

Actual Problems in School Discipline

By Antero Sto. Tomas

THIS study of the actual problems in school discipline is based on the following three motive questions: 1. What is the difference between discipline and disciplinary activity or process? 2. What are some of the actual causes of school offenses resulting to problems in discipline? 3. What are some of the bad and the good punishments or remedies actually applied by teachers and administrators for school offenses?

1. Discipline and Disciplinary Activity or process

1.1 Discipline indicates any and all measures for the better conduct of the school with reference to the order and behavior of the pupils. A disciplinary activity is any activity in which one engages, not primarily for its own sake or the sake of its immediate

2. Some actual Causes of School Offenses

2.1 Physical and mental energy not fully used or properly directed. When bright pupils have nothing more to do when dull pupils cannot do the assignment, there will be a problem in discipline.

2.2 A resentful resistance to a control which pupils do not understand or accept. This happens when pupils especially in the higher grades do not know and do not like any autocratic attitude of the teacher or administrator.

2.3 Peculiarities in the physical condition of pupils or a faulty physical environment. There are pupils having physical deformities that call attention from other pupils. There are many school buildings and classrooms that are crowded and lack the necessary facilities.

2.4 Lack of training in morals and manners. The home training of pupils has much to do in school discipline. Usually, pupils from good homes show good behavior in school.

2.5 A desire to attract attention and create a sensation. Not only pupils or students but also teachers may have this tendency that gives problems in discipline. Some say that the last war and the "drinking habit" of the present give rise to this bad tendency of our youth.

2.6 Imitation of others. Teachers, pupils or students may appear ultra-modernistic, too much lipsticks, to attract extraordinary attention. Some of us are not only too much imitative but also too much exaggerative.

outcome, but for a desirable subjective effect—that is, for the training value it may have upon one's self. All the training which society gives to the individuals which helps them better to control their powers may be called disciplinary.

1.2 Disciplinary process is the establishing and realizing of an adequate ideal of right conduct. This ideal must exist first in the teacher's mind, then in the minds of her pupils. Teacher and pupils cooperate in bringing about the realization of the ideal which involves the processes of creating good habits and curing bad ones and of establishing standards that will enable pupils to make the right decisions when new situations are presented to them, for response to them they have no precedent.

3. Punishments or Remedies

3.1 Threats, school work detention during recreation or rest periods, depriving of marks earned by good work, personal indignities, corporal punishments are not helpful forms of punishments except in rare cases. Tongue-lashing is the worst of all punishments in its hardening and vitiating effects.

3.2 All punishments should answer the requirements of justice, reformation, and economy. Among these which are effective are reproof, isolation wisely and temperately used, reports to parents and higher authorities: the humiliation or disgrace of a group of which the offenders are members; deprivation of privileges, restitution where it is appropriate and just, and in extreme cases, suspension and expulsion.

3.3 Pupils may also refrain from evil and do good through interest in their own advantage and advancement. A milder mode in which the teacher used her personal influence in persuading the pupil to follow the teacher is better than an authority based on force. Filling the life of the pupils so full of wholesome interests that these antagonistic to good school discipline are crowded out is of good practical remedy. The highest motive for which pupils can be trained to be "good" is that of contributing to the well-being and happiness of the entire school. Teachers can so guide their pupils that the lower of these motives will give way to successively higher ones, and in this way establish the better modes as fully as possible.