

# IN THE WAYS OF DEMOCRACY

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We are today in the grip of class conflicts and social uncertainty. Radical movements are revolutionizing our national life, endangering individual liberty, and the peace and security of the state. The tightening struggle for survival on account of the high cost of living is very alarming. There is a great demand for work; laborers clamor for living wages; peasants demand social reforms. In view of these social demands, there is a serious conflict between capital and labor; grave misunderstanding between landlord and tenant; and mutual suspicion between the government and the underdogs. The government is studying ways and means of promoting social improvement and has effected already some social reforms in an effort to solve the growing complexity of social living. Yet, we see in our midst unrest and dissatisfaction, threat and intimidation, corruption and graft, and an utter disregard for law and order. The psychology of the whole situation is perplexing, and it demands careful study and analysis. Today, more than at any other time, there is a great need for spiritual regeneration, moral rejuvenation, intellectual sanity, and social charity. It is the duty of education to do its share in promoting these social objectives, if we must have peace, happiness and prosperity in this new and growing republic. **Our youths must be nurtured in the ways of democracy.** The schools should aim to develop moral character, civic conscience, personal discipline, vocational efficiency and to teach the duties of citizenship. These are the major objectives of education. These objectives have been interpreted in various department bulletins which, for our purpose, are summarized brief-

ly as follows:

1. Learning is an affair of desirable and useful action.

2. The best type of action is one that is practical, intelligent, and deliberately planned to achieve a well-conceived purpose.

3. Each intelligent action must be directed toward the realization of a socially desirable purpose; or every learning must result in intelligent social action.

4. Education should promote healthful, happy, and efficient living.

5. Every subject matter must have some specific, practical, and functional value.

6. The choice of subject matter must take into account the problems of personal and social living.

7. Educational reconstruction must be a reflection of a growing Filipino life and improving Philippine conditions based on progressive Philippine experience.

8. Educational procedures should inculcate and develop the ways of democracy—respect for human personality, the greatest good for the greatest number, equality of opportunity, social justice, freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of worship, freedom of speech and inquiry, sane nationalism, international understanding and goodwill, rule of the majority, and respect for justice.

A careful perusal of the foregoing statements drives us to the conclusion that our educational program is dedicated to the development of a well-rounded, socially-efficient individual in

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a democracy. This is natural and logical since it is necessary that our education should prepare the youths of the land to meet the rapid changes in our social life and to enable them to assume their obligations and responsibilities under our sovereign republic. It is incumbent upon the teachers to assume the responsibility of carrying out this educational program effectively. Every teacher should study thoroughly the courses of study and the specific objectives in each subject.

In planning his lessons he should constantly keep in mind the principal objectives of education in a democracy. The choice of subject matter which must serve as the material of instruction with which to carry out a specific aim or purpose should deserve a careful attention. From experience, too often, it is noted that the subject matter is either unnatural, illogical, or unnecessary. It does not serve the aim or objective, nor give emphasis or attention to the proper development of our philosophy of education.

It is necessary to study the educational values of the separate subjects, if we are to properly place the emphasis of instruction. In language, we should lay stress on correct speech and social communication; in reading, we should teach the child to read for experience and personal enjoyment in order to broaden his outlook of life; and in arithmetic, we should emphasize the study of the functional processes and useful information which shall enable the child to transact his business activities efficiently. In the field of social studies the basic aim of all teaching is good citizenship and character development.

In geography, for instance, we should give particular attention to the relationship of man with his environment; in history, we should study time relationships, economic factors, customs, institutions, and social ideas; in civics, the child should be given a careful under-

standing of the problems of human relationships in the home, the school, the community, the state, the nation, and the world; in health education, the child should be given training to acquire correct and permanent habits of personal hygiene and develop an abiding interest in community sanitation and public welfare; and in character education, the child should acquire better moral attitude and develop a strong civic conscience and a right sense and feeling of social charity. The individual should be taught to do a good turn everyday, and to give away a part of what he has whenever he can afford it. Wealth should promote happiness and social welfare. It must not foster distrust and envy. In the field of industrial arts the child should acquire a deeper interest in, and an appreciation for, manual work, and develop technical skill and ability to be able to practice a vocation or a trade for rightful living.

Briefly stated, the principal objective of education in a democracy should be to prepare the child for intelligent, successful, and cooperative citizenship. To understand, participate in, and improve society—these are great goals of his education. In this connection we might consider the fact that we have a socially significant curriculum which is diversified and democratic. It is child-centered. The teacher should therefore draw the learning activities from human experience and human relations. No activity should be chosen unless it has a social significance. To be educationally useful the subject matter should contribute to the development of the child as a social being, conscious of his rights, obligations, and responsibilities as a citizen in a democracy.

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