

THE SUPERVISION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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My visits to ten school divisions during the school year 1947-1948 have convinced me of a felt need on the part of division superintendents of schools for planning their supervisory program before or a few days after the schools have opened. I noted that several weaknesses and bad practices could have been checked and improvements undertaken early in the school year if the supervisory program has been formulated, discussed, and promulgated right at the start of the year. Much time and effort could have been minimized, if not entirely eliminated, if all supervisory personnel in the division have the same objectives for the year, instead of working at cross-purpose because the district supervisors and the elementary school principals have their own supervisory objectives apart from those of the Division Office. In some instances, district supervisors and principals did not have any supervisory plan at all; hence they did not know what to do.

Experience has shown that many of the deplorable conditions and practices found in the classrooms, such as the following, could have been remedied if the supervisory program had been carefully planned and intelligently deliberated upon by those concerned:

- 1) Unhygienic seating, lighting, and ventilation,
- 2) Faulty and ineffective lesson plans — aims and procedures not workable,
- 3) Poorly prepared charts and flash cards — some errors in English

not corrected,

- 4) Poor distribution of textbooks, manuals, courses of study, and supplementary readers, and
- 5) Poor classroom control and management.

Planning is fundamental in supervision. It involves the following principles: 1) it should be formulated cooperatively and should be an expression of the combined thinking of teachers, supervisors, administrators, and community leaders concerning the needs of the schools and the community and 2) it should be flexible to meet necessary changes and readjustments with a minimum of confusion. The number of objectives may be kept small and plans for achieving them reasonably simple.

The next step is the execution of the plan. This would require the coordination and synchronization of the various activities of the supervisors and principals in putting the objectives into effect.

The last step is the evaluation of the plan. This would involve the use of statistical data, testing and measurement of both pupil achievement and growth, and the general appraisal of the supervisory program as a whole.

In some divisions, it has been observed that the supervisory program, if any, is the product of only the division superintendent of schools and some of the division supervisors. After it has been prepared and mimeographed, it is dishd out to the field, so to speak, for execution. Unless the plan is fol-

lowed up by conferences, it goes to the files to stay there for the rest of the year. The reason for this is the fact that the district supervisors, principals, and teachers were not a part in the preparation of the supervisory program. They were not made to feel that the program was their own and that they were duty bound to execute it for the desired results and outcomes. It is believed that if the presidents of parent-teacher associations and other community leaders are invited to participate in the formulation of the supervisory program, much good in the form of cooperation and understanding of the schools' objectives, needs, and problems would ensue.

Planning the Program. A desirable program of supervision may be formulated as follows: 1) Each district supervisor and his principals, head teachers, and representatives from each big school and parent-teacher associations formulate the supervisory plan and when approved submit the same to the division superintendent, and 2) the division superintendent of schools, the district supervisors, the principals, and lay representatives from each district meeting in the division office to go over all the plans submitted by the different districts to formulate the objectives for the division. The supervisory program, aside from those that may be discussed in the conference in the division office, should include such problems as those mentioned in the second paragraph of this article as of paramount importance in the improvement of instruction in the division. The final supervisory plan approved in this meeting should then be issued to the field.

Executing the Program. As soon as the final program has been released to the field, a series of conferences may be conducted by the Academic Super-

visor or the district supervisor to discuss the various objectives in the program. The objectives should be discussed fully, with the teachers suggesting here and there the means and methods through which those objectives could be realized. For the purpose of implementing the program, the district supervisors and principals should include in their monthly plans of supervision the division objectives and from time to time check those that have been accomplished or carried out. In the main, the different supervisors should be charged with carrying out during the year the objectives formulated for the whole province or division, but the details of carrying them out should fall in the hands of the principals. Since the objectives are expressed in terms of problems or goals, the principals should work out the ways and means of putting them into effect in the classroom. The Academic Supervisor or the Division Superintendent of Schools should check the plans of the field supervisors from time to time to see to it that all efforts are geared toward the successful realization of the division objectives for the year.

As stated elsewhere in this article, the supervisory program should be made with certain provisions for its flexibility so that necessary changes and readjustments, if any, may be brought to the attention of the field.

The in-service training program in the division should take into account the division objectives in order that the teachers could be properly oriented to the aims, methods, and procedures for each subject embraced in the supervisory program.

Evaluating the Program. Because of the lack of standardized tests, the effectiveness of classroom instruction may be measured by the use of local-

ly prepared tests. The tests should be carefully prepared by a committee of teachers, principals, and supervisors and should be administered twice during the school year. Form A (initial test) should be administered sometime in August or September, and Form B (final test) should be administered at the close of the school year. These formal testing should of course be supplemented by informal tests by district supervisors and principals from time to time in order to discover and diagnose pupils' weaknesses or difficulties for the purpose of applying remedial measures. The results of formal testings should be published for the information of the field; those of informal testings might be written on the B.P.S. Form 178 of the teachers concerned.

The evaluation of teaching, on the other hand, "may be either by comparing measures of the results of instruction with reference to expected outcomes or by studies of the teacher's performance through the application of criteria designed for this purpose. Similarly the effectiveness of supervision may be determined either through the application of criteria designed to judge the value of activities performed by supervisors, or through the measurement of the immediate and more remote outcomes of the supervisory program. The effectiveness of both teachers and supervisors can also be indirectly estimated through the measurement of qualities commonly associated with success in teaching or supervision: intelligence, and the like, and changes in these. Measurement thus gives one information about the status of some constituent of something under consi-

deration; evaluation carries the process at least one step farther and involves the comparison of the status of the object and its constituents with some expected value, outcome, or standard."¹ Since we have no standardized scale to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and supervision, a committee may work out one for the purpose. For purposes of finding out how well the teachers could assimilate instruction and suggestions regarding the supervisory program, informal tests on professional reading may be given to teachers in the course of supervision.

Another way of evaluating the effectiveness of the supervisory program is by means of the age-grade study of pupil progress and the holding power of the school. Such studies could be easily conducted in the division if the division supervisors, the district supervisors, and principals are curious enough to find out the status of the pupil-material with whom they work.

Teacher-Supervisor Relationship. No program requiring cooperative action will succeed unless the relation of the leaders and the followers are harmonious and wholesome. The same is true in supervision. The nature of the work of the teachers is such that every one concerned in educating the youth must work harmoniously and cooperatively in producing honest, law-abiding, and useful citizens of the Republic. Hence, the need for the highest order of cooperation and *esprit de corps* in promoting the interest and welfare of the pupils.

The traits that should characterize the relation between the teacher and the supervisor should be those of sym-

¹ *Supervision*, Barr-Burton-Brueckner (c. 1947). Page 755.

pathy, kindness, courtesy, tact, sincerity, helpfulness, discretion, consistency, humor, promptness, and open-mindedness.

A good supervisory program should have as its important objective the promotion of teacher growth which will ultimately redound to pupil growth and the improvement of the teaching-learning situation in and out of the classroom.

The role of the supervisors and principals should be intellectual not emotional, functional not personal, and creative not repressive. Supervision is intellectual not emotional in the sense that the supervisor stresses the use of objective and scientific means in realizing its objectives; that it is functional not personal, because the

supervisor emphasizes not merely teacher growth but teacher participation in the study and improvement of the total teaching situation; that it is creative not repressive, because the supervisor provides ample opportunity for the participatory discussions and group formulation of policies and plans and treats all contributions with respect no matter how small or simple they may be.

This article was written with a view to pointing out some of the weaknesses found in the field and with the hope that these suggestions given are tried out. Progressive teachers and supervisors are agreed that teaching and supervision must be carefully planned. Here are pointers and suggestions that might be considered to that end.

TOWARD BETTER . . .

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6. Drill devices must be varied and interesting, must utilize the play spirit or the elements of a game, must furnish life to otherwise dry-as-dust subject matter so as to arouse zest and enthusiasm on the part of the pupils; and the teacher must conduct drill lessons in double-quick time or at least in a lively manner, stimulating rivalry between individual pupils and pitting

row against row in an effort to secure automatic responses.

7. Drill must stop when optimum learning has been attained so as not to waste time.

Drill should be a profitable and painless method of repetition for the class.

(To be continued)

