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# SUGGESTIONS

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FOR

## INSTRUCTION IN LANGUAGE

IN THE

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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DR. EDWARD BROOKS

SUPERINTENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OF THE

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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PHILADELPHIA

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# Language Work in the Elementary Schools

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## INTRODUCTION

Education consists in developing the powers of man and furnishing his mind with knowledge. The act of developing the powers of the child has been called *Culture*, the act of furnishing his mind with knowledge is called *Instruction*. The primary object of education is therefore two fold, development and knowledge; and the fundamental aim of the teacher is to give culture and instruction to her pupils.

To understand the work of education fully the relation of Culture and Instruction should be clearly seen. The object of Culture is to quicken, strengthen, and enrich the mind; the object of instruction is to furnish the mind with knowledge. Culture aims to give a person mental power and skill; Instruction aims to give him information or learning. Each of these processes, of course, implies the other; for in giving culture we make use of knowledge, and in imparting instruction there is usually some growth of the mental powers. The two processes are, however, not identical; and the laws and methods of each are different. Culture and Instruction are largely the complements of each other; they are the two hemispheres of the science of education which, when united, give it symmetry and completeness.

The first of these two elements received special attention among the early Greek teachers and educators. Plato, the father of the science of education, regarded the object of teaching as the harmonious development of the powers of the individual; and nearly all thoughtful writers upon the subject of education have held the same view. The tendency

of teachers, however, has been to neglect the culture element of the problem and to emphasize the imparting of knowledge to the mind, making the standard of an educated person to be the possession of a capacious memory furnished with a multitude of facts. The idea of education among the people has tended in the same direction, the best educated person being regarded as one who knows the most, rather than one who thinks the best.

Both of these ends—culture and knowledge—should be kept prominently in view in the work of the teacher. The value of culture, so liable to be overlooked, should be especially emphasized in the work of instruction. The teacher should bear in mind that to develop and train the powers of the pupil is of far greater value than to furnish his mind with knowledge. The imparting of knowledge is a much simpler matter than the development of intellectual activity and correct mental habits. Knowledge is a tangible product; it is so many facts in the text-book or in the memory, and can be readily measured by an ordinary examination. Culture aims to secure an invisible growth of mental activity and power that reveals itself to a different judgment and requires a different measure. Its test is not the amount of facts treasured in the memory, but the ability to use the faculties of the mind in the acquisition and application of knowledge.

The term Culture as here used refers to the process of developing the powers of mind and body. It is employed in an active sense correlating with the term Instruction. The word Culture may also be used to express the results of the educational process. It signifies the outcome of Culture as well as the process, thus correlating with the term Knowledge which expresses the results of Instruction. Culture in this sense means that activity and vigor of mind and that richness of spirit and elevation of character possessed by the well educated person. And so while the processes of education are those of Culture and Instruction the results of these processes are properly named Culture and Knowledge.

The result of culture is efficiency. A well-trained mind is one that can make proper use of its faculties and its knowledge. In a correct scheme of education, both power and knowledge should become objective; they should go out into the achievement of something for the individual and for society. True education should not end in the mere passive possession of power and learning, but should qualify its possessor to be an active and effective force in the world. Giving formal expression to this element, which is really implied in culture, we may regard the ends of education as threefold—culture, knowledge, and efficiency. It is suggested, therefore, that the fundamental educational maxim of every teacher should be—*culture, knowledge, and efficiency*.

These ends of education are secured by correct methods of teaching. Teaching implies the use of materials with which to train the mind to correct methods of activity and to furnish it with useful information. This material is what is known as knowledge, and includes the different branches of science and art. These branches of knowledge have certain relations to one another which should be considered in the work of instruction. To neglect these relations results in a serious loss of time and of mental development. One of the principal defects in elementary education is the disconnected and patchwork way in which instruction has been given. Knowledge often lies in the mind of the pupil a mass of disorganized and undigested facts, producing confusion and a loss of mental power. By properly co-ordinating the different branches in instruction, knowledge becomes a living organism in the mind of the pupil. Each fact exists in the mind in relation to its kindred fact, the outcome of which is that breadth of view and clearness of vision that mark the well-educated person. This principle has been recently emphasized under the head of the “correlation and unification of studies,” one of the most important principles of primary education.

## THE CORRELATION OF STUDIES

This principle of the correlation and unification of studies is one of the leading questions of discussion among modern educators, and upon the proper solution of the question and the wise application of the principle of the work of the schools largely depends. A brief discussion of the question is therefore appropriate.

In the application of the principle of the correlation and unification of studies, the question arises, what study shall be made central or fundamental to which the other branches may be related? To this question two opposite if not antagonistic answers have been given by educators. One class of educators holds that the objects of the material world, or the so-called Nature Studies, should be the basis of instruction, and that all other studies should be related to these branches. Some prominent members of this school of educators place Geography as the basal study and correlate all the other branches around it as a centre.

Very strong and plausible reasons can be given in favor of this position. A child's mental life begins in the senses. The infant looks out upon the material world of color and form, and seems to awaken into mental activity through the impressions of material things upon the senses. Sense knowledge, a knowledge of material things, seems to be the pioneer of all other knowledge. Indeed, some thinkers go so far as to claim that all knowledge is either sense knowledge or the direct result of sense knowledge. "Nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses," says Locke; and he has many intelligent and earnest disciples in these opening years of the 20th century.

On the other hand, the school of educators known as the Herbartians, maintains that History should be made the central branch in primary education, and that all other studies should be derived from and be related to History. It is claimed that the deeds of the race rather than the objects of