DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 739 CS 006 183

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TITLE Effecting Change in School Reading Programs: The Resource Role.
INSTITUTION International Reading Association, Newark, Del.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-87207-945-7
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 76p.
AVAILABLE FROM International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19711 (Order No. 945, $3.50 member, $5.00 non-member).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Agents; *Change Strategies; *Program Development; *Reading Consultants; Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; Reading Teachers; *Resource Teachers; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

Intended for reading specialists who wish to become expert resource persons, this book provides a number of suggestions on how to bring about change in the attitudes of other educators concerning the place of the reading specialist in regular classroom settings. The nine chapters of the book provide the following information: (1) an overview of the role of the reading specialist as a resource person; (2) the role of the specialist within the school organization, including ways to find agreement with others about goals and procedures and ways to determine sources of authority; (3) guidelines for effective communication within the school organization; (4) necessary interpersonal skills and personal characteristics of the specialist; (5) leadership in the resource role; (6) decision making procedures; (7) using external resources, such as those offered by governmental, higher education, and professional organization agencies; (8) the rights of others, including students' rights to see official records concerning themselves, to privacy, and to the fair use of their test results; and (9) self-evaluation procedures. Four appendixes discuss preparing for a job interview, preparing for the first week of school, tips on working with a teacher in the classroom, and a checklist for measuring attitudes about parent involvement in the reading program. (FL)

EFFECTING CHANGE IN SCHOOL READING PROGRAMS:

The Resource Role

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Bean, Rita M.
Effecting change in school reading programs.

Includes bibliographies.
1. Reading—Remedial teaching. I. Wilson, Robert Mills. II. Title.
LB1050.5.B4 428.4'2 81-8231
ISBN 0-87207-945-7 AACR2

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Foreword

In recent years the role of the reading specialist as a resource person has achieved prominence in theory and, to some extent, in actual practice. While no one denies that the need exists for remedial instruction, the idea persists that improved initial teaching can spare many children the experience of remedial instruction. Hence the rationale for more emphasis on the role of the specialist as a resource for classroom teachers in their efforts to teach more effectively.

Improvement involves change. Bringing about change—especially change in the attitudes, habits, and skills of practicing adults—is never easy. It requires information and skills which have not traditionally been a part of the education of reading specialists. It also requires personal characteristics which specialists can work to develop in themselves once they understand the importance of these characteristics in their role as change agents.

For some time, business and industry have recognized the responsibilities of persons who work with other adults to bring about change in corporation policies and operation. Seminars and training courses "on company time" abound for these individuals. Education has generally left it to the reading specialists themselves to figure out how to become expert resource persons.

Effecting Change in School Reading Programs: The Resource Role addresses the issue and offers many worthwhile and very practical suggestions.

Olive S. Niles, *President*
International Reading Association
1980-1981

Chapter One

Reading Specialist as a Resource Person

The continuing emphasis on the "three Rs" and the inclusion of special reading programs within schools have contributed to the demand for reading specialists in both elementary and secondary schools. Through their professional organizations educators have recognized the importance of the reading specialist and, in many instances, have made the hiring of reading specialists one of their topmost priorities in negotiating contracts. Furthermore, the continuing emphasis on individualized instruction supports the need for additional personnel who have the expertise to diagnose and make recommendations for adaptive instruction.

Although there seems to be little argument about the need for reading specialists (Harsh, 1971), there is not much empirical evidence as to the role or functions these specialists must perform in order to have a positive effect on the reading abilities of children. The functions of the specialists might be viewed on a continuum. Remedial reading teachers at one end of the continuum have little opportunity to interact with teachers; generally, they spend most of their time instructing students who have difficulty with reading. Conversely, reading specialists who function as resource people may never work with children. These specialists spend much of their time on both informal and formal staff development. Between these extremes, one may find many different arrangements, with

specialists assuming resource roles as well as instructional ones. These resource specialists may work with content teachers, or they may assist in coordinating developmental programs with remedial programs while maintaining their roles as remedial teachers. Many factors contribute to these differing role emphases: the type of program within a school, the expectations of a specific institution, and the qualifications and values of the individual assuming the role.

A Historical Perspective

In looking at the evolution of the reading specialist as a support person, it is interesting to note that the early specialists (1930s) were essentially supervisors who worked with teachers to improve the reading program. It was after World War II, in response to the raging criticism of the schools and their inability to teach children to read, that "remedial reading teachers" became fixtures in many schools, public and private, elementary through secondary. The primary responsibility of the specialist was to work with individuals or small groups of children who were experiencing difficulty in learning to read. As stated by Briggs and Coulter (1977)

> Like Topsy, these remedial-reading services just "growed," aided and abetted by government at all levels and by private foundations quick to provide grants of funding for such programs (p. 217).

Guidelines for reading specialists developed by the International Reading Association in 1968 strongly supported the remedial role; five of the six functions described for the "Special Teacher of Reading" related directly to instructional responsibilities. One of the stated functions suggested that the specialist had a responsibility to classroom teachers: "Interpret student needs and progress in remediation to the classroom teacher and the parents."

Although there was a great deal of emphasis on the remedial role of the specialists, many educators decried this focus and pushed for a different role for the specialist; that of resource to the classroom teacher. In an editorial in the March 1967 *Reading Teacher*, the theme of which was the role of the reading specialist, Stauffer described the remedial role as one

of working in a "bottomless pit." He supported what he saw as the changing role of the specialist, from that of remedial teacher to reading consultant (p. 474).

Not only can support for the resource role be found in the writings of many reading educators (Briggs and Coulter, 1977; Wilson, 1981; Robinson, 1967), but in addition the *Guidelines for the Professional Preparation of Reading Teachers* (1978) developed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association include many attitudes, concepts, and skills that are directly related to the resource or consultative role.

A Shift in Emphasis

Although the remediation role can be beneficial for some children who are participating in the program, the pitfalls for the teacher who assumes only the remediation role include the following:

1. *Numbers.* Given the inflexibility in guidelines regarding admission to special programs and the limitation in teaching time, specialists may have difficulty serving all of the children who could profit from individualized help.

2. *Separation of classroom and specialist's program.* Probably the greatest pitfall is this one. If the remedial program is completely divorced from the ongoing program of the school, benefits to children may be minimal. Children with reading problems may return to classrooms where they are asked to learn from materials that are too difficult and to participate in instructional activities that have little meaning. Specialists and classroom teachers may have little opportunity to plan congruent objectives for children, thereby creating a dissonance between the remedial and developmental programs.

3. *Stigma of the remediation program.* Children may dislike and resent being singled out to receive remedial help if the remedial classes are labeled in a manner which suggests that only specific types of children are selected. Too often the remedial classes become dumping grounds for children with behavior problems or students labeled as slow learners.

4. *Concept of reading as a separate subject.* If teachers believe that it is the responsibility of the specialist to teach reading, then little effort may be exerted by the classroom

teachers, both reading and content teachers, to provide for the reading needs in their classrooms.

These limitations have hindered the effectiveness of specialists and speak to the need for increased emphasis on the resource role.

Current Status of Specialists

There does not appear to be overwhelming evidence that the role of the reading specialist has changed. Indeed, the results of a study (Garry, 1974), in which specialized reading personnel in Pennsylvania were asked to rate the importance of various tasks, indicate that there is a "wide diversity of practices and policies in the employment of specialized reading personnel" (p. 608). In a survey conducted by the International Reading Association and analyzed by Pertz (1976), the four most frequent activities of reading specialists who were members of the IRA were: remedial instruction, diagnostic work, development of instructional materials, and teaching of developmental reading. This evidence suggests that reading specialists still function primarily as remedial teachers. Nevertheless, the need for specialists serving as resource persons appears to be growing.

Federal legislation, for example, Public Law 94-142, should certainly affect the role of specialists. In this law that applies to students who require special education (including those labeled as learning disabled) there is a requirement that an individual plan of study be prepared for each student. In addition, there is support for the notion of mainstreaming, the process of placing a handicapped child in the regular classroom. Certainly specialists with their knowledge of diagnostic teaching can be helpful to teachers who must prepare these individual educational programs. More importantly, the current emphasis on mainstreaming can be implemented effectively only if classroom teachers and specialists work together to facilitate the integration of the child into the regular program. The specialist can serve as an important resource to the teacher who must provide for the reading needs of the child with a learning disability or of the child who has impaired vision.

The provision of special programs for the gifted may also provide new direction for the specialist in the resource role.

Teachers may need support as well as educational materials to enable them to develop and implement instructional programs for these children.

Support for the resource role comes also from the classroom teacher. In a 1981 project directed by Beal, specialists' roles and their impact on the reading achievement of students as well as on teachers, were studied. Each specialist assumed four major functions: diagnosing, instructing, working on staff development, and serving as a resource to parents. At the conclusion of the project, teachers were asked to evaluate the various functions according to their impact on the children. It was found that three of the four most highly valued roles were those demanding that the specialist function as a *resource* to the teacher (providing inservice, developing materials, and conferring). Instruction of children by the specialist was rated fourth in importance. The teachers valued most whatever enabled them, the classroom teacher, to become better instructors of reading.

There seems to be support for the resource function for all specialists, even those whose primary responsibility is that of remediation. The need for continuous interaction with the classroom teacher, both for obtaining information about children and for giving feedback about instructional practices, is being emphasized. Furthermore, there is also a focus on the specialist's role in working with content teachers in providing for the individual needs of children.

If specialists are to assume this role of resource, do they have the competencies to perform effectively? In a study conducted by Ivers (1975), a group of reading specialists, classroom teachers, principals, and reading supervisors were asked to identify and compare their concepts of the ideal role and functions of the reading specialist with the actual role and functions. Although Ivers found wide agreement among and within the four groups, there were differences between ideal and actual practices on certain key items. As stated by Ivers,

> ...the five statements concerned with reading specialist behaviors involved in assistance to the classroom teacher, which were considered by major contributors in the field of reading to be among the most important, were not correlated highly between the ideal as perceived by the reading

specialists or the classroom teacher, and actual practice as perceived by both groups (pp. 104-105).

The findings of this study suggest the need for improving communications between the classroom teacher and the reading specialist so that remedial reading programs can function more effectively. Apparently specialists had difficulty assuming the resource role.

Competencies Needed in Resource Role

It is not enough to state the importance of the resource role. Instruction for specialists in the field, as well as those in certification programs, must be provided. As early as 1967, Dietrich (1967) suggested the need for certain "personal qualifications" which would enable the specialist to: establish rapport with teachers, administrators, parents, and students; communicate effectively with teachers by listening carefully before evaluating; and encourage teachers to perform their instructional tasks effectively (pp. 484-485). Dietrich stressed the importance of communication skills in the effective performance of specialists.

The following list of competencies have been identified as essential for individuals assuming a resource role.

1. Understanding of and ability to relate to the social system or educational context in which one works.
2. Ability to communicate ideas effectively and accurately.
3. Awareness of one's own interpersonal skills and ability to establish excellent working relationships with others.
4. Ability to assume leadership roles and to develop leadership in others.
5. Ability to use appropriate decision-making processes.
6. Knowledge of the legal rights of children and teachers.
7. Understanding of the means by which the role of the specialist can be evaluated.
8. A thorough understanding and knowledge of the communication process and ways in which to promote children's growth in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In this book, various ways in which the specialist can

develop skills as a resource person will be presented. The focus will be on the first seven competencies since the eighth competency, which addresses the importance of the "knowledge base" for specialists, is presented quite thoroughly in many methods textbooks and in graduate programs for specialists.

The authors' concept of "resource" focuses on the need for a partnership of the classroom teacher, the parent, the administrator, other resource persons, and the specialist. This partnership must be based on mutual trust and respect. Indeed, Cogan's (1973) concept of "colleagueship" is appropriate here: the reading specialist and the teacher must work together as "associates and equals...bound together by a common purpose ...the improvement of students' learning..."(p. 68).

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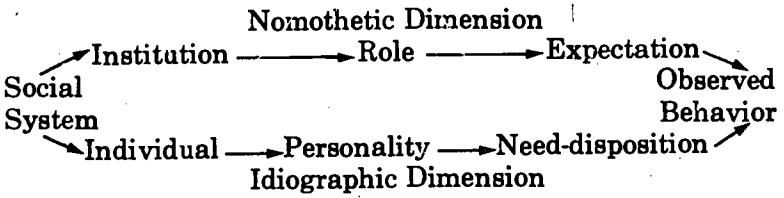
Chapter Two

The Specialist within the Organization

Success in a resource role may depend to a large extent on the specialist's ability to work effectively within a school organization. Too often, people who work in large, complex organizations have problems because they violate the norms or standards (overt or covert) of that organization. For example, in writing about one of the early cycles of Teacher Corps and its problems, Corwin (1973) indicates that teacher interns working within the schools were "relatively ineffective" because they ignored or violated customs and rules of the organization in which they worked (p. 375). Teachers may even lose their jobs because they do not fully understand their school systems. They do not get along with the administration or their colleagues; they ignore rules or procedures that are part of the institution's demands. They have difficulty knowing how to make changes by working within the system. As society becomes increasingly more complex and school systems larger and more bureaucratic, careful consideration must be given to the study of organizations or institutions, and the roles within those institutions.

The conceptual framework developed by Getzels and Thelen (1960) for describing the classroom as a social system is quite useful in viewing the specialist's role. The nomothetic dimension describes the normative or standard aspect of the social system: What does the institution expect? The idiographic dimension describes the personal dimension of activity in the

social system: What does the individual bring to the institution? These two dimensions can be described separately but, in reality, there is continuous interaction. Getzels and Thelen (p.68) represent their model as follows:



The application of this framework to the role of the specialist illustrates several of the problems and concerns that must be faced by specialists if they are to be successful in their resource role.

The school or school district (institution) in which the specialist works has certain expectations for the person functioning as a specialist (role). These role expectations may include such responsibilities as tutoring small groups of children, diagnosing children who have reading problems, conferring with parents and teachers. The school at the same time gives certain powers or privileges to persons serving in that role. Specialists may have more "planning" time than regular classroom teachers; they may have smaller classes; state or federal regulations may prohibit them from assuming clerical or supervisory tasks (bus duty, home room responsibilities). The institutions may or may not view the resource role as part of the specialist's responsibility. In institutions in which specialists are seen as a resource to teachers, time, materials, etc., will be allotted to enable specialists to fulfill that specific role. In institutions in which specialists are viewed as remedial reading teachers, there probably will be no support for the resource role since the institution does not include "resource" as one of the role expectations for the specialist.

No matter how specific the role expectations of the institutions, the observed behavior of various specialists will be different because these roles are filled by individuals with their own personality and need dispositions. One need only visit two classrooms in the same school building to have this point illustrated: same grade level, same materials, same

methodology, same procedures, but a different teaching style. It is the individual who "stamps the particular role he occupies with the unique style of his own characteristic pattern of expressive behavior" (Getzels and Thelen, p. 67). Furthermore, problems may arise when the individual assuming a specialist position views that role differently from the institution.

The dilemmas of the individual functioning in the resource role may vary from problems arising from the nature of the goals and expectations of the institutions to problems that arise because of the personality and need dispositions of the individual. Because Chapters 4 (Interpersonal Relations) and 5 (Leadership Skills) focus on the individual, the focus here will be on those concerns which may occur because of the institution. Specific attention will be given to the following:

1. Finding agreement about goals. What are the roles of specialists?
2. Finding agreement about procedures. How should specialists achieve goals?
3. Understanding authority. What do specialists have the authority to do? What do they have the power to do? Who has the authority in the organization?

Finding Agreement about Goals

From the initial job interview to the day-by-day activities in the school, the resource teacher will be obtaining information about goal expectations from the principal, supervisor, and others. Since goal expectations change, resource teachers need to be alert to cues relating to role expectations from many sources.

The resource teacher should start thinking about goals before accepting the position. If there is written policy, one can save considerable time and effort by being prepared to discuss unclear items. The job interview* and the first meeting with the principal are good times to clarify any questionable areas. Many resource teachers are responsible to a supervisor and will find that person to be most informed about the policy for the roles of the position.

Teachers are another source of information about role expectations. Teachers develop role expectations for the

* See Appendixes A, B, C for suggestions about learning to work within the system.

resource person in several ways. They might expect the role to be identical to that assumed by the previous reading specialist. They might have needs for diagnostic or instructional support. They might have developed their role expectations from ideas mentioned in staff meetings. In a given staff there probably will be a variety of role expectations from various teachers and it is important to know what those expectations are, how they differ from each other, and how they vary from the expectations of other sources such as administrators and supervisors. For example, some teachers might have a role expectation that the reading specialist will work with students in instruction while others may expect the resource person to provide ideas for instructional intervention.

Cues can be obtained from any of the above individuals concerning role expectation changes while on the job. The role may change for a variety of reasons. There may be a change because of the skill of the resource teacher. For example, if the resource teacher is skilled at helping teachers use new materials, then that might develop into a role expectation that had not been there originally. Roles can also change as leadership personnel change or as new directives are received from the board of education. Resource teachers should be aware of teacher and administrative reactions to their role. When there is disagreement about goals, these differences must be discussed and solutions reached. Otherwise, resource persons will find themselves in untenable positions.

Finding Agreement about Procedures

Once there has been initial agreement about goals, the resource teacher will need to become aware of procedures necessary to achieve those goals. Some procedures are likely to be spelled out in clear detail while others might be somewhat ambiguous. For example, procedures for working with small groups of students are likely to be described in detail and be a part of the overall school schedule, while the details of working with teachers in their classrooms might never be articulated in detail. For example, one teacher might need help with one reading group each day for several weeks while another might need only ten minutes on one occasion to talk over a teaching strategy that has been attempted recently.

When procedures have not been articulated explicitly, it is important to obtain as much information as possible from a person in authority, such as the principal or the supervisor. When working within a specific classroom, it is always best to discuss procedures with the teacher. For example, when conducting a demonstration lesson in a teacher's classroom, the resource person should be acquainted with classroom management procedures normally used in that classroom. How do children move from group activities to their seats; how are they excused from the room; how are they expected to approach the teacher? It may be necessary for the resource persons to modify procedures if they make a teacher uncomfortable.

Procedures, like goals, tend to change from time to time, so the resource teacher needs to plan procedures with built-in flexibility.

When there are procedural difficulties, resource teachers will need to rely upon their skills in developing effective personal relations. Part fo this task is to develop and maintain credibility. To some extent all educators lose a little credibility the moment they leave the classroom. Although no pat answers can be given for maintaining credibility, skill in working within the social system is important.

These suggestions may be helpful:

1. Always work with children as part of regular activities. As you discuss the progress of children with teachers, let them know you have concerns and frustrations, too.

2. Abide by the same school rules and regulations as teachers. Being on time, performing your share of nonteaching duties, and working a full schedule will be seen as your effort to be a working member of the faculty. On the other hand, seeking special privileges, taking too many breaks, and avoiding extra duties will quickly tell teachers that you think you are special.

3. Be certain to know students. Know their interests, behaviors, and concerns. Try to put test results into perspective with what is observed. Ask for teacher opinion and information; be certain that you do not create the impression that you have all the answers.

4. Be available to teachers. At times it will seem as though there are no more minutes in the day, but be available

to discuss concerns or offer services. Delays and excuses will not be regarded highly.

5. Provide feedback as quickly as possible. After testing a child, give information to parents and teachers immediately. Written reports might come later.

6. Keep confidences. Communications with teachers must be seen as privileged.

7. Offer to work on school events, such as an upcoming PTA meeting or a school fair.

Understanding Authority

For teachers, the source of authority within a school is usually easily determined. For resource teachers, however, there may be considerable confusion about where authority lies. Often resource persons are responsible to more than one person, and such a situation can create serious problems. For example, a principal might want the resource teacher to meet with several parents at the same time that the reading supervisor expects the resource teacher to conduct an inservice session in another school. Specialists working in this type of situation can get quite confused and frustrated, and steps have to be taken to identify the procedures for handling the conflict. Generally, the supervisor or someone in charge of support personnel must be notified and asked to meet with all staff so that a clarification of authority and responsibility can be made.

Resource teachers should determine as quickly as possible what authority or control they have over such matters as budget, scheduling, and curriculum development. It is not a matter of gaining power, but a matter of knowing one's responsibility. If specialists have little or no authority, then they need to know which staff member assumes that responsibility.

Final authority often rests with persons who control budgets. The person who evaluates the resource teacher is another source of authority. Most people work effectively when they know what is expected of them. Few work effectively when they do not.

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Chapter Three

Communicating Effectively

Communication is a process in which symbols are used to translate ideas and information into meaning. Communication involves a sender who encodes a message by deciding what messages to send and designing a verbal or nonverbal symbol system to send it. Communication also involves a receiver who decodes the message by using sensory systems to get the symbols to the brain for interpretation and evaluation.

All aspects of individuals' environments have effects on their communication systems. Attitude, time of day, health, location—all touch and affect communication. This makes the process of communicating a changing process. Educators need to be aware that symbols can mean different things at different times, in different places, with different people.

Communication breakdowns may occur for two reasons. First, the meanings attached to the symbols being used are different for two individuals. Both persons can possibly leave the communication session believing they understand the message that has been received or sent. However, the meaning difference may cause a lack of communication. For example, "She runs a structured classroom" may mean different things to different people.

Second, if either person in a communications situation is preoccupied with other matters (fatigue, disinterest, or distraction) there may be a communications breakdown. Teachers'

meetings following a strenuous day in the classroom might create an atmosphere for communication breakdown.

Effective communication, on the other hand, involves two people actively involved with each other's ideas. Each cares about what the other wants to express and is able to respond to it. Outside distractions tend to disappear, and the moment is total dedicated to the ideas being expressed.

Guidelines to Effective Communication

Some guidelines to effective two-way communication are:

1. *Be a good listener.* The first step in effective communication is the ability and desire to listen actively to the ideas being expressed. Active listening usually involves asking questions to obtain clarification about and expansion of ideas. At times it is difficult to be an active listener, but the skill can be developed. As the speaker realizes that you are actively listening to what is being said, you greatly increase the chances that you will be listened to by the other person.

2. *Be well organized.* As one organizes ideas before expressing them, the chances of effective communication increase. Organization indicates that the speaker has thought the ideas through and has taken the time to express them clearly. Rambling and meaningless dialogue will interfere with effective communication.

3. *Separate fact from opinion.* When emotionally involved with the issue under discussion, a person tends to express opinion as fact, and communication suffers. Couching statements with terms such as "I believe," "It is my opinion," "I'm not sure, but I think," helps the listener to properly weigh various ideas and improves communication.

4. *Be aware of timing.* The skill in recognizing appropriate moments for dialogue is important. In order for communication to be effective, the persons involved must be in a position to listen. Being aware of factors in the life of another which might be much more important than your ideas at the time can lead you to wait for a better moment to discuss an idea. For example, when a teacher is eager to get to an unattended class, every second of delay causes anxiety—a poor time to discuss yesterday's inservice presentation.

5. *Shared discourse.* Since few people enjoy the lecture as a means of communication, resource persons must be sensitive to the problems of one-way communication. Although no specific amount of time can be recommended, one might plan to include some discussion and reaction time in most formal presentations.

6. *Use multiple channels.* By using conversation, notes, and visual aids, one increases the possibility of effective communication. The note or the visual aid may carry the same message as the conversation or may add to it. In either case, it will serve to reinforce and clarify the message.

7. *Be sensitive to the feelings of others.* One tends to communicate best when comfortable and relaxed. If people feel threatened, communication usually suffers. Resource persons should be sensitive to the feelings of others and take positive action to reduce or remove threat.

Communications in the Resource Role

While the guidelines mentioned hold for communication in general, they also hold special meaning for the resource teacher. The following considerations are strategies that can be used to facilitate communication between the resource teacher and others.

1. As you develop an understanding of the school, a first necessity is to develop communications which will work in the social system. Establish procedures for teachers to get information to you and for you to get information to teachers. Consider both informal and formal communications. Chats in the teachers' rooms, meeting teachers by grade levels, sending newsletters, joining car pools, loaning books or other materials are all ways of opening communication pathways. Use the communication system to obtain information and deliver information. As people see you as an effective communicator, you will find more information being made available to you.

2. Consider all communication as privileged information. Keep all information private unless permission is given for sharing it. As you become viewed as a helpful person who can be trusted, your role as a resource person will be made easier.

3. Be prepared to share duties—even those which are not desirable. Take your share of lunch room duty, bus duty, and

playground supervision. Being a member of the team in every possible way facilitates communication.

4. Attend to the needs of teachers by being a good listener. Show interest by being available as a listener even when there is little you can do to solve problems. Be certain to communicate that you are able to keep confidences.

5. Be aware of your nonverbal communication. Eye contact while someone is talking with you tends to increase communication. Nods and other nonverbal signals communicate that you are actively listening.

6. People vary greatly in the amount of distance they prefer when talking with another. While some prefer a two or three yard distance between speakers, others are more comfortable if the distance is less than a yard. Try to become aware of these preferences and honor them. Also be aware of your own comfort distance.

7. Resource persons can easily fall into the habit of making judgments about ideas and performances of others. Avoid the use of terms such as right/wrong or good/bad when dealing with others. One can show approval without voicing it. For example, "I think I'd like to try that idea with some of my children," shows approval without voicing it directly. If teachers feel you are judging their ideas and performances, open communication will diminish quickly.

The resource person can enhance communications by focusing on strengths of others. Find the strengths of others and communicate to them that you recognize those strengths. Positive comments following a visit to the classroom, a note of appreciation for a favor done, a smile and a show of friendship at the end of a hard day are examples of things resource teachers can do to show that they value and respect the strengths of another person.

Effective communication is essential in all teaching. An awareness of the nature of communication breakdowns, the complexity of the whole process, and guidelines for effective communication will help resource teacher to be more effective in their roles.

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Chapter Four

Interpersonal Skills

Whether specialists serve as remedial or resource persons, they meet and interact with a number of people during the school day—children, classroom teachers, administrators, and parents. These contacts, if they are to be successful, require excellent interpersonal skills—skills which encourage and develop positive relationships between individuals.

Combs, Avila, and Purkey (1973) state that "the specific acts or behaviors employed by the helper are far less important to the helping process than the nature of the relationships established between helper and helpee" (p. x). Their findings indicate that effective helpers are people-oriented, have a positive view of the people with whom they work, and have a positive self-image (pp. 289-298). Certainly reading specialists are members of the helping profession—whether their focus is on children or on teachers—and, as helpers, they need to become aware of their own interpersonal skills and the ways in which they relate to others.

Essential Characteristics

The following six interpersonal characteristics are essentials for specialists if they are to function successfully in their roles.

1. *Acceptance.* Effective specialists must be able to disagree with various viewpoints and accept and work with individuals who profess divergent views. Effective specialists realize that persons with whom they work have varying opinions, some quite different from their own, and that the beliefs of these individuals are important and real to them. For example, specialists who reject teachers because of their negativism toward the reading program miss the opportunity a) to learn from those individuals how the reading program could be improved, or b) to work with those persons to make changes in their beliefs about the program.

2. *Realness or genuineness.* Genuine persons are those who can be trusted. Their concern for students and for teachers with whom they work is authentic and comes through in their interactions with others. Specialists who truly care about the people with whom they work and who are honest in their working relationships with others will be better received by teachers than those who are perceived negatively. Specialists who make all sorts of promises about materials, support and resources, and then do not deliver, soon lose credibility.

3. *Sensitivity.* Specialists must be sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of the individuals with whom they work. They must learn to "read" the nonverbal and verbal cues of individuals that tell them how their messages are being received. For example, specialists working with a beginning or inexperienced teacher must know when to *stop* making suggestions and begin providing support. Specialists must be aware that there are appropriate times and places to discuss sensitive and delicate matters. The teachers' lounge is no place to meet when teacher and specialist are discussing management or discipline problems. Likewise, the teacher who has just been observed by the principal or supervisor may not be receptive to a thorough discussion with the specialist about a child's need for supplemental reading instruction.

4. *Empathy.* The dictionary defines empathy as "imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being." Specialists must be able to "feel with" the teacher who has had a difficult parent-teacher conference, or the child who comes to a reading class angry and hostile because of an unhappy experience in a previous classroom. Although

individuals cannot be 100 percent effective in putting themselves into another's experiences, resource persons must consider how others feel and think. Sometimes the simple verbalization of another's feelings may help that person come to grips with deep emotions—and to realize that there is understanding and caring:

> "Johnny, I'm sure you must be very angry because you were sent to the principal's office."
>
> "It must have been very difficult to meet with those parents—it must make you very sad and bitter after you have tried to provide good experiences for Ruth."

A caution! Having empathy does not mean that the specialist is not going to work with individuals to help them to change and grow. Rather, it identifies a bond between specialist and teacher and helps to create an atmosphere of openness and trust.

5. *Assertion.* Effective specialists need to be assertive without being aggressive. They must be willing to assume responsibility, indeed, to *request* opportunities for additional responsibilities. Remedial reading teachers, for example, may have opportunities to provide staff development if they are willing to volunteer for such an assignment. Specialists who are assertive present their ideas along with excellent justification for their beliefs. They seek opportunities to make improvement not only in their own roles but also in the organization and structure of the reading program. Effective specialists must be willing and eager to assert themselves—to express their views intelligently and precisely.

6. *Initiative.* This quality is closely related to assertion. Specialists who wish to become successful resource people must be willing to take the initiative—to sense an opening and to follow through. For example, the specialist who hears a teacher say, "I'd like to try language experiences in my classroom but I'm not quite sure how to do it," will seek every opportunity to work with that teacher. The extent of support may range from providing materials to modeling several language experience lessons, depending on the needs of the teacher. The initiative of the specialist may be the key to developing and extending the resource role.

Suggestions for Self-Assessment

As a reading specialist eager to improve interpersonal skills, you might consider several ways in which to assess as well as to improve interpersonal abilities. Described below are several such approaches:

1. Read through the descriptions of each of the interpersonal characteristics above, and assess your strengths as well as your needs.

2. Ask several of your colleagues with whom you work closely (and who will be honest with you) to make an assessment of your strengths and needs. You might provide them with a list of the six characteristics above, and ask them to rank you, beginning with those qualities which are your strengths. You might also ask them to use a checklist such as the one that follows to rate you on your interpersonal skills.

Interpersonal Skills Checklist for the Specialist

	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Excellent
a. Is accepting of people with divergent views and beliefs.	0	1	2
b. Appears to have a genuine interest in people.	0	1	2
c. Is sensitive to feelings and beliefs of others.	0	1	2
d. Shows empathy for others.	0	1	2
e. Is assertive without being aggressive.	0	1	2
f. Takes initiative in program improvement.	0	1	2

3. You might then compare your perceptions with those of your colleagues. Others may perceive us differently from the way we perceive ourselves.

4. If you sense a need for improving your own interpersonal skills, attempt to put into practice one or two of the skills

which you have identified as needs. Continue to seek feedback from your colleagues. This issue of interpersonal relations is indeed an important one. Carl Rogers summarizes it well in his book, *Freedom to Learn* (1969):

> I'm sorry I can't be coolly scientific about this. The issue is too urgent. I can only be passionate in my statements that people count, that interpersonal relationships *are* important, that we know something about releasing human potential, that we could learn much more, and that unless we give strong positive attention to the human interpersonal side of our educational dilemma, our civilization is on its way down the drain (p. 125).

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Chapter Five

Leadership in the Resource Role

A leader is best
When people barely know that he exists,
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,
Worse when they despise him.

Fail to honor people
They fail to honor you.

But of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will say,
"We did this ourselves."

Lao-tzu (604 B.C.)

In this chapter, the discussion will focus on the concept of leadership and ways in which the resource person can effectively assume a leadership role.

Educational Leadership—What Is It?

One can define educational leaders as individuals who take responsibility for making instructional improvements within a school. Certainly there are individuals whose primary task is that of leadership—principals, supervisors, and others—whose *designated role* makes them accountable for the instructional programs in their schools. Given the broad definition of leaders above, however, all individuals within a school can and should assume leadership roles. Teachers, from

their classroom perspective, have a great deal to contribute to decisions about curriculum and instruction. The resource person, too, can be effective in creating change which improves the educational program for students.

The notion of *shared* or *functional* leadership is relevant to the person in the resource role. It implies that anyone working within a particular setting can assume leadership and help develop and encourage leadership in others. In most cases, resource persons are not designated leaders; they do not have the authority to make broad decisions about educational policy or practice. However, resource persons who have effective leadership skills can informally effect changes within the educational context. Perhaps resource persons can help other individuals assume leadership roles that will have an impact on the educational program. Too often, resource persons say, "If I only had authority, I would _____." Although authority might be helpful in some respects, the resource person has many opportunities to help in the development of the instructional program and, indeed, the fact that the resource person is a "teacher" may be beneficial in creating an atmosphere of trust and cooperation—an atmosphere conducive to creating educational change.

Skills of Leadership

Although past views of leadership stressed the innate characteristics that made individuals effective leaders, current theories of leadership stress the idea that individuals can be taught to develop good leadership abilities. Effective educational leaders must possess excellent interpersonal skills, communication skills, and curriculum and teaching expertise. They must also be aware of the forces or factors that affect their leadership: 1) knowing the people with whom one is working, 2) knowing the situation in which one is working, and 3) knowing oneself.

Knowing the individuals. Leaders should develop the skills that enable them to "read" the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the people with whom they are working. They should be sensitive to those individuals who need to be encouraged, those who never say much but have a great deal to offer if they feel comfortable enough to contribute. Too often,

the person who talks the most is thought of as the most knowledgeable or as "the authority." Leaders must recognize the needs of those talkative individuals also—and be alert to opportunities which will use their strengths but reduce their tendency to monopolize a group meeting or discussion.

Leaders should also be aware of the knowledge level of the group members. Have they had experience with the topic, with decision-making processes? A group of inexperienced teachers involved in their first curriculum development meeting may need more structure and input than a group of veteran teachers. Too often, leaders are so eager to see change that they are not alert to the subtle signals that indicate group members are not ready to move as quickly as the leader would like. Leaders must be sensitive to the status of their groups and provide the information or knowledge that will assist the group in achieving its goals.

Knowing the situation. Leaders must be aware of forces within the school which may affect group or individual behavior. For example, leaders who schedule after-school meetings that require more time than that stipulated for inservice in the teachers' contracts should not be surprised if they see little enthusiasm. Even in working with individuals, leaders must be sensitive to forces that may influence their effectiveness. Resource persons who naively suggest "open classrooms" to teachers who have criticized the lack of discipline in the school should not be surprised if they receive negative reactions. Leaders should also be aware of the many implications of any topic or issue which they are presenting. A discussion focusing on "needs assessment" may heighten the defensiveness of teachers, for example, in a school which has just received its achievement test scores and a letter from the superintendent questioning the low performance of the students.

Leaders should carefully and systematically obtain as much information as they can about situations in which they find themselves so that they can anticipate some of the reactions and be prepared to respond to them.

Knowing oneself. It is easier to look at the strengths and needs of others than it is to reflect on one's own characteristics. Yet value systems, personality traits, and needs affect the way

people relate to others and the way they handle their authority. Effective leaders must be *flexible*; they must be willing to adapt to individuals and situations. People with whom leaders work will not all be at the same level. Few may be ready to proceed as quickly as the leaders. Others may think the leaders are accomplishing nothing and "dragging their feet." Leaders must be prepared to accept and respect the uniqueness of group members, and help them gain the skills which will enable them to achieve their stated goals.

All effective leaders must also be able to maintain a balance between *task functions* and *maintenance functions* when working with a group. Johnson and Johnson (1975) define task functions as those actions which facilitate goal achievement and maintenance functions as those actions which help the group work cooperatively and effectively in their progress towards the goal. Task functions include giving information and opinion, seeking information and opinion, starting, summarizing, testing reality. Some of the maintenance functions are encouraging participation, harmonizing, relieving tension, building trust (pp. 26-27). Remember, both task and maintenance functions are important. At times leaders will need to reduce their emphasis on task functions in order to help a group work through a particular problem which is hindering ability to work together effectively. The time spent on maintenance is not wasted; indeed, it can facilitate progress towards the goal. The good will and atmosphere of trust which is developed will facilitate achievement.

Interpersonal skills are particularly important to the leader who must work with a number of persons, both individually and in groups. Effective interpersonal skills will help develop and utilize the strengths of individuals within the system and minimize unproductive behavior.

The leader who lacks excellent communication skills has little hope of establishing a climate for change. The leader must be a good listener who hears the nuances in the words of others, as well as an effective speaker who is able to communicate precisely and clearly.

The person who lacks a knowledge of curriculum and teaching is soon discovered. Teachers, parents, and administrators expect reading resource persons to have an excellent

understanding of the reading process as well as a knowledge of teaching strategies and methods. The most effective leaders are those who have a theoretical knowledge of curriculum, understand its sequence and structure, and have the vision to identify future as well as current curricular needs.

Suggestions for the Resource Person

Resource persons have unique roles as leaders. Seldom are they designated leaders; often, however, they have many opportunities to function as leaders with individuals and groups, both informally and formally. Because of the unique nature of the resource role, suggestions that follow should facilitate the resource person's role as leader. These strategies are divided into three stages. In Stage I, suggestions are provided for persons whose primary responsibility is that of working with children; they have little opportunity for formal leadership. The suggestions in Stage II are for persons who have dual responsibilities and work with both teachers and children. Finally, in Stage III, suggestions are listed for resource persons whose total responsibility is that of resource to teachers. Although these individuals may hold one of a number of titles—reading supervisor, consultant, coordinator, specialist, resource person—their primary task is to help teachers improve instruction in their classrooms. There is no fine line between these divisions, and many of the suggestions at any of the stages may be helpful to persons serving in the resource role.

Stage I. Ideas for the Resource Person Whose Primary Task Is that of Working with Children

1. Take every opportunity to work informally with classroom teachers—reading as well as content teachers. You may have to begin in the teachers' lounge or the lunch room. Listen to teacher concerns and be willing to help if you sense receptivity. The initial help may be minor; you may offer some supplemental materials to the teacher who expresses an interest in further individualization. However, these initial ventures are important first steps in assuming leadership.

2. Be positive! Look for the strengths of both teachers and children—and when you have opportunities to pass on

compliments, do so. If a child in your remedial reading group expresses pleasure about a classroom teacher, tell that teacher. If you notice some positive change in the behavior or achievement of a child, share the information with the teacher. The sense of trust and cooperation that you develop will enable you to function much more effectively as a leader.

3. Organize and share the data you have on the reading performance of children for the purpose of assessing the overall status of reading achievement in the school. It might be wise to make some summary statements about the data—and to raise some questions about current practices in teaching reading. Information you have can be influential in deciding school priorities and goals.

4. Help others interpret test results. Some teachers may have little experience working with group achievement or intelligence test information. Your experience with testing may be helpful in interpreting grade equivalent norms, stanines, or percentiles to teachers.

5. Work with individuals who request your services—both in the classroom and in conferences.

6. Be willing to take risks when you are participating as a group member. Volunteer for responsibilities such as note taking or chairing a subcommittee; make suggestions; and raise questions which indicate your interest and concern for improving the educational program for students. You will have many opportunities to function in this manner, in working with both advisory groups and various teacher committees.

Stage II. Ideas for the Resource Person Who Has Dual Responsibilities

These individuals have more opportunities to function as leaders and, most likely, are considered leaders in the school. They may have specific responsibilities for developing inservice or working on the development of curriculum.

1. Involve teachers in any decisions which you must make about the reading program. A mandate coming from your office does not ensure implementation in the classroom. The more teachers are involved in a decision, the more chance there is of that decision being made a part of their classroom practice.

2. Be quick to give credit to those who participate in an educational endeavor. The poem at the beginning of the chapter expresses it well: the best leader has quiet confidence in others—and a willingness to let others share in the accolades which come when the job is completed.

3. Follow through on your responsibilities. Although effective leaders must be creative and insightful, they must also be willing to handle the many details and administrative tasks which may make the difference between success and failure. For example, a School Reading Fair can work only if the responsibilities for publicity, organization, etc., are handled efficiently and effectively.

4. That you, the leader, work with children can be a benefit in the leadership role. You have established yourself as "one of us"; you know the strengths and weaknesses of the reading program. Your concern about individuals and groups of children should provide the impetus for many individual and group meetings in which you can apply your leadership skills. Some possibilities include: a) meeting with teachers to discuss ways of integrating the remedial program with the classroom program, b) meeting with the content teachers to ascertain ways in which you can help to teach various study techniques or specialized vocabularies, c) meeting with teachers regarding selection of students for the remedial or resource program, and d) soliciting ideas for improving the remedial/resource program.

5. When you receive new materials, review them, try them with children with whom you are working, and then make recommendations to teachers about possible usage. Too often new materials sit untouched in closets because teachers are uncertain about their use. You can encourage appropriate use of supplemental materials in the classroom reading program.

6. Respond promptly to requests that you receive for assistance. The teacher who asks to see you does not want to wait for several days. If your schedule is heavy, you can at least talk with that teacher to explain your dilemma and schedule a time for the two of you to meet.

Stage III. Ideas for the Specialist Whose Primary Role Is Resource

Most of the suggestions in Stages I and II are applicable. The suggestions below provide some ways in which those suggestions can be expanded.

1. Use the strengths of teachers. Form several groups of interested teachers who can be working on various aspects of the reading program: reading in the content fields, assessing reading progress, reading readiness, etc.

2. Continue to work with children, even if only on a short term basis. You may teach and videotape several lessons for use at inservice programs or team with several teachers in implementing a new approach or method.

3. Establish effective and continuous communication with teachers. Suggestions in Chapter 3 should be helpful here.

4. Be accessible to teachers. Although the administrative responsibilities may be great, get out into the schools so that you are aware of the issues and concerns.

5. Establish with teachers the goals and directions for the future—both short term and long term. It may be your responsibility to assess the needs of the reading program so that priorities can be established. A scatter approach to curriculum development is seldom effective.

6. Support the teachers in your communication with administration. Represent them and their views professionally.

Leadership, as defined in this chapter, is that behavior which influences the actions of others. It can occur in informal and formal settings, in small and large groups. Although the leadership role can at times be frustrating for the resource person, it is an important part of that position. The resource person who effectively assumes leadership can make an impact on the broader instructional program and help to create a healthy educational environment for students.

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Chapter Six

Decision-Making

What textbooks should be purchased next year? How should intermediate students be grouped for reading instruction? Is there a need to change reporting procedures?

Specialists in resource roles will be involved in decision-making processes. They will find themselves members of groups who must make decisions. At times, they may function as leaders. At other times, each may function as a group member challenged with the task of making an important decision.

In this chapter, the focus will be on the stages important in making decisions and on factors that affect decisions; also, guidelines that should help resource persons function more successfully in the decision-making process will be presented.

It might be helpful to relate the ideas in this chapter to a specific decision-making task in which resource persons might find themselves. Hence, the situation below:

> The reading specialist in a local school district has been asked to serve as a leader of a committee of teachers whose task it is to assess the readiness program in reading and make suggestions for modifications and changes, if necessary.

Stages in Decision-Making

The stages for decision-making are illustrated in Figure 1.

Stage		Question to Consider
I	Identifying the Problem	Do We Have a Problem?
II	Defining and Clarifying the Problem	What Is It?
III	Presenting Proposals for Solution	Shall We Try
IV	Anticipating Consequences	What Are the Consequences?
V	Initiating Action	How Do We Carry Out Our Decision?
VI	Evaluating	What Is the Result of Our Decision?

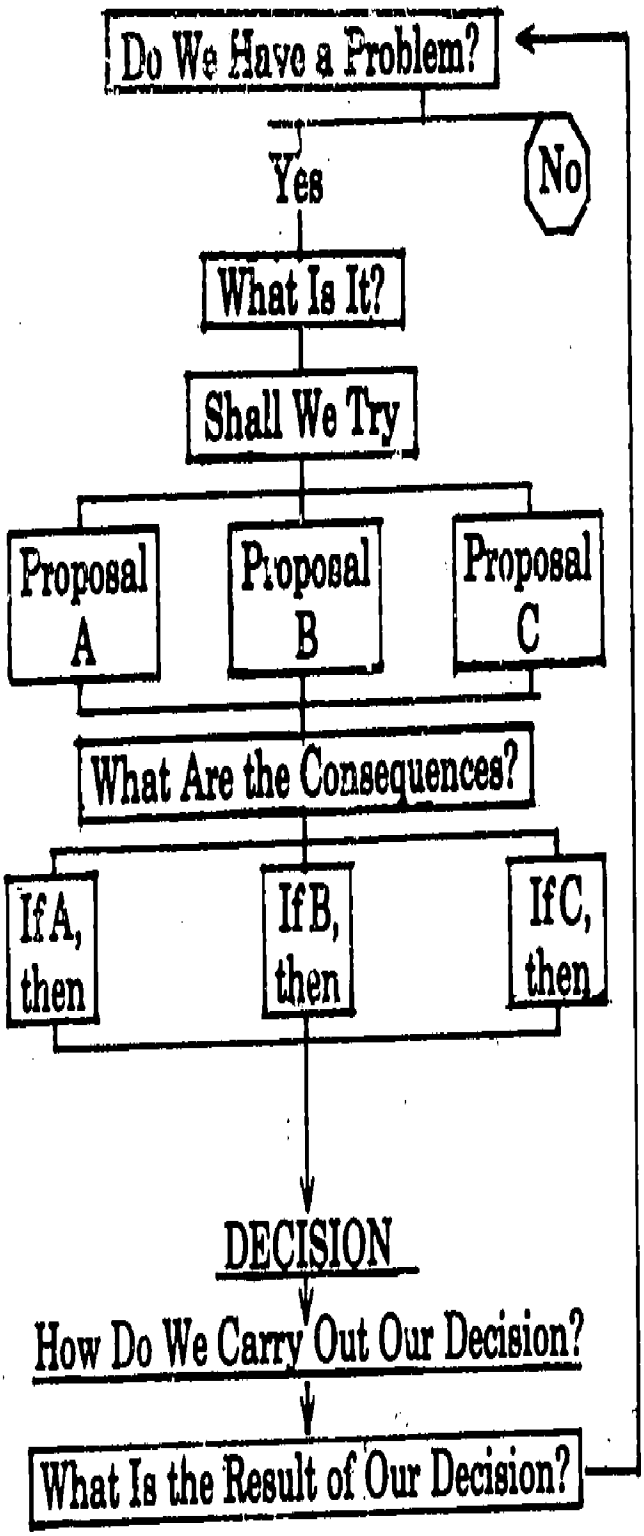

Figure 1. Stages in the Decision Making Process

Stage I. Identifying a Problem

People who will be involved in the decision-making process should participate in identifying the problem or at least should be aware of the problem. One of the means for identifying problems is that of a formal or informal needs assessment process. School district personnel should devise a means for obtaining information from the teachers about curriculum, instruction, and other issues. The data from the needs assessment help to identify the problem to be solved.

> *Situation:* The kindergarten and first grade teachers in several meetings discussed the achievement of the children in reading. They were concerned that many of the children going into first grade were not ready for instruction provided in the first grade program. Teachers' observations and scores from the Readiness Test helped to substantiate their concerns. The kindergarten teachers were eager to modify and adapt their program to provide better readiness experiences for the children.

A problem identified by those who will be directly involved in the implementation of the decision will be more seriously considered than one generated by individuals not directly involved.

Stage II. Defining and Clarifying the Problem

Before a group can successfully work with an issue, the problem must be clearly defined. Too often a task is so vague or general that a group is not sure how to proceed. Part of this stage consists of identifying the factors which need consideration. Do teachers need retraining? Is there a need for new materials? Should grouping patterns be changed? What about parent education?

> *Situation:* The teachers in this group spent much time specifically defining their problem. They had decided, based upon information from stage one, that they needed to: 1) become knowledgeable about the latest research and theories about readiness and beginning reading; 2) assess more thoroughly their current program relative to theory; 3) recommend to administration suggestions for teacher inservice as well as purchase of new materials; and 4) develop suggestions for parents.

The leader of a group may become restless if the group seems to spend a great deal of time wrestling with the problem. At times this is a necessity. If every member of the group has a clear understanding of the problem, solutions will be easier to reach, and the implementation will more likely be a reality.

Stage III. Presenting Proposals for Solution

As the group works together, various proposals for solving the problem should arise. The communication within the group and the type of decision-making process used will make an impact on the quality and the quantity of proposals presented. It is important that all members of the group feel comfortable to think and speak freely; too often solutions are limited if people do not feel free to present their views.

> *Situation:* The teachers on this committee presented and considered various proposals which might help them with their problem. The proposals ranged from ideas on types of teacher inservice to suggestions for parent education.

Stage IV. Anticipating Consequences

As various ideas are suggested, group members should seriously consider the consequences of each proposal. Each potential solution creates new dilemmas. For example, if a group decides to adopt a new program, what procedures are needed so that a wide sample can be evaluated? If a new type of reading method is suggested, what are the consequences of that method: Is there a need for teacher inservice, parental information, etc.? People in a group can make a wise decision only if they anticipate the consequences. The decision made without appropriate attention to consequences may cause more problems than it solves. Once the consequences have been discussed, the group can decide upon a course of action.

> *Situation:* The group spent a great deal of time discussing the pros and cons of various types of inservice education. The merit of summer meetings versus afterschool sessions was debated. Deliberations about the content of the workshops were intense, with individuals presenting pros and cons of various alternatives. The group unanimously agreed that a brochure for parents was needed. Concerns about the composition of the writing team, the availability of resources, and the distribution efforts were thoroughly discussed.

The many discussions helped the group to reach its decision:

1. A series of inservice sessions would be held both during the school year and in the summer. The focus would be Language Development and its Relationship to Reading.
2. A writing team consisting of interested teachers would be formed to write the brochure for parents. The authors would be given release time to develop the booklet.

Stage V. Initiating Action

Many times the efforts of a decision-making group fail at this point. The groups do not get the support they need from others to accomplish their objectives. The leader must facilitate the process by obtaining time, financial resources, or other assistance. A group which sees no results from its efforts will not continue to work effectively for very long.

Situation: The resource person contacted consultants and assisted in organizing the inservice program. Administration quickly supported the idea of a booklet for parents and provided the typing and duplicating services.

Stage VI. Evaluating

As each action is initiated, the group should evaluate its effect. The evaluation process assists the group in deciding upon future actions. Perhaps the group will continue to pursue a certain course, or the evaluative process may send the group in a different direction.

Situation: The writing team shared its booklet for parents and, after some revision by other group members, decided to distribute the brochure to parents at an open house.

The resource person reported on the results of the inservice session, including the written feedback from teachers who had attended. Recommendations about changes in the kindergarten and first grade program based on input from those teachers were presented.

The group decided that it would monitor the effects of its work in the following ways: 1) questionnaire to parents after a semester to determine parental response to the brochure; 2) analysis of scores from the achievement tests to determine whether any changes occurred in student progress; and 3) regular meetings with teachers to determine changes in classroom teaching.

The evaluation stage is by no means the last stage in the process. Indeed, it may become the first stage in identifying a new problem. For example, in the situation described above, the group recommendations may necessitate additional inservice or scheduling changes.

The decision-making process is cyclical; it is synergistic. It can be exciting and challenging or tiring and exhausting. Factors which facilitate decision-making and result in an exciting and rewarding experience are described in the following discussion.

Factors Affecting the Decision-Making Process

1. *Interpersonal conflict.* Personal differences that exist or arise among the members of a group may hinder productivity. Groups will have difficulty coming to a decision if individual members demean or criticize suggestions of others. This is not to suggest that conflict among group members is always destructive. When conflict exists over an issue, the ensuing discussion can be extremely provocative and stimulating to the group. However, conflict that arises because of personal hostility can destroy cohesiveness and prohibit any effective decision making. The leader and the members of the group must all help in working cooperatively toward the final goal.

2. *Hidden agenda.* Although groups are formed for specific purposes or goals, known as the surface agenda, very often there are other goals or purposes that are not public and that do not fit into the group task. These purposes or goals are known as hidden agenda. Think about the situation described above. A teacher who has an extreme dislike for another teacher on the committee might find it difficult to support that teacher's ideas and may oppose any suggestion on that basis alone. Another group member might have looked at materials long before the group was formed, and made a decision that "x" was the best available. The hidden agenda would be to influence other members of the committee to select that particular program. Leaders of groups must be aware of the possibility of hidden agenda held by either individuals or

groups so they can appropriately help the group deal with them. Because all people bring their own values, perceptions, and thoughts to a given situation, hidden agenda are quite common. The effective leader will help the group solve problems caused by hidden agenda by creating an atmosphere of openness in which all group members feel comfortable enough to discuss freely their thoughts.

3. *Type of decision-making procedure.* There are several different methods for reaching a group decision. One of the most common procedures is that of majority rule or vote taking. Although people are accustomed to this type of decision-making procedure, at times majority rule is not the best procedure to use since it does not always create an attitude of commitment and/or support. For example, if a decision is made and only 51 percent of the people support it, 49 percent may not be willing participants in its implementation. If one wishes to influence all of the group members to implement the decision, it might be better to fully discuss a problem until general agreement occurs. This does not mean that every person in the group must be convinced that the decision is without flaw. Rather, after viewing the alternatives, all members of the group agree that a particular decision is the best at that time. Reaching consensus is a time-consuming process; hence, when decisions must be made quickly, consensus becomes unwieldy and frustrating. However, the more one can involve the members in the group in the decision, the more likely it is that there will be a commitment to the decision.

It is wise to establish the ground rules as soon as the group starts its work. People feel more secure when they know how the decision is to be made and they understand the role that they will have in the process.

4. *Communication.* Free and open communication is a requirement for a group if it is to function effectively.

5. *Information or clarity regarding task.* If individuals do not have the information necessary to solve a problem or if they are uncertain about the problem, it will be difficult to reach a decision. The leader must provide opportunities for individuals to express their concerns and provide experiences that will develop needed background for the group members.

Guidelines for Facilitating the Decision-Making Process

1. Attempt to involve as many people in the decision-making process as possible. The contributions made by various group members should stimulate the group, create new thoughts, and raise the level of thinking. Involvement builds commitment: there is little value in reaching a decision if that decision is thwarted by apathy and negligence.

2. Select an appropriate decision-making method. At times, the resource person must make a decision alone. Lack of time, the simplicity of the decision, or the lack of need for committed action on the part of others may suggest that the resource person arrive at a decision alone. For example, the specialist may have to decide upon dates for an inservice or submit a request for various diagnostic instruments within a short period of time and may not be able to consult with a large group of teachers. However, when major decisions affecting others must be reached, the resource person should be willing to devote the time to the consensus process so that people will feel that they have had a voice in making the decision.

3. Respect the thoughts and feelings of others. If one involves other individuals in the decision-making process, then one must be willing to listen and accept the viewpoints of those individuals. Too often, individuals who seem to be at odds with one's own way of thinking are ignored. The effective resource person will encourage divergent thinking and will be sensitive to the feelings of others in the group.

4. Follow the stages in the decision-making procedure. Be sure that the problem has been identified and defined clearly. Provide the information and resources needed by the group. Finally, be sure to follow through on the actions and decisions. When individuals see the result of their efforts, they will more seriously commit themselves to future group endeavors.

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Chapter Seven

External Resources

One responsibility of resource persons is to be knowledgeable about resources which are external to the school. Resources are available for special funding and for special personnel from such institutions and people as government agencies, professional organizations, colleges, universities, and parents.

Government Resources

Local, intermediate, state, and federal governments often provide resources which can be useful for certain purposes. An overview of the potential for additional resources is offered so that resource persons can anticipate some of the possibilities.

Local district resources. Most school districts provide support services to individual schools. Personnel may be available to add support for special programs for the handicapped, gifted, reading disabled, etc. These personnel respond to requests from a school when problems have been recognized which are beyond the scope of personnel at the individual school. They might offer direct service to students or support service to teachers. Usually these support personnel are highly skilled in specialized areas and often can add insight to problems which otherwise go unattended.

Special funds often are available from central school offices for projects which need support and upon which the

school district has placed a high priority. These funds might support a parent volunteer effort, special student projects, or programs which are not normally covered in individual school budgets. At times special funds are made available for projects which are too costly for individual school budgets. While such funds are usually well advertised, at times they are available only to those who make inquiries.

Resource personnel have the responsibility of being aware of such resources and of knowing how to obtain them. At times all that is needed is a telephone call, while other resources might require special forms to be filed.

Intermediate unit resources. Some school districts are part of a larger organization such as an intermediate unit which represents several school districts. Intermediate unit resources are generally too expensive for local school districts (especially small ones) to provide. Resources provided by the intermediate unit might include psychological, medical, and guidance services. They might also include loans of films, videotapes, and instructional materials not normally provided by a local school district. Intermediate unit resources are available to those who request them. Once again, the resource person should be thoroughly familiar with the resources available and the procedures to obtain them.

State resources. States usually have large quantities of resources for special projects. Funds may be available for programs on basic skills instruction, compensatory education, and for the gifted, as well as for other programs. State resources usually are awarded only after needs have been thoroughly assessed. These resources are usually granted to school districts which, in turn, distribute them to individual schools. However, some resources go directly to those schools that are alert to their availability. The resource person must know about the types of resources provided by the state to the school district and should also be alert to the possibility of direct state assistance to a given school.

Federal resources. Huge amounts of funding are granted to each state every year. These funds generally are earmarked for special programs which have been identified by federal legislation. Individual schools do not normally apply for federal funding, but they should be aware of what funding

their state agencies have received. A subscription to the *Federal Register* will provide that information. The resource person should scan that publication every day to find out about funds that have been and will be distributed. For example, if a grant of ten million dollars has been awarded to a state for funding programs for the handicapped, then it would be important for the resource person to locate the guidelines necessary to compete for those funds.

Governmental resources are provided to be used. Those who are informed have a better chance to receive those resources than those who are uninformed. It is not necessarily easy to keep informed, but the effort might provide additional support for the students and teachers with whom the resource person works.

Higher Education Resources

Colleges and universities usually have outreach programs which provide resources to school districts. These include personnel, library, computer, and clinic resources.

Personnel. College and university faculties are composed of highly specialized personnel. These people can offer services for staff development, curriculum development, and proposal writing. For these and other purposes, most colleges and universities are eager to develop working relationships with the schools in their areas. Liaison committees, composed of personnel from the local education agencies and the higher education faculties, can be of great help in matching the needs of the schools with the resources of the colleges and universities.

Library. Many colleges and universities welcome the use of their library facilities by teachers in the local schools. These facilities include professional and curricular and media libraries. If there are no procedures established for the use of such facilities, then higher education administration can be approached with a proposal to create such procedures.

Professional libraries are usually up-to-date with the latest books and journals. They also have reference rooms with specialized staff to aid in the search for information. Many have the facility for computer searches when specific background information is needed on a topic of concern for a school.

Clinics. Many colleges and universities operate clinics as a part of their instructional programs in reading, arithmetic, speech and hearing, medicine, and others. These clinics usually provide quality programs at little expense to the client. Teachers who may have students whom they wish to refer for services must know about such clinics.

Professional Organization Resources

Professional organizations such as the International Reading Association, the National Education Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Council for Exceptional Children provide many useful resources to teachers through publications, conferences, personnel, and legislative support.

Publications. Journals, newsletters, and monographs contain the latest information concerning the profession. These publications often can be purchased using school funds and can be housed in the school library. If funds are not available, various teachers can subscribe to different journals and pool them for use by all. The ideas and research fundings reported in these publications must be available to teachers.

Meetings. Local, state, national, and international meetings are scheduled by many organizations. At these meetings teachers have the opportunity to talk with others, sharing their ideas and learning about what others are doing. Some school districts budget funds to assist with the expenses of such meetings. Teachers should be aware of what funds are available and should be encouraged to use them. The professional stimulation that comes from such meetings can have enormous pay-off in terms of teaching behavior.

Those who are selected to attend such meetings should be responsible for reporting to other teachers upon return to the school. In this way all teachers can profit from the experiences of a few. Reports can be written or oral. Informal discussion in the teachers' room or sessions on inservice days can focus upon the new ideas learned at a conference.

Personnel. Professional organizations sometimes have personnel resources relating to the area of that organization's objectives. Personnel may help to establish local chapters of the national organization. They may help to run a local or state

conference. Personnel is sometimes available for legal advice. Reading resource people should be acquainted with the personnel resources of the various organizations and request support when it is appropriate.

Legislative support. Most national organizations have a legislative division or committee. Federal and state governments call upon national organizations for testimony concerning educational legislation. That testimony can have a direct effect upon the teacher's professional life. The Council of Exceptional Children, for example, had a large role in the development of Public Law 94-142, a law that has a direct effect upon the education of all handicapped children. The time for input into legislation is before a bill becomes law. Teachers should know the stands being taken by their professional organizations and should provide input into the various position statements.

Professional organizations also provide legislative and legal advice to local schools and to individual teachers. Such resources often go unused because teachers do not know that they are available. Once again, the resource teacher can be of assistance by keeping informed and, in turn, keeping teachers informed.

Parents

Parent involvement in education is receiving a great deal of interest, concern, and publicity. One can find many books written by laypeople and professional educators that make suggestions to parents on how to help their children or how to gain more control of their schools. School personnel are encouraging parents to become involved in a variety of ways, from attending various meetings to serving as volunteers in classrooms. And almost every journal or magazine, whether found in the bookstore or in the local grocery store, has at least one article devoted to education.

Current writings indicating that a large part of the variance in school achievement is directly attributable to home and family factors have helped to stimulate this interest (Bessent and Webb, 1976; Coleman, 1966). Requirements in the guidelines for federal and state program funding which generally stipulate that parents be included have also created additional interest in programs for parents. The results of the

1976 Gallup Poll indicate that parents of public school children overwhelmingly support the notion of courses that will help them help their children in school (Smith and Gallup, 1977, p. 34).

Parents do have an important role in their children's education, and reading specialists can help make that role a positive one. One model that is useful in thinking about the role of parents is the one developed by Gordon (1976, p. 7). His parent involvement model consists of five components: parent as audience, parent as teacher in the home, parent as volunteer, parent as paid employee, and parent as decision-maker. The guidelines below encompass each of these components and provide suggestions for increasing parent involvement in the school.

1. *Know your own feelings.* You, the reading specialist, should know your own beliefs and values about the parents' role in education. Fifteen years ago, the common view held that parents should leave "teaching to teachers." Although this view is no longer an accepted one, there are some educators who find it difficult to accept some aspects of a parent involvement model. A questionnaire to solicit views about parent involvement was devised and administered to reading specialists. There was a wide discrepancy in the views of the group, with some teachers feeling that parents should have a voice in *every* aspect of education to those specialists who would put limits on parent involvement. The component that caused most controversy was that of parent as decision-maker. The questionnaire found in Appendix D might be useful in sparking discussion among teachers or specialists in your school and developing an awareness of values or feelings about parental involvement.

2. *Know the parents' needs and attitudes.* As important as it is to know your own attitudes and values about the parents' role, it is equally important to know how parents feel about their role, and also to know what they would like to learn to do as they become involved with their children's education. You might consider asking parents to respond to a questionnaire similar to the one in Appendix D; certainly it would provide an interesting point of departure for discussion. You might find that parents and teachers have similar views about involve-

ment; on the other hand, beliefs may differ. A discussion using a questionnaire like the one in Appendix D might bring out the areas in which there are disagreements as well as agreements.

The reading specialist interested in developing a parent involvement program should also administer some type of needs assessment instrument to determine the interests and needs of parents. Do parents want specific suggestions about teaching their children to read, information about various programs available in the school, help in developing the self-esteem of their children, or help in developing an effective home management system?

In addition to gaining some ideas about concerns of parents, you might also get some basic information about appropriate meeting times and places. Over and over again, we hear the comment from teachers, "We can't get the parents to attend our meetings." Professional educators need to do all they can to schedule meetings at times when working parents or parents with preschool children can make arrangements to be at the school.

3. *Involve others in developing a parent program.* Your parent program can be much more effective if school personnel (psychologist, social worker, counselor, administrator) and parents are involved in the development of the program. Parent concerns and interests will generally be much broader than "reading." Often, an academic problem leads to problems in the home, as well as problems of self-esteem for the child. Parents are acutely aware and concerned about these difficulties and should have access to people who can present some possible solutions.

4. *Provide workshops which serve as models for parents as teachers.* In most federally funded programs, there is a requirement that reading specialists hold workshops for parents. These workshops can focus on a number of topics: developing materials for use in the home, helping your child learn to read, finding good books for the elementary or adolescent child, monitoring television watching, and developing self-esteem. No matter what the topic, there are certain principles which should be followed if these workshops are to influence parental behavior. First, place parents in the role of the learner. Parents seem to be more comfortable using certain

activities if they have experienced them. Also, parents are more empathetic if they have been through certain "difficult learnings." Therefore, if you want parents to play certain types of games with their youngsters, put the parents in the role of learner and have them go through the experience of playing an educational game. The book, *The Parent as Teacher* (1972), provides a useful self-rating scale which forces parents to evaluate their approach to game playing (from beginning to end). This checklist provides a clear set of guidelines for parents to use when playing games with their children.

Second, the activities for home use must be very practical and nonthreatening to both parent and child. The majority of the experiences should be reinforcement and practice activities. New learnings should generally be taught in school under teacher guidance. Otherwise, the home sessions may turn into frustrating and negative experiences for both parent and child. For example, ask parents to have children find pictures of various objects which begin with a certain sound. This application activity is very different from asking parents to teach a specific letter-sound relationship to their child.

Third, stay away from educational jargon that may be frightening and demeaning to parents. Parents aren't always sure what is meant by terms such as neurological impress method, synthetic and analytic phonics, visual perceptual training. Make recommendations in meaningful terms.

Finally, and most important, these workshops should provide for two-way communication. You will be able to learn a great deal about parents and their efforts and educational desires for their children. You may also get some ideas for enhancing your work with specific children. Also, parents should be encouraged to share with other parents certain activities that have worked well for them.

5. *Maintain continuous communication between home and school.* Too often, the only communication between home and school occurs when there is an academic or behavior problem. One way to develop a positive relationship between home and school is to maintain an ongoing communication system. Notes or phone calls can be made to share the progress

of the child or to point out some specific achievement. Parents can be encouraged to send notes indicating their feelings about the child's performance. Regular communication should begin in the fall and continue throughout the school year.

6. *Develop parent involvement programs which are honest and realistic.* Whether your school is interested in developing a workshop for parents, starting a parent advisory council, or developing a school volunteer program, your efforts should take into account your views and expectations for parents and the views and desires of the parents themselves. If a parent advisory council is established, then it should have meaningful tasks which can result in effective programing for children. The council should not be a "token" organization that rubber stamps the wishes of the professional educators.

Parents who have made a commitment to becoming involved with such a responsibility have a right to be heard. However, they often need to be encouraged to express their views; they may feel somewhat hesitant about voicing some thoughts that they think will show a lack of knowledge about the educational process. Their ideas and thoughts may help you, the professional, to make some changes that will improve educational programs in the schools.

Likewise, school volunteer programs need to be structured to take advantage of the skills and competencies of the community workers. Volunteers should be given the training, however, that will enable them to carry out their roles effectively. Guidelines that set parameters should be discussed in advance so that the volunteer as well as the classroom teacher benefits from the experience. The National School Volunteer Program, which distributes literature on developing and implementing a school volunteer program, is an excellent source for the reading resource teacher.

Developing a parent involvement program in the school is not easy. Involving the parent of the problem learner is probably even more difficult. These parents have some frustrations and concerns that the parent of the successful learner does not. However, the school reading program can be strengthened if there is an honest commitment to a cooperative effort between school and parents.

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Organizations

Center for the Study of Parent Involvement (CSP). c/o Children's Rights Group, 693 Mission Street, San Francisco, California 99105.

Home-School Interaction Council (HSIC), Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132.

National School Volunteer Program (NSVP), 300 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

Other Resources

Clouse, Kenneth E. *Who? Me? Teach Reading? A program for parents of elementary school children* (filmstrip). 1978, 333 Quail Hollow Road, Felton, California 95108.

Publications on Parents and Reading. Brochures available from International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19711.

Chapter Eight

The Rights of Others

It is important for the resource person to be aware of the rights of others. All people have the right to official records, the right to privacy, the right to fair treatment, and the right to due process. To ignore or violate the rights of others is not only unprofessional, it might be illegal. The resource person also has the important task of being aware of the rights of students and of imparting this knowledge to other specialists and classroom teachers.

The resource person should be well informed about the rules, laws, and regulations of the school, school district, state, and federal government. If rules, laws, and regulations are not clear, the resource teacher should check with the supervisor or an appropriate and knowledgeable source. Ignorance of rules and regulations is no excuse for violating the rights of others.

Resource persons can obtain copies of original documents of rules, laws, and regulations. They should be cautious of the explanations of others and of summaries of policy documents. They should check documents for clarity and try to obtain explanations when language is not clear. For example, if a school board regulation states that, under normal circumstances, one must have parental permission before administering tests to a child, then the resource person must know what is meant by the words "under normal circumstances." In what situations would permission not be required?

Described below are some of the rights of students which the reading resource person should know.

Right to Official Records

Official records are normally available to the person involved. Parents also have rights to the records of their children. Efforts must be made to keep all official records accurate and up-to-date. Statements in records that are based on inferences about behavior should be avoided.

When making educational decisions, data from a variety of sources should be considered. Conflicting data should be a warning flag that some of the data may be unreliable. One test score or one observation of behavior should be viewed as tentative, at best.

Right to Privacy

Legally, the right to privacy means that a person has the right to be left alone and the right to be free from unwarranted publicity. The right to privacy also involves some ethical concerns.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, information provided to the resource person by another person is considered privileged. If the resource person desires to use that information with others, permission must be obtained.

Student progress records and test performance are other areas of privacy that must be recognized. All teachers should reevaluate such practices as placing certain papers on bulletin boards, discussing one child's performance with other children, and making records public. Each of these is an invasion of privacy from an ethical point of view.

When the resource person works with other adults, the same concern for privacy exists. Any public display or discussion of information that comes from personnel files, classroom teaching observations, or teacher conferences should be considered an invasion of privacy. Information obtained from a third party should be treated with the utmost care, since third party information is notoriously unreliable.

Right to Fair Treatment

The right to fair treatment means that all procedures (whether testing or instructional) should be applied fairly to

all. Steps should be taken to ensure that race, sex, and/or religious discrimination are not used in establishing procedures.

Being fair to others also involves the right to due process. Legally, due process is a principle of law requiring reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard. McClung (1977) provides some illustrations concerning the denial of due process in testing. For example, the author claims that teachers must be certain of the reliability and validity of any test that is used to make educational decisions about students. For example, making a decision to place a child in a special setting for instruction based upon a test of known low reliability could be considered a denial of due process. Denial of due process could lead to law suits. Short of that, appeals, sanctions, and protests within the system can have an effect on one's professional reputation and credibility. Most educators would not intentionally deny due process to others but, because of the subtle legal technicalities, it is best to consult legal authorities when there is any doubt.

The Use of Test Results

Many states are passing legislation that establishes a certain performance on a test as a requirement for promotion from grade to grade or for graduation from high school. The use of a single test for such decision-making can be challenged seriously.

Most of the tests being used to satisfy such legislation are group tests. Group test scores are not accurate reflections of individual achievement. They provide little information regarding the way an individual performed on the test. They do not provide the educator with an accurate grade level of performance of an individual student. Some report grade equivalent scores but these are not grade levels. A twelfth grader who scores 7.0 grade equivalent is not reading at the seventh grade level. To further complicate the matter, extreme scores (those most distant from the mean score) are highly unreliable.

Group standardized tests used for decision-making must be evaluated for validity. Do the tests measure what the curriculum of a given student's program provides? If not, the test is not valid for that student.

Harper and Kilarr (1978) discuss another problem with such testing when they present the case that reading is not an exact process and cannot be measured precisely. They call for educational leaders to make their positions known so that legislators do not fall into the trap of requiring single test scores for educational decision-making.

Test results that get reported by the news media indicate that some schools are better than others. Low scores in some schools might be attributed to factors other than poor educational programing. Highly transient school populations, lack of family interest and support of the schools, and lack of motivation to do well on the test may contribute to poor test scores. Again, educational leaders need to be aware of these factors and to interpret them to the public.

This chapter on the rights of others reflects a concern for ethical behavior and a realization that according to law, educators are responsible for their professional behavior.

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Chapter Nine

Evaluation

Evaluation is essential for effective decision-making. Without a good evaluation system one finds it difficult to make effective program changes. The resource teacher needs to establish objectives for various aspects of the resource role. Methods of collecting data relating to those objectives should be planned at the time the objectives are set. Interpretation of the data as they relate to each objective completes the evaluation process. Then, new objectives can be set and the process starts again.

Process of Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation is an ongoing process in which all are involved. The resource teacher's roles with students, teachers, other resource persons, administration, and the community are all important in self-evaluation. It is important to obtain feedback through hard data such as test scores and hours spent on certain activities; however, much data could be soft data such as teacher opinions, thank you notes, and signs of interest from parents. By keeping records of both types of data as they relate to stated objectives, resource persons can evaluate themselves effectively.

Self-evaluation calls for careful objective record keeping. By entering negative reactions in a self-evaluation, the credibility of the positive reactions is improved.

One must be careful not to be defensive about reactions which are unfavorable. Defensive reactions are damaging in that one reduces the possibility of obtaining honest appraisal in the future.

Self-Evaluation Techniques

By collecting data from several sources, the reliability of the self-evaluation is improved. Although several sources of data are described below, the list is not intended to be limiting. Many sources of data are available.

1. *Questionnaire.* By soliciting evaluation through questionnaires, a person can obtain data from different persons on the same item. Reliability of data is improved by obtaining reactions from many persons; consistency of responses is an indication that one can rely upon the data for making future decisions. The major problem with questionnaires is that people may interpret questions differently, in which case the data are not valid. Questionnaires need not be lengthy; two or three well phrased questions can often obtain all the data needed. Some questionnaires call for responses to specific items such as, "Rank your preference for the ideas presented." Others ask teachers to respond to value questions such as, "I found the day to be: *not useful useful very useful.*"

2. *Interviews.* Resource persons could have face-to-face discussions about their work. In this technique the problem of questionnaires can be avoided because one can discuss various questions. As a rule, however, people tend to be less critical in an interview than they are in a questionnaire. It might be wise to use both techniques.

3. *Observation.* The resource person, or an objective other person, can make periodic observations and collect important data. Examples of observation data can include the following: students' responses to lessons, teachers' reactions to an inservice session on learning centers, parents' commitment to the volunteer effort. Objective observation is one of the most valid sources of data. The problem with observation is that there may be difficulty in interpreting objectively what was observed. If another person makes the same observation, then one can be more certain of the reliability of the data.

4. *Test data.* Student performance on tests is an obvious source of data. The results of criterion-referenced tests administered before and after the instruction are probably of most value. Group performances on standardized tests are also of value; however, caution is urged when one tries to make individual interpretations on group test scores.

5. *Supervisor evaluation.* A resource person fortunate enough to have periodic supervisor evaluation should use this data for self-evaluation. If such a system is not in operation, ask for it. Be certain to build in a system of feedback concerning the evaluation, that is, face-to-face sharing of the behaviors that were noted during the evaluation or a written comment which can be retained in your records.

6. *Unsolicited feedback.* Some of the most useful data can be collected from unsolicited feedback. A note of appreciation, a comment of how it might be done better next time, and a conference with a happy parent all provide opportunities for feedback.

Difficulties with Self-Evaluation

All evaluation has some difficulties; self-evaluation has several peculiar difficulties. One of the biggest problems is that the feedback received may be unreliable. Some persons seem to complain at every chance, while others report everything to be fine. Unreliable feedback can be overcome only by obtaining feedback from as many persons as possible.

Some people hear only what they want to hear. Many times people are indirect in their criticism or praise, and it requires careful listening and interpretation to obtain the precise meaning of their message.

When the data indicate that people are displeased, it is important to admit it, face it, and adjust if possible. As people see change based upon self-evaluation, they will be more favorable toward future efforts at self-evaluation.

Finally, as mentioned before, one must develop a resistance to defensive reaction to negative feedback. Most people are trying to be helpful when they offer negative feedback. Defensive reactions create a breakdown in communication and threaten future evaluations.

Evaluation of Teachers

Try to avoid evaluating teachers. If reading specialists are seen by teachers as individuals who have to report on teacher effectiveness, then the specialists will have difficulty being seen as regular members of the teaching staff. Resource persons should make every effort to have their roles in teacher evaluation clearly defined. If the resource person acts as evaluator, the roles of assistant and colleague can be hampered seriously. If one must evaluate teachers, the following suggestions might be helpful.

1. Focus on strengths. Try to find teacher activities that are praiseworthy. Teachers might receive suggestions for change without feeling threatened if they also have received praise for several teaching behaviors.

2. Make suggestions as alternatives, creating the feeling that there are several acceptable ways to conduct an activity. For example, suggest that there may be times during the day that students can work in pairs or small groups. Such a statement does not say that a teacher is wrong to have students working alone.

3. Provide immediate feedback. Let the teacher know as soon as possible what the reactions are. Needless waiting creates anxiety.

4. Maintain confidentiality. Be certain that the teacher knows that you will not be discussing your reactions with other teachers.

5. Provide written feedback. After the immediate verbal feedback, be sure to provide the teacher with a written evaluation. Encourage the teacher to read the evaluation, ask questions about it, and save it for future reference.

Cogan (1973) suggests the following considerations when engaged in the evaluation of teachers.

1. *Priorities*. Try to be certain the priorities have been mutually established. If the teacher's priority is with the comfort of the educational climate and yours is with the technical aspects of the lesson, then meaningful evaluation can be missed.

2. *Feasibility*. Can the teacher implement the suggestions made in the evaluation or are they unfeasible for that teacher?

3. *Congruence.* Do the suggestions fit the style and talents of the teacher?

4. *Suitability.* Are the suggestions suitable to long or short term adjustment?

Evaluation of Students

Because resource teachers have had course work and experience with student diagnoses and assessment, it will not be expanded upon in this book. However, resource persons should be certain that the teachers with whom they work are prepared to evaluate the performance of their students. These teachers should collect data from a variety of sources and keep accurate records of student performance. They should develop a system for sharing student evaluations with each student. It may be the reading resource person's responsibility to make certain that student evaluation is understood.

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Appendix A

Job Interview

Interviewing should be viewed as a two-way communication process in which the interviewer and the interviewee are obtaining information. Often interviews deal with surface issues such as job related experiences, physical settings, and a description of the school population. While such issues are important, they do not deal with deeper aspects such as knowledge of the reading process, theoretical basis for learning, biases, and school staff rapport. One should expect some deep probes and have a few questions to ask of the interviewer.

Certain questions can be anticipated. Generally, answers that are short and precise are well received. Questions such as the following might be expected.

Surface Questions

1. Please give us a brief outline of your past experiences that qualify you for this position.
2. What certification do you have?
3. Why did you leave your last position?

Deep Questions

1. What are your beliefs about the reading process?
2. Describe the type of caseload you think you can handle effectively.
3. What is the place of testing in the total school reading program?

4. What relationships would you try to establish with other resource persons in the school?

Anticipate as many questions as possible and develop answers with which you can live comfortably. Also formulate questions so that you can leave the interview with as much information as possible.

Questions which Require a Commitment on Your Part

1. Do you believe in a strong phonics program in kindergarten?

2. How will you try to influence teachers and their use of oral reading?

These questions tend to be difficult because you do not know the biases of the interviewer. Be as honest and tactful as possible. Never try to bluff, for the next question might expose your insincerity.

Since the interview is one way of obtaining knowledge, go into the interview with three or four questions which are important to you. Questions might be formed on the following topics.

1. *Duties required.* What responsibilities does the reading specialist have for the developmental program, diagnostic testing, remediation, and resource activities?

2. *Evaluation roles.* What is expected in terms of evaluation of self, children, materials, others?

3. *Responsibilities.* What other activities does the job require? Is the reading specialist expected to be active in the PTA, prepare bulletin boards, participate in bus duty?

4. *Relationship with other resource persons.* If other resource persons are in the school, what are the lines of responsibility?

The following guidelines might be useful.

Try to listen very carefully before answering any question. Be certain you know what is being asked.

Try to answer questions honestly within the bounds of your knowledge.

Note taking usually is not appropriate; however, shortly after the interview you should jot down as much as you can remember. These notes will become your base line data for an understanding of the school system.

Appendix B

Preparing for the First Week

You have been hired! Now your search for knowledge about the social setting begins in earnest. Subscribe to the local newspaper, drive through the area served by the school and through surrounding areas. Go to the shops and stores. Get an overall feeling for the area in which you will be working.

Visit the school, meet the students and the teachers, attend faculty and PTA meetings, get to know the maintenance staff and the secretarial staff. Note the information you gain from these activities so that you can retrieve it at a later date.

Plan the first week. Make certain that you are seen as one who is willing to work hard and to help students and teachers. Plan to share materials, put up bulletin boards, and be generally helpful. At the same time, plan to help teachers understand your role and your responsibilities. Know what expectations teachers have about your role. Develop a checklist of all the items about which you need information. The following list might be helpful as a starter:

1. School goals and objectives (not just reading).
2. Establish priorities. Make certain that you know what must be done first and what can wait until later.
3. Procedures for decision making about curriculum and instruction.
4. Available materials.

5. Budget resources.

6. Teachers' names, training, expertise, interests.

7. Student home background, attitude, behavior.

8. Community interest in school, use of school, volunteer programs.

9. Other resource persons' names, responsibilities, interests.

10. Administrators' names, duties, responsibilities, expertise.

Determine whether you have any administrative duties and establish the source of authority for such duties.

Add to this list. Keep notes on each item. Double check areas for which you receive contradictory information. Resist the temptation to make judgments, for this is data collection time.

Try to be seen as a helpful person. Be interested in the students and teachers.

Appendix C

Working in the Classroom

Working with the teacher in the classroom is always a desirable goal. You will find your understanding of the social system of the school to be considerably clearer once you start working with teachers in their classrooms. While it is not essential to your functioning as a resource, working in the classroom certainly has advantages.

First, you will be able to be of greater help to the teacher for you will be able to observe the children and the teaching process for yourself. What teachers report about what happens in the classroom is often misleading, not because they intentionally distort, but because they are reporting their own perceptions of behavior.

Second, it improves your credibility if you can work in the classroom and help the teacher do a better job. As teachers observe you working with children, they become aware of what you can accomplish.

Third, as you work with all of the children in the classroom, the children's perception of you will change. You will not be seen as the teacher who works with poor readers only.

Gaining entry into the classroom is not always an easy task. Several ideas are suggested:

1. Go where you are wanted. Do not force yourself upon a reluctant teacher.

2. Upon obtaining some new teaching materials, ask teachers if you can use their children to try out the materials. If the materials work well, leave them with the teacher for use in the classroom.

3. Ask permission from the teacher to observe children with whom you are working. It is often necessary for the reading resource teacher to see children operating in the classroom in order to obtain a complete picture of the child's learning behavior.

4. Volunteer to work with a group of children in the classroom, thereby relieving the teacher of some teaching responsibilities.

It is essential to create an atmosphere of cooperation and maintain two-way communication.

Appendix D

Attitudes about Parent Involvement

Directions: Read each statement and then put a check in the box that most agrees with your ideas.

	5 Always	4 Frequently	3 Sometimes	2 Seldom	1 Never
Parents should be informed about the reading program in their school.					
Parents should have a vote in textbook selection.					
Parents should have a *voice* in textbook selection.					
Parents should know the intelligence test scores of their children.					
As a whole, parents today support the school when there are "teacher-student" problems.					
Parents can be extremely helpful in developing the readiness skills of children.					
Parents should monitor the television watching of their children.					
Parents can be very effective volunteers in classroom reading programs.					
Parents can be very effective volunteers in special remedial reading programs.					

An excellent parent-teacher relationship is a factor in improving the reading achievement of a child.

Parents of children with reading problems can be very helpful if they work with their children at home.

Parents today understand the importance of their role as "teachers."

Parents today are willing to assume their role as "first teacher."