

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

ITS PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUE

BY

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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



II PREFACE //

THIS book is intended primarily for students of education in universities, training schools, and normal schools, who are preparing for classroom teaching, especially in the elementary grades. It aims, first, to furnish the prospective teacher with a compendium of precepts that will aid him in the mastery of technique; secondly, to interpret these precepts in the light of accepted psychological principles; and, thirdly, to unite both precepts and principles into a coherent and fairly comprehensive system.

The data have been gathered from four sources: first and chiefly from observing the work of efficient and successful classroom teachers; secondly, from textbooks and treatises upon the subject of school management and classroom practice, numerous references to which will be found in the footnotes and at the close of the chapters; thirdly, from the writer's own experience; and fourthly, from general psychological principles. Data of the last-named class have, in every case, been subjected to actual test before being included in this volume. The writer is convinced that a successful *science* of education can never be produced by working backward from highly wrought theory to concrete practice. This procedure is a

survival of the deductive habit of mind which science has long since discarded as totally inadequate to the discovery of truth. Valid principles of teaching can be derived only from observation and induction based upon successful school practice. The expert teacher learns through a selective process of trial and error how most effectively to deal with the pupils under his care. If a given educational practice is effective, there must be back of it somewhere a valid principle. It has been the writer's attempt, first to find the successful practice, and then to discover the principle that governs it. Of the difficulties to be encountered in this method of procedure, the writer is fully cognizant; of the dangers, he is not unaware. A given practice may be effective in one school and ineffective in another. Many of the precepts here presented will not be applicable to all schools, but the writer is convinced that practically all are applicable to the typical American classroom. It is the teacher who has charge of such a classroom that the book is primarily intended to aid; not that it will make the work of this teacher expert from the outset; no book could accomplish that end; but it may serve to shorten the period of necessarily amateurish practice,—to eliminate some of the early errors, and to augment, both in quality and in quantity, the successful efforts.

The manuscript has been read by Professor Amos W. Farnham, of the Oswego State Normal School, to whom the writer is heavily indebted for many valuable suggestions. Acknowledgment must also be made of the

aid and inspiration gained from the writer's association with the schoolmen of St. Louis during his service as a grammar school principal in that city, and especially from the fortnightly sessions of the St. Louis Schoolmasters' Club. To State Superintendent W. E. Harmon, of Helena, Montana, he likewise owes a debt of gratitude for a fresh and stimulating example of the attitude that one may take toward the detailed and seemingly trivial problems of schoolcraft.

For especial courtesies in the furnishing of data and illustrative material, acknowledgment is due to Assistant Superintendent C. C. Rathmann, of St. Louis; Superintendent C. L. Robbins, of the Montana State Normal College; Superintendent John Kennedy, of Batavia, N.Y.; and to Miss C. V. Sinnamon, Miss L. L. Lovelidge, Miss Katherine Hayes, and Miss Jennie McGrath, of the Oswego State Normal School.

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CLASSROOM ~~MANAGEMENT~~: ITS PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUE

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

I. An extensive diffusion of education among the people is made possible by dealing with children, not individually, but in masses. Provided that they are approximately equal in age, ability, and degree of attainment, thirty pupils can be simultaneously trained and instructed by one teacher. This working unit of the educational system is termed a "class," a "grade," or a "room." The last term is perhaps the most convenient as a technical designation, for, in practice, the working unit, assembled under the supervision of one teacher, is frequently made up of two or more distinct classes or grades. Whether it is wise ever to divide a "room" into separate classes is a disputed point in educational policy, but the condition is well-nigh universal in American schools, and may be considered as representing the normal type of classroom organization.

The relative merits of the class and individual systems of instruction will be discussed in greater detail in a later section.¹ It should be said at this point, however, that the class system

¹ See below, ch. xiv.