University Elementary School

CONDUCTED FOR BOYS
AND GIRLS; TO HELP THEM
WORK AND PLAY, BY PROVIDING IN THE SCHOOL A
GREAT VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES PECULIARLY SUITED
TO THEIR NEEDS
"LEARNING?—CERTAINLY, BUT LIVING PRIMARILY, AND LEARNING THROUGH AND IN RELATION TO THIS LIVING."—JOHN DEWEY.
Boys like to play; so do girls. And they like to play together. Boys and girls like to work, too, especially if that work is quite their own. It is perfectly natural that children enjoy play; it is just as natural that they enjoy some kinds of work.

Too many children do not want to go to school. Too many do not attend very long. They hardly learn to read and write. What fun boys and girls have at "recess times" and "noons." Their happy voices may be heard several blocks away. Were school merely "recesses" and "noons," children would probably attend quite regularly without being obliged to do so.

There is pleasure in play. But children do not enjoy the same games that adults enjoy. There is pleasure in work. But children must have work that is suitable to them.

The University Elementary School gives her pupils hard work and hard study. The pupils enjoy this work and study because it is children's work and study. The school provides also a great variety of games and other ways of spend-
ing leisure time. This is a part of the school "studies." Thus the work of this school is not confined to the usual schedule. Even pleasure calls for study and school is more like the everyday life of children.

Pupils enter the school building as they would a well-ordered home. The front hall and broad stairway say, "Come in; make yourselves at home." The bubbling fountain offers refreshment. The fresh flowers halfway up the stairs contribute to the welcome. Pupils talk freely as they stop in little groups or as they pass leisurely to other parts of the building.

The University Elementary School building is not like the usual school house. Through double doors, usually wide open, pupils pass from the front hall to the "Fountain Room." This is not a classroom lined with rows of school desks; nor is it an auditorium for formal assemblies. This large room serves a great variety of purposes. First of all, it is for all pupils at any time. It is the center of the real life of the school.

At the south windows is the aquarium. In one compartment are eggs, tad-poles and frogs at various stages in their development.
One frog, hoping to be peer among his fellows, perched himself on the corner of the aquarium, in the nick of time for the photographer. But such poses are frequent, for these school frogs have here in the school building much of their natural habitat.

In other compartments are gold fish and ordinary local fish, turtles, crayfish, snails, etc. Flowering plants surround the Boy-and-Goose Fountain which supplies a constant stream of trickling water.

This Fountain Room is the music room. Here the pupils sing songs, not to learn to sing but to give pleasure to themselves and others. But they do learn to sing. The Choir Boys in bas-relief above the piano is their model.

At the north end of the room are cases in which are kept many pieces of work done by the pupils. Here are drawings, writings, collections of pictures, pieces of handwork. This collection is developing into a museum of studies. Pupils, teachers and visitors enjoy examining this material. Not the best work only is exhibited. Every pupil is represented. No one is slighted. No comparisons are made. Each does his best and finds encouragement in this exhibition of his work.

In these cases is being collected a variety of illustrative material. Here are mounted bees and bugs, flies and butterflies. Here are specimens of coal, iron, copper. The silk industry is represented in its various stages.
In such an environment as this the pupils greatly enjoy their Folk Dances. These are the simple home dances of the peasant people in England, Holland, Sweden and other countries. These dances represent one beautiful phase in the lives of these peoples. These dances, like music, are for wholesome enjoyment. But in these dances pupils develop a sense of rhythm; they acquire the habit of walking more gracefully, of carrying their heads and shoulders more erect, of being more courteous in their manners.

In this room the pupils assemble, usually each Wednesday morning. No seats? Each pupil brings a chair from library or classroom—a simple device to keep the Fountain Room free and open for other enjoyments. These assemblies are informal: humorous stories and serious reports; songs, poems and simple talks. Much of this is voluntary. It is a social hour. This hour is as much school work as any exercise in the classrooms.

Songs, dances and assemblies are recreation. Stories, pictures and games are also provided, but these will be referred to later.

THE PUPILS ENJOY THEIR FOLK DANCES
Boys and girls want free play also. This they have on the play ground and (in stormy weather) in the basement. The grounds are being equipped with swings, horizontal bars, the giant stride, see-saws; also with a basketball court and football grounds. The amount of time for such play depends upon the weather and the needs of the pupils. Sometimes pupils ask for longer play; sometimes they prefer school work.

A new form of recreation has been introduced in this school. It is the German "Pause"—a brief rest. The pupils walk leisurely on the sidewalks, on the lawn, or in the Fountain Room. They go in groups for enjoyable conversation; or alone, for there is rest in silence. At first the "Pause" seems an unnatural restraint. Real boys must be boisterous—at times, and girls perhaps noisy. Both soon find genuine pleasure in a higher form of leisure. Incidentally pupils learn to walk more quietly when quiet is wanted. They learn self-control.

The pupils of the University Elementary School find pleasure at school. It is home to them, and they have many companions. They all talk and laugh freely in their play. And even in their work they talk and joke among themselves, but they learn to stop when such talking hinders rather than helps others.
LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE

Do children remember how they learned to talk? No, but their parents remember for them. Yet most of us, both children and adults, remember how we struggled in learning to read and write at school. We learned to talk simply by talking when we were in need or when we had something to say. We learned to say, “Please, mama, give me a drink,” when we wanted a drink. We did not practise on such words at nine o'clock each morning.

The pupils in the University Elementary School learn to read, to write, to draw, and to do other things, just when they need to do so. The pupils do in this school about what they would at home but they learn to do it better. They play and work. At home they are very active most of the time doing many things; and so they are in this school.

These pupils learn to play games. They play at home, but in this school they learn to play better. The better they play, the more fun they have. But to play better they must study the game. The pupils watch carefully the best player: they study how he stands and how he moves. They make drawings of him. They talk of how to play “on the square.” They keep scores in many games that they may compare themselves in playing. Records are

A SIMPLE STORY OF THE GAME
kept in "folders." Here the pupils learn to write out a simple story of the game and illustrate it by drawings and score cards.

Good stories are enjoyed by children. The teachers in this school tell many stories: the pupils tell yet more. Some stories may be told by acting. The stories become more real when thus represented. But telling and acting lead pupils to wish to read more stories. The pupils in the University Elementary School do not have reading lessons to learn to read. They have a children’s library and soon read for the pleasure in reading. The first grade pupils read from twelve to thirty books during the year. Second grade pupils read from twenty-five to fifty books. In reading so much pupils learn to read. They learn to read good stories and read them well.
Boys and girls have sharp eyes. Nature is full of interest. A poet has pictured The Barefoot Boy as having

"Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bees' morning chase,
Of the wild flower's time and place,

How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung."

Just this is one of the main studies in the first three grades. The little people take many excursions. They go to the woods, to the meadows and to the orchards. This is done in school hours as a part of the regular school occupation. The pupils' illustrated "folders" show interesting records. To the pupils this is hard work, but it is very enjoyable to them.

Give a boy a hammer and he will make a noise. Provide him with suitable tools and material and he will make many things useful and beautiful. So with the girl. Nature has endowed children
with more zeal for making things than for studying "reading-riting-rithmetic." At least one hour every day is spent in making things that are useful and ornamental, for self or for others.

And this one hour is not enough time to suit these little people. Closing time comes too soon. But such hand work is excellent home work: more readily carried home than assigned "lessons" to learn. These little products of the hand are more lasting than "grades" and of more value. Boys and girls like to make things at home. Now they can do so.
WORK AND PLAY

An excursion is something like a picnic. Children are usually eager to go. Nature gives children an interest in going. But a school excursion is going to see something worth studying. The primary pupils take some excursions; the fourth grade take many. Most of their work for the year is based upon what they see upon excursions about town.

Saturday is baking day at home. Every day is baking day at a bakery. And the bakery shop is school for a time.

The grist mill with its wheels and noise; the blacksmith shop with its clanging anvil; the ice-plant with its frost in summer time; these and many more such local industries quicken the pupils into vigorous study. They return to their school rooms. They look into arithmetics, into geographies, into books on travel, history and poetry in their efforts to study further these local activities.

These fourth grade pupils work hard: on the excursions, in the library, at their desks.

Adults have leisure; and children must play. But play is not
simply games at recess time. Good stories serve as play: they give recreation to the pupils. The Children’s Poet wrote:

“Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day’s occupations,
That is known as the Children’s Hour.”

Such a pause is taken daily by the pupils. Seated in somewhat circular form, one pupil reads to interest and to instruct the others. To insure good listeners, the reader must have selected a good story, and he must read it well.

This kind of reading is the pupils’ chief home-work. When a book is finished the pupil writes a very brief report of it. These reports are kept on file. Home-work thus becomes largely voluntary and is a pleasure.
"Excused for recess," thinks the hasty observer. "Busy at work," is the answer of one who observes more closely. Some pupils are writing and drawing at tables (There are no formal rows of desks in this school.), a group is talking with the teacher, another group is talking among themselves, some are in the library, some are going this way, some that, with books, papers, materials. It is the hum of industry. Seldom is a pupil idle. Each has plenty of interesting work or wholesome leisure—and he is busy at it.

Here is the secret of industry in school. Pupils direct themselves and do it well if given opportunity to be mutually helpful in doing things that meet their needs.

No texts are used. But a library of over twelve hundred books with many clippings, pictures, daily papers and magazines serve for study. Pupils go to the library with a problem. They find the information needed. "It is half an education to know how to find things." The pupils learn to use books. They learn to study.
In this hum of industry the pupils of the upper grades are studying the industries of real life: mining, lumbering, farming, manufacturing, etc. It is a practical education.

What a busy world! The burro carries a heavy pack on his back. The wind lifts water from the well and drives the ship across the seas. Steam trains and steam boats are laden with traffic. Electricity flashes the news around the world. Such are some of the ways of carrying things. Cotton is transported from Mississippi to Massachusetts. Shoes go back on the return train. People are traveling in all directions—even up and down in their aeroplanes. What interesting problems for study! What is carried; How much; Where is it carried; How; Who does the work; At what cost. Here is real study on real problems. Reading, arithmetic, geography, are in constant use. The nature of the problems allows natural methods of study. This is school industry.
Handwork is a good companion for head work. At least one hour each day all pupils work with their hands. From three until four o'clock each day the whole school becomes a workshop. The hum of industry has increased. Twice as many hands as pupils are busy making all sorts of things that boys and girls wish to make: gifts for parents or friends; bags and baskets and boxes that pupils themselves may wish. Each pupil draws and describes what he is to make; he keeps count of the materials he uses and pays for it: he takes home the things he makes. Head and hand work well together.

This hand work is not that of a trade school. No attempt is made to train skilled workmen. Nor is this hand work arranged to make illustrative material for other subjects. Boys and girls want things made for use now. To meet present needs prepares best for later work.
The University Elementary School is a real school for the real boy—and his sister. Pupils learn to work and they learn to play. They learn to talk and they learn to keep quiet. They learn to laugh and they learn to be serious. They acquire a great wealth of information. They enjoy, first, the present. They also prepare for the higher grades and later work. The usual school subjects are not forgotten. They are the better studied because more constantly used. But the studies of this school are the activities of everyday life.

The foregoing story may give the impression that the University Elementary School is without organization. Quite the contrary. The superintendent, assisted by the teachers, has arranged
a definite plan of work and schedule of time. But this plan is very flexible to meet the needs of pupils. A condensed plan and schedule is here given.

CONDENSED PLAN AND SCHEDULE

These "studies" are listed in terms of various activities of children and of adults. The traditional subjects are in almost constant use in the study of these activities.

Grades I II III

1. Observation
   Flowers, trees, fruits
   Insects, birds, other animals
   Holidays
   The Weather

2. Play
   Wholesome and helpful games

3. Stories
   Reading, telling, dramatizing
   Singing songs
   Drawing and studying pictures

4. Hand-work

Grades IV V VI VII

1. Industries
   IV Industries—local
   V VI Industries—worldwide
   VII Industries—historical

2. Stories
   English, German
   Music, Art

3. Handwork

All Grades

Physical exercises
   Folk Dances and free play
   "Pause"

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Observation</td>
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<td>Play</td>
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<td>3:00</td>
<td>Handwork</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Folk Dances and free play</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>&quot;Pause&quot;</td>
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VISITORS

Parents and all others interested in children and elementary education are welcome at the school at any time. But Wednesday of each week is set aside as Visitors Day. At nine o'clock all pupils gather in the Fountain Room: they sing, they dramatize stories, they read, they talk. The interests of the whole school are here brought together. It is a social hour. Throughout the day visitors may observe the work of the school according to the usual schedule.

The superintendent is at the school each Wednesday to talk with parents and others interested in the school.
ADMISSION OF PUPILS

The school is open to all, but application for admission must be made to the superintendent. The number admitted is limited. Places are reserved for those enrolled the preceding year. The tuition fee is ten dollars for the year or any part thereof, payable upon enrollment.

TEACHERS

Superintendent
Grades I II
Grades III IV
Grades V VI VII
Music and German
Drawing and Art
Physical Exercises

Professor J. L. Meriam
Miss Margaret Sinclair
Miss Katherine Helm
{Miss Ruth Fitzgerald
Mr. H. H. Mecker
Mr. H. H. Mecker
Miss Ruth Fitzgerald
Miss Katherine Helm

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