

# The Changing World

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## THE INFECTING OF PARENTS BY PUPILS

THE GENTLEMEN who write the books dealing with the school's public relations problems argue very plausibly that satisfied pupils produce satisfied patrons. They are even more convincing when they assert that dissatisfied youngsters are certain to infect their elders.

These considerations make it important that the school *know* instead of *guess* where it stands in reference to its status in regard to pupil satisfaction-dissatisfaction. No less important, teachers and administrators must discover what the specific attitudinal components of general pupil-dissatisfaction (and its opposite) actually are if they are to know instead of guess what needs to be done to make the feeling tone of the school and the community what they want it to be.

A study designed to eliminate guesswork in both of these respects has been completed this past year in an Illinois city of medium size. The findings of this study are now being put to work by the school people in this progressive community.

It may interest the readers of this column to note what some of these findings are. Although the study was conducted at the elementary and the junior high school as well as at the senior high school level, we shall here draw our illustrations only from the senior high school situation.

One of the questions requested the pupil to tell how well satisfied, "all things considered," he was with his school. Nearly two-thirds unequivocally declared themselves to be generally satisfied pupils. About one-tenth said that they were definitely dissatisfied. The remainder indicated that they were "on the fence" in this regard. These findings reliably reflect the magnitude of the "feeling tone problem" in this particular school. Its faculty now

knows how big a problem it has on its hands in this respect.

This faculty now also knows what particularized attitudes are respectively associated with general satisfaction and with general dissatisfaction with the school. If space permitted, two tendency sketches—one of the generally satisfied and the other of the generally dissatisfied pupil—would be offered at this point to indicate what these particularized attitudes were found to be. But space does not permit, so we shall reproduce here only a greatly abbreviated tendency sketch of the generally dissatisfied pupil.

The generally dissatisfied pupil:

1. Very markedly tended to feel that he is not "one of the gang" in his school; that, instead, he is more or less of a "nobody" or an "outsider" who didn't "count."
2. Very markedly tended to feel that he is unable to go to as many of the school parties, dances, plays, and athletic contests as he would like.
3. Very markedly tended to feel that the "poor kids" are left out of a lot of the fun at his school.
4. Tended to experience difficulty in finding the necessary money to bring to school, and to be hurt or ashamed because he cannot always do so.
5. Very markedly tended to feel that the teachers do not treat the pupils fairly and kindly.
6. Very markedly tended to feel that his teachers do not know him as a person.
7. Very markedly tended to feel that he is not learning very much from his work.
8. Markedly tended to feel that but half or less of what he is studying will be of value to him in real life.
9. Very markedly tended to feel that but half or fewer of his teachers give him

the help he needs with his school subjects.

10. Markedly tended to feel that he is in need of help from the school in reference to several types of personal problems.

We have here given but ten out of some twenty specific attitudes which characterized the generally dissatisfied pupils in the school in question. Enough have been noted, however, to suggest the desirability of such a study and analysis to any thoughtful teacher or supervisor who is desirous of "reaching" all pupils—and of generating the right sort of talk around all the dinner tables in his community.

The operational demands of a changing world some quarter of a century ago forced business and industry to substitute systematic appraisal for guesswork in assessing the status of their public relations both without and within the plant. The Army and the Navy followed suit in reference to problems of troop morale in the recent war. The public relations problems of the public school are no less crucial than those of business, industry, and the military. How much longer will public school educators continue to guess about these matters when they could know?

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### *A Bibliography in Grouping*

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