

11 *On Education*

The youth of a society are that society in the future. Their correct education is essential to the functioning and survival of the society. Therefore, in planning and designing that education it is important to first make clear its purposes and objectives.

THE PURPOSES OR OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

There are three general immediate purposes or objectives of education and one further long term one. These are as follows.

- 1 - To train or form the individual to be a cooperative, contributing, sharing, rational, responsible, social member of the society, a process that is sometimes termed “civilizing”.
- 2 - Based upon his aptitudes and interests, to teach the individual one or more skills or specialties as needed to be usefully practiced for the functioning of the society and needed by the individual for him to socially contribute to the society.
- 3 - To equip each individual to be able to pursue within the society the achievement of as high a quality of life and fulfillment of his potential as is possible for him.
- 4 – To identify and further develop those individuals having the requisite intelligence and talents to be leaders in the society in its progressive further development, its adaptations to changing circumstances, and its creative avoidance of stagnation on the one hand and excessive revolution on the other.

The order of relative priority of those objectives is as given above.

The first objective is the most fundamental and essential because without successful “civilizing” of the members of the society it cannot exist nor function as a society; rather, it would devolve into primitive survival of the fittest behavior.

That first condition having been met, then the society requires the successful accomplishment of the second objective, the provision and production of those services and products essential to the functioning of the society and of its individual members.

The third objective is the actual overall objective of the society and would be of the first priority except that the fulfilling of the first and second objectives is an essential prerequisite to pursuing the third.

The fourth objective is, of course, long term but essential.

CONTROL AND DIRECTING OF THAT EDUCATION

Education being of such great importance to the society, the control, directing and performing of that education cannot be left to amateurs, nor to random chance, nor to personal preferences and prejudices of individual parents and teachers. It is the society itself, because of the above objectives and their relative priorities, that must control and direct the education of its youth, of each successive generation.

Much of the education for the first objective, and the laying of the groundwork for the remaining objectives, takes place in the first years of children's lives, years in which the child experiences primarily the nuclear family environment and learns from both the overt teaching by its parents and the actual behavioral examples that they provide. Because those early years are such significant formative years in the development of a child the role of parent is extremely important in the education of children.

Consequently, the role of parent cannot be deemed an absolute right of adult persons, especially not for them to conduct as they personally see fit; rather, it is a function so crucial to the society that it must be controlled and directed by the society through trained, experienced professionals, not the amateur parents that most parents are or would be absent intervention by the society.

Children are not the property of their parents; they are not possessions. They are not the property of anyone, neither their parents nor the society. No matter how strong the bonds connecting parents and their children, emotional bonds and biological bonds, and no matter how perfect the intentions of parents with regard to their children, it remains that parents are little or poorly trained and naturally inexperienced for their role as parents. On the other hand, the society has a dominantly greater interest than the parents in the proper educating of its children.

Consequently, parenting must be a privilege, open only to those who demonstrate their abilities [either their inherent abilities or those obtained after appropriate training] to provide the kind and quality of early years education necessary for the proper advantageous development of the child and the success of the society. Inasmuch as the love and bonding between parents and their children is valuable and desirable for the early development of the child yet those parents must also be sufficiently qualified for their parenting role, the actual process of procreating children must be restricted to those persons meeting the requirements of sound parenthood after appropriate training to teach and prepare them for parenthood and testing to evaluate their readiness.

Even after such a program designed to provide, by training and selection, that all parenting is performed at the optimum for the child and the society, continuous monitoring of all actual parenting going on is called for to insure maintenance of the requisite level of parenting and education.

Millennia ago farmers learned that of the crops that they harvested the portion to be set aside for seeding the next season's crop should be that portion of

the highest quality, the remainder being for consumption. That way the quality of each successive crop should be better than its predecessor. That same principle is applicable to education. The members of society who are the teachers and the education system managers and planners, in general the educators, should come from the highest quality [for those purposes] members of the society. Similarly, in the society the position of educator should be highly respected and well economically compensated. On that principle the quality of the adult members of the society produced by the education system should improve generation upon generation.

ANSWERING THE CRITICS AND SKEPTICS

Critics and skeptics will complain about interference with adult's "freedom" to do as they wish, in particular to procreate children and to raise them as they see fit. But, that "freedom" serves only the particular interests of the particular adults so protesting. That "freedom" does not necessarily serve the interests of their neighbors, nor those of the society in general, and especially not the interests of the child.

The society owes its adults, freely, every opportunity to learn to be socially beneficial parents for the sake of their offspring and for the overall sake of the society. But it owes the society in general and especially its children an optimal education and it has the obligation to prevent incompetent or harmful parenting from taking place.

Others will raise objections to the society determining the content of education: that which will be positively taught, that which will be included / omitted, and that which will be negatively depicted. These same critics do not criticize in that manner the society's functions of: law making, business practices, international treaties, war making, decisions on roads, zoning, other public facilities, public safety, health care, and so forth. That is, they take it for granted that the governmental system of the society performs those functions sufficiently well. And they believe that to the extent that it does not do so a change in the persons running the government will be enforced.

Certainly then, that same procedure, what is good enough for public safety and health care, applied to determining the content of education and the standards for educators and for parents, should be as acceptable for those educational functions as for all the other functions of government.

But, in the case of education an even better procedure can be used.

Government is run by politicians. The qualifications of politicians generally fail to include skill or expertise in governing nor in any of the various aspects of running and managing a society. The skill and expertise of politicians is primarily in getting themselves elected and re-elected. To some extent that involves their conduct and decisions being designed to please the voters, but to a much greater extent that involves their pleasing those persons with wealth and power who contribute the money that makes or breaks the politicians' election campaigns and who reward the politicians with gifts and benefits.

The setting of standards and determination of content for the education functions must be set, not by politicians, but by skilled, experienced, trained education specialists. Politics must be kept out of education.

Likewise, personal economic gain and profit seeking must be kept out of education. The best test of whether an activity or proposal is objectively directed toward performing the intended or stated function is asking, "Who benefits?"

- The unqualified parent who objects to these requirements is seeking his personal benefit, not that of his children nor that of the society.
- The politician who seeks to control the educators or the content of education is seeking his own benefit in the implementing of his personal objectives, not that which benefits the society as a whole.