

agreement was reached between Great Britain and Italy covering most of the causes of friction between these two nations. The settlement is popular with both peoples and marks a decided improvement in the general international atmosphere.

Near the end of April Great Britain and France formed an alliance that almost amounts to a military and diplomatic union. This step unifies the power and influence of the two great European democracies and should be a major force for peace.

OTTO F. FREDERIKSON

THE USE OF THE PROBLEM AS AN APPROACH TO SUPERVISORY ACTIVITIES

SUPERVISION is a democratic, cooperative enterprise, designed to improve the learning and teaching situation, the curriculum as an instrument of learning and teaching, the administration of the school so that the stage may be set and kept for learning and teaching, and the coordination and direction of the entire program of the school.

If it accomplishes its objectives, it should produce in some measure the following results:

1. A clearer conception of the school's philosophy of education and supervision.
2. The acceptance of definite procedures for supervision.
3. The development of a program of supervision based upon the underlying philosophy of education and supervision, and a diagnosis of conditions requiring supervision. In the development of this program the functions of the various supervisory agencies are recognized.
4. The continuous development of the curriculum of the school.
5. The improvement of the learning and teaching situations.
6. The continued evaluation of the outcomes in secondary education.
7. Improvement in the organization and administration of the school for learning and teaching.

8. A more effective coordination and direction of the program of the school.

9. Stimulation and encouragement of teachers for creative and experimental work.

10. A continuous evaluation of the supervisory program for refinement and improvement.

If supervision is to be a democratic enterprise and if its final objective is the integration of and direction of the program of the school, the use of the problem as an approach to supervisory activities offers a real opportunity for all parties concerned to make it a cooperative affair. Just as teachers have found that the unit plan of teaching brings about a better learning situation and improves the teacher-pupil relationship, so those in charge of supervision have found that the unit plan of supervision improves the teaching situation and brings about a better supervisor-teacher relationship. When the problem method is used, all those concerned, if given an opportunity to contribute to the solution, will exhibit a finer spirit and will feel that they have had a part in a common enterprise. Teachers should be just as anxious to improve their teaching, to improve the curriculum to bring about a better functioning of the administration, and to improve the program of the school as the supervisory officers. If they are made to feel that they are a part of the supervisory enterprise and given opportunity to contribute to this enterprise in terms of their knowledge and goodwill, they will exhibit a better attitude towards the supervisory program than they would exhibit if this program were imposed upon them. The hostility that teachers exhibit to the supervisory program and the methods that they employ to insulate themselves against supervisors are the natural results of an autocratic, arbitrary, and undemocratic program of supervision.

The modern high school is a cooperative enterprise; and, since supervision is a vital part of the program of secondary education, the classroom teacher should have the privilege and the opportunity to contribute to the working out of a functional program

of supervision. The use of the problem as an approach to supervisory activities offers a fine opportunity for such cooperation. When a problem of supervision is set for solution, those in charge of supervision should call together the teachers for its consideration. The problem should be outlined, its nature explained, and its importance to the welfare of the school established. A committee should be appointed to study the problem and to report at a later meeting a proposed solution of it. Ample opportunity should be given all the teachers to contribute to the formulation of the final plan for attacking the problem. When substantial agreement has been secured for the method of solution of the problem, a way is provided for attacking the problem with the combined strength and resources of the supervisory and teaching personnel.

The following selected problems of supervision are susceptible to this kind of treatment:

1. Formulation of the philosophy of education for a particular high school and the evaluation of procedures and practices in secondary education in terms of this philosophy.
2. The formulation of a formula for measuring the teaching load in terms of the training and work required of teachers.
3. Specific methods for the supervision of a beginning teacher that will result in professional growth and development.
4. The character of professional faculty meetings for the improvement of instructional activities.
5. A rating scale for teachers.
6. The improvement of the morale of the teaching staff.
7. Causes of friction between principal and teachers that hinder satisfactory cooperative relationships.
8. An evaluation of the present high school curriculum.
9. The determination of proper aims and objectives for school subjects and divisions of school subjects.
10. Criteria for the selection, validation, and presentation of curriculum materials.
11. How the organization and administration of the school may be improved for the furtherance of its instructional program.
12. How existing means and methods of supervision may be improved, such as classroom observation, individual and group conferences, teachers' meetings, demonstration teaching, visitation, teacher rating plans, curriculum study and revision, professional reading, the testing program, etc.
13. New means and methods of supervision that could be effectively used and desirable modifications of existing methods.
14. The advisability of having the supervising principal teach a class and use this class for demonstration teaching.
15. Working out a program for professional faculty meetings.
16. Adjusting instruction more nearly to the nature and capacity of the child.
17. The case of the integrated curriculum.
18. The promotion of teachers.
19. Cadet teaching.
20. The promotion of teachers with their pupils in the subject of their specialization.

To illustrate how the problem may be used as an approach to supervisory activities, let us consider one of the problems indicated above—a rating scale for teachers. In the solution of this important problem that vitally concerns the welfare and spirit of the teaching staff, the supervisory officials should call a professional faculty meeting to explain the problem. At this meeting various methods and devices for rating teachers should be explained by the principal or by a person designated by him. A carefully selected bibliography covering this problem should be distributed among the teachers. A general discussion of the problem should be called for. The principal should appoint a committee representative of the best of his teaching staff—teachers that represent both the modern and the old point of view—to make a careful and exhaustive study of teacher rating plans, said committee to report at a later meeting a definite plan for teacher rating to be used in the school. The principal, of course, is an *ex officio* member of this committee and his opinions would doubtless have great weight with the committee. When the committee is ready to report, copies of their

proposed scheme should be distributed to the teachers in ample time for them to study it and form an opinion about it before it is presented to the faculty at a special meeting called for this purpose. At this meeting, after the report is presented, ample opportunity should be given for its discussion, revision, and modification, and the plan as finally agreed upon should have the substantial support of all parties concerned. After the plan has been adopted, a scheme for its operation should be agreed upon. It well might be that the following procedure would be decided upon:

1. The supervisory official will use the plan for evaluating the instructional status of the teacher by means of observation of teaching.
2. The rating of the teacher by the supervisory official on the basis of this observation.
3. An evaluation of the teaching status of the teacher by the teacher himself.
4. A private conference between the supervisor and teacher in which the evaluation of both supervisor and teacher is compared.
5. An agreement between supervisor and teacher as to strong points and weak points in teaching.
6. A program for the improvement of the teaching status of the teacher.
7. A further evaluation at a later period in the manner indicated above of the teaching status of the teacher and an additional conference for comparative purposes.
8. Continuation of the program throughout the session.
9. A final evaluation of the teaching status of the teacher by the supervisory officer, the teacher being apprised of this evaluation.
10. Opportunity for the teacher to protest the final evaluation to the superintendent.
11. Use of this evaluation for promotion, demotion, probation, or dismissal of the teacher.

WILLIAM R. SMITHEY

A THEORY OF RELATIVITY

To make mistakes as we are on the way to knowledge is far more honorable than to escape making them through never having set out to seek knowledge.—RICHARD TRENCH.

WHAT DO THE PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THEIR SCHOOLS?

An Attempt to Summarize Public Opinion about Education and Suggest Some Implications for Students and Teachers.

OPINION about the public schools is a queer mixture of pro and con. No other public enterprise draws such united support and provokes such wholesale criticism. Public education as a whole is overwhelmingly approved, but its various component parts are condemned loudly and often by some part of the population. The underlying idea of public schools in America has grown steadily from colonial days, but it has met opposition every step of the way on grounds of religious tests, social contributions, cost, or usefulness.

At present there is no institution so typically American as the public schools. In contrast to systems in the different countries of Europe, the American schools are made up of so many diverse elements that the differences of opinion are a natural outcome. On the one hand a great dependence upon education pervades public opinion, and on the other so many doubts exist that it is sometimes hard to see how we go on making progress.

Last month in *The Virginia Teacher* we offered an analysis of periodical writings on education for general readers. In this article we attempt the more difficult analysis of public opinion, particularly that held by average citizens—those who do not write and who certainly read little or none. To some extent opinion can be inferred from

This article and the one appearing in the April issue of the *Virginia Teacher* form a treatment of the topic for which Dr. Houchell received an award of \$50 in a competition conducted recently by Psi chapter of Phi Delta Kappa at George Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Houchell's prize paper will be published in the spring quarter *News-Letter* of Psi chapter.—EDITOR.