

**CORRELATION OF  
STUDIES: REPORT OF  
SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN**

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Correlation of Studies: Report of Sub-Committee of the Committee of Fifteen by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**CORRELATION OF  
STUDIES: REPORT OF  
SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN**



*National educational association.*

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**CORRELATION OF STUDIES**

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**REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE**

OF THE

**Committee of Fifteen**

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WITH

**ANNOTATIONS**

BY

**GEO. P. BROWN.**

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## COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN.

### REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE CORRELATION OF STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

The undersigned Committee agrees upon the following report, each member reserving for himself the expression of his individual divergence from the opinion of the majority, by a statement appended to his signature, enumerating the points to which exception is taken and the grounds for them. <sup>1</sup>

#### I. CORRELATION OF STUDIES.

Your Committee understands by correlation of studies:

##### 1. *Logical order of topics and branches.*

First, the arrangement of topics in proper sequence in the course of study, in such a manner that each branch develops in an order suited to the natural and easy progress of the child, and so that each step is taken at the proper time to help his advance to the next step in the same branch, or to the next steps in other related branches of the course of study.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author of this report uses the word Correlation in its generally accepted sense of reciprocal relation. The things here related are the studies in the school, and life in the social order. What are the mutual relations between these? Evidently those of science to art. The social order is the art of which the school studies are the science. The problem of the school is to so master these sciences that their application to the art of living shall be easy and natural. The life of the community is these school studies animated by will and touched with feeling. What is the value of each study in preparing for living in the civilization of which the child is a member? The chief purpose of this report is to answer this question. The full discussion of these values demands that some consideration be given to co-ordination of these studies in the school and the method of teaching them, and this is done throughout the report, though very briefly and imperfectly.

<sup>2</sup> This first definition is very imperfect in that it considers only the order of the sequence of topics within the respective groups of like subjects; for example, Arithmetic, Algebra, and Geometry in Mathematics. But having determined what studies in each group should go into the

2. *Symmetrical whole of studies in the world of human learning.*

Second, the adjustment of the branches of study in such a manner that the whole course at any given time represents all the great divisions of human learning, as far as is possible at the stage of maturity at which the pupil has arrived, and that each allied group of studies is represented by some one of its branches best adapted for the epoch in question; it being implied that there is an equivalence of studies to a greater or less degree within each group, and that each branch of human learning should be represented by some equivalent study; so that, while no great division is left unrepresented, no group shall have superfluous representatives and thereby debar other groups from a proper representation. <sup>2</sup>

3. *Psychological symmetry—the whole mind.*

Third, the selection and arrangement of the branches and topics within each branch considered psychologically with a view to afford the best exercise of the faculties of the mind, and to secure the unfolding of those faculties in their natural order, so that no one faculty is so overcultivated or so neglected as to produce abnormal or one-sided mental development. <sup>3</sup>

elementary schools, the questions in what order, and at what stage of progress each shall be introduced becomes important as questions of method.

<sup>2</sup> The second definition considers Correlation on the basis of the co-ordination of the different groups of studies, so that the pupil's view of life may be comprehensive at every step and not limited to the studies of a single group. Let the pupil look through all "of the five windows of the soul" at every stage of his progress. The relative importance of the view from each of these five windows is not considered. That is, the actual value of each study in the art of living is ignored. The same time and energy might be given to the representative study pursued in each group, without disregarding this definition of Correlation.

<sup>3</sup> The third basis of correlation is taken from the point of view of the mind to be educated. It is therefore purely subjective, the child's relation to the world not being considered. The question here is what studies, and in what order, will best develop the different faculties? It is considered of minor importance what the content of the studies



4. *Correlation of pupil's course of study with the world in which he lives—his spiritual and natural environment.*

Fourth and chiefly, your Committee understands by correlation of studies the selection and arrangement in orderly sequence of such objects of study as shall give the child an insight into the world that he lives in, and a command over its resources such as is obtained by a helpful co-operation with one's fellows. In a word, the chief consideration to which all others are to be subordinated, in the opinion of your Committee, is this requirement of the civilization into which the child is born, as determining not only what he shall study in school, but what habits and customs he shall be taught in the family before the school age arrives; as well as that he shall acquire a skilled acquaintance with some one of a definite series of trades, professions, or vocations in the years that follow school; and, furthermore, that this question of the relation of the pupil to his civilization determines what political duties he shall assume and what religious faith or spiritual aspirations shall be adopted for the conduct of his life.

To make more clear their reasons for the preference here expressed for the objective and practical basis of selection of topics for the course of study, rather than the subjective basis so long favored by educational writers, your Committee would describe the psychological basis, already mentioned, as being merely formal in its character, relating only to the exercise of the so-called mental faculties.

It would furnish a training of spiritual powers analogous to the gymnastic training of the muscles of the body. Gymnastics may develop strength and agility without leading to any skill in trades or useful employment. So an abstract psychological training may develop the will, the intellect, the imagination, or the memory, but without leading to an exercise of acquired power in the interests of civilization. The

may be, provided they give the discipline needed at the particular period of growth considered. In this view it is one's theory of the nature and activities of the mind and of their mutual relations that would determine the studies he should select. The purpose of the correlation here considered is to form the mind without much regard to furnishing it. It is the reciprocal relation between the studies and the mental faculties that is regarded.

game of chess would furnish a good course of study for the discipline of the powers of attention and calculation of abstract combinations, but it would give its possessor little or no knowledge of man or nature. The psychological ideal which has prevailed to a large extent in education has in the old phrenology, and in the recent studies in physiological psychology, sometimes given place to a biological ideal. Instead of the view of mind as made up of faculties like will, intellect, imagination, and emotion, conceived to be all necessary to the soul if developed in harmony with one another, the concept of nerves or brain-tracts is used as the ultimate regulative principle to determine the selection and arrangement of studies. Each part of the brain is supposed to have its claim on the attention of the educator, and that study is thought to be the most valuable which employs normally the larger number of brain-tracts. This view reaches an extreme in the direction of formal as opposed to objective or practical grounds for selecting a course of study. While the old psychology with its mental faculties concentrated its attention on the mental processes and neglected the world of existing objects and relations upon which those processes were directed, physiological psychology tends to confine its attention to the physical part of the process, the organic changes in the brain cells and their functions.

Your Committee is of the opinion that psychology of both kinds, physiological and introspective, can hold only a subordinate place in the settlement of questions relating to the correlation of studies. The branches to be studied, and the extent to which they are studied, will be determined mainly by the demands of one's civilization. These will prescribe what is most useful to make the individual acquainted with physical nature and with human nature so as to fit him as an individual to perform his duties in the several institutions—family, civil society, the state, and the Church. But next after this, psychology will furnish important considerations that will largely determine the methods of instruction, the order of taking up the several topics so as to adapt the school work to the growth of the pupil's capacity, and the amount of work so as not to overtax his powers by too much or arrest the development of strength by too little. A vast number of subor-

dinate details belonging to the pathology of education, such as the hygienic features of school architecture and furniture, programmes, the length of study hours and of class exercises, recreation, and bodily reactions against mental effort, will be finally settled by scientific experiment in the department of physiological psychology.

Inasmuch as your Committee is limited to the consideration of the correlation of studies in the elementary school, it has considered the question of the course of study in general only in so far as this has been found necessary in discussing the grounds for the selection of studies for the period of school education occupying the eight years from six to fourteen years, or the school period between the kindergarten on the one hand and the secondary school on the other. It has not been possible to avoid some inquiry into the true distinction between secondary and elementary studies, since one of the most important questions forced upon the attention of your Committee is that of the abridgment of the elementary course of study from eight or more years to seven or even six years, and the corresponding increase of the time devoted to studies usually assigned to the high school and supposed to belong to the secondary course of study for some intrinsic reason.\*

\*This is a wonderfully clear, though brief, presentation of the function of the school and of psychology in realizing that function. It will be accused of giving too little importance to physiological psychology. The author of this report has elsewhere elaborated more fully the relative values of the old and new psychology. (See article in *Public-School Journal*, June, 1895.)

In none of these definitions of correlation has the report considered that use of the word which holds it to mean such an organization of the studies in the practice of teaching as will make one or more centers around which the other studies may be grouped. Some of the Herbartians, so-called, would make history and literature the core studies in the curriculum, for example, and teach all the others as, in a measure, subordinate to these. What man has thought and done is held to be the most valuable knowledge-content for education, and the instruments that he has used in his thinking and doing are of subordinate value. Others would make the nature studies the important, or, at least, the initial studies, and learn arithmetic, language, literature, etc., as the study of science suggests. Others, still, would make three groups—nature studies, human studies, and mathematics—and tie these groups together where they touch each other. It was the understanding of those who were making a study of correlation in