

## Developing the Individual in a Social Scene

The individual's developmental tasks and those of the community are inter-related in a life-needs program. Mary's task in learning to walk to school safely will be more difficult if her community has built a school near railroad tracks. Whether we like it or not, this hazard to safety is part of Mary's problem. The curriculum in a life-needs program will need to note both individual and community factors. It will seek to help Mary cross streets safely and will em-

phasize observing railroad signals. Moreover, it will aim to build community understanding about locating schools in the future. Education for life needs will note the dual responsibility to individual and society.

Thus the life-needs program will aim to develop the individual in a social scene. The curriculum will be concerned with individual developmental tasks as they are related to common personal requirements. It will be further concerned with particular community tasks as they relate to common social needs.

## THE SCHOOL AND LIFE NEEDS

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LIFE NEEDS have been frequently defined by psychologists in terms of psychological satisfactions and frustrations. Sociologists usually define them by showing the desirable actions of individuals with regard to institutions, ideals, and their fellow men. Subject teachers define them in terms of skills, knowledge, or power in dealing with facts or principles.

There is no *one* way to define "life needs," but whatever definition (usually a classification of experience) is accepted, it should be useful in the selection of instructional material which will be effective in producing the desired results. It should be specific enough to help in making a choice among curriculum materials. The classifications should be few in number, not a major listing of specific goals to be achieved, and the classifications should be closely related to human experience so that a need is at once apparent. By way of illustration, let us

indicate the principal life needs that the school should strive to meet.

### Associating with Peers

First, there is the need for learning to behave the way your peers expect you to behave. This at once recognizes differences in capacity, achievement, and expectancy. It likewise makes foremost the pressure of public opinion and the need for discovering and accepting principles, ideals, and standards of the group in which you live. It presupposes maturity, self-control, courage, honesty, stability, and those other attributes which produce psychological maturity. Inherent in this need are the qualities ordinarily considered those of a good and informed citizen and a stable and energetic individual—knowledge, action, thought.

### Earning a Living

Second, there is the need for getting and holding a job. This implies all the

preliminary study and analysis necessary to match individual interests and abilities with the work of the world and come out with an intelligent personal decision. There is inherent in this need the study necessary to be successful in the chosen career, the skills of successful relationships with fellow workers, selling one's services, and performing the job satisfactorily.

### **Individual Development**

Third, there is the need for personal growth and development. This implies three things: meeting your own personal standards; learning to do something worthwhile when you are not on your job; and maintaining and building personal health. Each person needs to have his own standards of achievement to which he can refer and which will supplement the pressure of others for accomplishment. Leisure time can be destructive, or it can lead to rehabilitation, enjoyment, and release from tensions. Each person has a need for resources of his own that he can rely upon to renew, restore, and relax him. These are the three R's of leisure time. If health is lacking, all other phases of life are affected. Thus a strong body and a high degree of organic functioning are real needs for successful living.

### **Successful Family Living**

Fourth, there is the need for developing a successful home life. This is a mutual responsibility of parents and

children. It implies the need for children and youth to recognize their responsibilities for sharing their parents' fortunes and trials; for utilizing the home for security, love, guidance, and social adjustment; and for contributing to the development of a happy home. It implies also a need for parents to learn to live together with one another and with their children, for possessing the knowledge and means for the economic maintenance of a home, and for assisting their children to come to full maturity.

### **A Curriculum Framework**

These four life needs represent the chief areas in which the school can be effective in working with children and youth. They tend to combine the psychological, social, and vocational needs of life into a framework which can be used by the curriculum worker for determining curriculum materials. They are simply and succinctly stated and yet are comprehensive. All other phases of needs can be subsumed clearly under these four.

These needs also may serve as a framework of organization, and will, if adopted, tend to focus attention upon behavior and the selection of materials to establish certain behavioral patterns. They provide opportunity for personal experience, skills, and the experience of others (history, principles, ideals) to be unified. They are needs closely related to life activities.

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