

learned by preachment; it is learned through its successful practice. And if teachers are to encourage the development of this disposition, they will have to be careful to distinguish between the genuine article and its more frequent imitations. They will have to distinguish between effort which is guided by foresight of genuine ends on the one hand and compulsive activity on the other; they will have

to encourage the diversity of attack and viewpoint which different individuals can bring to or carry away from learning situations; they will have to foster the idea that a belief sincerely examined and found well-grounded is the surest guide to action. When they have done these things they will have made their contribution toward producing the resolute and committed persons the world so badly needs.

LOUIS E. RATHS

What Is Teaching?

This article examines the functions of a teacher in today's world. It also indicates the relationship of learning to values, thinking and competency.

EVERY AGE answers for itself this most difficult of all questions and our age is no exception. As times change significantly the conception of what is needed in the teaching process changes too. Are there some general areas of agreement on what is most needed in today's world?

Fault finding is common from outside the profession of education and from within it. As one looks at the many criticisms one recognizes that it is not possible to construct a policy for our times which will please everyone. It can be said, however, that there is an insistent demand that education at all levels should be more concerned with *values*, with the clarification of them, with the conservation of those we hold

most dear and the reconstruction of others which are inadequate or in conflict.

There is also a pressing emphasis on the notion that teachers everywhere should give more attention to the *intellectual* aspects of schooling. It is said that there is a neglect of the thinking and planning process and that our young people are learning rather to conform to situations than to think through them.

Along with values and reflective thinking there is a recurrent demand that we pay strict attention to "*know-how*" and that our children should have a firm grasp of the skills that we associate with the purposes of education.

If we may assume that these three centers and emphases are indeed what should guide us in trying to answer the question, "What is teaching?" then the task is somewhat easier.

The functions of teaching then become obligations to practice in ways which will increase a concern for values, which will contribute to the improvement of thinking and planning and which will add to competency and skill. What follows, therefore, is not to be thought of as functions in isolation but as parts of the teaching process, each of which may contribute to the improvement of learning because learning is the job of the schools.

The Functions of Teaching

Initiating, managing, directing, taking charge:

All teachers have the professional responsibility to develop a program with children, to carry it out, and to do it in ways that promote the learning of children in a wholesome and satisfying way.

Modifying the curriculum:

It is a normal expectancy that teachers will help to develop materials which will meet the particular and unique requirements of the groups with which they work. It is assumed that this will be done to supplement texts, movies and other curriculum materials.

Informing, explaining and showing how:

It is a normal expectation that a teacher is skilled in the arts of expression, of demonstration and of communication skills which are learned through "showing how."

Security giving operations:

Because nearly all learning in group situations constitutes some threat to the security of children, it is commonly recognized that security is essential to the learning process. This involves a recognition of the physical, social and emotional needs of children in group situations and the establishment of a psychological climate which is conducive to learning.

The clarifying process:

It is widely recognized that all knowledge starts as opinion, and unless opinion becomes tested in a wide variety of situations it may not become fact or truth or knowledge. Large areas of life remain at the opinion stage. These are concerned with values, attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, purposes, problems and activities.

Teachers, in order to further growth and development, must know how to help their students to clarify these aspects of life. It is hypothesized that out of this clarification come clearer purpose, more consistent thinking, and an independence of thought and action that is highly desirable.

Group unifying operations:

As the teacher begins his work in the classroom it is often with an aggregate of individuals. As he continues to work with them, under some circumstances, they become a group which is related, communicating, and evidencing a desire to work with each other and to cooperate with each other in the pursuit of sound conclusions and

Louis E. Rath is professor of education, New York University, Washington Square, New York, New York.

sound action. Every teacher needs to know something about the ways in which groups tend to unify and the forces which tend toward disintegration.

We normally expect that teachers will develop, within their children, a group spirit that is wholesome both for group living and individual life.

Community enriching operations:

Back of every school there is a community, and a school tends to be only as good as the community which supports it. As schools and communities work closely together it is possible for both to become enriched. We expect teachers to learn how to help their students to understand the community and we expect communities to understand the schools.

Diagnostic and remedial work:

By and large, we expect teachers to be familiar with the most common difficulties and blocks in the learning process. We anticipate that they have ways of identifying these in the cases of individual children who are not learning as well as they should. We would anticipate that they are familiar with a variety of procedures to try out with youngsters who are having difficulty in learning.

Evaluating, recording and reporting:

One of the most common functions of teachers is to appraise and judge the progress that students are making in the important process of learning. There is the job of recording this progress and reporting it to: home, school, children, teachers, and sometimes to other agencies.

School-wide functions:

Besides the work with his own parti-

cular class of children every teacher is expected to participate as a member of the faculty. This may involve extra-curricular activities such as dramatics, supervision of corridors, lunchroom, charities, dances, etc.

Home-room aesthetics:

With some exceptions in our secondary schools, almost all teachers have a home base. We expect the teacher to assume responsibility for upkeep and maintenance, for charm, for comfort, for beauty, not as ends in themselves necessarily, but as a means to provide a setting for learning which will encourage students and make them feel that school is indeed a fine place in which to learn and in which to live. Ordinarily it is expected that there will be appropriate seating arrangements, provision for committees to work, and such arrangements of furniture and equipment as will contribute to the improvement of learning.

Professionalizing one's career:

It is now a common expectation that teachers in service will continue to read in their own fields of specialization. It is normally to be expected that teachers will take an active interest in research in their own schools and in other schools where research is carried on. It is expected that teachers will join professional organizations and groups and participate actively therein to improve the quality of education for children everywhere.

Function as a citizen:

It is expected also of teachers, that they will live a rather full and rich personal life, that they will make efforts to participate in some of the activities

of a community, not as teachers, but much in the same way as other adult persons living in that community. It is assumed that the teacher will function as a mature, thoughtful person in interaction with many, many, members of the community; that he will have friends; that he will entertain; that he will travel now and then, and in many other ways contribute to a richer kind of living for himself and his family.

This list of the functions of a teacher in today's world should not be misconstrued. Each of these is not something which can be considered in isola-

tion. Each has some relationship to the others and all must be conceived in a manner that will promote learning. This learning is to have its focus upon *values, thinking and competency*. It is further understood that no function will be discharged without a profound respect for the personalities of children, for the promotion of self respect, and for the extension of a free mind in a world that is tending toward conformity. All of these functions, moreover, need to be conceived as protecting the welfare of society and the dignity of the individual.

ERNEST A. HAGGARD

LEARNING:

A Process of Change

Improved understanding of the learning process can help our educational leaders plan changes that will meet the present crisis and "result in a better education for our youth."

LEARNING is the heart of the educational enterprise. This fact is entirely obvious—but even so it is sometimes forgotten. Learning is more important than attractive school buildings, administrative policies and programs, integrated curricula, or even a happy and enthusiastic teaching staff. The school may provide facilities, but after all, it is the pupils who must do the learning. Unless they learn, the plant, program and personnel of the educational system have failed, and amount only to

"sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

To say that the essential purpose of the school is to maximize learning does not belittle its many other functions. Many educators take the position that it is more important for the school to help develop stable, mature and well-adjusted citizens rather than "grinds" who sparkle with facts. This issue can arise, however, only if we define learning in terms of the "three R's," as some are wont to do. But from what we know about these matters, each in-

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