

the group, that is, its efficiency of locomotion towards its own goals, should not be kept at a level lower than necessary by the failure of people to recognize the need for practice and understanding of democratic group skills.

Thelen: I agree with what you say,

Lee, and it seems to me that you are underscoring the importance of our own leadership self-training in going on to consider much more carefully the mechanisms of frustration, and their relationship to group health and to problems of training.

Group Study Procedures— A Selected Bibliography

GEORGE V. GUY

This selected bibliography includes recent publications dealing with categories of group study procedures: staff technique, classroom technique, and the teacher's role. George V. Guy is a graduate assistant at the College of Education, University of Illinois.

GROUP WORK is a comparatively recent development in the field of education. Strang (10) notes that in 1936 very little, if any, attention was given to the group work process by means of which individual students were being helped to develop their best potentialities. Before the end of 1936, however, first investigations into the dynamics of group action had begun to appear.

Since 1936, group work has been introduced and utilized in almost every phase of school and school-community life (10). It has been within the last few years, however, that group process in education has gained its impetus. It has been used most widely in two aspects of the educational program: as a methodology for achieving more efficient and effective staff and staff-com-

munity planning, and as a classroom technique for more functional pupil learning. A consideration of these two areas in which group work is functioning should serve to indicate both its value as a methodology and its points of difficulty in action.

A STAFF TECHNIQUE

Lippitt and Bradford (6) see group methods of working as contributing to the in-service education and growth of both teachers and administrators. The regular fall staff institute in one local community was used as an opportunity for airing and discussing common problems. In attendance at the institute were teachers, supervisors, administrators, and parents in the community. This cooperative effort resulted in improved staff relationships

in the various schools represented in the institute.

Although cooperative efforts have often been used in the formulation of school objectives, in working out a common school philosophy, perhaps more real and lasting success has been achieved where such efforts have been channeled into the broader and more inclusive area of curriculum evaluation and development. Shane (9) reports the situation when a group of teachers at Winnetka, Illinois, were faced with the problem of what to do about teaching aids either out of print or in short supply: should they be reissued? replaced? rewritten? A consideration of this question by the staff led directly to curriculum evaluation, to the question of whether or not present practices were consistent with values which had been expressed and accepted. From the group's discussion and thinking emerged a set of criteria by which the learning experiences for students were to be selected, and a further approach to curriculum-making through teacher-pupil planning. Shane concludes that the effective use of teachers' talents is the best way to a wholesome school program, that the sharing by all of staff responsibilities is the best way to free group creative power.

The degree of success which a group will achieve in its work, however, depends upon a number of factors. Parker (8) points out certain conditions which are necessary for successful teamwork. For maximum effectiveness, each group needs *group* thinking, *group* discussion, *group* planning, *group* decision, *group* action, and *group* evaluation. To the extent that these factors are present in the work of a group, to

that extent will success be attained. Problem-centered groups of staff members are to be regarded as the key to curriculum development through the improvement of teaching. For this purpose Parker believes that groups of from ten to fifteen members are probably the most efficient. As in the functioning of all groups, there are certain problem-areas to be considered—such as the leadership function, the relation of sub-groups to each other, the relation of sub-groups to the total group, etc.—where greater efficiency will lead to greater group effectiveness and productivity.

A CLASSROOM TECHNIQUE

Although the successful use of group processes by mature adults is clearly evident, some would find them inappropriate as learning devices for immature students. Although the basic tenets of cooperative learning are generally accepted *in theory*, some teachers find them impractical at the level of action in the classroom (1). More often, the ineffectiveness of group processes when applied to instruction is due to inadequate preparation on the part of either teachers or pupils, or both, for a "new method" of instruction and the failure to locate and recognize problem areas which arise with its introduction (1, 3).

Dilley (3) states that methods used to achieve the disciplines of the past are no longer effective in serving the complex needs of our present world. New classroom techniques, therefore, must be developed and utilized. Group discussion, involving democratic group processes, is the most effective means of developing individual personalities

(4, 5, 11, 12). Dilley (3) points out, however, that group discussion, as a democratic procedure, requires certain attitudes and disciplines on the part of group members if discussion is to be structured and productive. Attitudes which underlie discussion on the one hand, and debate, a traditional classroom technique, on the other, are contrasted by the writer. It would seem, furthermore, that these attitudes and skills are to be regarded not as prerequisites for, but as concomitants with, and outgrowths of, group endeavor.

The Teacher's Role

The first concerns of teachers in promoting group experiences in the classroom are in organizing groups and in directing their activities. Of primary importance is the realization that the utilization of group experiences in teaching capitalizes on the social structure of the classroom group, while in the traditional recitation type of teaching this social structure is either ignored or neutralized (5). Harris (5) denotes six teacher activities in a group experience teaching unit: determining group needs, guiding group planning, guiding the assignment and acceptance of responsibilities, guiding group activities, guiding in the determination of group and individual benefits, and assisting in evaluation activities. Techniques are suggested in each of these areas, and the outline presented may be used as a checklist in the organization of group experiences.

Staff members of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation (11) suggest that there are natural or organic groups which are based upon some common need, pur-

pose, or interest—groups which are present both outside and within school classes. Teachers can contribute toward genuine learning experiences on the part of students by locating and utilizing these organic groups within their classrooms. Suggestions are given to the teacher for discovering these natural groups. Moreover, eight services are cited which the teacher performs simultaneously as she works with her class to help it become an organic group. The process by which this is accomplished is that of increasing the size of the original groups as their common needs are broadened and helping to relate the work of the several groups to one another.

In many immature groups (immature in their development *as a group*) it may be both necessary and wise for the teacher to act as group leader. Hardy (4) gives detailed suggestions to the teacher-leader by means of which more fruitful discussion may be assured.

Effective Group Size

The problem of group size is a second area in the promotion of group study procedures. With how many members will a group function most efficiently? Thelen (12) proposes an answer in his "principle of least group size." If the individual participation of each group member is the measure of his personal growth, then each individual's participation is to be maximized. The group, then, should be large enough so that all the skills required of group membership for the particular learning situation are present, but small enough so that no required skills are duplicated. This principle charges individuals to assume their full responsi-

bility to the group. At the same time it charges the teacher to know the skills required in each learning situation and also the skills possessed by individual students. The application of this principle necessitates the use of sub-groups. Thelen explores five problems encountered in their use and suggests means for their solution.

Relations Within the Group

A third problem area which confronts group work is that of human relations. Berger (1, 2) discusses this problem as a factor in impeding and frustrating satisfactory and successful democratic group processes. The rejection by some teachers of group process in classrooms may often be associated with the problems of human relations for most students as they try to be cooperative. Certain experiences in evaluation are suggested as means of improving human relations and fostering success in group learning: evaluation conferences with teachers, student evaluations of each other, and evaluations of students by the group in terms of their compatibility with group objectives. Other techniques of meeting human relations problems are also suggested.

As a group matures, however, and becomes more conscious of the group process and of itself as a group, evaluation moves more and more in the direction of *group* evaluation which is aimed at improving the group process and securing greater efficiency and productivity. Miel (7) records the work of a graduate class searching for new light on group processes and cooperative procedures. Several devices were developed by the group for an-

alyzing participation within the group, interpersonal relationships, group progress, and persistence of interest: running records, a group "seismogram," a vocalization chart, statistical tabulation of vocal participation, sociometric devices, studies of role-playing, a frequency table of topics under discussion, and subjective evaluation of individuals in group process. These devices may be adaptable for use by other groups and helpful in giving valuable insights during evaluation sessions.

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