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IOWA STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE



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Preface

THERE are, in round numbers, 153,000 one-teacher schools in the United States. For the most part these schools are under the direct control of those living in the small rural districts, and may, therefore, be called the people's schools. Because they control them, rural people believe firmly in the efficiency of these schools and are loath to give them up even when their continuance ceases to be economically desirable. These schools to a large extent gave the rural population the education it possesses, and to their inspiring influence many of the nation's great men have paid their tributes of praise.

If these schools have been efficient in the past they can continue to be efficient in the future. They are the freest and most independent schools to be found anywhere. No accrediting agency dominates the activities of the one-teacher schools, and the lockstep and regimentation of the city graded schools have not circumscribed their curriculum or technique of instruction. In these schools teachers find the widest opportunity for the exercise of initiative and originality. Those who exhibit qualities of sane leadership and win the confidence of their constituents will find them ready to follow into new areas of endeavor for the improvement of their schools. No people have a deeper appreciation for work done in behalf of their children than do those who support the one-teacher schools.

The pioneers who settled in the various states made great sacrifices to provide their children with the means for acquiring an elementary education. Under the regime of pioneer life social demands were simple and the "Three R's" provided all the education that was deemed necessary. A teacher's preparation was a simple process compared to that of teachers today. In spite of the meagerness of that preparation the schoolmaster was looked

up to as the best-educated man in the community. His advice was sought on many questions, and he was pointed out as an example to be followed by the youth of the district.

Social conditions have changed greatly with the passing of the pioneers. Life in rural areas has become more complex. The introduction of machinery has brought about more leisure on the farm. The automobile has extended the scope of the farmer's activities and increased his circle of acquaintances. This widening field of vision has demanded changes in the rural school and these changes have come. The schoolhouses of early days, built of logs, stone, or sod, have been superseded by more attractive ones of frame or brick construction. These buildings are now being supplied with inside toilets, running water, electric lights, oil burners, and airconditioning equipment. What more could a teacher desire to make her work pleasant?

These changes in school buildings have been accompanied by changes in curriculum and in methods of teaching. The "Three R's" are no longer sufficient for farm boys and girls, and other subjects have been introduced into the schools. Teachers now must have a preparation for teaching much broader than that of the early teachers. The one-teacher school presents an opportunity and a challenge to young people who have initiative and a desire to be of service. The opportunity for freedom of action and the lack of interference from outside agencies make the rural school an attractive place to those who are prepared for that type of work. This book has been written for the guidance of those who are ambitious to teach in one-teacher schools. It is an attempt to make them acquainted in some small degree with their relations to the people with whom they are to work and with the activities they are to carry on.

A long experience with rural schools and rural teachers has aided the author at every point. Principles are followed by illustrations to add to the simplicity and interest of the book. Topic headings are given to make the book more teachable. Diagrams are introduced wherever their use seems to make the text clearer. Exercises are given at the close of those chapters that should have additional study. Supplementary readings are sug-

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gested at the close of each chapter. These may be used for special reports by individual members of a class. No textbook contains all that an instructor may desire to give his class. Every teacher will supplement the text he is using with data and illustrations from his own experience. It is believed, however, that by supplying local material on such topics as the state course of study, state department regulations, and the school laws of the state, any instructor will find the book an adequate text on rural-school management.

The book is intended for use in classes in normal schools and teachers' colleges, and may be used in county and city training schools and junior colleges, all of which supply teachers for the rural schools. It should also be a valuable book for use in state teachers' reading circles as professional reading for rural teachers.

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Introduction

TEACHING a one-room rural school is a difficult task. The teacher in a school of that type must adjust her program to accommodate several grades; present the subject matter in short periods; teach a large number of subjects in all grades; teach with few supplementary books; make final decisions in cases of discipline; and get along with a meager supply of material for seat work. In the face of all these handicaps the beginning teacher is usually expected to serve an apprenticeship in the rural schools. There she finds herself alone with a group of children of various ages. No one is near on whom she can call for help in solving perplexing problems of organization. The county superintendent may call at her school once or twice during the year to give her some help. In the main, however, she must work out her own salvation. Then, after she has taught for three or four years alone, and has learned to do a good job without help, she is taken into a graded school in town. There she has a superintendent or a principal right at her elbow to aid her in a situation that is easier than that in which she has previously served. Without doubt it would be more logical to reverse this order of procedure and put the beginning teacher in charge of a grade room in town. In that position she would be aided and guided by the superintendent, and could talk over her plans with some more experienced teacher in the same building. Then, after a few years of apprenticeship, she might go out into a one-teacher rural school and undertake the more difficult task found there. Custom is difficult to change, however, and it is not at all likely that any change will be made in the present practice.

Educators often say that rural schools are no different from other schools; that children are just the same wherever one finds them; that teachers everywhere have practically the same prob-

lems to meet; and that a teacher who is prepared to teach a grade room in town is equally well prepared to teach a one-room rural school. It might be better for the schools if this were true, but unfortunately it is not true. There is a vast difference between the two types of schools and also between the activities required of the teachers in them.

In 1929 an attempt was made to determine the activities of rural teachers and compare them with the activities of teachers in town schools. A list of activities was made up from the opinions of county superintendents and experts in rural education. It was then sent to a large number of rural and grade teachers. They were asked to indicate which of the activities on the list they had been called upon to perform and to add any activities not included in the list. Charters and Waples summarized the results of this study in their Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study and made it available to those interested in this question. About the same time McGuffey made a similar study and published his findings. The following table is taken from McGuffey's study and adapted to this presentation:

A satisfact of Taxabase	Per Cent of Teachers Doing T	
Activities of Teachers	Rural	Grade
1. Meet with school board	48	0
the school	78	0
3. Advise the board as to school law.	26	0
4. Determine holidays and vacations .	38	0
5. Order school supplies	65	7
6. Purchase school supplies	37	0
7. Act as purchasing agent for pupils .	42	0
8. Receive and audit school supplies .	51	0
9. Make final decisions in cases of classification and promotion	70	11
cipline	69	9

¹ Verne McGuffey, Differences in the Activities of Teachers in Rural One-Teacher Schools and of Grade Teachers in Cities, Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 346, New York, 1929.

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A	Per Cent of Teachers Doing T			
Activities of Teachers	Rural	Grade		
11. Administer all punishment '	73	12		
of compulsory attendance law 13. Take responsibility for enforcement	39	0		
of health and quarantine laws	31	0		
14. Keep school-census records	39	o		
15. Keep clerical records of school board 16. Collect and account for school	16	0		
funds	13	0		
17. Investigate absences	75	27		
18. Make curriculum for the school 19. Establish friendly personal relations	42	0		
with all patrons of the school	77	23		
20. Provide publicity for the school 21. Formulate plans for educational ad-	51	0		
vancement of community	30	0		
school	47	0		
no supervision	66	11		
several grades	84	5		
small classes	75	13		
while one is reciting	76	8		
periods	82	13		
edge of farm children	50	6		
the life of the farm community .	57	0		
30. Teach music	49	30		
31. Teach art	69	27		
32. Teach agriculture	65	0		
33. Teach home economics	30	0		
34. Provide for socializing children from]		
isolated homes	36	0		
for instruction	52	7		

Activities of Teachers	Per Cent of Teachers Doing T		
Activities of Teachers	Rural	Grade	
36. Adapt health work so that it will			
function in peculiar sanitary and			
economic conditions of the com-	£		
munity	65	25	
function in the rural community.	34	0	
38. Teach all subjects in all grades	73	0	
39. Supervise playground activities of all			
grades and both sexes	79	19	
40. Coach athletic teams	27	5	
41. Coach dramatics	37	0	
43. Plan and manage entertainments to	65	15	
raise money to buy school sup-			
plies	66	7	
44. Serve as school librarian	73	0	
45. Keep all school records	79	5	
46. Make all school reports for school .	84	10	
47. Give standard tests and measures	53	16	
48. Score standard tests and measures	47	10	
49. Make decisions on basis of tests and			
measures	39) 0	
51. Provide material for first aid	32 54	5	
52. Administer first aid	71	26	
53. Care for children in emergencies due	,-		
to sudden illness	74	26	
54. Care for children in emergencies due	·]	
to bad weather	72	25	
55. Conduct Arbor Day exercises	63	8	
56. Conduct opening exercises profitable			
to all grades at the same time 57. Prepare school exhibits and transport	77	0	
them to the county seat	21	ا ہ	
58. Transport pupils to various centers	~.	5	
for contests	39	9	
59. Know well the home life of each child			
in the school	41	0	
60. Administer dental and other clinics			
during school hours	65	10	
61. Live in a teacherage	21	0	

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A animisian of Tanahama	Per Cent of Teachers Doing Then		
Activities of Teachers	Rural	Grade	
62. Live in a home without modern			
conveniences	41	0	
63. Share room with other persons	30	15	
64. Assist with housework at boarding	}	ļ	
_ place	39	8	
65. Depend on landlord or neighbors for		l l	
transportation	29	0	
66. Walk less than a mile to school	37	62	
67. Walk one mile but less than two	1		
miles to school	18	0	
68. Walk two miles to school	15	0	
69. Ride or drive a horse to school	18	0	
70. Drive a car to school	19	6	
71. Become a social leader for a group of	i		
young people	35	0	
72. Become acquainted with and visit	_		
parents	78	25	
73. Establish friendly relations with	l _		
school officials	80	25	
74. Find suitable recreation for self in			
community	67	30	
75. Possess knowledge concerning all vo-	}	j	
cations of the community sufficient			
to be interested in its activities.	58	15	
76. Possess sufficient skill in many activi-			
ties so that one may engage in the			
duties of homes visited	55	11	
77. Possess ability to do housework, in-		}	
cluding laundering, cooking, and	}		
sewing	73	37	
78. Serve as source of information for in-	[
dividuals of the community	42	0	
79. Initiate action looking toward en-	{		
forcing legal rights of children and			
defectives	25	0	
80. Assume active leadership in move-	}		
ments for improvement of recre-			
ation facilities of community	33	0	
81. Assume active leadership in move-			
ments for improvement of com-		_	
munity health	26	0	

A astronomy of Taraham	Per Cent of Teachers Doing Th	
Activities of Teachers	Rural	Grade
82. Assume active leadership in movements for improvement of economic conditions in community		
(co-operative marketing etc.) 83. Assume leadership in community	15	0
organizations	25	0
adults	8	0
ties, parties, etc	33	0
school	22	0
87. Teach Sunday-school class	35	6
88. Attend church and Sunday school	69	25
89. Sing in church choir	31	5
90. Attend "ladies' aid"	25	0
91. Become a member of community clubs	35	10
92. Conduct entertainments for community	59	0
of audience at entertainments in the schoolhouse	~6	11
94. Make public talks or addresses	56	i !
95. Do all janitor work	27	0
96. Find someone to do the janitor	59	0
work	20	0
97. Employ a janitor	18	0
98. Supervise a janitor	33	0
99. Care for grounds	61 8-	0
100. Supervise care of grounds	83	0
101. Assume full responsibility for sani- tary conditions of building and		
grounds	60	0
102. Actively oversee school toilets	83	0
103. Oversee source of drinking water .	74	0
104. Make repairs	17	0
105. Supervise repairs	30	٥
lation	88	20

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Assisting of Gazalana	Per Cent of Teachers Doing Them		
Activities of Teachers	Rural	Grade	
107. Keep fire in stove or furnace	72	0	
108. Start fires in mornings	55	o	
fires	52	0	
tramps and other marauders	42	o	
house	17	0	
life of farm community	61	11	

From the table it will be noted that many of the activities named are not performed at all by grade teachers. In all but one or two items the per cent of rural teachers who perform the activity is more than twice as great as the per cent of grade teachers who perform it. This shows very clearly that there is a great difference between the work of rural teachers and teachers in the grades in a town school. Since their work is different it follows logically that their training also should be different. In the following pages an attempt will be made to present to those who expect to become rural teachers a discussion of the work which rural teachers find it necessary to do if they are to render the best service to the community in which they teach.

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