

It is an interesting study - when asked as I was, to sum up my views of Progressive Education - to evaluate this great movement, not in pedagogical terms, but in terms of "parents and teachers", and without recourse to many splendid books and articles constantly being written on this subject. Instead I have tried to think through the salient characteristics of Progressive Education as we have tried to work it out at Hanahauoli. A year by year check of this kind would be most interesting, for a glance at our records of work and our samples of children's work shows amazing changes - as any living organization should show.

Yet there are certain fundamentals which underlie all this and which, though methods and materials change, still remain essentially the same as when Mrs. Cooke founded the school twenty years ago.

(1) Paradoxically, the first fundamental that I shall mention as indicative of Progressive Education is that it is a moving, dynamic, changing education - not a theory or a system proved, and therefore static, but a living thing, growing, continuously having to change because of the three great changing elements with which we deal - children, environment and civilization or culture.

This should not indicate instability or following fads, nor change of fundamental principles. But it does indicate a readiness to accept a new viewpoint when the need for it arises; it does indicate watching life and children alertly - not passively as so much former education has done; and it does mean following the growth of the child, physically, it is true, but emotionally as well, and mentally. No system of education which has, as its core, the child, can remain static. Only an organization of subject matter can do that. With the ever-changing and growing child, education moves ahead.

But back of all this must be experience and study, and a certain security of educational outlook, so that the school and each child in it, and the community of which it is a part, has confidence that necessary changes do not imply a throwing over, but a building up. So I say, Progressive Education in no way indicates instability.

(2) Then, Progressive Education stands for an active, alert attitude toward life and toward intellect - a critical awareness. In your conferences with our faculty, you hear much of our endeavor that your children should have, to an increasing degree, intellectual curiosity; that the quest for attainment of all kinds be undertaken by the child; that reaching out for all the wonders which science and civilization are laying so profusely before us in this decade be not a matter of forcing or prodding by the school or home; but through the child's own interest and approach, he should discover and be guided to the way to research, and the opening to him of this limitless world, so that, not only in school and college, but through every day of his life until its end his intellectual curiosity will give him the zest for living which makes life beautiful, not bored.

I discussed this with a business man yesterday who rejected it. He said intellectual curiosity was given to only a small percentage - that the common run of men and women are most content to see only the surface, discuss only the obvious, and live a life that only touches its possibilities. But I do not share his pessimism. Granted it is so today, Progressive Education should change it.

This cannot be done with the old methods of imparting subject matter. Materials consistent with the child's understanding at each year of growth must be selected; methods must be used to develop within the child his increasing responsibility for carrying on his own education (or it will stop when the teacher stops); and perhaps greater than all, the child must be taught to appraise his materials, his values, his judgments, weighing pros and cons, looking at all sides, developing an open mind - an ability to discuss, not argue. No longer do we accept a thing because "the book says so". Finally, with no lessening of the security of his own ideas, he must learn to be tolerant with those with whom he must disagree. Toward this universal tolerance, we must all work if the world our children inherit is to endure.

Progressive Education stands, perhaps predominantly, for child guidance, and sensitivity to children's needs. This is going back to the principle of the school for the child - not the child for the school. This has been lost sight of in America's hundred years of mass growth - but child guidance is now coming into its own.

No two children react the same to any given stimulus. What they get becomes an entirely different product as it becomes assimilated with their different emotions or with the understandings which various home backgrounds have given the children. What each child is learning - what he is adding to his life - those are things we are looking at more scientifically - which we are continually questioning in the light of the study of each child; something which no educator is yet capable of testing. Child guidance and study is teaching us much; it is also knocking down much of our complacency over things we thought we had taught. There are so many difficulties which children have experienced and to which we have been blind. One of the school's first duties is to find and solve (if possible) the emotional as well as the academic difficulties of our children (and needless to say, they are always related). I believe in the right of each child to develop happily and normally. When at school we have gone as far as possible in solving these problems, we turn for help to specialists in this line. I greatly hope that Dr. Zachary, whose fine work and understanding I watched at Columbia this summer, will be able to come to Honolulu next June so that you may all be acquainted with her work. I believe Dr. Ebaugh at the University of Hawaii this summer made Honolulu conscious of the need for trained workers in this line of work.

Meanwhile, the progressive school organizes the school for the child, keeping uppermost the best and most scientific principles of child guidance, thinking of each unit of the course of study in terms of the changes it will work in each individual child, and evaluating its successes or failures always by those criteria.

Again I say we must become more sensitive to children's needs. This means a change in the subject matter we select to teach.

When in the 1830's the vast frontier of America was opened and education for every child was attempted in a great mass movement, the mass as always enveloped the individual. Courses of study were made wholesale and rammed down every child's throat whether they fitted his needs or not. The organization was the main thing. Courses of study were logically built by college professors and chopped into twelve sections for twelve grades. And it is that tradition of less than a hundred years duration that all schools (not only progressive ones) are struggling to break. Each generation of parents says, "Something is wrong. I studied this when I was seven. I read that at nine. What are they doing to my child?" We should ask, rather, "What did they do to us? Has it proved a success in our lives?" What we teach today, and why, has so many different interpretations in all our minds. It is much too large a subject to treat in this paper. But Progressive Education looks at all the material, keeping in mind the double relationship of the child and the subject matter,-- never the latter alone. "Breathing involves both lungs and air." Schools have been too much concerned with the air and too little with the lungs that receive it. "The real progressives do not pretend to have all the answers as to subject matter and techniques; they are primarily concerned with the attitudes of mind, and the goals of the teacher and pupil as they proceed together along the paths of better living." So we select that material to teach which best serves the individual child in each stage of his growth, to best develop in the society in which he lives.

With all the knowledge of child guidance we now possess, we watch the effect on each child (as you watch the effect of certain foods on his physical condition). This can be done only with classes sufficiently small to enable teachers to know each child; with mothers and fathers intent on the same objectives in the home that we have in the school, and who are willing to give them thought and cooperation; and with teachers alert to every condition, who have a truly professional attitude toward their work, who love it and give their all to it. I think no one is called upon to give more than a real progressive teacher. Hanahauoli faculty is trying to live up to this ideal.

But I have not mentioned one of the things first remarked in a progressive school - the creative arts.

A thoroughly happy person must have infinite resources within himself. If books, people, work - all the things to which his life has been geared - be taken away, he should continue to truly live, if he has fostered since childhood the creative arts.- that spring of expression coming from within, which has given to the world the

beautiful in many forms - art, sculpture, literature, drama, dance. It is the lack of these inner resources that is so appalling in the old age of certain individuals. It is the abundance of these that makes lives like da Vinci, Beethoven, Browning, Edison and scores of others, as well as thousands of more humble souls, shine.

One must engage in the creative act really to understand it. One must know by having experienced, what effects he can get by different arrangements of words, sounds, gestures, colors - all the media upon which expression can play. Children must have continuous experience in all this. As Elli says, "The Channels of expression must be kept free to flow." We all know what it means to be choked and inhibited by any number of things - by emotional disturbances, by diffidence, by lack of opportunity or by lack of technique. All these we seek to clear away with the child so he may be able to "say" what he sees in a great variety of ways - with paints, in writing, in dance forms, in dramatic play - all with the object of clarifying his own grasp of life. The person who has learned to do this is no longer an unhappy person. He will probably often experience a "divine discontent" with his product, for always our vision eludes us. We and the children (whoever is working creatively) must reconstruct our work continuously in the attempt to make the product a real expression of our idea. Back and forth the child goes, constantly analyzing, struggling, to get the painting more clearly like his idea - the piece of writing a better expression of his thought - the act of the play a more convincing thing. So this aspect of Progressive Education is far from the soft pedagogy sometimes attributed to it. To "think to the bottom" of a piece of work - to analyze its values - to really express something from within in a manner satisfying to oneself - that is a worth while task for man or child. And the deeper one goes into the problem, the more loth is one to do things for exhibition purposes. That is why Progressive Education does not believe in exploiting the work of its children. What the individual receives from an experience is the thing sought for - not the applause of an audience.

I have really only touched on the problems which have faced Progressive Education for twenty years. A teacher who went to the Summer Workshop in Secondary Education at Sarah Lawrence College this summer said, "I am afraid I had spelled Progressive Education with a big 'P' and expected someone to tell me briefly and concisely all about it." I am afraid you, too, have done that in asking me to tell you in a short evening what Progressive Education means. I am still finding out after twenty years' study.

But to summarize the four points I chose to emphasize tonight:

First: Progressive Education is a moving, dynamic thing which has to change as its three great elements - children, environment and our culture - change. But this ability to change does not mean instability nor insecurity, nor vagueness of plan or performance.

Second: Progressive education represents an active, alert attitude toward life - and a critical awareness. Increasingly through the child's own efforts, and decreasingly by the request of the teacher, his intellectual curiosity is developed, opening up the world to him, giving that zest for living which should mean an abundant life to the end of his days.

Third: Child guidance and sensitivity to children's needs are the great requisites of Progressive Education. It means the reorganization of the school for the child, with the realization that each child's individual reaction makes the material taught become a different thing to each person. The all important thing to consider is what changes are being made in the child's attitude toward life. This involves a thoughtful and cooperative home, and an alert and professional faculty in the school.

And Fourth: Progressive Education believes thoroughly in the efficacy of the creative arts in clarifying the individual's grasp of life. To be able to give expression through many media to our experience in life throws open the gates for further and fuller experiences. The creative person inherits abundant life.

"So these are some of the things for which Progressive Education has stood that are now being accepted nearly everywhere - that education is more than merely the subjects of the old time school, important as those were and still are under certain conditions; that it involves human beings in their emotional life and their wholesome relationships to others; and that the arts have a far greater significance for life and therefore for education than schools in the immediate past have recognized."

If this has, to any extent, answered some of your questions about your child's school, I ask that it serve only as an introductory chapter - and that you come to us to see our work, to share our meetings, to find the excellent books and magazines which will enable you to study, along with us, these absorbing questions. Like Froebel I say, "Come let us live with our children."