

living by the standards with which art immediately supplies him—harmony, proportion, the power of creative synthesis.

For this reason the person who has heard the rhythms of Milton or Shelley or Meredith can never be happy with jazz music. The appreciative reader of Henry James or Conrad or Hardy can never be satisfied with Theodore Dreiser or Scott Fitzgerald or James Joyce. And perhaps when we shall have done our duty as teachers of English the very names of Rupert Hughes and Harold Bell Wright will have passed into deep and impenetrable oblivion.

DOROTHY BETHURUM

THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING THROUGH CLASSROOM SUPER- VISION

I. THE FUNCTIONING OF THE SUPERVISOR IN THE WORK OF SUPERVISION

IT IS the business of supervision to discover talent, to bring to the notice of many and to distribute as widely as possible all the best in teaching that can be found.

Just as we spend more, per capita, on our feeble-minded and border-line children than upon the brightest and most promising, so, at present, we are spending more time in supervision of the very poorest teachers than of those who are most likely to profit by it. Supervision which functions as a constructive factor is not thought of as a remedy for those about to fail, but as a systematic "keeping in touch" with those who are doing well. Sometimes the very keenest intellectually need this most. They need the stimulus of challenge to their powers and need to realize their own possibilities of growth.

Reporting in teachers meetings worth while features of work observed is one helpful means of stimulating effort. It serves not only as a stimulus to the ones who are quoted, but at the same time gives

inspiration to those who hear it. Such sharing of experiences does much to establish in the minds of those concerned the fact that supervision is not a "system of inspection," but a means whereby helpful things may be discovered and made available for the use of all.

Under a system of supervision where "growth in efficiency" is the chief goal, less emphasis is laid upon and less time is given to "grading" teachers and more to criticizing constructively the work as it is done. This necessarily means that efforts are made to remedy weaknesses and to discover talent rather than merely to accumulate data in order to classify a teacher according to her standing among others. It follows that the reserve often shown by teachers in revealing the real trouble they may be having is overcome; they think of supervision as trying to "do something *for* them rather than *to* them."

When supervision is functioning constructively, the person to whom this work is entrusted shares the professional respect of those whom he would help. He knows thoroughly the instruction problems of the classroom as well as those that are disciplinary and administrative. He is able to offer advice, helping the teacher choose wisely the results she should secure. When a weakness in procedure is noticed, he is ready to suggest an improvement which would bring the desired result. He is quick to back up any adverse criticism by an explanation of the principle involved and can give suggestions for a procedure that will prove helpful. In other words, he demonstrates the ability to analyze the recitation, to establish clearly in his own mind *what* the teacher is trying to do, *why* she is trying to do it, and *why* she is doing it *that way*—her aim, her method, and the outcome she hopes to secure.

II. QUESTIONS ABOUT TEACHING PROCEDURE WHICH SHOULD BE HELD IN MIND

Is too much uniformity on the part of pupils expected? Is there recognition of a

wide variation in quantity and quality of individual ability?

Is the distribution of emphasis wise? In enthusiasm for certain items are other important ones crowded out? In zeal for appreciation of the interesting or the beautiful is drill upon essential facts omitted? In zeal for drill upon facts or skills and for achievements of certain standards, is the stimulation of creative imagination neglected?

Do those instructing the children know the fundamental principles of teaching? Do they recognize the characteristic native tendencies which children manifest? Do they realize the possibility of many responses to a given situation, and the means of modifying or redirecting these original responses? Do they know the possibilities of wise selection and the laws of habit-formation which will function in their behalf? Do they allow for the wide variation of ability within any group? Do they recognize influences which may be operating because of health or nervous instabilities? Do they consider the significance of the child's purpose as a factor in the situation?

III. EVALUATING THE CURRICULUM IN RELATION TO SUPERVISION

Does not supervision bear a relation to curriculum reform as well as to curriculum maintenance?

Should not the knowledges taught be chosen according to valid criteria; that is, should not the material be "knowledge of the real," knowledge that "applies to many situations," "affects widely human welfare," and that helps to control future conduct? Should not the omission of non-essentials be encouraged in order to bring out the big values, instead of allowing them to be obscured by a mass of irrelevant and insignificant details?

Should not the work going on in the classroom, the curriculum, be judged by the number of vital experiences it affords the child? Should not "accomplishing nothing very nicely and faithfully" be condemned as

worthless? Should not the allotment of time permit emphasis where emphasis is due and encourage a sense of relative values? Should it not be pardonable to neglect Cortez, Balboa, Ponce de Leon, or other traditional, spectacular characters, for the full appreciation of Pasteur, Lazear, Walter Reed, William C. Gorgas, Seaman A. Knapp, and others whose contribution to civilization has been immeasurable?

IV. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHILDREN AS AN INDEX OF THE VALUE OF A SCHOOL

Both supervision and teaching must find their final appraisal in terms of the results obtained, in what the children are doing. While gaining information they must be exercising those powers that help to develop increasingly the ability to live together with one's fellows and to enjoy better things.

In routine matters in the classroom, care of library books, distributing papers, and so forth, should be found an opportunity for the child to practise and to grow in the ability to carry on the work of the group of which he is a member.

While he is striving to reach or surpass such standards as the grade norm on a test, for instance, other habits which he is forming at the same time should not be overlooked. Emphasis on the opportunity to work together for the good of all should make it impossible for one to flaunt his superiority over his fellow pupils.

Attitudes and appreciations must be considered more vital than specific bits of knowledge or habituation to formal "rules." Disciplinary control must be handled so that there will be *positive* results and so that "the virtues may be crystallized into good manners and morals."

And finally, the improvement of teaching implies, and depends most upon, a growing knowledge on the part of us all of the possibilities of our calling. Teaching may be, "with these ideals, the noblest of professions; without them, the sorriest of trades."

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