In these abecedarian times, N D E might be placed in large bold letters over the door of the genial looking house at 921 Myrtle Street. Like NRA, CWA, CCC, RFC and others, N D E bears a meaning that is highly significant in the industrial and social revolution which is upon us today.

As a matter of fact, the ideals for which N D E stand are much older and much more firmly established than the aims of most of the boards, bureaus, and commissions whose letters have given a new sound to our conversation and a strange appearance to our newspaper headlines.

N D E stands for New Deal in Education. We should add to that "in Atlanta," for it is in reality a mature set of principles tried and accepted in many other communities. Its concepts are in accord with the ideals and objectives of the nation's contemporary leaders. Like the new deal in politics, it is
predicated on the theory that the individual citizen should profit with the community and not at the expense of the community.

The new deal in education is known as Progressive Education. It is all that the term implies. It is education which is progressing continually in order to keep in step with the constant changes occurring in the world around us. It is a changing education for a changing civilization.

Progressive Education is education which has looked critically at itself and as a result has discarded outworn methods and theories. It keeps an appraising eye on itself and an alert eye on the times. It is the antithesis of static education which, bound by tradition and precedent, is certain always to be years behind the material and intellectual advances of the nation.

Progressive Education stresses cooperation rather than competition. Its dominant effort is to integrate the child as a contributing member of society instead of permitting him to become an egotistical person obsessed with the notion that society should contribute to him.

Toward this end, Progressive Education seeks to it that the child works and plays constantly with others in a number of group activities. Formal and informal dramatizations in which costumes and scenery are jointly planned and developed, constitute one way in which the child is trained to contribute. The school paper, the student council, charitable projects at Thanksgiving and Christmas, house and grounds supervision,—all these furnish additional opportunities for cooperation. Careful supervision makes sure that the ideal of group service is successfully understood and thoroughly applied.

No formal grades are given and no prizes are offered in progressive schools. Individual progress cannot be measured by an arbitrary yardstick applied generally. It can only be estimated by the teacher’s knowledge of the child’s ability and efforts. Remarks such as “This shows improvement” or “You can do better than this” let the pupil know that an understanding observation is constantly being made of his activities.

The praise and admiration of the group are far more stimulating rewards than formal grades and scholarship prizes which encourage the idea of selfish gain. Conversely, the censure of the group is more effective in establishing standards of conduct than any external appraisal in terms of grades.
The progressive school considers each child an individual with special strengths and weaknesses. To that end, the progressive school works in terms of attitudes, appreciations, and the development of personality. Its methods are sharply opposed to those which require the absorption of facts without understanding and which cling to examinations, passing grades and other venerable impedimenta.

The manner of doing something is considered more important than the thing done. How to study is of greater importance than how much is studied. Every effort is applied to establish an interested and questioning rather than an accepting attitude.

In reading, for instance, the love of good literature is the important thing—not the number of “classics” read. In writing, it is the fun and interest which are emphasized rather than the quantity of pages or lines laboriously put down. In a word, the progressive school offers an education of doing and creating as opposed to a training in memorizing and repeating.

The Lovett School is Atlanta’s institution modeled on the principles of Progressive Education. Here interested and interesting young personalities are being developed to fit children to use enjoyably the larger leisure which the advocates of the new economic order have promised us.

The curriculum of the Lovett School is broad. It has a core to give it direction and stamina. Around this center the teacher sets the stage for a multitude of lively, purposeful and student-directed activities.

Investigations, supplementary reading, modeling, painting, drawing, shop work, writing, trips and continual dramatizations of subject matter, are the magic “sesames” which open the door to a rich, adult life for the learning child.

Instead of merely reading in a text book about the world outside, the children go to the truck farm and the dairy, to the terminal and the warehouse, to the store and the factory.

Nature is studied in nature’s own classroom—the fields and woods. Zoology is studied at the zoo. Industry is studied in the factory. Books take on an added significance as a result of visits to printing plants, book binderies and libraries.

The painter, sculptor, and musician are brought to the school for informal talks,
demonstrations and recitals. The physician, the engineer and the traveler, all add to the fullness of the child’s background and experience.

The child is introduced to the worlds of science, literature, dramatic art and music in the hope that he will develop an interest in an enjoyable avocation. Frequently, out of these interests grows the incentive for a vocation. At the same time the skills of reading, writing and mathematics are not neglected. In Progressive Education these are, however, not permitted to dominate the curriculum as ends in themselves. They are definitely classified as "skills" necessary for the development of a desired project.

Hence, these essential subjects are more easily learned. The boy who wants to understand a process in the manufacture of airplanes needs no driving and no reward to be induced to read a fairly difficult book on the subject. The girl who is figuring yards and costs for costumes of a play gets real and lasting practice in arithmetic.

Briefly stated, Progressive Education deals with the material of life and living rather than with abstract "subjects" which fail to develop initiative and a capacity for adaptation. The importance of the difference between Progressive Education and static education has been evidenced by the depression. Most of the people who successfully weathered the economic storm were able to adjust themselves to it...to "get on" with all sorts of people and under all sorts of conditions, and to derive enjoyment out of things not necessarily connected with material wealth.

"The education of the little red schoolhouse," says Carleton Washburne, head of the famous progressive public school system of Winnetka, Ill., "is not enough to meet the present and future demands upon our children. The three R's are merely tools. They are useful indispensable tools to the one who uses them wisely, but they are dangerous weapons in the hands of one who lacks a sense of social responsibility. How many persons today fail in their home life, their business life, or their life in the community because they lack the three R's? Compare this small number with the multitude who fail because they lack initiative, clear thinking, ability to cooperate, and a sense of responsibility to the social order."
The following questions should give direction to your thoughts on the subject of your child’s education. They are significant in their revelation of the principles behind Progressive Education and of the comparison of the new ideas in child training and the older, less plastic standards.

1. What kind of school is your child attending—progressive or static? Is it critical of itself and constantly trying to improve methods and material?
   Or is it content to remain as it was five, ten, even twenty years ago?

2. Is it a pleasant, livable place where a child enjoys working and playing?
   Or is it just a huge building of rooms and corridors, and desks riveted to the floors, and an air of arbitrary regimentation?

3. Does it view the child’s training in terms of attitudes, appreciations, habits and developments?
   Or does it speak in terms of subjects, page assignments, tests, passing grades and system requirements?

4. Is the material in which it works broad and real, introducing the child to science, art, and literature, by enabling him actually to work in these fields?
   Or is the curriculum built around the “skills” and the facts which are acquired by memorizing and repeating?

5. Does your child’s school consider him as an individual whose personality has certain strengths and weaknesses which the curriculum is adapted to encourage and discourage?
   Or does it consider that the system comes first because there are too many children to permit of flexibility and adaptation?

6. Are the groups at your child’s school small enough so that his contacts with other children can be supervised and directed carefully and firmly with the result that those contacts are pleasant and are made successfully?
   Or is he just exposed to a large number of other children with whom he may not mix satisfactorily at all? In a word, is he permitted to learn the extremely difficult art of making social contacts without guidance and without help—risking heart-breaking failure with the possibility of becoming a misfit?
7. Does your child’s school consider his behavior as it affects his own character and the freedom of others, and does the school investigate to find out the real cause of social behavior and to seek the remedy?

Or does it consider behavior in the light of rules to be observed, deportment marks to be won and punishment to be meted out for the infraction of arbitrary restrictions which the child may not understand?

8. Are the teachers adequately paid, specially trained, and people of vision and background whom you would be likely to find interesting regardless of their relation to your child?

Or are they over-worked and under-paid and so burdened by requirements that they have little time or energy for creative thought or work?

9. Are you considered a partner in the business of your child’s education so that your cooperation and advice are frequently enlisted and you are kept familiar with the activities and problems of the school?

Or are you out of touch with the school or in contact with it only through formal organizations which reflect the regimentation of the school system?

10. What is the attitude of your child toward what he is doing at school? Do his scholastic activities have a real interest for him—an interest which carries over into out-of-school hours?

Or are the activities of the school just so many chores to be disposed of as quickly as possible and with the least possible effort—and effect?

11. Does your child say, “We are building an Indian village and I want to know how an adobe hut is made”?

Or, “We go to page 50 in our history tomorrow”?

12. Does your child curl up after dinner to pursue the delightful adventures of the “Peterkin Papers” to which he has just been fascinatingly introduced?

Or does he make the reading hour unpleasant with his complaints on having to read “a dry old classic”?

13. Are you willing to spend a nominal sum to give your child a sound educational basis in the precious formative years of his life?

Or are you inclined to let him have commonplace training now in order to
conserve funds for unusual preparatory and college training later in the hope of overcoming deficiencies in his pre-adolescent schooling?

14. Are you anxious for your child to get a new deal in education and to be better trained than you were for whatever the uncertain future may bring?

Or are you content to let him muddle on with the same type of education that has proved to be of little help to the present adult generation?