

The High School as Viewed by Some of its Recent Graduates

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Purpose. The purpose of this paper is to present the opinions of a group of recent high school graduates on certain questions pertaining to the following topics: (1) the high school curriculum; (2) extra-curricular activities in the high school; (3) help given by the high school in eight fields related to the development of personal traits or the solution of personal problems.

Source of data. In order to secure the opinions of recent high school graduates, a questionnaire was submitted to 453 college students—153 men and 300 women—enrolled in the Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, Knox College, James Millikin University, and Bradley Polytechnic Institute. The distribution of students by classes was as follows: freshmen, 171; sophomores, 185; juniors, 59; and seniors, 38.

The students were graduates of representative high schools in 56 counties in Illinois, and of high schools in eight states other than Illinois. Both large and small high schools were represented.

Limitations of the data. It is recognized that the answers of the students are merely expressions of opinion. However, the statements are apparently sincere and worthy of consideration. Possibly the opinions of a group of graduates might be somewhat more favorable to the high school than would be those of a group who left high school before graduation.

SUMMARY

1. *Opinions concerning certain questions pertaining to the curriculum.* At the time the questionnaire was given, 58 per cent of the students regarded the subjects studied in high school as decidedly valuable. At the time they were in high school only 40 per cent considered the subjects closely related to their needs and interests.

English led in frequency of mention as the best liked, the most valuable, and the easiest subject. Mathematics led in frequency of mention as the hardest and the least liked subject. Foreign language led in frequency of mention as the least valuable subject.

The chief reason for liking a subject was the intrinsic interest of the subject matter, while the chief reason for disliking a subject was its difficulty. The principal reason for considering a subject valuable was its relation to the problems of every day life, while the principal reason for not considering a subject valuable was its lack of relation to the problems of every day life. The leading reason for considering a subject easy was the intrinsic interest of the subject matter, while the leading reason for considering a subject difficult was uninteresting subject matter.

Twenty-nine per cent of the students thought that there was decided overlapping between the subjects that they had studied in high school and college. Laboratory sciences led in frequency of mention as the subjects in which there was most overlapping.

Sixty-eight per cent of the students thought that there were certain subjects in which their high school work gave them an unusually good preparation for certain subjects studied in college, while 52 per cent thought that there were certain subjects in which their high school work failed to prepare them well for certain subjects taken in college. In both cases English led in frequency of mention.

The following subjects were mentioned twenty-five times or more as subjects that students wanted but that were not offered: commercial subjects, foreign languages, home economics, industrial arts, art, and music.

2. *Opinions concerning certain questions pertaining to extra-curricular activities.* Sixty-nine per cent of the students thought that extra-curricular activities received about the right amount of emphasis in their high schools. Twenty-six per cent thought that activities received too little emphasis. Speech activities led in frequency of mention as not receiving enough emphasis. Five per cent thought that activities received too much emphasis. Athletics led in frequency of mention as receiving too much emphasis.

Forty-seven per cent of the students thought that teachers in their high schools favored athletes, while 53 per cent thought that teachers accorded athletes the same treatment as other students.

3. *Opinions concerning help given in eight fields related to the development of personal traits or the solution of personal problems.* In the eight fields—social conventions, health, citizenship, character, use of leisure, appreciation of music and art, educational guidance, and vocational guidance—about which students were asked, the percentage of students who thought that they had received valuable help ranged from 24 in the field of vocational guidance to 55 in the development of character. The help that students received in the eight fields was given largely through various school subjects, extra-curricular activities, and personal interviews.