

*All elements of the community must cooperate
in developing the influences which contribute to the whole person.*

Education = Schools +

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EVEN a brief observation of children today shows that education is not confined to "the schoolhouse." For example, the writer's four-year-old grandson has learned to make positive choices of his breakfast cereal as a result of viewing the commercials on the TV screen, while a nine-year-old granddaughter recently announced to the family that her schedule of outside activities—church club, Brownies, flute lesson, baton twirling class—precludes her acceptance of any responsibility for household chores. These observations, which can be recognized at all age levels in households throughout the land, indicate that education in America equals factors *plus* the influences of "the schoolhouse."

Educational and classical literature, as well as the current popular magazine and newspaper writings or congressional hearings, is replete with definitions, descriptions, or statements relating to the purposes or requirements of education for children, youth, and, more recently, adults in our society.

Purposes of Education

Education might be described as the aggregate of all the social processes by which people are subjected to the influences of their environment, controlled or uncontrolled, through which a person develops abilities, attitudes, appreciations, skills, or other forms of behavior of positive value to the society in which he lives. In modern America, then, education must be considered as encompassing influences both within and without "the schoolhouse." The educational program of the schools—local, county, state, or national—is circumscribed by the influences of the *community*, the *church*, the *family*, and the *mass media*. The interrelated influences contribute to the selection of a career (work), the choices of recreational activities, and the contribution as a citizen (social service). Parallel to the highly structured educational program is the individual's personal development as he matures physically and develops attitudes toward safety in the society in which he moves. Riding to and from school in the school bus can have an important educational influence in relation to home, school, and highway safety.

The total educational process is a team effort, whereby the organized program of "the schoolhouse" plus the outside influences must be recognized in the complex society of the last third of the twentieth century.

Everyone recognizes the wisdom as well as the necessity of being better prepared than he would be without instruction to do what he aspires to do or is likely to do. One gets much of his preparation for the ordinary duties of life at home or picks it up, often uneconomically, through trial and error. Without instruction, a person is likely to go through life crippled by inefficiency. The "schoolhouse" has had the responsibility of preparing young people to perform duties likely to be accepted, but unlikely to be learned elsewhere. Generally, the educational programs of our society have been concerned with developing abilities, attitudes, and skills as producers—workers in the professions, business, and industry. Ancillary programs—extracurricular in school together with community activities—promote the recreational facet of a pupil's experience. The influences of the family and church contribute to the pupil's attitudes concerning his relationship toward his fellow man which may be grouped under the broad area of social service.

While the elementary schools teach what is recognized as basic and essential preparation for the ordinary activities of living, as the students increase in maturity, their ambitions, varied abilities, and developed interests demand many kinds of specialized education. The secondary school programs have provided academic, business, general, vocational, and technical programs to equip youth to attain competence in either higher education or to enter the world of work.

However, the school has strangely neglected certain future activities which will surely be required of all adults, those performed by all persons—disadvantaged or affluent—as consumers. From childhood and adolescence on, every person is a consumer.

Mass media are used by manufacturers and retailers to sell to youth, especially the teen-agers, their products and services. To realize the importance of the teen-ager as a consumer, the Bureau of Census reported on July 1, 1966 that there were 25.4 million persons aged 13 through 19. Today nearly 13 of every 100 Americans are teen-agers, and they are sizable spenders. Consumers Union estimated that the teen-agers in 1966 were paying out some \$15 billion—about \$625 per teen—annually on goods and services.

Consequently the significance of teen-age spending or the place of the consumer as he relates to the educational program, preschool through the university, together with the implications to our national consumer economy cannot be over-emphasized. This is an area that laymen, rather than educators, recognizing that many adults buy unwisely, uneconomically, and wastefully of time as of money have urged that the problems of the consumer be considered in the educational program.

Consumers face the problem of resource allocation because most of us have limited incomes but unlimited wants. Therefore, the major objective of assisting youth in making intelligent choices among goods and services and in securing the fullest utility from them should soon become a part of every educational program.

A recognition of two striking facts about human society is the starting point of economic inquiry. The first fact is that the resources for fulfilling these wants are not unlimited. While training producers, education has to a very large extent permitted the training of consumers to remain outside the realm of "the schoolhouse."

The employers of our nation (the consuming public), whether they be individuals employing professionals (law, medicine, accountants, etc.), listeners to the mass media, readers of current literature, or the whole business or industrial enterprise, are constantly critical of the education of the entering employee.

The Joint Council on Economic Education and many other groups have conducted studies which show a high degree of economic illiteracy, not only among dropouts from school but even among college graduates, and indeed among businessmen themselves. To a large extent the destiny of the nation and the world is dependent upon effective control of our economy. It must, therefore, be recognized that unless the individual member of the community realizes that what he does as a consumer as well as a producer has a considerable effect upon the community, the economic system will not be able to function within reasonable limits.

The sociological demographers indicate that the trends toward urbanization require increased competency in both literacy and technology in order to facilitate the shifts from a rural to an urban society.

During the past half-dozen years there has been a proliferation of early childhood or preschool programs. While many of these programs are school-based, a significant number of them "crop up" in churches, store fronts, apartment houses, and elsewhere. Some are short-term summer projects; others operate the year-around.

Underlying most of these early intervention or compensatory efforts is the intense pressure to provide programs for disadvantaged children in the development of language and verbal skills, concept formation, visual and auditory discrimination, general environmental orientation, self-concepts—and ways to relate them to school performance. This downward extension of schooling "may become a part of America's common school." Having recognized the crucial importance of the formative childhood years on intellectual, personal, and social growth, both educators and laymen are beginning to provide instruction that will constitute a sound foundation for all children, according to whatever their origins.

The knowledge explosion, according to geneticist Bentley Glass, will by the year 2000 increase the fund of scientific knowledge 100 times more than it was in 1900. This knowledge explosion is equally important in the non-scientific disciplines. The implications of these developments for school curriculum workers is staggering—programs and textbooks must be revised continually to keep ahead of obsolescence.

Hence the understanding of the inevitability of social change demands as a prime requisite an education that includes those *plus* influences which take the individual beyond the established program of "the schoolhouse." ❧

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