

# PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL SUPERVISION

BY

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THERE was recently issued, in this series of textbooks, a volume entitled *How to Supervise*, by the author of the present collection of problems in school supervision. His book was a discussion of the practical job of school supervision itself, and he confined himself to the task of showing how to build up teachers in general and specific teaching skills, and how to awaken new professional interests and enthusiasms in them for the teaching service. In a series of very practical chapters he laid down, in some detail, the supervisory techniques which should be a part of the professional preparation of every supervisory officer.

In the present volume, which may be used either as a companion volume of practical problems or independently, the author has set up a progressive series of thirty-three typical problems in school supervision, supplied the data and the references necessary to their solution, and has shown instructors how to use the problems most effectively with classes in school supervision. He has presented practical situations which others have faced, and which the student, too, will have to face and solve if he is to become a successful supervisor, and he has formulated the problems in such a way that the student will be forced to work out his solution under conditions as nearly actual as possible. The volume is in a sense a case-book in school supervision, analogous to the case-books of the prospective lawyer, and the method of training, well used by a skillful teacher, ought to prove as useful to the student of school supervision as do similar methods of training for students of the law.

ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY

## PREFACE

AN essential part of preparation in any professional field is that phase of study which unites theory and practice. This important aspect of development applies alike to the inexperienced student preparing for his chosen profession and to the experienced practitioner growing in his selected vocation. The former needs training and guidance in bridging the gap between theory and practice through exposure to and experience in typical situations to which he can apply his newly acquired knowledge. The latter faces many problems and situations in his work which he can meet efficiently by utilizing a guide containing pertinent references to helpful sources and practical suggestions for preparing himself to meet his specific needs.

This book of typical problems is designed to provide opportunities for concrete experiences in elementary school supervision which will meet the needs of the student in this field and of the supervisory officer needing further help. The typical problems and situations have been selected and arranged to furnish the student with the means for obtaining practice in experiences markedly similar to those which will confront him in this field of experting. Supervisory officers will find the materials organized in such a way as to meet their needs, also, in dealing with the frequently occurring situations arising in supervision.

The basic problems included in the volume were selected from the materials amassed by the writer from the following sources:

1. The author's personal experiences in various types of supervisory positions in public schools, and the records

of experiences obtained from his many colleagues, while serving with them.

2. The reported supervisory experiences and problems of the many superintendents, principals, and supervisors who have been students in the writer's classes in supervision in the University of Michigan, University of California, Columbia University, University of New Mexico, and Washington University, during the past nine years.

3. The writer's tabulation of problems and activities stated in or implied from the literature of the past decade, dealing with the supervision of instruction.

Each problem included in the final selection was chosen because it was in keeping with the following criteria:

1. It is typical of problems and activities which frequently occur in the experiences of supervisory officers.

2. It is an integral part of the series of essential experiences which contribute to a well-rounded training in the field of elementary school supervision.

3. It furnishes the necessary experiences involving intensive study and functional activity which contribute to the acquisition of knowledge of and skill in supervisory techniques.

The problems, together with the questions and suggestions accompanying them, have been tested frequently by the author in the classes of experienced and inexperienced students of supervision taught by him in the universities mentioned above. The bibliographies also were critically read and selected by him, and then tested in the classes to determine their educational value in conjunction with the respective problems to which the references are appended.

The materials are arranged in an order which will provide an accumulation of supervisory experiences. The activities involved in the solution of each problem contribute to the gradual growth of the learner, and furnish him with a back-

ground of information and skill to be used and supplemented by new experiences in the subsequent problems. In the section preceding the set of problems, dealing with instruction in the use of the materials, the writer has indicated suggestive procedures to be followed by instructors and by students for getting the most help from the volume.

The contents of the book have been organized, therefore, so that it may be used as a handbook by supervisory officers at work on their various problems, and as a case-book or problem-text for students training for supervisory positions. It is especially serviceable as a companion book to such a textbook in the supervision of instruction as the writer's *How to Supervise*.

The indebtedness of the author is gladly acknowledged to the many superintendents, supervisors, principals, students, and others who have contributed to the development of this book. He regrets that the large number of these persons precludes the special mention he would like to give to each one in appreciation of his contribution.

GEORGE C. KYTE

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# PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL SUPERVISION

## I. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

IN making use of the typical problems included in this book, the instructor should keep in mind that their basic purpose is to serve as a means by which the student can be aided in bridging the gap between theory and practice. With this motive affecting any method of teaching employed, the learning will result in concrete, practical outcomes in keeping with a sound philosophy of education. An instructor will find it feasible, therefore, to follow any procedure he now uses with but slight modification in order to incorporate the use of the typical problems. Suggestive ways in which the book may be used are presented in the last part of this section.

### *General procedures in using the problems*

**Length of course.** The first phase of planning for the use of these or similar problems in a course dealing with the supervision of elementary schools, for example, is the determination of the number and types of problems which can be used effectively in the time available. The writer has kept a record for years of the time required by the students to work out each problem, with a reasonable amount of effort and in a reasonable length of time. The data thus accumulated regarding the problems included and many similar ones have been used in arriving at the suggestions included in the table.

Courses of five or six semester credits are long enough to permit the use of all the problems included. The student will have time to study very thoroughly all pertinent references and to deal with many minor, detailed problems which arise in the course of working the printed ones. Suggested modifications to be made in selecting problems to be used in a four-unit course are indicated in the table. The reading assignments can be almost as extensive as those made in a five-unit course.

Approximately twenty-five problems can be treated adequately in a three-unit course in one semester. The options, omissions, and the like, suggested in the facing table have been planned to indicate a selection of problems which will provide the student with a well-rounded series of experiences in the field of supervision. The extent to which students can make use of the entire list of references selected for each problem depends on the method of teaching employed. Since the lists contain the best references, as determined by a critical reading of them and testing in classroom use, it is possible to select for each problem the number of reading assignments which will be sufficient to give the student as sound a background as time and available good materials permit.

In planning the suggested selection of problems for a two-unit course, the writer has kept in mind the same considerations as have been stated regarding the three-unit course. Fewer problems can be utilized effectively and, consequently, the choice of them, as indicated, must be guided by the aim to select those giving the student the widest range of experiences in various phases of supervision in the limited amount of time.

In the one-unit course or its equivalent, which is generally taught in connection with a general course in educational administration and supervision, only a minimum number of

**SUGGESTED LISTING OF PROBLEMS TO BE USED IN COURSES  
OF VARIOUS LENGTHS**

PROBLEM	SUGGESTED MODIFICATION OF SELECTION OF PROBLEMS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF SEMESTER HOURS OF WORK				
	Six	Four	Three	Two	One
I.....	Use all the problems .....				
II.....		O	A }	B }	O
III.....			A }	B }	O
IV.....			A }	B }	O
V.....					O
VI.....				C }	
VII.....				C }	O
VIII.....			I		
IX.....			O	O	O
X.....					
XI.....					
XII.....			D }	E }	F }
XIII.....			D }	E }	F }
XIV.....			D }	E }	F }
XV.....			D }	E }	F }
XVI.....				C }	C }
XVII.....		I	I	C }	C }
XVIII.....			C }	C }	C }
XIX.....			C }	C }	C }
XX.....					
XXI.....					
XXII.....		C }	C }	C }	C }
XXIII.....		C }	C }	C }	C }
XXIV.....					
XXV.....					
XXVI.....				C }	C }
XXVII.....				C }	C }
XXVIII.....		C }	C }	C }	C }
XXIX.....		C }	C }	C }	C }
XXX.....					
XXXI.....					
XXXII.....		I	I	O	O
XXXIII.....					

EXPLANATION: O, Omit. I, Include if time permits. A, Select 2 of the 3. B, Select 1 of the 3. C, Select 1 of the 2. D, Omit 1 of the 4, if necessary. E, Omit 1 of the 4. F, Omit 2 of the 4.

problems can be treated. They should be selected with the purpose of giving the student exposure to all the principal phases of supervisory activities and the educational philos-

ophy governing them. An analysis of the problems suggested for inclusion in such a course will indicate to the reader the broad nature of exposure provided by the problems selected. The amount of reading which can be done will also be limited to a considerable degree. Much stress will have to be put on the materials in textbooks dealing with supervision. Only a small amount of additional time will be found available which can be devoted to reading in periodical literature.

**Meeting the needs of students.** The subdivisions of each problem have been made to furnish assistance in the selection and use of the group of typical problems which will serve the needs of an individual or a group. The first part presents a practical situation, similar to many found in school systems, and provides the limiting conditions commonly confronting supervisory officers.

Immediately following the subdivision is a statement regarding the nature of the problem. In this short section has been included a summary of the supervisory experiences which the study of the problem is to furnish the student. The contents of the paragraph will serve to conserve the time of the instructor by facilitating his selection of the problems he wishes to use. The statement will also direct the attention of the student to the supervisory phases in the reading materials he should study most intensively.

The third subdivision deals with the suggestive questions and directions to be followed by a student in solving the problem. The final section of a problem consists of the selected reading references. The use of the questions and the use of the references are treated below.

**Use of the suggestive questions.** The questions and directions included at the close of the statement of each type of supervisory situation have been arranged in an order which has been found to guide the student's reading and thinking

so that he will get the most value from the experiences involved. These questions and suggestions have been tested and modified many times, until the writer found them serving well the purposes intended by their inclusion. In general, therefore, if a student works out the responses to each point in the order in which it occurs, he will have experienced the desirable learning activities which the problem is planned to provide.

The instructor may wish to formulate other questions and directions which the problem suggests to him. They may be supplementary to the printed ones, or substitutes for them. The writer follows these practices, especially when he has felt that certain special aspects of a problem need to be raised to greater prominence and worked out more intensively because of ascertained definite needs of the student. The extensive nature of the literature included for each problem readily provides for such modifications.

**Use of the references.** In compiling the list of references, the writer has endeavored to select and include all references which were found to have value for the student. They have survived the test of rigid use in solving the problems included and in bringing the student into contact with many significant aspects of supervision. The writer has included in the list, therefore, specific references to usable materials found: (1) in general textbooks dealing with the supervision of instruction; (2) in special texts treating with a phase of the subject; (3) in reported experiments and investigations published in monographs, yearbooks, and periodicals; and (4) in other published literature of value in this field of education.

Blank pages at the close of each list of references have been included, so that the student may list such new references as may appear in print or such old ones as the instructor feels should be added because of specific phases he desires to stress. Such added bibliography enhances the value of the

book for future use by the student. In order that the new lists may be usable, however, the student should be instructed to exercise care in making the entry both complete and accurate. These two characteristics are essential to facilitate locating the materials when they are needed.

It is not intended that every student shall read every reference to a problem. The overlapping in such an extensive list as has been included is bound to be considerable. The student will need to select references which will give him as wide a range of contacts with ideas and practices as time and energy permit. With this purpose in mind, he should be expected to study all materials included in a general textbook or two in the field of elementary school supervision, study such additional literature as will supplement or expand effectively his range of information, and read any other references for which he can find time.

The limitations of library facilities affect most teaching and learning situations in which students of supervision will be found, whether in institutions of higher learning or in school systems. With these conditions in mind, the writer has carefully included many references from such widely selected sources that the list for each problem contains a sufficient number which will be found in any fairly good library. As a further help to the instructor desiring to meet this phase of planning, a tabulation of the references included has been made to determine the frequency with which usable materials occur in the various periodicals and other serial publications especially. The tabulation led to the conclusions that:

1. The bulk of worth-while magazine articles on the supervision of instruction in the elementary schools appears in the following periodicals:

*American School Board Journal.* Bruce Publishing Company,  
Milwaukee.

*Educational Administration and Supervision.* Warwick and York, Baltimore.

*Elementary School Journal.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

*Journal of Educational Method.* Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

*The Nation's Schools.* The Nation's Schools Publishing Company, Chicago.

2. Educational organizations whose publications are largely devoted to the same specialized field of education are:

*The Department of Elementary School Principals*; National Education Association, Washington.

*The Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction*; National Education Association, Washington.

If sets of the above-mentioned publications are available for the student's use, he will have access to most of the best serially published literature in the field of supervision of the elementary schools.

### *Special procedures in using the problems*

The problems may be used as the guiding basis of group discussions, as the set of assignments in a program of individualized instruction, as the means for enriching, supplementing, and illustrating in practical ways the materials included in a series of lectures, or any combination of these procedures. In any procedure followed which incorporates a study of the problems, the student will be using the case method, natural activity approach, or the project method, as such a procedure is variously called. No matter what name it is given, the steps that the student takes will be essentially the same. Since this aspect of the learning is treated in the instructions included for the student, only such phases of it are included in the following discussions as are parts of a procedure used by an instructor.



**Group-discussion method.** A detailed account of the method followed by the writer in using the problems in his classes will indicate many phases of using the problems in whatever procedure may be followed by other persons. Such aspects as are prominent in the other procedures, as well as in the procedure of the writer, are presented the one time to avoid wasteful duplication in this discussion.

After analyzing such data concerning the members of his class as the nature and extent of their training for teaching and for administration and supervision, the nature and extent of their teaching experiences, the nature and extent of their administrative experiences, and the future work in which the students are particularly interested, the instructor selects the first series of problems in the set which seems to be best adapted to making a sound beginning in the training program of his course. These problems are assigned to the class as a whole to read, in order that each member may indicate which problem or problems he wishes to study intensively in order to meet his needs, his interests, and the like.

Utilizing these expressions of choice, together with the data accumulated about each student, the instructor then assigns each member of the class to one problem or more, the group thus assigned to a problem constituting the committee-in-charge at the time it is taken up in class. At this first class meeting, the members of a committee thus formed meet to get better acquainted, select a chairman, and assign readings among themselves. The instructor designates the general reading which all members of the class are expected to have completed previous to the presentation of a problem in class.

At the second class meeting, further general guidance is given the class regarding routine matters affecting the discussion procedure used. The members then form in their com-