

THE CURRICULUM

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PREFACE

SINCE the opening of the twentieth century, the evolution of our social order has been proceeding with great and ever-accelerating rapidity. Simple conditions have been growing complex. Small institutions have been growing large. Increased specialization has been multiplying human interdependencies and the consequent need of coördinating effort. Democracy is increasing within the Nation; and growing throughout the world. All classes are aspiring to a full human opportunity. Never before have civilization and humanization advanced so swiftly.

As the world presses eagerly forward toward the accomplishment of new things, education also must advance no less swiftly. It must provide the intelligence and the aspirations necessary for the advance; and for stability and consistency in holding the gains. Education must take a pace set, not by itself, but by social progress.

The present program of public education was mainly formulated during the simpler conditions of the nineteenth century. In details it has been improved. In fundamentals it is not greatly different. A program never designed for the present day has been inherited.

Any inherited system, good for its time, when held to after its day, hampers social progress. It is not enough that the system, fundamentally unchanged in plan and purpose, be improved in details. In education this has been done in conspicuous degree. Our schools to-day are better than ever before. Teachers are better trained. Supervision is more adequate. Buildings and equipment are enormously improved. Effective methods are being introduced, and time is being

economized. Improvements are visible on every hand. And yet to do the nineteenth-century task better than it was then done is not necessarily to do the twentieth-century task.

New duties lie before us. And these require new methods, new materials, new vision. The old education, except as it conferred the tools of knowledge, was mainly devoted to filling the memory with facts. The new age is more in need of facts than the old; and of more facts; and it must find more effective methods of teaching them. But there are now other functions. Education is now to develop a type of wisdom that can grow only out of participation in the living experiences of men, and never out of mere memorization of verbal statements of facts. It must, therefore, train thought and judgment in connection with actual life-situations, a task distinctly different from the cloistral activities of the past. It is also to develop the good-will, the spirit of service, the social valuations, sympathies, and attitudes of mind necessary for effective group-action where specialization has created endless interdependency. It has the function of training every citizen, man or woman, not for knowledge about citizenship, but for proficiency in citizenship; not for knowledge about hygiene, but for proficiency in maintaining robust health; not for a mere knowledge of abstract science, but for proficiency in the use of ideas in the control of practical situations. Most of these are new tasks. In connection with each, much is now being done in all progressive school systems; but most of them yet are but partially developed. We have been developing knowledge, not function; the power to reproduce facts, rather than the powers to think and feel and will and act in vital relation to the world's life. Now we must look to these latter things as well.

Our task in this volume is to point out some of the new duties. We are to show why education must now under-

PREFACE

v

take tasks that until recently were not considered needful; why new methods, new materials, and new types of experience must be employed. We here try to develop a point of view that seems to be needed by practical school men and women as they make the educational adjustments now demanded by social conditions; and needed also by scientific workers who are seeking to define with accuracy the objectives of education. It is the feeling of the writer that in the social reconstructions of the post-war years that lie just ahead of us, education is to be called upon to bear a hitherto undreamed-of burden of responsibility; and to undertake unaccustomed labors. To present some of the theory needed for the curriculum labors of this new age has been the task herein attempted.

This is a first book in a field that until recently has been too little cultivated. For a long time, we have been developing the theory of educational method, both general and special; and we have required teachers and supervisors to be thoroughly cognizant of it. Recently, however, we have discerned that there is a theory of curriculum-formulation that is no less extensive and involved than that of method; and that it is just as much needed by teachers and supervisors. To know what to do is as important as to know how to do it. This volume, therefore, is designed for teacher-training institutions as an introductory textbook in the theory of the curriculum; and for reading circles in the training of teachers in service. It is hoped also that it may assist the general reader who is interested in noting recent educational tendencies.

CONTENTS

PART I. ENDS AND PROCESSES

I. TWO LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE . . .	3
II. EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE UPON THE PLAY-LEVEL .	8
III. EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE UPON THE WORK-LEVEL .	18
IV. THE PLACE OF IDEAS IN WORK-EXPERIENCE . . .	26
V. WHERE EDUCATION CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED . . .	34
VI. SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN CURRICULUM-MAKING . . .	41

PART II. TRAINING FOR OCCUPATIONAL EFFICIENCY

VII. PURPOSES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING	55
VIII. SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL TRAINING	71
IX. THE SPECIALIZED TRAINING OF GROUP-WORKERS .	76
X. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING . .	87

PART III. EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

XI. THE NATURE OF THE GOOD CITIZEN	117
XII. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENLIGHTENED LARGE-GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS	131
XIII. MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	163

PART IV. EDUCATION FOR PHYSICAL EFFICIENCY

XIV. THE FUNDAMENTAL TASK OF PHYSICAL TRAINING .	171
XV. PHYSICAL TRAINING	180
XVI. THE SOCIAL FACTORS OF PHYSICAL EFFICIENCY .	189

PART V. EDUCATION FOR LEISURE OCCUPATIONS

XVII. THE FUNCTION OF PLAY IN HUMAN LIFE . . .	207
XVIII. READING AS A LEISURE OCCUPATION . . .	227

PART VI. EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL
INTERCOMMUNICATION

XIX. THE MOTHER-TONGUE	247
XX. TRAINING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES	255
XXI. SOME CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS	282
INDEX	291

THE CURRICULUM

PART I

ENDS AND PROCESSES

THE CURRICULUM

CHAPTER I

TWO LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

CURRENT discussion of education reveals the presence in the field of two antagonistic schools of educational thought. On the one hand are those who look primarily to the subjective results: the enriched mind, quickened appreciations, refined sensibilities, discipline, culture. To them the end of education is the *ability to live* rather than the practical *ability to produce*. For them most of education is to be motivated by interest in the educational experiences themselves, without particular solicitude at the moment as to the practical use or uselessness of those experiences. If they expand and unfold the potential nature of the individual, therein lies their justification. The full unfoldment of one's powers is the primordial preparation for practical life.

On the other hand there are those who hold that education is to look primarily and consciously to efficient practical action in a practical world. The individual is educated who can perform efficiently the labors of his calling; who can effectively coöperate with his fellows in social and civic affairs; who can keep his bodily powers at a high level of efficiency; who is prepared to participate in proper range of desirable leisure occupations; who can effectively bring his children to full-orbed manhood and womanhood; and who can carry on all his social relations with his fellows in an agreeable and effective manner. Education is consciously to prepare for these things.

The controversy involves practically every field of training. For example, the advocates of culture would have science studied because it is a rich and vitalizing field of human thought. They would have the student live abundantly within the wide fields of his chemistry or biology or physics without at the time any great regard for the practical use or uselessness of the particular facts met with. If the experience is vivifying, if it satisfies intellectual cravings, therein is to be found its sufficient excuse. They assume that enough of the scientific facts, principles, and habits of mind acquired will be of use afterwards to justify the teaching from a purely utilitarian point of view. In fact, they assert that these things can be better mastered when studied as "science for science's sake" than when narrowed down to practical science for the work's sake.

The utilitarians, on the other hand, would have science studied in order that the facts may be put to work by farmers in their farming, by mechanics in their shops, and variously in the fields of manufacturing, mining, cooking, sanitation, etc. They would have an accurate survey made of the science-needs of each social class; and to each they would teach only the facts needed; only those that are to be put to work. In an age of efficiency and economy they would seek definitely to eliminate the useless and the wasteful. To cover the broad fields of the sciences without regard to the functioning value of the particular facts is a blunderbuss method in an age that demands the accuracy of the rifle. It is to waste time and energy and money that are needed elsewhere. It is to force upon unwilling students things that can be justified upon no practical grounds.

A social study like history or literature the culture-advocates conceive to be chiefly a means of lifting the curtain upon human experience in all lands and ages. It gives the pupil an opportunity to view and to mingle vicariously in

the age-long varied pageant of world-wide human life. The pupil's business is simply to look upon this pageant as he would view a play at the theater. The experience is in itself a satisfying mode of living, enriching his consciousness, expanding the fields of his imagination, refining his appreciations. When in his reading he beholds the "glory that was Greece and the splendour that was Rome," the epics of Homer or the dramas of Shakespeare, he need not concern himself with the application of that experience in the performance of his practical duties. On the other hand, the utilitarians tell us that we would better eliminate ancient history and the older literatures. These deal with a world that is dead, a civilization that is mouldered, with governments that are now obsolete, with manners and customs and languages that are altogether impracticable in this modern age. In their judgment, in so far as we need history at all, it should be modern history drawn for the purpose of throwing light upon current practical problems of industry, commerce, and citizenship. The facts should be gathered in definite relation to the problems and not be mere blunderbuss history that aims at nothing in particular. And as for literature, they say, it would best be that which reveals the world of to-day: the present natures of men and women; present-day social problems and human reactions; current modes of thought; existing conditions in the fields of commerce, industry, sanitation, civic relationships, and recreational life; not classics, but current literature.

The controversy is particularly marked in the matter of foreign languages. Ancient languages do not function in the lives of men, say the utilitarians: therefore they should be cast out. For the vast majority, even the modern languages do not function. What does not appear in the lives of the people has no reason to appear in the education of the people. The argument is plausible, convincing; and yet the

foreign-language advocate is not convinced. He asserts that important matters are lost sight of; that there are more things in human life than practical action, however efficient; that living itself is worth while; that it is the end of education; and that the various utilities are but to provide the means. He looks to a self-realization, to a humanism, to a world of satisfactions that lie above and beyond the mere means to be used in attaining those high ends. He accuses our practical age of aiming at a life for man that is too narrow, barren, mechanical, materialistic.

Now, which side is right? Doubtless both are right. It is like asking the question, "Which shall the tree produce, the flower or the fruit?" It must produce both or it will not perform its full function. We have here simply to do with two levels of functioning, two levels of educational experiences, both of which are essential to fullness of growth, efficiency of action, and completeness of character. Both are good, both are necessary; one precedes the other. One is experience upon the play-level: the other experience upon the work-level. One is action driven by spontaneous interest: the other, by derived interest. One is the luxuriation of the subjective life which has a value for objective experience even though one be not conscious of the values at the time. The other looks to the conscious shaping and control of the objective world; but requires for maximum effectiveness the background of subjective life provided by the other.

The culture-people are not wrong in demanding an education that looks to the widening of vision, the deepening of the general understanding, the actualizing of one's potential powers, the full-orbed expansion and maintenance of the personality, the harnessing-up of native interests, the development of enthusiasms and ideals; or briefly, the full humanization of the individual. They cannot too much insist.

The practical-minded people are not wrong in affirming that man's life consists, and must consist, largely in the performance of responsible duties; that these are to be capably performed; that responsibilities are to be efficiently absolved; that there is need of technical accuracy, dependableness, industry, persistence, right habits, skill, practical knowledge, physical and moral fiber, and adherence to duty whether it be pleasant or painful; and that these results are not to be sufficiently achieved without education of the practical work-type. Upon these things they cannot too much insist.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE UPON THE PLAY-LEVEL

RECENT psychology tells us that man has a long period of childhood and youth in order that he may play. He plays, not because he is young, but he is long young in order that he may play; and thus through active experience secure his education. Play is Nature's active mode of education.

Shall a boy unfold his physical powers so that he can run with speed and endurance, or throw accurately or fight with strength and skill, or exert himself long hours without undue fatigue? Nature provides that in his play he shall run and throw and fight and otherwise exert himself; and thus make actual his potential powers. Physical play is Nature's physical education. Shall the boy develop the social abilities necessary for full coöperation with the members of his social group? Nature provides instinctive tendency to participate in group-plays, social games, conversation, etc., which develop his social nature, fix his social habits, and cement social solidarity. Social play is Nature's active method of social education. Shall the boy possess an unspecialized mechanical ability of a type that is even more needful today than in the age when man's nature was shaped? Fortunately, here again we find the strong constructive and operative play-instincts which drive boys to make and operate things. Give a normal-minded boy a rich opportunity to make things and to "make them go," — and one has then only to leave him alone with his opportunity. Nature's method of education will do the rest. Shall he be observant of men and affairs about him? Shall he fill his mind concerning the things with which he is to be concerned throughout

life? Shall he acquire and maintain masses of knowledge through the possession of an inquiring disposition? Again Nature has provided the deep-lying and powerful mental-play instinct of curiosity, the intellectual appetite, the desire to know. The boy is made watchful of everything that goes on about him, especially the actions of men. Thus he learns and thus he continues to learn throughout life. Mental play is Nature's active method of filling the mind with information.

Since education is so largely a matter of learning things, let us first take up this topic of mental play as the basis of intellectual education. One observes men and their affairs, the things of one's environment, and the natural phenomena by which one is surrounded, simply as a mode of living. Through such observation he is continuously gathering facts through all of his waking hours; and without question as to the use or uselessness of the information. He makes no attempt to observe merely the things that can be of practical service in his personal affairs. He lives most fully who keeps himself awake to everything before him and who sees all in due relation and proportion even though most of it has no visible relation to his practical affairs.

Not only does he observe directly, but he listens with consuming interest to the stories of things which he has not seen. Most of the gossip of the daily papers relates to things with which he has no immediate concern. And yet he reads and learns, and feels that if he does not do so he does not fully live. The avidity with which he absorbs the news or the eager curiosity with which gossips delve into the affairs of the neighborhood show the universality and the intensity of this hunger after knowledge, even of useless type. One drinks endlessly at this fountain without ever so much as raising the question whether the knowledge so obtained is or can ever be of any use. Like breathing, one

feels it to be a natural portion of living which requires no justification.

Learning things because of curiosity without reference to the use of that knowledge is really one of the largest normal activities of man. Knowledge-getting because of curiosity is analogous to food-getting because of hunger. One wants the food when hungry whether he knows anything about its functional value or not. The hunger is Nature's way of ascribing value to things that the man needs. Equally, the healthy mind wants to know the things that appeal to the mental appetite without care at the time as to their practical application. This knowledge-hunger is Nature's method of ascribing value to the things that the man needs — when he is too immature or too stupid to know what he needs. Such strong and continuing instincts impel only to things that are on the whole useful and necessary.

It is play; but it has its values. Although most things observed have no visible relation to his immediate affairs, yet everything in the community is related to everything else in subtle, intangible, and usually unknown ways. Each individual is the center of a vortex of influences. He needs an understanding of the total life of the community in order that he may adjust his actions to the factors of the situation as a whole. His current information concerning apparently useless things really gives him fullness of vision of the total pageant of community life of which he forms a part. This fullness of vision is necessary for understanding; for valuations; and right social attitudes.

While traveling to my work in the Orient, some years ago, I had occasion to observe a portion of the educational experiences of two boys about twelve years of age. The ship on which we were traveling stopped for a day or two at each of a number of ports: Hongkong, Shanghai, Nagasaki, Kobe, Yokohama, etc. Scarcely had the ship come to anchor when

the boys were off and away on an exploring expedition. For them it was a region strange and new. There was no assignment of anything for them to learn; they were not sent; they were not going ashore to get information so that they might recite upon it at night; it was not a thing upon which they were later to be examined. Simply a rich field of experience opened before them and they eagerly embraced their opportunities and went forth to partake to the full. It was simply play-experience resulting from their intellectual hungers. During the day they visited as many different portions of the city as their time and their means of locomotion would permit. They looked into the residences of rich and poor, into the shops, amusement places, religious temples, soldiers' barracks, streets and alleys, the conditions of life among the well-to-do and among the poor, etc. They came back to the ship at night with rich stores of experience and full to overflowing with information. It required no effort on the part of the adult members of their party to secure extended and enthusiastic verbal reports. The boys were living. They were not simply memorizing facts. It was all upon the play-level; and yet they were securing the best possible type of education. Had it been made a work-task for them with definite program and time allotments, with reports that had to be put up in specified form and with examinations to see that nothing had been overlooked,—would they have left the ship? And in what mood?

This experience of the two boys seems to indicate the kind of intellectual play-experience needed throughout the fields of education. In the same way, impelled only by curiosity and the play-motive, following the leadings of interest, children and youth should, it appears, wander through every important field of human knowledge and human experience. Without any particular consciousness of the serious values or purposes of the learning, they should thus