

# THE PRINCIPAL LOOKS AT THE SUPERVISOR

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THE importance and consideration of the individual was one of the prime concerns in a high school located in the Southwest. Faculty members wanted help in improving their teaching. The students wanted to be considered as individuals rather than being lost in the shuffle. One of the main goals of the high school was to help each student recognize his abilities as well as his limitations so he could develop to his full potential. The parents wanted their children to have quality education. Obviously regular and proper supervision of classes was vital in obtaining this quality education.

Good supervision provided acceptance and support for the teacher which helped him feel secure in his teaching. Then he helped the students feel secure by individualized consideration of them. Thus, the teaching and learning processes functioned to produce a better quality of education.

The teachers were more cognizant of the relationship between a pupil's achievement and his self-concept. They questioned their teaching practices and they became more concerned about individualizing their instruction. They realized that success for these high school adolescents did not necessarily mean that they must excel, but rather that their success was based on their own abilities and goals. They reflected these feelings in their dealings with the students. This state of affairs evolved slowly. Persistent, sympathetic supervision helped to bring about this evolution.

## **The Department Head**

One of the young algebra teachers asked the principal if the head of the mathematics department could visit his class because he was not getting his pupils to understand some of the algebraic processes. After several visits, the head of the mathematics department discovered the teacher was not reaching all of his pupils because of his lack of concern for the slower ones. He was going entirely too fast when explaining problems and he acted annoyed when some of the slower pupils asked questions even though he had explained the problems only once.

It was noted that even the better students seemed to be insecure. During the study time allowed near the end of the period, only a very few students ever ventured to ask questions of the teacher, who remained seated at his desk. When the supervisor and teacher were discussing this situation at one of their conferences, the latter said he was sure the students understood what he had explained since they never asked many questions. He could not have been more in error!

The supervisor carefully and considerably explained that the teacher should proceed a little slower when presenting problems, encourage questions and answer them cheerfully and patiently, move around the room during study periods, and assure the students they were doing their work well and it was expected they would have to ask questions. These suggestions made sense to the teacher, so he tried them.

A few months later when the head of the mathematics department visited this teacher again, the entire atmosphere was different. Real learning on an individualized basis was taking place and the students and teacher were working together. The success of the students in learning algebra had enhanced their self-concepts, which helped them realize that their school was actually humane in its consideration of them.

### **The Curriculum Coordinator**

When the curriculum coordinator studied the tests given to ninth graders, he discovered a considerable difference between the pupils' abilities and their achievement. When he presented these facts to the principal and the English teachers, the result was the establishment of a remedial reading class for twenty of the pupils with the highest IQ's who had low achievement records. It was decided that sophomore English would also be a part of this program so the students would not fall behind the others.

By the end of the year, all the students in the remedial reading class were earning better grades than ever before. Two years later, these same pupils were all on the honor roll. The students were grateful they had been given some special consideration that helped them to remedy a situation they did not even know existed. The remedial reading teacher had at last a chance to prove her ability. Another forward step was taken in humanizing the high school.

### **The Principal**

Supervisors should not do all the supervising, the principal himself should spend a considerable amount of time supervising classes and giving the teachers the benefit of his experience. Most principals do some supervising but others claim to be too busy. In most instances, the former have better schools than the latter who are usually so involved with "administrivia" that they rarely visit classes. These principals are certainly missing the opportunity to obtain a better quality of education.

The English teachers, curriculum coordinator, and the principal spent a great

deal of time in establishing the first honors class in English. Twenty-five seniors were carefully selected for this class on the basis of ability. The teacher who was chosen to teach them had many years of experience teaching senior English. This should have been an ideal situation for both students and teacher. However, when the principal visited this class at the end of the first month, he was surprised to find the students noisy, disorganized, and the teacher shouting at the top of her voice. The students talked as they pleased and the study period was a bedlam.

The principal suggested to the teacher at a conference that afternoon that perhaps she was not providing the proper stimulation for such capable students. Perhaps they were bored and expected more of such a class. So the teacher reorganized her lesson plans and there was a decided change in the assignments and the kinds of materials used. It was not too long until the discipline problems disappeared and the honors group were eager adolescents, each progressing to his own satisfaction. The honors program soon involved other courses because a principal had taken time to supervise and provide leadership for his staff.

In summary, good supervision is vital to secondary school educational programs if quality education is to prevail. The cooperative efforts of pupils, teachers, supervisors and principals will build such a program. The success of the secondary schools depends on the pupils and educators working in a healthy atmosphere toward the achievement of goals and the solution of problems that are important to all. ☞

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