

"...We note first that the realization of a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress, or readjustment, is an important consideration, makes a democratic community more interested than other communities have cause to be in deliberate and systematic education. The devotion of democracy to education is a familiar fact....A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment in its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing social disorder."

5. *The schools become everything to everybody.* As life becomes more industrialized, specialized, and standardized, the individual home has less opportunity of giving diversified training of youth for life's responsibilities. Where the home was once training ground as workshop, social unit, and religious center, it is fast becoming just a place for parking, filling, and resting in life's faster merry-go-round. The schools have had thrust upon them, for better or worse, the increased load of all-round training, as the home has abdicated its high place of former days. That the schools can ever succeed distinctly in the larger undertaking many thinking people sincerely doubt, but the issue is at least clear. If the schools do not, who will? Where once the main job of the schools was to provide "book learning"—some mastery of elementary skills and knowledge in fundamental school subjects—in a brief time borrowed from the active affairs of life, to supplement home and community efforts, now we see the schools taking on an increasing load from new areas in the attempt to provide complete training for citizenship, including homemaking, vocation, and cultured living.

The demand for vocational fitness as a product of schooling is central in the educational scheme, a steady growth and faith from Franklin's time to the present. Current thinking is not at all clear as to how the essential contradiction between practical training for a vocation jibes with the

demands of scholarship as formerly emphasized. The theory of mental discipline has broken down, leaving a dilemma of proportions in education. Some people feel that scholarship dwindles as the demands for practical, socially valuable things are emphasized. It has always been argued so. The answer to this riddle is the unfinished task of the schools. We may be certain that the answer in America will be along practical and useful lines, probably closely related to the dollar sign, and not a harking back to traditional concepts held in the heyday of exclusive education.

6. *Out of a background of trial solid ground has been reached.* The schools have expanded upward, downward, and outward to embrace a great variety of interests. By the process of natural growth in response to popular demand and public support the educational ideal is widespread. No nation has ever before attempted education on such a broad scale. The schools may be said to represent in the present stages an organic effort of the nation to preserve its integrity and spread benefits to its citizens through the beneficent enterprise of education. Whatever the practical difficulties in working out, this may be thought of as the principal result of 300 years of beginnings of education in our democracy.

PAUL HOUNCHELL

## SCHOOLS WORK TO REDUCE ACCIDENTS

ONE of the most serious problems confronting the communities of the nation is accident prevention. This is strictly a state and local problem which must be dealt with in the various communities. Nor is accident prevention confined solely to the highway. Every year there are hundreds of thousands of accidents in the home, in industry, and in many unthought-of places. While it is true that last year



marked progress was made in reducing the number of deaths from traffic accidents, an appalling number of persons still lose their lives in accidents which might easily be prevented if more care and caution were exercised.

#### SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY

The problem of accident prevention is one with which the schools might directly concern themselves. In fact, large numbers of high schools throughout the country have already taken a hand in the campaign to reduce the number of accidents. It is certain that the activities of the high schools were at least partially responsible for the reduction, by more than 7,000, of fatalities last year from traffic accidents. Through traffic clubs, safety campaigns, and by other methods, they made a distinct contribution.

While the school is not the only agency through which to promote a safety program, it does share a major responsibility. The school is in an advantageous position to assume a large share of this responsibility, since it comes in contact with those persons who exert an important influence upon the prevalence of accidents. The big question is not whether the school should participate in a safety program but rather how best its teaching can become a reality in the everyday experiences of the young people who pass within its doors. Whatever is done by the school or, for that matter, by any other agency, must be done in a practical manner if the program is to be productive of concrete results.

Today there are few schools which do not do something in the way of educating for safety. A recent survey shows that the elementary schools surpass the high schools in respect to the proportion of teachers reporting participation in safety instruction. This does not necessarily mean less attention to the subject in the high school, but indicates, rather, that high school teachers are assigned by subjects and not by grade. As school

systems increase in size, greater emphasis is placed upon the desirability of placing someone in charge of the safety program. In almost half of the cases, a classroom teacher is placed in charge, while the principal of the school ranks second. Other persons assigned to the safety program include the assistant principal, the physical education instructor, and the safety supervisor.

Various methods of instruction are employed in the school's effort to make the program meaningful to the student. Classroom forums and general discussion of accidents and safety problems and bulletin-board displays of posters and pictures are among the most common methods. A large proportion of schools are beginning to call upon traffic experts, policemen, and firemen for lecture and demonstration work. Excursions by pupils to factories and other places where accidents have occurred, and to congested highways, have been most successful as laboratory experiences in teaching safety facts. Motion pictures on safety constitute another means by which the school has endeavored to attack the problem.

#### A PRACTICAL PROGRAM

Other realistic situations are provided through the school monitor system in the control of corridors, stairways, and playgrounds, and through the auto-driving courses. These, together with the safety and traffic patrols organized in most of the schools of the nation, have been highly productive in making students safety-conscious. The attention which school authorities have given to the construction of school buildings, to the installation of safety devices about the school building, and their continuous efforts to remove safety hazards has indirectly, but nevertheless effectively, tended to make people conscious of the problems of safety.

Any program of safety education, to attain the best results, calls for the active co-



operation of pupils and teachers. To be effective, each group must make its contribution in a broad program of accident prevention. State departments of education, health, motor vehicles, forestry, labor, parent-teacher organizations, safety organizations, automobile clubs, automobile manufacturers, insurance companies, service agencies such as chambers of commerce, safety-device manufacturers, and the like all offer helpful assistance in the promotion of a program to make America safe from accident. *The American Observer.*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR READING IN EDUCATION

A SUMMARY OF CURRENT MAGAZINE  
ARTICLES FOR GENERAL  
READERS

Should He Read in the First Grade? James V. Williams. *Parents'*, January, 1939.

Parents of first graders are often greatly surprised that their children are not learning to read. To their query, "What is the first grade for, them?" a new answer is being given. Reading must be based on experience to be of value. A complex of capacities—social, mental, physical, and emotional—must exist in the first grader before reading experiences can be of any value to him.

Ugly Duckling, by Hughes Mearns. *Ladies Home Journal*, January, 1939.

Professor Mearns gives several case studies of boys and girls—"ugly ducklings," as he calls them—who have made good through the patience, faith, and hard work of understanding teachers. The writer feels that the only way to handle such cases is to believe that each individual has one thing he can do better than others. This type of child requires a teacher with more professional skill than ordinarily found and one who will help him and credit him with his excellence. The ugly duckling does not like fault-finders, but will follow wholeheartedly those who guide carefully and make an attempt toward understanding him.

Youth on the Job, by Florence Whitfield Barton. *Parents' Magazine*, January, 1939.

Not every boy or girl has the type of mind which makes college a rewarding experience. Schools and communities in about twenty states, recognizing this, are carrying out a co-operative arrangement in which students in the last two years of high school may attend classes in school half of the day and apply that learning in an actual life situation for the rest of the day. Such a program binds the school and the community in a common interest as nothing else does.

Is Thinking Going out of Style? J. T. Adams. *The Rotarian*, January, 1939.

Do we avoid thinking seriously? The author says that people want everything in a shortened form, filled with humor, and without mental strain attached. The demand for shorter magazine articles and choppy radio programs, the popularity of the "weeklies"—all these show that the public is refusing to concentrate. He blames the schools for not teaching children to think. Increase in the complexity of life in this modern world makes it necessary for one to be able to think.

Are Our Schools Practical? Anne Bryan McCall. *Woman's Home Companion*, February, 1939.

In the early stages of school education, the three R's met human needs practically and efficiently. But in time, as life has changed and the influence of education itself has been felt more and more, new subjects have been added. The times demand psychology as a new subject. Miss McCall stresses the need of psychology in the schools to "teach them more about themselves. The need is there. Let us do something about it; but let us be sure that it is something efficient."

Wasn't the Regular School Good Enough for Us? Maxine Davis. *Good Housekeeping*, February, 1939.

The little red schoolhouse is being remodeled, but the architects don't agree. Conservative architects say that the children in our schools get too little discipline and not enough facts; and instantly the progressive architect argues that too much discipline interferes with natural development of the child and that the facts which the children are taught are at least practical and may be applied to life situations. The author challenges parents to realize the importance of co-operation between the home environment and the school.