

Growing Up at College

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WHETHER ONE WORKS with 5-year-olds or college seniors, there is at the present time one common difficulty in developing basic skills for citizenship in a democracy. That difficulty is essentially in method. It is comparatively easy to name personal traits which should be developed—the literature abounds with suggestions, and agreement is widespread. It is also comparatively easy to find prescriptions of the curriculum content considered appropriate to the development of these traits. But when one searches for cogent analyses of the functional relationships between these acknowledged ends and the recommended curricula, one finds for the most part only vagueness, gaps, and *non sequitur*. The need is to give more careful attention to the *method* of defining and validating the social skills and dispositions which are the ends of school instruction as well as that of organizing an experimental attack to discover the best methods and materials to achieve these ends.

During the past year one of the faculty research committees in the Stanford School of Education has been making a fresh attack on this problem as it concerns the college. Though interested especially in the education of teachers, the committee's present attention to the method of breaking up a problem for systematic study may be of general interest. Consequently, its procedure in regard to the method of defining and

validating the skills and dispositions which should constitute the aims of a broad teacher-education program are presented here.

The Frame of Reference

The committee proposes that the ultimate product sought by our democratic society consists of persons who are becoming increasingly self-directive in cooperatively finding and controlling the many satisfactions in living in this changing culture. The teacher, as one of these, plays a dual role. First, in his role *as a teacher*, his professional efforts should be devoted to the development of others into well-adjusted persons. Second, in his role *as a person*, he is, like all others, a candidate for satisfying personal growth. For this second role, the college should set up aims which are justified primarily for their contribution to the making of the good citizen in modern society.

At what age do we expect the fruits of the college training period to become sufficiently visible to be used as verification of the success of the program? The committee chose 30, since that age gives reasonable time for experience, reflection, and professional maturation, while the teacher is still young enough to possess his maximum flexibility, energy, and enthusiasm.

The Teacher as a Person

Outlining the categories under which to list the desired characteristics is a highly stimulating and instructive experience for any group. While we are here concerned primarily with the ways in which these choices are to be criticized and validated, the committee's choices are listed in outline for easy reference and illustration.

Physical qualifications

1. Basic good health and vitality
2. Normal sensory acuity and motor response (vision, hearing, etc.)
3. Freedom from serious speech defects
4. Good posture and well-controlled bodily carriage

What kind of a person will today's 20-year-old be in ten years? How do the things young people learn in our colleges today affect their personal and professional happiness ten years hence? To discover answers to these difficult questions, a faculty committee at Stanford University in California made a study of the characteristics of well-balanced individuals to try to determine the relationship between the kind of person one is at 20 and the person one will be at 30. The work of this committee is described here by Lawrence G. Thomas of the Stanford University School of Education.

5. Freedom from serious physical handicaps or disfiguration

Intellectual qualifications

1. High quality of mental ability
2. Interest in understanding and keeping abreast of current developments in technology, politics, socio-economic problems, science, and the fine arts
3. Habitual use of the scientific approach to the settling of problems and the determination of policy
4. Ingenuity and resourcefulness in meeting new situations.

Social viewpoint

1. Some larger-than-self loyalty for which he is willing to work, make sacrifices, and subordinate personal advantage
2. Loyalty in practice to the principle of brotherhood of men
3. A steady sense of personal responsibility for understanding and helping control the social institutions and conditions affecting his life.

Effective relations with others

1. Intrinsic interest in others (especially children)
2. Objectivity
3. Group leadership—ability to organize a group for effective action
4. Group cooperation—ability to cooperate under another's leadership

Personal-social adequacy

1. Attractive in appearance
2. Pleasing in voice and speech habits
3. Correct and precise in use of language
4. High standards of workmanship
5. Observant of social amenities
6. Attractive personality

Consummatory interests (especially those which are stable and enduring)

1. A general interest in finding and pursuing enjoyments in the cultural achievements of civilization—music, painting, sculpture, architecture, dramatics, philosophy, religion, history, literature in native language, literature in a foreign language, classical literature.
2. A range in the character of his interests which will include at least one of each pursued—
 - a. As a consumer or spectator
 - b. As a creator or performer
 - c. By himself
 - d. In cooperation with others
 - e. With artistry or superior competence

3. A range among his interests in the type of activity involved, including the following types—

- a. Physical exertion
- b. Manipulative, productive activity
- c. Intellectual effort
- d. Enjoyment of competition
- e. Enjoyment of fellowship

The foregoing list comes under the heading of "The Teacher as a Person." Another list, developed under "The Person as a Teacher" and dealing with professional competences, need not concern us here.

Working Definitions

To secure objectivity for common agreement, the committee undertook to give operational content to each aim. For example, "Objectivity," under *Effective relations with others*, was re-expressed in such phrases as "freedom from taking suggestions and constructive criticisms of himself as a personal question or an implied slight," "can join in the enjoyment of a joke on himself," "freedom from habitual suspicion of the motives of others," "describes personal and professional problems in terms of their development and present appearance rather than merely in terms of evaluations and judgments." There is no limit to the operational definitions which may be devised. Through their use the maximum of common understanding and intent is assured for subsequent experimental action.

Value Testing

For this list to constitute the unquestioned or "ultimate" expression of the kind of person eventually sought by an educational program, persons directing it should agree on the desirability, as far as can now be determined, of these aims. As to the consummatory aspects of these aims (for example, the items listed under *Consummatory interests*, and the first two loyalties listed under *Social viewpoint* may be esteemed more as sources of consummatory satisfaction than as means to other desired ends), the question to be put is the following: Do you desire these outcomes as the sources of the kind of satisfactions in living that you would wish both for yourself and for others? As to the instrumental aspects of these aims—such as "Ingenuity and resourcefulness," "Group leadership," "Group cooperation," and "Cor-

rect use of language," which may be desired not so much for themselves as for what they will lead to—the question is: Do you agree that the achievement of these outcomes is most likely to equip a person to be an effective participant in our contemporary society in cooperatively finding and controlling, for himself and for others, the many satisfactions in living?

To answer these two questions, the faculty of the School of Education is now engaged in re-examining their own experiences and the lives of esteemed teachers they know to see how well these aims express their considered conclusions.

Guiding Hypotheses

While the foregoing aims describe a desired person at age 30, the faculty in teacher education is working with students in their late teens and early twenties. What basic skills and dispositions should these 20-year-olds possess on leaving the university to give the maximum assurance that they in ten years will approximate the kind of person desired at 30? This question calls for hypotheses concerning the relation of skills and attitudes at 20 to the desired kind of skills and dispositions at 30. These hypotheses will be, in effect, the basic skills and dispositions which the college program will attempt either to develop or to identify as already possessed by the student.

Two approaches are available to achieve these hypotheses. One is to find experienced teachers (or mature citizens in any work) exemplifying the desired traits, and then to discover what characteristics they exhibited at 20. Another is to make estimates of the characteristics at 20 most likely to produce the desired type of person at 30. The estimates derived from both methods should be followed up over a period of years to verify their accuracy.

Underlying Assumptions

In working on these hypotheses, the committee has found that several alternate assumptions underlie and classify the kinds of hypotheses proposed.

The first set of assumptions concerns the relation of the life of normal 20-year-olds to those traits desired at 30 which are largely social understandings and competences, such as "Interest in understanding and keeping

abreast of current developments," "Some larger-than-self loyalty," and "A steady sense of personal responsibility for understanding and helping control social institutions and conditions affecting his life." One assumption is that students who exhibit these understandings and social competences in college are most likely to exhibit the same traits at 30 in the community environment. An alternative assumption is that most of those who will eventually exhibit these traits as experienced teachers do not now, as college students, exhibit these traits because of natural and important qualitative differences between their present normal concerns and their later normal concerns.

Attention, therefore, should be given in college to evidence which is preparatory for and predictive of (rather than representative of) competent social understanding as a mature adult. This last assumption is a recognition of the fact that few college students have the economic and family responsibilities now which most of them will have at 30 and that they normally devote a great part of their energies and talent to the romantic pursuit of members of the opposite sex. The implications of both assumptions should, of course, be considered and tested in an experimental educational program.

A further set of assumptions concerns the wide differences in degree of modifiability possible among the desired traits, especially those relating to personality, health, and mental ability. Some attributes of the student will be subject to considerable alteration under a well-planned and well-directed program, others will be subject to only some alteration, and still others will be so set or fixed at college age that it would be unrealistic to suppose that any appreciable change could be achieved in the college environment. Before particular traits can be correctly associated with one of these three assumptions of possibility, an intensive examination should be made of the college facilities with respect to time, personnel, equipment, and organization.

Next Steps

The logic of the analysis to this point has brought the research committee to the following problems for immediate attack:

1. The identification of all possible sources of evidence on the status and growth of

- students with respect to each hypothesis
2. The creation of instruments for reporting this evidence
 3. The development of procedures for selecting students as early as possible with respect to those traits for which the university can assume no great responsibility in its educational program.
 4. The allocation of responsibility among counsellors, advisers, and course instructors for the development of those traits for which the university can assume some responsibility in its educational program.
 5. The consequent revision of course offerings and guidance services in the light of these objectives.

Beyond these immediate problems lies the need for a ten-year experimental program which will put all this thinking and planning

to the pragmatic test. It will test the effectiveness of the university's system of continuous selection of students and the effectiveness of its educative services. It will test the accuracy of the hypotheses concerning the kind of person at 20 who is most likely to become the desired kind of person at 30, and will help determine what minimal requirements of achievement the university should insist on. It will even test the validity of the traits we now desire for all persons at 30, for nothing modifies one's judgment of his ultimately desired goals so effectively as taking action in pursuit of them. Finally, it will provide general implications for education in the basic skills and dispositions which we shall want to share with teachers of all aged students in our common endeavor to develop better citizens in a better democracy.



"The Changing World" Is Coming Back Again

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP is happy to announce that beginning in January 1946 it will again bring readers a department of the magazine entitled "The Changing World." The new editor of this feature will be Ernest O. Melby, dean of the School of Education at New York University, New York, N. Y. "The Changing World," formerly edited by Paul R. Hanna, calls to the attention of educators situations and problems of current economic and social significance which affect school people both personally and professionally. Mr. Melby, until recently at the University of Montana, was first introduced to readers of EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP in February 1944 when he wrote on major problems of the transition from war to peace.

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