

The teacher who tells students to pick up the paper from the classroom floor will never get children to assume that responsibility. They develop the attitude that the only responsibility they have is to follow her direction rather than be concerned about the condition of the room.

Learning to assume responsibilities and to carry them out is best done by

providing genuine educational experiences for children where they learn through participating in the planning, setting up of their purposes, planning the activities, and participating in the evaluation of the learning experiences. "Learning by doing" applies in this case. Responsibilities and attitudes *about* responsibilities are learned through *having* responsibilities.

Getting the Community Into the Curriculum

EDWARD G. OLSEN

The tools and methods for teaching should be under constant appraisal and improvement. A comprehensive program toward that end is now under way in Washington State. Edward G. Olsen, director, School and Community Relations, State Office of Public Instruction, Olympia, Wash., outlines its essentials.

IF PUBLIC EDUCATION is to serve our dynamic civilization, it must itself become dynamic. This requires that our schools at all levels find their fundamental purposes in the enduring life needs of the whole child within his own community—a community that is conceived nevertheless in local, regional, national, and potentially worldwide terms. This means, further, that the instructional materials and methods used be based squarely upon the demonstrated fact that "we learn what we live, only what we live, and everything we live. We learn each thing we live as we accept it to act on, and we learn it in the degree that we count it important, and also in the degree that it fits in with what we already know."¹

¹ William H. Kilpatrick "Role of Camping in Education," *The Camping Magazine* 14:14-16; February 1942; *Education Digest* 7:46-48; March 1942.

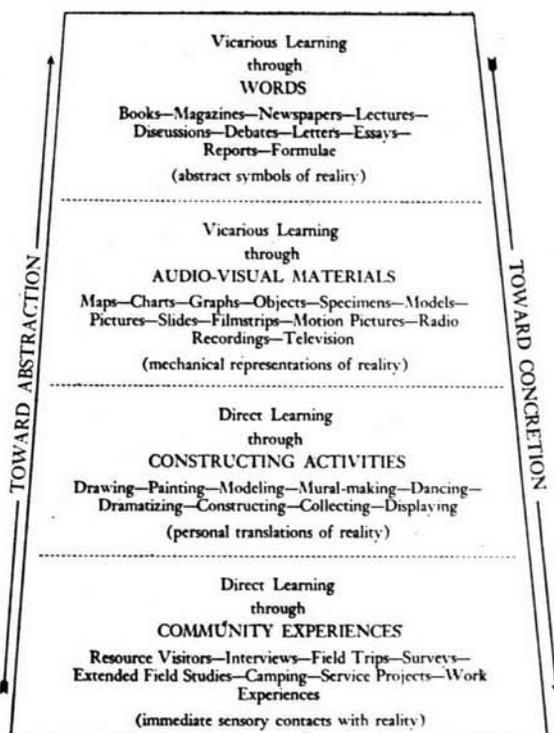
The primary function of education is to create, clarify, transmit, interpret, and evaluate experience. In the very process of learning, specific experiences are organized into abstract generalizations, which themselves become meaningful as the context of previous personal experience is progressively widened. Thus education proceeds, stimulating the student to an ever-broadening and more realistic understanding of himself within his world. The instructional problem, therefore, is that of choosing and utilizing those particular types of experience which in each specific situation will most effectively help the pupil learn to live successfully in his varied personal, social, economic, and civic relationships.

Tools for Teaching

In recent years our professional con-

cept of instructional materials and experiences has broadened enormously. Today we recognize the equal importance of firsthand, vicarious, and symbolic experiences in education. That is why we now stress appropriate school utilization of varied community experiences and constructing activities as well as increased use of significant audio-visual and printed materials. Such instructional experiences—carefully planned, utilized, and evaluated in terms of valid educational purposes—are the essential tools for teaching and learning in modern schools. These basic types of instructional materials and experiences may be classified according to four chief types as indicated on the accompanying chart.

It will be noted that the first two types of instruction offer indirect, mediated or vicarious learning experiences, while the latter two approaches provide personal, firsthand, sensory experience with the realities of the learner's physical, biological, and social environments. Talk, reading, and simple visual aids far antedate expressive activities and field experiences in the school program. Perhaps that is why these newer instructional media are sometimes regarded merely as fads—as being only supplementary to the “real” process of teaching through words and simple visual imagery. Yet it is true that the more direct the learner's constructive experience with reality, the more he develops a practical basis for making his words meaningful, and the more he makes intelligent use of books and other



HOW SCHOOLS PROMOTE GOOD LEARNING

vicarious sources of experience because they now appear more significant.

The point should be stressed that every type of learning material and experience is valuable under appropriate circumstances. There is no approach that is “best,” under all conditions. In general, however, we must emphasize the fact that direct experience is foundational to all other and that firsthand community experience, the starting point in effective education, nevertheless requires interpretation and evaluation through reading and discussion if valid concepts are to be formed by the learner as basis for further growth. Personal experience without interpretation through words and other symbols is mere sensation, not education; mastery

of words without experiential context to give them meaning is merely verbalization, not functional learning. Education that is meaningful and effective—and, therefore, worthwhile—requires thoughtful verbal expression of adequate personal experiences as well as appropriate channels for personal growth through constructive social action.

The Program Is Planned

Most schools already use audio-visual materials and constructing activities to some extent, and many have experimented with various types of community experiences. Yet all three of these approaches to effective learning are still far too little used in our schools at all levels. The general academic tradition in education; lack of interested or trained teaching personnel; professional timidity; failure to realize that non-verbal teaching need not be expensive; lack of effective organization to secure, handle, and arrange these materials and experiences and to promote their use—these and other such factors may account for present limited use of newer approaches and techniques. Although none of these obstacles deter teachers and administrators of imagination and initiative, they have nevertheless become definite negative factors in many communities of Washington State as elsewhere.

Recognition of this inertia and appreciation of the educational necessity for relating schools more closely with community life, led to the establishment of a division of School and Community Relations in the Washington State Office of Public Instruction in 1945. This was the first such service division ex-

pressly organized by a state department of education to stimulate development of more effective community study and service programs in the public schools of an entire state.

The Goal Is Set

Our basic purpose is to promote closer articulation between school programs and community life needs—in all fields from art to zoology and at all academic levels from kindergarten through adult education. Subservient to this general goal and as means toward its achievement are more specific objectives involving at least two types of emphasis:

The school's instructional program, including the formal curriculum and the so-called extra-curriculum. In both approaches to school education we hope to stimulate more intensive and functional study of the local, regional, national, and potential world community areas, in terms of their on-going social processes and related human problems. This will involve much more extensive use of library materials, audio-visual aids, constructing activities, and community experiences in the schools of the state. In addition to these activities we stress also the importance of wider student and faculty participation in local community life through the media of constructive service projects and work experiences. These activities should be considered a fundamental part of everyone's personal education as well as of desirable civic training in a democracy.

The school's relations with its supporting community. Developments of modern life require that citizens generally come to recognize that "education" is a community-wide responsibility, not merely that of the school alone. To this end we seek to develop an increasing public and professional awareness of this responsibility and a

mutual interest in cooperatively attacking the problem of community coordination for better youth education.

Functions Defined

The Washington State Office of Public Instruction is now equipped to offer professional aid in the field of community relations to teachers in all fields at all levels, to school administrators, youth and adult group leaders outside the public schools, and to others interested in improving community leadership programs through education. This service is intended primarily to help Washington teachers and others to initiate, develop, and appraise their own programs of community study, participation, and leadership. The office's resources may be freely used by those concerned about such areas as:

The philosophy, foundations, and development of the community study and service movement here and abroad.

Ways of understanding any community in terms of its history and structure, its people and problems, its institutions and needs.

Methods of relating education to community life through the use of documentary materials, audio-visual aids, resource visitors, interviews, field trips, surveys, extended field studies, school camping, service projects, and work experiences.

Utilization of community resources in teaching and vitalizing all curricular fields.

General problems such as those of program-planning, scheduling, transportation, finance, legal liability, evaluation, public relations, service center, and clearing house and community coordination.

More specifically, the state office now offers Washington schools seven major services:

School-Community Library

An extensive professional library dealing with the philosophy, procedures, and problems of community study and services has been established in the office at Olympia. Many carefully selected books, bulletins, pamphlets, courses of study, and units of work are included. Catalogs and annotated lists of relevant audio-visual aids are also provided. These materials are available for use at any time.

Loan Kits

Selected books, pamphlets, bulletins, and reprints are assembled in special kits for loan to teachers or school administrators within Washington. These kits are available without charge except for return postage costs to Olympia. Each kit may be retained for one month. Application for the use of a kit is made upon a special form which is sent out upon request.

Index to Periodical Literature

A comprehensive card index to the periodical literature of this field has also been developed. All phases of the community study and service movement—such as the underlying philosophy, the varied techniques of utilizing community resources in the school program and the administrative and public-relations problems involved—are included. This index covers all important professional journals published since 1930. It is cross-filed three ways: by topic, by school subject-field, and by school level. All references are descriptively annotated. The index is kept constantly up to date and may be freely consulted in Olympia.

Successful Program Descriptions

Lists of schools and colleges which have developed worthwhile programs for the more effective linking of school instruction with community life and its needs are available. In many instances, published descriptions of these programs are also included in the library.

Bulletins and Guides

Information bulletins and curriculum guides to publicize newer developments and effective programs in school-community relationships are issued from time to time. These materials are announced in advance through the pages of *Education in Washington*, an official publication of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Bibliographies

A mimeographed series of bibliographies has been compiled for distribution to interested school personnel. Each bibliography is devoted to the utilization of community resources in one teaching field or on one school level. Specific references are made to selected books, bulletins, pamphlets, and magazine articles in standard professional journals, and each cited source is carefully annotated.

Consultation Service

An office and field consultation service on school-community programs, procedures, and problems is available. Interested persons are invited to visit in Olympia for conferences, to examine materials, or merely to browse in the library. The director of School and Community Relations is also available for advisory visits, planning conferences, evaluative analyses, and public addresses throughout the state.

Local Developments

Throughout this promotional program runs the fundamental purpose of stimulating local planning and organization for more effective community education projects. Six of the state's thirty-nine counties have already provided for instructional materials' specialists attached to their county superintendent's staffs, and others are in prospect. Two of the six countywide programs began some years ago as film

libraries and still retain this primary emphasis; the other four were established in 1945 and 1946 as service centers to stimulate coordinated use of library materials, audio-visual aids, and community experiences in the schools of their areas. A considerable number of local public school systems throughout the state are developing similar programs. In addition to audio-visual activities within classrooms, local surveys of community educational resources are being made by teachers in rural regions, in small towns, in larger communities, and in major cities. Community resources catalogs are being issued as guides to local opportunities for field trips, student interviews, surveys, service projects, and work experiences, as well as to varied types of audio-visual materials.

In nearly every case increasing emphasis is being placed upon careful and balanced use of both direct and vicarious instructional experiences. It may be of incidental interest to note that the regional audio-visual conferences sponsored yearly by one of our state universities are now being called conferences on the use of instructional materials, with their programs broadened accordingly. Summer workshops and campus courses have also stressed coordinated community-wide educational planning by educators and laymen together as well as improved school use of educational resources within the local and regional communities.

Trend of Our Times

Underlying all modern programs of school education is one basic thesis: the child is a whole being who is educated by his total environment. Young people

will learn what they live, what they accept to act upon, what fits in with but also goes beyond their own previous experience. The school alone cannot provide such learning opportunities, but the school working in close cooperation with all other community agencies

can do the job. That is precisely why this whole community education movement is no passing fad of the moment. It is rather the practical expression of the best we know about how to develop real learning of genuine worth to individuals and to society alike.

Vital Environment for Learning

C. L. BIRD

Planning a good curriculum for youth is important, and that administration must lend a helping hand to the teacher is voiced by C. L. Bird, superintendent, Wilson Public School, Wilson, Ark.

FOR FIFTEEN years the Wilson Public School which is located in the middle of some of the world's richest farming land, has been working on a program to enrich and vitalize the school curriculum to give the greatest possible help to the pupils and to the community. There are twenty-four teachers with a school population of five hundred and twenty-five in the twelve grades. The curriculum is based on life problems with an activity or work period set up in each grade. During that period units are planned, executed and evaluated. Need for special drill coming out of these work periods is cared for in special skill periods set up to handle the basic tools of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The pupil is given every possible opportunity to learn by doing and much effort is exercised to provide many lifelike experiences for each child. The school is in many respects the center of the community and is open at all times for the use of the community.

The school community presents innumerable opportunities for learning.

Students learn much from direct participation in well-planned activities. The key to much of the success of this type of program is sound efficient planning. It requires teachers and administrators of broad knowledge and broad vision who are not adverse to hard work. For, contrary to opinion, the newer type program requires more, rather than less, work. But it pays dividends in better prepared, better-adjusted pupils with a wider range of experiences. Children have an opportunity to learn by doing and community resources add to the classroom tools of learning.

In this type of program the responsibilities of the teacher are heavier and more varied. Added to a good basic training, teachers need a thorough understanding of the type of program the school follows. This requires time spent in on-the-job training.

Beginning with a basic interest in children, the teacher must understand the whole program and her place in it. To do this requires time spent in study and in conferences. An eagerness to

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