INITIATING GROUP PLANNING AS A
SUPERVISORY TECHNIQUE TOWARD TEACHER
GROWTH IN THE GRANT AND WILSON ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS IN MASON CITY, IOWA

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is a feeling among teachers that many school administrators have been prone to criticize teachers for a lack of understanding and use of the most modern teaching methods without offering them very much constructive help and advice. Many teachers would like to try some of the newer proposed methods of instruction if someone would show them, through demonstration or by conference, how to proceed. Today there are many average teachers in our classrooms who might well be superior teachers if some supervisor or principal would kindly help them to understand how to initiate new techniques and procedures with respect to their methods of classroom instruction. Few people in any walk of life like to be behind the times. Many teachers talk against newer methods of instruction not because they really feel the newer methods are wrong but as a defense mechanism for their own traditional methods.

If teachers are to grow professionally as a result of supervision it is necessary, within a democratically administered school, for them to have a part in the planning.

In the interest of promoting democratic practices in school activities, increasing effort is being made to secure cooperative action in supervision and thereby to divest the supervisor-teacher

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relation of its expert and nonexpert aspect. 1

Otto also places emphasis on group planning and democratic procedures when he states:

In recent years leaders in supervision have given much thought to the place of democratic procedures, cooperation, and leadership in supervision. If supervision is to operate in harmony with the dominant aim of education in a democracy, a democratic relationship must exist between teachers and pupils. This can hardly be achieved if the relationship between supervisors and teachers is undemocratic. As in administration, supervision must provide for group participation in the definition of problems and in the development of plans for dealing with those problems. There cannot exist the superior-subordinate type of relationship. 2

Many elementary schools are not large enough to have a supervisor. In some systems the principal is considered a supervising principal. If undertaken, the initiation of group planning among teachers would most likely rest with the building principal. Whoever initiates group planning among teachers will probably need to stimulate their interest.

In order to interest teachers in a personal program of professional growth and improvement, they must be made acquainted with the activities which are performed by successful teachers, and training provided in the development of the activities with which they are unacquainted, or in which they are untrained. It is important that the teacher acquire a broad understanding of the duties of her position, and essential that any fallow abilities be developed. 3

That there is a real need for more and better supervision and planning with teachers is becoming more and more evident. Bailey recently conducted a rather extensive study in an attempt to compare the type of supervision teachers desire with the supervision they receive. His study shows:

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1. That most teachers desire constructive criticism.

2. That more than one-fourth the teachers wish recommended new techniques and methods.

3. That one-fourth wish to have demonstration teaching.

4. That nearly one-fourth desire suggestions concerning materials and equipment.

5. That only one-fifth of the teachers felt they were getting desirable supervision.

A recognition of the need for more supervision of the beginning teacher is expressed by Reavis as follows:

Frequently the young teacher enters upon the duties of her first assignment eager and zealous to render efficient professional service in her chosen field, only to find herself abandoned by the principal after a few routine directions have been given. She is compelled to shift for herself in the solution of trying problems and to expose her valuable professional enthusiasm to the harsh assaults of the machine-like demands of a large system and not infrequently to the none too wholesome influence of unprofessional teachers.

Educators are in agreement that children usually learn best when instruction is tailored to fit their individual needs. By the same reasoning teachers may also profit most from help that is given to them individually or in small groups where the needs are similar. Some of the best and most readily accepted teaching techniques are those suggested to teachers in small group meetings after their particular problems have been studied.

A meeting of the teachers of a subject field or grades may be a profitable supervisory technique. Since unplanned meetings are likely to deal with routine matters it should occasion no surprise if teachers have a poor opinion of the group meeting, because they are rarely well planned with the teachers participating in the planning. Clearly, then, the group conference offers one way in which supervision can be improved materially if the group conference deals with topics which aim to improve instruction and in

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1P. M. Bail, "Do Teachers Receive the Kind of Supervision They Desire?" Journal of Educational Research, XL (May, 1947), 713-716.

2Reavis, Pierce, and Stullken, op. cit., p. 372.
which teachers are interested. Any principal who has a planned program for supervision dealing with such vital matters as curriculum revision and methods of teaching can organize group meetings that are truly supervisory.\(^1\)

Before group planning among teachers can be properly launched the teachers will first have to be convinced personally that the principal, or supervisor, undertaking such a project is not only cognizant of their situations but that he holds and practices a sound educational philosophy. It will still remain for the administrator to convince the teachers that help is being given not as criticism of their present methods but rather as an aid to their methods of improving instruction for children.

Teacher growth does not necessarily pertain solely to that which a teacher does with subject matter in the classroom. It pertains to all phases of teacher-pupil, teacher-parent, and teacher-community relationships.

Most educators agree that the schools belong to the community and that parents should be urged to visit their school frequently and have a share in the planning. Here again, is this commonly practiced or does it more often receive only lip service? Kaplan says:

If we really believe that our schools are schools of the people, then let's get the people into the school and stop trying to sell them what they think is a shoddy product. Educators should have nothing to hide from parents and should have nothing to fear from them. It is not an easy matter to include parents in the professional functions of a school, but we have tried all other avenues of public relations and have nothing to lose by trying the one avenue which, though difficult, holds great promise for re-creating the spirit which should exist between a community and its schools.\(^2\)

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This study was carried on in cooperation with the teachers from two selected elementary schools. The purpose of this study was to initiate group planning with teachers as a method of supervision and to study any possible effects this type of supervision might have on the professional growth of the teachers involved.
CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES FOR GROUP PLANNING

The two schools involved in this study were under one supervising principal. The social and economic conditions within the two school communities were very different. One school was composed largely of lower-income families with approximately half the population made up of Italians, Greeks, Mexicans, Bohemians, and colored people. Many of these people worked as laborers in the local factories. The school site is near two railroads, several junk yards, factories, and similar industries. The school building is thirteen years old, in good repair, and reasonably well equipped. The school enrollment was 240. There were ten full time teachers; none of them were new to the system and all had at least three years of experience. Two of the teachers had four years of training and the others would average approximately three years of training. Six of the teachers had been in the system twelve years or more.

The other school community was made up of professional and business people and was considered the elite section of the city. The school building is twenty-eight years old, located on a good site, and surrounded by dwellings. The building was remodeled during the school year and was very attractive when completed. There were nine full time teachers with an enrollment of 230. Two teachers were new to the system
but had taught previously; two had been in this particular school for more than twenty-five years. The other teachers had been in the system from four to ten years. Two of the younger teachers had four years of training and the others averaged three years of training.

Supervisory Group Planning

Principal—total teacher group planning.—The principal held regular planning meetings bi-weekly with the teachers in each of the two buildings. The principal acted as chairman and teachers offered suggestions. These were supplemented by the principal by further suggestions involving modern teaching techniques. Discussion of how these methods could be made to work out to the advantage of children in the particular school took place. The supervisory plan was such that teachers were allowed to choose if they wished to try new techniques. This was viewed by the principal as an opportunity to test the merits of democratic group supervision. Supervisory help, information, and freedom to carry out plans were assured each and every teacher desiring to participate in group or individual projects.

Principal—small teacher group planning.—Once projects and experimentation had been accepted by some of the total group, the varied nature of their choices and the areas in which they wished to work required smaller group planning. In some cases, this involved a more or less horizontal grade grouping. In other cases it involved only one or two teachers planning directly with the principal. However, in order that all teachers might profit from the small group planning reports were often made to the total group. In this way teachers in the building would know what was being done and the purposes of the particular project, and they could observe the operation to some extent.
Principal-teacher-pupil planning.—In order to have a democratic school and also have boys and girls recognize the purposes behind their learning, it is necessary that the pupil plan with teacher and principal. Selected areas involving safety, citizenship, pride of ownership in the building, and such general subjects were used to initiate this planning. Once it had become an accepted procedure, it could then be transferred even into the academic areas.

Principal-teacher-parent planning.—If a school is really to succeed in its attempts to educate children, the parents must know the objectives of the program in general and certain of the projects in particular. Adult members of the community, vitally interested in the school, have suggestions to make and, when planning meetings include them, it gives to administration and teachers needed support on the basis of understanding. Parent-teacher organizations can be used as the starting point for initiating this type of planning, but, where no parent-teacher association exists, parents can be utilized.

Evaluation of group planning.—The supervisor—in the case of this study, the principal—is vitally concerned with the improvement of the planning procedures. For this reason it was necessary to continually evaluate the planning. This involved individual as well as group evaluation and included all of the abovementioned groups.

In these two particular Mason City schools, the emphasis on group planning started with the beginning faculty meetings in the fall of 1950 and continued throughout the school year. Some of the areas which were explored as a result of the use of the group planning techniques and the evident outcomes of these explorations will be described in Chapter III.
CHAPTER III

NEW APPROACHES AND THEIR OUTCOMES

Principal-Teacher Planning

Homogeneous to heterogeneous grouping.—In one of the schools studied it has been the practice for several years to have the children who were slow in learning segregated and taught as a separate group. These groups were usually referred to as "special groups" and at the time the principal came to this community, which was one year prior to this study, there were two such "special rooms" consisting of approximately sixteen children each. During the first year no change was made, but the principal and teachers did study the effects this practice had upon the children and parents of this community.

At a faculty planning meeting in the fall of 1950, just prior to the opening of school, this topic was discussed at length. After considerable thought and planning it was agreed to include the pupils who previously had been in the so-called "special rooms" with the pupils of their respective age and approximate grade levels, thus providing complete heterogeneous grouping of children throughout the entire school. Care was taken to keep the distribution of boys and girls equalized and the teachers helped with the decisions where social adjustment presented a problem.
By noon of the second day of school the change was made and the effects of this change were remarkable. For the first time since they had left kindergarten many children were wearing a smile of satisfaction about school. Many parents, too, had a changed attitude toward the school as well as toward the teachers. Even those children who had always been in a regular, heterogeneous group seemed happier.

The entire change in feeling and attitude did not, however, come immediately. Many children and parents were skeptical; there was still a stigma attached to the teachers who had taught the slow groups and it took considerable explaining and proof to convince some parents that the school did not still have "special rooms."

All of the improved attitude and feeling of success was not with the children and parents alone. The teachers had also developed a better feeling and understanding of each other's position and of the real purpose for which the schools exist—the children. The attitude of the children was well expressed by one little boy who, as he smiled up into the face of his teacher, said, "You mean, Miss B., that I'll never be in a dumb room again?"

**Teacher-community relationships.**—At one of the group planning meetings stress was placed upon the importance of teacher participation in the civic affairs of the community. Through the discussion which followed it was revealed that, while some were very active, others were taking little or no part in the activities of the community. At a later staff meeting the principal submitted a sheet of information to each teacher indicating the various types of community projects, reading clubs, and service clubs that might be of interest to teachers. In addition to the sheet there was a check list which offered an opportunity
for them to indicate special talents they might have that they would be willing to share with the community such as: singing in a choir or chorus; giving a travelogue; presenting some form of educational lecture; teaching an adult education course; or describing some personal hobby. The results were compiled and a copy was sent to the program chairman of the service clubs and women's organizations within the city.

It was not long until teachers were receiving calls for their particular talents. The program chairmen were grateful for a list of source material for future programs and those teachers who took part enjoyed meeting the people of the community in other than a teacher capacity.

Some teachers felt that they had little to contribute to the community and several were certain they could not get up before the public and present a topic even though they had the knowledge. The principal spent considerable time with several of these teachers individually, trying to show them that they did have special abilities and that, if they were willing to get up before an adult audience at least once, they would derive a satisfaction and self-confidence they had never before experienced.

Two teachers who had never before taken an active part before an adult group accepted invitations to present a portion of a program for an adult group. Before the end of the school year they each served on at least one other program. These persons have grown as teachers and have truly gained poise and self-confidence. They are aware of this change and are proud that they had the courage to make the test. Today
they are held in higher esteem by their fellow workers as well as by the people of the community.

An integrated unit.—In order that some of the teachers might see some first-hand results of a thoroughly integrated unit of teaching, it was suggested to Miss X, a teacher of third grade children, who had previously expressed a desire to learn more about integrated teaching, that she select a topic of interest and teach her third grade in this manner until the unit was completed. Most of the teachers had done some integrated teaching, but none had broken away entirely from all subject areas for any length of time. She was to have little regard for subject matter areas; she was to use a topic of medium difficulty and one which she had previously taught so that time could be spent on planning rather than on locating materials.

Miss X chose "milk" as the main topic of interest. Briefly summarized, this is what was done. Milk was studied in all its various forms, using all the available information from books, magazines, strip films, and movie films. As the children completed each area of study, they planned trips to pertinent places of interest to see the actual processes about which they had studied. Their first trip was to a fine milking parlor some ten miles out in the country. The children were accompanied by the foreman who explained step-by-step all that takes place from the time a cow is brought into the milking parlor until the milk is ready to be trucked to the dairy.

Their next trip took them through a modern dairy. The manager had guides on hand who explained the operation of the entire plant. The children enjoyed seeing milk pasteurized, the process of homogenizing milk, the shaping of cardboard containers, and best of all, the
actual bottling and capping process.

The third educational trip was to a large creamery where the children observed the processes involved in the making, testing, and marketing of butter.

As inferred previously, each field trip was conducted after Miss X felt the children had gained an adequate background of knowledge and understanding to absorb and to enjoy that particular tour. Each trip was followed by discussion periods where all children had an opportunity to share their observations and where controversial opinions concerning various operations observed were clarified. Now that they had studied and observed the process of butter making, the children wanted to see if they, too, could make butter. They brought the necessary materials to school and each tried his hand at churning butter. Not only was it made in a glass churn but several children churned butter in a regular fruit jar. In order that the children might sample their product, Miss X arranged for a committee of children to bring to school the necessary ingredients for the making of bread. One mother furnished an electric roaster and Miss X baked bread in the classroom. Later in the day the children were served "schoolmade" bread and butter.

The last trip was to a wholesale ice-cream factory. Here again, the management saw that the children received competent guides to explain the various processes and to answer their many questions. The children not only saw ice-cream made in the various flavors, but they observed how "frosticks," "newlyweds," and "drumsticks" were made.

Again, the children wanted first-hand experience, so with the aid of the custodian to prepare the ice, they made ice-cream. Each child had invited his mother to visit school and to listen to a brief
program summarizing what they had gained from their study of milk. Following this the children served their mothers the ice-cream they had made.

In summarizing the apparent outcomes that seemed to be most valuable it appears that, in spite of the fact that little thought was given to any specific subject area, there was good teaching in most all areas. The children worked problems in arithmetic in connection with their weight charts, ice-cream recipe, and in figuring the average number of pounds of milk each cow gave. Discussion of milk bottles and cream cans brought into use the study of liquid measure—gallons, quarts, pints, and half-pints. Problems dealing with money were worked in connection with figuring the cost of milk, butter, and ice-cream. Oral language was employed when children were selected to make the appointments by telephone with the management of each of the companies visited. Another committee made personal contacts with the school principal to schedule a time suitable for each field trip. Still others were responsible for contacting mothers by telephone to arrange transportation. Written language was necessary when each child wrote an invitation to his mother. Certain children were selected to write "thank you" letters to the managers of the firms visited and to the mothers who provided transportation. Spelling was correlated with the written report each child made of the trips taken. Such words as pasteurize, homogenize, products, sterilize, laboratory, and stanchion were added to the vocabulary of most of the pupils. Because of the nature of the study of milk in all its various forms, this whole project was closely associated with science and health. The cooperation necessary among the children to carry on this project also made an excellent opportunity for practical social living.
The manager of each of the concerns visited seemed pleased to have the children visit his plant and each expressed a desire for other school children to make similar visits. It was interesting to note how much the mothers who furnished transportation seemed to gain from each trip. It was also interesting to note how few mothers had ever before visited a dairy or creamery.

This group of third grade children had an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge from seeing the actual amount of work required to place a quart of milk on the front step of their homes. There could be value in the changed concepts and attitudes towards the industries of our society that these children experienced at this early stage of their educational careers.

Teacher-Pupil Planning

Phonetic approach to spelling.—Spelling in the Mason City schools had been taught in the traditional method for many years; that is, lists of words to be studied, or memorized, by all children with little regard for variations of ability or aptitude. Although most of the elementary teachers seemed to be doing a satisfactory job of teaching reading, many of the children were unable to sound out and spell words as they should.

It was decided that instead of using regular spelling books a particular phonetic workbook would be used in grades two, three, and four during the entire year to see if the results would justify a change in the method of teaching spelling. Arrangements were made for the author of the phonetic workbooks to come and give a demonstration to the teachers, showing the proper use of the materials. This was done and the materials were used during the entire school year.
There were eight teachers teaching grades two, three, and four in the two schools. All of them were willing to try this new approach, but few had much hopes of its success. Some felt the phonics in the workbook would conflict with the suggested phonetic materials in the basic reading texts. Others felt that phonics is more closely connected with reading and, therefore, should be taught separately. All of the teachers, as well as the principal, were concerned that the phonetic workbooks might not be taught interestingly enough but that many children would form a dislike for spelling and word study.

The teachers presented the materials as directed and did their best to make the work interesting. At the group planning meetings that followed, there was considerable discussion centered on phonics and spelling. After two or three months several teachers became quite enthusiastic over the progress some of their children were making, but it was not until well into the latter half of the school year that most of the teachers could sincerely say very much in favor of the new approach. With continued use it was gradually winning favor.

The principal checked with each of the teachers during the last month of the school year, asking each teacher to express her own personal feelings concerning the use of the phonetic workbooks. The results were as follows:

1. Each of the eight teachers felt that she was able to teach as much spelling with the new approach as she had taught the previous year with the regular spelling books.

2. None of the teachers felt that the material really conflicted in principle with the phonetic materials suggested in the basic reading texts.

3. Seven of the eight teachers felt that the children had enjoyed using the phonetic approach to spelling.
4. All teachers agreed that the new approach more adequately prepares a child to "unlock" words than does the traditional spelling method.

5. Seven of the eight teachers felt that the material offered a method that was superior to the traditional method of teaching spelling.

One of the teachers of a large fourth grade did some individual experimenting. The group was made up of thirty-three average fourth graders. The spelling book previously used in the fourth grade contained two lists of one hundred words each that were suggested as test lists to cover the entire fourth grade work. Without any preparation or warning the children were given each of these lists of words. The results showed an average score of ninety-five words correct on the one test and an average of ninety-two words correct on the other.

Principal-Teacher-Pupil Planning

Concrete objects in meaningful arithmetic.—According to the test results of the past ten years the children in the upper elementary grades of the Mason City schools have shown less growth in arithmetic than in any other basic subject area. This fact was presented and discussed at a planning meeting in each of the Grant and Wilson schools. In trying to analyze the problem it appeared that many children did not like arithmetic and that this was possibly due to a lack of understanding of the basic principles upon which our number system is built. It was also brought out that most of the teachers were using little in the way of teaching materials except the basic text.

The problem became one of how to make the teachers cognizant of the need for improved methods of teaching arithmetic without making them feel their present methods were unsuccessful. In order to accomplish
this the principal made an effort to become better informed concerning the modern teaching practices in the field of elementary arithmetic. Several mathematics conferences were attended where demonstration lessons were observed. Several of the leading authorities in elementary mathematics were interviewed. The information gained in this manner was then taken back to the planning meetings.

Several of the teachers indicated that they would be glad to have help. Individual conferences were held to analyze each teacher's particular problems and to offer helpful suggestions. In order to have concrete objects for the demonstrations and for the teachers to use with their pupils, the principal purchased hundreds of meat skewers, cut off the sharp points, and bundled them in groups of ten with rubber bands. Tongue depressors work nearly as well. Student council members were asked to make a plea for discarded spools. These were sorted according to size, painted, and strung on durable cord with one hundred spools to a string and with every tenth one painted a contrasting color. Some of the children helped sort and paint the spools. These were hung below the chalk trays where children could use them easily. Many other objects were either made or purchased to use in connection with the teaching of fractions, estimation, quantity, weight, and similar areas.

After planning with a teacher and carrying on one or two demonstrations with her pupils, the teacher was encouraged to try other similar methods and to check with the principal for help if she felt a need. Sometimes a child who had special difficulty grasping a certain number concept, such as borrowing in subtraction, would go to the principal where he would receive individual help through the use of concrete objects to help clarify his concept of the process.
This type of cooperation and planning offered an opportunity for the principal to work on a level with the teachers. It also offered a means by which teachers could receive in-service training and at the same time they could actually see if some of the modern trends and teaching devices really had merit. The demonstrations offered an opportunity for the teacher to analyze and compare her own teaching procedures with those of another teacher. This seemed especially valuable since the demonstrations were conducted with each teacher's own pupils. The demonstrations offered an ideal method of showing a teacher a weakness without seeming critical. As an illustration, one first grade teacher felt certain her group was not ready for numbers above ten. In a demonstration lesson with this group of children the principal gave several exercises which showed that many of the children could easily work far in advance of this.

**Student council.**—There was, in each of the schools studied, a student council which had developed as a result of cooperative planning on the part of the entire school. The council was made up of three representatives from each of the rooms in grades three through six. Each council member was selected by his own classmates. Prior to the election of council members each teacher explained the work of the student council and the importance of selecting well-qualified persons to represent the room.

The meetings were usually held in the principal's office. This seemed to please the members and it offered a natural opportunity to explain and answer questions about the many duties connected with the principal's work. Sometimes the children chose to bring a sack-lunch and hold their student council meeting during the noon hour.
Considerable time was spent at the first meeting explaining the part the principal, custodian, superintendent, and other school employees play with respect to the total organization of the school system. This seemed to have merit as the students asked many questions and showed a real interest. It also seemed to give each member a feeling of worth and importance that his part in the student council really counted for something. Most of the discussions centered around the topics of: improved playground arrangements; how to get more playground equipment; and care and neatness of the school building and grounds. Before each meeting adjourned certain members were selected to make announcements in each of the rooms concerning any important decisions or changes that had been approved. This provided a real life situation for oral language and the children truly enjoyed doing it. The most important outcome of this type of activity was that these children had an opportunity to see how a democracy should work and they also had a chance to put what they learned into actual practice.

Principal-Parent-Teacher Planning

Christmas program.—During the school year, 1949-1950, the Wilson School had an extensive evening Christmas program. Because the school building did not have an auditorium the program was held at one of the junior high school buildings. The program was very successful and the parents expressed their desire to have a similar program each Christmas and to hold it at the junior high building where all the necessary stage and seating facilities were at hand. Most parents did not realize the amount of time and planning required to present a program of this nature, especially when it included all the children in the elementary grades.
and when it was to be presented in an auditorium located a mile from
the regular school building. The parents had been carried away by the
results of last year's program and had forgotten that the program,
along with Santa Claus and the Parent Teacher Association's treats, was
too lengthy for elementary children who had to be in school the follow-
ing day.

In a faculty meeting held in the fall of 1950, a discussion was
held concerning the value of such a program from an educational stand-
point. The teachers brought out the fact that many children were worn
out following the program and that several were sick and not in school
as a result of too much candy or from lack of sleep. It was the general
feeling of the teachers that they could not justify another such program
held away from their own school because of the amount of school time
and planning required to present it and because of the general effect
upon the children. Most of the teachers felt it would be better to have
individual room programs held in the afternoon with parents invited.

When the principal presented the teachers' viewpoint to the
Parent Teacher Association Board, the members were open-minded but still
expressed a desire for an evening program when fathers, as well as
mothers, could easily attend.

In order to give all persons an opportunity to express their
opinions, the principal called a meeting of the Parent Teacher Associ-
ation officers, the faculty, and a group of representative parents. The
president of the Parent Teacher Association baked a large cake and while
enjoying cake and coffee a plan was worked out which was agreeable to all.
A program would be held in Wilson School gymnasium. As there was no
stage, movable risers would be used and the program would be largely of
a musical nature. It would be in the evening but would be scheduled early and was to be very brief. In addition to this, the parents would be invited to attend the room programs held during regular school time which the children had planned as their observance of the spirit of Christmas.

Some of the general outcomes of the above teacher-principal-parent planning were:

1. By sitting down together and discussing all angles of the problem each group saw that the other group's point of view had some merit.

2. Teachers realized that the mothers were sincere when they expressed a desire for an evening program held when most of the fathers could attend.

3. The parents saw the educational value of room programs held during regular school time where children could be seen in their regular school environment.

4. The teachers realized that the parents did not demand, or even want, a big show that took hours of extra work and planning.

5. The teachers learned that a successful program could be staged with little extra work and without loss of regular school activities. We had only one joint rehearsal at which time the children had an opportunity to see the entire program.

6. Because of the poorly lighted gymnasium and the inadequate stage facilities the parents had an excellent opportunity to see a real need for a building and modernization program in Mason City. This program was held during a time when there was considerable opposition to a building and modernization program in the Mason City schools.

7. Because there was not room in the gymnasium during the program, all the children stayed in their regular classrooms except when they were performing; thus, every parent had an opportunity to see his child's teacher and his child's classroom at the close of the program.

8. By having the program in their own building no parent was deprived of attending because of distance or lack of transportation.
9. Because the program was to be brief, it started at seven-thirty and was over by eight-twenty. No one was bored and many business and professional men were able to attend the program and also keep other business engagements.

Pupil evaluation.—In the elementary schools of Mason City the teachers are required to send a progress report of each child to the parents at the close of each nine week's period. However, in kindergarten and first grade the progress report is required once each semester. The report forms are quite modern and have proved very satisfactory.

In some of the group planning meetings the principal has emphasized the possible value of teacher-parent conferences and has encouraged teachers to try them on a small scale even though regular written reports are required. Several teachers have had close contact with their parents in connection with the projects previously described and have found this contact very valuable in understanding and evaluating pupils. Some teachers actually gained so much from the incidental contacts with parents that they have scheduled regular conferences with their parents. Because of these teachers' enthusiasm others are planning to start using conferences with parents, also.

As an outgrowth of principal-parent-teacher planning, the practice of teacher-parent conferences has grown naturally. Although parent-teacher conferences mean extra work for the teacher, every teacher who tried them wants to continue the practice in the future.

During the school year several other projects not described in this chapter were carried out as a result of group planning.¹

In the chapter which follows, a summarization of the outcomes of group planning as observed by the writer will be discussed. A critical evaluation of group planning makes possible certain recommendations.

¹Appendix, p. 29.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In the public schools across our nation emphasis has been placed upon the importance of children understanding and practicing democracy. Stress has also been placed on "learning by doing." School administrators and teachers could profit by using democratic procedures in connection with "learning by doing" in their professional relationships. Because example is still an influential method of teaching, group planning among teachers, pupils, and parents can be a very effective method of teaching children the true values of our democratic way of life.

As the responsibility of coordination and integration of the activities for the entire school system rests with the superintendent, so does the coordination and integration of activities within each school rest with the building principal. ¹ Because the principal usually has more duties than time will allow him to perform properly, it is important that his number one responsibility, that of improving education for children, be shared with other members of his staff.

¹Hagman, op. cit., p. 53-57.
Supervision must be more than classroom visitation if it is to serve its true purpose which is improving the educational opportunities of children. As Caswell says:

It should be obvious that the only justification of administration and supervision is the contribution which these services make to the actual education of children. Every activity provided by workers who supply these services and every aspect of school organization should be submitted to this final test.¹

There is much concern at the present time because of the shortage of capable teachers in our public schools and because too few capable candidates are entering teacher-training institutions. This is not a new problem; good teachers have always been scarce. Therefore, it behooves school superintendents and principals to utilize to the best advantage the teachers now in the system. One important method of better teacher utilization could be to improve the quality of teaching now being done through cooperative supervision.

Although the initiation of group planning requires extra work on the part of the principal, it does provide a method of professional growth for him as well as for his teachers. It does not take any great wealth of technical know-how for a principal to recommend that a weak teacher be released. It is, on the other hand, a gratifying experience for a principal to watch a weak teacher grow stronger when he realizes that he has had a part in implementing the change.

As a result of the group planning described in Chapter III, the writer offers the following observations:

1. The teachers had a tendency to lose their fears of observation when cooperative planning was used; tension between principal and teacher was removed and classroom supervision became natural and pleasant for both parties.

2. The children sensed the freedom in supervision and they, too, became more free and natural in their reactions. Because they had helped with the planning, the whole ramification of the school program became more meaningful and worthwhile to them.

3. The children took more interest and pride in the appearance of their school building and playground.

4. Those teachers who were at first little interested in trying new techniques became curious and more interested as the year progressed; later, they took a more or less active part.

5. Because of the close cooperation of principal and teacher some faulty concepts and ideas of teaching that would have otherwise remained hidden were brought to the surface. Because of the oneness of purpose these were easily understood and corrected.

6. By principal, teachers, pupils, and parents planning together, it was less difficult to establish a more unified educational philosophy suitable to the needs of the entire community.

7. The parents by-and-large wanted the best of educational opportunities for their children and looked to the teaching personnel for educational leadership so long as they showed themselves to be competent and sincere.

8. The parents usually desired an honest evaluation of their child's progress in school and were willing to come to the school at the teacher's convenience to gain this knowledge and to discuss their child's progress.

9. Fathers, as well as mothers, were willing to visit school when they felt they were sincerely welcome.

10. Group planning led to many more principal-parent conferences than would have otherwise taken place.

11. While the children's reactions were very similar in both communities, the cooperation of the parents in the community of higher income and social standing was more in evidence than was the cooperation in the community of low income and social standing. This difference was primarily caused by financial strain on the part of the lower income community rather than a lack of interest.

12. Group planning was not accomplished as rapidly in the community of lower incomes but satisfactory results were just as evident.
13. The younger teachers with recent training were more enthusiastic and availed themselves of more help than did the older teachers with more experience and earlier training.

14. This method of supervision offered the principal an excellent opportunity to see the true perspective of the entire school, to feel the pulse of the community with respect to education, and to evaluate more accurately his growth as a school administrator.

Recommendations

The writer feels that group planning as a supervisory method of promoting teacher growth is very satisfactory and that this practice should be continued from year to year. Further recommendations include:

1. When initiating group planning as a supervisory technique, it would be better to limit the areas to principal-teacher and teacher-pupil planning.

2. Faculty-community planning should follow after the faculty is adjusted to group planning and after the community has been properly oriented.

3. Teachers should be led into group planning rather than having it forced upon them.

If the schools are to keep pace with changing society, there must be constant evaluation and modification of instructional materials and teaching methods. With many teachers having received their training from ten to thirty years ago, some method of bringing modern techniques directly into the classroom is imperative. Group planning as described in this study offers a practical approach to both teacher and administrative growth.
APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL APPROACHES NOT DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER III

Principal-Teacher Planning:

Conference type of reporting to parents.

Teacher participation in connection with remodeling school building.

Teacher-Pupil Planning:

Pupil evaluation of recess activities.

Principal-Teacher-Pupil Planning:

Planned visitation of parents to see regular school work.

Principal-Parent-Teacher Planning:

Responsibility of good citizens with respect to school bond issue.

Utilization of laymen as valuable source of information for certain classroom projects.
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