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Leonard E. Kraft

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The Rotating Principalship

By LEONARD E. KRAFT

THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR of a school system has many individuals who assist him in accomplishing his educational mission. One of the most important administrative roles in the operation of the school system is that of the building principal. In fact, many authorities pinpoint the principalship as the *key* educational role in the local community. It is the principal who comes in contact with the students, parents, teachers, custodians, and others in the immediate front line of the educational enterprise. It is vital, therefore, that "tender loving care" be used in the administrator's *modus operandi* towards the continued growth of each principal.

The chief administrator may well ask himself the following questions: Have I observed the attitudes of my building principals toward their educational role? Do they express, through various means, the same enthusiastic interest toward their current role as they did on the day they were appointed? How do I think my principals would fare in an educationally devised Gallup Poll or Neilsen Rating?

Do any of them express a desire to change roles because of their lack of interest in their current one? Have I denied any of them a new assignment because I felt he was doing a good job in his current position, not considering the possibility that the individual might have become bored by

the routine and/or was feeling a lack of achievement?

There is sufficient evidence to support the following statements:

- (1) Principals, like teachers, may fall into a routine.
- (2) Principals, like teachers, may reach a plateau in their contribution to their particular role in a particular situation.
- (3) The anxiety the individual has may be replaced by assurance.
- (4) Anxiety is important in all learning experience.
- (5) Success may be a deterrent to individual growth.
- (6) An individual may, after a period of time, feel that things have become humdrum in his position. Crystallization of the individual's behavior may take place.
- (7) Each year may become a repetition of the former year—several years in the same principalship may not really be several years of experience.

Several other questions the chief administrator may well ask himself are: What are the responsibilities that I have assigned to each of my principals? Have I analyzed the effect that these responsibilities may have upon the behavior of the principal? If I were to categorize the responsibilities assigned to my principals along a continuum with creative on one end and routine on the other, where might I expect the majority of the responsibilities to fall?

To assist the chief administrator further in developing a frame of reference, a base of operation for the proposal to rotate his building principalships, let us examine some other areas of endeavor in our society. It is important to point out that the role

EDITOR'S NOTE

The proposal advanced by the author has precedents in many quarters except education, but, as they say in the trade, "Let's try it on for size." Mr. Kraft is Acting Director of the Department of Student Teaching at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

expectation of a particular individual in a particular situation is not the same for that individual in a similar role in a different situation.

In the discussion of what individuals or organizations might do or suggest, we are concerned with possibilities of bringing both "new blood" and "new life" into systems of operation. The following exhibits are offered for consideration:

Exhibit A—Government. Recently, General Eisenhower had something to say about bringing "fresh blood" into government. During a taped interview which appeared, in part, in the newspapers he indicated that he has changed his mind about the two-term limitation on Presidents. At first he thought it "rather odd" but, as time went on, he became aware of the great power in the hands of one man. He also talked about the political machine that can perpetuate itself. In addition, he suggested "some limit, maybe 12 or 16 years," on the service of House members. It is his feeling that "this would keep more fresh blood rolling through all the time."

Exhibit B—Business. Companies will admit to keeping individual "books" on their administrative personnel, books which determine the future of the individual in that particular organization. It is quite common for individuals in such organizations to move every three or four years, often to a similar position in a different location. The ability to accomplish these assignments with a high degree of success is one of the most important criteria considered in keeping a man in line for bigger and better opportunities within the company. The company is concerned with making a profit. Therefore, it is concerned that effectiveness and efficiency of each of its operations is maintained at the highest possible level. The individual administrator has to continue to grow if he is to be of maximum value to the organization. The "books" very clearly show the company the growth patterns of each administrator.

Exhibit C—Military. The patterns of operation in the military services indicate that officers are often assigned to similar roles in new situations for two purposes: (1) to stimulate the growth of the individual, and (2) to put new life into the unit.

Exhibit D—Entertainment. It is not unusual to learn that a certain movie star has decided to move into a different medium of expression such as the theater because he became bored with the routine of what he was doing. It is possible that this decision to change mediums and perhaps even the type of role played was motivated by the audience's lack of enthusiasm for the "same old thing." Not only does the audience get tired of the same old monotonous movements of the actor, but so does the actor himself.

From these examples it appears that the chief administrator might very well consider creating a few disturbances in his school system through the rotation of his building principalships. We know that the rotation of his principalships will create new situations for the principal and teachers which will be advantageous to both. Old habits of operation will be disregarded and new patterns will evolve with new challenges. These new situations will upset the orderly experiences established by both parties because of the give and take during the adjustment period. The injection of "new blood" into a school will play down the premium traditionally placed on order and stability and project a fresh look at new ways of doing things. It will stimulate the creativity of the individuals involved in each relationship.

How often should the chief administrator rotate building principalships? It is very difficult to project a specific time period for each individual and/or situation. Many factors need to be considered such as: (1) previous experience, (2) performance of the individual principal in his current position, (3) age, (4) health, (5) rotation opportunities in a particular district at a given time,

(6) willingness of the individual to change (you might need to force some to move, others might be anxious to move), and (7) the educational climate in the particular school and in the school district. One might hypothesize that most principalships should be rotated at least once every five to eight

years if the principals are to continue to grow in their chosen profession and if they are to give quality performances.

The rotation of building principalships is one of the best ways to help individuals grow to realize their fullest potential as educational leaders.



Disadvantaged Pupils and Physical Education

By WILLIAM STREICH AND GERALD ASMAN

University of Wisconsin at Madison and Mukwonago (Wisconsin) Elementary Schools

It would seem that any program to compensate the disadvantaged child for his deprivation ought to make provision for both developing the cognitive skills and abilities he lacks upon entering school and providing for changing the negative attitudes and values that he has learned. Of all the areas of education involved in the latter task, physical education might be best suited to changing the attitudes and values of disadvantaged children.

The absence of masculine contact in the home can be provided through the male physical educator. The matriarchal structure of low income families and the feminine influence in the elementary schools create a need for boys from disadvantaged families to identify with a man worthy of emulation, and the male physical education instructor is often just this sort of man. This identification is particularly important in the kindergarten and primary grades where women dominate.

In contrast to the academic classroom setting, the gym and the athletic field are places where the disadvantaged child can often be as successful as his advantaged classmates. Success or the lack of success is the key to self perception. One perceives himself as his experiences dictate. If physical education is an important part of the curriculum, the disadvantaged child's successes in physical education can be used to change self-perceptions and achievement in academic areas.

In communication, too, physical education uniquely serves the disadvantaged. Acceptable com-

munication and self expression are difficult for deprived children. The written and spoken word is their least effective means of expression. In the home of the disadvantaged child, monosyllables and incomplete sentences are common. The printed word is generally limited in quantity and quality. As a result, the disadvantaged child is often reduced to expressing himself through physical means. Physical education can reduce the frustrations of this lack of communication by providing opportunities for self expression in the disadvantaged child's most effective media.

And finally, physical education is in a position to change and develop values and attitudes through concrete life experiences on the playing fields and in the gym. For example, values like integrity (fair-play), and cooperation (team-work) are meaningful in a gym whereas they be meaningless in an abstract classroom situation.

If physical education is to be an effective tool for compensating children for deprivation, certain changes in present programs will have to be undertaken. There is a need for getting top quality men teachers into core elementary schools. There is a need for lengthening the time devoted to physical education especially in kindergarten and the primary grades when attitudes and values are more easily learned. And there is a need for inservice programs for physical education teachers devoted to understanding the disadvantaged child and techniques for teaching attitudes.