

AMERICAN EDUCATION SERIES
GEORGE DRAYTON STRAYER, GENERAL EDITOR

THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL

IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CLASS AND SCHOOL

BY

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THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL — MORT

E. P. 1

MADE IN U. S. A.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The schools of a democracy should offer to each pupil those unique opportunities for acquiring skills, for practice in precise thinking, and for growth in power of appreciation which are attainable by one of his intelligence. This ideal requires that we adjust our standards to the abilities of our pupils. Every pupil in the ideal school system is judged by the best which he can do and not by the median performance of a non-selected group.

In order to adjust our schools to the needs of individual boys and girls, our curricula and courses of study must be markedly different for groups of children who vary in ability. We may not rest satisfied with the provision of special opportunities for the feeble-minded, the physically handicapped, and the morally delinquent. It is important that adjustments be made in terms of the varying abilities, achievements, and environmental conditions of children all along the line. It is of surpassing importance to provide facilities which will stimulate the most able children to the attainment of their fullest intellectual development.

Our schools have begun to attack this problem. Further progress is dependent upon the more complete diagnosis and guidance for each pupil enrolled in the schools. In this volume, Dr. Mort presents the best that has been accomplished in our schools, as well as suggestions for the improvement and development of our practices in caring for the needs of individuals. The teacher who masters the methods which he presents will get the satisfaction which comes to those who practice the fine art of teaching.

GEORGE D. STRAYER

PREFACE

This book deals with the problems arising in our schools from the individual needs of the boys and girls. Every boy and girl at more or less frequent intervals demands attention as an individual. This is a fact that has been long recognized. It was brought to my attention as a young teacher by Dr. Strayer's book *A Brief Course in the Teaching Process*. In my copy of this book purchased in the second year of my teaching I find the following underlined:

When pupils all work together it is not expected that all will be able to do an equal amount of work. It is especially important that provision be made for the brighter members of the class, in order that they may have enough work to keep them active and alert. It too often happens that in large classes the work is scaled down to meet the ability of the poorest half of the class, in consequence of which the brighter pupils learn to loaf and tend to lose interest in school work. However many groups the class may be divided into, there will always be the necessity for individualizing the children of each section. The brighter ones must be given assignments which are beyond the ability of the less capable, while a minimum of achievement must be accepted when it represents the best effort and means the continued development of the pupil who is weaker intellectually.

Good teachers provide for individual needs, not only by grouping their classes on the basis of their ability, but also by giving individual instruction. No daily program should fail to provide a period during which the teacher can devote herself to the needs of those individuals who need special help. It may be to help the boy or girl who has been absent on account of sickness, to explain a difficult problem in arithmetic, to help in the interpretation of a map or diagram, or to teach the pupil how to study; always there will be plenty for the teacher to do who thinks of her pupils as individuals during the half hour or more devoted to individual instruction.¹

The subject of this book is fairly well defined by these two paragraphs.

¹ From Strayer, G. D., *A Brief Course in the Teaching Process*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

To-day there is a possibility of confusing individual needs with the much discussed topic of individual differences. Individual differences constitute but one of the parents of individual needs. The other parent is social requirements. Individual differences in characteristics not developed by education do not give rise to individual needs in school. There are differences in that most useless of abilities -- ear wiggling, but such differences do not, as a general rule, result in individual needs within the classroom. To result in individual needs, there must be social implications. There may be a special demand for a common level of achievement in arithmetic computation. The fact that pupils differ in their rate of learning this subject results in individual needs. Society may demand that knowledge or ability in a subject vary with native ability. In this case the individual needs take the form of differences in subject matter or in methods of teaching. Or society may place a premium on the development of a special talent, as for example, musical ability. This may result in a need of marked variation in curriculum content.

Chapters I to VII deal with the manner in which individual needs may be met by the classroom teacher with a minimum of outside assistance. Chapters VIII, IX, and X deal with services that can be performed and organization that can be developed which will not only make possible the lightening of the load of the classroom teacher in meeting individual needs, but will in addition make possible the meeting of individual needs that call for a service more technical in nature than the classroom teacher may be expected to render.

Throughout the book, the discussion is in terms of actual children selected from several states. Extensive problems are given at the end of each chapter. They make possible the application of the reader's learning to concrete situations. They will be found to be particularly valuable for group discussion or for instructional purposes. The bibliography has been chosen with two purposes in mind. Specific references are given to

books that have bearing upon the problem, in order that the reader may readily obtain the judgment of other writers who have considered the problem from a general viewpoint, and references are given to magazine articles, many of which are descriptions of practice, or results of experimentation in actual situations.

I am indebted to a host of people who have contributed through their classroom experience or their researches to the problems discussed in the various chapters. The students in School Administration who have worked in my classes at Teachers College have contributed out of their rich and varied experience. Many of the classroom teachers with whom I have had the privilege to work, particularly those who have seriously attacked the problem of teaching their groups of youngsters as individuals, have been an inspiration.

I am indebted to the Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, for permission to reproduce material first published in city school Surveys made by the Division of Field Studies, Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College.

Dr. John Granrud, Assistant Superintendent of the Springfield, Massachusetts, Schools, read the manuscript and gave many valuable suggestions. Professors N. L. Engelhardt and Carter Alexander have given sympathetic assistance throughout the period during which I have worked upon the organization of this field.

The suggestion that this book be written and the encouragement to its completion came from George Drayton Strayer. If there were some way to trace the influences of this master workman, first through his writings, next through his instruction, and most recently through his personal counsel, much of whatever has merit in this book would likewise be found to come from him.

Finally I wish to express my indebtedness to my wife, whose assistance throughout has been invaluable.

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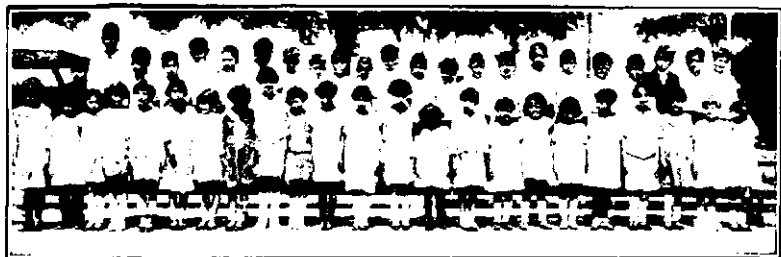
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ILLUSTRATION 1
TWO FIRST-GRADE CLASSES IN THE SAME CITY
GROUP A



GROUP B



(Facing 17)