



growth in dealing with environmental factors and forces—these three areas of everyday living in which persistent life situations can be grouped—demand ability to make moral choices, competence in the use of intellectual power and effectiveness in working with others. It is out of repeated experiences which provide for the development of these abilities and competences that our values emerge. Some of the values are: respect for the individual, the importance of democratic methods, the need to use scientific knowledge and technological resources for the improvement of individuals and our society, the ability and decision to shoulder responsibility, the interdependence of peoples.

We know that the school's job in this undertaking begins with the child's first day at school, be it nursery, kindergarten or first grade, and continues throughout school life. Any teacher must know the level of operation of his children or youth and the desirable directions for them so that he will not expect too much or too little of them. He must recognize and provide for their basic needs and interests. He must be able to identify their difficulties and weaknesses as well as their gifts and special strengths in order to ensure satisfactions, success and growth. In addition to all this the teacher must understand the educative process and must also know how to teach.

### **An Invitation To Visit**

One day this spring I spent several hours visiting in the classroom of a good teacher. On the basis of notes, taken at the time, I should like to see

what answers we may find suggested even in a traditional school system to the questions posed in this article.

In our school system an instructional supervisor may visit classrooms only upon request of a teacher and for a stated purpose. An exception to this might be an instance in which a principal or a superintendent suggests that an observation be made or when the supervisor needs help from a teacher.

At a teachers meeting in early fall, I was invited to visit a first grade room taught by Miss Lillian C. Since I had not taught children younger than eight years, I was glad for this opportunity.

### ***The Children Plan***

The door was open and the teacher said, "Come in, Mrs. Keyes. We were just talking about how you could get to know all of us today. We've decided to let you print the children's names on these cards. Later you can pin them on the children. While you are doing that we can make out our lunch order and look at our plans for the day."

The children counted 21 who wanted lunch; they added 1 visitor and 1 teacher. "But 3 people brought their lunches," one child observed, "so we will have 26 people in the lunchroom even if we order only 23 lunches." A child carried the report to the principal's office while the group proceeded with the plans for the day. The teacher acted as secretary and made notes on the board as they talked over their plans. When they finished they pulled out the plan which had been written on lined chart paper the day before and pinned to a coat hanger. They checked to see if they had left out anything or had added something new.

### *Plans for Tomorrow*

The teacher now turned to a painting on the bulletin board. This represented a catlike animal with orange spots and was labeled, "Tiger." She asked the difference between this catlike animal with spots and the same kind of animal with stripes. Some guessed there was none; some said there was a difference; others claimed the animal could have both stripes and spots. "Can you prove what you say?" No one could. "Where can we find proof? Who can help us?" Plans were emerging for the next day. A note was made on the board under the title, "Plans for Tomorrow."

By this time about half the children were painting, playing with puzzles, modeling clay, building or reading. The others got books from a shelf and walked to their reading circle at the end of the room, a large space which was adaptable for many kinds of activities. They worked for twenty minutes, enjoyed their story, learned new skills, practiced familiar ones, added new words to their vocabulary chart, planned other activities in connection with their reading. The teacher complimented them for the way they had worked. "It's now ten minutes till 10:00 o'clock. When the long hand gets to eleven the children who have been doing other things will come by the bookcase and get their books for the reading circle."

Purposeful reading, enjoyment and interpretation through pictures, work at gaining skills and learning to overcome difficulties—all this and more took place for twenty minutes. During this time, a mother came in. She was

greeted by a child and shown to a seat. The teacher nodded but went right along with the work. At the end of this period, the teacher said, "Let's stand up and stretch for just one minute; then let's come to the board." They took a little time to work on the words they had missed, words which they felt they should know. This meaningful drill, figuring out ways to meet the next situation, was evidently fun for the boys and girls. "Let's put our books in the case now and sing." The teacher began to sing "The Merry-Go-Round." Suddenly all children were on their feet going around in a big circle. Each had chosen to be a horse on the merry-go-round.

"In five more minutes we go out for recess. What games have we planned?" "Three Deep, Ball Relay, What's Your Occupation?" one girl reported. "And Mary, Billy and Jerry are the leaders today," said Janet. This had been decided by the group the day before. Now on the playground their planning would pay off well.

At 10:30 the bell rang for recess. At the teacher's signal, the children ran for the playground.

The teacher now came over to talk with the mother, who had been enjoying her visit. From this parent the teacher learned about Tommy's throat trouble. She then relieved the mother's anxiety about her child's progress in school. The mother agreed to come back in a couple of weeks to see a play which this first grade was writing. Their purpose was to present this play at a time when the pre-school children would be invited for a visit. During this visit the new children would register and their parents would hold a

group discussion with the principal, school nurse and the supervisor.

At 10:50 the children returned and seated themselves in a group on the floor. They talked of the fun they had had, told stories and sang songs.

Later in the morning, the class worked out a schedule for the next day. They also looked at the plan they had made the day before. They had not practiced their play, but there was still ample time to perfect this before the day of the pre-school children's visit. They talked about some new things they had learned, some of their problems on the playground and how these might be handled better. They completed their plan for the next day and the teacher quickly drew up a chart

from notes that had been made on the board throughout the day.

Perhaps strength of character, individual and group efficiency and stability are built incidentally through our life experiences from day to day, week to week, month to month, year to year. Perhaps these are built while we gain knowledge which has bearing on the solution of our problems, on the handling of our conflicts here and now, whether our developmental age be 6 or 8, 10, 12, 14, 50 or 60. Perhaps also the satisfactions, failures and understandings gained from this day-to-day struggle contribute to our growth into higher and higher levels of performance and service, into more satisfying levels of maturity.

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## *The Teacher's Role in Politics . . .*

Do "special conditions" apply when a teacher participates in politics? What understandings and competencies do teachers bring to such participation? These questions are discussed in this symposium article by a school board member and by a teacher.

### *. . . As Viewed by a School Board Member*

MAX J. RUBIN

**T**HE VERY NEED to discuss the role of the teacher in politics in itself indicates that the question has not been free of difficulty.

The fact is that boards of education, superintendents and others charged with the responsibility of maintaining public school systems strive for the support of all elements and factions in

the community. Therefore they shy away from any area of controversy not connected with the school system in order to avoid offense to groups whose support of the public schools is so desired. Particularly in these days of mounting costs of education, increased taxes, criticism of the public school, boards recognize the need for strong

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