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ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES DURING THE BIENNIUM 1926–1928

By

L. R. ALDERMAN
SPECIALIST IN ADULT EDUCATION

[Advance Sheets from the Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1926–1928]

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By L. R. Alderman,

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INTRODUCTION

There has been increased interest and activity in the field of adult education during the biennium 1926-1928. The term "adult education" is used in so many ways that the question is often asked, What is adult education?

"Adult education" came into general use in the United States soon after the World War. The shock of the war so aroused men and women that they began to look for a means to prevent such a calamity from ever happening again. It was more clearly seen that a people can not by any machinery or form of government exonerate themselves from responsibility for the acts of their Government. When mistakes are made by rulers, the people must suffer the consequences. This concept forces one anew to the conclusion that education of the whole people is most important. Men saw that rank and promotion in any military organization depend much upon education. The war revealed the fact that a very large number of men of military age were unfitted for general military assignment because of the lack of ability to read ordinary communications or to convey information by writing. From the National Academy of Sciences came the shocking announcement that about one-fourth of the American Army were not functionally literate.

The World War also revealed anew the fact that America is made up of many nationalities; that there were sections of this country which were essentially foreign in language, customs, and ideals. Assimilation had not gone on as fast as it was generally believed. Citizens generally saw that if this country was to enter into any action that required a united people it was necessary to assimilate this large number of foreigners. The alien himself saw that in order to carry on in this country it was necessary for him to become naturalized. The demand for instruction for our alien population received a great stimulus. The movement was called by the general

name of Americanization. Almost every large community established classes for preparing the foreign-born for American citizenship. To these classes, where the alien was taught to read and write the English language, came also native-born citizens. The term Americanization evidently did not fit and, to avoid its use the term "adult education," which has a much broader significance and was well-known in Europe, came gradually into general use.

Adult education was accepted as a challenge by many grown people. Adult education became a slogan for continued education. Numerous organizations adopted it as their objective. New organizations were formed to promote various phases of education for grown men and women.

Another reason why so much interest has been manifested in adult education is that a much larger number of our people have more leisure than ever before on account of the wider use of machinery and the improved organization of business. This increased leisure, viewed by some with alarm, makes adult education on a large scale possible. Whenever men are free from the necessity of putting forth all their efforts for immediate objectives they begin to think of more remote and ultimate objectives. The efforts to discover these ultimate objectives and to adjust one's life in harmony with them is what some people have in mind when they speak of adult education. Since the average man's contacts with the world have increased in number and meaning within the past few years, his environment may be said to be limited only by his ability and industry. Our times in a new sense motivate continuing education.

Adult education is the cause of much optimism because an increased number of people see in it a remedy for uninteresting and pessimistic old age. Perhaps the greatest contrasts in life are noticeable in men and women after 45 or 50 years of age because some are able at this time to make a transition from interests that are largely physical to those that are more largely mental and spiritual, while others for some reason do not make this important transition, and their old age is, therefore, uninteresting and pessimistic—one of the greatest tragedies in life.

Those who have thought much on the subject have given up the idea, at present, of stating accurately just what adult education is. They are content, for the time being, to give some outstanding characteristics of formal adult education, namely: (1) The work must be voluntary; (2) it must be taken during leisure time; (3) it must be somewhat continuous and consecutive.

There is no agreement as to how old the individual must be before his studying may be said to come under the head of adult education. Some claim that the individual must be 21 years of age or more; others claim, for practical purposes, that if the studying is carried

on under the conditions enumerated above by persons who have passed the compulsory school age it may be called adult education.

ABILITY OF ADULTS TO LEARN

The discovery and proclamation on the part of eminent psychologists that learning ability does not stop with maturity has greatly stimulated expectations as to what might be accomplished in this field of education. There is speculation as to whether the attention of educators should be focused upon the education of adults or upon the education of children and youths. There is no doubt that educational thought in this country, during the last half century at least, has been focused principally upon the training of young people. There are many who claim that American education has not measured up to expectations, because educators have not followed their students into mature life and thereby gaged the success or failure of their educational methods by the success of their students. There are probably few who would not agree that the ultimate end of education is to produce the largest possible number of educated adults. Hence, the system of education of youth is the best which contributes most to this end.

Probably the most outstanding event during the biennium in the field of adult education was the publication of "Adult Learning," by Dr. E. L. Thorndike and others, which study reveals very clearly that learning ability is tenacious. Doctor Thorndike says:

> If an adult class were to be divided into two sections, one expected to make rapid progress and the other expected to make slow progress, age would be practically worthless as a basis for the division. * * * The misinterpretation of a careless comment on the fixity of adult habits has afflicted popular pedagogy with an erroneously exaggerated estimate of the lack of plasticity—or learning power, or modifiability—of adults. This exaggeration may have helped to preserve the custom of confining education to early years, a custom for which there is, in my opinion, no ultimate justification of any sort. There certainly is no justification for it on the grounds of the futility of education of adults. * * * The provision of opportunities whereby adults can learn those things which they are able to learn and which it is for the common good that they should learn is a safe philanthropy and a productive investment of the nation. * * * Adult education suffers no mystical handicap because of the age of the students. On the other hand, it is not freed by the nature of its clients from any of the general difficulties—of adaptation to individual differences, stimulation of interest, arrangement for economy in learning each element, and organization of the subject of study so that each element of learning shall help all the others as much as possible and interfere with them as little as possible.

President F. B. Robinson, of the College of the City of New York, says:

> Comparing youth and middle age I find that there is hardly a subject in our curriculum that the average mature mind will not grasp with equal ease and with superior understanding. Take two men of equal intelligence, one 45 and

one 20, both in good health and with good habits, both free from hampering worries, and turn them loose on a new subject in which they are both interested. One finds immediately that the man of age and experience has all the advantage.

STATE ACTIVITIES

Since education in this country is a State function, it is desirable to know what is done by State departments of education to provide opportunities for those who can not take advantage of the regular day-school sessions. The information contained in the following table was compiled from questionnaires received from State departments of education:

Adult education activities as reported by State departments of education

State	Has State enacted legislation to provide education for—				Number of State supervisors of adult education in terms of full-time supervisors	Does State give financial aid to local communities for adult education?		Per cent of cost of adult education provided by State	Local communities having public-school classes for adults July 1, 1926, to June 30, 1928	Enrollment in all adult classes (native and foreign-born)		Institutions giving training courses to teachers of adult classes	Has State an illiteracy commission?	
	Adult foreigners		Adult native illiterates							1926–27	1927–28			
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No						Yes	No
Alabama	X		X		1½	X		50	436		13,757	0		X
Arkansas		X	X		1		X	0		1,163	3,459	1	X	
California	X		X		1½	X		(1)		46,641	56,801	4		X
Connecticut	X		X		2	X		15	54	8,743	9,246	1		X
Delaware	X		X		2	X		98	73	2,276	2,251	1		X
District of Columbia[2]	X		X		2	X		[3] 100	[3] 17		299	2		X
Florida	X		X		0		X	0						X
Idaho	X		X		0		X	0				0		X
Illinois	X		X		0		X	0						X
Iowa		X		X	0		X	0				3		X
Kansas		X		X	0		X	0	3			0		X
Louisiana		X		X	0		X	0				0		X
Maine	X		X		2	X		66⅔	20			0		X
Maryland		X		X	0		X	0	1	6,187	6,551	1		X
Massachusetts	X				2	X		50	95	25,123	25,086	2		X
Michigan	X		X		0		X	0				2		
Minnesota	X		X		1/10	X		50	47			0		X
Missouri		X		X	0		X	0				0		X
Montana	X				0		X	0	0			0		X
Nebraska	X		X		4	X		80	12		1,206	1		X
Nevada	X		X		0	X		(1)	5			0		X
New Hampshire	X		X		0	X		(1)				0		X
New Mexico		X		X	0		X	0						
New York	X		X		6	X		50	130	74,900	75,000	10		X
North Carolina	X		X		0		X	0	18	1,082	1,182	1	X	
North Dakota	X		X		0	X		50	25					X
Ohio	X		X		1		X	0	35		24,596			X
Oklahoma		X		X	0		X	0	500	5,000		0	X	
Oregon	X				1		X	0	12	1,800	2,000			X
Pennsylvania	X		X		2	X		(1)	92	19,500	22,443	2		X
Rhode Island	X			X	2	X		(1)	20			2		X
South Carolina		X	X		1	X		75	688	11,967	9,775	1	X	
South Dakota	X		X		½	X		50	6	42	655			X
Tennessee		X	X		0	X		(1)						X
Texas		X		X	0		X	0						X
Utah		X		X	0		X	0	4					X
Vermont		X		X	0		X	0	3			0	X	
Washington		X		X		X		(1)	18		7,481		X	
West Virginia	X		X		0	X		(1)	100			0		X
Wyoming	X		X			X			25		520	0		X
Total	26	14	25	12	31⅗	21	19		2,439	204,424	262,308	34	6	32

[1] State aid to local districts varies.
[2] In the District of Columbia school funds are provided in part by taxation upon property in the District of Columbia and in part from the Treasury of the United States.
[3] Schools for adults are provided in 17 centers.

It will be noted from the foregoing table that 26 States report that there has been legislation pertaining to the education of foreign-born adults and that 25 States report that there has been legislation for the education of adult native illiterates. Seventeen States indicate that they give supervision for adult work from the State department of education and that the supervision in terms of full-time supervisors amounts to a total of 31⅗ persons. From the reports of State departments of education which provide supervision of adult education work, it will be seen that the amount of supervision ranges from six full-time supervisors, in the State reporting the most, to one-tenth of the time of one supervisor in the State reporting the least.

Twenty-one States report that they give financial aid to school districts which provide adult classes. The State paying the largest per cent is Delaware, which provides 98 per cent of the cost. Fifty per cent is the most common division of the cost of adult education between the State and local community.

The States reporting give 2,439 communities as holding classes for adults and the total enrollments as 204,424 for the year 1926–27, and 262,308 for the year 1927–28.

Thirty-four institutions of higher learning are reported as offering training for teachers of adults. Six States report that they have illiteracy commissions.

A few examples of adult education activities, based on reports of the respective State departments of education, follow:

Connecticut.—Adult education in Connecticut has been confined during the past two years to the education of non-English-speaking adults in reading, speaking, and writing of English and in civics. In this particular field, there has been: (*a*) Marked interest shown by the towns of the State, both large and small; (*b*) considerable increase in registration and marked increase in average attendance in spite of restricted immigration; (*c*) greater number of teachers seeking training in this particular field; and (*d*) much better instruction offered in the classes.

"Restricted immigration has emphasized the necessity for education, for intelligent citizenship. * * * It has brought home civic responsibility, and the classes contain thousands who have long been alien residents of this country and yet unable to speak English. The value of English-speaking communities is being impressed deeply on town officials."

The above comment by the Commissioner of Education of the State of Connecticut shows the effect which the law restricting immigration is having upon the desire for education by aliens who are already here.

Delaware.—The rural adult class work in this State should be of interest to rural dwellers everywhere and to all others who are concerned with rural-life problems.

During the past two years the expansion and extension of activities in rural districts of Delaware have been noteworthy. In 1927–28, 1,178 men and women came together for study and discussion in 52 centers of rural Delaware. Their ages ranged from 16 to 80 years, 60 per cent being between the ages of 21 and 55 years. They were farmers, merchants, teachers, preachers, housewives, engineers, beekeepers, postal clerks, highway policemen, factory employees, and others. Their previous education ranged from none whatever to university graduation.

Each individual in these groups wished to know more of the world in which he lived and worked, and to participate more fully in its life and development. The means by which these ends could be achieved varied with different groups and different communities. As far as its resources would permit, the public-school system of the State provided that form of educational activity desired by each group. Classes conducted as a result of these desires provided for the study of country-life problems, economic and industrial history, State and National Government, parliamentary law, community organization, current history, salesmanship, industrial arts, poultry husbandry, elementary reading, writing, and arithmetic.

A large number of these classes were held in one and two room school buildings in isolated sections of the open country. They met 2 nights a week for 10 weeks in the months of January, February, and March.

Teachers qualified to lead these groups, it is reported, were extremely difficult to secure because of the time and effort required for traveling to the different centers. Among those who served were university professors, specialists in the State departments of health, agriculture, and marketing, rural school supervisors, school superintendents, directors of bureaus in the State department of public instruction, business men, high-school and elementary-school teachers.

From one of the most remote sections of the State came a request for a course of 10 lectures. The subjects to be covered in these lectures were health, music, science, Delaware history, rural-life development, cooperative marketing in Denmark, world-mindedness. When the wisdom of such a comprehensive program was questioned, a member of the community making the request said: "We want to have a little bit of many things this year, so that we may know what we want to study in detail next year."

To assist and advise the director in the development of adult education in rural Delaware, a council has been formed consisting of one representative from each center in the State. This council met three times in 1927–28.

The desire of the adult population of rural Delaware for opportunities for growth and development is the natural outcome of the program of community organization carried on by the State Parent-Teacher Association for the past eight years.

At the union graduating exercises of the adult evening classes of Delaware, an interesting feature of the exercises was the reports from chosen students of the various classes. The students who made reports ranged in age from 25 to 60 years. The reports showed that both vocational and cultural subjects had been studied and four outstanding results were emphasized, namely: (1) New intellectual interests by the members of the classes had been discovered; (2) sources of helps for individual study had been learned; (3) the social life of the members of the classes had been made richer; (4) valuable information in various fields of knowledge had been acquired.

As the program progressed it could be seen that both pupils and teachers were enthusiastic over the winter's work and that plans were under way for an enlarged program for the next year.

This development in Delaware has succeeded largely because of the leadership of the State department of education.

Pennsylvania.—The report from this State gives such a clear picture of its comprehensive adult educational program that it is reproduced here in some detail.

I. Objectives for the biennium, submitted in 1926:

(1) Increase of enrollment in schools and classes for immigrants and native illiterates; (2) system of follow-up and enrollment of new immigrant arrivals; (3) modification of courses of study to meet needs of immigrants and native illiterates; (4) development of state-wide plan for acceptance of public-school credentials in lieu of naturalization examinations; (5) special study of immigrant education problems through University of Pittsburgh; (6) development of home classes for foreign-born mothers; (7) experimentation in the administration of standard evening high schools; (8) development of high-school correspondence courses; (9) establishment of bases for extension education reimbursement; (10) the coordination of extension education agencies; (11) the establishment of extension centers; (12) the formulation of minimum standards governing university extension credit-course instruction; (13) the formulation of minimum standards governing summer high-school instruction in advanced-credit courses; (14) the development of systematic

and recreational reading courses not too academic in their nature for the masses; (15) the publication of needed bulletins in extension education.

II. The extent to which the objectives for the past biennium were realized:

Of the 15 objectives mentioned, creditable progress has been made in realizing 10. This section will be arranged under two major captions: (1) Objectives toward which definite progress was made; (2) objectives toward which little or no progress was made.

(1) Objectives toward which definite progress was made: (*a*) Increase in enrollment: Total enrollment of immigrants in public-school classes, an increase during the biennium from 18,562 to 22,443, or more than 20.8 per cent; total enrollment in extension elementary schools, an increase from 8,100 to 13,123, or more than 62 per cent; total enrollment in extension secondary schools, an increase from 35,300 to 36,305, or more than 2.2 per cent. These enrollments are exclusive of Smith-Hughes vocational evening classes throughout the State. (*b*) Development of home classes for foreign-born mothers: Unusually well done; enrollment of foreign-born mothers in home classes conservatively estimated at 4,000; many cities now employ full-time home-class teachers, Pittsburgh leading the entire Commonwealth with 16 such teachers, seven of whom were added to the force during the past year. During the same year Philadelphia added one home-class teacher, Aliquippa added one, and work was begun for the first time in Butler, Butler Township, Clearfield, Williamsport, and North Braddock. There is constantly growing interest and support in this work. (*c*) Modification of immigrant-education courses: Courses have been markedly modified throughout the Commonwealth to meet the needs of the new immigrant who reaches our shores well educated in his native schools; intensive courses differing radically from the traditional courses offer opportunity for speedy learning of the English language and an early finding of one's place in the educational régime of this country. (*d*) Experimentation in the standard evening high school: Well and thoroughly done; minimum standards formulated and approved and evening high schools being accredited according to such standards. Philadelphia was first to have a fully accredited evening high school, and others followed. (*e*) Establishment of basis for reimbursement: Completed; minimum standards formulated and approved; policy of inspection and report as basis for approval established and procedure rather fully defined, including policy with regard to scope of classwork which will be reimbursable under the law. (*f*) Coordination of extension education agencies: Well under way; several special State conferences and one general State conference were held during the biennium; virtual agreement to plan has been constantly evident; university extension

is only phase of coordinated program not yet agreed upon by agencies concerned. (*g*) The establishment of extension centers: Part of the coordination program, but little actual done; indirectly it has stimulated the organization of the Johnstown and Erie centers now maintained by the University of Pittsburgh. (*h*) Formulation of minimum standards governing university extension instruction: Standards fully formulated and submitted; not yet approved by the State council of education; action taken by council upon recommendation of superintendent looking towards early conclusion. (*i*) The formulation of minimum standards governing accreditment of summer high-school instruction in advanced credit courses: Well under way; minimum standards fully formulated to become effective during summer session of 1929 and distributed to public-school superintendents maintaining such classes for review and criticism before approval is requested. (*j*) The publication of needed bulletins in extension education: Bulletin of scope and administration of extension education fully prepared and manuscript submitted for approval; bulletin on function of extension education prepared and manuscript submitted for approval; bulletin on bibliography in process of preparation, dealing with immigrant education exclusively.

(2) Objectives toward which little or no progress was made: (*a*) Development of follow-up and enrollment system for new immigrant arrivals; (*b*) development of state-wide plan for acceptance by naturalization courts of public-school credentials in English and citizenship in lieu of naturalization examinations; (*c*) special study of immigrant education problems through medium of university master's theses and doctor's dissertations; (*d*) development of system of high-school correspondence courses for directed study; (*e*) development of recreational and systematic reading courses of a nature not too academic in service to rank and file workers of the Commonwealth.

South Carolina.—The report from the South Carolina State Department of Education will be interesting to many people and especially to those who know something of the excellent work which has been done in that State.

Under the adult education department comes the organization and supervision of all instruction for pupils over 14 years of age who have not completed the elementary grades. Emphasis has been placed on teaching those who have never gone to school or who have gone very little.

In order to meet all needs, four types of schools have been organized: (1) Night or continuation schools in mill villages, taught by day-school teachers for two or three nights a week during the winter; (2) all-year schools, taught by special teachers employed by the mills and the State not only to give instruction to groups of workers but to

go into the homes to teach the mothers; (3) lay-by schools in country districts, taught during August by specially prepared teachers who are willing to devote one month's vacation to such instruction; (4) two opportunity schools which are literally college vacation schools for workers.

The ultimate aim of adult elementary education in South Carolina is not only to teach the mastery of the fundamentals but to awaken in the pupils some intellectual curiosity so that they may become readers and be able to identify themselves with community development. Therefore, the course of study is organized around practical problems of every-day life and thus, while the pupils are mastering the "3 R's," they are given an opportunity to study health habits; good manners; budgeting; saving; our Government, what it is, what it does for us, and what we can do for it; inspiring biographical sketches. During the past year two units of work were given on travel, culminating in a visit to Washington, in August of 1927, by the opportunity-school pupils, and one to Charleston, in the spring of 1928, by the continuation pupils.

A review of the year's work is both encouraging and discouraging—encouraging because of the demand for more schools and longer terms; discouraging because a reduction in the appropriation not only has made it impossible to meet this demand but has necessitated the supervisor's devoting her time to office detail rather than to the organization of schools and to the professional direction and training of teachers. Nevertheless, schools have been organized in 32 counties. The following figures were compiled from the reports of the 312 schools.

	White	Negro	Total
Number of schools	251	61	312
Number of teachers	382	93	475
Total enrollment	7,405	2,370	9,775
Number of students over 21 years of age	3,664	1,661	5,325
Number of students under 21 years of age	3,741	709	4,450
Average attendance	4,756	1,690	6,446
Number of students in first grade	1,722	689	2,420
Number of students in second and third grades	2,528	871	3,399
Number of students in fourth grade and above	3,082	801	3,883
Number of students taught to read	902	394	1,296
Number of students taught to write	1,040	437	1,477
Number of students perfect in attendance	1,305	321	1,626
Expenditure per pupil	$3.62	$1.45	$3.09
Total expenditure	$26,862.00	$3,454.00	$30,316.00

The pupils ranged in ages from 14 years to past 70, with the average age 25 years and 6 months, in grade ability from no schooling to 7 years, with an average of third grade. Of the 475 teachers employed, all held first-grade certificates except 3 white teachers and 15 negro teachers. Practically every white teacher had some special training before beginning work.

Elementary education of adults is difficult because—

(1) Public-school officials have not generally accepted the responsibility for furthering night schools. These schools are expected to run with little direction and are often given only that part of time and money which is left after the day-school program is carried out. The per capita expenditure for night school (white) pupils last year was $3.62, as against $60.25 for day-school pupils.

(2) It is difficult to secure and hold trained teachers because the salary is too small for the demands made upon their energy, ability, and sympathy.

(3) Adult pupils, regardless of ambition, are tired, sensitive, often undernourished from poorly prepared food, and handicapped through low earning ability. A study of 164 life histories of opportunity school pupils, 90 per cent registering from textile communities, presents a cross section giving the background of the lives of 4,000 pupils enrolled in the night or continuation schools. Most of the pupils were reared in homes with not fewer than six children. Forty-eight (30 per cent) of the pupils had lost one parent. The average age was 21 years and the average age for starting to work was 14 years. The average schooling was 40 months, with fourth-grade ability. The median salary received was $13 a week, out of which the average pupil assisted in the support of three people. Fourteen per cent were married, with an average of three children to a family.

The work in mill villages was much easier than in rural districts because of the superior educational advantages and of the generous support given by mill executives. A laissez faire attitude was found in the country which could be overcome only through personal contact of the teacher with landlords and pupils. Long distances made this difficult in a short-term school. The pupils in the rural sections were 9 years older than those in the mill communities, the average age being 30 years. The average schooling was 25 months, 15 months less than that in mill communities; the earning capacity was also less than that of the mill pupils.

The past 10 years have witnessed the greatest educational progress in the history of the State. In evaluation it must be borne in mind that all results can not be measured and that all progressive movements and organizations have played a part in bringing about better conditions. The marked improvement in the public schools has been one of the determining factors in the educational awakening but likewise the night schools have hastened this awakening. The figures which follow show the value of the work accomplished by the night schools.

From 1900 to 1910, when there was little concerted effort against illiteracy, the reduction in the number of illiterates was 4,133 (7

per cent), while from 1910 to 1920, the decade in which night schools were generally organized, the reduction in the number of illiterates was 11,500 (22 per cent).

The five counties leading in adult work during the past 10 years show a gain in white day-school enrollment of 37 per cent and a gain of 11 per cent in average attendance. Contrast this with the five counties reporting few adult schools where the enrollment gain was only 14 per cent and the average attendance only 6 per cent.

The gain in seventh-grade enrollment in five counties furthering adult work was 86 per cent, while in five counties, where little work was done, the gain was only 21 per cent.

More important than the instruction in the classrooms has been the reflex influence of the schools. To illustrate, a few excerpts are given from teachers' reports:

> Those who have shown an interest in previous campaigns show the fact in many ways, more pride in the appearance of their homes, their yards, and themselves.
>
> Mr. ——— has started his children to day school and has brought his wife and older son to school with him every night. He regrets now that his four married daughters never went to school a day, for he now sees the value of an education. He hopes they will have the chance of going to an adult school.
>
> Mr. ———, with whom I board, is one of my pupils. He had never been in school a day in his life until several years ago when he entered a lay-by school. To-day he is superintendent of his Sunday school and a leader in his community.

As a rule, the adult-school pupil becomes a booster for his school. Through civic instruction and friendly relationship with his teacher he is given a new self-respect and is made to appreciate the State services at his command and to see his obligation to himself, his community, and his family. He becomes *a part of* rather than *apart from* his neighborhood.

It will be noted that the largest number of pupils in the night schools were in the third, fourth, and fifth grades, demonstrating a desire for more learning on the part of those who have had some advantages.

Practically one-half of the pupils were within the public-school age.

Is it right to make provision for the fortunate child privileged to attend day school and not for those who are forced out of school because of economic need, parental avarice, or indifference? There are thousands in South Carolina who would study at night if proper provision were made. Even when the compulsory education law is passed there will still be a demand for after-work-hour education, for some children must necessarily be bread winners, and as education becomes more diffused a larger majority of the people in the State will desire opportunity to study during leisure hours. As an

illustration, there were enrolled during the past year in the night schools of one town two 15-year-old boys who, before they were 14 years of age and through no fault of their own had thrown on their shoulders the burden of the support of a mother and six and seven younger children, respectively. When they entered the mill three years ago they registered in a night school as first-grade pupils. Their earning capacity has increased during the three years from an average of $4 a week to $11 a week, and each year has found them in night schools developing into desirable types of young manhood. These cases are typical of many others, for last year there were enrolled in the night schools 4,450 pupils between the ages of 14 and 21 years. For the education of a similar number of day-school pupils, between the ages of 14 and 21 years, the State spent last year $156,551, in contrast with $13,740 on these young folk who attended school after long hours of work.

It should be borne in mind that both South Carolina and Alabama excelled all other States in the Union in the matter of the reduction of illiteracy between 1910 and 1920.

ILLITERACY

There has been an effort in some States by school officials and outside organizations to reduce the number of illiterates in those States before the 1930 census is taken. This work has been difficult because it was hard to locate those persons who could not read or write. In some cases the names and addresses of illiterates reported in the 1920 census were secured from the Bureau of the Census. It was found that after a lapse of five or six years so many of those reported by the Bureau of the Census as illiterate had moved their residence that this information was of little value. In some places local censuses were taken, and it was found that there was considerable variance between these records and those reported by the United States Bureau of the Census. The State Department of Education of Nebraska has undertaken to ascertain at the time of the annual school census in June the names and addresses of all adults in the school districts, together with information as to whether they can read and write. This information will be most valuable in planning the elementary instruction needed by those beyond compulsory school age.

When it is so well known that illiteracy of parents is a handicap to the district in training their children and to the general prosperity of the community it is difficult to understand why there is not more activity in all States to reduce illiteracy to a minimum.

In organizing a program for the reduction of illiteracy among those beyond compulsory school age voluntary workers can be of great assistance in at least three ways, namely: (1) By ascertaining

who and where the illiterates and the near-illiterates are; (2) by bringing to the attention of the boards of education the importance of providing instruction for these persons; and (3) by helping to recruit students for classes. This last is a matter that requires time, tact, and patience. The service can best be performed by some one who is known to the prospective student or to some of his friends, as grown illiterates are usually timid and suspicious.

Experience in most States has shown that voluntary workers should not attempt to give actual instruction to illiterates unless they happen to be trained teachers. Even if the voluntary worker is a trained teacher it is claimed that best results are obtained by having the class organized as a part of the regular school system, so that the students may carry on from year to year.

Illiteracy is not a matter that can be removed by a few lessons unless we are willing to assume that the mere writing of one's name makes him literate. It takes many lessons to teach an illiterate to read well enough to get pleasure from what he reads and thus acquire the habit of reading.

EDUCATION OF THE FOREIGN BORN

More and more the foreign born are seeking opportunities for education, with naturalization as an objective.

There also has been during the biennium an awakening to the importance of education of foreign-speaking women who, on account of the number of children in the home or because of racial customs, can not at first be induced to attend regular afternoon or evening classes. Instruction in the homes of these foreign mothers has proved a very effective means of orienting them to American ways. It is found that after a relatively few home classes these mothers often are willing to attend the regular afternoon or evening classes provided by school authorities.

MODERN LIFE DEMANDS EDUCATION

Employers in industry are beginning to look more and more into the causes of accidents, with their attendant slowing down of production. They find that many accidents are due directly to the inability of employees to read warning signs and to understand the principles involved in the operations which they perform. In times past an employee was a lone worker with a certain amount of labor to perform. Under the conditions of modern manufacturing one employee depends upon the work of another employee, and all are apt to be managing a complicated machine, so that the education of each employee is of vital concern not only to the employer but to every other employee of the system.

In our complicated age, with the very rapid substitution of mechanical devices for manual labor, it is found that the undereducated man is hardest to become rehabilitated in new employment.

PARENT EDUCATION

Parent education, which is receiving much attention, is looked upon as an important approach to the education of boys and girls. The most dominating influence in the life of a child is that of his parents and other adults in the home. It was found in some of the remote mountain sections of Buncombe County, N. C., that before the adults were brought into the evening schools it was almost impossible to secure regular attendance of children at the day schools. The attendance of parents in evening schools in one year increased the day-school attendance of children from 68 to 86 per cent in some districts. Superintendents of city schools are discovering that evening schools have a decided, wholesome effect not only upon the attitude of the children of parents who attend them but upon the attitude of large groups of adults, as most adults who attend evening school belong to various organizations which are led through their influence to support the school program. Our motto has been "Educate all of the children of all of the people," but we find that we have not succeeded in this because we diagnosed the case to be much more simple than it is. We find that we can not educate all of the children without also educating all of the people.

There is a growing tendency on the part of school administrators to acquaint parents with the month-by-month objectives of the day schools, as it is found that parents can strengthen pupils in their school studies. This is especially true in drill subjects, such as learning the multiplication tables, tables of measurements, and spelling. Many believe that this plan has great possibilities in parent training, as most parents have a natural desire to keep up with their children in educational matters.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Universities and colleges, through class work held outside of regular hours or outside of the institutions, and through correspondence courses, promotion of debates, forums, conferences, loan of books, and by what are called "package libraries," are doing much to advance many phases of adult education. This field is almost unlimited and will grow with the demand for such service. Almost any individual or group can now receive guidance and help from some college.

A decided movement in adult education is the part which urban universities are taking. Classes are organized to meet the needs of adults who need special subjects. These classes, in many cases, are organized in down-town centers; for example, Cleveland College of Western Reserve University has taken as its main function the education of adults.

A question which is receiving much attention in the field of adult education is, should institutions of secondary and higher education give credit to those who are studying under the conditions outlined in the preceding pages as "adult education"? Many desire to have adult education free from the conditions now imposed in connection with the granting of credits and degrees. However, if adult education is to assume the significance that many predict for it, it will not be confined to the boundaries set for it by any particular group. Many will desire credit, and the officials who grant credit under the authority of the State will be asked to give credit. Far-seeing educators are trying to find a way for granting credits that will stimulate the greatest possible number of people to undertake bona fide educational endeavor in fields most suited to their needs and will not lower educational standards. It is freely granted, however, by students of this subject that as matters now stand many students (this is more true of adult students), in order to secure credit, are required to pursue studies in which they have but slight interest and to forego the study of other subjects in which they have a vital interest because of the arbitrary precedent for giving credit for the one and not for the other. And what is more pertinent to adult education, accrediting agencies have not yet evolved a satisfactory plan for giving credit for work done by those who are not regular resident students.

NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

During the past two years there has been marked activity on the part of two national organizations which have as their main purpose the promotion of adult education. The department of adult education of the National Education Association has held several meetings which have given a picture of what is now taking place in the elementary education of adults. At these meetings valuable committee reports have been published in *Adult Education* (previously known as *Interstate Bulletin*), the official organ of the department.

The American Association for Adult Education has held two national meetings, has sponsored lines of research, and has fostered the publication of a number of valuable studies, in addition to that by Doctor Thorndike, mentioned previously, among which appear two very important studies concerning the whole field of adult educa-

tion in Buffalo, N. Y., and Cleveland, Ohio.* These surveys are valuable not only to the residents of these cities but to all cities which may desire to make similar studies. In most cities there are people who are interested in aiding their communities to secure well-rounded adult education programs. Even a tentative study in many cities will show that cooperation and coordination of the existing educational and recreational agencies will give additional educational opportunities to many people. From the Cleveland survey, we quote:

From the point of view of the community's fundamental interest in education, particular organizations, such as schools, colleges, and museums, are seen to be instrumentalities of value in so far as they are useful in achieving an educational purpose; they are to be strengthened, modified, supplemented, or abandoned according as they fulfill this purpose. It is, in fine, the paramount functional unity of the educational process that makes necessary the correlation and expansion of the community's institutional mechanisms under such leadership as shall envisage the process as a whole.

Under this interpretation of the term education, existing and potential educational activities in the community may be divided into two large groups: (1) Those concerned with the education of persons who are registered as regular full-time students in educational institutions, and (2) those concerned with the education of persons above legal school age who are not enrolled as regular full-time students in an educational institution.

In Cleveland the potential student body in the second group numbers over 750,000, while the first group numbers approximately 250,000.

"Adult education" is understood, then, to be the conventional term for all those educational activities that fall, by more or less common consent, within the second group. * * *

Practically all adults are engaged in some sort of occupation—in industry, commerce, home-making, the professions. This occupation constitutes their chief interest and claims the major portion of their day. Around it are centered all other activities. Manifestly, to plan an educational program for adults without reference to this central activity and interest is to court failure.

On the other hand, adult education is not to be thought of as limited to instruction having a distinctly vocational purpose. In addition to being a productive worker, each adult is also a social being, a citizen, a member of some home, a physical organism, and an individual with highly significant mental and spiritual potentialities. Therefore, no complete program in adult education may neglect proper provision for continuing the education of those, whether native or foreign born, who feel, or can be brought to feel, a real need for educative experience in each of the following fields of adult activity and interest: English and other subjects, habit formation in citizenship, parental and other home activities and responsibilities, health activities and habits, guidance in spare-time activities.

HOME READING COURSES

Realizing the need for broadening and strengthening home reading of worth-while books among the American people, representatives from four national organizations, namely, the United States Bureau of Education, the American Library Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the National University Exten-

sion Association, met in April, 1928, in Washington, D. C., to cooperate in formulating plans for furthering home reading.

As a result of this meeting a specific program was unanimously adopted, and each organization assumed a definite part in its development. According to this plan, the Bureau of Education and the American Library Association, separately or jointly, will prepare graded, annotated reading courses on general and special subjects, as may be requested by organizations or even individuals, and print and distribute these courses within the limits of their respective budgets; they will also give publicity to this project. While the Bureau of Education and the American Library Association formulate these courses, they may not always have at hand the requisite data for their construction. In such cases they will endeavor to secure whatever help is necessary from outside specialists equipped to give such data.

When these courses have been prepared and distributed, the American Library Association notifies the various library purchasing agencies that there probably will be a demand for the books contained in these reading courses.

The National University Extension Association adopts and promotes, as a part of its extension program, the reading courses issued by the Bureau of Education and the American Library Association. The extension division of each of the universities and colleges subscribing to this program issues on its own behalf certificates of achievement to those persons who satisfactorily complete reading courses.

For the service attendant upon examining summaries of books, giving suggestions, and issuing a certificate a small fee may be charged by an extension division; otherwise the services of the extension divisions are free.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers actively promotes the use of these courses by the formation of reading and study groups and also devises plans for making available in interested communities the books required for these courses.

While these four national organizations have initiated and are sponsoring this plan for the promotion of more worthy home reading, all other interested organizations may cooperate in the project.

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