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The Role of Home Visits in Effective
Home-School Relations
(TITLE)

BY

Wanda F. Miller

PLAN B PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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AND PREPARED IN COURSE

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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A need for improvement in the area of home-school relations is reflected in the review of educational literature. This literature suggests that a communication and social gap might exist between the school and the home.

Various methods were suggested in the literature on home-school relations to help improve and make these relationships more effective. The home visit was one of the methods suggested.

The purpose of this paper was to research educational literature in an effort to find a suitable approach to this problem: "Can a program of teacher home visits bridge the communication and social gap between school and home? If such an approach is employed will it enable the child to face his total environment more effectively?"

Significance of School and Home Communication

Reference materials in the area of child behavior suggest that the child is influenced by experiences outside of school as well as those in the school. The out-of-school experiences may supplement or complement school experiences or may act to neutralize or negate their effects.¹ Chester Harris cites the following as an example of the lack of communication between the school and home.

The school may try to develop clear enunciation through its language teaching, but out-of-school experiences may reward . . . [careless] speech and, thus in a large measure undo the work of the school.²

According to the Encyclopedia of Educational Research there is experimental evidence by Ralph H. Ojemann and Francis R. Wilkinson suggesting that a teacher can work more effectively if he knows the out-of-school experiences of the students.³ Eva Grant also offers experimental evidence indicating that changes in

¹Chester Harris (ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research, (3rd. ed.; New York: MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 938.

²Ibid.

³Ralph H. Ojemann and Francis R. Wilkinson, "The Effect on Pupil Growth of an Increase in Teacher's Understanding on Pupil Behavior," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. VIII (1939), pp. 143-47.

the home environment, such as the death of a parent, can affect the child's behavior in school.⁴

A demand has developed for more opportunities for teachers-in-training and teachers-in-service to learn about the home and community background of students. Furthermore, many parents have recognized that it is difficult to understand and guide the child's behavior at home unless they have some knowledge of his experiences at school.⁵

In a study by Clarke Slade of a selected group of schools, fifty-five per cent of the schools and seventy-eight per cent of the parents believed that schools and parents have equal responsibility for the personality development of children.⁶

In preparation of an article entitled "Parents' Gripes," Dr. W. B. Hollister requested parents to write about any procedures or situations in their schools that irritated or distressed them. One parent responded, "The teachers as a whole are not concerned enough about their students' work, attitude, welfare. Very seldom do they

⁴Eva Grant, "The Effect of Certain Factors in the Home Environment upon Child Behavior," University of Iowa Studies of Child Welfare, Vol. XVII (1939), pp. 63-94.

⁵Harris, op. cit.

⁶Clarke W. Slade, "Pupil Personnel Practices in Member-Schools of the Educational Records Bureau," In Traxler, Arthur E. (ed.) Goals of American Education, (1950), pp. 104-120.

contact the parent to talk things over, and the parent may never know of things that could have been corrected."⁷

James L. Hymes writes:

One obstacle that stands in the way of close home-school relations is the fact that not enough teachers are in touch with the complexities of family life. Despite the common bond of the child, the paths of the school and the home are different. Each can go along, losing sight of the other.⁸

Three of the major factors found to produce strained parent-teacher relationships which Louis Kaplan listed are, "(1) misunderstandings or lack of agreement over the school program, (2) the efforts of parents and teachers to protect their vested interests, and (3) the personal inadequacies of parents and teachers."⁹

Kaplan goes on to state:

Since there is a conflict of authority between the home and the school, some problems do arise. The important thing for parents and teachers to remember is that they are approaching the same goal from different points of view. Both are interested in the growth of the child.¹⁰

⁷W. B. Hollister, "Parents' Gripes," The Parent-Teacher Association Magazine, Vol. XLIX (April, 1965), p. 18.

⁸James L. Hymes, Effective Home-School Relations (New York: Prentice Hall, 1953), p. 73.

⁹Louis Kaplan, "Tensions in Parent-Teacher Relationships," Elementary School Journal, Vol. XLI (December, 1950), p. 190.

¹⁰Ibid.

Significance of School and Home Cooperation

According to Harris the teaching profession has realized the importance of knowing the child's home environment. Conversely, he states parents increasingly have come to realize the need to know the child's school environment. Thus, both school and home have come to recognize the necessity for effective cooperation between parents and teachers.¹¹ The parent finds he cannot work with his children in isolation of other influencing forces. He must also know how to work with the teacher by supplying out-of-school experiences complementary to the child's school work and to give the school the intelligent support of the community.¹² Similarly, teachers find it is not sufficient merely to obtain information about the child's home and community background. Other problems would involve " . . . securing mutual understanding and acceptance of the aims of the school, cooperating directly with parents, interpreting to parents a child's experiences at school, planning ways by which home and school can help the child to overcome any difficulties that may exist"13

¹¹Harris, op. cit.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

Significance of Social Change

According to Gerald and Norma Kowitz " . . . our country is experiencing a series of significant social changes which mandate changes in our schools. Our ability to sustain progress is directly related to the quality of education provided our youth."¹⁴

Kowitz goes on to write that no longer is it enough just to insure the child a basic, minimum education.¹⁵ Programs are needed which will support the maximum development of individual talents. Academic achievement is a major goal, but not to the exclusion of a high level of personal development. It is "the ability to live with the anxieties of the times and to strive toward a future which often is frightening."¹⁶

According to E. Paul Torrance, (1) the teacher can help relieve these anxieties in children by helping them establish more contacts with their environment--to see, hear, and sense more fully what they experience. (2) He can help them find anchors to which they can cling and by which they are better able to gauge their behavior.

¹⁴Gerald T. Kowitz and Norma G. Kowitz, "Improving Home-School Relations," National Elementary Principal, Vol. XLIII (April, 1964), p. 22.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

(3) The teacher should be able to help them think more imaginatively and creatively about problems. (4) He can teach children how to make decisions. (5) He can help them become more fully functioning persons.¹⁷ The school cannot do this job alone; it must have the support and at times the active cooperation of the home.¹⁸

¹⁷E. Paul Torrance, "Stress--When Problems Threaten to Overwhelm the Child, What Can the Teacher Do?" National Education Association Journal, Vol. XL (December, 1961), p. 11.

¹⁸Kowitz, op. cit.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Points of View

When these questions: "Can a program of teacher home visits bridge the communication and social gap between school and home? Can home visits enable the child to face his total environment more effectively?" are put to the educators there seems to be a lack of unanimity among them. For example, David Helberg, principal of Sternberger School, Greensboro, North Carolina, wrote for the October, 1965, Instructor:

The pressures of the day call for schools to deal with students on an individual basis. To do so effectively, teachers must consider the many elements that influence pupil behavior. . . . Therefore, I believe it is in the best interest of a good school program to ask that teachers visit in the homes of their students.¹⁹

Ernest J. Machnits, principal of Heathcote Elementary School, Searsdale, New York, wrote for the same magazine:

¹⁹David T. Helberg, Ernest J. Machnits, and Josephine McKee, "Should Teachers Be Encouraged to Visit Pupils' Homes?" Instructor, LXXV (October, 1965), p. 15.

When a teacher visits a child's home as a part of a school visiting program she is invading privacy. . . . The major advantage put forth by proponents of scheduled home visiting is the information one acquires about the child's environment outside of school. Although I share the opinion that the more we know about the child the better, I am convinced that in this case possible disadvantages outweigh what may be gained.²⁰

Josephine McKee, principal of Emmet Field School, Louisville, Kentucky, writing in the Instructor on the topic "Should Teachers Be Encouraged to Visit Pupils' Homes?" expressed the following point of view:

Teachers should be encouraged to visit a pupil's home if there is a valid reason for a visit and if the teacher feels that the visit will accomplish a worthwhile purpose. However, no teacher should be required to visit homes when she sees no value in this type of communication.²¹

The changing role of the teacher offers insights to those who are negative or neutral toward a program of home visits.

Changing Role of the Teacher

Ruth Sneed asserts that the pedagogical skills of the schoolmaster of former days were considered complete

²⁰Helberg, op. cit.

²¹Ibid.

in knowing the subject and teaching it to every child in the same manner. With this point of view she recognizes that a consideration of individual needs was largely disregarded.²² Sneed says that in order that the child may acquire the social, emotional, intellectual, and mechanical skills required for modern living, teachers must use approaches which lead to a discovery of the needs unique to each person. They must be able and willing to use a multiplicity of methods.²³

She further states that a teacher must see pupils in a variety of situations to recognize the diverse facets of each child's life. It is important that the teacher know each pupil in relation to his total environment. This would support Hugh Bonar who says that probably the strongest force in a child's life is his home environment where personality traits and attitudes have their roots.²⁴

According to J. Edgar Hoover, in a bulletin entitled Challenge to Teachers, there is but one way to

²²Ruth Sneed, "School Visits Home," Bulletin of University of Kentucky, Vol. XXX (December, 1959), p. 5.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Hugh Bonar, "Every Teacher a Visiting Teacher," Journal of the National Education Association, Vol. XXX (January, 1941), p. 4.

eliminate juvenile delinquency.

This is by providing each child in America with competent parents. The improbability of this is apparent and the consequent burden of parental deficiency falls on the various community agencies and institutions. Of these, the school is the closest to the child, and it is the individual teacher who must discharge the obligations placed upon the schools.²⁵

Hoover goes on to relate that, "The good teacher, like the law enforcement officer, knows no hours."²⁶ His work takes place not only in the school, but also in the home.

Changing Role of Education

"Home visits are the necessary support to a modern program of education, whether you call it the activity program, the core curriculum, a child-centered program, a life adjustment program, or by any other name,"²⁷ says James Hymes.

Home visits could provide the teacher with valuable information about those relationships with members of his family that influence and form the pupil's relationships

²⁵J. Edgar Hoover, Challenge to Teachers, In Leo J. Cantelope, "Home and School--Joint Responsibility?" Clearing House, Vol. XXXIX (May, 1965), p. 543.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Hymes, op. cit., p. 135.

with members of his classroom; thereby leading to a better understanding of the pupil as a person and the reasons for his general behavior.

Hugh Bonar writes that:

The primary purpose of these home visits is to make possible better understandings so essential if we are to know the needs of boys and girls and more nearly meet those needs in the areas of assistance assigned to the schools.²⁸

Beneficiaries of Home Visits

Home visits bring with them important benefits to four recipients--the teacher, the school, the parents, and the child.

The teacher:

1. Home visits will give the teacher a longer time to discuss the child's problems with his parents.²⁹
2. Home visits properly planned and conducted will result in amiable attitudes even in the face of almost insurmountable problems.³⁰

²⁸Bonar, op. cit.

²⁹Donald MacDonald, "Old-Fashioned Remedy," Clearing House, Vol. XXXV (September, 1960), p. 13.

³⁰Mercedes Petry, "Parents, Teachers, Attitudes," Instructor, Vol. LXIX (October, 1959), p. 80.

3. Home visits will provide knowledge of the out-of-school experiences of students so the teachers³¹ can work more effectively with them.
4. Home visits will result in more cooperation from parents on problems of mutual concern.³²
5. Home visits will help the teacher know more fully the conditions under which each student lives, thus being better able to understand each child.³³
6. Home visits will bring about a positive change of attitude on the part of the child.³⁴
7. Home visits will lessen complaints such as, "I am too busy to come up to school," or "My Johnny is a good boy, the other boys are picking on him."³⁵
8. Home visits allow the teacher to see the child on his home ground. It is very difficult for the average child to claim at home that the source of his troubles was that "the teacher doesn't like me," when the same teacher spends an evening to visit his home to discuss him and his problems with his parents.³⁶

³¹Harris, op. cit.

³²Ibid.

³³William Finch, "Bringing Together Family and School," Chicago School Journal, Vol. XLIII (November, 1961), p. 86.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

9. Home visits should establish a working relationship with the parents so that parent and teacher may respond to the needs of the child.³⁷
10. Home visits can do a big thing for you. They can make the child come alive. The visits can give you the information you need to tailor your program to every single child--his interests, his strengths, his needs.³⁸
11. Home visits are made by some teachers because they feel that their work is lightened in the long run.. Life goes smoother when parents know that you care; they will respond with warming support.³⁹
12. Home visits will bring with them reduced problems and reduced parent misunderstandings for the teacher.⁴⁰
13. Home visits will benefit the teacher by requiring less time after school to work with those children whose maladjustment formerly prevented normal achievement during the regular class periods.⁴¹
14. Home visits will benefit the teacher with less time being spent before school administrators in defending practices that he resorted to in cases of unsympathetic and remonstrating parents.⁴²

³⁷Beatrice Gray, "Home Visits: Problem or Pleasure," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. XL (February, 1948), p. 73.

³⁸Hymes, op. cit.

³⁹Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁰Bonar, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

15. Home visits will help the teacher gain immeasurably in physical and mental health because the problems are fewer.⁴³

The School:

1. Home visits can help the school reach its goal of being concerned with the development of all aspects of a child.⁴⁴
2. Home visits can affect the child's behavior in school by bringing about changes in the home environment.⁴⁵
3. Home visits will bring active cooperation of the home with the school, thereby, good communication will result between the two.⁴⁶
4. Home visits will provide information about the child enabling the school to do a job of quality education.⁴⁷
5. Home visits that are planned are an effective medium for the development of the understanding of the total school program of services.⁴⁸
6. Home visits bring about less turnover of personnel since the teachers are happier and more contented.⁴⁹

⁴³Bonar, op. cit.

⁴⁴Hymes, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴⁵Harris, op. cit.

⁴⁶Kowitz, op. cit.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁹Bonar, op. cit.

The Parents:

1. Parents are encouraged and take renewed interests in their children with interest being shown in their children by the teacher.⁵⁰
2. Parents gain a clearer understanding of the school's goals and purposes.⁵¹
3. Parents learn to work satisfactorily with the teacher, thus showing a greater spirit of cooperation and understanding.⁵²
4. Parents learn to understand and handle their own children more effectively.⁵³
5. Parents learn to know and understand the teacher as a person.⁵⁴
6. Parents gain through happier home relations because boys and girls are better adjusted and more successful in their school environment.⁵⁵
7. Parents are likely to be physically and mentally healthier because their children are happier and more successful.⁵⁶

⁵⁰MacDonald, op. cit.

⁵¹Hymes, op. cit., p. 9.

⁵²Harris, op. cit.

⁵³Kowitz, op. cit.

⁵⁴Frank J. Adams and Robert Hoppock, "Do Parents Welcome Home Visits?" Clearing House, Vol. XXXV (December, 1960), p. 231.

⁵⁵Bonar, op. cit.

⁵⁶Ibid.

The Child:

1. Home visits make for happier and more successful school experiences for boys and girls.⁵⁷
2. Home visits help the child receive the aid of parents who understand modern school procedure better.⁵⁸
3. Home visits help the child profit from more sympathetic and understanding attitudes of the teacher. The teacher has learned much through home visits that makes it possible for him to better interpret the child and modify the school environment, including the child's program of study, to more nearly fit his needs.⁵⁹
4. Home visits help boys and girls to be better adjusted and more successful in their school environment. This in turn brings a happier home relationship.⁶⁰
5. Home visits may let us list less physical and mental illness among children because of happier and more successful experiences.⁶¹
6. Home visits in which teachers and parents better understood conditions that contributed to nervousness in children helped some of this nervousness disappear.⁶²

⁵⁷Bonar, op. cit.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

7. Home visits enable the teacher and parents to work together to help children overcome any difficulties that may exist.⁶³
8. Home visits bring children a richer, fuller, more nourishing life, in school and out, than would otherwise be open to them because their parents and teachers work together.⁶⁴

⁶³Harris, op. cit.

⁶⁴Hymes, op. cit.

CHAPTER III

PLAN OF PROCEDURE

Since the welfare and education of the child is a mutual responsibility of the teacher and the parent the key word in the project must be communication.⁶⁵ Home and school must cooperate by communicating with each other in the following ways:

1. by maintaining a flow of information about the child from the home to the school.
2. by supplying a flow of information about the school, its policies, and operations, from the school to the home.
3. by providing periodic progress reports of pupil achievement from the school to the home.
4. by quickly contacting each other as soon as special problems are discovered by either home or school.

A program of home visits might be initiated by the superintendent, principal, teaching staff, or other appointed personnel. The important aspect is not who initiates the program of home visits, since educational literature suggests that cooperation and mutual effort

⁶⁵Kowitz, op. cit.

must be demonstrated by those who are involved in the program of home visits.⁶⁶

Step One

Using as a basis the four communication guidelines given on the preceding page, the first step in establishing the program of home visits would be to research the present relationship of the home to the school. This could be done by the person or the committee responsible for coordinating the program of home visits.

Step Two

The second step in establishing the program of home visits is to evaluate the study to discover the areas of home-school relationship needing improvement. The study would then be available for staff use.

Step Three

The third step in establishing the program of home visits is to devise a plan for meeting those needs ascertained from the study.

The actual program of home visits should center in (1) maintaining a flow of information about the child from the home to school, (2) supplying a flow of information

⁶⁶Bonar, op. cit.

about the school to the home, and (3) contacting each other as special problems are discovered.

Basic Home Visit Requirements

Information from Parent:

Hugh Bonar suggests that the home visit must solicit from the parent a willing commitment to keep the teacher informed throughout the year concerning the needs and problems of the child.⁶⁷

Parents know their individual children. They know their strengths, the budding interests, the beginning inclinations that mark one child off from all others. They can recite the intimate details of a child's past: his fears, illnesses, the exciting experiences, the good and the bad that made the child what he is today.⁶⁸

William Finch also suggests that the visit itself will bring such enlightenment; nonetheless, the continuing cooperation of the parent in this regard is of vital importance.⁶⁹ Hymes writes that the parent, ready to sacrifice his needs in behalf of his child's will eagerly ally with a teacher who shows by home visitation his sincere concern for the benefit of that child.⁷⁰ The aim, then, is to weld a parent-teacher team.

⁶⁷Bonar, op. cit.

⁶⁸Hymes, op. cit., p. 22.

⁶⁹Finch, op. cit.

⁷⁰Hymes, op. cit., p. 15.

Information to be given Parent:

The visit must provide the parent with information about the school, its goals, policies, and operations.

Hymes says:

The youngsters go to school early in the morning, they come home in late afternoon. What goes on? What do they do? How do they act? The children tell a little; the parent guesses a little; and reports and materials brought home convey a little.⁷¹

Hymes goes on to relate that too many times the "little" that the parent knows about the school is distorted as it is brought to him through the immature eyes of his child. Warped information might be worse than no information. He continues, "Only when mutual trust and understanding exist will homes and school find their creative energies, unplagued by doubts and arguments and suspicion, released to work for children."⁷²

It would seem that the best way to establish that mutual trust is to supply the parent with full answers to his every question, including those unasked.

Bonar suggests that the teacher must remember he is a representative of the school. The English spoken,

⁷¹Hymes, op. cit., p. 18.

⁷²Ibid., p. 47.

the evidence of general intelligence, and the ability to give information on the total school program--all contribute to the success or failure of the call. As a result of the call, the parent will form opinions of the fairness, the openmindedness, the culture, the humanity of the teacher, and the effectiveness of the school in educating his child.⁷³

Thus, the program of home visits must include a visitor well trained and equipped to explain " . . . present day educational philosophies and their influence on the local school's service, . . . the service, and . . . the school history of the child."⁷⁴

Information concerning Special Problems:

The visit must solicit from the parent a willingness to contact the school as soon as special problems are observed. The visit should give the parent assurance that, in case the problem is discovered by school personnel, the same courtesy and cooperation will be extended from school to home.

⁷³Bonar, op. cit.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Additional Elements Necessary
for Implementing Program

Cooperation of Teachers

The first and most important task in implementing a plan of home visits is to enlist the cooperation of the teachers. If home visits are to be successful, the teachers must believe dogmatically in the value of the mission.

To bring about this level of enthusiasm, the staff must realize beyond question the importance of home visits established in the afore mentioned four points:

1. The benefits received by the teacher.
2. The benefits gained by the school.
3. The benefits produced for the parents.
4. The benefits given the child.

Visual Aids

In helping to demonstrate the benefits established by home visits the person who is co-ordinating the program could make use of some valuable audio visual techniques. The benefits listed could be placed on transparencies for use on an overhead projector. They might be placed on tag board to be used as a flip chart or as flash cards. Another effective way of presenting

these benefits could be with a flannel board.

Materials

The next step in implementation is to provide materials for the teacher. Every salesman knows the value of well designed, colorful sales aids that present his product in a clear and forceful manner. A student-parents' handbook presented by the visiting teacher would have "ice breaking" value while providing important information for the parent. This information could be referred to again and again to answer questions that might otherwise result in conflict.

Staff Preparation

The next step would be to train the staff.

(a) Instruction Manual

An important part of this training is to prepare a manual of instructions. In this booklet, the benefits of home visits should be clearly presented as an introduction that helps the program be accepted. The remainder should contain correct methods of visitation.

(b) Workshop or Seminar

If possible, a workshop or seminar should be conducted using outside speakers who have had experience in a program of home visits.

(c) Role Playing

Included in the instruction manual were to be correct methods of making home visits. The staff might utilize role playing as a means of practicing correct procedures of visiting. This practice might help the visitors overcome some of the fears one might experience in anticipation of that first visit.

Administrative Adjustments

The final step in the implementation of the program is to make provisions necessary for the teachers to actually make home visits. At this point the superintendent must be prepared to make some administrative adjustments.

Some schools want all the good they can wring out of home-school relations. . . . but . . . not . . . enough to make any major adjustments. They are glad to talk about working with parents. When it comes to the doing, they want the easy way out.⁷⁵

A pitfall the co-ordinator must anticipate is extreme rigidity of the program. What will be effective with one group of teachers may fail with another. Thus, it is advisable to present the plan of procedure to one school staff at a time. This does not mean that the program should be allowed to lose its shape through

⁷⁵Hymes, op. cit., p. 141.

disintegration of the main structure. There should be enough flexibility to make it adaptable to each school, thereby helping the administrator in gaining the cooperation of his staff.

(a) Time

The words "home visit" can be said in a flash, but the time involved in visiting every pupil's home may consume many hours. Farseeing is the superintendent who will make school time available for visitation just as conscientiously as he plans for institutes and workshops. Perhaps half-day blocks of time early in the year could be given the teacher for home visits by paying substitute teachers.⁷⁶ Other procedures may better suit a particular school unit. The point is that the already overloaded teacher should not be expected to work home visits into her already crowded time schedule.

(b) Transportation

Furthermore, there is the question of transportation. Is the teacher expected to use his own car without remuneration? Perhaps a school automobile could be provided for the visits. In any case, the

⁷⁶Bonar, op. cit.

superintendent must plan to meet this responsibility to the teacher.

(c) Flexibility

Other points of a similar nature may confront the superintendent or co-ordinator, forcing frequent readjustment. Thus, the word flexibility must be re-emphasized. A school cannot expect to implement a new concept and still go along in the "way we've always done it."

Utilization of Home Visit Information

A home visitation program that does not contain provisions for utilization of the information and benefits gathered from each call is as ineffective as the foolish hen in this anecdote.

Once upon a time there was a hen who gathered corn to fill her house. She worked hard and spent much time and effort getting in the tender young kernels. She counted them as she brought them in and put the tally on a board. She encouraged all her friends to help her. But at the back of her house was a hole, and an evil rat carried away corn as fast as she brought it in.

"Why," asked a friend, "don't you plug up the hole? Aren't those kernels the rat carries away worth as much as the new ones you gather?"

"How can I take care of that? It takes all my time and energy to get the corn in!"

The persons responsible for the program of home visits will find it necessary to make provisions for the utilization of the benefits of home visits. Following are some of the methods which could be used to help in fully utilizing the benefits of home visits.

Visitation Report

First, the teacher could be provided a visitation report form on which to record her findings. The report, preferably made in duplicate, should contain such questions as:

1. Is the attitude of the parent toward the school a good one?⁷⁷
2. Is the relationship between the parents and the child a healthy one?
3. What kind of home environment does the child have?
4. What special needs does the pupil seem to have?
5. Do you have any suggestions for bettering the home-school relationships of this family?

File System

With the visit made and the report prepared, the next step would be to provide adequate housing for the information.

Each teacher should have immediate access to these reports in order to recall the impressions formed during the visit; thus, one copy should be kept in a file in the school building where the principal may also make use of it.

Evaluation

The second copy should be available to the superintendent, or the person in charge of the program, who must also maintain a file. By maintaining this file, the program can be evaluated from time to time. Through evaluation recurring reports on various pupils from one

⁷⁷Petry, op. cit., p. 86.

family may be recognized. Also the attitudes and efficiency of the various teachers participating in the program of home visits may be evaluated.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the purposes of this paper was to try to establish that a communication and social gap between the school and the home does exist. The following were found to have helped create such a gap: (1) the lack of effective communication between school and home, (2) the lack of effective cooperation between school and home, and (3) the social change that our country is experiencing.

Another purpose was to review educational literature. First, several points of view were expressed by the educators on the topic, "Should Teachers Be Encouraged to Visit Pupils' Homes?" There appeared to be a lack of agreement among them.

Next, the changing role of the teacher was discussed. This changing role brought with it responsibilities for meeting the goal of modern education, which is to be concerned with all aspects of a child's development.

In order to reach this goal it appeared that the home visit might be one method that could be employed.

If the home visit were to be used by teachers, it appeared to bring many possible benefits to four recipients--the teacher, the school, the parents, and the child.

The final discussion dealt with procedures for a program of home visits. First, a program had to be planned and then implemented. There were various requirements for implementing a program of home visits. Among these were (1) cooperation of the teacher, (2) visual aids, (3) materials, (4) staff preparation, and (5) administrative adjustments. Some methods suggested in helping to utilize the home visit information were (1) a visitation report, (2) a file system, and (3) evaluation of the total program by the person or persons responsible for the program.

From a review of educational literature in the area of home-school relations the following conclusions would seem appropriate: There seems to be a communication and social gap between the school and the home.

It would appear that many teachers have never realized the importance of home-school relations. If teachers and parents are not cooperating effectively, then their potential energies might not be released for the benefit of the child.

and parents need to be more concerned about how best to help the child.

It would seem appropriate at this point to suggest the approach of home visits as a possible aid in helping the child become the center of education. This would also help in bringing the school and home closer together.

It is realized that the educators have differing opinions concerning the value of home visits. Since the purpose of home visits, however, is to establish a working relationship with the parents for the ultimate benefit of the child, it would seem that this approach should be considered.

It must be realized, of course, that home visits are not a panacea for home-school relations. However, if we are, as one principal put it, ". . . dedicated to the proposition that these are our children; that out of them, if we work hard and intelligently enough, can and will come great men and women,"⁷⁸ we must of necessity consider this approach.

⁷⁸Finch, op. cit.

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