

tive support of fair employment and education practices legislation and vigorous enforcement of these, support of policies of non-discrimination in housing, eating places and recreational facilities, and similar activities having for their purpose the democratization of the community, all serve to establish a social environment for children which encourages healthy intergroup attitudes.

Employment of posters and literature seeking to promote better human relations on a mass basis appears to be relatively ineffective in itself. This is the case because of the ease with which those to whom it is most applicable may ignore or distort its meaning. However, such techniques are valuable in

that they encourage the overt expression of democratic attitudes in a community or school environment where the dominant attitude differs.

The activities suggested in the preceding paragraphs are by no means new to forward-looking teachers and administrators. Many of these activities have long been part of the programs of our better elementary and secondary schools. However, until recently many such practices were not seen in their relationship to attitude changes in children. It is indeed gratifying to find that the indications from contemporary research concerned with intercultural attitude change lend further support to the case for democratic experimental education in our American schools.

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## *Social Education: A Dual Job*

JAMES L. HYMES, JR.

Educators must again see their task as twofold, involving both person and content. James L. Hymes, Jr., is Professor of Education at George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.

HOW ARE YOU going to educate children for kindness? For decency, for generosity, for thoughtfulness? How do you build a sympathy that cares about the other fellow? A reasonableness that is willing to talk things over rather than attack first and hit? A peacefulness that is strong and sturdy and confident? How do you develop people who aren't out to get the other fellow but who are capable of anger, when that is right, capable of determination, capable of courage? People who want to live and

who want others to live, to live well and fully; people who want a good life for themselves and a good life for others?

Instruction must be a part of the answer. Youngsters growing up need to come to know what the score is. They need chances to spot the pressure points of decency, chances to work for what they want and to work against what they don't want. They need facts to go on, skills they can use with their facts, values that will give these a direction.

And all of these—facts, skills, values—must begin to be a part of youngsters from the very early school days on. Social education is not an advanced subject. It is a developing, expanding process that has its roots way down. Advancing years mean enlargement, not beginning anew.

#### EDUCATION: PERSON AND CONTENT

Instruction—facts growing out of experience, skills growing out of use, values developing out of life—from the nursery school into the kindergarten into the primary grades into the elementary school and high school and college. An expanding content, reaching out from its beginnings with the very here-and-now increasingly to include the further-away in time and space; developing from its beginnings with the first-person-singular increasingly to include the other fellow; moving beyond its initial emphasis on the thoughtful handling of each-specific-situation-as-it-occurs into generalizing and foreseeing.

Yet instruction can be only a part of the answer. There has to be a pre-disposition, a leaning, a feeling-for, an inclination. This is not a matter of what you have studied, or what you have read or seen or heard. This is the *You*—the kind of person you are, what you yourself are like.

Call it a frame of reference. The facts, the skills, the values will fit in and relate to each other depending on it.

Call it a screen. What you really learn, how much of it you remember, what part of it you ever use depends on it.

Call it a censor. For this is what decides: I will hear this, I will see this, I

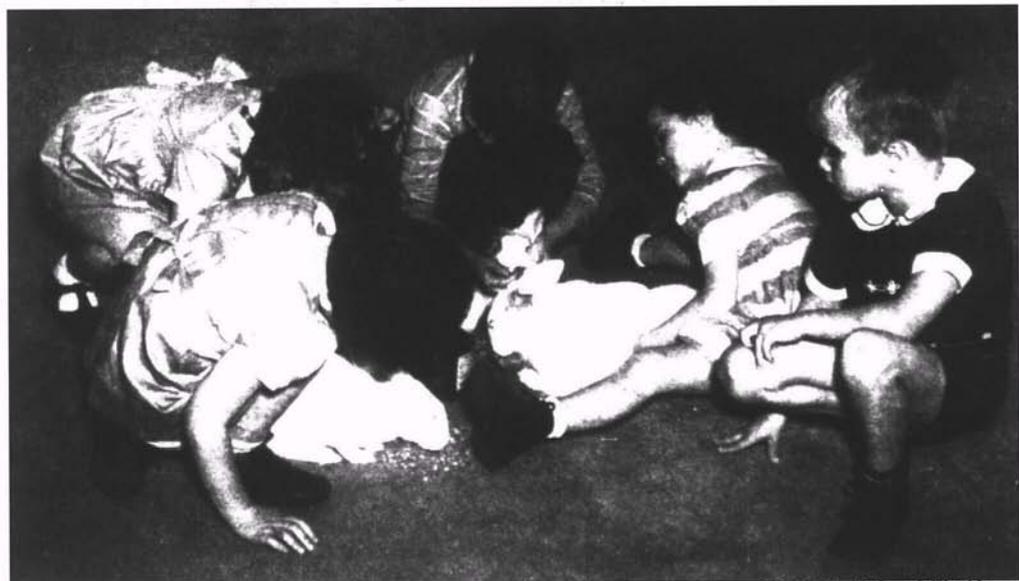
will act here and not there, I will be guided by this, I will respond here and not there.

Call it *The Person*, for that is what it is. Social education is in part instruction and certainly too it is in large part personality development. Social education is the education of liberally informed and democratically skilled people, but certainly too it is the development of secure and confident and personally content humans. Moreover, social education is instruction *plus* treating youngsters as they grow so they will be free to use what their curriculum has taught them.

#### Instruction Plus Humanity

The two must go together. Without instruction the human—let us say well-balanced, his own feelings in hand—remains a potential, not alerted to where his basic good will and friendly, trusting attitude can do some good and is needed. But without suffusion of the feelings that come from a healthy personality development, the human remains tied to specifics. "I have learned not to hit over here so I won't, but I have to hit and there is this possibility. . . . I have learned not to hate here so I won't, but there is anger inside of me and no one has said anything about this group. . . . I have learned that I am supposed to care about this segment of life, but I have never had enough for myself and so the devil with those over there."

Basically it is the development of the person that holds promise of continuity of action and hope of extension to new situations. Seen in this light social education becomes a broader job still. Instruction must begin as early as possible



*Courtesy, Univ. of Florida*

*It is home room and art and arithmetic and science. But it is social education too for the person is finding himself.*

—even in the nursery and kindergarten as life in those years provides situations. But the way of treating the person starts even long years before. In terms of feelings the nursery years are almost graduate education. Much has already happened, much has already been learned. The child is old, not young.

#### CONFIDENCE IS BUILT EARLY

Schools and teachers seldom act as if we care but everyday events—prosaic, routine—are basically contributing to: How do I feel about myself? How do I feel about others? How do I feel about this world? And this becomes the initial framework, the first screen, the primary censor, The Person, which is our concern.

Way down in the first years of life, the beginnings of strong confidence can be built: I'm fed often enough, I'm

held often enough, I'm played with and talked with often enough, I'm admired and enjoyed often enough. . . . I'm good and I'll get by. There is a place for me. I don't have to fight-fight-fight to make myself real.

The beginnings of decent trust can be built: They will come when I want them, they will give me what I need, they won't leave me too long alone, they won't expect more of me than I can give. . . . They're good and I can get along with them. This is a friendly enough world. I don't have to everlastingly look out and be on guard to make it safe.

The beginnings of reasonableness can be built: The world hasn't landed on me. I don't feel I have to attack to make things even.

Everyday events: feeding and weaning, toileting, sleep time . . . the simple

business of bathing and playtime . . . people to look at and laugh with . . . the language tone you hear, the facial set you see, the muscle tone and emotional wave that gets over to you . . . the words that tell you what you can touch and where you can go and what you can do . . . a new baby born . . . a glass of milk spilled . . . a toy broken . . . a skinned knee. This is the beginning. This is where a person first finds himself.

For the present: I feel happy and I feel good. For the future: I'm all right. Jones probably is too.

For the present: I feel uncomfortable, empty, a little angry inside. For the future: Jones? Who is Jones? I'm not sure he likes me. I'm not sure I like him.

For the present: I feel safe, sure, wanted, enjoyed. For the future: I can work with Jones and we'll get along.

For the present: I feel put upon, pressed, upset inside. For the future: Jones? Who is Jones? What does he want from me? I must keep my eye on him.

#### PARENTS, TOO, NEED HELP

These are the really early beginnings of a pre-disposition. Schools could do more than we now do to make these good. This is the part of social education that is solely in the hands of parents. But parents alone often feel buffeted, isolated, confused. Many would welcome the help caring schools could give. Group meetings and study classes for "pre-school parents"; a single staff member concerned with these early years and available for help; at least a bibliography of free and inexpensive materials so that parents could know what is at hand for them . . . there are

all degrees of concern that can be expressed. And as we see social education as beginning at birth, not incidentally but in an important way, we will be able to think of still more.

Development of decent-sized, adequately equipped and professionally staffed public-school nursery schools and kindergartens is certainly a step. Not alone for the instruction these make possible, but because they can offer children a good life, because they are confidence-building when youngsters are Three and Four and Five.

#### THE PERSON FINDS HIMSELF

Yet this extension of educational concern downward to the years where personality first forms is only a part of what is needed. This would be getting down to a good start, but a start is a start. Development of the person begins in very early childhood but it does not end there. Dealings with people—their sternness or support, their approval or their pressure—begin with the first days of life but they do not end there. Extension downward must be coupled with extension outward.

It is a good omen for the potential of a decent social point of view if a child can come through his early bowel training feeling: I can do it, they like me, I am up to the rules of the game. But then this must be built upon: I can take this starting-to-school in my stride, I can do this reading they are asking of me, this teacher smiles and is friendly, I am able enough in this game-stuff we do out of doors. Here too—the whole gamut of life in every classroom—is social education. For here too is the person finding himself.

It is a good omen for the potential of

a decent social point of view if a child can come through his infancy feeling: They like me, they laugh with me, they play with me, they are glad I am here. But then this must be built upon: I sit with my friends in fourth grade, I am the one the teacher counts on in this committee work, they chose *me* for the part in the play. It is home room and art and arithmetic and science. But it is social education too for the person is finding himself.

It is a good omen for the potential of a decent social point of view if a child can come through his early feeding feeling: They took their time, they wanted me to be happy, they are good and I like them. But then this must be built upon: My teacher smiles, it is just the second day and he knows my name, the principal is a good guy, we have fun in our classroom and the teacher is a brick.

### First Learnings Count

A bad beginning makes it hard. That

is one reason why these very first learnings count. But even a bad beginning can be overcome if teachers are patient and knowing and pile on what The Person is looking for.

Facts alone will never do it. Reading alone never will. News analysis, working with others whose skin is different, sensitizing novels and movies, committees and shared jobs, real responsibilities and field trips . . . the good instruction never can go beyond the pre-disposition. There has to be a freedom to use what you learn, a framework that puts you as a secure person in a world that is not too attacking.

Social education has this dual job to do: to build the person, through all the experiences he has, so that he sees himself as able and sure, sees other people as friendly, sees the world as manageable. And then to build the background, through all the experiences a child has, so that he uses this freedom that is within him to think about others, to feel for them, to care, to do.

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