

an arm rest on the right side is obviously handicapped in performing this kind of school work, but it would seem much easier to place him at a table-type desk or even a "left-handed chair" than to force him to give up the use of his left hand.

While it appears from the studies quoted that handedness is socially conditioned, it is doubtful if the evidence is conclusive enough to furnish the basis for establishing a very definite policy concerning the treatment of left-handedness.

It may be assumed with a fair degree of assurance that there are degrees of handedness, an individual seldom being one hundred per cent left-handed; a situation which lessens the need of changing the handedness of a person.

If parents and teachers insist on changing the handedness of children the training should commence just as soon as left-handedness manifests itself. If the training produces no ill effects in the child, continue it, but if such unfavorable results as speech defects, nervousness, or irritability occur, stop; the slight advantage which may be gained by forcing children to adopt the common mode of handedness is not counterbalanced by the danger involved in the forced change.

Long live the left-handers; may they be allowed to enjoy life in their own way!

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THOMAS D. EASON

EDUCATING FOR EDUCATION

EVERY day one may find in some newspaper or magazine an article advocating a principle or theory of this or that concerning teaching. In association meetings enthusiastic teachers become over-enthusiastic over some new idea of theirs. In practically every instance it is nothing but a restating or a revamping of an old principle, some going back to Plato. (I might add that if we went back we could do far worse.) The Dalton Plan, the Unit Plan, the Platoon System, and hundreds of other plans are nothing new. They have been tried; they have been used for ages, but without their educational tags, and they have been successful. The world has changed, but education has stood still, or at best crawled, except in adapting new names to old ideas.

Once it was Greek and Latin that we taught, and that would have been splendid if we had really taught them. Today it is English and history; tomorrow it will be something else. And in each instance it has never been the heart and purpose and spirit back of and in the subject but rather a list of rules—taught because they trained the mind. Why not count the bricks in a wall and remember how many? A good rule would be to remember to use a ladder, for then when counting the bricks in a high wall the pupil can see them more easily. Yes, tomorrow it will be something else, and from all indications it will not be Life that is taught.

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It is Life that our school graduate is going to face. It is Life that he must know. The social, philosophical, and economic thought of the world—its leaders and its masses—are the all-important. It is not the author of Macbeth, the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth, the quadratic equation, Boyles' Law, but the significance, the causes, the results of such in the terms of the life struggle that he has, or is going to have, that is important. (All of this doesn't seem very new, does it? It is, though, for it has never been done except in theoretical papers delivered by a classroom theorist at some educational meeting.) My argument is not to theorize but to put into practice.

Here I am going to summarize in a very general and superficial manner my ideas concerning primary and elementary education. Today we spend from eleven to twelve years training, not educating, a child in work and rules that I would compress into seven or eight years, at the most. Not all that we teach, to be sure, but rather the barest fundamentals of correct speech and writing, the workings of the simplest of mathematical problems, and by means of clubs and organizations a general introduction to health and society. Critics will say that it is impossible to compress that into the length of time I propose—that the mind of the child is not capable of doing the work. How much of the boredom that makes the modern child leave school at the eighth year is due to repetition of the same material in the same way year after year? How do the critics know that it can't be done? It has never been tried. One does know that the maximum capacity of the human mind has not been reached. If we cultivate trees and flowers, they grow beyond what they were in their wild state—way beyond our fondest hope and expectation. If we cultivate and train more intensively and efficiently the mind, it also will develop beyond expectations. Then instead of turning loose upon the world immature, half-educated youths, we pro-

duce mature, well-trained minds able to state their job and, more important, able to carry their work to a successful conclusion. There would be nothing lost, and there might be much gained. It is worth the trial.

Beginning with the eighth and continuing through what is now our traditional twelfth grade will be roughly the period of secondary education, the period in which I am urging change and reformation even if no change is made in the earlier years.

One of the most pressing needs of any and all school systems is a trained psychiatrist. One that really knows the study could work miracles if the faculty and parents were in sympathy and were sufficiently educated to the importance of mental study. By educating parents and teachers, I mean showing them the value of a scientific study of the mind and emotion of the pupil. The teacher would have to be taught that the old slipshod method of classifying pupils into merely dull and bright pupils will have to be discarded. Parents would have to be assured that the school is not going to unearth family skeletons. The nearest we come to any real mental study, except in a very few isolated instances, is through our so-called mental testings or intelligence tests. Here what little we learn is not taken advantage of. We still think and teach in terms of group intelligence and not in terms of the individual.

Let me cite an example of two students with whom I have come in contact. The first X, an attractive, cultured girl. She has developed a great interest in things or subjects of a morbid nature. All of her themes are on the morbid. It is the morbid that she finds and discusses in literature. Why? What will be the result? That is our business, and we are doing nothing about it.

Y is from the country. She is sensitive, extremely nervous, attractive in appearance, but remarks dropped by her make me inclined to think that she feels that she is

thoroughly unattractive. She never associates with students, is brusque in speech, and by many is thought to be discourteous because of her brusqueness. She dislikes school, but above all delights in writing. Her themes always deal with the "Main Street" rural types. Is she an interesting and worth-while study?

These are only two. They can be multiplied many times in my classes and in every class and school in this country. We have the life and future of every child in our hands. What are we going to do?

But here I want to offer some suggestions concerning the education of teachers.

On paper our teachers are highly capable. They have college degrees, have written exhaustive and scholarly bits of research (often as a parrot repeats), and have had thorough training in practice teaching. What they lack is thoroughness in knowledge of what they teach. I have known teachers who could outline forward and backward *Oliver Twist*, but who were at the same time totally ignorant of the social and economic forces that went into the story. I know teachers who can tell the name and position of every bone of the human body and know nothing of the life the body leads, or the emotions, feeling, senses, and thoughts housed within the body. They have practice teaching, but will never make teachers in a million years. They are walking encyclopaedias of facts but lack knowledge and intelligence. Surely there is some way that our schools can get leaders and not have to rely on credits, certificates, and degrees. There is—if our powers in authority will shake System out of their system and put in a sincere, honest, and heartfelt desire to do the best possible for humanity, and not the best possible to advertise their school and their own names.

It might seem that I am not in favor of our teacher-training institutions. On the contrary, I am. I only urge that they broaden their field of instruction and stress knowledge and information concerning subject matter while they are teaching the lit-

tle tricks of the trade. Practice teaching too often is valueless because the conditions under which the apprentice works are so different from the classroom that the young teachers enter for their life work. As apprentices they are surrounded by all educational conveniences and devices, learn the use of such tools, and never, after graduation, come in contact with such conditions again.

Now as to subject matter. The basis of all the last four years of the traditional lower school is to be the study of the social sciences—philosophy, sociology, psychology, government, economics, and history. English, mathematics, and the more exact sciences are to be used as the utilitarian tools that they actually are.

In philosophy we shall have a general survey of the thought and beliefs of the world's philosophers; such a thing as is outlined in Durant's *Outline of Philosophy*. This will include a general study of those things that make philosophy—ethics, politics, logic, metaphysics, and esthetics.

In sociology there will be a general study of society as an organism—its problems, duties, and function.

In psychology, of course, much would be dangerous for the younger student, but a study of undisputed material is, and would be, valuable. We should teach the mechanics of the structure of life. We should teach some of the common mental phenomena, and lead the student to look at all things with a scientific attitude.

In economics and government the same general plan should be followed.

History as it has been taught—the story of wars and its leaders—should be scrapped. Instead, the facts of development, progress, and peace should be stressed. The civilization of peoples—their education, religion, architecture, society, the history of the church, the struggling social elements are far more important than much of the propaganda and the confused mass of dates and wars given out in doses to the students of today.

In the case of literature, in which I am vitally interested, for I teach it, I hold that it is far more valuable to attempt to teach and show to the student the relation of the poem or prose selection to the life and thought from which the work grew, than it is to teach the history, the life of the author. The student now knows the date of the birth and death of the author, to what school he went (as if that mattered), his chief literary characteristics according to the text, and his outstanding work, but knows little or nothing about his literature. There is no appreciation for literature as literature. He has not been taught the principles of criticism and the forming of an honest, independent opinion. I try, but doing that in one subject in a school, or to a group of students whose whole training is in another direction, makes little headway possible.

It may seem that I am suggesting that we add new courses to our school. I am, but I also hold that much can be and should be abolished. The separation of literature and composition is not necessary; the subjects added immediately call for the removal of civics. Too much stress is put upon athletics. Many of our language courses, particularly in smaller schools, can be discontinued. As for mathematics—scarcely any of that taught is either culturally or from the standpoint of utility valuable. Logarithms can be figured from pocketbooks. Not one student in a hundred or more ever uses the algebra and geometry that he is taught, and when the information is needed it can be acquired by investing ten to twenty-five cents in a vest pocket book where one can find the desired figures. Sections and classes can be united, and in all we will probably find fewer, but more vital and important, courses offered. My plan calls for elimination of waste material and the changing of emphasis from purely utilitarian and academic to studies of social nature.

Now for one more change. I state that

the subjects commonly called commercial and manual have no business in a secondary education course. No business, as they are taught. They train and do not educate. If students want such classes, let them attend a training institution where book-keeping, stenography, and typing can be mastered in half the time now used. When the instructor of manual arts, woodworking, cooking, and sewing is able to make of them the art that they rightfully are, they belong on the same plane as writing, painting, and music. But when they are taught purely as a means of making a dollar, they belong in an Institute for Mechanical and Manual Training. Education's purpose is to prepare a man to live—to know how to live, and not how to make money to pay the costs of existence.

I am not arguing that we should not meet the demands of our economic age. I am arguing that we should not confuse training and education. Broaden the pupil's contacts with the economic tools offered in the commercial course, but let the pupil know what their use and value will be. Do not compel some pupil, whose ambition and ability is limited to being a head-booker, to labor for hours over a history of literature, a study of algebra, and principles of composition and rhetoric. Pupils want and need book-keeping instruction. Give them that. Make them book-keepers and do not clutter up academic and cultural classes with people who do not want and never will need or use the academic information. Naturally this training is a public duty, but separate it from education.

One more thing. It is the duty and obligation of the school to acquaint the pupil with the best of all things. Poets, dramatists, scientists, craftsmen, their work and their art, should constantly be before the pupil. This can be done through travel, lectures, the radio, paintings, sculpture, and hundreds of other ways. Give practical work to the commercial and mechanical pupils. Teach the value of tools to all. Give them contact and association with life.

Education has for its primary purpose the inculcation of social consciousness and individual mental and spiritual growth. We are small, insignificant bits of life and all that is useless which does not tend to make us expand, recognize the value and worthwhileness of life. What is useless must be discarded. This country has the future of western civilization in its hands. Education can determine that future. What shall it be? Stagnation and final defeat, or sunrise, a new birth, and a more glorious future?

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