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McGuffey's Reader Forgotten in Modern Classroom



LEARNING TO COUNT . . . By using figures to represent the absent pupils, Mrs. Edna Wright's kindergarten class at Fern Ave. School discovers that five members of the class are absent. Peggy Ackerman, Roger Blakely, and Phillip Hoffman hold up the figures, while Mrs. Wright and Jolene Wiseman look at one of the cards which are used to help students learn their names.



MORE ADVANCED ARITHMETIC . . . As children go up through the grades, they go through more and more complicated problems until they arrive at more difficult problems. Here, members of Jim Williams' eighth graders at Ferry School try to determine the circumference and area of a circle from charts in the classroom. Shown are Emil Capik, Kelson Dearth, Judy LeClaire, and Pat Kestler.

LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM NOW IN EIGHTH YEAR

Torrance's school district is a comparatively young one—eight years old this year.

As a result, its 466 teachers are comparatively young, averaging about 35 years of age.

Its ideas are modern, and many of the latest methods in teaching are being used, although there is no set pattern. Teachers use the method that suits them best, with apparently satisfactory results.

It is a growing system. Its elementary program has grown from about 2000 pupils and four schools in 1947, when it began, to nearly 10,000 students and 17 schools at the present time. With population figures ever rising, six more elementary schools are in various stages of planning.

Double sessions, which nobody—School Board, administrators, principals, teachers, or parents—likes, are necessary until the time when money and schools can keep up with population increases.

In spite of this, the Torrance elementary schools are carrying on their customary class work. This is the story of what is happening to children in the city's elementary schools.

Teachers Vary Class Technique

By TOM RISCHÉ

When Grandpa took his books in hand and trudged off to school, he dutifully studied little moral lessons in McGuffey's Reader and toiled hard to learn his readin', writin', 'n' 'rithmetic.

Nowadays, Johnny Schoolboy no longer studies McGuffey's Reader, but may instead read something like "My Little Green Story Book." He will study his "three Rs," and other subjects in a way which might surprise Grandpa.

If he were in fifth grade in the Torrance schools, chances are that his daily schedule ran something like this:

Social studies and science, 70 minutes; reading 60 minutes; writing, speaking, and spelling, 60 minutes; arithmetic, 40 minutes; arts and music, 50 minutes; health and physical education, 50 minutes; with an additional 120 minutes per week used for industrial arts, for boys, and homemaking training for girls.

Bulletin Boards Prominent
He would go to school in a classroom, surrounded by bulletin boards on which displays of various kinds were posted to help make his studies more vivid. He would see movies on various phases of his school work.

His teacher might use any of a variety of methods in teaching him. The local school district allows a teacher to make his or her choice about how much material will be presented to the class, what areas of work in such field as social studies shall be taught, and whether the room should be divided into groups according to ability.

Johnny may be learning in an entirely different way from his friend, Willie, who is in the next classroom, but the results should be the same. The district administrators feel that the teacher can do a better job if he or she uses the method which suits him best. Chances are that Johnny will not be at the same place in his studies as some of his other classmates, but this is based on the principle that there may be as much as five grades of ability within one classroom.

Difference Explained
At the beginning of the semester, his teacher may have picked the tallest boy and girl in the class, and the shortest boy and girl, and pointed out that just as some children grow physically faster than others, so some grow mentally more quickly than their schoolmates.

With this in mind, his teacher may divide the class up in groups according to general levels of ability. For instance, in reading, he may be reading a sixth or seventh grade book, even though he is a fifth grader, while some of his slower companions may be reading third or fourth grade materials.

His teacher will seek to get him to learn as fast as he can, but will have no set standard for him to reach. Experts feel that pushing a child beyond his

ability may retard rather than help him. Every child, however, is a special case.

Children who are mentally retarded will be placed in special classes.

Subject Combined
Often Johnny's teacher may combine a number of different subjects into one class project. If Johnny had been in one class recently, he would have combined reading, writing, arithmetic, language, art, social studies, and science.

This class project, a study of the airplane industry, involved reading, writing, and discussion about the airplanes, building a model airfield, using art and arithmetic; and study of weather, bringing in science. In addition, the class visited Torrance Municipal Airport to see their subject in action.

At the same time, he will be learning to write, and in the third grade, began to use the rounded, cursive script, instead of printing.

He began to learn how to spell more and more difficult words, after learning the basic words.

Social Studies Expand
Beginning with a study of home and community in the kindergarten, Johnny moved on to study where local goods and services come from, how California and the United States developed, and finally, something of the history of the Old World. Included in this social studies program are geography, science, and civics.

Physical education and recess periods emphasize physical development and sportsmanship, while health classes emphasize care of the body. His teacher must keep an eye cocked to make certain her children are healthy, and make suggestions if any of her pupils seems overly tired, seems to be ailing, or has poor vision or hearing.

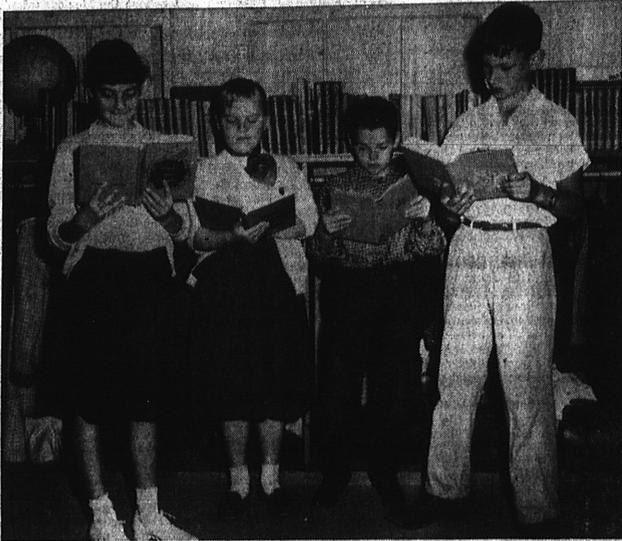
Johnny may dance or paint as his ability allows, and often illustrates other classwork by making displays or figures.

Children May Sing
Musically, he will sing if he can do it well, or otherwise may help with the music program and learn to appreciate it. Many youngsters play in the school orchestra.

Johnny's report card is divided into nine sections—reading, arithmetic, language (oral and written), social studies (history, geography, science, and civics), music and art, work and study habits, group relations, personality traits, and physical development.

Under all of these headings, his teacher makes comments about his progress in these various fields. His parents are asked to comment in a space on the card reserved for them.

Once a semester, his parents will be asked to come to school



THERE'S A DIFFERENCE . . . Mrs. Betty Wehr, fourth and fifth grade teacher at Meadow Park School, uses her students to point up the fact that children differ, both in size and in reading capacity. Some children grow faster, both mentally and physically, she says. Her reading program is based on bringing a child along in reading as fast as he can absorb the material. Reading for the class are Georgia Owen, Karen Campbell, Bill Waterman, and Duane Crowley.



WHAT MAKES IT RAIN . . . Students in Ross McAdams' fourth and fifth grade class are making a study of weather as a class project. Each day, temperatures are recorded, along with rainfall, and weather reports in the papers are checked for accuracy. Recording some of the data are Anne Houston, Don McHenry, Carolyn Lyons, and Bob Roy. In the background are cloud charts, made by the class at Howard Wood School.

Learning Habits of Youngsters Molded in Kindergarten Classes

Although many people think that the main function of a kindergarten is play, the course for the beginning school child includes a much broader program than games.

Before Johnny ever started in Torrance schools, his parents were contacted by the kindergarten teacher and learned something about him.

The first two days of school, the scared youngster and his

mother both came to school for one hour and they inspected the room and its equipment, while the teacher explained what she was going to teach the children. The next three days, both he and his mother came to school, and Johnny gradually overcame his fears and his mother was reassured.

The second week, the regular three-hour daily kindergarten sessions began.

One of Johnny's big problems was learning how to get along with a large group of children, and he had to learn how to care for his own equipment. He had to learn the lessons that would serve him the rest of his life—that he must help others, and in turn, to be helped; that he must learn to share, and not demand all of the teacher's time and attention.

Johnny started to learn something about the meaning of numbers, and how to count, preparing him for later work in arithmetic. He started to learn to identify objects, and to recognize his own name. He participated in "grown-up" situations. He sang songs and recited poems with the group. His teachers sought to give him an inquiring mind.

His time was divided roughly as follows:
Social studies and science, 50 minutes; reading, 50 minutes; writing, speaking, and beginning numbers, 30 minutes; art and music, 40 minutes; and health and physical education, 50 minutes.



READING, WRITING, AND ART . . . A social studies project of Mrs. Janice Hampson's third grade class at Torrance Elementary School involves several fields. While the children are reading about America's shipping industries, they also draw pictures of ships and write stories about them. Discussing the project are Margaret Riebold, Michael Hughes, Edward Foster, Karen McGuire, Brian Christensen, and Sarah Nelson. These various projects make it easier for the children to understand what they are talking about.