adventure not only opens up new considerations for the purposes of teaching the disciplines but also provides the possibility of releasing school people to select content beyond the usual stereotypes.

Much of the exploration under way is reflected in the work of major national committees in mathematics, sci-

ence, foreign language, English, and the social studies. Each committee is making major recommendations relative to what to teach from its discipline in the school program, how to teach it, and in many cases at what point in the child's life he is able to develop these understandings. Because of NDEA funds and private foundation grants, reports, courses of study and text materials have been prepared by the various groups at work and are now available to schools. Textbook development is already being influenced.

Changing and extending emphases in foreign languages: Research drastically affecting the teaching of foreign language has made a marked impact on language programs in the schools. Students are excited about language and are gaining competence in the use of languages which heretofore have not been available. Many language teachers seem to feel that while language laboratories admittedly introduce problems such as housing, expense, teacher time for supervision, the preparation of material, initial installation, they also do much to move the individual student ahead.

Extending the time of introduction of a foreign language into the elementary school is causing intensification of interest in language. This trend also is forcing us to rethink the secondary school language program. In many school systems language is for the first time becoming a kindergarten-through-high-school subject for study.

Coordinating the arts: While the scholars and educators in such fields as mathematics, science, and linguistics have been working to identify concepts which might help students learn the structure of their disciplines, some artists and teachers have moved ahead in identifying concepts such as line, form and rhythm common to all art forms. Following care-

¹ National Society for the Study of Education. *Social Forces Influencing American Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. Chapter 5, p. 123.

ful and detailed planning, specialists in each of the arts areas have pioneered in team teaching efforts. Advanced class enrollments in these situations have increased greatly with the result that many students are going on to college to major in the arts areas.

Testing new media for instruction: Technological development has provided the American public with television for entertainment, and the American school with television for teaching. It has also provided business with programmed billing, and education with programmed teaching. Utilization of these media is very much in the experimental stage. While teaching by television has been used in some schools for a period of time, significant research on what may best be taught through this medium still remains undone. An interesting question raised by one leader in the field is, "How can we use students on camera?" Outstanding and exciting shows in the teaching of ballads were produced in one school system, using high school juniors and seniors.

Teaching by machines is an area needing much research. Just how and how long children will relate to and be motivated by a machine are unanswered questions.

Research in psychology: Many of the questions to be raised by educators concerning the exciting possible frontiers in the refocusing of teaching in the disciplines, the experimentation in the teaching of foreign languages, the use of the new media for instruction must be answered in terms of research being carried on in psychology. Scholars in this area are insistently calling to the attention of educators the limitations of the I.Q. as an index of ability as we now measure it and of giftedness, and the impact of lack of opportunity and low

motivation in causing underdeveloped capacity to learn.

Psychologists are also developing theory and reporting researches which hold tremendous promise for teaching in such areas as perception and the development of human potentialities. As we learn more about how to detect and to build upon the learner's perceptions we will be able to make startling strides in selection and organization of content as well as teaching methods, in terms of our purposes for teaching. As we learn more about the uniqueness of human potential and ways of developing it, we will unlock many resources among human beings which are now imprisoned.

Programs for Engineering Curriculum Changes

Developing personal potential: As indicated earlier, the primary purpose of supervision is to improve the educational opportunities for boys and girls; this means that the quality of teaching must be developed to its limits. Opportunities through which professional staff members may broaden horizons, develop new interests, deepen insights must be encouraged and, whenever possible, be planned for as an integral part of the professional development program of the school. This will result in richer and more varied opportunities for learners. Deliberately creating an atmosphere in which intellectual and cultural development is valued is an important aspect of supervision.

Developing professional potential: Professional and personal potential are of course, inextricably related. However, they are deliberately separated here for purposes of this discussion. This is well for an extensive retooling job lies ahead for thousands of American elementary

and secondary teachers as new formulations are developed relative to the teaching of several of the subject matter areas. This retooling will require teachers and curriculum leaders to work with educators and scholars in the disciplines. Programs of supervision in the immediate future will necessarily include intensive workshop opportunities, possibilities for on-campus as well as in-service courses in the subject matter areas. Many excellent summer workshops and fine academic year scholarships for retraining personnel have been developed under the NDEA and foundation grants. Supervisors should become familiar with these many opportunities so that they can encourage staff participation.

It likewise is of critical importance that teachers and curriculum workers have systematic opportunities within the program of supervision to become familiar with new research frontiers in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. The supervisory program should be so designed that much opportunity will be provided school staffs, not just to listen to lectures in these areas, but to have systematic opportunity to explore what the meanings are for curriculum and teaching in new formulations, theories and research. Decisions relative to content, grouping, organization of the school day must be made with recognition of the research in these areas.

Developing research studies for curriculum: It seems important to recognize that much of the thinking and planning being done, many of the proposals being made in the subject-matter areas and in the utilization of machines and television in teaching are untested. For example, staffs of some school systems located in uniformly high socioeconomic areas are already reporting that the "new

mathematics program" is only good for the upper two-thirds of their students. What does this mean for the other one-third of the students in these areas, most of whom would expect to go on to college? Does this indicate that the content is inappropriate for the majority of the high school youth; that the organization of the content is not well conceived; or that the methods of presentation have not been good even though the teachers have had and are continuing to have training in the teaching of the content and in the use of the materials?

In addition to these considerations another factor deserves attention. There are several "new mathematics programs." While the proposals are alike in some respects they are quite unlike in others. Differences are found in vocabulary, in the timing of presentation of some key concepts, and in organization. At a time when much work is being done internationally in many fields, when many professional workers are meeting in international conferences, it seems questionable that there should not be agreement on at least the language of mathematics—and of other disciplines as well.

These facts are presented only to emphasize that all curriculum innovations should be carried on within a research framework. This applies not only to the content and methods employed in teaching the subject matter areas, but also to grouping, testing programs, unmotivated learners, and gifted learners. Bench marks should be established, hypotheses developed in terms of anticipated outcomes and systematic observation, testing and reporting.

If supervisors are not trained in designing and carrying out research studies, this is an area of competency they

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probably be able to cope effectively with his environment at least as satisfactorily in the future as he has in the past, and without benefit of total mastery.

The real need for our society has been, is, and will be for people who know how to find out what they want to know, how to make application of what they have learned, and how to select those facts and ideas which are of use to them and discard those which are of no use. Our schools should help young people choose appropriate areas of study—appropriate for each individual—how to motivate students to high levels of enthusiasm for the learning they have embraced, and how to help them to see relationships among the knowns and the unknowns with which they must deal.

Perhaps one of the problems with which schools deal each day—student apathy—is self-induced. For the youngster who can see no connection between the Crossing of the Rubicon and his own day to day living, there is bound to be resentment engendered when such factual information is inflicted upon him. But man's destiny is to explore—and the exploration of ideas can be exciting, even for the faint in heart and weak in mind. An Expedition of Exploration requires leadership. This, then, is the challenge of education.

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should develop. While that competency is being learned, assistance in designing and executing studies is available from colleges, universities and state departments of education. It is also hoped that ASCD's Research Commission will give leadership to the development of some nationwide research endeavors in which many individuals and school systems over the country can participate. Much

curriculum work must become research oriented.

What are some of the frequently-stressed principles to which supervisors must continuously give attention as they work for curriculum development, improvement and maintenance? Some helpful principles are these: (a) Planning for activities should be done with those who participate. (b) Development of plans for coordination should be done with the staff; developing and maintaining open lines of communication throughout the individual school and school systems are essential for successful curriculum work. (c) Providing opportunities for parents and other lay citizens to discuss their hopes and expectations for their children, for the school program is essential. (d) Providing continuous information about education and the educational program of the community increases not only understanding of but also support for the program.

Working toward a theory of supervision: A plea has been made in this statement for supervisors to take leadership in placing their curriculum development work in a research setting.

A further plea is made that supervisors and other curriculum workers shall proceed in developing a theory of supervision and curriculum in order that activities in this area of leadership may be more effectively analyzed and researched. At present we do not have sufficient descriptive data as to how curriculum change takes place, the factors that seem to facilitate and to block. Systematic efforts in theory building for this leadership function need to be undertaken.

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