

Supervision and Team Teaching

WARD SYBOUTS

Associate Professor, Teachers
College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

THERE are indications that many educators are still asking, "What are the advantages of team teaching?" This is apparent when we realize most schools have not adopted the newer techniques of staff utilization.¹ More effective use of skilled teachers for the improvement of instruction has been recognized among the several objectives of team teaching. However, Ivins has reported that many principals in schools in which team teaching was being used were overlooking the potential for staff growth and development.² Supervision is one of the areas in which team teaching extends an opportunity for improving the quality of education.

Supervision has been defined in many ways. Simply stated, supervision should encompass a major portion of the efforts of the principal and staff to improve instruction. Supervision is not limited to

specific acts of visitation, evaluation, or in-service training. Supervision is an educational and social process of high professional character which is essential to the accomplishment of the aims of an educational program.

Historically, supervision has progressed from the level of inspection to the involvement of democratic leadership which focuses attention on the acts of the teacher. Supervisory techniques typically reported in the literature include: (a) in-service training; (b) class visitations; (c) teacher conferences; (d) staff meetings; (e) demonstration classes; (f) intervisitations; (g) supervisory bulletins; (h) professional reading; and (i) summer school attendance.^{3,4} By their very nature, most supervisory techniques do not tend to involve the teacher as a participant, but

¹Judson T. Shaplin and Henry F. Olds. *Team Teaching*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1964. pp. 323-26.

²Wilson Ivins. "Team Teaching in Southwestern Secondary Schools." *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals* 48:25-30; March 1964. p. 27.

³Paul B. Jacobson, W. C. Reavis, and J. D. Logsdon. *The Effective School Principal*. Second Edition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963. pp. 97-108.

⁴Stanley W. Williams. *Educational Administration in Secondary Schools*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Inc., 1964. pp. 136-40.

the teacher becomes primarily a recipient. Supervision has typically consisted of a one-directional flow of information.

Professional school administrators have promulgated the hypothesis that supervision is necessary to the effective functioning of a public school staff. Some, who envision teaching as a profession, find existing supervisory philosophy contradictory to their hypothesis that the professional teacher, within the framework of a profession responsible for the competence of its members, is most effective when granted professional autonomy.⁵

Much of the supervisory behavior of administrators has not given adequate consideration to professional changes which have taken place among teachers during recent years. The failure to realize that teachers are in fact changing has been the cause of concern among some educators who focus their attention, and perhaps justly so, upon questions of authority and control. There are those who warn that as democratic administration moves forward teachers will demand an increasing voice in decision making.⁶ As educators become more knowledgeable—more professional—there should be a growing respect for demonstrated professional judgment and less concern for the balance of power between administration and staff.

Team teaching extends to educators many opportunities to improve instruction by advancing the level of supervision beyond the limits of communica-

tion patterns designed primarily to send information in only one direction. Through the interrelationships afforded by team teaching there is an opportunity for the professional autonomy of teachers to be recognized and harnessed to provide a better quality of education.

Productive Supervision

The various ramifications of team teaching for supervision are too numerous to attempt a complete listing. A few illustrations of how the supervisory relationship can be more productive between administration and teacher in a team teaching setting are these: (a) promoting cooperative planning; (b) reducing teacher isolation; (c) providing new teachers with more constant assistance and guidance; (d) promoting peer evaluation of teaching; and (e) relating supervision to staff-identified needs and interests.

Cooperative Planning

Adequate planning is basic to good teaching. Master teachers have consistently facilitated learning through well-planned and well-organized lessons. In contrast, many teachers who fail to reach their potential have limited themselves through poor planning. The administrator, or supervisor, has a golden opportunity to help staff members grow if he can direct some of his supervisory efforts to the planning phase of teaching.

When teachers are working in a team, planning takes on new dimensions. In utilizing the collective abilities, knowledge, and background of staff members, planning is brought out into the open

(Continued on page 163)

⁵ John Wilcox. "Another Look at Supervision." *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals* 47:82-94; February 1963. p. 83.

⁶ W. A. Wildman. "Implications of Teacher Bargaining for School Administration." *Phi Delta Kappan* 46(4):152-58; December 1964.

(Continued from page 159)

where the judgment and contributions of all team members can be applied. The team can discuss, evaluate, and critique as they work together. Within the procedure of team planning the supervisor has many opportunities to exercise a high level of leadership.

Reduction of Teacher Isolation

The reduction of teacher isolation, which is in part reflected in cooperative team planning, constitutes an important ingredient in the supervisory process. The elimination of teacher isolation initially establishes a new and different working climate.⁷ "The teacher, accustomed to the professional isolation of normal classwork, finds he must learn new skills, polish old ones, work for honest harmony with colleagues, assess his own performance, and expect to be judged by his colleagues. . . ."⁸ Growth of staff can result from teachers' observing and being observed by their colleagues.

The exchange of ideas among teachers can be a more fruitful experience than traditional "supervisory visits" made by the principal. This is not to imply the principal quits, or even reduces supervisory activities. It does mean he will be involved as one of several observers and be a contributor and resource person with those who are on the team. Supervision of team teachers, to be most effective, requires of the ad-

⁷ Medill Blair and Richard G. Woodward. *Team Teaching in Action*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964. p. 61.

⁸ Glenn F. Varner. "Team Teaching in Johnson High School, St. Paul, Minnesota." *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals* 46:161-66; January 1962. p. 164.



READING DIFFICULTIES: Their Diagnosis and Correction, 2nd Ed.

GUY L. BOND and MILES A. TINKER, both of the University of Minnesota. Completely up-dated to include recent research, new ideas, new tests and materials, this book covers all aspects and all levels of reading disability in a clear and thorough manner.

564 pp., illus., \$6.50

PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Edited by RICHARD I. MILLER, University of Kentucky. A distinguished group of authorities explore a major educational concern—the problem and process of change—from the perspective of both concrete case studies and general curriculum theory.

392 pp., paper, \$3.95

GUIDING DISCOVERY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS

C. ALAN RIEDESEL, The Pennsylvania State University. Field-tested classroom situations here illustrate a guided discovery approach to elementary mathematics, with the emphasis on effective, learner-centered, teaching methods.

491 pp., illus., \$7.50

ESSENTIALS OF SCHOOL LAW

ROBERT L. DRURY, *Legal Counsel, Ohio Education Association*; and KENNETH C. RAY, *Ohio University*. This outstanding volume provides the prospective or neophyte teacher with a practical guide to their on-the-job legal rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities.

215 pp., paper, \$2.25

Appleton-Century-Crofts

Division of Meredith Publishing Company
440 Park Ave. S., New York 10016

ministrator new approaches, such as greater recognition of the professional qualities of his staff, more dynamic leadership, and less commandership.

Supervision of New Teachers

A reduction of isolation can help new teachers overcome their reluctance to ask for help. All teachers, experienced or inexperienced, need to grow in the recognition that one's colleagues are valuable resource persons and there need not be a threat involved in asking for help.

The new teacher, who in the typical school has often received too little assistance, will be able to work with experienced teachers in planning and observing the various phases of teaching. For many years industry has taken the attitude that once the young college graduate comes to an organization he is ready to be trained. A young graduate in business administration may spend a year and a half in a training program. Education must assume a posture which recognizes that a college graduate entering teaching is, like the graduate in business administration, in need of further training. Working with experienced staff members as a team member enables the beginning teacher to receive adequate on-the-job training and supervision.

Development of Peer Evaluation

One of the advantages of team members working together is the change that can occur in the "evaluation" aspect of supervision. In many ways, supervision has been deterred by the inseparable quality of supervision and evaluation of teachers. When team members work with each other to im-

prove instruction, there is little or no threat involved. When team members evaluate what they have done, there is more emphasis placed on improving teaching and less emphasis placed upon evaluation or rating of the teacher.

Relating Supervision to Staff Needs

In a traditional setting the topics dealt with in the supervisory process are usually identified by the supervisor. At the end of a visitation the supervisor lists the strengths and weaknesses, discusses these with the teacher, files the report form and goes on to other pressing administrative chores.

Team members and a supervisor are able to arrive at a decision about the areas which are satisfactory or which are in need of change or improvement. The areas needing change or improvement can then receive the mutual attention of the members of the team and the supervisor.

The best, in terms of supervision, will not be realized if the principal does not provide adequate leadership. The principal needs to demonstrate more *leadership* and less *commandership* as a means of working *with* people in place of having people work *for* him. As the principal works with teachers, there must be evidence of the fact that he recognizes the worth and professional qualities of each staff member. Changing patterns of instruction and supervision continue to place new demands upon the secondary school principal. As the principal and his staff develop an understanding of team teaching and see the new supervisory relationship in operation, there will be a growing awareness of the opportunities for supervision through team teaching. ☛

Copyright © 1967 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.