

## The New Conception of Education

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CHILDREN as well as adults are really interested only in what they do successfully. Tasks that make no appeal are sheer strain.

The most complex problem before the teacher is to see that work is progressively mixed with problems that require thought and effort without inducing the soggy habit of mind that goes with unattractive work whose purpose is not known. Interest exacts a motive.

The new education regards school as a duplicate of life outside, and works for modification of the present unsocial school room grouping where children "stay put". Many school rooms are now so arranged that children can work together in groups, may learn by doing. While a community spirit is encouraged, the child's individuality is safeguarded. Self-reliance cannot be secured by telling children to be independent. Initiative, selective judgment, self-direction, come through opportunity to practise—to learn as do all humans by trial and error.

In every activity of life there is a "floundering period." The floundering time in the process of self-direction no more points to failure than does floundering time in learning to walk or to swim.

One of the greatest contributions of educational psychology is the significance of individual differences in the general mental make-up of children—the child of action, the child who excels in dealing with the abstract, the one who excels in power of appreciation, the types of memory brought out: desultory, rote, logical, etc. The education that takes no account of these different types is

wasteful. The measurement of achievement by standard tests and scales instead of by examination enables the child to watch his own methods and progress, and enables the teacher to help where help is most needed. This has done much to obviate the injustices that characterize much of the grading in schools.

The position of the new education in the matter of discipline is that it should grow out of experience furnished by the school. Children who are trained under an external discipline of fixed standards, with opportunity for motive and choice at a minimum, make excellent subjects later on for the quack, the political boss, the ward heeler. The old relation between teacher and child is rapidly changing, and in a few more years the cartoonist will be deprived of the reality that has so long inspired his art—the standardized, rigid, spectacled female holding a stick over a cringing infant. And the pretty girl may now enter the teaching profession with less fear that the curse of a schoolma'am face may fall upon her.

Where the new education rules, external control is at a minimum, social control at a maximum. Emphasis is on constructive work rather than on external perfection. The school is increasingly an embryonic community life with occupations reflecting the larger life. Discipline comes through doing things in a social and co-operative way. The classroom in which a death-like silence reigns is regarded in a light that might horrify the good disciplinarian.