

Preparing Children and Youth for Work: The School's Role

Robert C. Goodwin

AS A people, we are dedicated to the premise that a youth should have the opportunity to work in a job that satisfies his personal needs and interests, and uses his skills and abilities to the fullest—skills and abilities that have been carefully nurtured through years of academic training and work experience.

Our schools and the education we are providing for our children have become matters of critical national importance. The profound changes taking place in our occupational structure under the impact of technology make it imperative that we help the coming generations to make the most of their talents and opportunities. This requires thoughtful assessment of what we are doing, careful consideration of suggested changes, and a blending of the old and the new in a way that will accomplish our goals.

More young people are getting more education today than ever before. By 1970, almost three-fourths of our youths will have had at least a high school education before they leave the academic world for a job. The number of students who plan to continue their education after high school graduation is growing steadily and rapidly. It is apparent that the bulk of high school graduates do realize their need for increased knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, one million youngsters leave school every year, many at the high school level, but many others while they are still in elementary school.

The youth problems that are giving

rise to so much concern today are relatively new to this Nation. They reflect a number of economic and social trends which are not new, but which have been greatly accelerated in recent years. We are faced with the fact that high and increasing unemployment among young people may well be our most formidable manpower problem in this decade. And there is every indication that the employment problems of our youth will become even more accentuated.

In the next few years, there will be the greatest influx of young people into the labor force in our history. By 1967 there will be 3.3 million more young people in the labor force than there were in 1962. Between 1963 and 1965, the number of 14-through-19-year-old workers in the labor force is expected to rise by more than one million. The impact of changes, both in the nature of work and larger numbers of workers seeking jobs, has already created serious problems. All groups in our society have some responsibility in bringing about desperately needed solutions to these problems.

Educational Opportunity

As persons in the field of education know, it is becoming increasingly clear that education is a lifelong process because the educational and training needs of both citizens and workers are constantly changing. In the world of work, modern technology has indeed brought

dramatic changes in manpower requirements. The decline in unskilled jobs, the rapid increase in service occupations, and the creation of entirely new fields of work and new kinds of jobs make it mandatory that the nation's school systems educate and train the present and future members of the labor force in many important directions. It must provide the kinds of education and training which will enable individuals to compete realistically for jobs, so they can become fully productive members of society. It must provide students with an education necessary to prepare them for citizenship in the broadest sense, and it must emphasize the kind of education and training which will make the individual as maneuverable, flexible, and responsive to change as possible.

Secretary of Labor Wirtz has said:

Think what would happen in this country if we declared war on ignorance. Suppose we raised the standards of teachers to the levels the importance of their job demands, paid them the salaries the required skills would warrant, cut the students-to-teachers ratio to the point good sense would require, built the schoolrooms which are needed, and gave every child in the country the educational opportunity—from first grade through college—which a few have today.

Education would become our largest economic enterprise, which it ought to be. This would, in itself, go far toward creating full employment. It would wipe out ignorance.

It is not likely that there will be full employment of youth until the educational system, as well as the economy, is operating at full capacity. In the meantime, there remains the hard fact that there are today several million young Americans who have left the schools, not to return, and that they are not equipped to make a living which will satisfy them or keep them and their families independent. It can be hoped that eventually

the only special programs which will be necessary to supplement the general education system will be retraining programs for those who need such training when they have to change jobs. In a properly functioning economy, it may be possible for most of this retraining to be done privately. But we all know that we are nowhere near that point today.

The tremendous job of meeting the needs of youth in our changing society is too big for any one agency or one program of action. We must coordinate the efforts of those who *have* jobs for youth, those who *find* jobs for youth, and those who know youth best. All agencies working with youth must learn what the realities of the world of work are now, and what they can be expected to be in the future, so they can see the dimensions of the job of preparing youth for these realities.

Schools must keep abreast of job requirements and of what the lives of these young people will require. Educators must apply this knowledge with a new depth of understanding and with new curricula and techniques of teaching. This would help to stem the tide of dropouts. And the State Employment Services must learn what new organizational devices and guidance techniques will be required of them in helping youth to become more employable, as well as in speeding the placement of all youths on the road to productive employment.

With this knowledge, we can then begin to learn how to coordinate all community resources—the teachers, the employment specialists, the behavioral scientists, the clergymen, the recreation specialists, the family, and community agencies. We are certain that all these disciplines and skills need to be given a common direction if youths are to be

(Continued on page 287)

of selected excerpts from some 50 psychologists, is an outstanding contribution to psychological and educational literature. Contemporary educational psychology has long needed a systematic reporting of significant research on the cognitive processes, a topic clearly central to human learning. In preparing the compendium, the editors recognize, as did Hill, "the dilemma that what is most adequately developed in psychology is least relevant in practice" (p. v). (Laboratory studies of simple behavior patterns are not always adequate for generalizing to complex behavior situations such as persist in the classroom.)

The organization of the book is carefully done.

Part One, dealing with a general arousal theory of motivation, is central to the neo-behavioristic and cognitive processes proposed by psychologists like Hebb and Osgood, presented in Part Two. Non-associative approaches to cognition comprise Part Three, while the computer model and computer simulation of cognitive processes are presented in Part Four. In Part Five the generality of cognitive theory is demonstrated in the context of personality and motivation. Part Six deals with development and cognition in children (p. vii-viii).

Selections within the sections are appropriately chosen to reflect key developments in the various aspects of theorizing. Editorial introductions to the parts of the book, though brief, are adequate to introduce the readings. If there is a weakness of this book, it is the limited editorial analysis of the papers.

Teachers of young children should be particularly interested in Part Six. Articles in this section report studies of problem-solving processes, children's language development as related to the development of cognitive functioning, and children's probability learning.

Readers expecting a "how-to-do-it in the classroom" implementation will be disappointed. This volume presents theoretical constructs which research-minded teachers will find helpful in understanding and explaining human behavior.

Students and researchers of the learning process and of curriculum development should be familiar with this significant publication. Both Parker and Hill have clearly pointed to the educator's need to be cognizant of theories and experimentation in the cognitive domain. *The Cognitive Processes* is contemporary, well organized and possessed of far-reaching implications.

—Reviewed by JAMES A. PHILLIPS, JR.,
Assistant Professor, Secondary Education,
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

Editorial—Goodwin

(Continued from page 220)

served well. Those interested in the guidance of youth, in and out of school, cannot walk on separate sides of the street as if they are in competition. The point is not primarily that professional neighbors ought to know each other better, or that we can add to each other's knowledge (although we can). The consuming interest and need is that young people in our communities may receive more adequate vocational service.

Progress toward this goal continues to be demonstrated through the Employment Service-School Cooperative Program. As part of this program of service offered to youth, the local offices of State Employment Security agencies have cooperative arrangements with high schools to provide group guidance, counseling, testing, occupational and other job information, and placement assistance to students entering, or about to enter, the labor force. The 1962-63 program was

the most extensive ever provided to graduating seniors. A total of 10,866 of the Nation's 21,338 high schools participated in this program. Nearly 700,000 seniors received Employment Service help. Such cooperative efforts, which are increasing each year, help our young people immeasurably and avoid duplication and competition of effort.

It is most appropriate for *Educational Leadership* to have selected for its 1964-65 issues the theme "Schools and the Social Revolution"—a theme which is both timely and of national significance. The task before all of us is difficult, but well-coordinated efforts can be fruitful. By working together—educators, labor, business, industry, government at all levels, private and community agencies—all of our citizens can unite to preserve and nurture our most precious asset—the youth of America.

—ROBERT C. GOODWIN, *Administrator, Bureau of Employment Security, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.*

Employment—Rice

(Continued from page 235)

11. United States Department of Labor. "Job Changing and Manpower Training." Manpower Report No. 10, June 1964. 8 p.

12. United States Department of Labor. "Job Opportunities Information." October 1963. 3 p.

13. United States Department of Labor. *Manpower Report of the President and a Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training.* Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office; March 1964. 279 p.

14. United States Department of Labor. *Manpower Research and Training Under the Manpower Development and Training Act.* Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office; March 1964. 193 p.

15. United States Department of Labor. *Mobility and Worker Adaptation to Economic Change in the United States.* Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office. Man-

power Research Bulletin No. 1, Revised. July 1963. 77 p.

16. United States Department of Labor. *Research and Training Activities Under the Manpower Development and Training Act.* Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office. February 1963. 135 p.

17. United States Department of Labor. "United States Labor Force Report No. 28, Employment Projections, by Industry and Occupation, 1960-75." Reprint from the *Monthly Labor Review*; p. 240-50, March 1963.

18. United States Department of Labor. *Young Workers: Their Special Training Needs.* Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office. Manpower Research Bulletin No. 3. May 1963. 19 p.

19. Grant Venn. *Man, Education and Work: Postsecondary Vocational and Technical Education.* Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education. 1964. 184 p.

20. W. Willard Wirtz. "War on Ignorance." *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* 8, 1:5-8; February 1964.

Home Economics—Conafay

(Continued from page 229)

ington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1963.

A New Look at the Vocational Purpose of Home Economics Education. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, Division of Home Economics Education.

New Directions: A Statement of Philosophy and Objectives. Washington, D.C.: American Home Economics Association, 1959.

Rua Van Horn. *Home Economics Education for Wage Earners.* Washington, D.C.: American Vocational Association Journal, April 1964.

American Women: Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963.

FEBRUARY 1, 1965

Closing date for

Advance Registration

ASCD 20th Annual Conference

Copyright © 1965 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.