

UNIFIED KINDERGARTEN
AND FIRST-GRADE
TEACHING

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FUNKER AND TEMPLE

UNIFIED KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST-GRADE TEACHING

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GINN AND COMPANY

BOSTON • NEW YORK • CHICAGO • LONDON
ATLANTA • DALLAS • COLUMBUS • SAN FRANCISCO

PREFACE

This book is intended for use in kindergarten and primary departments of normal schools and teachers' colleges, in kindergarten-primary training schools, and in reading circles. Its scope has been purposely limited to the kindergarten and the first grade in order that it may deal in detail with the problems of unified teaching in these grades. For a similar treatment of the problems of the later grades the reader is referred to S. C. Parker's *General Methods of Teaching in Elementary Schools* and *Types of Elementary Teaching and Learning*.

After the authors had agreed upon a general plan of organization, each assumed responsibility for writing half the book. Professor Parker's work had been completed at the time of his death with the exception of a chapter dealing with handwriting. This chapter (XVII) has been written by his friend and colleague Professor Frank N. Freeman.

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Most of the examples of teaching have been generously supplied by the former and present kindergarten and primary teachers of the University Elementary School of The University of Chicago and other experienced teachers who have been members of classes in The University of Chicago.

Special acknowledgment is made to Doctor Charles H. Judd for reading the manuscript and preparing the Introduction.

ALICE TEMPLE

INTRODUCTION

Attention has frequently been called to the fact that the educational systems of this country suffer because of a serious lack of coördination between the various units which compose them. The elementary school is sharply separated from the high school, the high school from the college, the college from the professional schools. The same separation has been common between the kindergarten and the first grade.

There are indications on every hand that efforts are being made to correct these incoördinations by bridging the gaps in the educational scheme. The junior high school and the junior college are new institutions especially designed to remedy the wasteful practices of the past. In the field to which the present volume refers it has been growing more and more evident that there are children of kindergarten age who are mature enough to be treated in the way in which first-grade pupils used to be treated and that there are first-grade pupils so immature that they ought not to be subjected to the formal type of instruction often regarded as the distinguishing characteristic of the primary school as contrasted with the kindergarten.

In the movement to coördinate the kindergarten and the primary grades the School of Education of The University of Chicago has been a pioneer. For eleven years the organization of the work in the University Elementary School has been of the type set forth in the following pages. The success of the unified kindergarten-primary organization has been carefully tested and proved by the

experience which has been accumulated during these years. It is now proper that the program should be made available for others who are engaged in teaching in the kindergarten or the primary grades and in the training of teachers.

The joint authorship of this volume by Professor Parker, who devoted his life to the preparation of works on educational methods, and Miss Temple, who is the head of the Kindergarten-Primary Department of the School of Education, indicates the type of effort necessary to secure coordination. Teachers must be trained who are sympathetic with the points of view of the two institutions, and plans must be worked out in detail which will effectively unify instruction.

Professor Parker spent the last two years of his life in preparing his part of the manuscript. He became interested in the problems with which the book deals while he was Dean of the College of Education. His sections of the work were very nearly ready for the printer at the time of his death, July 21, 1924, and the chapters prepared by his collaborator had been read by him and had received his comments. The two authors had also the benefit of reactions to their general position which came in response to the articles which they published in the *Elementary School Journal* in 1923 and 1924. The volume presents, therefore, a thoroughly tested plan, sponsored by the institution with which the authors have been connected and certain to receive wide acceptance because of the authority of the authors in the field which they have covered.

CHARLES H. JUDD

DECEMBER, 1924

KEY TO BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The books from which quotations are made in the text are included in the bibliographies which are printed at the ends of the chapters. The source of each quotation is indicated by two figures in parentheses. The first figure refers to the book by its number in the bibliography at the end of the chapter, and the second figure refers to the page. Thus, (2: 18) means page 18 in the second book in the chapter bibliography. This system has been adopted in order that the instructor or student may verify or follow up any quotation without the ordinary reader's being distracted by numerous footnote references which are unimportant in his reading.

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UNIFIED KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST-GRADE TEACHING

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose.—The chief purpose of this book is to help prospective kindergarten and first-grade teachers to understand and use methods of teaching that coordinate closely the activities of pupils in the kindergarten and the first grade. It is also intended to aid experienced teachers, school superintendents, and supervisors in understanding the possibilities of unifying the teaching in these grades.

Curriculum and methods continuous and delightful.—In such a unified program there is no break between the two grades in curriculum or in methods. Plays and games, construction and drawing, and the study of social life and nature, which were once considered the peculiar curriculum of the kindergarten, now continue through the first grade. On the other hand, reading, once considered unsuited to kindergarten children, is introduced in the kindergarten as early as the mental ages of the individual pupils assure successful learning of this useful art. The reading which is taught, however, is not the "scourge of infancy," as Rousseau called it in 1762. Instead, the reading methods are so playful and delightful that the children find in them the same pleasure that they experience in listening to nursery rimes and fairy tales, and such methods quickly open the road to the fairyland of children's books.

No conflict between kindergarten idealism and essential social skills.—We wish to make it clear that we sympathize with the idealistic motives that actuated pioneer American kindergartners in their efforts to ameliorate the condition of young children and to bring more enjoyment and more socialized experience into their lives. At the same time we recognize the importance of the essential social skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, which the primary school historically has emphasized in response to definite social needs. We see no necessary conflict between these two points of view but feel that both kindergarten activities and the essential social skills can be merged in the education of children from five to seven years of age in a manner completely in keeping with the mental ages of the pupils.

Three main divisions of the book.—In the following pages we present not only the scientific evidence and principles that justify this merging but also detailed descriptions of the curriculum and the methods through which it can be accomplished. In order to assist the reader to grasp the organization of our discussion in its larger aspects, we have divided the book into three parts, as follows:

Part I. Unification, Purposes, Curriculum, and Equipment. This first part gives the reader a general view of the workings of the unified kindergarten and first grade.

Part II. Types of Learning. This part describes in detail the methods of teaching social insight, expression, problem-solving, recreational activities, civic-moral behavior, health habits, arithmetic, reading, and writing.

Part III. General Aspects of Learning. This part considers the general spirit that should prevail in directing pupils' activities and discusses the utilization of interests and provisions for individual differences.

PART I. UNIFICATION, PURPOSES, CURRICULUM, AND EQUIPMENT

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE UNIFYING OF KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST-GRADE EDUCATION

Period of experimentation.—The movement to unify kindergarten and first-grade education had gained some momentum in the United States by 1907-1908, as is evidenced by the publication in those years of two important yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education in which coördination of the two grades was a central theme. Since that date the scientific basis for the movement has been greatly clarified, especially through the study of the "mental ages" of children; and the practical unification has been actually accomplished in a number of schools. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace briefly the historical change from the isolated kindergartens and first grades of the earlier days to the unified organizations of today. This historical background will explain in part why it has taken so many years to effect the unification of the two grades.

Sections of the chapter.—We shall divide our discussion of the history of this movement into the following sections:

- I. The old-fashioned first grade.
- II. The isolated kindergarten.
- III. The unified kindergarten and first grade.

SECTION I. THE OLD-FASHIONED FIRST GRADE

Examples of A-B-C school and early dame school.— While it is still possible to find many old-fashioned first grades in which young children spend a dreary year in acquiring little more than a small amount of skill in reading, we shall, for purposes of illustration, use an example from the olden times and quote descriptions of an A-B-C school and of a dame school in New England about 1800. The account of these schools was written by a man who had entered an A-B-C school in Boston in 1805. Speaking of the old gentleman who, with his wife and widowed daughter, kept the school, the author says :

By him was I taught my A, B, C, D, E, F, G, my a, b, abs, and my e, b, ebs, after the old, old way — praised because ancestral — the old gentleman holding an old book in his old hand, and pointing, with an old pin, to the old letters on the old page, and making each of us chicks repeat their several names, till we could tell them by sight, though we did not know what it was all for. . . . [We spent] four or five weeks in acquiring complete knowledge of the twenty-six arbitrary marks constituting the English alphabet. . . .

From this school I was removed to another, Madame Tileston's, . . . where I was taught elementary reading and spelling, after the same ancestral fashion ; that is, I received about twenty minutes of instruction each half day, and as school was kept three hundred and sixty minutes daily, I had the privilege of forty minutes' worth of teaching and three hundred and twenty minutes' worth of sitting still (if I could) which I could not — playing, whispering, and general waste of time, though occasionally a picture book relieved the dreary monotony.

My dislike of confinement at busy nothingness, love of mischief, [etc.] . . . often entitled me to Madame Tileston's customary punishment of sundry smart taps on the head with the middle finger of her right hand ; — said finger being armed . . . with a large and rough steel thimble. (10: 210-211)

Origins of old-fashioned first grades. *Two motives.*—

The social motives which led to the establishment of these early primary schools were twofold: (1) commercial and (2) religious, as brought out in the following paragraphs:

1. *Commercial motives early found in medieval cities.*—

We find the commercial motive operating clearly in western Europe as soon as commercial cities had developed to the point where the merchants realized the need for schools to train clerks in the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Sometimes these schools were established by public authorities, but frequently they were merely private ventures, as suggested in the following quotation:

City clerks, vagrant ecclesiastics and scholars, pious sisters and nuns, or secular women for the purpose of earning their livelihood, or a little extra income, offered to instruct little children in numbers, reading, and writing, as they had learned these arts themselves. . . . Such teachers for children are mentioned in Frankfort on the Main as early as 1364; women teachers are spoken of in Speier in 1362; in Mayence before 1300. (9: 24-25)

2. *Religious motives.*— Examples of the operation of religious motives in the early establishment of primary schools are found in both Catholic and Protestant communities.

Schools of the Christian Brethren in France (1684).— The most notable example of the early establishment of Catholic primary schools is found in the very successful efforts of the Brethren of the Christian Schools in opening hundreds of such schools in France. The motive of social service to the poor was primary in the thought of La Salle (1651-1719), a wealthy Frenchman of noble family and a canon of the cathedral at Reims, who established this order in 1684, after some earlier experiences in organizing a number of charity schools for boys. By the time of the French Revolution (1789) the schools of the organization included about sixty-three thousand children.

Religious preamble of Puritan school law of 1647. — One of the clearest instances of the operation of the religious motive in the establishment of schools for teaching reading and writing is contained in the law passed by the Puritan legislature of Massachusetts in 1647. It reads in part as follows :

It being one chief point of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times, by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times, by persuading from the use of tongues, that so at last the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, that learning might not be buried in the grave of our fathers in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors, — It is therefore ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord has increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read.

Clear social needs for three R's in old-fashioned primary grades. — The examples which we have given of the establishment of primary schools in response to practical commercial needs or to religious motives help us to realize why the old-fashioned primary school placed so much emphasis on the essential social skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although it is possible to give examples in which either the practical commercial motive or the religious motive operated predominantly, it is likely that both motives prevailed in many schools. As time went on, however, certain changes took place in the motives for teaching these skills. For example, while the religious motive was retained in parochial schools, it declined or disappeared in most of the public schools of America as a reason for teaching reading. On the other hand, when our democracy developed, the need for skill in reading for purposes of good citizenship was a strong incentive for