

SUPERVISING PROGRAMMES OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

Plenary Session

Mr A L Jones introduced his paper and first stressed that recommendations had to be as realistic as possible, pointing out that teachers were increasingly being asked to do many different jobs.

He explained that it was salutary to consider the situation in more developed systems: In the United Kingdom which had had universal primary education for over 100 years there were over two million adults who were illiterate and research indicated that the majority of school teachers in training could not do the mathematics they were supposed to teach.

Referring to the content of his paper, he considered supervision essential though the term had a variety of interpretations.

The aim of in-service education was to change the behaviour of teachers and it was essential that everyone concerned was clear what changes were desirable and why. Those involved in change had to try to be sensitive to the social, cultural and political wishes of the people.

He stressed the importance of building confidence in teachers so that they were encouraged to help themselves.

He emphasized the importance of clear expression in communicating with teachers; technical terms were often desirable but jargon should be avoided as far as possible.

Referring to "motivation" he considered why teachers might want to become better at their work. He accepted that pay and conditions were important but he pointed out that most teachers wanted to do their job as well as possible and "job satisfaction" was significant too.

Courses, meetings and workshops for teachers should meet the practical classroom needs of the teachers. He approved especially of courses which led to the production of materials such as class exercises, lesson plans and teaching aids which could be used in the classroom.

Theoretical considerations were important too, he said, and he referred to a number of complex issues raised during the workshop. Such matters required intensive study and research and he explained that universities had a valuable role to play.

He stressed very strongly the importance of consulting teachers especially with regard to the changes that might be required of them in how they did their job. He explained that the teacher's perception of his role had to be taken into account too.

It was essential that in-service education for teachers was evaluated. At the very least, teachers should be encouraged to give their views and those responsible for programmes should avoid being too defensive about them.

He concluded by stressing the importance of good administration which demanded attention to detail and an acceptance by teachers and others that

even the best plans could go wrong.

After the presentation, the discussion turned to an examination of what the role of the supervisor should be and how it should fit into the system as a whole. For example, it was noted that if teacher education was to be effective, it must enable teachers to overcome the various problems that prevent curriculum objectives from being fulfilled and had to be part of a co-ordinated educational programme in which everyone involved had the causes of conflict reduced to a minimum. This required supervision of a very high order.

Discussion followed on feedback on in-service programmes in systems where communication and transport were poor. Decentralization of supervisory staff and materials were considered important in these circumstances.

Group Sessions

The groups comprising educational administrators and teacher educators held separate sessions to discuss the following assignments:

ASSIGNMENT 1 (for educational administrators' group)

1. What are the rules for teachers getting leave from their school teaching to attend in-service courses? Who must be consulted? By whom? What is the chain of authority? Is it flexible enough for in-service training needs? How might it be changed for the better?
2. What arrangements exist in schools to provide coverage for teachers absent for in-service training?
3. What are the conditions affecting up-grading of teachers? How many teachers are eligible?
4. What teachers' associations or trade unions exist? What influence do they have on the in-service education of teachers? What help can they give?
5. How willing are the authorities to allow teachers to work on problems that teachers themselves perceive as real problems? Which authorities have a say in this matter?
6. What arrangements should be made for social activities on in-service education courses?

ASSIGNMENT 2 (for teacher educators' group)

1. State five aims of in-service education as precisely as possible.
2. What measures should be taken to get different agencies to collaborate in providing in-service education? What are those agencies?
3. What features of the existing system of teacher education should be preserved? Why?
4. State one feature of curriculum development with which in-service education should deal. Suggest ways in which this

might be done.

5. What specifically are the needs of beginning teachers or 'probationers' who have just completed pre-service training? What should be done for their "induction"?

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSION - ASSIGNMENT 1

In discussing the assignment given, the educational administrators' group reached the following conclusions:

Permission to attend short (1 day to 1 month) and intermediate length courses (1-3 months) can be arranged satisfactorily through District Education Officers in conjunction with Inspectors and then cleared with Headquarters. Where possible they should be arranged so as to make the least interruption to teaching by being held at weekends or vacations or on a day release basis. Applications for long courses (3-12 months) need to be more carefully planned and strictly controlled because of the greater financial implications. For example, they will normally be open only to teachers with at least three years teaching and will be limited to priority areas of education. Where local institutions cannot offer the training required, consideration has to be given to overseas courses and the provision of scholarships for these. Such planning will be conducted at Ministry Headquarters, probably through the Chief Inspector.

Full salary is usually paid at least for the first year. Extra increments are often given for successful completion of these courses. These increments are more generous in some countries than in others.

To prevent some wastage by successful course applicants who wish to leave teaching, candidates are sometimes bonded to serve as teachers for at least as long as the duration of the course they followed.

In most cases teacher educators or serving teachers who wish to become teacher educators, attend overseas' courses, though the training given may be less relevant to local needs.

Because primary teachers are often wrongly considered inferior in status to secondary teachers, and local universities appear to reflect this attitude by their lack of suitable courses for upgrading primary teachers, the following resolution was passed:

"Since the training of high level manpower is one of the functions of universities, it is recommended that Ministries of Education should insist that universities set up systematic degree courses for primary teachers and administrators, particularly in the areas of curriculum development and primary teacher education".

Sabbatical leave should not only be given to University lecturers, but to administrators too, for in this way leadership can be rejuvenated, and the whole educational system be run more efficiently.

The group then turned to the question, "What arrangements exist at schools to provide coverage for teachers absent for in-service training?"

The points which emerged were as follows:

(a) Short and intermediate courses

(i) When courses are held in school holidays there is no replacement problem.

(ii) When a day release system is employed, floating teachers are sometimes used, or courses are arranged so that not all students are in college together, and thus those in schools on practice cover those in college.

(b) Long courses

(i) Sometimes replacement teachers are found for the duration of the courses.

(ii) Sometimes courses are arranged so that students have alternative years in college and school. Thus those in school cover those in college.

The next questions to be discussed were: "What are the conditions affecting upgrading of teachers?" and "How many teachers are eligible?"

The conclusions of the group on this matter were as follows:

(a) A small number of teachers (about 10% are sometimes promoted purely on merit. This is often done on the basis of inspection and satisfactory reports.

(b) To prevent good teachers seeking administrative posts in order to gain promotion, there is sometime a tendency to create new school promotion posts such as that of senior teacher.

(c) Crash programme courses are sometimes determined by critical shortage areas, which tend to be found particularly in Science and Mathematics. Teachers thus selected for upgrading often go to local or overseas' universities to follow diploma or degree courses.

The group then examined the role of teachers' unions with the questions, "What teachers' associations or trade unions exist? What influence do they have on the in-service education of teachers? What help can they give?"

The main points made were as follows:

(a) Unions exist in most countries, and the Secretary General is usually a full-time member.

(b) In some countries the unions are not involved much in teacher education, but are only concerned with salaries and conditions of service.

(c) In other countries the unions run refresher courses in conjunction with the inspectorate, and there are professional associations for different subject areas.

(d) It was felt that unions could help teachers in the following ways:

(i) By ensuring that teachers work as a team, and that the important work done by primary teachers is seen as important as the work done by secondary teachers.

(ii) By circulating information about facilities and innovations in methodology through newsletters.

(iii) By helping subject associations to function efficiently.

The following questions were then discussed: "How willing are the authorities to allow teachers to work on problems that teachers themselves perceive as real problems?" and "Which authorities have a say in these matters?"

The conclusions reached were as follows:

(a) The main problem in this question is how to ensure, in a centralized system a two way exchange of ideas between teachers and the Ministry since most member countries have centralized systems of education.

(b) Since most teachers' problems relate to the curriculum, the inspectorate is responsible initially.

(c) Teachers can take their problems to the Teacher Advisory Centre, and from there the matter can find its way through to national level if it is important enough.

(d) In some cases a government will take over a programme which it thinks can be presented in a more suitable manner in schools. (An example here might be a programme to do with family planning. The Government might decide to create a more wholesome programme than one conducted by an outside agency).

(e) Authorities should be prepared to listen to teachers' ideas, and to encourage teachers. Ideas could be collected and held in an ideas bank.

Finally, the group turned its attention to the question, "What arrangements should be made for social activities on in-service education courses?"

The conclusions reached were:

(a) Centres should create facilities which encourage teachers to talk socially, and to exchange ideas. (e.g. facilities for making tea and coffee, and a bar).

(b) Centres should organize activities that encourage the meeting of teachers for professional purposes (e.g. libraries, displays of teaching aids, apparatus which can be bought).

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSION - ASSIGNMENT 2

The main conclusions of the teacher educators' group were as follows:

Aims of In-Service Teacher Education

The main aims of in-service teacher education are:

- (a) To provide more trained teachers and reduce the number of untrained ones.
- (b) To improve the professional and academic standards of teachers and change their career opportunities.
- (c) To enlarge teachers' perception of their role in the community.
- (d) To prepare teachers for new curricular materials and involve them more in the process of curriculum development.
- (e) To build the morale of teachers on-the-job by, providing opportunities for sharing experiences and ideas.
- (f) To relate the training of teachers to the national goals of education.

Agencies which can Collaborate in Providing In-Service Teacher Education

It was suggested that the inspectorate, teacher training colleges, universities, curriculum development centres, professional associations, national and local government authorities, parents, teachers' professional associations and teachers' unions, relevant sectors of the community including employers' associations and headmasters can all collaborate in providing in-service teacher education. The following measures were suggested to achieve the purpose of collaboration:

- (a) Organizing formal and informal meetings for consultation.
- (b) Providing a mechanism, which could be a body or a centre, for co-ordinating all in-service activities in the country.

Priority Area for In-Service Teacher Education

The group were of the opinion that priority should be given to helping teachers with the use of new curriculum materials rather than with the other aspects of curriculum development.

Suggestions on how the training might be done are:

- (a) The running of short residential in-service courses using headteachers, inspectors and teachers followed by regular follow-up visits.

- (b) The running of radio programmes parallel with face-to-face instruction.

Additionally, mass training should be done for all key personnel involved in the implementation of new curricular materials.

Specific Needs of Beginning or Probationary Teachers for Pre-Service Training

Teachers who have just completed their training at a Teachers' College have been taught methodologies and classroom management techniques, but they still need:

- (a) The confidence to take full charge of a class of learners who depend solely on them.
- (b) Follow-up visits from college staff and headmasters. These would go a long way to satisfying this need; but it was suggested that subject teachers whose headmaster's speciality lies elsewhere, need the special attention of their college tutors. Apart from follow-up visits, other forms of help, guidance and support suggested were:
 - (i) Subject-based newsletters.
 - (ii) Continuous interaction with other members of the teaching profession and
 - (iii) Access to advisory centres where the new teacher can get reference books, make teaching aids and get advice from other colleagues.

For the induction of these new teachers, it was suggested that they be attached to an experienced teacher, a headmaster or subject head. Lesotho follows a system whereby teachers-in-training spend their first year studying at a residential teacher training college, then leave the college during their second year of training to do teaching practice as interns. During this time they are visited weekly by college staff. They return to college in their third year, sit for their final examination and then are certificated.