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UNIQUENESS OF THE MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTOR'S POSITION

By

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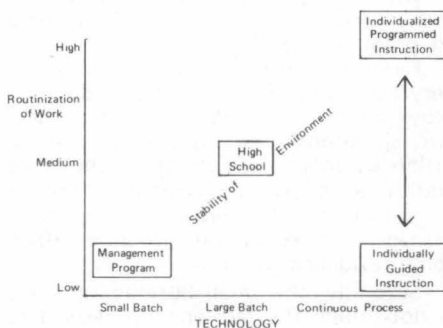
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The Minnesota Farm and Small Business Management Education Programs involve adults having managerial control over their business. Both programs attempt to involve the entire business family in the educational process. The separate programs for farmers and for small business operators follow similar organized programs of instruction including classroom, group and individualized instruction.

Instruction in both programs centers around the goals of the family enrolled in the management education program. It is recognized by those who advance these programs that individual families have their own goals and values. It is not the intent of management education to change values, but rather to aid in the formation and realization of goals of each enrolled family.

Because these programs are unlike the usual school offerings, the management instructor's position and program is not generally understood in the context of the public school.

Joan Woodward (1) and James Thompson (2) provide a framework that suits our purpose for the examination of the management instructor's position and program. The following diagram is an adaptation of their model.



The management program exists in a rapidly changing environment. Small batch (individualized and small group) instruction characterizes its technology. The instructor finds his work anything but routine, with a need for flexibility and decision making at his professional level. The instructor can operate best with few worries or tensions. However, rules and regulations of the traditional school will usually provide these tensions.

The high school program exists in a rather stable environment. Large batch or mass production characterizes its technology. The instructor's job may be described as moderately routine, but falling under a hierarchy of control because operations are standardized.

Individualized programmed instruction is stable and routine, except for the individual guidance required at times.

GOALS INFLUENCED BY VALUES

The management instructor deals with a program that centers around the goals of the enrolled family. The values of the individuals have a direct bearing on goals.

John S. Brubacher in the text, **Modern Philosophies of Education**, addresses the difference in values of agricultural and industrial economies. A summation of his views would see the agriculturalists as having lower educational values, primarily because of the time consuming nature of farming leaving little (if any) time for additional education. In contrast, the industrialist, by the complex nature of the business world is forced to acquire additional education and thus places a

greater value on education. In addition, the industrialist comes into constant contact with new ideas at the market place further strengthening his concern for education. (3)

While Brubacher may be correct in many instances it would be appropriate to point out two significant exceptions.

First, the business of farming today is very complex. The farmer of today employs many labor saving devices. These two situations have resulted in a recognition by many farmers of the need for additional education, and the time to to pursue it. The growth of the farm management education program offers some evidence of this.

Secondly, the small business operator is not unlike the farmer with respect to time for education. He often has to work long and hard hours at the business, thus leaving little (if any) time for additional education.

It would seem to follow that if one values education highly and pursues it, then that same individual will have a broader and higher set of goals than will one who places little value in education. This assumes that education does indeed enlarge one's horizon, and motivates a quest for a better standard of living.

Gordon McCloskey has this to say about the Values of Education.

"Well-educated people are better producers than poorly educated ones. Well-educated people can earn more and buy more. They better perform the growing number of complicated management tasks and more ably conduct the complicated research essential to progress."(4)

THE NATURE OF GOALS AND VALUES

Dr. Frederick C. Neff, Professor of Education and Chairman of the Department of History and Philosophy of Education at Wayne State University, has stated that "goals and values serve to remedy a situation you have observed which needs to be improved." He sees goals as a workable plan rather than a passive end product.

This is an interesting comment helping to clarify the position of goals in management education program where they are viewed as being in a constant state of revision and study. However, this differs somewhat from the traditional view of goals.

The traditional view, and the one found in most dictionaries as the definition of goal is something toward which an effort is made; an end or objective. This would lead one to believe that a goal can be stated apart from the activities directed toward goal realization.

Waltraut J. Stein writing on "Exploiting Existential Tensions in the Classroom" suggests "the goal of any educational process is to equip the educated person with the means of realizing his own goals in the context of his cultural heritage in a way that at the same time creatively advances this heritage." (5)

To put it precisely, Neff and Stein seem to agree that goals are active and individual in nature. It would also appear that they would agree with a teacher teaching about goals, but leaving the statement and realization of goals up to the individual. Both the farm and small business management education programs are designed to present the goal activity in this manner. The difficulty with this approach for some teachers is that their own value systems conflict with that of the student.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

This issue involves the idea of academic freedom. If we were talking in the context of children as students, general agreement might be found for the teacher to identify dangerous goals and to point out pitfalls others have experienced. At this time we might point out that the individual might be free to set his own values, but that they cannot infringe upon the freedom of others.

However, we are dealing with adults as students in the management education programs. The experience of the Minnesota management education program has shown that some adults have rather fixed values. Perhaps this is a result of only a moderate level of education. John Paul Strain has this comment on the subject: "For values are not static, but are subject to evolution and to education." (6) If this is so one could anticipate that a change in values might occur during or following a management education program.

We then come back to the teacher and his role in this situation with regard to responsibility and academic freedom. It is my belief that a teacher is obligated to explain the relationship of values to goals, and to present several views of values (perhaps including his own). However,

care should be taken to stop short of actively engaging in goal setting for the students. This is not to say that the teacher cannot suggest a goals framework and cite examples of what might be considered goals.

Individual students may require a varying degree of assistance in the establishment of goals, and in determining the means to realize them. This variability can be handled well during the individualized instruction occurring at the business. Teachers of the Minnesota management education program report that families are more open in their discussion of values and goals in the personal setting of their home or business. The type of discussion which revolves around goal setting often leads to the establishment of better communications within the family where it is taking place. The writer has personally served as a Minnesota farm management education teacher and has experienced these situations.

SETTING EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Lest a teacher think that the student should be in complete control of the learning situation we need to examine this point. The question might be stated in this manner: is the teacher obligated to only teach according to the goals of the students, or are there areas of the curriculum that should be taught, even though student interest is lacking?

Bernard J. James writing on "Can Needs Define Educational Goals?" states: "But as the educator moves from the broad ethical frames of reference toward problems of immediate concern (including subject matter and methods), he is required to make more and more decisions with respect to goals of his clients. At no point on the means-end continuum is the educator free of the burden of decision." (7) It would appear we could equate this with Stein's comments on supplying the means (through education) for each individual to realize his own goals.

Those who advance the Minnesota management education program see the establishment of success patterns as one of the aspects of goals. Robert F. Biehler recognizes the German psychologist F. Hoppe (1930) for his analysis of level of aspiration. He observed that a person tends to raise his goals after success and to lower them after failure. He states: "This process protects him from continual failure or from too easy achieve-

ment, which does not provide a feeling of accomplishment." (8)

It is generally recognized by teachers in the management education program that success builds confidence, and confidence often leads to more success.

It would seem that the goals of the student, while bearing significantly on the educational goals of the teacher, should not have total control over the situation.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

It is apparent that a discussion of goals involves the notion of personal values. There appears to be general agreement that each individual has his own value system, and excluding infringement upon the freedom of others, he should be allowed his beliefs. However, it has been stated that values change with evolution and education. It is the teacher's responsibility then to provide the means for that change through education.

The teacher is expected to promote the use of goals in the management education program. It may be unreasonable, however, to expect this to happen if he does not have a firm belief in their value. This paper has tried to clarify some of the issues facing the use of goals, and has identified that some people see goals as active, if not exciting, in their role.

How then can the teacher go beyond this form of written exposure to the subject? It would seem to be the obligation of the teacher, as a professional educator, to involve himself in the actual experience of establishing goals (for himself and others) and in an attempt to realize them.

The uniqueness then lies in the organizational structure of the program (including the needs of the instructor to manage the program), and in the emphasis on family goals and values.

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