A STUDY OF THE DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM
OF EDUCATING FOR LIFE IN A CHANGING WORLD

APPROVED:

G. A. Odam
Major Professor

Louis W. Newton
Minor Professor

G. A. Odam
Director of the Department of Education

Jack Johnson
Dean of the Graduate Division
A STUDY OF THE DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

OF EDUCATING FOR LIFE IN A CHANGING WORLD

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North
Texas State Teachers College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Elbert W. McAlister, B. S.

Fort Worth, Texas

August, 1946
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>THE NEED FOR A DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATING FOR LIFE IN A CHANGING WORLD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>THE DEMOCRATIC CURRICULUM</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>DEMOCRATIC METHODS</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

This is a study of the democratic approach to the problem of educating for life in a changing world.

Method of Collecting Data

The material for this paper was gathered through extensive reading and careful inquiry in the fields of democratic administration, the modern or progressive curriculum, and democratic methods.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the need for a democratic approach to the problem of educating for life in a changing world and to show, too, how this approach can be made through a democratic administration, a democratic curriculum, and democratic methods.
CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR A DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM
OF EDUCATING FOR LIFE IN A CHANGING WORLD

We must ask ourselves: Do we have the kind of world we want? Are we satisfied with things as they are? What kind of world do we want? Is our education fitting us for life in a changing world? Critical thinking on these questions leads us to the conclusion that we do have some difficult problems before us. We must decide on the kind of world in which we wish to live. Is our world

... to be the primitive world where men cowered in fear, holding their few precious values close—the jungle-world of today with its tools of terrible destruction held by leaders with the outlook of tribal chieftains? Or is it to be the world implied in our most adventurous sciences, which is being constructed for us on the physical side by our technologies—that world of a physically expanding universe, that calls so loudly for a socially expanding civilization within which human nature can find that larger personal differentiation and reintegration that it so longs for, so sorely needs?1

A new question arises: If we decide upon a world that calls for a "socially expanding civilization," how are we going to implement the change from the old forms to the new? Long study reveals only one answer: "The hope of the future, in its social and spiritual aspects, is to be found in education."2

Not the autocratic, traditional type, but the democratic type,

---

1 Joseph K. Hart, Education for an Age of Power, p. 191.
2 Ibid., p. 237.
so essential to the creative life, must be considered as that education of real worth.³ But education is faced with a multitude of heterogeneous problems that must be examined in a critical manner. Some of these problems, like man's adversity to change, go back into the early dawn of civilization.⁴ The next few pages will be given to a critical study of the need for a democratic approach to the problem of educating for life in a changing world.

Education, as we have known it, ends in sterile intellectualisms, as a rule. According to Joseph K. Hart, education . . . came out of life two thousand years ago, and may get back into life two thousand years from now. Just now it is above the battle! There is an enormous lack of critical study, by school men, of the presuppositions of their own programs.⁵

Taking this quotation as a point of departure, we find that Plato's philosophy, even though it is being seriously contested in some quarters, is still too much with us.⁶ Plato, we will recall, accepted an actual separation between the classes as natural. As far as Plato was concerned, "the separation was there, and, being there, it was real and right."⁷ We are


⁵Hart, op. cit., p. 112.

⁶Ibid., pp. 106-111

⁷Ibid., p. 106.
told that Plato set up the Academy in the light of this philosophy. The Academy offered an education made up of "ideas" for those who belonged to the cultured, privileged, and dominant class. Further study shows that this education had to do with the searching out of reality in the realm of ideas, and youth was to be indoctrinated with these ideas. This philosophy placed great emphasis on formal learning and memorization of materials. Schoolroom activities were far removed from real life situations. In other words, experiencing had to do with reading and talking about life rather than actually participating. Pupils competed for high marks, and the only aspect of growth that received outstanding emphasis was the mental. Some attention was given to physical growth, but the other two phases of growth were largely ignored. The classrooms were autocratic and teacher-dominated, and standardization was an objective much sought after. The teachers, or most of them, held that verbal learnings of the classroom would carry over into actual life situations. This fact is being most vigorously and scientifically repudiated by many educators of today.

In times past, and too largely in present school practice, the curriculum has been conceived primarily as formal subject matter (facts, processes, principles), set-out-to-be-learned without adequate relation to life. The pupil has too frequently been required to repeat words, express ideas which he does not understand, and to accept, adopt, and use materials which have been furnished him ready-made and completely organized by the teacher. "Learning" was thought of as the ability to

give back upon demand certain phrases and formulas which had been acquired without adequate understanding of their meaning and content.

In recent years, however, we have come to recognize that there are many different forms of memorizing and learning. Some of these are permanently advantageous; others are fruitless for the development of the child. The forms of learning which should be encouraged are those which lead on the intellectual side to generalization, on the habit side to the cultivation of useful skills, and on the side of attitudes and appreciation to the recognition of those relations which are most permanently satisfying.

Advantageous learning affects favorably the individual's behavior. Meaning grows only through reaction. The term "true learning" therefore, is applied to any change in the control of conduct which permanently modifies the individual's mode of reacting upon his environment. Advantageous learning is never guaranteed by mere formulation of subject matter which is used in instruction. The teacher must patiently strive to bring the pupil to the point where the best arrangements of subject matter are made his own for actual conduct through the process of true learning.10

We live in an age of power today! Technocracy is expanding at a very rapid rate. Is education for cooperative and functional living expanding in proportion to technological expansion? Educators say that this is one of the major problems of the educational field today.11 Education, they say, has lagged far behind the technological, and many problems are now arising in our society because of this fact.12 We see power and potential production staggering drunkenly and aimlessly


12Ibid.
in a world where want is prevalent everywhere. The following quotation comes out of the twentieth century's 1943 and 1944:

But Calcutta was ... a city of hunger and death. For those who lived in its sprawling native sections, for the beggars and untouchables who walked the streets endlessly, there was no rice or millet. For them there was only the bare sidewalk where they begged for food, where they rubbed their swollen bellies and crawled after affluent sahibs, where at last they lay dead in the gutter, awaiting the lorries that would come and take them away to the burning yards.

... ....................................................

For the bloated dogs of Calcutta this was a time of feasting. They roamed the streets, picking at human flesh and carrying human bones. They attacked the freshly dead as soon as resistance ceased. More than once I saw a dog fighting with an hysterical woman for possession of her husband's body.13

How big has this giant, Power, grown? A horsepower, we learned in school, is the energy required to lift 33,000 pounds one foot in one minute. The United States, we are told, had at its command in 1930 one and two-thirds billion horsepower of physical energy. Figuring that it would take about twenty-five slave power to equal one horsepower, would mean that we had in the United States in 1930 about three hundred twenty-five slaves per person.14 It becomes clear that in the realms of science and invention we have done wonders—surpassed the wildest dreams of the most liberal—but we have failed, and failed miserably, in the social application of these scientific wonders. This fact offers a challenge to education today; it is a challenge


that can be met only by the application of democratic educational techniques.

The present situation demands that education face forward and delve into the problems that are everywhere in life. We find America

. . . attempting to carry on a great experiment in democratic government under the most hampering conditions: A heterogeneous congeries of people of less than eighth-grade education, sprawled over a huge continent of 70,000 communities, huddled (sixty millions of them) in towns and cities, existing on a bare living wage, engaged primarily in the quest for food,—many totally ignorant of and indifferent to their collective affairs.

It is especially important that our youth should develop clear comprehension of life in America because of the cleavages which dominate it. The whole continent is ablaze with the impact of groups; in this respect it merely reflects the contemporary order in other countries. Suspicion, misunderstanding, friction, pervade the social life of peoples in many parts of the earth. Successive decades of American political and economic history have been characterized by their realignments of countries, sections, and groups. The contemporary order reveals this same division of our people into cliques. They exhibit distressing cleavages; for example, that of proletarian worker and capitalist owner, of Protestant and Catholic; of producer and middleman; of black and white; of industrialist and farmer. Scores of races, nationalities, and cultures have been thrown into the melting pot of America, but the process of coalescing is thwarted. At the basis of each cleavage is a lack of understanding.15

These problems must be faced in a scientific manner, and this requires critical and unbiased thinking based on facts. We must probe deeply into reality. It seems that too many of this world's people, along with Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Theodore Woolsey,

have been content to pull the blanket of genteel tradition up over their eyes and, in their waking hours, seek satisfactions in scratching the topsoil of reality.

The inevitable fruit of such thin soil was the genteel tradition, the excellence of which in the seventies New England maintained in the face of all frontier leveling and romantic liberalisms—a timid and uncreative culture that lays its inhibitions on every generation that is content to live upon the past. It was a penalty for backsliding. The men of the preceding generation had got their cheeses made—and excellent cheeses they were, with a fine native flavor. But the transcendental cow had gone dry and with no fresh cows coming in the Brahmins of the seventies were hard put to it to live an adequate intellectual life. Translations and medieval scholarships were no better than remainder biscuit after voyage.\textsuperscript{16}

An analysis of this quotation leads to this observation: One of the great needs of our world today is the practice of a dynamic philosophy of education—one capable of shaking off the archaic forms that doom us to a state of precarious existence rather than opening up the wide avenues that lead to the good life. And what philosophy of education is more dynamic than the democratic philosophy?\textsuperscript{17}

Education desperately needs ideas today that are born of critical thinking, and scientific observation is most important to the process of critical thinking.\textsuperscript{18} A tour over the country

\textsuperscript{16} V. L. Parrington, \textit{Main Currents in American Thought}, III, 52.


side during the school season offers an excellent opportunity to observe what some schools are doing with what they have. In many sections of the United States we will find school children trudging across eroded fields to schoolhouses where they will memorize some thirty lines from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and learn the names of the bones of the skeletal system of the human body. These same children know nothing of shock treatment, artificial respiration, checking of arterial and venous bleeding, or the underlying reasons why their fathers much borrow money at ten per cent interest in the spring to pay back in the fall. The schools keep filling them with "hindsight" rather than foresight, and thus the sterility of present-day education continues to live.

It is encouraging to note that educators here and there are beginning to recognize this sterility and to do something about it. Many others simply pay lip service to the new forms and crawl back into the seclusion of the old. Outstanding among those who have dared to forge ahead is Laurence Clifton Jones, "The Little Professor of Piney Woods," and a Negro, who started with $1.65 in cash and a vision. From this humble beginning he built a splendid institution for his own people near Jackson, Mississippi:

The school now has a $250,000 plant, 1700 acres of well-tended land, and an enrollment of 440 pupils ranging in age from six to forty, drawn from fifteen states and one foreign country. It has sent out to rural communities thousands of trained farmers, mechanics and housekeepers
and hundreds of practical, competent teachers. In addition it has carried the gospel of good farming, healthful home-making, sensible religion and stimulating social life to Negroes for miles around.

Now, in addition to a fine farm which produces sixty per cent of the food consumed by the students, the school has five handsome brick buildings and twenty frame structures. Students made the brick, cut the lumber and put up the buildings.\(^1\)

We may not agree with everything that is being done at Piney Woods, but it appears that they are on their way to that larger social world, for they are experiencing, and their learnings are born of understandings.\(^2\) Their sleeves are rolled up, and we can imagine how happy they are as they engage in these meaningful activities. They find dignity in work that gives poise and direction to them, and we are reminded that "there are three basic motivations found in work that cannot be found in equal strength elsewhere." First, there is the motive of service, that is, doing something that has value for others or for the group; second, there is the motive of creative activity, which means that we do things just for the "pleasure of creative self-expression"; and third, we see the economic motive which has to do with the directing of activities toward making a living.\(^3\)

\(^1\)W. A. Crawford, "The Little Professor of Piney Woods," Reader's Digest, (November, 1945), pp. 25-27.


\(^3\)Hart, op. cit., p. 167.
Adversity to change has caused education to lag far behind the technological; this condition may be due to the profit motive involved in the technological. The following quotation throws light on the problem as far as education is concerned, and it helps us to think of change in a critical manner.

The course of change that took place in society had different actors and new events, but the pattern seemed much the same from generation to generation. Each generation strove to carry on the same kind of practices that were known to its ancestors. An earlier age, its virtues magnified by legend, was usually regarded as a golden age from which the later periods had degenerated. Could these pristine virtues once be restored and some fixed ideal be approximated, the care of men would then be simply to resist all further changes, since they could only reduce the state to a worse condition. 22

Courageous living demands that we select the changes that we need and desire. If we look about us, we can see them being made everyday in the technological fields. Why can't we make them in the cultural and social fields as well? A little reflective thinking at this point indicates to us that we can plan for ourselves the sort of cultural and social world that we want if we determine to do so. It is a matter of learning to implement our wills. The democratic system of education, more than any other, can enable us to reach this objective, for the democratic way is the way of meaningful experiences and

22 G. P. Adams and Others, Knowledge and Society, pp. 336-337.
understandings. These experiences and understandings become woven into the experiential background and are, therefore, of vital use in later periods as well as the present.  

CHAPTER III

DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION

What is the school administrator's responsibility for the democratic approach to the problem of educating for life in a changing world? We are told that teaching is guidance. In the democratic school the teacher guides in the development of meaningful experiences. Further study indicates that meaningful experiences are vital if the school educates for democratic living. The teacher, then, is to promote desirable growth of her pupils in all directions in which growth is possible. If desirable growth is paramount as far as the child is concerned, isn't it reasonable to assume that the greatest responsibility of the administrative staff is to render guidance and service to the teaching staff in order that teachers might grow? Growing teachers are the only kind who can promote a democratic way of life in a classroom, and teacher growth is dependent upon an administration that understands the significance of growth in a democracy.

2R. H. Lane, The Principal in the Modern Elementary School, p. 117.
Administrators must set the stage for teacher growth.

The administrator's work is creative in nature. He must work to create an administration that is dedicated to the democratic way of life; this administration must foster the growth of teachers, and teachers who are growing will find effective ways and means of guiding boys and girls in the channels which will enable them to develop the ability to continually reintegrate themselves. We should note well the fact that it is "practically impossible to grow richly and achieve personal integration in a disintegrated society or world." The responsibility, then, first of all is on the administrator's shoulders to engineer a school situation that promotes the integration, or the ability to constantly reintegrate, on the part of teachers who are capable of doing the same with the children.

The administrator might find it helpful, perhaps, at the outset of his career or new venture, to ask himself this question: Why have I been employed in this capacity? The question is such an important one that he should be willing to spend some time in critical thought as to its meaning.

"The highest form of education involves the development of

---


capacity for criticism and evaluation, of independence of thought and action. As a leader in the educational field, the administrator should be willing to resort to the highest form of education in order to promote the growth of himself. How can the administrator promote the growth of others if he makes no provisions for the growth of himself? In teachers college classrooms today one hears the statement: "I would like to teach the democratic way, but my principal or superintendent believes that we should teach history, arithmetic, geography, etc., by drill and memory methods." This statement is very significant. It means that some administrators are failing entirely to see that life should be truly creative; that people everywhere should be able to recreate their environment and "mold it in accordance with their aspirations."

Life evolves, expands, and moves on! This is a changing world! Our economic and social situations grow more complex; and, because of this, many "have lost faith in our ability to master our own destinies . . . We are bewildered and do not know which way to turn."[We have problems, and we learn when we solve problems.] The administrator, then, must see the

---

6 Jesse H. Newlon, *Education for Democracy in Our Time*, p. 84.

7 Ibid., 85.

significance of life's problems—the problems of this changing world—and make his school functional. The wise administrator will note well the significance of the following quotation:

"The general point of view is that life and learning are more intimately interrelated than most people have hitherto thought, and accordingly that study and learning have in them more of the active and interactive quality that characterize life—and life in society—than most schools and school people have been willing to recognize."

The administrator must think in terms of goals. In the democratic school the administration, the teachers, and the children must have goals. Nobody should impose his goal upon anybody else. The goals pursued by teachers and children must be accepted as their own, and the administrator should mark this point well. Goals that have value to the goal-seekers are the only ones that motivate and cause a plan-of-action to be forthcoming. The goal cannot have meaning if it is divorced from life. Life and learning must be viewed as closely interrelated.

A comprehensive study of many works in the field of education leads one to the conclusion that John Dewey is an outstanding thinker on educational problems. He is unique because he has had the ability to see problems long before his contemporaries have been able to see them.


Educators now are inclined to agree with Dewey that, without efficient educational administration, compatible with democracy, all other improvements in education are "compromised at their source and postponed indefinitely for fruition." Administrators should note well the import of this significant thought of Dewey's. This means that all activities initiated and directed by the school must contribute to the process of education. If we intend to teach wholesome living, all educational activities must of necessity contribute to wholesome living. The democratic way is the wholesome way. The administrator must decide whether he is going to be an autocrat, a benevolent despot, or a democratic leader. He must look ahead in order to find the wholesome way, for the wholesome way is on friendly terms with wholesome goals.

In all fairness to himself and the society in which he lives, the administrator should examine his philosophy critically. He should ask himself: What do I actually believe? If he believes that his work has to do with guiding and serving, he is well on the road to being a democratic leader. He would probably find the "Creed of Democracy" which follows most helpful to him. We believe in a democracy which

1 - extends into every realm of human association
2 - respects the personality of every individual, whatever his origin or present status
3 - insures to all a sense of security
4 - protects the weak and cares for the needy that they may maintain their self-respect

5 - develops in all a sense of belongingness
6 - protects every individual against exploitation by
special privilege or power
7 - believes in the improbability of all men
8 - has for its social aim the maximum development
of each individual
9 - assumes that the maximum development possible to
each individual is for the best interest of all
10 - provides an opportunity for each and every individual
to make the best of such natural gifts as he has
and encourages him to do so
11 - furnishes an environment in which every individual
can be and is stimulated to exert himself to
develop his own unique personality, limited only
by the similar rights of others
12 - assumes that adults are capable of being influenced
by reason
13 - appeals to reason rather than force to secure its
ends
14 - permits no armed force that is not under public
control
15 - implies that a person becomes free and effective by
exercising self-restraint rather than by having
restraint imposed upon him by external authority
16 - imposes only such regulation as is judged by society
to be necessary for safeguarding the rights of others
17 - assumes that all persons have equal rights to life,
liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
18 - guarantees that rights and opportunities accorded to
one shall be accorded to all
19 - insures standards of living in which every individual
can retain his own self-respect and unabashed make
his peculiar contribution to the society in which
he lives
20 - does not tolerate an enduring social stratification
based on birth, race, religion, or wealth, inherited
or otherwise acquired
21 - recognizes a desire on the part of people to govern
themselves and willingness to assume responsibility
for doing so
22 - holds that government derives its powers solely from
the consent of the governed
23 - tests the validity of government by its effort and
success in promoting the welfare of human beings
24 - lays on individuals an obligation to share actively
and with informed intelligence in formulating general
public policies
25 - requires that the responsibilities and activities of
citizenship be generally held to be among the
highest duties of man
26 - holds that men deserve no better government than they exert themselves to obtain
27 - believes that the decisions concerning public policies made by the pooled judgment of the maximum number of interested and informed individuals are in the long run the wisest
28 - weighs all votes equally
29 - has faith that an individual grows best and most by actively and intelligently exercising his right to share in making decisions on public policy
30 - permits, encourages, and facilitates access to information necessary to the making of wise decisions on public policies
31 - provides free education from the beginnings of formal schooling as long as it may be profitable to society for each industrious individual to continue
32 - attempts a general diffusion among the people of the ideals, knowledge, standards of conduct, and spirit of fair play which promote a sense of equality
33 - permits the unhampered expression of everyone's opinions on public policy
34 - guarantees the right of free expression of opinions on all matters, subject to reasonable libel laws
35 - implies that all who are bound by decisions of broad public policy should have an opportunity to share in making them
36 - demands that minorities live in accord with the decisions of the majority, but accords the right to agitate peacefully for the change of such decisions
37 - exercises tolerance to others without sacrificing the strength of conviction favoring different notions and practices
38 - accepts representative government as an economy necessitated by the size of the population
39 - delegates responsibility to individuals chosen by the people for their peculiar competence in defined areas of action, but retains the right to withdraw this authority
40 - develops a steadily increasing sense of obligation to a constantly enlarging social group
41 - stimulates a willingness to sacrifice personal comforts for recognized general welfare
42 - stimulates a hope of constant betterment and provides means which the ambitious and earnest may use
43 - encourages constant reappraisal of things as they are and stimulates hope that leads to action for their betterment in the future
44 - uses peaceful means for promoting and bringing about change
45 - holds that the fundamental civil liberties may not be impaired even by majorities
46 - permits unrestrained association and assembly for the promotion of public welfare by peaceful means
47 - recognizes and protects the right of individuals to associate themselves for the promotion of their own interests in any ways that are not incompatible with the general welfare
48 - grants the right to labor at work of one's own choosing, provided it does not interfere with the interests of society
49 - guarantees the right to enjoy the fruits of one's honest labor and to use them without molestation after paying a part proportionate to wealth or income to the cost of necessary government or general welfare
50 - encourages individual initiative and private enterprise in so far as they are compatible with the public weal
51 - maintains human rights to be more important than property rights
52 - so regulates the natural resources of the country as to preserve them for the widest use for the welfare of all the people
53 - insures freedom of movement
54 - guarantees a legal assumption of innocence until proof of guilt, definite charges before arrest and detention, and open and speedy trial before a jury of peers, with protection of rights by the court and by competent counsel
55 - guarantees freedom from persecution by those in authority
56 - provides that no individual be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law
57 - permits worship according to the dictates of one's conscience
58 - separates state and church
59 - provides such security, freedom, opportunity and justice for all of its members that they will be qualified and ready, if circumstances require, to sacrifice in defense of its way of life
60 - renews its strength by continued education as to its meaning and purposes

If the administrator is democratically dedicated to his task, a study of the "Creed of Democracy" will lead him to ask:

Is our school really democratic? He will probably find it helpful to ask questions that are somewhat on the order of the ones presented in the following quotation:
1. Does one hear "we" and "our" from students, teachers, school patrons and administrators? Is a deep sense of possession expressed by all persons associated with a given school? The pronouns used in a school have significance.

2. Do students and teachers have utmost confidence that certain decisions are theirs to make? No school is democratically administered if the thinking of a group is junked on the whim of a "superior" or if decisions are reversed when they do not please the "boss."

3. Is there a friendly atmosphere about the school? Do teachers, students, and administrators enjoy working together? The human relationships in a school are a most important means of judging what kind of living is going on there.

4. Are teachers and students informed regarding the total institution as people are who constantly engage in planning for that institution?

5. Does the school have to its credit a vast number of accomplishments which indicate the active participation of many persons?14

It is far better for the administrator to measure his actions and those of the school against the yardstick of democracy than to wait for teachers and students to do it. His first move should be a very critical analysis of his thinking and activities to determine how they square with the democratic way. One teacher made comparative lists of some behavior traits that are characteristic of the autocratic administrator and the democratic administrator. They are presented here, as they are pertinent to the problem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Autocratic Administrator</th>
<th>The Democratic Administrator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thinks he can sit by himself and see all angles of a problem.</td>
<td>1. Realizes the potential power in thirty or fifty brains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does not know how to use the experience of others.</td>
<td>2. Knows how to utilize that power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Cannot bear to let any of the strings of management slip from his fingers.

4. Is so tied to routine details that he seldom tackles his larger job.

5. Is jealous of ideas. Reacts in one of several ways when some one else makes a proposal:
   a. Assumes that a suggestion implies a criticism and is offended.
   b. Kills a suggestion which does not at once strike him as excellent with a withering or sarcastic remark.
   c. While seeming to reject it, neatly captures the idea and restates it as his own, giving no credit to the originator of the idea.

6. Makes decisions that should have been made by the group.

7. Adopts a paternalistic attitude toward the group. "I know best."

8. Expects hero-worship, giggles with delight at his attempts at humor, and so forth.

9. Does not admit even to himself that he is autocratic.

10. Sacrifices everything, teachers, students, progress, to the end of a smooth-running system.

3. Knows how to delegate duties

4. Frees himself from routine details in order to turn his energy to creative leadership.

5. Is quick to recognize and praise an idea that comes from some one else.

6. Refers to the group all matters that concern the group.

7. Maintains the position of friendly, helpful adviser both on personal and professional matters.

8. Wishes to be respected as a fair and just individual as he respects others.

9. Consciously practices democratic techniques.

10. Is more concerned with the growth of individuals involved than with freedom from annoyances.
11. Is greedy for publicity. 11. Pushes others into the foreground that they may taste success.

12. Gives to others as few opportunities for leadership as possible. Makes committee assignments, then outlines all duties and performs many of them himself.\(^\text{15}\)

12. Believes that as many individuals as possible should have opportunities to take responsibility and exercise leadership.

After considering well the democratic philosophy and bringing his own in harmony with it, the administrator is ready to set up a truly democratic administration which shall seek:

1. To facilitate the continuous growth of individual and social personalities by providing all persons with opportunities to participate actively in all enterprises that concern them.

2. To recognize that leadership is a function of every individual, and to encourage the exercise of leadership by each person in accordance with his interests, needs, and abilities.

3. To provide means by which persons can plan together, share their experiences, and cooperatively evaluate their achievements.

4. To place the responsibility for making decisions that affect the total enterprise with the group rather than with one or a few individuals.

5. To achieve flexibility of organization to the end that necessary adjustments can readily be made.\(^\text{16}\)

Administration, then, must determine that administration is democratic. A democratic administration can give the necessary leadership and service in securing a democratic curriculum and democratic methods.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 15-16.}\)

\(^{16}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 3-4.}\)

CHAPTER IV

THE DEMOCRATIC CURRICULUM

The need for democratic education in a changing world had been discussed, and some of the characteristics of the democratic administration necessary to meet the problem have also been discussed. This chapter will have to do with the curriculum necessary to secure the democratic way of life.

Noah Webster is said to have made the statement that if youth were to grow into citizens capable of furthering democracy, it must be by means of an education suited to a democracy.¹ The process of educating involves a curriculum, and the curriculum must be democratic if it contributes to democratic living. An autocratic curriculum will not educate youth for democratic living. An autocratic curriculum will make for a way of life that fosters dictatorships and all of the attending evils.²

Perhaps at this point it might be well to look deep into the meaning of democracy again before proceeding further. In a democracy human happiness is very important. Human personality, regardless of race, creed, or color, is respected. Rugged individualism is not permitted to ride rough-shod over society, but the well-being of the whole becomes paramount.

¹A. D. Hollingshead, Guidance in Democratic Living, p. 1.
Human achievement is encouraged, and society is recognized as a growing society that needs the formulation of intelligent plans. In a democracy the individual is permitted to grow in all directions in which desirable growth is possible. The democratic curriculum encourages this growth. The individual has the right to seek a life which grows continually better.  

Life is an evolving process. It isn't enough to say that we desire to educate in order that one can adjust to contemporary life and solve its problems. The problem of education in a democracy carries far more significance; we must educate for life as it is becoming. This is an evolving and changing world. Things are not the same today, tomorrow, and always. John Dewey, in his very enlightening book entitled The Quest for Certainty, informs us well on this fact as he pictures philosophy's search for the immutables.  

Man desires security and searches for the unchanging in the hope that it will bring security, but his education has not been the kind which fostered critical thinking on life as it is becoming or life as it is possible of becoming. This absence of critical thinking has disrupted the delicate balance in the areas of reality and brought many problems of great magnitude to perplex us and our neighbors. These few quoted

3 Urville G. Brim, op. cit., p. 49.


lines set out the problem adequately and offer some solutions.

Men have wanted security, even against their inner spirit of adventure. They have worked for it, invented gods for it, built for it, prayed for it, lied for it, killed for it. It is the saddest of all human rates that in this modern world of machineries when we want security more than ever before, we are now realizing that this accelerated inventiveness has brought us to a universe in which the only permanence we can hope for is in the orderliness of change. We have discovered that change is more stable than changelessness in the old material sense. Of course, modern science has known this for a long time. Now, social understanding, and statesmanship in social organization, are called upon to catch up with the natural and technological sciences, and to enter into this new mind of the age. If we are to have a stable civilization, in any prospective future, that civilization will be built on the rhythms of change, and not on romantic "changelessness."

The present age offers us the chance to attain a completely human level of living. If the capacity to think is the mark that distinguishes man from the lower animals, then certainly the more thoughtful we become the more completely we rise above the level of the brute. This age offers men more conflicts, more problems, more demands for inventiveness and creation, and therefore more stimulations for thoughtfulness, than any other the world has ever known. So, if men have the ability to think, now is the time to demonstrate that ability; and we ought not to complain that now, as never before, we find continuous thoughtfulness necessary; we ought to be glad of this necessity and to enter into our human heritage.6

Taking this quotation as a point of departure for further study, we can base our hope for the good life on the application of critical thinking to our problems. Surely a democratic curriculum should stimulate critical thinking. This brings up another question: Has our educational program been suited to a democracy? Have our school activities been developing boys and girls capable of advancing democracy? Have our curriculums been founded on democratic concepts? Have administrators,

---
6Hart, op. cit., pp. 97-98.
teachers, and the lay public understood the meaning of democracy? How much have they contributed to democratic living?

If we find "continuous thoughtfulness" necessary, shouldn't we ask: What are we going to teach? Are we going to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, or are we going to teach people? If we are going to teach people, we probably should ask; What scientific facts do we know about how people grow and learn?

Early in our investigation we will find that growth is a continuous process. 7 This means that the revision and re-evaluation of the curriculum should also be a continuous process. The curriculum should be such that the desirable growth of children continues in all directions in which growth is possible. 8 Besides being continuous, growth has other interesting characteristics important to science. Its two phases are maturation and learning. We must recognize growth's quantitative and qualitative character; it follows an orderly sequence; the patterns differ somewhat from child to child; the growth tempo is not even; external and internal conditions sometimes modify the rate and pattern of growth; closely inter-related aspects cause growth to be complex, and we find that each child tends to grow in his own unique way. 9

7 M.E. Breckenridge and E.L. Vincent, Child Development, p. 6.
8 Lane, op. cit., p. 117.
9 Breckenridge and Vincent, op. cit., pp. 4-14.
In the study of these growth characteristics we must remember that there are four closely interrelated areas in which children grow: physical, mental, social, and emotional. In a democratic curriculum these important facts are utilized, and much emphasis is placed upon the fact that if desirable social growth takes place, it must be directed.

Democracy would have the curriculum makers adhere to the democratic principles of desirable learning. Critical study shows that

1. An individual learns best when he has his own purposeful goals to guide his learning activities.

2. An individual learns best when he is free to create his own responses in the situation which he faces.

3. An individual learns best when he is free to make his own organization of materials in the process of satisfying his own purposeful goals.

4. An individual learns best when he can share cooperatively in the management of the learning experiences with his fellows under the guidance but not the control of adults.

5. An individual learns best with sympathetic adult guides, such as parents and teachers, who know and understand him as a growing personality.

6. An individual learns best with adults who view learning as a genic process, not as a mere immediate overt behavior.

7. An individual accepts and acts upon the learnings which he believes are personally valuable to him.

---

10 Ibid., pp. 33-45.  
11 Hollingshead, op. cit., p. 67.  
At this point we have a few scientific facts to govern our thinking. In the light of these facts it seems very clear that any curriculum revision and reorganization would start with the child and his environment. Democracy demands that we start "where we are with what we have" and proceed scientifically. This process would require that we square our findings with the principles of democracy.

Principle 1. Democracy Regards the Individual as of Inestimable Value and His Development as the Sole Objective of Society.

Principle 2. Democracy Guarantees an Equality of Rights to All Individuals.

Principle 3. Democracy Insures Freedom to All Individuals.

Principle 4. Democracy Places the Relations of Individuals upon the Plane of Fraternity.


Principle 8. Government in a Democracy Is "of the People, by the people, and for the People."


Hollingshead, op. cit., pp. 11-23.
If, then, we follow these democratic principles in making our curriculum, we have hopes of creating a truly modern man. Let us examine the portrait of the modern man. He will be a technological man, recognizing the worth and rights of individuals regardless of race, color, or creed. He will be an artist also. Life in every organism will have meaning to him, and he will express himself creatively; and, finally, he will be a religious man. He will be spiritually sensitive.\(^\text{14}\)

It might be well, perhaps, to inject a word of caution before proceeding further. When we speak of change, we do not propose to discard the accumulated culture of the ages; we intend to use that which is functional. Change must be tempered with wisdom. "Change is essential to growth and development, but some degree of permanence and stability is necessary to keep from getting lost in the fog."\(^\text{15}\) But let it be said again with emphasis that our changes should be fully justified and engineered in such a fashion that they proceed in an orderly manner. We should never change blindly just for the sake of changing. Change is a matter of finding a more suitable way to implement our wills.

As we prepare to go into our curriculum work, democracy would ask: Who is going to revise or make the curriculum? It is most difficult to think about democracy without thinking of togetherness. Togetherness is an attribute of the

\(^{14}\)Rugg, op. cit., pp. 275-279.

\(^{15}\)J. P. Wynne, The Teacher and the Curriculum, p. 100.
democratic way of life. This togetherness, however, is not a product of force and coercion but comes from mutual understandings and participation in life as it is, as it is becoming, and as it should be lived.\textsuperscript{16} As we continue to think about our problem of curriculum development, shall we proceed according to the pattern set out by democracy? Shall we follow the autocratic plan?\textsuperscript{17} Curriculum making by a corps of highly skilled experts and administrators does not square with the democratic way. The efforts of these people become democratically significant when experts, administrators, supervisors, teachers, parents, the lay public, and children are working together on the problem.\textsuperscript{18} This is a part of the unfolding drama of democracy! Yes, democracy unfolding because of the understandings and participation of the members of society. This is togetherness is a must in curriculum construction.

A logical question to ask here is, how are we going to organize in order to produce a democratic curriculum? Critical thinking applied to this question indicates that we must cultivate a spirit of unity in the undertaking. There must be a goal, squared against democratic principles, and a democratic plan of action. If these requisites are had,


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 23.

\textsuperscript{18}Newlon and others, cited by Caswell and Campbell, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 171-172.
the curriculum movement will have value for people; they will put forth effort, and if people are growing in the right direction, problems are being solved.\textsuperscript{19}

Those who are going to lead in curriculum development should stimulate those with whom they work to do creative thinking and scientific study on the problem in preparation for the launching of the program. Out of this study should come the generalization that

The curriculum should be based on careful study of world life and of the child, as two major determiners of the educational process and objectives, and on careful analysis of the relative value of alternative experiences for promoting child growth. In short, research into all aspects of the program is essential to thoroughgoing curriculum development.\textsuperscript{20}

This chapter has come to the point where "meat can be put on the skeleton." In a democracy we emphasize "the continuous improvement in the quality of individual development and group living."\textsuperscript{21} This means, in short, that we must have a basis around which to organize if we expect to accomplish our objectives. Themes, culture periods, and social functions are suggested as possible bases.\textsuperscript{22} Programs of curriculum organization that promise the most worth for democracy are

\textsuperscript{19}Chas. W. Waddell, Corinne A. Seeds, and Natalie White, Major Units in the Social Studies, p. 13, cited by Caswell and Campbell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 393.


\textsuperscript{21}Henry Harap, "The Organization of the Curriculum," \textit{The Changing Curriculum}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 87.
those based on "areas of living" or "social functions." the social functions are presented in the following quotation:

After making an exhaustive analysis of thirty-eight different sets of classifications, the committee accepted the following nine areas of living: (1) protecting life and health, (2) getting a living, (3) making a home, (4) expressing religious impulses, (5) expressing aesthetic impulses, (6) securing an education, (7) cooperating in social and civil action, (8) engaging in recreation, and (9) improving material conditions.

Some broad planning must be done regarding the learning sequence in the curriculum. It must be considered also if we produce individuals who are capable of constantly reintegrating themselves—individuals capable of adjusting to life as it changes. Some schools organize their curriculum around a sequence that has to do with the levels of mental development; some organize around nearness in time and space; others organize around the complexity of social processes, and others organize around progress toward a social ideal. Progress toward a social ideal seems to harmonize with the democratic way. It has to do with the immediate environment of the child, a world that is constantly expanding, the importance of technological change, and the importance of orderly social change. The Santa Barbara set-up is presented as an example:

Kindergarten to grade one. Adjustment to self, home, school, and neighborhood groups
Grade two. Adjustment to community
Grade three to four. Further adjustment to our modern community through understanding of the basic functions

\[23\text{Ibid., p. 90.}\]  
\[24\text{Ibid., p. 93.}\]  
\[25\text{Ibid., p. 106.}\]
of living carried on by historical cultures of Santa Barbara and California.

**Grade five.** Experiences with modern power machine techniques, utilization of which has caused rapid social and economic changes and increasing interdependence of peoples in our modern world.

**Grade eight.** A broader and deeper understanding and a more intelligent utilization of new discoveries and techniques based upon the principles underlying the biological environment and their applications.

**Grade nine.** A broader and deeper understanding and intelligent utilization of new discoveries and techniques based upon the principles underlying the physical environment and their applications.

**Grade ten.** Orientation and thorough understanding and appreciating the changes necessary in individual, social, and vocational activities as newer techniques are variously utilized in carrying out the basic functions of human living.

**Grade eleven.** Orientation and thorough broadening and deepening understandings and appreciations of the relative merits of possible democratic solutions of the critical and persistent problem caused by an uneven development of new techniques on the one hand and the development of American institutions and social controls on the other.

**Grade twelve and on.** Further and more concerted attempts to formulate a reasoned philosophy of living which will be thoroughly in harmony with the aspirations of democracy and which will include a predisposition toward the modification, through democratic processes, of social arrangements for the promotion of the general welfare.\(^{26}\)

Perhaps the most fitting ending that this chapter can possibly have is a brief discussion of one school that is doing the job of educating for democratic living. The people of Holtville, Alabama, are accomplishing this job by living democratically in their community.\(^{27}\) These people, through their school, have raised the social and economic level of inhabitants.

---


\(^{27}\) Blake Clark, "Holtville Youth Leads the Way," *Reader's Digest*, (June, 1945), pp. 64-68.
of their entire community. But more than this, they have pointed the way to other communities. Let us examine a few significant facts regarding Holtville.

Holtville, like many communities in our state, was eroded, comparatively unmechanized; farm buildings were dilapidated; the diets of people and farm animals were inadequate, and the people, generally speaking, lived—or existed—without hope. This lack of hope caused several of the youth to raise the question as to what the future held for them. One girl said she wanted to go places besides the woodpile and the well. These people had a problem, and their problem was not to adjust to life as it was to them. Their problem was to bring about creative living, and they did it by the democratic approach.

In very simple language, they recognized their problem through the application of critical thought. They set up a worthwhile goal that had value to them; this motivated them. They put forth effort and developed a plan of action to reach their goal, and they are realizing a far richer life today. Houses are painted; land is terraced and contour plowed; farms are fenced; better animals graze the pastures; people are better fed, and labor-saving machinery has come. But most important of all, "human personality is being developed."
The social and economic level of a whole community has been raised; and this is due, in no small part, to the fact that their curriculum is meaningful to them. Holtville is an outstanding leader in the field of education for democratic living today.
CHAPTER V

DEMOCRATIC METHODS

This chapter has to do with the problem as to how we are going to educate. This statement implies that the discussion will resolve itself around methods and instruction.

How are we going to teach? Are we going to keep on doing it the traditional way or is there a better way? Why are we trying to educate children? If it is to help people live a better live, will the traditional method of memorizing and reciting facts enable people to live a better life? What understandings do we have in regard to the selection and organization of materials? Have we looked the child and his community over to determine needs? What things in the child's environment have value to him? Does he recognize the values that he should? Does he have a background for the recognition of values? What is the quality of the experiences the children of the community are having? Are these experiences conducive to the democratic way of life? What provisions are being made in the community to lead the child to solve his own problems? What provisions are being made for creative learning and the development of human personality? Are the classrooms recitation halls or workshops?

These questions could go on and on. They are pertinent, for we are thinking in terms of the democratic approach to the
problem of educating for life in a changing world. If we will consider a democratic approach, we must certainly need to think of ways and means of implementing this approach. Methods, or instruction, are needed, but democracy demands that they be surveyed critically.\(^1\) It becomes necessary, therefore, to ask ourselves: What are we trying to do? We want a better world. We want a better tomorrow. What does tomorrow promise?

The promise of tomorrow is a promise of constructive achievement at an unhurried pace, of a society characterized by mature culture; a promise of expanding personal opportunities, of stability for the nation and security for individuals and families.\(^2\)

Reaching this goal is a matter of implementing our wills, and methods must be considered as a means to this end.

Perhaps one of the most dynamic approaches to the problem of methods is found in the simple story of Robert.\(^3\) Robert, we are told, lived somewhere in the ranching country of the Middle West. His mother brought him and her story or his insubordination to a fifth grade that was operating peacefully. Robert had been a terror in his fatherless home. His previous school experiences had left unpleasing memories with himself and others.

Those who have taught probably know how this boy's teacher

---


\(^2\) R. S. Myer and C. Coss, The Promise of Tomorrow, p. 42.

\(^3\) A. Gordon Melvin, Method for New Schools, pp. 5-8.
reacted at first. She could see her well-made plans dissolving away with the coming of Robert, but she faced the facts intelligently and decided that she must "know the boy and find out who and what he was." On a short walk away from the other children the teacher discovered that Robert was an intelligent and misunderstood child. Robert discovered that here was a teacher who was a friend and not an enemy. He knew, at last, that here was a teacher who had a genuine interest in him. How different this teacher was from others who had shown a marked dislike for him! Here was a teacher who wanted to guide rather than dominate.

We can be sure that life changed for Robert. His teacher asked him what he liked to do. This was a far different procedure from those that Robert had experienced. Other teachers had not asked him what he liked to do. This teacher was starting with Robert and his world. This teacher was actually starting with the things in which Robert was interested.

Robert wrote down some things that he wanted to do. He liked to swim; he wanted to carve a dwarf; he wanted to make a Chinese checkerboard and a checkerboard. He liked to tap dance, write songs, and write poetry. These were the things he was interested in doing, and this is where creative learning starts.\(^4\) It must start with the child and his needs. It cannot be divorced from his interests. If the activities he engages in

---

are meaningful to him, his personality will grow.5

We might conclude the story of Robert by saying that his
teacher did not ignore this learning situation. She gave
Robert guidance as he pursued his interests. He did not fare
so well in music because the teacher failed to recognize his
ability and, therefore, did not encourage him. This, of course,
was a very damaging mistake, as it retarded his growth in this
direction. But we can say that this teacher did a very good
job of making the right approach to creative learning.

Robert and countless thousands of Roberts are problem
children because of the lack of democratic methods in the class-
room. A dominated classroom brings forth many damaging forms
of compensatory behavior.6 We are told that the guidance of
pupils in democratic living demands that the teacher possess
certain qualities of personality that will enable her to be
accepted as an active member of her class group.7 This must be
if the teacher is to guide in creative learning.

Let us examine the traditional method of instruction before
proceeding to the democratic approach. The classroom under a
traditional system is dominated by the teacher. This is an
authoritarian method of imposition and indoctrination. It
produces docile individuals whose duty it is to follow and not
question.8 The teacher operates with a textbook and rules of

7Hollingshead, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
discipline. She initiates the acts, and this is a fatal error in method, for learning takes place when "persons initiate acts and acts expanding become experience. Experience is the key to understanding."  

Too often in the traditional school the concept of learning is entirely wrong. "The process of learning is often regarded as confined to the experience of memorizing; the outcomes of learning are regarded as facts or skills and the ability to reproduce these facts from memory."  

The student is asked to reproduce facts from the teacher's lecture or from the textbook. Readings are outlined, and the opportunity for critical reactions to the content is lost. What understandings can the student get from this type of procedure?

Let us examine the important matter of pupil purposes under the traditional system. Too many times pupil purposes have no meaningful connection with the real life of the student. They are not vital to the student. He learns a minimum number of facts, rules, etc., in order to escape unpleasant consequences. He may be trying to please the teacher or his parents, or he may be trying to accumulate enough credits to get into college or out of high school. In short, he learns because it is more comfortable to learn than to face other consequences. But the big question is: Can he use the things he has learned under these circumstances? Where is the meaningful whole to which he is reacting? Critical thinking shows us that

---

9Melvin, op. cit., p. 16, 10Burton, op.cit., p. 23.  
11Ibid., p. 29 12Ibid., p. 13.
it does not exist, and we are reminded that "parts must be in certain dynamic adjustment to each other or the whole does not exist."\textsuperscript{13} Because wholeness is lacking, pupil purpose in the classroom is either weak or lacking entirely.

Since the problem of meaningful wholes has been mentioned, it might be well for us to dwell on it briefly at this point. In our approach to the problem of learning it is most important that we think "from person to experience, never from fact or fancy or lesson or book to the person for whom it is prescribed."\textsuperscript{14} The unity of the personality is dependent upon the unity of learning. If we attempt to square the traditional method with the "person-to-experience" procedure, we find that we are lost in a maze of pages to be covered and dates to be memorized. The traditional method simply will not square. The emphasis must be on pupils.

He who would teach must know persons and what they have done, what they are doing, what they would do. He can then help them to do all things well.\textsuperscript{15}

The lack of wholeness is said to be one of the greatest dangers in any approach to the methods of teaching. We are told that the failure to grasp this unitary quality of teaching is an outstanding fault among teachers and educators. They do not have understandings because they do not see their teaching as a whole; and, therefore, they do not understand its parts.

\textsuperscript{13}Wheeler and Perkins, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{14}Melvin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 14.
"Unless the teacher can conceive of all the learning experience as a single and living thing, all considerations of method must be worse than useless."\textsuperscript{16} The discussion here narrows down to the fact that "the whole problem of method must be known before its parts."\textsuperscript{17} Does the traditional school approach the problem of education by way of the whole method?

In the traditional school we find the forty-five minute period system interfering with the wholeness of learning. This system, it seems, serves only to chop up learning into equal segments. What can be accomplished in these chopped-up periods? Only those items that are learnable in forty-five minutes are taught. These items usually consist of facts that are simple, isolated, and fragmentary. There is no appreciable continuity of learning, and desirable learning outcomes are not really attained. Understandings, attitudes, appreciations, and abilities are lost to the students when continuity is lost.\textsuperscript{18}

Too many times the traditional school fails to see that the needs and purposes of education are to be found in the needs of the society which the school serves. A democratic way of life cannot be had simply by memorizing facts concerning cultures of the past. A school that does not face the problems of today is actually doing the students an injustice

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p.3. \textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 4. \textsuperscript{18}Burton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 27.
for these students are going to be hurt in a world of problems. They must be introduced to the world in which they live. They need to become acquainted with the nature of their environment. There are political, economic, and social problems that need to be solved. The child's energy needs to be directed toward vital problems. Opportunities for creative learning must be found.

... achieving or growing or learning is a creative process. Behaviorism which stresses atomistic, mechanical learning neglects the significance of creative intelligence. A child's response is not merely a result of past habits. The child ... attempts to solve the problems by response that seems, in the light of present insight, adequate. Even failure gives new insight, leads to somewhat different response.

Failure will come to many as an attempt is made to solve contemporary problems, but failure can be wisely used to promote desirable growth. Better means of implementation will be the outgrowth of failure utilized for growth.

Let us examine the modern school briefly. It is sometimes referred to as the democratic school. We will find children keeping pets, writing plays, growing flowers, singing songs, building playthings, looking for information, visiting factories and industries, discussing problems, reading stories, going on outings, planning lunches, buying materials, and doing hundreds of other things. This is living. Textbooks are merely tools to be used in the solving of problems. The teacher is an understanding guide. Life becomes meaningful, problems become

challenges, and the tempo of life takes an upward swing.

The experience curriculum is based upon a dynamic philosophy of the learning process. According to this philosophy, education is viewed as a continuous life process. The growth of the individual in the desired directions is paramount. Intelligent participation of each individual in society is sought. Experience situations are set up by the group, and these situations offer opportunity for growth and understandings which will enrich the experiential background of the learner. The democratic school strives to produce an integrated individual who will be capable of adjusting himself to a changing culture.

In the democratic school pupil interests and felt needs are the important points of departure. Proper learning situations must be engineered, and the pupil must be challenged to active participation. Let us stress again the fact that the democratic enterprise is a cooperative enterprise. Pupils and teacher plan together, select materials together, and engage in activities together. The goals are not imposed upon the learner; they are his own. The teacher must be alert for for real enterprises which will serve to promote learning.


26Ibid.
The following quotation will enlighten us on the nature of the learning experience:

It is urged in many quarters that learning should be regarded as that inclusive development necessary to meet and control life-situations adequately and that, in consequence, the learning experiences provided for by the school should be in the nature of real enterprises which call for the exercise of maximal self-direction, assumption of responsibility, creative thinking, planning, and exercise of choice in terms or desired life values.\(^{27}\)

In concluding this chapter it might be well to state that methods can justify their existence only if they promote desirable growth.\(^{28}\) In a democratic society, methods give freedom, for they enable people to attain their maximum efficiency with a minimum amount of friction. Under these circumstances, human personality can grow, and our changing world demands versatile personalities who can solve problems.\(^{29}\)


CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

By way of summary, the need for a democratic approach to the problem of educating for life in a changing world has been discussed, and the administration, curriculum, and methods necessary for a democratic approach to the problem have also been set out and discussed. It is hoped that this chapter will serve to re-emphasize some of the pertinent thoughts relative to the problem before us.

The outstanding hope of the world today is probably the hope for eternal peace. President Truman expressed this hope when he spoke at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 6, 1946. This is a problem not only for our own people but for all the people of the world. It is a problem for education because it involves an understanding of a whole situation. We must have a united world working toward the goal of eternal peace. President Truman indicated that the history of the war between the states can be made a great help in guiding our nation and world through the problems ahead.¹

It is significant that on July 13, 1946, President Truman had some comments to make on education that are pertinent to the problems discussed at Gettysburg on July 6. The president,

¹ "Truman Hopes for Eternal World Peace," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 7, 1946, Sec. 1, p. 3.
speaking from Washington, said:

It seems particularly important, therefore, that we should now re-examine our system of higher education in terms of its objectives, methods, and facilities, and in the light of the social role it has to play.

These matters are of such far-reaching national importance that I have decided to appoint a presidential commission on higher education.

Among the more specific questions with which I hope the commission will concern itself are: Ways and means of expanding educational opportunities for all able young people; the adequacy of curricula, particularly in the field of international affairs and social understanding; the desirability of establishing a series of intermediate technical institutes; the financial structure of higher education with particular reference to the requirements for the rapid expansion of physical facilities.²

It is encouraging when our national leader realizes the importance of functional and democratic education to our problem-solving efforts. It is doubly encouraging when plans are made for a scientific approach to the problem. If understandings can be had in regard to the social role that education has to play in this world, we can have hope, then, of bringing the areas of reality into a harmonious relationship.

When man is able to grasp the greatness of his heritage, life will take on new meanings. Men have really lived like animals in a world where they could have lived like gods. By their own choice they have remained poor when riches were within their reach.³ Harmony, beauty, security, and the expanding life are within the reach of those who are willing to work together. Education's job is to point the way and guide in

² "Truman Picks Group to Study U. S. Colleges," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 14, 1946, Sec. 1, p. 2.
this dynamic venture. Organized education is quite capable of pointing the way to a better tomorrow.4

In order to take advantage of his heritage, man must resolve to engage in the highest type of mental work possible. Some speak of this as creative learning; others refer to it as problem solving. The road up starts with people who have purposes or goals. A goal that has value motivates; this causes the individual to put forth effort and develop a plan of action to reach the goal.5 Is not this an activity in which every normal individual can engage? Is not this a plan that will promote understandings?

Administration, the curriculum, and methods must be set up in such a way that creative learning is promoted. A democratic set-up is the only one within the realm of possibility that can promote creative learning, for creative learning is in harmony with the democratic concept of freedom. We might emphasize the fact here and now that the only starting point we have for creative learning is the child's interests. But how many schools today still start on page one even though the child's interests are far from it? We might ask this question:

---


5Wm. F. Book, Economy and Technique of Learning, p. 405, cited by Caswell and Campbell, Ibid., p. 334.

How many schools are really educating for life in a changing world? A changing world needs creative people who can solve problems.

It becomes necessary, then, for the school, if it is to be a democratic school, to institute a program of continuous evaluation. This is one of the most difficult problems of administration and teaching. We must ask: Is what we are doing really worthwhile? What are we accomplishing? What changes are being made in the pupils? What influences is our school having upon life? Do we have suitable means of checking to determine whether or not our school is contributing to the good life? Our children must know how to live cooperatively; they need to develop desirable interests; we want our children to be able to make a good, honest living when they reach adulthood. To what extent is the school promoting the good life?

Probably the best thing that can be done for mental health is the development of creative ability. This makes for a balanced whole, and a balanced whole is capable of reintegration. The world needs people who can create, solve problems, and reintegrate themselves.

---


8 Ibid.

9 Raleigh, Statement of Aims and Educational Programs of the Raleigh Public Schools, pp. 59-64, cited by Caswell and Campbell, p. 563.

10 State Higher Education in Calif., Report of Carnegie Foundation...
the concept of integration is significant at this point:

Integration is a state of an individual in which his various habits, perceptions, motives and emotions are fully co-ordinated, resulting in effective adjustment. The integrated person acts as a balanced whole. He comprehends the various aspects of the situation that he faces, and relates them to the appropriate past experiences. The unintegrated personality reacts in a fragmentary and partial manner, ignoring significant cues that should aid him in adjustment, or else adjusting only a portion of his needs to his opportunities.\textsuperscript{11}

It is clear, then, that the well-balanced person is one who is capable of re-integrating himself. The following quotation is significant in regard to the well-balanced individual:

On the premise that the development of a well-balanced personality is more important than is the mere learning of soon forgotten subject matter, a number of educators have abandoned the conventional curriculum entirely, and have turned to a type of school organization designed expressly for the adjustment of the pupil. This movement has found its clearest expression in the child-centered or progressive elementary school. In such a school large units of subject matter originating from the needs of the pupils and rich in developmental possibilities, replaces most of the compartmentalized routine of separate school subjects. Pupils in the first grade may be found studying community life with special emphasis on food supply. At a higher level of maturity, a group of sixth-graders may spend a year studying how man has made and used records. Educational tests have shown that pupils gain as thorough a mastery of the fundamentals from this curriculum as from the conventional one. The chief advantage of the progressive approach, however, is that it teaches children how to live by giving them practice in living, instead of the less effective and more common device of compelling them to store up knowledge supposedly for later use.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11}Shaffer, op. cit., p. 332.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 507.
The development of creative ability will enable boys and girls to grow into strong personalities. School people should examine their programs carefully to see if they are conducive to personality growth. It might be well to note that mere practice in problem-solving in school does not aid the individual to solve his adjutative difficulties; neither does mere preaching about virtues have any appreciable practical effect. But a procedure that gives the student practice in a valuable trait and at the same time gives him insight into how the method can be applied to his own real needs has considerable likelihood of being effective. Most of the school subjects can be used as vehicles for achieving this genuine kind of education. Composition and public speaking can be made to assist the student to express his problems clearly and freely. The study of literature can give insight into human difficulties and their solutions and can help the student understand the motives and behavior of others and of himself. History can teach the origin and necessity of social institutions that perplex the youngster. Mathematics and science can be made the basis for an understanding of orderly and systematic processes of thinking. By proper adaptation of the abilities and needs of students of various degrees of maturity, these values may be achieved at all levels of education. But it must be emphasized again that the conventional teaching of the subjects for their own sake will not accomplish the results needed for the development of personality. Only when the primary attention is paid to the learner and his needs, and when the school subjects are regarded only as tools for the development of individuals can instruction contribute to mental hygiene.13

The problems created by this changing world are many and varied, but they offer a challenge to those engaged in educational work. On the basis of the facts that have been presented, it seems logical to conclude that these problems can best be solved by the application of democratic educational techniques.

13 Ibid., pp. 506-507.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Horn, Ernest, Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.


Lane, R. H., The Principal in the Modern Elementary School, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1944.


**Articles**


Clark, Blake, "Holtville Youth Leads the Way," *Reader's Digest*, (June, 1946), pp. 64-68.


Newspapers

"Truman Hopes for Eternal World Peace," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 7, 1946, Section One, p. 3.

"Truman Picks Group to Study U. S. Colleges," Fort Worth Star Telegram, July 14, 1946, Section One, p. 2.