

July 18, 1929

People measure time on this earth by the revolutions of the earth. We sometimes measure time in other ways. I spent twelve months here last night in thirty minutes and enjoyed it. I noticed during that thirty minutes some wonderful transformations that were made of East Carolina Teachers College students and I enjoyed those transformations more than they did but when you greet me this morning with a bunch of old maids sprinkled in with sour wood I begin to question the work we are doing in Psychology. So much as a preliminary to the conference at Chapel Hill.

Each year during the summer quarter at our State University a conference on Elementary Education is held. These conferences were started four years ago by our Superintendent of Public Instruction and by Dr. N. W. Walker of the University. I believe one thing they have done is to cause the University to put in a department of Education. I have attended all of these conferences and for two years have been on the Program Committee. Each year for the last two years, at least, the programs have improved. This year the program was centered around child development. I think that is quite significant. Dr. M. C. S. Nobles, Jr. was responsible for the program this year and not the rest of the committee.

For a long time we people in education have been working out programs on the basis of theories. I think I am justified in making that statement. Now a theory is all right but a theory does not prove anything not even the theory of evolution. A theory is a working hypothesis maybe but if it will not work the theory is of no real service. I think I can truthfully say that this conference at Chapel Hill this year was not a conference of theories. One

theme was running thru the whole program. It was a realization on the part of those who took part in the program of the little child as being the center of their thinking and of their daily work in education in North Carolina. In other words, out of all these theories at last the little child is beginning to emerge and become the center. Teachers, administrators, and supervisors are building their whole program now around the idea of doing something to develop the child.

Child development was the central theme of this conference and on Thursday evening the first meeting dealt with the subject, "Solving Problems of Retardation in the Elementary Schools in such a Way as to Further Child Development". In other words, the Thursday evening program was built around the idea of doing something to reduce a large amount of the retardation in the public schools of our state and there were a number of good papers. And let me say this, while they had six or seven speakers on each program they had only ten minutes and at the end of ten minutes they were stopped by the presiding officer. I want to give you an idea of what this first meeting was about. They discussed, "Reducing the Percentage of Retardation in the First Grades", "Reducing Retardation through the Classification of the Six Year Old", "Reducing Retardation Through the Establishment of Opportunity Classes for Pupils Who Are Mentally Proficient but Who, for Various Reasons, Have Lost Some Ground", "Reducing Retardation in Craven County Through a Study of Problem Cases in Craven County", "Reducing Retardation in Edgecombe County by Means of a County Wide Survey". The gist of reducing by means of a county wide survey was to get together data about the children who are retarded in that county and to see what can be done. This was followed by a paper on "Pupils Cumulative Permanent Records as a Means of Reducing Retardation". That is one of the Most Promising ways of finding out the Truth about why children are retarded.

At the next meeting the problem was studied around some phases of

Child Development and one way of aiding the Elementary School Child to Develop Music Appreciation. You know the person who can go about a difficult task and can attack that task with a song in his heart is going to get it done. Music plays a prominent part, much more so than we realize. If you see a person who has an exceedingly objectionable task to perform and hear him whistling as he goes about that task he will do it every time. "How to Aid the Elementary School Child in Developing Art Appreciation" was another phase discussed. "How an Analysis of Health Education in a North Carolina County May Further the Development of Children School Age within the County", "How to Aid the Elementary School Child in Developing Proper Social Attitudes" were two phases taken up. Dr. Gladys Hoagland Groves of Chapel Hill gave the paper on "Developing Proper Social Attitudes" and they say she is the mother of two children who are not spoiled. Often we people who are studying educational problems make a dismal failure of raising children. One day one of these educators was giving a formal dinner and the guests were attired in formal evening clothes. His little boy made a ball out of some food and threw it at one of the guests and hit him on the front of his shirt. His mother said, "Dont mind the boy, his father is studying him". This lady really gave some splendid thoughts. "How to Aid the Elementary School Child in Developing Character" was one of the best papers we had. This was by Dr. K. C. Garrison of State College. He is a clear thinker. I understand they are going to print the proceedings of this conference and if they do I want you to read this paper and the one by Dr. Adams of our faculty.

On that afternoon we studied, "Methods of Instruction for Furthering Activities for Child Development". That is the part of the program that I came on to summarize the seven papers given. Dr. Adams read his paper and I did not find any fault with it. I think it was probably the strongest paper of the conference. He gave us a good paper. Now in this program they

worked out all kinds of activities for children and it was here I issued a warning. You know how they are taking everything about the child into the school room. When I was a boy I wanted to play my way; I did not want to be told how to play. We have not standardized to that extent yet. It is true as I brought out in this conference that the child is more than just the book learning we are trying to give to him and that if we want to make the best citizen possible we must help the little fellow in all of his activities. Give him freedom but throw around him those subtle influences that will help him without directing him. For after all the biggest thing in education in our nation is the development of the finest possible type of citizen.

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