

Experience Centers Afford Sound Learning

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Only a seventh son of a seventh son could foresee the most appropriate experience centers for every social education curriculum. Experimental minded educators, seventh sons or not, deny that any pattern can be prescribed which is universally useful. Communities differ in this continental America; neighborhoods differ within communities; schools differ within neighborhoods; classes differ within schools; individuals differ within classes. The ways in which schools handle social education programs differ widely: some channel it through history and social studies subjects; others through an integrated social studies sequence; others, through core curriculums; while still others emphasize a social education program which permeates all phases of the curriculum. Therefore, educators must individually analyze the culture which provides the social foundation of education; learn the needs, problems, and tensions of the young people with whom they work; determine and apply a philosophy of education which will guide their endeavors. These insights, with a conception of content for implementation, the educator brings with him to a teaching situation where, after the give and take of teacher-pupil planning, actual (not paper) curriculum experiences materialize.

Among the centers of learning experience, the following are suggested as of probable postwar educational concern:

1. Personal development and self-understanding
(life and growth, sex and marriage, personality, psychology, mental hygiene)
2. Home, school, and friends
(the family, housing, immediate educational problems, school government, age-mate relationships)
3. Health
(diet, exercise, posture, rest, heredity, medical care, disease-prevention)
4. Time on our hands
(recreation, use of leisure time, expanding interests)
5. Goods and services
(consumer education concerning food, clothing, shelter, economic organization, advertising, standards)

6. Racial, religious, ethnic, social-economic relationships
(intercultural education concerning minority groups, prejudice, human relations)
7. Our vocations
(varieties of work, work experience, vocational choice, job preparation)
8. Education
(further education, varieties of schools, self-education, role of education, educational support)
9. Proposed roads for the American economy
(laissez faire, restoration of free market, business leadership, mixed economy, governmental planning)
10. Workers, management, and government
(historical development, consolidation, conflicts)
11. Propaganda and public opinion
(sources of our ideas, agencies of communication, propaganda techniques)
12. Ways of living in other nations
(China, Russia, Latin America, British Empire, Germany)
13. War in the modern world
(backgrounds, causation, alignments, conscription, weapons, results)
14. Efforts toward enduring peace
(attempts to organize peace, disruptive factors, nationalism, imperialism)
15. Human and natural resources in modern civilization
(resource bases, technology, science, cultural lag, human behavior)
16. World views and ideologies
(religion, democracy, fascism, communism)

Such a list is intended only to stimulate thought and attendant disagreement on needed emphases in the years immediately ahead. It is not a final, comprehensive list. Fundamentally, educational experiences must be adapted to the problems of the American City and to John Smith's needs as well as to the culture of America in the atomic age and to generalized child and adolescent needs. No list, however, can substitute for the fundamental task of the supervisor as he works side by side with teachers--to examine the culture, the needs of young people, the unfinished business of philosophy, and to develop centers of learning experience which are valid for a specific community-

neighborhood-school-class situation in which teachers as well as children and youth are continuously learning.

MAJOR CLUSTERS OF CONTENT

The sixteen centers of experience discussed below are suggested by the author as highly important in a balanced and significant program of secondary education today: (1) war, peace, and international relations; (2) overpopulation, pollution, and energy; (3) economic options and problems; (4) governmental processes; (5) consumer problems; (6) intercultural relations; (7) world views; (8) recreation and leisure; (9) the arts and esthetics; (10) self-understanding and personal development; (11) family, peer group, and school; (12) health; (13) community living; (14) vocations; (15) communication; (16) alternative futures.

Obviously, these clusters of content are not proposed for eternity; as new developments within the interacting sources require new adaptations, the clusters of content will change. The suggested list of centers of experience represents no particular rank order of priority.

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