

The Committee of Ten

In the late 1800's in the United States there were multiple divides in the educational thought on how children should be taught. Arguments such as the high school dividing the students into college-bound or trade-bound, the standardization of courses, rote memorization versus critical thinking, and the practicality of studies were all being waged at the same time. In 1892, in order to try to find a solution to this argument the National Education Association invited Charles Eliot, William Harris, James Angell, John Tetlow, James Taylor, Oscar Robinson, James Baker, Richard Jessee, James Mackenzie and Kenry King to come together along with their teams of researchers to form the Committee of Ten to look at these issues (National Education Association of the United States, 1894).

With the lead of Charles Eliot, the Committee of Ten recommended many ideas to the secondary school curriculum. The Committee of Ten recommended eight years of elementary education followed by four years of secondary education as well as the standardization of what is taught in each subject. Specifically their study reported that "every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease" (National Education Association of the United States, 1894).

There are criticisms of the report generated by the Committee of Ten (Eliot, Hill, & Winship, 1894; Hall, 1911) but the effects of this report are still evident in the structure of the educational system today.

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References

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