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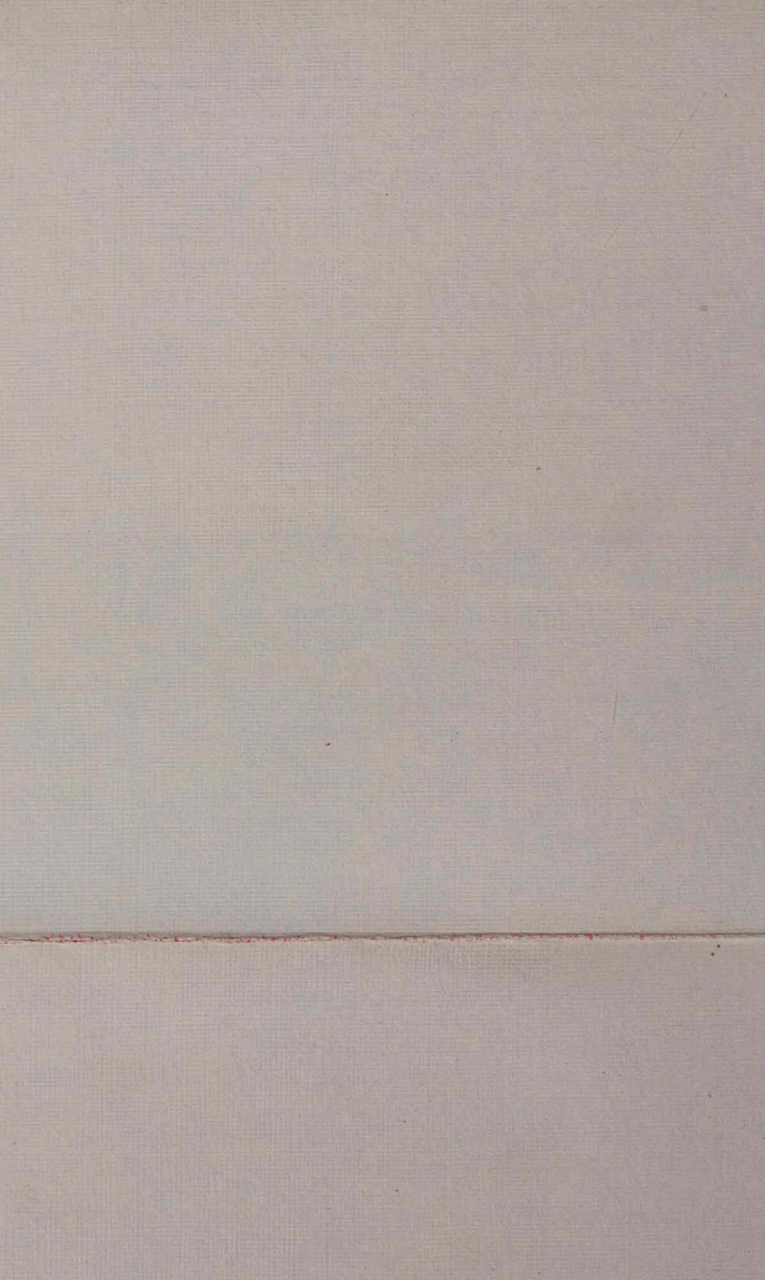
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THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

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Will the same training in the Normal School serve to prepare the teacher for both elementary and high school work?

If not, what training should be common to the two classes of teachers and wherein should the training and preparation differ?

I. GENERAL STATEMENT: 1. It is unwise and wasteful to classify prospective teachers at the beginning of their professional preparation because they all have inherited traits and capabilities which should be the criteria for their differentiation into classes.

2. It requires two or three years of instruction intermingled with experimentation to determine what these qualities are.

3. From the nature of the case two or three years in the normal school or teachers' college should be devoted to such general courses of instruction and experimentation as will reveal to the student what his talents are.

4. Differentiation into elementary teachers and high school teachers should probably take place during the fourth year in the normal school and in the teachers' college. Even then it is doubtful whether the two classes of teachers need to be separated very widely. Perhaps eighty percent of all the professional or technical instruction and preliminary experience in the preparation of teachers should be common to the two classes under consideration.

5. The most effective and practicable scheme in the preparation of all teachers furnishes academic and professional instruction contemporaneously and in the later periods joins with these some constructive experience in teaching.

II. BASIC FACTS: Professional preparation for all teaching below the college is pre-determined by the following facts:

1. Adolescence frequently begins pretty low down in the elementary school period and ends early in the high school period. It sometimes begins late in the high school period and continues beyond the time of high school graduation.

2. As to aptitudes and disposition, children differ among themselves in the elementary school fully as much as they do in the high school.

3. Elementary school children manifest in some degree practically all the traits and impulses discovered in high school children.

4. The subjects in the curriculum (whether for elementary schools or high schools) are relatively simple and easy, while the children to be taught (whether in elementary school or high school) are infinitely varied and exceedingly hard to understand and direct.

5. Sound scholarship in the content of the school curriculum is essential. But it constitutes only part of the teachers' burden of thought and study. The paramount problem is the school child.

III. ARGUMENT: Training is a bad word for our purpose. It savors too much of studied imitation, of conscious repetition and the exaltation of routine. It suggests the substitution of drilling for thinking. It signifies prescriptions and rules dictated by instructors and acquired by would-be teachers. The dog and pony show illustrates what can be done by training. The prospective teacher needs instruction and practice in constructive thinking more than he needs training. He needs frequently to apply and test his knowledge in concrete experience of his own. He needs direction and exercise in the use of his constructive ingenuity. Opportunities for application and test of his knowledge are many and varied. In the great cities the potency of mechanism stifles spontaneity and power of personal reaction. In the country at large there is much opportunity for wholesome professional growth through practice which is not over-directed. This may be in practice schools, or through substitute work in schools of villages and small cities, but best of all in rural schools.

The typical graduate of the normal school and of the teachers' college goes about his work in too large a degree conscious of rules and prescriptions learned by him while undergoing training. But he should be nearly unconscious of acquired methods. He should attack his work with his energies centered upon the curious, inquisitive, kaleidoscopic group of persons given him to teach or exploit. During his professional preparation his skill in adaptation and his creative imagination need stimulating to the utmost. By effort he should acquire the ability to lose himself in guiding the learner and in adapting knowledge to the use of the learner. There is something in all this vastly better than the thing we call training.

The curriculum used in educating children is relatively simple and stable; but the children furnish a varying stream of thought and action exceedingly complex and difficult to comprehend. We count out a few hundred facts to be taught in the high school. We classify, tabulate and label them. We give ample reference to bibliographies. Most of the high school teachers have spent

some years in college learning the contents of the curriculum. We permit them to make diagnoses off-hand and administer the medicine with reckless unconcern. Our prescriptions are dealt out chiefly by the rule of cut and try. No one has attempted to classify, measure and label the children of the high school classes.

Custom compels the elementary teacher to learn the natural traits of children and to appeal to the children through things which are known to them. But custom allows the high school teacher tolerably free rein to follow his tastes and inclinations. Hence he usually patterns after those who taught him. With somewhat better scholastic acquirements than the elementary teacher has, he is frequently a narrower person living more within his limited specialties and teaching subjects, not persons. He is sometimes woefully ignorant of the child to be taught.

We are not likely to make progress excepting in spots until some parts of our educational creed are reconstructed. One of them innocently promulgated from the circles of higher education is to the effect that a half educated person is good enough to teach children up to and including the last day in the elementary school while a fully educated person is needed to take charge of the children the next day in school, i. e., the first day in the high school. By this tenet the typical Normal School graduate with insufficient academic attainments and much dogma stands for the half educated person while the University graduate crammed and surfeited with ill digested facts and theories acquired in college lecture rooms represents the fully educated person. This creed is convenient and practical. It is more easily lived up to than a better creed would be. It is damaging to all education.

I think we should repudiate these invidious discriminations, for if any one needs a college education it is the teacher who guides the children through the varied subjects used in the grammar school grade. If any one needs critical and available knowledge of human nature in the uncertain period of childhood and the stormy stages of adolescence, it is the teacher of the high school child.

Most of the normal schools offer limited courses which high

school graduates finish in two years. This custom precludes separation of students with a view to preparing them for different kinds of service, because it is impossible in so short a time to differentiate and test the students sufficiently to determine the kind of teaching to which they are severally adapted. Out of a lot of two year old colts a horse trainer judging from structure may select the trotting horse or the roadster or the one to pull the beer wagon; but we can't so classify prospective teachers. One professor of education in a great university informs me that the girls entering his department have already decided to be high school teachers. There is an educational caste in his state. He says the graduates of his department would be humiliated were they required to teach in elementary schools; but some of these prospective teachers are by nature and acquired traits adapted to the work of primary teachers and nothing else; others among them are versatile, forceful persons, adapted to the varied life of the grammar school teacher and wholly unfit for the confining specialties of secondary education. But it requires many months of time to classify these persons and so direct their study and work that no part of their professional lives shall be wasted. It therefore seems clear that a teachers' college or normal school offering such a short cut to professional life as a two year's course, should devote itself to general courses of instruction and practice, leaving final differentiation to be determined after graduation.

But some normal schools offer academic courses covering the college curriculum, about two-thirds of the student's energy being devoted to academic subjects; about one-third, to professional preparation. Such schools offer special courses for the different classes of teachers. But they find that a very large part of all that the elementary teacher should know is needed also by the high school teacher and vice versa. They find that the high school teacher should not be ignorant of the phases of life in elementary schools; for it is impossible to guide with certainty the high school student if the teacher is ignorant of the preliminary stages through which the student must have come. As an illustration, suppose a would-be teacher detaches himself

from ordinary family life for a period of five or six years and isolates himself in university life to delve in knowledge and perchance to write a hundred letters for research material out of which to make a thesis. Will he not certainly get out of sympathy with the ways of child life? Is it not clear that he will have to serve an expensive apprenticeship in order to reinstate himself in the ideals of child life? Must he not learn by wasteful experiment to interpret the inherited and acquired qualities in the victims of his empiricism?

The facts seem to show unmistakably the unsoundness of the doctrine that a child may at one time have for his teacher a sensible, practical, resourceful, person of meagre academic attainments and at another time a teacher of deep scholarship in a few specialties and dense ignorance in more vital things. And surely the typical normal school should stand for better scholarship in its graduates; but the university should remove the strong hand with which it clutches the high school teaching corps. The normal school should look into and master the requirements of high school instruction. The university should have a higher conception of the preparation of all teachers. It should be as close to the elementary school as to the high school. The university now stands for knowledge as against processes in teaching. It should go to the very foundations of that knowledge which appertains to the capabilities, inclinations, inheritances and possibilities of the child and the youth to be taught.

This paper presents no specifics, devices, schemes or mechanisms for preparing high school teachers. It seeks to make clear some conceptions of life in education which ought to be wrought into the constitution of every would-be teacher.

The school child from six to twenty is a child through all his years of schooling. He is the product of forces preceding him. His inheritances and experiences make him what he is. Without knowledge of these potencies his teacher can not with certainty direct his energies.

We have a somewhat top heavy high school curriculum. Higher education provides for that and sends peripatetic pedagogs

to enforce its dicta. The typical high school teacher lacks sympathy for and insight into the transition period of growing high school children, too many of whom suffer with mental dyspepsia, being loaded with undigested and indigestible food for the mind. Fresh green graduates in the role of teachers are driving out our restless boys from the high schools. Girls being used to the cramping effect of conventionalities, can not be driven from school by empiricism, tyranny or routine. Yet they suffer much.

To meet the conditions teachers will have to be so prepared as to know the back-ground below the plane of consciousness in the high school child and see how things must look to him. They will have to be capable of worrying over his habits and deeds. They will have to be able to discover the avenues to his consciousness. By instruction and trial they will be obliged to learn how to reach his consciousness through its content in order to direct energy in the mastery of things outside that content. They have no right to invade class rooms with masses of knowledge all formulated and ready to transfer to the consciousness of the high school child regardless of his previous knowledge and experience.

Each boy lives in a world of concrete tangible things. These constitute the soil in which to sow. But first they have to be discovered so that we may start the boy from things known to him in his work and play. Conceptions of Grammar are nearly impossible to some sensible boys because they have no kindred ideas to compare it with.

This paper therefore ventures to suggest some mental states or attitudes with which efficient teachers by instruction or experience grow familiar. These states or attitudes need not be known in any particular form; but their recognition, study and use become part of the conscious or unconscious habit of every efficient teacher in every school. Among these may be mentioned the following:

1. The vegetative or un-impressionable state of mind. Students at times do not hear what is said to them. Though respectful in bodily attitude their minds seem inactive or non-

receptive. At other times they are wakeful, attentive, thoughtful, in **receptive attitude**. Many of them are non-receptive because the only existing avenues to their consciousness are ignored. The inattention of children is usually not their fault. It is just a part of themselves. No two are reached equally well at the same time through the same avenues to their consciousness. Each child has a mass of concrete personal experiences through which he hears and sees. He is receptive when approached through these experiences. When not so approached he is non-receptive. Skillful and sympathetic teachers never proceed without believing that those to be taught are in receptive attitude. And it is for prospective teachers through instruction and experiment to gain insight into varied human nature so that they may with certainty secure this attitude even from the most indifferent students.

2. Through the **recitative attitude** we secure expression of the simplest kind of mental reaction. This attitude does not imply much thinking. It does not require much. It implies just enough of mental reaction to reproduce forms spoken or otherwise delivered or assigned by teachers. From primary school to college, typical lesson assignments pre-suppose that lessons are to be looked at or heard and reproduced to the teacher in the way he wants them delivered to him. And although the recitative attitude signifies poor teaching and vague conceptions of the teacher's relation to the one taught, it is still the pedagogue's main stay, his stock in trade, his source of greatest pride. To lead young teachers to use it effectively and yet to realize its utter inadequacy by itself is one of the hardest and longest tasks in the preparation of all teachers.

3. The **reiterative attitude** is the recitative attitude with concentration a little prolonged. It is based upon good receptivity. But the reciter in this attitude is unduly conscious of the forms of expression. He lacks spontaneity. When started on a paragraph or a page which he is to reiterate he is like a boy coasting; it is disagreeable to be upset. He can't get another good start without returning to the point of departure. But I

have visited many high school teachers and college professors who rely chiefly upon the reiterative attitude and glow with enthusiasm when a poor parrot of a student can repeat, perchance in his own words, a long paragraph or a long lesson.

4. Without a generation of college professors who know good teaching and practice it, the preparation of high school teachers can never succeed very well. So often the professor says to his students: "Read the book and get the author's thought"; or "Listen to me and get my thought." But reading is not getting another person's thought. Reading is having one's own thoughts. Reading is thinking; and hearing-language is thinking. So long as teachers and pupils meet chiefly for recitations their thinking is of a low type. Infinitely better than reciting and reiterating is cogitating. Every true teacher secures from each one taught the **cogitative attitude** of mind. But the typical professor dislikes to be interrupted in his lectures. He desires students to hear and reproduce "in substance" what he says. He seems not to know that hearing-language and observing and reading are all thinking processes requiring continuously the cogitative attitude of the mind. He is too commonly a recitationist; but he influences tremendously the high school teachers. They follow his ways. His apparent purpose is to produce reciters, rather than thinkers. He thinks and formulates for them. They recite after him. How delightful it is to run across those rare ones among us who are skillful in having students work out and think out and formulate subject matter with them.

It is for normal schools and teachers' colleges to recast a great part of the current conception of the teacher's function and by a large variety of teaching experiments to bring prospective teachers into a condition of constant eagerness to teach skillfully through utilization of the ever varying attitudes of those to be taught.

5-7. The **inquisitive, skeptical and critical attitudes** of mind are suppressed in a large proportion of high school and college classes. The typical recitation hearer does not enjoy them.

They savor too much of disrespect for his dogmatism. They throw him off his beaten track. They disturb his habit as a recitationist. They dislocate the adjustment of his oft repeated story. They are too much like life outside the school; they turn the mind from form to content. They lead towards definite questions, answers, arguments and conclusions. They force issues to finalities. They are the delight of the full fledged artist teacher in every school of every kind.

8. Another characteristic of good teaching is the **combative** or disputative mental **attitude** which implies living together as student and teacher and struggling with one another in friendly combat. In this attitude the student wouldn't hurt the teacher's feelings, the teacher wouldn't play boss or dogmatist, both student and teacher delight in courteously making unlooked-for interpretation of things, teacher and student live together in subjects, work out things together, indulge in sparkling, friendly, cross fire, and welcome witty retorts made in good temper. But how can normal schools and teachers' colleges prepare teachers to skillfully utilize this state of mind? Partly perhaps by instruction, but more by exemplifying it through companionship with students in class rooms while teaching classes in the ordinary academic subjects. And the college professor should give us a square deal and do his share.

9. The **discursive** or argumentative **attitude** of the mind is better still. As a school inspector I many times longed to discover some difference of opinion between the high school teacher and his students. The peaceful, monotonous harmony which commonly prevails in the high school classes, means low mental vitality and wasted opportunities. It marks long and slow growth into habitual credulity. Where the critical, honestly skeptical, inquisitive, cogitative attitudes are utilized, the many persons taught see and think of many things which the person who teaches can not see or think of. Frank and honest exchange of ideas as to how things look does not mean waste. It means joint action and larger thought product. It means divided responsibilities and definite conclusions. It does not mean opinions

formed by teacher and taught to students. It means conclusions that stick forever because they are worked out in the friendly competition of many persons, each one's notion being tested by the criticism of many others.

10. Best of all is the **constructive attitude**. It is seldom found in the typical high school recitation. It is sometimes found in the grammar school grades where alert, well taught, masterful teachers dare allow their pupils to think for themselves, to struggle with subject matter, to sum up or build up conclusions and declare where they are, how far they have come, and what they anticipate in view of the mental structures already erected.

This list of attitudes is illustrative, not exhaustive. The typical normal school delivers recipes and prescriptions for doing things. The teachers' college in the university is perhaps a little worse; it quotes from a larger bibliography. Both normal schools and teachers' colleges are consuming their best energies learning and reciting what someone has thought and formulated. But the poorest thing by which we deceive ourselves is the mechanism called the recitation. It assumes the student to be a reflecting machine to receive and return ideas and impressions. Professors who rely chiefly upon the lecture, the "quiz" and the "exam" seldom appreciate any process above the recitative. They assume receptivity. They are satisfied to receive back the content of talks and text books. When by repression and bodily inaction students lapse into somnolent torpidity, then inefficiency finds relief in note books. Voluminous copies of profoundly obscure lectures are kept. Bodily action in note taking keeps awake the students of many an inefficient professor. There is fatal sequence. Stenographers copy into note books what speakers say, put aside note books feeling free from worry of cogitation, and later on reproduce from notes exactly what was uttered. In like manner the pedagog substitutes transmission for cogitation, obstructs thinking, prevents face to face contact with living teacher, and snatches away opportunity to comprehend and assimilate subject matter while fresh and new.

“Quiz” follows lecture, further disguising professional unfitness.

“Quizzing” is not teaching. “Quizzing” narrows thinking of many into channels of one. The “exam” concludes the hampering process. Much lecturing and “quizzing” call for much examining because teacher is ignorant of student’s mental content and attitude. But lecture, “quiz” and “exam” are the stock in trade of many a friend of ours who never dreams of cogitating, analyzing, questioning, arguing and working out with students the subject matter to be dealt with, digested and assimilated.

IV. CONCLUSION: All teachers during their professional preparation need in common:

1. To secure by instruction and experience a working knowledge of childhood and adolescence.

2. To acquire, in teaching, the habit of basing daily instruction on the learner’s mental content and attitude in order to modify both his content and his attitude and accustom him to the habitual and independent reorganization of his mental content.

3. By trial in many phases of experimental teaching they need severally to discover themselves and what their several talents are, and, in view of their talents inherited and acquired, what they severally are destined to do best.

To cover these requirements will consume by far the greater part of the time and energy which teachers can devote to initial preparation.

Probably one-fifth of the labor in the professional preparation of teachers should be devoted to special pedagogical aspects of subjects to be taught. In these special aspects high school teachers and elementary teachers after differentiation need separate instruction in such things as bibliographies, appliances, and the correlation of each separate subject with other parts of the curriculum.

