

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING



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By

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PREFACE

ALL educators of the past who have viewed their work as a means of guiding youth toward better living, and there have been many, have contributed to modern secondary-school method. Since the time of Vittorino da Feltre, or earlier, each century has produced foes of formalism, verbalism, and bookishness. Comenius, in his plea for activity in the school; Peter Severinus, in his demand that his pupils study the things of nature firsthand; Rousseau, in his denunciation of pedantry and formal pedagogy; Froebel, in his advocacy of free development, self-activity, and social participation; Herbart, in his analysis of the learning process; and in America such early leaders of educational thought and practice as Gallaudet, Page, Susan Blow, and Mann, and more recently Harris, Parker, and Dewey, — all these recognized leaders and thousands less famed laid the foundation of present-day method.

The twentieth century has brought numerous new ways of achieving time-honored ideals of great teachers. The innovations of the new education do more than provide the techniques that make learning natural; their principles strike deep into the sources of human behavior and clarify much that formerly was discerned only through the insight and intuition of the truly great.

The volume in hand attempts to integrate for the prospective teacher still in college and for the teacher in service the best theory and practice of the recent developments with the best of the practices long used by superior teachers. Written from a background of nine years of supervisory and administrative experience and eleven years of college and university teaching of education, the book seeks to blend the theoretical and the practical in an effective manner. If the aim of the work has been successfully consummated, this book should be of considerable value to prospective secondary-school teachers and to teachers already in the junior and senior high school and in the junior college.

The union of the proved practices of the past with the equally effective though different and more stimulating features of the new education has necessitated a reorientation of the field of method. The reorientation has been achieved in this volume by building the system around three principles the reciprocal relations of which, since the turn of the

century, have gradually centered in a widely accepted philosophy certain to be of great influence in secondary education during the next score of years. Concentrated in one sentence, the three principles hold that the secondary school from Grades Seven through Fourteen should *guide the individual pupil through wide, complete, unified experiences* to give him the ability to face confidently and to meet successfully the problems of contemporary life. Thus the three principles stress *guidance* as a vital part of teaching, emphasize *individualized instruction*, and accept the *unit idea*.

The first chapter uses the findings of research in outlining for the student the main problems he will face as teacher. In doing so it demonstrates the initial step of the unit idea. The reader, himself the learner, in Chapter I experiences the initial step of the unit process by becoming *aware* of his own problem in broad outline, and at the outset should thereby appreciate the significance subsequently of having his pupils first see and define each problem "in the large" as they launch their attack toward its solution.

His goal broadly defined in terms of activities, traits, attitudes, and ideals, the student is led into the problems which every prospective teacher should understand before attempting to teach. These are the "pre-instructional problems" presented in Division I. The purposes toward which he is to guide the adolescent are clarified in Chapter II. In Chapter III the guidance viewpoint in teaching is discussed, and the techniques by the use of which information about pupils may be collected are described. Great progress has been made in the problem of pupil adjustment. The old view of discipline through punishment has vanished, and the new view of the development of self-control and self-reliance through success in interesting and worth-while endeavor has succeeded it. The basic principles of pupil adjustment and the techniques derived from them are presented in Chapter IV. The sources from which motives and drives arise and the techniques for stimulating and directing them are treated in Chapter V as the final problem in the pre-instructional group. The guidance viewpoint runs as a theme through the entire division.

Division II is devoted to the unit concept. In Chapter VI its origin and development are traced from Herbart through his successors to the present day. Nine applications of the concept are analyzed in detail to give the student a clear view of recent educational innovations. The ninth application, the workbook, fundamental to the operation of sev-

eral of the applications, is given an entire chapter. Chapter IX sets forth a four-stage unit plan derived from earlier plans and from the experience of the writer. It provides for the guidance of the individual pupil or the group through wide, unified learning experiences. As the reader proceeds through the division, he will realize that many of the study and work techniques involved in each of the plans, particularly those of the final integrated plan, may be used by teachers who do not follow the unit idea in its entirety. They may be added as enrichments to any mode of instruction.

The third division of the volume deals with additional classroom practices, both the long-established and the recently developed. Chapters X and XI treat in theory and by practical applications the problem of planning learning activities, and to it relate questioning, drill procedures, and the development of emotional response. The place of visual aids is described and illustrated in Chapter XII. An entire chapter is devoted to a treatment of the radio as an aid to learning. Since much of the progress in education may be credited to educational measurement, it is essential that a teacher be able to understand, use, and interpret measurement in his work. Toward this end Chapters XIV and XV present the principles of measurement and illustrate their application to practical classroom work. Although associated with the unit plan, the practices treated in Division III, like those of Division II, are applicable to any plan the secondary teacher may choose to follow.

The final division is an integral part of the volume. It treats those problems which are indirectly associated with teaching, though so vital as to be frequently the determiners of the success or failure of the teacher's classroom work. Chapter XVI outlines the work of the teacher in the school and the community, which is not purely instructional but which is nevertheless expected of every teacher. The final chapter stresses the personal satisfactions and the professional advancements which result from continued professional and cultural study after leaving college, and describes the methods by which such study may be pursued effectively.

The problem of individual differences is one of several themes held to be of sufficient importance to be treated at numerous points throughout the volume rather than in a separate chapter. Classroom management and discipline in similar manner are in no sense ignored but are treated in their relation to the functions of the teacher in the guidance and adjustment of pupils. The treatment of such problems in their relation

to the guidance of the individual pupil is a part of the plan of reorientation. These problems will always be essential elements of teaching.

The writer holds that attempts to differentiate method from materials are both futile and undesirable. Neither can be independent of the other. They are intricately interwoven parts of the teaching and learning processes. Enrichment and other change in the one are immediately reflected in the other. In the opinion of the writer it is also unsound too definitely to link method with specific fields of knowledge. In directing any learning experience the teacher should be free (and able) to draw upon any field of knowledge which offers assistance. These views are reflected at various points in the volume.

The writer acknowledges his general indebtedness for the rich educational heritage from remote and recent times frequently drawn upon in this volume. Specific recognition is given contributions of known origin. To his present and former associates the writer is personally and professionally indebted. Inspiration has come from the comradeship, challenge, and example of all his colleagues. For the sound educational doctrines of the late E. M. Sipple, a master teacher and for twenty years the writer's counselor, he will always feel deep gratitude. He acknowledges the lasting influence in his educational thought of Fred Engelhardt and Earl Hudelson, with whom he was most closely associated first as student and later as colleague. More specific is his indebtedness to Cline M. Koon for his materials on visual and audile aids. For the many valuable suggestions of J. Earle Grinnell, who has read the entire manuscript critically for content and form, he is most grateful. He wishes also to acknowledge with gratitude the many constructive criticisms of the students in his classes at the College of Education, University of Minnesota, who have used the materials of this book in their developmental stages over a period of six years.

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INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I · Becoming Aware of the Teacher's Problems

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GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHAPTER

Purpose of the Chapter

Problems Reported by Beginning Teachers

Activities of Teachers

Topics of Greatest Value to Teachers

Traits of Teachers

Professional Attitudes and Ideals

Overview of Problems Treated in This Volume

Selected References for Further Study

Purpose of the Chapter

THE first step in the solution of any problem is to realize that the problem exists. This implies that one must become keenly aware of the significance of the problem to one's own welfare. The rule applies whether the problem be highly complex, like learning how to teach, or relatively simple, like learning how to drive an automobile. Following the realization of the problem, the first step, come the successive steps of (2) defining or outlining the problem, (3) proposing probable solutions, (4) collecting relevant facts and checking each proposal in the light of those facts until the best solution is found, (5) verifying the solution, and (6) making the results a part of one's mental equipment for future use in similar situations.¹ A thorough mastery of these six steps will facilitate learning in any field and relates particularly to the field of teaching.

Successful teaching includes among other personal characteristics the ability to solve quickly and effectively a large number of problems met daily in the classroom. Many of these problems can be studied in advance and their solutions held in readiness for classroom use. The prospective teacher should sense each of the problems in turn as keenly as if he were standing before a class of high-school boys and girls. In fact, constantly to imagine such a class in front of one provides a wholesome stimulus; it whets the desire to meet those problems happily, effectively, and with confidence and poise.

¹ John Dewey, *How We Think*. D. C. Heath and Company, 1910.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a rather large array of teaching problems drawn from various investigations and to indicate their relative importance to the student looking forward to a career as teacher. One's eventual success in teaching will in part be proportional to his present ability to take these problems to heart and to drive his energies toward their solution.

Subsequent chapters will attempt to aid the student in defining and outlining various problems, to present the best-known evidence regarding the solutions of the problems, to recommend the best solution so far as the evidence will permit, to make suggestions for the verification of the problems, and thereby to offer the student the opportunity to acquire a large number of attitudes, ideals, insights, and skills which will enable him to meet successfully the classroom situations which confront every teacher.

Problems Reported by Beginning Teachers

For several years the writer has received from alumni of the College of Education, University of Minnesota, reports of their experiences during the first year of teaching. In Table 1 are presented in rank order the twenty problems reported most frequently as those which caused greatest difficulty.

Discipline, as will be noted, appears to be one of the chief problems of the beginning teachers. It was specified by half of the beginning teachers whose problems are recorded in Table 1 and implied in other items such as "Relations with pupils," "Classroom management," and "Too large classes." Other difficult problems were those associated with motivation, planning the instruction, insufficient equipment, and assignments, each of which was reported by about a fourth of the beginning teachers.

Special attention is called to two types of problems recorded in Table 1: those related to inadequate command of methods and those arising from inadequate command of subject matter. Approximately the same proportion of the beginning teachers reported each of the two types of difficulties, the latter type being mentioned largely by those who had been required to teach subjects in which they had inadequate college preparation. The prospective teacher should understand clearly that these two general problems are interrelated. One must be a master of the subject matter beyond the level he expects to teach, and in addition he must

be a master of the methods by which it can best be taught, if he is to attain his maximum success in teaching.

About a fifth of the group reported difficulty in adapting subject matter to the level of their secondary-school pupils. It is unfortunate but true that many a brilliant and successful college student does not distinguish himself in secondary-school teaching because he is unable to tone down to the level of his students. He understands what he tells them and thinks that they do, but they do not. He is shooting over their heads. It is highly important at this point that he consciously modify his language so that his class can understand. Lectures from his college notebook will not fit secondary-school pupils.

TABLE 1. PROBLEMS REPORTED BY 157 BEGINNING TEACHERS

<i>Rank Order</i>	<i>Special</i> ¹		<i>Academic</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	Num- ber	Per Cent	Num- ber	Per Cent	Num- ber	Per Cent
1. Discipline	18	51	61	50	79	50
2. Motivation	5	14	30	25	35	22
3. Inadequate command of methods . . .	6	17	29	24	35	22
4. Planning the instruction	8	22	26	21	34	22
5. Insufficient equipment	7	19	26	21	33	21
6. Assignment	3	8	28	23	31	20
7. Inadequate command of subject matter .	5	14	24	20	29	18
8. Adapting subject matter to pupils' level	3	8	24	20	27	17
9. Budgeting one's time	7	17	18	15	25	16
10. Relations with pupils	3	8	21	17	24	15
11. Classroom management	6	17	11	9	17	11
12. Adjustment to local community . . .	3	8	12	10	15	10
13. Marking	1	3	12	10	13	9
14. Staff relationships	8	22	4	3	12	8
15. Too heavy teaching load	4	11	7	6	11	7
16. School routine outside of classroom . .	4	11	4	3	8	5
17. Social relations outside of school . . .	0	0	7	6	7	4
18. Providing for individual differences . .	0	0	4	3	4	3
19. Too large classes	1	3	3	2	4	3
20. Combating aversion to new types of teaching	0	0	4	3	4	3
Number of teachers responding	35	22	122	78	157	100

Adjustment to the local community is a problem of great significance to the young teacher who is entering a community different from the one in which he has lived. This affects not only his relations outside the classroom but those within as well. If he does not show respect for the customs of the community, it will be difficult for him to gain the loyalty

¹ Teachers of art, industrial education, music, and physical education.

of his pupils. Without the loyalty and confidence of his class he will be seriously handicapped, however well he may have mastered both subject matter and methods of teaching.

Certain problems reported were the results of retrenchment programs; for example, "Too heavy teaching load" and "Too large classes." Since the beginning teacher cannot prevent these and similar conditions, he should anticipate them and accept them without surprise or shock. Few beginning teachers are fortunate enough to find ideal teaching situations.

It is inevitable that the beginning teacher should fail to see many of the problems which face him, just as a young physician, however well trained, does not have the insight of a doctor who has had several years of successful practice. While the difficulties reported by novices are of value as signposts to prospective teachers, it is of importance to consider also the experiences of those older in the profession. A more comprehensive study, discussed in the following section, outlines the problems which every teacher should understand.

Activities of Teachers

One approach toward determining what prospective teachers should study and master is to prepare a list of all activities performed by teachers. Such a list would be a set of goals toward which the student in education should direct his energies. Mastery of the activities which he would be required to perform would be a logical procedure in his preparation for teaching. In following this procedure, however, one should realize that it alone is not adequate, because it ignores the personal traits of the teacher.

It is probably true that if two persons have the same traits of mind, character, and personality, the one who would perfect the most techniques associated with the activities of teaching would become the better teacher. But a mere technician, however skillful, could not become a superior teacher if he lacked the personal traits which give life to teaching. Consequently it is important that the prospective teacher understand clearly not only the activities which will be expected of him but also the personal traits which are considered essential to successful teaching.

The most comprehensive study which has attempted to list both the activities of teaching and the traits desirable in teachers was conducted by Charters and Waples. The list of activities assembled in this study