

# Our Teachers

*We may be surprised to learn how strongly children resent favoritism and dictatorial methods and how earnestly they desire friendliness, understanding, companionship, and an opportunity to cooperate with us*

## *Sixth-Graders Say . . .*

- I like a teacher that does not seem like a teacher, but like a friend and talks with us about other things besides our lessons.
- My favorite teacher doesn't hush, hush us up when we want to talk about the war. We can discuss things freely in her presence. She told us many interesting things about this war. She pointed out things we had not noticed before and gave us descriptions and explanations about them. This gave me a new interest in my school subjects.
- I like a teacher who gives you thoughts that you couldn't think of or put into words by yourself.
- This teacher has a lot of confidence in us. She laughs with you and not at you.
- I liked my first teacher a lot because she played games and read us stories and taught us something, too.
- No one could call my favorite teacher beautiful or young because she is not, by any chance. I liked her because she understood us children. Yes, she gave us hard work, but I didn't mind doing it for her. When I got stuck on a problem or a word she was always glad to help me out.
- I do not think that teachers should have pets. All men are created equal and everyone should have a fair chance.
- I like a teacher to be fair and to know each fellow's story before she draws any conclusions.
- Miss Black was our first teacher and

she was really nice. I don't think I would be drawing now if it hadn't been for her. I drew a picture one time and she encouraged me to keep drawing pictures.

- Mrs. Jones taught me a lot of everything. I don't know what I would do if it wasn't for Mrs. Jones.
- The teacher was nice except that she kept on talking and talking.
- One of my teachers was so charming that it was really fun to come to school. She was the prettiest and most interesting teacher I have ever seen. She always had a joke or two to tell during the day and made all work seem pleasant. She was so understanding that you could go to her with all your troubles. Several times she took us on hikes through the park with our lunches. She had hair like silk and walked as if she were floating along. I loved her.

## *We Dislike Favoritism*

- Almost every high school student, I suppose, has some complaint to make against the way his school is run. The thing that irks me mostly is the favoritism that a great many teachers practice. Favoritism is a thing that is common to practically all schools. It is my belief that all the students in a classroom should be treated equally as far as possible.

I realize that it becomes extremely difficult for a teacher to have the same attitude toward an uncooperative pupil as toward one who does cooperate. This

unwillingness to cooperate with the teacher may be due to the personality of the pupil, or it may be caused by the teacher favoring one or more pupils. This favoritism may cause the unfavored pupils to feel neglected. They, therefore, do not have the same will to cooperate as they did at the beginning of the course.

*Give Us Classroom Democracy,  
Says a High School Youngster*

- The classroom should be a small democracy at work. This is not always true. A classroom dominated by an autocratic taskmaster demanding compliance of the student is not democratic. Neither is the classroom where students do as they please.

Fear of the teacher has no place in the classroom. Teachers and students should know their goals and work together to achieve them. The teacher should direct and guide the learning to make the best use of the time.

Another example of teacher autocracy is where the teacher has no regard for the rights of time which rightfully belongs to students and other teachers. A teacher should not make assignments with threats that force the student to devote time to the subject which rightfully belongs to other teachers. There are teachers who overvalue their subject matter. Knowledge is important, but knowledge without a working plan in the democratic classroom or country has missed its aim.

*Please Understand Us*

- Unless there is complete cooperation between the students and teachers very little can be accomplished.

Teachers should try to understand

pupils' problems, as well as the student realizing his obligation to himself, his instructors, and classmates. The feeling of interdependence must be realized. The school is an institution composed of students and teachers which is very similar to a machine, in that every part must work in harmony with the other to produce any results. (*Twelfth Grade*)

- Some teachers discourage the students. They do not try to understand them as well as they should. If a person is going to take teaching as a profession, we think they should have child psychology as a compulsory subject. Some students don't get as much help as others, and in quite a few of these cases the ones that don't get the attention are the backward or shy pupils.

Teachers, like everyone else, make mistakes once in a while, but when they try to smooth them over instead of admitting them, we feel they are making a bigger mistake. Some of the pupils may have ideas that would help the teacher understand her mistake.

We feel that the teacher should be interested in the class enough so that everyone understands the course. Very few of the teachers in our high school are like that, though there are exceptions.

We students have, in some classes, learned to regard our teacher as one of us, and therefore do not treat her as somebody we should shy away from. Some teachers have had the tendency to show their authority by dominating the class. This is not fair to the pupils.

A thing badly needed is the development of a friendlier atmosphere between the teachers and the students. There would be less trouble in our classes if

the students could feel that the teachers were trying to help instead of criticize them. (*From eleventh-graders in a big-city high school.*)

The students should be made to feel that the work they are doing is for their own benefit and not because the teacher likes to make them work. (*Eleventh Grade*)

- The teachers should be better qualified to meet the needs of rural children. So many teachers have never lived on a farm and are not able to help students with farm problems. Sometimes the teachers do not understand rural children and families. (*From a discussion by seventh-graders in a rural area.*)

#### *Teachers Should Be Friends*

- A teacher should be considered as a friend, not as an enemy or an "old book-worm." A teacher forms the students' opinion of her. If she is sweet and considerate, the students will be obedient and considerate of her. My opinion of school is an institution where students and teachers work together. Why not make it this? It can be done with a little cooperation on both sides. (*Eighth Grade*)

- My subjects seem hard for me and sometimes I think the teacher doesn't even know me and is grading by the cold facts in his grade book. (*Twelfth Grade*)

- There should be an understanding between the teachers and pupils. The teachers should know each pupil personally so that there could be an understanding. The teachers should have a conference with each pupil individually when he registers, to know the subjects he wants. Also, she could find the subjects that could help him best in the

work that he wants to do when he graduates from school. This should be followed with other conferences during the year.

The student should bring his problems to his teacher, for she is one person who knows him best outside of his own father and mother. This need for cooperation in the schools is very great. . . .

A teacher should be just like one of your best friends, always ready to help you. . . . Probably no one is to blame, but I would like to go to a school where the teachers and the students have a closer feeling, where they would be on a friendlier basis and where both students and teachers would try to understand one another. . . . Many students go to this school but the classes are small. This enables my teacher to know me as an individual and not as just another student. She knows my strong points and my weak points and has plenty of time to help me not only when I need help but at all times. . . .

My teacher should be able to have a heart-to-heart talk with me and tell me what field of work I would do best in. A teacher should trust everybody alike. . . . The teachers and boys and girls should not think of each other as "instructors" and "students" only, but more as good friends helping one another to overcome problems and accomplish tasks. . . . (*From discussions and papers by high school students.*)

#### *From Negro Children . . .*

The type of school I would like to attend is where the teachers would not be too strict. And where everyone was treated with equality. And where there was no difference in the race. Where everyone could have equal privileges

and the teachers took more interest in the pupils. Where the colored, as well as white, could go swimming. Where everyone could have a part in every organization and the colored, as well as white, could have dances and parties.

The soldiers are fighting a war to preserve peace and equality, but in the school the teachers are showing un-equality among the children. . . .

### *We Like Our Teachers Human*

• "Of course they're humans. What else could they be?" I know that now, but I didn't always think so. Oh, yes, I always knew that they had human anatomy, but I didn't know they were people socially.

Do you remember in grammar school when you hoped to outwit the teacher, trying to get away with something. When someone would suggest "ditching" art, I would agree (it was usually my idea anyhow).

Why did I do this? Was it because I didn't like the subject, or am I naturally bad. I know that I didn't like the subject, but of course the alternative is out of the question. Perhaps I should have talked it over with the art teacher, but such an idea never entered my head then. I apologized, because I knew that that was the proper thing to do, but I'm sure I resented having to do it.

In my sophomore year I have met a teacher at our school whom I like very much. I have entertained her at my house and have had lots of fun with her in school. One day a friend and I invited this teacher to my house for dinner, and we prepared the meal. That in itself was fun.

This teacher is young and might

easily be mistaken for a student. When she was at my house, we talked and learned a lot about each other. I am sure we said too much, but we knew that she would keep our confidence. Students should feel free to talk to their teachers, if they are not sure about something, and the teacher should encourage this and create opportunities for the student to come to them.

The relationship between the teacher and student is necessary and helps both. I believe it is easier to talk to an older person as you get older, and I enjoy doing this. I can't say what good it does the teacher, but if I were a teacher I would like to have my students come and talk to me. (*Tenth Grade*)

• I expected a mixed lot of teachers, some like humans, others, well— I couldn't say anything against the ones I've had, though, as they have all been very nice, and I have learned lots from them. I hoped we should all be considered equal with others. I have liked the way we have been.

I like the way teachers tell you they don't know everything and are ready for more information. That makes us feel better, knowing that they don't consider themselves so superior to us. And then there are those who appear to be like THE encyclopedia from A to Z in their particular study. They seem to think that no more information can be added to their already overwhelming store of knowledge. (*Eleventh Grade*)

• I would have my teachers be people who are human, teachers that did not feel it their duty to subdue and snub the pupils, but rather to understand and be one of them. My principal would be on the same order, only a little more firm. (*Ninth Grade*)

## Teachers Are Important

• The most important think is the teachers Why. How they help you along and how they talked. Some teachers aren't alike and some are. Some teachers like to help some people more than others because they like the teacher and the teacher like them. If you are nice to the teacher they will help you more. (*Sixth Grade*)

• What I think is most important to me is, all of the subjects and a good teacher of which we have, to teach the things we should know. I believe that all of the subjects we have this year in school will help a great deal for any coarse of thing any person would want to do. The reason for this is that know matter what you do or where you are you allways have to be able to think quick, to figure, to write, be a good sport, be a faithful citizen, and if you couldn't do all of these things what kind of a person would be?

The place we learn all of these things is all through our books and a good teacher. Also in school we learn how to act and we learn or should learn what kind of a person to be. Sometimes we get the dickens from the teacher and if we would have done what should we wouldn't have got it. (*Eighth Grade*)

• First of all I will try to explain what the word *education* means to me. Many times people define the word as the work that goes on in school. For in-

stance, if one goes to college and receives a degree he would then have a college education. But education has a deeper meaning. It is, in a sense, the operation of all forces that act upon a person—the influence to think, feel, and behave.

Teachers are one of these influences; they have an important part in education. They can help you to study and concentrate on various subjects, but they can't do the thinking for you.

A good teacher can give a desire for education. A mathematics instructor can help students who are interested in becoming pilots to have a better foundation for their job. In the same way, boys who want to become engineers must have higher courses in mathematics. If a pupil wishes to be a lawyer, one of the main courses he might take would be public-speaking. Again the teacher can be a good influence.

There is always room for improvement in teachers. If they could spend more time and patience on the slower students instead of spending it all on the brighter ones, they would be contributing even more to education. Another point is classroom activity. It would be far better for students to do the planning themselves, for it gives them responsibility plus a certain satisfaction.

Education, then, develops and improves one's mind, and the teacher's influence is foremost as the guiding factor. (*High School*)

## Toward A New Curriculum

The Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development is pleased to announce that the 1944 yearbook, *Toward A New Curriculum*, has come from the press recently. All members receive copies as a membership privilege. Sale price is \$2. See order form on last page of this journal.

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