

seventh and eighth grades, they have fairly well formulated notions of social class. Therefore, it would seem advisable for a systematic study of the class structure of America to be undertaken in the junior and senior high schools. Materials such as *Yankee City* could be used in part, and students helped to see not only the existence of social class, but also the reasons for it.

But junior and senior high school students are also beginning to feel the advantages or disadvantages of their particular class position, and some recognition of their feeling with regard to class needs to be made. Here case studies culled from such books as *Elm-town's Youth* could be carefully studied, and used as a basis for helping

students verbalize their attitudes toward class. Such study should be directed toward two ends: (1) helping students probe their own prejudices and rationalizations concerning class, and (2) helping students arrive at generalizations regarding people on a basis other than social class.

The teachers of America have made notable strides in the field of intercultural education, and have courageously attacked racial and religious prejudices. But in the area of human relations, the problem of social class has been largely untapped. It is hoped that educators will not shy away from this "hot" area, but will seek a solution through revised curriculum practices in both elementary and high schools of the nation.

## *Working to Learn*

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MILTON J. GOLD

"Learning about the world of work and learning about the world through work" is the theme of this article by Milton J. Gold, supervisor of curriculum in the Washington State Department of Public Instruction, Olympia. The author outlines a secondary school program which brings work experience into the general education of all school youth.

THIRTY OR FORTY three-year-olds tumble into a Brooklyn high school every morning. Precocious? No. Just a number of children whom the school serves while at the same time providing realistic experience for girls who are to be nurses, dieticians, playground assistants, domestic workers—and mothers.

In a high school operated by a Detroit automobile corporation, a boy works all week with machine tools molding replacement parts for the

tools and dies that assembly line workers will actually use in the auto plant. An instructor carefully guides the boy through a sequence of activities that will make him an expert machinist. Next week he will spend in the school building proper. He will be learning applications of mathematics, science, and shop theory from specially prepared texts. He will take a course in "technology" that includes in a sample week such things as the handling and processing of basic raw materials, trips

to the plastics division and print shop of the auto plant, discussion of today's mass production methods with focus on precision and interchangeability of parts. Courses in English and history complete the picture.

Joe Anderson attends high school in Minneapolis. In the morning he follows the conventional program, with one exception—an occupational relations course. In the afternoon he goes downtown for part-time experience on a job the school has helped him get. The occupations course helps orient him as a worker in the community; it calls for analysis of the job he holds, measuring his potentialities as a worker, consideration of the problems of the beginning worker and of the problems common to all workers, introduction to community agencies available to adults, and long-term job planning.

### Learning through Work

“Learning by doing” is a phrase that educators have taken to their bosoms in the past half-century. Yet the phrase expresses a truth old as time. The entire civilization of human beings is a story of learning by doing—by working. “In and through work,” says Dewey, “they have mastered nature, they have protected and enriched the conditions of their own life, they have awakened to the sense of their own powers—have been led to invent, to play, and to rejoice in the acquisition of skill.”\*

People live their work as truly as they work for a living. In many cases the occupation gives meaning and dignity to a man's life. In others the

occupation is a straightjacket which narrows interests and sensitivities. And in some it is a nightmare to escape from whenever possible. Positive or negative, it colors the individual's thinking as a citizen, as a worker, as a consumer, as a believer, and as an enjoyer of leisure time. The school has an obligation to help the adolescent see his work in proper perspective by helping him to understand the meaning of work in our culture.

If the race, then, has developed its culture through its work, and if we actually do learn by doing, is it not reasonable to expect that youth can best learn their culture by working in it—but working in it in such a manner that light is thrown on all our social, economic, aesthetic, and ethical relations? Something of the kind can be seen in the examples of the girls in Brooklyn, the boys in Detroit and Minneapolis.

In some instances, efforts have been made to tie together general education and vocational orientation. Here and there, school people have come to the conclusion that it is through work experiences, broadly conceived and developed, that the important phases of general education take on meaning. On-the-job experiences, work-camps, voluntary community service are the matrices in which understandings of personal relationships, ethical principles, social and economic organization grow. Yet always in the background is the necessity for school direction, planning, and guidance to help clarify meanings, to avoid exploitation of youngsters, and to prevent a cynicism from developing through familiarity with but one side of the coin. The

\**The School and the Child*. Edited by J. J. Findlay. London: Blackie and Son, no date. p. 86.

school's role, too, is one of insuring attention to broader educational objectives rather than the development of mechanical skills alone.

### **Integration of Vocational and Educational Programs**

In the period between the two World Wars secondary education in the United States enjoyed a phenomenal growth. That growth was accompanied by increasing concern as to the appropriateness to its new population of the old high school program. One of the results was the institution of separate vocational schools and courses; another was the inauguration of a whole series of inquiries into the "needs of youth" and the adequacy of the schools.

In general, the vocational programs have been criticized as being overly specialized, as requiring too early specialization, as being too narrow, and as addressing themselves to but a small percentage of the population—the skilled trades. In an era when schools are growing ever more concerned about the integration of personality and the unity of the school program, separation of "vocational" and "general" should not be accepted without question.

The various youth studies of the 'Thirties—the American Youth Commission's and the New York State Regents Inquiry, to name but two—all indicated the primary place occupied by adjustment to the world-of-work in youth concerns. Leaving school and entering upon a job involved not only the required vocational skills; it also was a matter of personal and social relationships on the job, of ethics sur-

rounding the working situation, and of leisure-time activities when off the job.

### **Instructional Programs**

Learning about the world of work, and learning about the world through work can develop from several types of programs that have already proved practicable. These take the form of cooperative work-study programs using local industry, work-camps, school farms, school production work, and supervised work experience.

#### *Work-study programs*

The oldest of these as an institution on the American scene is the cooperative work-study program. Starting at the University of Cincinnati in the early years of the century, cooperative courses have spread to many of the colleges and high schools in the country. Essentially this program provides for a division of the student's time between school and work on a job which has been chosen as a career.

Since 1933, the diversified occupations program has operated within this framework in communities where there is no need for a large number of workers in a specific trade. The diversified program brings boys and girls interested in a variety of occupations together for general work orientation in the morning. In the afternoon, it places them in the trade of their choice under the supervision of a cooperating employer and under the guidance of the school coordinator.

#### *Work experience programs*

The National Youth Administration pointed out the possibilities for work by youth that would benefit the school

and community while affording necessary work opportunities. Before another depression precipitates new federal incursions into school activities, it may be well for each school district to adapt the better features of the NYA as it operated in the area. In many cases the NYA was able to demonstrate real values of work activities in the school, in the community, and in resident work centers.

One of the outcomes of the NYA was greater attention to work experience programs not directly related to the school curriculum. In many schools time is now released and school credit given to students for out-of-school employment in the senior or junior year. In some cases this is accompanied by a course in vocational guidance. In some, placement and supervision are accomplished by the school.

#### *Youth work-camps*

The Civilian Conservation Corps also pioneered a way in work experience by providing youth with an opportunity to earn and to learn while performing one of the nation's most significant conservation achievements to date. The CCC has been evaluated elsewhere, most of the criticism arising from the relative poverty of its educational program. Here again the schools can perform a real service by seizing upon the values of the CCC in a framework that gives primacy to educational values.

Introduced to the United States in the 'Thirties on secondary and collegiate levels, voluntary work-camps have tied together study of social-economic "tension areas," development of work skills, and understanding of work as service—as an ethical value.

Since World War II, the Philadelphia Society of Friends has been organizing weekend work-camps during the school year. Boys and girls have gathered on weekends for service in slum areas to improve life in the community and to build their own values.

#### *Schools in private industry*

In a few cases industries have developed their own schools operating as parts of the industrial establishment. Dangers of narrowness and paternalism are apparent in these programs. To avoid these dangers, many schools have set up production facilities inside the school plant that include baking, auto shops, printing, wood-working, etc. In both cases, a very real connection between production and education can exist.

#### **A Proposed Program**

If we were to plan a secondary school program which would spring from the world of work, what would it be like?

We should like to see, of course, some agricultural experience to show man's basic dependency on the soil—and to explore farming as a way of life as well as an occupation. A school-camping experience on a school farm could use part of the ninth or tenth year to provide this general background on agriculture as a way of life, and to stimulate study of the science of growth and a "practical" geometry. The farm could also provide specialized training for students in their last year, both as they farmed the land and assisted the more general freshman group.

Voluntary service to the community—a project of community improve-

ment, or service in public and civic agencies—could form part of the tenth year program. A civic conscience—just as a “spelling conscience”—grows from actual doing. The development of government, its organization and services, would be a “natural” learning at this time.

Experiences in the various service careers could broaden the horizon of the sixteen-year-old—assistance in hospitals, clinics, law offices, public agencies, social welfare offices. Activities challenging a wide range of competence can be provided, useful work that is not professional but gives a realistic picture of career possibilities in various fields. Boys and girls whose vocational dreams may not correspond to their abilities may in this way find related occupations that satisfy their aspirations.

In the eleventh year, two or three months' part-time experience in representative factories or above-ground mining operations can give to every youth a basic understanding of American industrial organization. A later experience in commercial enterprises can acquaint the student with sales and distribution processes and their significance personally and socially. Finally, in the senior year, the student can select one of his previous experiences as the one in which he desires

special training so that he may leave school with a “salable skill.”

#### Occupations—the Center of the Educational Program

Work experiences until now have been included in many school programs. They have taken their place, however, almost solely as methods of vocational training. As such, they have an immediate and important function, but too often the essential meaning of the occupation as a way of life has been lost. Moreover, specialization has taken place prior to general knowledge of industrial life, and the divisive, fractionating tendencies of a machine age have been reinforced. The effort here is to bring work experience into the *general*, common program of all school youth.

Unlike the ancient Greeks, we do not separate citizens and workers; our schools can do a better job of educating youth by combining their citizenship and vocational programs. They can do a better job of educating for democracy by developing a better understanding of the diverse ways in which people work for a living and live their lives. They can help youth contribute to their culture by building education around the center of that culture—the occupations of men.

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