

The Training School Quarterly

Modern Tendencies in Education.

Every system of government, every organization of human society has some philosophy upon which it rests. The educational system of America from its beginnings has rested upon the theory known as Formal Discipline. This doctrine held to the idea that if we learn to memorize poetry the whole memory is strengthened and that we can the better remember names or dates. Or if by practice we acquire power through the eye to observe the flowers in the woods that we will be able the better to observe birds or animals, and that the power to attend through the eye sense helps us to attend through the ear sense. If we become a good seer we will thereby become ~~better~~ a better hearer. Under this theory the school was a mental gymnasium, and it made but little difference what the student studied just so ~~the~~ subjects exercised his various mental faculties. That these faculties were general and if so developed the individual could and would make his specific applications in his various life demands.

Educational psychology has shown this theory to be false. All learning is definite and specific for each learner and not general. Power is carried over only in so far as the things learned have a common element. Memorizing poetry may not help one to remember dates. The development of the power to attend through the eye may not help one to attend through the ear. The power to see flowers in the woods may not help one to see birds, it may even hinder him in his efforts to see birds.

This of necessity means a shift of interest from subject matter to individuals. Not that subject matter is not necessary, but that it is to be a working tool in the hand of the teacher for the development of individuals. Teachers must study children more and subject matter must become nothing more than a means to an end; for education is the proper development of human life and not the acquisition of book facts. A person

may acquire a vast store of book facts and not be an educated individual. Development of life instead of teaching texts must become the object of the teacher.

There are certain subjects that every individual should master; for they are the working tools in his development- in his education. As I see it there are five of these subjects as follows:

First, Reading. By this I do not mean simply the power to call words but more than that. It is the power to get the thought from the printed page.

Second, Writing. This means more than forming letters, words or sentences. It is the power to express ones thoughts through written language.

Third, Number Work. It makes but little difference what one does in this life there are constant demands made upon him to make some of the simpler calculations found in Arithmetic.

Fourth, History. No human being can adjust himself properly in a Government like ours if he does not know something of our national history and something of our state history.

Fifth and last, Geography. By this is not meant so much place Geogrphy as historical and industrial geogrpahy. Who lives on the different Continents, ^{and} what they do, what they produce

With these five subjects thoroughly mastered the individual will have the working tools necessary to help him "find himself." If he finds his place in human society then he can take his chosen occupation and master all the working tools necessary to make his life ^{the} fullest, richest, and most useful possible. It is the function of the school working hand in hand with the home and the church, to help each to find his place in organized human society and to ^{so} adjust himself that he may indeed and truth live the full life.