PROGRESSIVE METHODS OF TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE advances of the past three or four decades in the development of educational method, with special reference to the secondary school, are well evidenced by a comparison of the contents of the present volume with what existed in printed form thirty to forty years ago. Teachers then began their work in our secondary schools with little more specific preparation in teaching methods, when they had had any at all, than was represented by a brief course on school management, taught with the needs of the elementary school, and particularly the rural school teacher chiefly in mind. We had, to be sure, a few special-methods books on the teaching of English, and Latin, and science, but no comprehensive textbook on high school instruction — its aims, its methods, and its special techniques — and for the very good reason that the aims, methods, and techniques as we now know them had not yet been formulated and reduced to organized form.

One very important cause of the remarkable advance which has taken place in the organization of and instruction in the American secondary school, within the past third of a century, is the great change which has been made in the professional preparation of the secondary school teacher. Not only is he far better prepared academically, but professionally as well. With a clearer formulation of the aims and purposes of the American secondary school, new teaching techniques have been worked out with a view to bringing the instruction in the school into closer accord with these newer aims and purposes. With a keener analysis of these new aims and purposes, it has been seen that different teaching methods were demanded by different teaching situations.

The old recitation type of teaching has, in consequence, been analyzed, and its defects and its points of usefulness set forth. Instructional planning, the assignment, the review, and questioning procedures have all alike been studied and

formulated as techniques. Education for mastery and for appreciation have been differentiated, and the place of each clearly set forth. The lecture method of teaching has been investigated and experimented with, and the lecture assigned its proper place in the instructional process. Problem-solving instruction has been organized, and its peculiar usefulness and its techniques described. The project, the contract, and the cycle plan have alike been exploited and in time reduced to their proper place in the general teaching scheme. The socialization of the recitation and supervised study also have had their day, and by now have assumed their place as a part but not the whole of secondary school technique. Finally, the measurement of the instruction given, and the means for evaluating the different instructional procedures and for testing the results of teaching, have all been worked out and put into concrete and usable form. As a result of this extended and at the same time rapid evolution in secondary school methodology, the secondary school teacher of today has available a multiplicity of tools, and can start from the secondary training school with a knowledge of techniques and a bag of tricks of which the teacher of a third of a century ago scarcely dreamed.

To give to prospective secondary school teachers some knowledge of and experience in the use of these newer tools is the main purpose of the training school, and to furnish a manual of these progressive methods for the use of teachers in training, and teachers in service as well, who may wish to improve their ability to use the different teaching techniques described herein, is the main purpose of this book. What a tremendous aid to the beginning teacher such a carefully prepared volume will be, only the teacher who began instruction in the secondary school a third of a century ago can fully appreciate.

ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY

PREFACE

IN RECENT years there has been evident a distinct tendency among writers of textbooks on teaching method to restrict the scope of the treatment to the more general techniques of teaching. The topics usually found discussed in these texts include the lesson plan, the assignment, the question, and the more commonly used classroom methods, such as the recitation, the project, and supervised study.

This book is the outgrowth of a conviction on the part of the author, as the result of some ten years of intimate association with the problems of teacher-training as instructor in classroom methods, director of supervision, and director of the University High School of the University of Oregon, that there is a widely felt need for a textbook covering the general task of classroom teaching and applicable to the accepted period of secondary school education in America, which period embraces the grades from seven to fourteen. Such a text should point briefly, for the prospective or actual secondary school teacher, the peculiar nature of the educational problem of the school at this level of the pupil's development.

Two reasons would seem to dictate the desirability of a brief summary, at the beginning, of the nature of the educational problem peculiar to the secondary school in a textbook on method. As yet there is no sequence of courses in the teacher-training institutions universally accepted or rigorously applied that insures a course in methods being preceded by courses covering the nature and the philosophy of secondary education. Even though courses giving consideration to the nature and philosophy of secondary education should precede a course in principles or methods of teaching in secondary schools, it is still highly desirable for the teacher, at the threshold of the course in methods, to be reminded of the

necessity of a complete correlation between method and the nature and function of education at this level.

In addition to the usual treatment, in textbooks on methods of teaching, of the general techniques and methods alluded to in the opening paragraph, there should be included a unit on classroom organization and management. It is a false pedagogy that assumes classroom method and management can be treated as separate entities, each to be considered independent of the other, yet very few recent textbooks in methods of teaching have recognized classroom organization and management as legitimately a part of method. The personality of the teacher, the physical conditions of the room, routine organization, etc., are inextricably related to the total teaching situation within the classroom, and as such should be recognized in any text that purports to give a complete picture of the problem of classroom teaching. Finally, since modern teaching techniques lay great stress upon pupil understanding and achievement as the basis of progress, it is necessary for the teacher to be acquainted with the approved devices and techniques available to the teacher with which to evaluate instructional success.

The plan of this book envisages a fivefold approach to the problem of method. Unit I serves to orient the teacher into the nature and purpose of his task. Unit II gives careful consideration to the problems of classroom organization and management, usually neglected in a text on teaching method. Unit III acquaints the teacher with the teaching techniques common to normal classroom teaching situations. Unit IV presents and evaluates the most important of the methods applicable to the learning-needs of pupils at the level of the secondary school. Unit V provides the teacher with a basis for an understanding of the problem of evaluation of the results of teaching, a knowledge of the devices available for the varied purposes of evaluation, and with definite suggestions

for the use of these devices for the determination of teaching success as well as for the improvement of general and specific teaching method.

The newer unit-concept has been applied in the organization of the materials of this text, thus producing a sense of both unity and completeness of treatment of each of the five-fold phases of method. An advantage in employing the unitary development of the several phases of method is the resultant flexibility obtained in the organization of the text for teaching purposes. If the class has been well oriented through a previous study of the nature and philosophy of education at the secondary level, it is possible for the teacher to treat lightly or to omit entirely a consideration of Unit I. When the teacher feels that the class lacks sufficient orientation to make the study of method most helpful, sufficient references are given in the Selected Bibliography at the end of Chapter I to make more extended treatment possible. At times the author has reversed the order of Units II, III, and IV in classroom consideration, to advantage. In general, a study of the units in the order given in the text has been found by the author most satisfactory for usual classroom purposes.

Throughout the book two fundamental points of view with respect to method have been maintained consistently. The *first* is that there is no *one best* method. It should be obvious that different forms of learning require appropriate teaching methods. Individual differences likewise suggest the wisdom of frequent variation in method, even when applied to the same form of learning. It is the point of view of this book that of the many forms of method available, such as the lecture, the recitation, the problem, the project, the contract, and the Morrisonian Cycle Plan of Teaching, each has its peculiar merits, and to restrict one's use of these to one or two forms would seriously impair teaching efficiency. Something of an eclectic point of view with respect to methods has

been the result. At the University High School, the training school of the University of Oregon, there has been maintained consistently an experimental attitude toward the problem of method, no one being used to the exclusion of others, and no one method accepted as beyond improvement through experimentation.

The *second* point of view maintained throughout this book as fundamental is the *functional* conception of education. Techniques of instruction, therefore, that do not contribute in maximum degree to the realization of the aims of education, as accepted by progressive educators, must be corrected where they may; otherwise they must be rigorously rejected.

Every effort has been made to present the most recent data, from the literature of experience and experimentation, upon improved teaching techniques. Wherever these studies might throw additional light upon the validity of the claims made on behalf of various classroom methods, the most important findings and conclusions therefrom have been made available for the teacher's consideration.

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A casual reading of this volume will reveal the extent to which the author has drawn upon the writings of others. For the permission to use copyright materials, the author in this manner expresses appreciation to both authors and publishers. Full acknowledgment is made in footnote references to author and publisher where copyright material has been used.

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UNIT I

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL METHOD

CHAPTER I

THE FUNCTION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN EDUCATIONAL THEORY

I. THE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

Past and present interrelated. The high school teacher who aspires to be successful will do well to understand the modern secondary school in its historical perspective. Like many other social institutions, the present-day secondary school represents an evolutionary development. It is a product of many forces that have played upon it, molded its form, and determined its essential characteristics; and, like most institutions of society at the threshold of a new transition period, it has not divested itself completely of the outworn trappings of its past. As a result, many hangovers in the way of organizational form, curriculum, and concept of function — often meaningless and sometimes definitely contradictory — are found to exist side by side in schools between neighboring communities and even within the same school unit.

Nor should we necessarily expect to find a new institution completely divorced from historical origins. Newness *per se* does not have inherent within itself the essence of value. Intelligent social evolution requires the survival of those institutional values that have proved their worth in racial or social experience. The primary question must be their timeliness, their adaptability for the present.

Unless the teacher has a sympathetic understanding of this evident confusion and its causes, and can thereby keep a sense of perspective in the midst of it all, and select for de-

velopment those elements in the situation which have value and practicability in the present, inefficiency and dissatisfaction with the profession of teaching must inevitably result.

Stages in secondary school development. At least three secondary institutions have formed a line of succession in the evolution of the American high school. The first of these, the Latin-Grammar school, was brought to America by our first colonists. It represents a direct transplantation from Europe. It embodied the social, political, and educational outlook of its native soil. The secondary schools of Europe were then, and to a great extent still are, the restricted schools of the classes. Only the well-to-do could or did send their children to the Latin-Grammar school. This school was distinctly a college-preparatory institution in Europe, and that remained its rather exclusive mission in early colonial history. As the name clearly implies, the Latin-Grammar school was heavily freighted with the ancient Latin classics and formal rhetoric. Very early in their life in the New World, many of the colonists sensed the inappropriateness of the Latin-Grammar school for the exigencies of pioneer life. Relatively few were able to afford a college education. Even fewer found it possible to follow a life of leisure and cultural interest as did the upper classes in the homeland. A natural demand arose, therefore, for a type of education on the level of the Latin-Grammar school that would contribute more practical worth to the life of these early colonial pioneers.

The dissatisfaction found definite expression in the advocacy by Benjamin Franklin, in 1743, of a secondary school known as the Academy. Franklin was anxious to establish a school that would emphasize a general type of training for those not able to continue their education through the college. The curriculum would focus attention upon such subjects as English, mathematics, morality, geography, and history — the last to include commercial history and natural history.

The curriculum suggested by Franklin was a radical innovation. Unfortunately, when finally Franklin's Academy was organized in 1751, the curriculum represented something of a compromise with Franklin's friends, who could not conceive of a secondary school without the time-honored ancient languages. Languages, therefore, were included for those who wished to study them. In fact, Franklin's Academy opened for instruction with three departments — the Latin school, the English school, and the Mathematical school. From this time forward the Academy developed rapidly, ushered in a wide range of subject matter in the curriculum, and soon surpassed the rapidly waning Latin-Grammar school.

At least two major influences brought about the downfall of the Academy. First, with the decline of the Latin-Grammar school, the colleges began to cast about for a suitable preparatory training-medium for their students. The Academy proved to be the logical agency. It gradually lost its original character and became in essence a substitute for the Latin-Grammar school as the agency for preparation of college entrants. Its curriculum became narrow and predominantly classical in content. The second major factor in the eclipse of the Academy was the cumulative public insistence upon free public education at the secondary level. The Academy was from the first traditionally a private tuition school. The first school created in response to these demands was organized at Boston in 1821, as the Boston English Classical School. The school was free and was available for those who did not plan to go to the Latin school; i.e., for those who did not contemplate college attendance. Its curriculum was similar to that of Franklin's Academy except for the complete absence of foreign languages. The development of the high school, however, was slow. The next thirty years saw fewer than forty free public high schools

established, while the Academy reached its peak of development about 1850 with over six thousand units.[1] After 1875 the Academy declined rapidly and the free public high schools came into the ascendancy.

Unfortunately, the usurpation of the place of first importance by the high school made it the object of concern by those interested in the adequate preparation of entrants to college. As a consequence the high school, at the beginning of the twentieth century, had degenerated into a preparatory school for the colleges and remained dominantly that prior to the World War.

Growth and development. The growth of the public high school has been phenomenal. In 1929–30, 23,930 public secondary schools were reported, with an enrollment of 5,212,179 pupils.[2]

> On the basis of enrollment data supplied by State departments of public instruction it appears that there were 253,753 pupils attending the 1,693 high schools not included in the tabulations made by the Office of Education. By adding this number to the enrollment cited above one arrives at the figure 5,465,932 as the most complete count of pupils enrolled in all types of schools existing during the school year, 1929–30. Of this number 4,399,422 were registered in the last four years of the public-school system.

The high school population more than doubled during the ten-year period, 1920 to 1929–30, and increased over eight fold between 1900 and 1930.

This rapid development however, has not taken place without its accumulation of problems. As previously indicated, prior to the World War the secondary school was essentially college preparatory in its emphasis. A study,

[1] Draper, E. M., and Roberts, A. C. *Principles of American Secondary Education*, p. 37. The Century Company, New York, 1932.

[2] *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States*, 1928–1930, chapter VII, pp. 3–4, 13. "Statistics of Public High Schools," 1929–1930. Office of Education Bulletin, No. 20, 1931.

completed in 1921 by Counts,[1] revealed the serious consequences for a democratic conception of education of college-entrance domination of the high school curriculum. Counts found that the character of the high school population startlingly reflected the narrow purpose of the school curriculum. For the most part only those pupils attended whose parents were able to contemplate the possibilities of a college education for their children. The recent and broader emphasis given the curriculum of the secondary school, akin to that of the early Academy movement, no doubt has had a considerable part in the phenomenal growth in high school attendance during the past decade.

2. SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MODERN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Educational organization evolving. The summary picture thus far presented of the fortunes of the secondary school cannot but suggest the lack of stability within the form of educational organization. While the secondary school through the Latin-Grammar, Academy, and high school has carried with it by implication a lower form of educational organization, as well as a higher (college) form, the outlines of these have not been sharply defined. Rapidly these organizational outlines are being brought into clear perspective. The more clearly defined these lines of cleavage are and the more extensive the units involved, the greater the need on the part of the teacher for a thorough appreciation of the place and nature of the task of the modern high school in a democratic society.

Much like Topsy, our educational system has just grown. Considerable confusion still exists both as to the organizational form and the significance of the parts. The fact that

[1] Counts, G. S. *The Selective Character of American Secondary Education.* Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 19. University of Chicago, 1922.

no country in the world previously has undertaken to educate its citizenry on the broad scale attempted in America, or to make that education at all levels potentially possible for the remotest individual, has led to much of our difficulty, inasmuch as we have had no landmarks to guide us. Even worse, the tendency to forget the uniqueness of our educational experiment has led to confusion on the part of many who see a well-defined and co-ordinated secondary school curriculum in vogue in Europe, but have not paused to inquire into the function of the secondary school in continental education.

Present organization and tendencies. The educational ladder consists of three principal divisions, somewhat clearly defined in major outlines: they are the elementary, secondary, and higher educational levels. The lines of demarcation between these divisions are not so sharply determined. Graphically the divisions may be set down roughly as most commonly recognized by educational leaders.

Elementary
- Kindergarten — Age 5 — Grades sub.
- Primary — Ages 6–8 — Grades 1–3
- Intermediate — Ages 9–11 — Grades 4–6

Secondary
- Junior High School — Ages 12–14 — Grades 7–9
- Senior High School — Ages 15–17 — Grades 10–12
- Junior College — Ages 18–19 — Grades 13–14

Higher — Professional and Technical Training — Ages 20+— Grades 15+

While these divisions are the ones commonly accepted in educational theory they do not represent the accepted mode of practice, inasmuch as the eight-year elementary school still predominates and the Junior College is yet in its infancy. Besides, a further development gaining headway at the present would extend education two years below the kindergarten,

recognized as the preschool period, and at the other extreme would provide a flexible system of adult education not contemplated in the third major division or higher education. These divisions do, however, aid the high school teacher to localize his problem.

3. THE FUNCTION OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Meaning of education. Such evidence of confusion as to the purpose of secondary education, revealed throughout the history of the secondary school in America and further indicated in the unsettled scope of its organization, naturally forces the teacher to question the true function of education at this level. Indeed, a prior question would appear to demand an answer; namely, "What is the meaning of education?" No teacher can hope to succeed until he understands the meaning of the whole as well as the relationship of its parts. In other words, he must comprehend clearly the general purpose and function of education. He must see, too, the purpose of each major division as it relates to the larger outreaches of education. The writer has no further objective in this chapter than to suggest for purposes of recall important data that need to be considered, and to insure a common understanding upon which to base a methodology of teaching at the secondary level. The imperative need on the part of the teacher of a well-defined conception of education is accepted as fundamental.

One of the more thoughtful of modern writers on education [1] suggests that:

> Whatever else we may say about it, then, education is a process of growth; it means a liberation of capacity. The aims that we set up in education are just guides and sign posts to indicate the direction in which this growth is to take place.

[1] Bode, B. H. *Fundamentals of Education*, p. 8. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1921.