

Mort, “Every third grader will be asked to spell the word. . .” 1946

(keywords: Paul R. Mort, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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Selected text published in:

Paul R. Mort, *Principles of School Administration: A Synthesis of Basic Concepts* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1946):179–80. This text forms a part of Chapter 12: “Prudence Continued: Simplicity, Responsibility, Loyalties, Inertia.”

No Change without Notice

This principle applies similarly to the curriculum. Changes in the curriculum should not be made without warning. Here again the public has certain external standards by which they judge the adequacy of a school. If third-grade children customarily learn to spell “daguerreotype,” you can be assured that every third grader will be asked to spell the word some time during his third year. If he has not learned it during the year, the school will be marked down as a failure. The prudence criterion does not dictate that we teach the spelling of daguerreotype in the third grade. It does dictate, however, that when we drop daguerreotype from the words to be learned in the third grade, the interested public should be a party to it and, if possible, should be given as a substitute some easy standards of judgment.

[End of selected text. All content related to the daguerreotype herein provided.]

EDITOR’S NOTES:

This brief text provides some indication of the persistence of the daguerreotype in American culture (albeit typically viewed as a hundred-year-old artifact at the time of this writing.)

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