

WORK EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION'S ANSWER TO TECHNOLOGY

by

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No one can deny that one of the most crucial issues facing modern man today is the advent of advanced technology. Technology has been described as a double-edged sword. The file clerk who may be displaced because of an automatic file sorter will probably go home and turn on his television set for enjoyment. How do we prepare people to live in a technological society, work in one as well, and what does it mean to the schools?

There are many avenues which can be traveled in order to formulate relevant programs which could enhance the positive adjustment from school to the work world.

Exposures that students can receive via work experience may offer a solution.

The school's first task is to make an extensive examination of so-called vocational education programs in existence. Non-college people are ready for skill training at sixteen years of age. The spotlight that is focused upon academic excellence must not be permitted to blind educators from realistic goals. Good counseling is a necessity in the clarification of these goals.

Financial aid should be secured for more extensive vocational counseling, placement service, equipment and trained personnel who are familiar with the most recent innovations. The continuing rapid rate of technological change stresses training which would permit flexibility. This would enable workers to shift more readily to allied classifications of work. The school and industry should be in close interaction with each other to ascertain occupational needs.

Courses of study should represent conditions of "job fitness" standards. A survey should be conducted to determine the feasibility of initiating a new program. The information a survey should include:

- (1) *community*; number and kinds of industry, population and job opportunities;
- (2) *school*; student's interest, number of terminal students, and materials and equipment on hand; staff competency;
- (3) *training stations*; number of enterprises willing to accept work experience students, training and experience offered, working conditions and salaries.

If the school and community approve of the need for establishing work experience, an advisory committee should be organized for the purpose of assisting in the operation of the program. The advisory committee should be composed of members who represent the various industrial areas served by the program, school personnel and students.

Next, good work stations must be established. This key lies in management's understanding of the objectives of work experience, plus careful selection of a sponsor within the business who possesses those special competencies and interest in the students to bring about a worth while training experience.

The position of teacher-coordinator is of great significance. A primary consideration is to secure a person who can weld together various groups to work together toward common objectives. He should be one who possesses initiative occupational experience, teaching experience, and the appropriate professional education.

Layout and equipment in adequate quantity and quality are required in order to facilitate learning and create an atmosphere of realism in the classroom.

There is no doubt that technology will make additional demands upon the educational system. Training is the link between labor supply and labor demand. The technological potential can be realized only if the labor supply in kind and number is adopted to labor requirements.

Serving society and geared directly into the social fabric is the American School. A people with a simple society ask of their school only a simple system of education, while people of a highly complex existence must demand accordingly a complex system of education. Principles of learning may remain constant, but programs of study cannot. Shifting the curriculum to meet the changing social scene is not new to American education. A keen look must be given to work experience and the ability to include technology into our present educational objectives.