

The Century Education Series

PRINCIPLES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

BY

JOHN LOUIS HORN

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, MILLS COLLEGE



THE CENTURY CO.
New York & London

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

When one examines the titles of the many textbooks which deal with the various phases of elementary education, one is impressed by the apparent duplication of serious work which is going on. It is possible, for instance, to find various volumes entitled "Principles of Education." Sometimes upon examining closely the contents of these volumes, one finds that he is dealing with a book which is strictly concerned with the technique of teaching. Again, one may find practically the same title with the emphasis laid upon the historical phases of the development of the school. A recent study of educational textbooks showed that certain of them were used as basal texts in variously named educational courses—courses which apparently should demand entirely different fundamental texts. One, therefore, approaches a volume entitled *Principles of Elementary Education* with some misgiving as to what he will find discussed under the title. Dr. Horn, while recognizing by implication these divergences of practice in the writing of educational texts with nearly the same titles, begins his volume with a discussion of what he calls two contending principles of organization, namely, that which has to do with educational levels and that which has to do with educational techniques. His conclusion is that the best

method of attacking the subject of principles of elementary education is to recognize that each of these methods of organization has its place in the volume. In other words, as he explains, he is trying to make the student of the volume reasonably familiar with the more important problems that must be kept in mind by those engaged in working with the elementary school. Some of these problems may have to do with the conduct of the school and some may have to do more specifically with the methods of instruction. The advantage of such a treatment of the subject is evident. The student of such a volume is not likely to be confused as to what is really implied by the expression "principles of elementary education." While such treatment makes impracticable a very intensive discussion of various techniques, it does afford opportunity for an elementary presentation of the larger divisions under which all techniques must be classified. The author's wide experience in education, combined with his writings on the American elementary school and the American public school, fits him admirably to use in a discriminating fashion the materials which are available. It is hoped that many students will find within these pages the specific type of information needed by them in their efforts to familiarize themselves with the elementary principles dealing both with organization and with technique.

CHARLES E. CHADSEY

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I INTRODUCTION	3
TWO CONTENDING PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION	
THE WORK IN OUTLINE	
THE POINT OF VIEW	

PART I

THE SCOPE OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

II ORIGINS	15
GENERAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	
HISTORICAL BASIS OF PRESENT PRACTICE	
THE HIGH SCHOOL	
THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	

III THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND SECONDARY EDUCATION	36
OBJECTIONS TO PRESENT PRACTICE	
EUROPEAN ORIGINS AND IDEALS	
EUROPEAN ORIGINS COLOR AMERICAN PRACTICE	
THE NEED TO REORGANIZE	
THE PROPOSED SOLUTION	

IV THE FUNCTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION	57
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIX-YEAR SCHOOL	
CAN THE TASK BE DEFINITELY FORMULATED?	

MEANING AND FUNCTION OF PRE-SECONDARY
EDUCATION

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL REASONS FOR THE NEW
SCHOOL

TWO QUESTIONS

WHEN DOES ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BEGIN?

PART II

THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

V RELATIONS 85

TO THE GENERAL COMMUNITY

THE STATE AND EDUCATION

LOCAL UNIT CONTROL IN OPERATION

CONSOLIDATION—THE COUNTY UNIT

STATE UNIT PROPOSED

TO THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY

DEMAND TO BROADEN SCOPE

COMMUNITY USE OF PLANT

SERVICE OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

VI COMPULSORY EDUCATION: PROBLEMS OF ENACT- MENT 110

THE RIGHT OF THE STATE

VARIATION IN THE LAWS

REASONS FOR VARIATION IN THE LAWS

EXEMPTIONS: MINIMUM TERM

MOVEMENT FOR FEDERAL INTERVENTION

EDUCATIONAL SUBSIDIES

CONTROL OF CHILD LABOR

ARGUMENT AGAINST UNIFORM LEGISLATION

LESS LEGISLATION: MORE DISCRETIONARY POWER

PART III

THREE MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING INSTRUCTION
IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER	PAGE
VII THE CURRICULUM	133
AN UNSETTLED QUESTION	
THE REASONS	
THE PROBLEM TO-DAY	
BASIC PRINCIPLES	
VIII GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATIONAL METHOD .	152
THE EXPERIENCE OF PRACTITIONERS	
THE FORMULATION OF AIMS	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD	
IX THE PROBLEM OF VARIABILITY	171
EDUCATION: PROCESS AND INSTITUTION	
EARLIER ATTEMPTS TO MEET THE PROBLEM	
THE MEASUREMENT OF EDUCABILITY	
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE	

PART IV

THE ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

X EARLY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION	195
THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM	
CONTENT: THE FUNDAMENTAL PROCESSES	
METHOD: THE OTHER OBJECTIVES	
ORGANIZATION: PROVISION FOR INDIVIDUAL VA- RIATION	
XI LATER ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: AN APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF CURRICULUM FORMULATION	223
THE PROBLEM	

	THE CURRICULUM THEORISTS AT WORK	
	CONCLUSIONS	
XII	CONTENT AND METHOD IN THE UPPER GRADES . . .	243
	THE BOUNDARY LINE	
	THE CURRICULUM IN OUTLINE	
	SUBJECTS COMPLETED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	
	SUBJECTS BEGUN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	
	THE LESS TANGIBLE OBJECTIVES	
	MODERN METHOD	
XIII	ORGANIZING THE STAFF FOR PURPOSES OF IN- STRUCTION	270
	THE PROBLEM	
	ADVANTAGES OF DEPARTMENTALIZATION	
	ORGANIZING THE DEPARTMENTALIZED SCHOOL	

PART V

THE SCHOOL AT WORK

XIV	SOME PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION	295
	THE PRINCIPAL AND HIS TASK	
	EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL	
	NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS	
	NON-CLASS ACTIVITIES AND VALUES	
XV	COMPULSORY EDUCATION: PROBLEMS OF ENFORCE- MENT	318
	NON-ATTENDANCE: THE FACTS	
	DESIRABILITY OF STATE-WIDE ENFORCEMENT	
	CAUSES OF NON-ATTENDANCE	
	CONCLUSIONS	

CONTENTS

xi

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVI THE HANDICAPPED CHILD	338
THE PROBLEM SURVEYED	
TYPICAL CHILDREN AND TYPICAL EDUCATION	
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DEFINED AND CLASSIFIED	
SPEECH CORRECTION	
THE SEMI-SIGHTED AND HARD-OF-HEARING	
THE BLIND AND THE DEAF	
THE CRIPPLED CHILD	
XVII THE TRAINING AND THE STATUS OF THE TEACHER	365
TRAINING	
HOW THE DOUBLE SYSTEM BEGAN	
DOUBLE TRAINING SYSTEM IN PRACTICE	
POSSIBILITIES FOR REORGANIZATION	
THE TEACHERS COLLEGE MOVEMENT	
UNIFIED TEACHER-TRAINING	
STATUS	
IN CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS	
PROFESSION OR TRADE?	
NEWER IDEALS PROPOSED	
INDEX	389

PRINCIPLES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

PRINCIPLES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. Two Contending Principles of Organization

The division of the general field of education into specialized areas for professional and technical study and research has not yet been finally accomplished or universally agreed upon. There seem to be two contending principles on the basis of which special treatment and curriculum units in education may be organized, and at the present time books are written, courses are offered and, indeed, journals are established, on each of these principles of division.

These two principles on the basis of which the attacks on educational study and research are being made, may be referred to as the principle of the educational levels and the principle of the educational techniques. In part, these two possible modes of approach represent the inevitable conflict in point of view between the practitioner on the one hand and, on the other, the student, aloof from the actual situation, interested abstractly in the field.

Let us make the situation more clear: From the point of view of the practitioner and the organizer of educational facilities for the children of the country, these educational instrumentalities consist of an ascending series of schools, dividing horizontally at certain age or maturity levels. From this point of view we have pre-school education, the kindergarten and primary levels, the upper elementary period, the junior high school, the senior high school, the junior college, the upper classes of the college, the university. From this point of view we find courses in the departments of education, treatises devoted to every link in the chain and journals devoted to each of the several units of the series, such as *Childhood Education*, and *The Elementary School Journal*.

On the other hand, the student of educational theory as definitely distinguished from the responsible practitioner, makes vertical divisions running throughout the school series. He studies techniques as such, and he hardly recognizes the horizontal dividing lines that separate the several units. He devotes himself to method, to measurement, to principles of curriculum construction, to educational psychology, to administration. From this point of view, too, we find courses in the departments of education, treatises devoted to every one of the techniques and journals discussing contemporary developments in every one of the fields of special interest, such as *The Journal of Educational Research* and *The Journal of Educational Method*.

An interesting illustration of this conflict between the technician and the practitioner may be found in

the effort recently made by an American student to define secondary education.¹ Abandoning the idea of the contemporary high school as synonymous and interchangeable with this term, on the ground that the present secondary unit arises from administrative convenience and tradition, he charges current practice with carrying on in several essentially separate institutions an educational task which in its nature is not discontinuous, and calls our present concept of organization an essentially false and indefensible, if persistent, stereotype. He then proceeds to claim that the only way to locate the proper scope of secondary education is to search for that region in the process of formal education within which there are no essential and critical differences in the nature of the process of learning under instruction. This period he finds, as we shall have occasion to indicate at greater length in another chapter, actually begins much earlier and lasts a great deal longer in the life of the average pupil than would be assumed, judging from the number of years included within the limits of the present high school.

In further illustration of the point which has been made, let us examine one or two instances in which the two modes of attack influence one another. We may note, for example, a movement along the vertical line of method to organize curriculum units in terms of the psychology of the student rather than the inherent logic of the subject-matter, which might demand abstract divisions and units of its own. This movement

¹ H. C. Morrison, *The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926.

to synthesize subject-matter and organize it in terms of real life activities rather than in terms of summaries and abstractions of the subject itself, is expressed in the elementary school largely by way of the project, whereby the child engages in activities involving several subjects. It expresses itself in the secondary school by the project and, in addition, by the movement toward the so-called "general" course, which is producing such curriculum units as general mathematics, general science, the social studies. Latterly the same movement has been expressing itself most interestingly in the colleges by way of the inter-departmental initiatory courses organized in terms of real social problems and with a view to the real business of living as against the specialized courses which deal with defined fields of scholarship.

The essential unimportance of horizontal dividing lines inherent in the study of administration, measurement, and psychological principles such as motive, interest, laws of learning, training in thinking, need hardly be pointed out.

Both modes of attack and of study are important; both are worthy the attention of the student. Every vigorous professional man and woman will be interested in the school in which he is engaged and, in addition, in one or more special aspects, be they curriculum units or techniques. From the point of view of the student who is not a practitioner, on the other hand, the particular technique that engages him will never, no matter how advanced and specialized his interest, be entirely unrelated to the several schools.

From his point of view it will always be important to discuss, examine, criticize, build, improve, reorganize particular units of the school series.

It will, after all, always be true that the prospective practitioner must select one school in which to work, and that the child at every age level stands at the center of the problem, requiring the techniques, no matter how abstract and aloof, to converge toward the several age ranges if these techniques are to be translated into terms of usefulness in education. It is this last named need to focus the several techniques at every age-range which corresponds to a particular school, that accounts for books and courses in departments of education which bear titles similar to that of this book.

II. The Work in Outline

This volume, then, is primarily organized to introduce the prospective practitioner to the problems involved in the conduct of one institution, with the boundary lines definitely horizontal, and indicating a definite range in pupil-age. While undertaking to introduce the student to the several techniques which have some bearing on the elementary school, this book will, in conformity with the point of view already indicated, present no exhaustive treatment of any of them. On the other hand, the student must be introduced to the essential, inherent, institutional problems involved in the conduct of the elementary school which, if not treated in a volume occupying this field, will not be found treated elsewhere, as there is no vertical technique or field of research which can do so.

Two assumptions underlie the specific delimitations of the ground covered by this work. One of these assumptions is that the student undertaking this course has already been given his preliminary survey of the entire field of education by a course in the history of education or otherwise, and is therefore prepared to examine in some detail one particular school. The other assumption is that he will be introduced in other courses more exhaustively than is here possible to such of the techniques as will be important in the practice of his profession as, for example, the special methods of teaching the fundamental processes; the special psychology of the pupil group found in the elementary school; the supervision and measurement of instruction, as well as other particular aspects of the conduct of the institution. This volume must be engaged primarily with the school rather than with the particular child, the particular class, the particular subject, the particular method. Work in these must run parallel with or follow the course for which this volume is intended.

A survey of the task to be accomplished is always of interest and frequently helpful. Toward that end we will proceed to outline the principal topics that will engage our attention in this examination of the underlying principles of elementary education as carried on in the public schools of the United States.

Our first task will concern the delimiting of the field of elementary education, outlining the specific objectives to be achieved, the history of the American elementary school, the locating of its place in the Amer-

ican series. The next three chapters will be concerned with the historical background of the American elementary school; the relation of this school to secondary education; the function of this first unit in the formal series of schools.

In the section which follows this discussion of the scope of elementary education we shall deal with the school and society, taking up in succession the relations of the school institution to the general and to the immediate community and the problems involved in the endeavor to make education compulsory for the entire child population.

Proceeding to an examination of the problems involved in the conduct of public elementary education, we shall discuss three major factors of instruction which condition the conduct of the school: the formulation of the curriculum, the principles of educational method and the problems which present themselves to the educator in consequence of the fact that children vary in native endowment.

Following this survey of problems general in character, we shall proceed to the actual instructional task itself. Under the general title, the organization of instruction, we shall deal first with the beginning years of formal education, then with the upper grade curriculum in an endeavor to outline in definite terms the specific objectives of the elementary school and the tasks which differentiate this school clearly from other phases of education; and, finally, with the organization of the staff for purposes of instruction.

In the last section, entitled "The School at Work,"