

STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
FOR YOUNG WORKERS

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1926

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FOR YOUNG WORKERS**

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Set up and printed.
Published November, 1926.



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Printed in the United States of America

STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

THESE five studies were undertaken in connection with the general efforts which the Carnegie Corporation is making toward improved education in the United States. The first four were made by investigators under the auspices of the Corporation, the fifth by a Commission of the American Library Association.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WORKERS. *By Owen D. Evans.*

THE UNIVERSITY AFIELD. *By Alfred L. Hall-Quest.*

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INTRODUCTION

THIS study is the first unit of the Adult Education Study which is being conducted by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. There has been much discussion in recent years of education as continuing process. As a nation we are committed to a policy of universal education whether in free public schools or in generously endowed or privately supported institutions.

From these schools each year an army of young people drop out or are graduated. The graduates from elementary, secondary, or collegiate school are invariably assured that this step is but a "commencement." Presumably their school training will function later in life in the getting of more education. Assuredly those who make a commencement on their own initiative by leaving school before they graduate will find even greater need of getting more education. As the need for specific vocational training arises, they will pursue studies designed to make them more effective producers. As they develop a taste for avocations and seek a worthy use of leisure they will pursue liberal or cultural studies designed to make them wise consumers. Some who through necessity or lack of wisdom left school before they had acquired the foundations of a good education will strive to remedy this former loss by taking courses designed to fill the gaps in their elementary or secondary education.

Most of this we had taken for granted. We believed, rather than knew, that post-school educational opportunities were offered, adequate for expressed needs, varied in response to the demands of typical groups, suited to the

desire and comprehension of adult learners. They ranged from reading clubs, chautauquas and lyceums, through university extension courses, correspondence schools, workers' educational classes, private schools of commerce and mechanics, to the wide offerings of the free public evening schools and the special offerings maintained in part-time schools and apprentice training schools.

The general objective of the Adult Education Study is to determine the present day extent of these types of educational activity; to try to discover how many people and what kind of people use them; to portray their subject matter, methods of instruction, and general effectiveness. A particular objective is to try to discover whether with decreasing hours of labor and increasing hours of leisure there is a dormant or potential demand among adults for an increased offering of cultural or liberal studies as distinguished from vocational or strictly utilitarian subjects.

At the beginning of the study it became obvious that we have a large group of young workers who have either graduated or dropped out from the regular day elementary or high school. They are not adults so far as age is concerned; yet by the very fact of leaving school to go to work they have taken on many adult responsibilities. This group, if any, should avail itself of post-school opportunities for further education. So it was decided that whereas the study as a whole should discuss various types of educational opportunities, one unit should be directed to a study of the young worker group and should take in such a cross-section of different types of schools as would include those which specialize chiefly on training young workers.

The group, then, consists of the boys and girls who have left school to go to work. Their ages range from about fourteen years to an upper limit of about twenty-

two years, although sometimes it is advisable to include those who are a few years older. Practically two-thirds of them left day school with no more than an elementary school education. Hardly one in ten completed high school. They work at home, on the farm, in store or factory. A few of them approach the threshold of their entrance into employment with lingering footsteps and longing backward glances at the school which they regret to leave; but most of them plunge joyously to the great adventure. Little do they know or care what lies before them.

Sooner or later they meet the need for further guidance and training if they are to earn a living and live a life. Some are at once constrained through legal enactment, labor organization policy, or plant practice to enroll for definite training in part-time school or apprentice class; many, after a few months or years of freedom from the compulsion of school, voluntarily enroll in evening schools; a few, but the number is increasing, are fortunate enough to come in contact with a local guidance bureau where trained counsellors help them to find a job with a future or direct them to opportunities for continuing education. Many, in fact the great majority, desire no more schooling, or make no effort to get it, and instruction stops except for those younger ones who are required to attend a part-time school.

The purpose of this unit of the Adult Education Study is to trace the historic development of educational opportunity for employed youth; to show the needs of this group to-day; to describe existing opportunities for meeting these needs; to discuss the relative efficiency of these opportunities, portraying some types of successful agencies; and to suggest where emphasis should be placed in the educational program of the near future.

This unit tends to concentrate on cooperative classes, apprentice training, public evening schools, continuation

schools and guidance agencies. In general it treats other agencies briefly, usually for the purpose of showing their relation to the types of educational opportunity just mentioned, which specialize on the younger group of workers. Accordingly this unit touches only lightly on such agencies as college extension, the work of county agents, correspondence schools, philanthropic schools and the community center work or general lecture and recreation agencies.

No attempt was made to get information by a questionnaire method. The writer has relied on existing material recently issued in bulletins or other publications. The response of educators, however, has been so cordial and generous that it has been possible to incorporate the findings of a number of very recent unpublished researches. The indebtedness of the writer will be recognized by those who are familiar with recent writings in this field. He has tried to be punctilious in giving credit for each item of essential information and sincerely hopes that he has not been guilty of any omission. Special acknowledgment is due for the generous help accorded by members of the staffs of the United States Bureau of Education, the Department of Agriculture, the Children's Bureau, the Federal Board for Vocational Education and the State and Municipal school officials in the districts mentioned in the text. So many have contributed that it is impossible to mention them by name.

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PART I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENT
SITUATION

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF THE YOUNG WORKER

Apprenticeship among the ancients. The problem of training young workers is not new. Ancient Babylon made rules governing apprentice relations in the code of 2100 B. C. Plato and Xenophon mention apprenticeship as a well established institution. Ancient Rome and Roman Egypt also provide instances.¹ No great stretch of imagination is needed to visualize the boys and girls of ancient times facing the prospect of taking their places as young workers with zest equal to that of youths of our own time. Doubtless even in those days there was shaking of gray beards and nodding of maternal heads, and many a doleful comment from veteran artisan or trader wondering to what bad end the younger generation was coming.

The rise of the guilds. But it was not until the system of trade apprenticeship of the European guilds of the Middle Ages developed that we get the beginnings of our modern system of definite instruction. Then apprenticeship meant education, as suggested by the German word "Lehrzeit" meaning to teach, or the French "apprentisshep" meaning to learn. Then as now the educational system had to be adjusted to meet changing economic and social conditions. For centuries most of the people of England, Germany and northern and central France had lived as serfs on great estates, rendering service to the feudal lords, knowing little or nothing

about what occurred at a distance of even a few miles. About the year 1000 A. D. small towns developed.² They grew in size and importance as trade increased. Traveling merchants appeared, and the town dwellers learned that there was profit in producing more goods than they needed for home consumption in order that they might have some surplus to exchange for the goods of foreign merchants. As the towns grew in numbers and wealth, they also grew in power. With timely loans or by shrewd bargaining they bought release from feudal dues and service. These newly won rights were recorded in charters which granted the power to regulate trade and industry. Taxes were levied instead of tribute. As merchants and artisans learned that the power of groups was greater than that of individuals, they formed themselves into associations called guilds. They developed regulations for many kinds of detailed relations, and among these they developed a formal plan for training young workers.

Guild apprenticeship. The guilds were not labor unions in our modern sense. Rather, they were associations of employers. In general, apprentices and journeymen could not belong to the guild. The master workmen owned the shops, tools, and machines, and determined the policy of the guild. Frequently these policies could be enforced by government authority. Hours of labor, the number of apprentices allowed to each master workman, and the time to be spent in learning the trade were determined by the guild. The usual term of apprenticeship was from five to nine years. The apprentice received no pay, in fact he frequently had to pay a premium for the privilege of learning the trade. During this time he was in intimate daily contact with the master workman and was instructed in every detail of the craft. In addition the fact that he ate at the master's table and was responsible to the master for his conduct abroad,