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AN EVALUATION OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING ACTIVITIES  
IN SELECTED WESTERN MONTANA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

WILLIAM JOSEPH TAYLOR

B. E., MONTANA STATE NORMAL COLLEGE, 1947

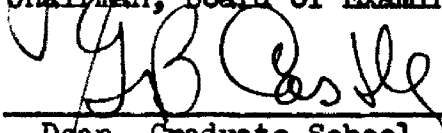
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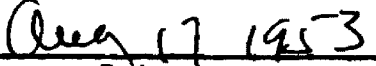
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1953

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

The last three decades have been a period of rapid change in American education. The specific changes have been varied and comprehensive in scope. They have affected educational philosophy, character and grade placement of materials, classroom activities, the organizational pattern of the school, and administrative policies and practices. No part of the school life has remained static.

Yet at the very time when teaching is most difficult and most essential, Montana elementary schools are faced with a loss of many of their most energetic teachers, a shortage of new teachers, and with the entrance, or re-entrance, into the profession of many teachers who have not been associated with schools for a period of several years. It is, therefore, the problem of Montana elementary schools to find ways of meeting this teacher emergency, of insuring the realization of highest teaching objectives, and of preparing for the uncertain period ahead with the handicap of a rapidly changing teacher personnel. There is no question about the desire of schools to meet these problems, nor of the willingness of teachers to adapt their work to meet the challenge of the times, but it is apparent that a program must be designed to help them

face this reorganization, and that such a program must be one of education in service, for there is no time to wait until colleges and universities give this training. The task is one which must, in large measure, be carried on in the Montana elementary schools themselves.

## I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of the study was to survey teacher opinion as to the amount of help received from in-service teacher training programs in elementary schools of western Montana. More specifically, the purposes of the study were as follows:

- (1) to determine whether or not elementary schools of western Montana are engaging in effective in-service teacher training programs,
- (2) to determine teacher opinion with respect to the amount of help received from these various in-service training programs, and
- (3) to interpret the findings and offer recommendations which seem warranted as a result of the study.

Delimitation of the problem. It is the responsibility of the elementary school to provide an environment in which the teacher will develop a keen insight into, and a full understanding of, the significance of the school program in which she must take an active part.

As desirable as it would be to consider the in-service program as a whole, if we accepted the broad implication of the preceding paragraph, the difficulty of such an undertaking would be readily recognized. For the purposes of this study the problem was delimited as follows:

- (1) Because of the wide variation in types and interpretations of in-service training activities it was necessary to limit this survey to



certain activities recognized as basic in the nature of good in-service training programs.

(2) Only the elementary school level was considered in this study. It would be inadvisable to attempt to organize an inclusive investigation of in-service training at all grade levels into one study.

(3) Because of the large number of teachers in the elementary schools of western Montana, schools in five counties only (Lake, Beaverhead, Lincoln, Sanders, and Granite) were included in this study. The schools in these five counties were considered by the investigator as being fairly representative of western Montana Schools.

(4) The individual school's in-service training methods and philosophies were not considered in the study.

(5) Rural schools, because of their unique administrator-teacher relationship were not chosen to be studied.

Importance of the study. It was hoped the benefits of the study would be threefold:

(1) The findings would serve, to some extent, to evaluate on-going in-service training programs. If effective in-service teacher training programs are to be installed in Montana elementary schools it would be desirable to know whether or not teachers feel the need of changes in existing in-service programs, and if so, what these changes should be.

(2) The findings would serve as a guide for installation of more effective in-service training programs. Those responsible for in-service teacher training programs should have some definite knowledge of what teachers expect of a self-improvement program, and what they

would be willing to contribute to it.

(3) Future researchers in this field and grade level would have a tentative pattern upon which to plan their studies. A knowledge of the value of present practices in in-service training in Montana elementary schools would aid researchers interested in evaluating in-service training procedures at other grade levels.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is the purpose of this section of the study to clarify and present terms as they were used in this study.

In-service Teacher Training. In-service training can be broadly defined as the provision, by the school, of an environment in which the teacher will find new significance in living and new understanding of the forces which affect children and society, and in which the teacher will develop new insights into the social significance of the school program in which she must take an active part. This may take a number of forms, from individual administrator-teacher conference to self-originated teacher self-improvement study groups.

Elementary school. Elementary school was the term used to designate the grades one through eight. This is commonly a separate school unit in the Montana public school system.

## CHAPTER II

### IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING--A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The literature on teacher education places much emphasis on the preparation of prospective teachers, much less on the continued growth of those already in service. One finds some studies of the difficulties experienced by beginning teachers, analyses of the characteristics of good or poor teachers, and a few investigations of the social attitudes of school workers. Magazine articles, superintendents' bulletins and reports of educational societies describe some promising in-service training efforts. These and a few other investigations present information that bears on in-service education, but for the most part information of helpful nature is scattered and not comprehensive. The recent study of teacher education conducted by the American Council of Education has made available significant materials and information.

One might readily conclude from a study of much of the literature available, and from reports of conferences on teacher education that once teachers complete their pre-service training, they are prepared to teach for all time. The implication seems to be that a period of experience in the classroom to perfect methods of presenting subject matter will complete the education of the teacher. This concept is

extremely short sighted and altogether inadequate when one takes into account the changing character of our world, and the broader interpretation of teaching now developing.

The education of teachers does not end with their graduation from a teacher training institution. Growth, for a teacher as for any adult, means enlarged understandings and greater meanings in relation to her environment. Growth is not something "done to" an individual. Growth arises from the activities of the self; growth is "that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences".<sup>1</sup> It is then the responsibility of the school to provide an environment in which the teachers will grow in alertness to their opportunities and responsibilities.

Provision for Maintenance of High Degree of Physical and Emotional Health. In-service education of teachers should seek to create an environment in which there is maximum opportunity for engendering good health for teachers.

It is surprising that so little attention has been paid to the health of the school teacher. For some time, industry has recognized the importance of the supervision of the health of its employees. This should be even more essential in the school system. The health of the teacher, one of the most important elements in the school system, must be safeguarded and maintained. The school should recognize that it

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, Democracy and Education, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), pp. 189-90.

affects not only personal happiness and professional efficiency, but public health.

Efficient administration demands the opportunity for the achievement of optimum health and the making of a conscious effort to reduce sickness among teachers.

One study relative to the health of the teachers indicates that more than one-fourth of the teachers have abundant energy and vitality and enjoy good health; whereas about one-fifth lack this abundant vitality and hence are handicapped for regular and effective classroom teaching.<sup>2</sup> The causes of the poor health of teachers are not always within their own control. Many of the causes are personal matters and can be corrected or controlled only by the teacher. A number of factors affecting the teacher's health are beyond her control, important among which is the unsatisfactory environment of both the school and community. Leading causes of poor health among teachers, based upon ratings by eleven school physicians who devote considerable attention to problems of teacher health are:

1. Improper personal health habits.
2. General weaknesses and physical handicaps.
3. Unfavorable out of school environment.
4. Unfortunate personnel relationships with administrative officers.
5. An excessive amount of school work.

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<sup>2</sup> National Education Association, "Fit to Teach", Ninth Yearbook of the Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association, 1938, p. 20.

6. Improper school house facilities.

7. Diseases contacted from pupils.<sup>3</sup>

Important as the physical defects and sicknesses of the teacher are, these are overshadowed by the mental, social, and emotional attitude and well-being of the teacher. The teacher who is abnormal in any of these respects has a direct effect upon the pupils with whom she comes in contact. Nervousness, personality conflicts, and emotional instability limit the effectiveness of the teacher no matter how well trained she may be in subject matter and methods. The health of the teacher often is affected by her intense preoccupation with certain problems that confront her. Continued worry over problems is not conducive to good health. The teachers themselves report that the following causes produce worry:

1. Financial worries
2. Present economic problems
3. Serious illness of relatives or friends
4. Unsatisfactory progress of pupils
5. Matters of personal health
6. Being unmarried and without normal family relationships
7. Disciplinary problems
8. Rating by a supervisor
9. Possible loss of position
10. Work of a college course
11. Being unhappily married

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

## 12. Religious questions<sup>4</sup>

Physical health, mental health, emotional well being, the school environment and the out-of-school environment are all intimately linked with the general health and well being of the teacher. Provision of a program balanced to meet the teacher's abilities, and provision to make the work enjoyable and less burdensome will go far toward the attainment of an environment conducive to good health and teacher efficiency.

Provision for an Environment which will Foster Democratic Cooperation. In-service education of teachers should seek the creation of an environment which is conducive to democratic cooperation of all those concerned with the educative process. Cooperation is a word which is frequently used with the functioning of democracy, but there are many kinds and some of them are not included in the concept of democratic cooperation. Courtis describes democratic cooperation as follows:

... every member would be group conscious and think of himself only as an organ or agent of the group. Each member would voluntarily carry a full responsibility for leadership and creative thinking as a leader does and would also be ready to act under direction as a follower when group planning was at an end. There would be no officers nor organization except for the purposes of coordination, execution and record as determined by the group. Each member would will for every other member that member's highest good and give freely of his own services to help others secure the highest good. His own wishes are not put aside but are given by him neither more nor less weight than those of any other member of the group. Leadership would be a function, not a person, and would pass from person to person as any one had a creative suggestion.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> National Education Association, Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> S. A. Courtis, "Cooperative Principles and Practices", Eleventh Yearbook of the Department of Supervision and Direction of Instruction, National Education Association, 1938, p. 30.

Division of labor does not eventuate, necessarily, in a democratic spirit. The typical elementary school divides the labor of teaching, but such division does not necessarily result in democratic forms of participation.

Democratic cooperation in solution of school problems requires that the staff begin with problems which arise out of specific situations in the school and that the staff proceed cooperatively to the discovery of what actually constitutes the problem, its causes, and its possible solutions. It is essential that problems concerning the school be faced by the total group as they arise in order that the combined thinking of individuals be brought to their solution and that individual ideas should not become so set that they cannot be modified. The sharing and modification should come about through cooperative evaluation of the entire staff in terms of the consequences of the action in the light of basic difficulties to be solved.

The program of in-service education of teachers must break down the traditional concept that the interests of the child, the purpose of the teacher, and the hopes of the parents are different and separate. The principle of mutuality demands that teachers, pupils and parents work together to devise solutions to their common problems. This principle of mutuality also implies that teachers will study community needs, utilize community resources, and share with community leaders the responsibility of solving common problems.

There is a great deal of difference between situations where executive<sup>s</sup> tell workers what the associated aims are, and those where all the workers are given the opportunity to join in creating and altering them. "Leadership is known by the personalities it enriches, not by



those it dominates or captivates."<sup>6</sup>

Democratic cooperation implies the provision of opportunities which permit persons to make distinctive contributions to the solution of socially significant problems. If democratic cooperation is to be achieved in an in-service education program, the first obligation of the school is to create an environment that will make democratic cooperation possible.

Utilization of Intelligent and Creative Thought and Action of the Entire Faculty. In-service education of teachers should seek the creation of an environment which engenders effective methods of problem solving. Effective problem solving requires thinking in which inquiry plays an important role.

Thinking is a continuous and changing process. It is obvious that it can take place only in an environment which stimulates free inquiry and free discussion. To attempt to foster thinking in an environment characterized by rigidity, authoritarianism and imposed external authority is fruitless. Thinking emerges from mutuality, democratic cooperation, and participation in many activities. Participation in solving mutual problems supplies a background of mutual understanding upon which planning is based. Problem solving through participation is made possible only through specific planning according to the principles by which learning takes place. Spalding defines the participatory process as:

. . . the combination of those activities which are carried on by persons who seek to solve problems by cooperative methods, according to principles which

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<sup>6</sup> Ordway Tead, The Art of Leadership, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1935), p. 81.

are in accord with the way in which man learns and which include the specific behavior of democratic people. Organization of the personnel is most effective when it results in the use of this process. It is least effective when it is carried on without participation.<sup>7</sup>

Spalding continues to say that benefits of the participatory process come into play only when several persons are generally bothered by a problem and are concerned about securing a solution to it. This process develops more resourceful persons than do other procedures. Every person who participates with others in the solution of problems which are common to the group as a whole, acquire skill in the use of methods of solution which can be employed on other occasions with profit to him and to the school. He develops a sensitivity to the existence of problems which were previously beyond the range of his experiences and seeks to solve them through cooperative interaction with others who are similarly aware of them. As present problems are cleared up, as new problems are discovered and solved, and as the practice which teachers have in solving problems continues to increase competence in this work, the school system improves rapidly and becomes dynamic.

The challenge to schools in conducting a program of participation and inquiry in problem solving is that teachers in service must be caused to solve their problems in participatory activities.

It is also the function of the in-service education program to arrange for the kind of experiences which are conducive to creative work on the part of the teacher, to the end that through her own experiences

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<sup>7</sup> W. B. Spalding, "Organizing the Personnel of a Democratic School System", Forty-Fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, 1946, pp. 78-79.

the experiences in the classroom will foster the same kind of thinking among the pupils.

The teacher interested in the problems of fostering growth in her pupils and finding satisfaction in her work, caring for the needs of the children, and exhibiting genuine affection for her job is creatively engaged. To be interested in the problem of growth implies that the teacher herself is growing and that she is engaged in creative expression and thought.

If a program of in-service education is to produce growth, the task of those in charge of the program is to begin with those experiences of the teacher which have promise of presenting new problems which will stimulate new methods of observation and judgment leading to expansion of experiences.

Participation in activities of this type cannot be accomplished under regimentation, fixed rules of conduct and other mechanized requirements. The humdrum of rigid activity, the submission to convention in practice and procedure are the enemies of creative work.

Creative minds are essential in a dynamic society. For this reason techniques employed in the in-service education of teachers should endeavor to foster creative expression and thinking on the part of the teacher.

#### Basis for Establishment of In-service Education Program.

In-service education is not a new development in teacher training. Progressive educators, for several decades, have been advocating opportunities for teachers to attain their maximum development. Theisen<sup>8</sup> states two

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<sup>8</sup> W. W. Theisen, "Teachers for the New Education", Thirteenth Yearbook of the Department of Superintence, 1935, pp. 172-73.

reasons for the provision of in-service training: the changing social demands on education, and a pre-service training period that is too brief for meeting all the responsibilities required of teachers in actual service. Kyte<sup>9</sup> reported a need for in-service training because of higher certification requirements. Mark E. Stine<sup>10</sup> stated that in-service education for teachers was necessary because pre-service education is, in many cases, far removed from actual teaching conditions found in schools, and that experience alone cannot guarantee familiarity with latest developments in education. In another writing, Stine<sup>11</sup> urged that county and city superintendents insist that their teachers grow professionally through agencies of in-service education. George E. Hill states that teachers in every system of schools have a distinct need for expert and efficient help toward the creation of more professional attitudes and higher levels of teaching skills. No group of teachers will remain static. The superintendents, principals, supervisors, and teachers are each professionally obligated to recognize this need and to organize their efforts toward a steady improvement in the teaching staff as a whole. Due to the rapid change in education procedure the need for the continuous preparation of teachers in service becomes even more apparent.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> George C. Kyte, "The Growth of Elementary School Teachers in Service", Educational Administration and Supervision, 21: 413-20, September, 1935.

<sup>10</sup> Mark E. Stine, "In-Service Education for Teachers", School and Society, 41: 582-84, April, 1935.

<sup>11</sup> Mark E. Stine, "The Influence of Teacher Certification on the Education of Teachers in Service", School and Society, 42:707-09, November, 1935.

<sup>12</sup> George E. Hill, "Teachers Instructional Difficulties--A Review of Research", Journal of Educational Research, 37:602-15, April, 1944.

It is necessary to improve teachers in service because many teachers who are relatively unprepared enter the profession each year. Complete preparation within a teacher training institution is impossible due to lack of basis in experience, and because teaching is a profession in which those who do not continually make efforts to go forward soon lag behind. Even with the usual professional and academic preparation for teaching, the beginning teacher enters upon her teaching experience in a new environment, facing the use of tools relatively unfamiliar to her and materials which are relatively unknown. She needs assistance to help her become properly adjusted to the teaching situation.

The experienced teacher needs training in service as well as the inexperienced teacher. This is especially true of the experienced but unprogressive teacher who has enlarged her outlook and broadened her knowledge but little since entering the profession. Stagnation is a danger in teaching. The experienced and progressive teacher always recognizes that there is room for improvement, and is ever striving to attain a higher standard of teaching. This type of teacher is entitled to the opportunity she desires for self improvement.

"If the full potentialities created by proper selection and preparation of teachers are to be realized, and if children at any given time and place are to receive the best teaching possible, it is essential that the conditions under which teaching is done should be conducive to the full realization of each teacher's existing powers. If these powers are to steadily increase, as it is both natural and desirable that they should do, the working situation should be conducive to continuous personal and professional development. The school system should be

the hub of in-service education of teachers, and provision for such education is essential to a good system."<sup>13</sup>

The problem of helping the beginning teacher assume and succeed in her first professional responsibility is an important one. At a time when teacher turnover is high, when there are a large number of inexperienced teachers in the schools, it is important to direct attention toward initiating teachers into the profession in such a way that their first professional experiences will be satisfying and effective.

The need of special assistance for the beginning teacher has been the subject of studies by several educators. Barr and Rudisill<sup>14</sup> found that teachers and principals agreed rather closely as to the nature of the difficulties of beginning teachers, although the principals stressed the teachers' personal characteristics, her relations to the community and her appreciation of the pupils more than did the teachers. The teachers, on the other hand, stressed conditions of work, problems of adjustment, lesson planning and the burden of administrative details more than did the principals. Johnson and Umstatted<sup>15</sup> listed the instructional responsibilities causing difficulties to beginning teachers, reported by 119 superintendents of schools, as largely problems of adjustment and provision for the needs of individual pupils.

The teaching profession, rather generally, places beginning

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<sup>13</sup> Commission on Teacher Education, The Improvement of Teacher Education, (Washington: American Council on Education, 1946), p. 173.

<sup>14</sup> A. S. Barr and Mabel Rudisill, "Inexperienced Teachers Who Fail--and Why", The Nations Schools, 5:30-34, February, 1930.

<sup>15</sup> Palmer O. Johnson and J. G. Umstatted, "Classroom Difficulties of Beginning Teachers", School Review, 40:682-87, November, 1932.

teachers to sink or swim, as best they can. The beginning teacher, from the very first day, plans her work, manages the class and meets situations with no more help than her experienced colleagues.

Often, because of seniority practices, the beginning teacher draws the most difficult assignment in the school. The experienced teacher feels that she has served her time in the difficult classroom, and objects to working with the less stimulating groups year after year. The one least qualified for the difficult assignment--the beginning teacher--is the one frequently burdened with it.

The beginning teacher should be given an assignment comparable with her limited skills and understandings; she should have adequate help from both the teacher training institution and her employing authorities. The teacher-training institution should employ adequate follow-up and the school should be responsible for an adequate program of orientation, assistance and in-service education.

Trends in In-service Education. The five year study by the Commission on Teacher Education of the American Council on Education<sup>16</sup> identified several broad trends in the in-service education of teachers which were similar to developments in teacher preparation. It is natural and desirable that in both pre-service and in-service education of teachers recognize the same general aims and basic ideas.

The school systems studied by the Commission were striving to achieve democratic participation in the determination of general

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<sup>16</sup> Charles Edward Prall, State Programs for the Improvement of Teacher Education, (Washington: American Council on Education, 1946), entire study.

policies, and, at the same time more opportunity for freedom of group and individual experimentation. Cooperation in thought and action was being emphasized, with recognized need of the proper working situation.

Prall and Cushman,<sup>17</sup> reporting for the Commission on Teacher Education, discovered an increasing awareness of the importance of the human factor in teacher development. Respect for personality and an understanding of human needs were seen as essential to an in-service improvement program. For a teacher to make the most of the powers she already possesses and to try to increase these powers, she must have a sense of security, of being able to contribute to the common goals. It is shown by the study that teachers in service respond to opportunities to pool their ideas and to act responsibly.

Another trend reported by the Commission was that toward using jobs recognized as needing to be done as the starting place for in-service groups.

"The most successful activities of the school systems associated in the cooperative study were in response to relatively specific needs which were felt by the teachers themselves. These grew out of experiences on the job more than out of abstract ideas as to what schools or teachers for our rapidly changing times should be like."<sup>18</sup>

A further trend is toward seeing the school system itself as the center for in-service education of teachers. The Commission states that administrators should accept leadership in the development of in-service programs as one of their important responsibilities.

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<sup>17</sup> Charles E. Prall and C. Leslie Cushman, Teacher Education In Service, (Washington: American Council on Education, 1944).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 349.



The development of school-centered programs of in-service education calls for appropriate budgetary provisions. Education, in the past, has been viewed primarily as an affair of the individual. Costs were to be borne by that individual through encouragement in the form of salary increases upon the achievement of certain standards. This carried the implication that there is a point at which a teacher's education may be complete. It ignores the importance of group endeavors as a means to personal and professional growth. It seems justifiable that, since supervisory leadership is provided and accepted as a proper expense, provision should be made for some educational activities. These may be such as: the release of teacher time for participation in important group activities, the purchase of supplies for study groups and workshops; the employment of consultant services; the operation of local conferences; the sending of teachers to significant meetings held elsewhere.

"System centered in-service programs raise new problems of financing. The logic of the development points to the appropriation of additional funds by school boards. A substantial and rapid movement in this direction is indeed eminently desirable . . . It will remain appropriate, however, for the individual teacher to share costs where credit toward degrees is being sought."<sup>19</sup>

The role of the colleges and universities in programs of the in-service education of teachers is the subject of considerable study by the Commission, which suggests the increasing responsibility for in-service programs by school systems will make for a greater degree of functional relationship between the schools and institutions of higher

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<sup>19</sup> Prall, op. cit., p. 178.

education.

It is not suggested that the traditional methods of the colleges and universities in the in-service field be abandoned, nor that this is desirable. A proportion of instruction can be given better on the campuses and it is desirable that more courses can be organized in clearer relation to the professional needs of those who take them.

The Commission suggests that workshop type experience will receive growing recognition as a desirable and essential element in programs of graduate study for teachers in service. This will be true not only in the case of the summer workshops organized by the universities on their own campuses. School systems that set up local workshops have found it possible to arrange with institutions for assistance in planning the program and for granting credit to teachers to whom such credit is important. Other practices recommended for universities are field services at a minimum charge and wide consultant services.

Teacher training institutions that wish to give significant service to schools must be willing to modify their educational patterns. Cooperative arrangements should be worked out with school systems. These institutions must express sincere interest in the field of in-service education and desire to assist teachers in service with problems they are concerned about and have recognized as important.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

(1) In-service education can best take place in an environment which provides for the maintenance of that high degree of physical and emotional health which promotes the spontaneity, vitality, and enthusiasm essential to good teaching.

(2) In-service education, if it is to be a significant experience, must be based upon a challenging problem which has developed in the framework of the local situation.

(3) In-service education can best take place in an environment which utilizes the intelligent and creative thought and action of the entire faculty.

(4) A truly effective in-service program must concern itself with the relations of specific school problems to the larger problems of education and to the larger community of which the school is a part.

(5) It is the task of school leadership to seek and provide those conditions and opportunities that will keep professional staffs actively engaged in a significant program of self improvement.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

Since the purpose of this study was to survey teacher opinion as to amount of help received from in-service practices in western Montana elementary schools, classroom teachers in western Montana, elementary schools appeared to be the logical source of data. The ideal method for gathering data would have been to visit each elementary school in western Montana and interview each teacher, or to interview a sizeable and representative sample of teachers. From the standpoint of time and convenience the personal interview was not practical or possible. Therefore, a carefully constructed questionnaire was selected as the most practical means of gathering data for this study. It was fully realized that it would be necessary to exercise considerable care and effort in questionnaire construction if reasonably reliable data were to be obtained.

The procedure for gathering data for the study consisted of the construction and distribution of the questionnaire, and the tabulation of returns.

The most difficult task confronted in making the study was the construction of the questionnaire. Neither the subject nor the technique required to gather data would lend itself readily to concise, detailed treatment, a basic requirement of a reliable questionnaire.

Numerous books, pamphlets, and periodicals were searched to determine the nature of effective in-service education. The two hundred odd topics most often included in discussions of effective in-service training were grouped into two general areas: (1) education needs and classroom management, and (2) relations with school personnel and community. These two hundred topics were again sifted, and thirty-one of the topics, which seemed most basic for an effective in-service program, were chosen for the questionnaire.

After the list of questionnaire topics had been compiled, the major problem became the selection of the simplest technique for obtaining responses which would result in as reliable and objective returns as possible.

It was finally decided to request teachers to indicate their responses by checking in columns of: "considerable help", "some help", and "little or no help". It was fully realized that such phrases would unlikely mean the same degree of help to all teachers, but they would give an opinion picture of their local in-service training program. Consequently, teachers were asked to check an opinion as to the amount of help received from their in-service program in these thirty-one activities.

In order to strengthen the questionnaire, eight questionnaires were passed out to eight teachers in the Stevensville elementary school. The teachers' reactions resulted in the rewording of some items and the clarification of the directions to aid teachers in making responses.

Two questions were added to the questionnaire to determine (1) teacher opinion of the need of a more extensive in-service program in their school, and (2) whether or not teachers would be willing to

devote out of school time to an in-service program.

One hundred fifty-five questionnaires, with letters of explanation<sup>20</sup> were mailed to the superintendents of all the elementary schools, except rural, in the five counties. These were directed to be distributed to the teachers in the elementary schools for completion and return. With each questionnaire was a self addressed envelope to facilitate the return of the questionnaire without again going through the office of the superintendent. This, it was felt, would hasten the return of the questionnaire, and give the teacher greater freedom in answering the questions. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaire the writer tabulated the responses in routine manner, the results of this tabulation are presented in Chapter IV.

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<sup>20</sup> This letter and the questionnaire are included in Appendix A.

## CHAPTER IV

### TEACHER OPINION OF THE AMOUNT OF HELP RECEIVED FROM THEIR IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM

The purpose of this chapter is to determine teacher opinion as to the amount of help received from the in-service training program of their school or school system as judged from thirty-one activities assumed to be basic in an effective in-service training program. One hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed to teachers in seventeen elementary schools in western Montana. One hundred five acceptably completed questionnaires were returned; table I shows these questionnaires were completed by a wide cross section of teachers in years of experience. Replies in partially completed questionnaires were accepted as valid for the particular item checked, thus all items do not show the same number of replies.

Good in-service teacher training programs are based upon the needs of the teachers, the general school program and the needs of the community. It is not probable that any one school, school system or group of teachers will participate in an in-service program embracing all the desirable features of an in-service training program, nor will they receive help in all the activities concerned in such a desirable

TABLE I  
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF 105 WESTERN MONTANA  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Number of Years Experience	Number of Teachers
1 - 3	26
4 - 6	16
7 - 9	15
10 - 12	16
13 - 15	13
16 - 18	7
19 - 21	3
22 - 24	2
25 - 27	4
28 - 30	1
31 - 33	1
34 - 36	1



in-service program.

There are three major factors which will restrict the accomplishment or realization of the most desirable in-service teacher training programs. One limitation is that of time in this day of crowded curriculums and heavy teaching loads. The second limitation is that of lack of knowledge on the part of both teachers and school administrators of techniques of in-service education. The third limitation is the teachers' and administrators' lack of a realization of the tremendous good arising from a superior in-service teacher training program. All the aims of in-service training can be only partially realized by most groups, so objectives must be selected which will best meet the immediate and most important needs of any particular group.

A common weakness of in-service training is that it often consists of a rather autocratic periodic teachers' meeting conducted by some administrative official of the school, usually the principal or superintendent. It is maintained in most studies that a more adequate and efficient in-service program would result if the program were a democratically planned and conducted improvement situation.

In order that this study might contribute more than just a list of in-service training practices, an attempt was made to determine how much help these practices, as carried on in western Montana elementary schools, actually are to the teachers.

In-service Training Activities Affecting Educational Needs and Classroom Management. A vital phase of in-service teacher training is that of meeting the needs of the teacher on the job. As is shown by

TABLE II

TEACHER OPINION AS TO AMOUNT OF HELP RECEIVED FROM IN-SERVICE TRAINING  
 ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND CLASSROOM  
 MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN WESTERN MONTANA

	Considerable Help	Some Help	Little or No Help
Help in selecting and organizing subject matter and instructional materials for class study	2	18	73
Help in understanding school policy and routine as it pertains to:			
Attendance	37	45	23
Mechanics of marking	26	33	46
Daily schedule of classes	8	31	60
Ordering supplies	28	45	29
Making records and reports	30	21	45
Taking excursions and field trips	4	20	63
Help in evaluating results of teaching	6	15	77
Help in experimenting with new classroom procedures:			
On a plan prepared by supervisor, principal, or superintendent	2	6	63
On a plan by teacher herself	3	25	62
Help in arranging visits to other teachers' classes		29	52
Help in arranging demonstration lessons of good teaching		9	70
Help in obtaining professional literature:			
Periodicals	20	55	20
Books	18	31	29
Reports of learned societies	2	25	51
Help in arranging college extension courses for your community	7	26	51
Help in providing time and place within school day for study and planning	3	15	75
Help in arranging a definite program on the part of all school personnel for the solving of special problems of teachers	9	24	56

the questionnaire the teacher was requested to check a response indicating the amount of help she received from various activities of in-service training, which, presumably, were present in the in-service program of her school. From the responses shown, it appeared that few teachers thought they had "considerable help" in activities affecting educational needs and classroom management. In no instance did the greatest number of responses fall in the "considerable help" column. Of 1,623 replies in this area 205 signified "considerable help" column, 473 signified "some help", and 945 signified "little or no help".

"Considerable help" was most evident in six activities: help in understanding school policy and routine as it pertains to attendance, mechanics of marking, ordering supplies, making records and reports, and help in obtaining professional literature, specifically periodicals and books. In none of these activities, however, was "considerable help" the greatest number of replies.

More teachers considered themselves to be receiving "some help" than "considerable help" in almost all activities in this area. There were only four activities which received "some help" as the greatest number of replies. These were: help in understanding policy and routine as it pertains to attendance, and to ordering supplies; and obtaining professional literature, specifically, periodicals and books.

In the following seven activities the "considerable help" and "some help" replies were more than half of the replies for those activities: help in understanding school policy and routine as it pertains to attendance, mechanics of marking, ordering supplies, making records and reports; and help in obtaining professional literature, specifically

books, periodicals and reports of learned societies.

In all other cases the reply of little or no help was more than half the replies for those activities. Those activities are: help in selecting and organizing subject matter and instructional materials for class study; help in understanding school policy and routine as it pertains to daily schedule of classes, help in evaluating results of teaching, help in experimenting with new classroom procedures on a plan prepared by principal, superintendent or supervisor or on a plan by teacher; help in arranging visits to other teachers' classes; help in arranging demonstration lessons of good teaching; help in arranging college extension courses for your community; help in providing time and place within school day for study and planning, and help in arranging a definite program on the part of all school personnel for the solving of special problems of teachers.

The results of this section of the study show that, in general, the field of educational needs and classroom management is not being effectively handled in many western Montana elementary schools.

In-service Training Activities Pertaining to Relations with School Personnel and Community. The area of relations with school personnel and community was handled in the same manner as the preceding area. The field of social and professional relationship is of extreme importance in recruiting teachers and keeping desirable people in the profession. The outcomes of a good effort in teacher-community relationship are both technical with respect to the teachers' work, and general, with respect to the development of a well-rounded personality. Teacher-school-community action counteracts and balances the sometimes confining

and isolating limits of the school.

Of 1,255 replies in this area 209 signified "considerable help", 431 signified "some help", and 615 signified "little or no help". This general look indicates that in-service training in this area is more helpful to the teacher than in the preceding area; however, almost half the total replies signify "little or no help" to the teacher.

Of the thirteen activities and opportunities for response only two show "considerable help" as the greatest response: help in securing cordial relations with school personnel, specifically teachers, and help in securing adequate living conditions. In the first one of these, "considerable help" received a majority of the replies.

Four of the thirteen activities showed a larger response of "some help". These four were: help in securing cordial relations with school personnel, specifically, custodians, nurse, board members, and help in understanding attitude of community toward school and school and teachers.

The six activities just mentioned indicated that a majority of the teachers received at least some help in those activities.

Seven of the thirteen activities in this area of school and community relations showed a largest response of "little or no help". These were: help in acquainting teachers with such aspects of community as resources, industries, national groups; help in arranging teacher visits to homes of pupils; help in arranging cooperative meetings of parents, teachers and board members to work together on school problems, help in arranging frequent meetings with parents to discuss school problems concerning pupils' activities, help in organizing staff into

TABLE III

TEACHER OPINION AS TO AMOUNT OF HELP RECEIVED FROM IN-SERVICE TRAINING  
 ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF RELATIONS WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND  
 COMMUNITY IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN WESTERN MONTANA

	Considerable Help	Some Help	Little or No Help
Help in securing cordial relations with school personnel:			
Teachers	62	25	3
Custodians	5	55	34
Nurse	9	57	33
Board Members	17	46	36
Help in understanding attitude of community toward school and teachers	23	49	33
Help in acquainting teachers with such aspects of community as resources, industries, national groups, etc.	8	36	52
Help in securing adequate living conditions	39	26	36
Help in arranging teacher visits to home of her pupils	5	6	88
Help in arranging cooperative meetings of parents, teachers, and board members to work together on school problems	13	21	71
Help in arranging frequent meetings with parents to discuss school problems concerning pupils' activities	6	30	52
Help in organizing staff into groups to study specific problems of the group	6	24	57
Helping plan social and recreational program for teachers, such as athletic programs, parties, etc.		39	54
Help in teachers' leisure-time planning by holding teachers' meetings on school time	16	17	66

groups to study specific problems of the group; helping plan social and recreational programs for teachers, such as athletic programs, parties, etc.; helping teachers' leisure time planning by holding teachers' meetings on school time.

In this latter group replies of "little or no help" were the majority of replies in every case except helping plan social and recreational programs and parties. This activity was singular also in that it was the only one in this area which received no replies of "considerable help".

These results indicate that in many cases in-service training programs are far from adequate in the field of school and community relations.

Teacher Participation in In-Service Training. The purpose of the third phase of this study was twofold: (1) to determine whether or not teachers thought there was a need for a more extensive in-service teacher training program in their school or school system, and (2) to determine whether the teachers would be willing to devote out of school time to an in-service program, and, if so, how much time per week.

The teacher activity aspect of the in-service program is of utmost importance for an effective program. Teachers should make every effort to participate in situations of group thinking, take an active part in discussions, and energetically contribute leadership. Teachers should be concerned with the common problems of the school rather than solely with the limited problems of their own departments. Unless teachers are willing to assume the responsibilities incident to co-operative planning, outworn, ineffective authoritarian procedure will

continue to dominate the efforts of schools to promote growth in service. Teachers, when selected to serve on committees, should pursue their assignments with energy and seriousness of purpose. Staff members, in study groups, forums, panels, group interviews, and informal discussions, should make every effort to help the group in weighing data and in making valuable judgments.

Teachers, as a group, were not in agreement as to whether or not there was a need for more extensive in-service training. Of the 105 replies to the question, "To what extent do you think there is need for a more extensive in-service teacher training program in your school?", 46 replied "great extent", 43 "some extent", and 16 replied "no need".

The question, "Would you be willing to devote out of school time to an in-service training program?", was answered with 53 yes and 43 no.

When answering, "How much time per week would you be willing to devote to an in-service training program?", teachers' answers ranged from one-half hour to four hours a week, with an average of 1.7 hours.

The results of these answers seemed to be that teachers, as a group, seemed to some extent at least, to find a need for more extensive in-service training. Only a little more than half, however, were willing to devote out of school time to such a program, and this group would devote an average time of one and seven tenths hours per week.

#### Summary of Findings.

(1) Of the eighteen opportunities to respond in Educational Needs and Classroom Management, fourteen activities received the greatest response of "little or no help", four received the greatest response of



"some help", and in no instance was there a largest response of "considerable help". "Little or no help" was the response in 58.2 per cent of the replies; "some help" 29.1 per cent; and "considerable help" 12.6 per cent. A total of 41.7 per cent signified receiving at least some help.

(2) Thirteen opportunities for response in Relations with School Personnel and Community resulted in seven greatest responses of "little or no help", four greatest responses of "some help", and two greatest responses of "considerable help". Replies of "little or no help" were 49.0 per cent; "some help" 34.3 per cent; and "considerable help" 16.6 per cent. A total of 50.9 per cent signified receiving "some help" in this area.

(3) The thirty-one opportunities for response in the two areas of in-service training resulted in twenty-one instances of "little or no help" as the greatest response, eight instances of "some help" as greatest response and two instances of "considerable help" as the greatest response.

(4) Teachers seem to agree that there is need for more extensive in-service training in their schools as indicated by eighty-nine replies for, and sixteen against. However, out of 105 teachers, only sixty-one signified a willingness to devote out of school time to an in-service training program. Those who would be willing to devote out of school time to in-service training signified an average time of one and seven tenths hours.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of the study was to survey teacher opinion of the amount of help received from in-service teacher training programs in elementary schools of western Montana.

Specifically, the purposes of the study were as follows: (1) to determine whether or not elementary schools of western Montana are engaging in effective in-service teacher training programs, (2) to determine teacher opinion in respect to the amount of help received from these various in-service training programs, and (3) to interpret the findings and offer recommendations which seem warranted as a result of the study.

#### PROCEDURE

A questionnaire returned by teachers in western Montana elementary schools was the main source of data for this study. The questionnaire consisted of a list of activities assumed to be important in an effective in-service teacher training program. Teachers were requested to indicate the amount of help they received from each of

these in-service activities. The questionnaire was strengthened by a trial completion by eight teachers in the Stevensville elementary school.

After being improved, one hundred fifty-five questionnaires, with letters of explanation were mailed to superintendents of elementary schools in five western Montana counties for distribution to the teachers. One hundred five acceptably completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 67.7 per cent return.

### FINDINGS

(1) In-service training activities affecting education needs and classroom management as carried on in western Montana elementary schools are giving teachers little or no help in most cases. "Little or no help" was the response in 58.2 per cent of the replies in this area; "some help" received 29.1 per cent; and "considerable help" received 12.6 per cent. A total of 41.7 per cent signified receiving "some help" in this area.

(2) In-service training activities pertaining to relations with school personnel and community as carried on in western Montana elementary schools are of some help, at least, to more than half of the teachers. Replies of "little or no help" were 49.0 per cent of the replies; "some help" received 34.3 per cent of the replies; and "considerable help" 16.6 per cent. A total of 50.9 per cent signified receiving "some help" in this area.

(3) Teachers largely agreed that there is a need for more extensive in-service training in their schools as evidenced by replies

of 84.7 per cent in favor and 15.2 per cent against. Willingness to devote out of school time for in-service training was signified by 58.1 per cent of the teachers, who would be willing to devote an average of 1.7 hours per week to in-service training.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations are acknowledged:

(1) The questionnaire method was employed to gather data for the study. As a result the reliability of the findings depends upon the quality of the questionnaire and conscientiousness of those who completed it. The most desirable plan would have been to interview each teacher individually. This was not possible, and the alternative appeared to be the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was carefully constructed, and was tested with the aid of teachers in the Stevensville elementary school.

(2) The nature of in-service education does not facilitate a specific and objective study. The results are given in terms of opinions which are variables, and the degrees of judgment; "considerable", "some", and "little or no" are such that interpretation varies with individuals.

(3) All teachers in western Montana were not participants in the study. Teachers in Lake, Beaverhead, Lincoln, Sanders, and Granite counties were selected as representative of teachers in western Montana.

#### PROBLEMS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Since this study was narrowed to a survey of selected

activities of in-service teacher training, certain related problems remain for future study. It seems, therefore, reasonable to suggest the following related problems for study:

(1) It would be desirable that a study be made to determine exactly what in-service training practices and techniques are being carried on in Montana elementary schools. Evaluation of these practices through comparison with recognized practices and through resultant improvement would be of value to school leaders in evaluation of their own programs of in-service training.

(2) A problem closely related to evaluation of in-service training programs is that of determining the needs of school programs and teacher groups in the field of in-service training. The building of an in-service training program around specific needs of any particular group will greatly increase the value of that program to the school program and the teachers.

(3) Another problem worthy of consideration is the cause of loss to the elementary schools of Montana of many promising young teachers. Efforts should be made to determine why teachers leave the field of elementary education, and the profession, in order that corrective measures might be proposed. It is probable that effective in-service programs could assist in holding many of the badly needed teachers in the elementary schools.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher education is not an end in itself. The fundamental thesis in the foregoing pages has been that of teachers and administrators working together on problems accepted as important for consideration in bettering the welfare of the school, the staff, and the community.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to make the following recommendations:

(1) School board members, superintendents, principals, supervisors, and all school teachers should engage themselves in a critical look at their own school programs to determine whether their in-service training program is as effective as it can and should be. They should inform themselves of the approved techniques and the scope of good in-service training so that they can lead in the establishment of an effective in-service program.

(2) Teachers should avail themselves of the opportunities of cooperative group self-improvement. Through their daily contacts with boys and girls, teachers have more opportunity to secure an awareness of pupil reactions. Their judgments should be carefully arrived at and should deserve as much consideration as that of the school administrator. In some areas teachers should be more competent to provide leadership than the school administrator. In many instances teachers can assume the initiative in the establishment of in-service training programs.

(3) The State Department of Public Instruction should make a definite effort to foster and assist in the development of in-service teacher training programs in both the elementary and secondary schools in Montana. This could be accomplished through workshop meetings, dissemination of literature and guidance material and provision of leadership in the early stages of program development.

Examples of successful solution of school problems through cooperative planning and working together indicates that this is a

valuable procedure for administration and in-service training of teachers. They also show that by cooperative thinking, teachers not only build up security and happiness within their own groups, but build into themselves attitudes and techniques which are reflected in dealing with their pupils.

The ultimate responsibility of school administration for leadership in developing these techniques cannot be evaded. In most schools, positive leadership of the administrator is essential in developing the program. A passive attitude, even though there is no active opposition, is usually sufficient to discourage any teachers who might otherwise go ahead.

Montana elementary school teachers have no greater challenge than to develop in pupils the ability to think and act cooperatively for the best interests of the ever-expanding group—class, school, community, state, nation, and world. Upon how well they meet this challenge, the success of democracy depends. The logical place to learn and practice democracy is in a cooperative in-service teacher training program in the schools.

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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS REQUESTING COOPERATION  
OF HIS ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Stevensville, Montana  
April 20, 1951

Dear School Administrator:

I am making, as part of my Master's program at Montana State University, a study of the value of in-service teacher training practices in western Montana elementary schools, and wish to enlist your aid.

Enclosed is a number of questionnaires with letters explaining the purpose of the study. I would greatly appreciate your distributing these to your elementary (grades 1-8) teachers to fill out and return.

Won't you please help me make my project a success?

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

William Taylor

LETTER TO TEACHER INCLUDED  
IN QUESTIONNAIRE

Stevensville, Montana  
April 20, 1951

Dear Fellow Teacher:

As part of my Master's program at Montana State University, I am making a study of in-service education in western Montana elementary schools, and I do need your help.

The purpose of this study is to determine the amount of help you receive from your in-service training program, including help from your superintendent, principal and supervisors.

This study is not intended to be a criticism of what your school, or all the schools, do. No teacher, nor school, can be identified from my study, so be honest with your opinions.

I do need your help if my project is to be a success, so won't you please fill in and return this questionnaire promptly.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

William Taylor

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY OF TEACHER OPINION OF AMOUNT OF HELP  
RECEIVED FROM IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM AND TABULATION OF  
RAW DATA FROM 105 COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES

Place a check in the column at the right which you think best describes the amount of help you receive from the in-service teacher training program in your school; including help from your superintendent, principal and supervisors.

	Considerable Help	Some Help	Little or No Help
<b>A. Educational Needs and Classroom Management</b>			
Help in selecting and organizing subject matter and instructional materials for class study - - - - -	<u>2</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>73</u>
Help in understanding school policy and routine as it pertains to:			
Attendance - - - - -	<u>37</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>23</u>
Mechanics of marking - - - - -	<u>26</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>46</u>
Daily schedule of classes - - -	<u>8</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>60</u>
Ordering supplies - - - - -	<u>28</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>29</u>
Making records and reports - - -	<u>30</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>45</u>
Taking excursions and field trips - - - - -	<u>4</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>63</u>
Help in evaluating results of teaching - - - - -	<u>6</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>77</u>
Help in experimenting with new classroom procedures			
On a plan prepared by supervisor, principal or superintendent - - - - -	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>63</u>
On a plan by teacher, herself -	<u>3</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>62</u>
Help in arranging visits to other teachers' classes - - - - -		<u>29</u>	<u>52</u>
Help in arranging demonstration lessons of good teaching . . - - -	<u>9</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>79</u>

	Considerable Help	Some Help	Little or No Help
Help in obtaining professional literature:			
Periodicals - - - - -	<u>20</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>20</u>
Books - - - - -	<u>18</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>29</u>
Reports of learned societies-	<u>2</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>51</u>
Help in arranging college extension courses for your community - - -	<u>7</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>51</u>
Help in providing time and place within school day for study and planning - - - - -	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>75</u>
Help in arranging a definite program on the part of all school personnel for the solving of special problems of teachers - - - - -	<u>9</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>56</u>
<b>B. Relations with School Personnel and Community</b>			
Help in securing cordial relations with school personnel:			
Teachers - - - - -	<u>62</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>3</u>
Custodians - - - - -	<u>5</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>34</u>
Nurse - - - - -	<u>9</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>33</u>
Board Members - - - - -	<u>17</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>36</u>
Help in understanding attitudes of community toward school and teachers - - - - -	<u>23</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>33</u>
Help in acquainting teachers with such aspects of community as resources, industries, national groups, etc. - - - - -	<u>8</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>52</u>
Help in securing adequate living conditions - - - - -	<u>39</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>36</u>
Help in arranging teacher visits to homes of her pupils - - - - -	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>88</u>
Help in arranging cooperative meetings of parents, teachers, and board members to work together on school problems - - - - -	<u>13</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>71</u>



	Considerable Help	Some Help	Little or No Help
Help in arranging frequent meetings with parents to discuss school problems concerning pupils' activities - - - - -	<u>6</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>52</u>
Help in organizing staff into groups to study specific problems of the group - - - - -	<u>6</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>57</u>
Helping plan social and recreational program for teachers, such as athletic programs, parties, etc. -	<u>        </u>	<u>39</u>	<u>54</u>
Help in teachers' leisure time planning by holding teachers' meetings on school time - - - - -	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>66</u>

C. Other Information

How many years have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_

To what extent do you think there is need for a more extensive  
in-service teacher training program in your school?

Great extent \_\_\_\_\_ Some extent \_\_\_\_\_ No need \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to devote out of school time to an in-service  
training program? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how much time per week? \_\_\_\_\_