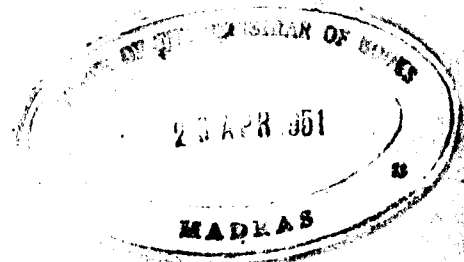
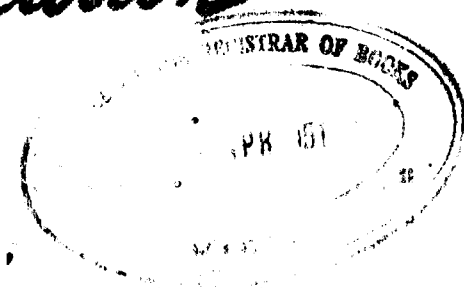


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Adult Education



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STUDENT BODY OF AMERICA

*People gather in groups by the thousands
for adult education in the United States*

By JOSEPH DEITCH

AT the end of the working day in the United States, many people leave their jobs and go to school. In fact, many adults start learning about different things—from soil conservation and arc welding to non-objective art—almost the minute they get up in the morning.

A lot of people who study this way—at assorted hours and places—do not realize it, but they are the “student body” of the adult education movement in the United States. Not long ago it was estimated that 30,000,000 Americans are giving attention to something that can be called an adult education activity. The adult education movement in the United States has grown today until more people may soon be part of adult education than children and youth in regular schools and colleges.

If anything, these people are a proved power source for America’s well-being. A leading example of this power in recent history were the young women who became riveters in World War II, and who symbolized the help of adult education in the war effort. Such women were virtually America’s civilian heroines during the war.

Adult education today means more than learning English and civics to become a naturalized citizen,

or studying mechanical drawing at home to get a better job. Schooling for adults has pretty much become the mass movement of education in the twentieth century. Quietly, surely, it swept the Nation and has settled. It is a part of American life.

It has meant education for everybody—farmer, stevedore, policeman, carpenter, mechanic, housewife, insurance man, teacher, garment worker, stenographer, lawyer, the unemployed, the rich, the poor, the young, and the old. It is usually to be had for the asking. People want it. It is a necessity. It is free, or at low cost. And when people take it up, they see what they have been missing.

The spontaneous growth of the adult education movement has been a little ahead of organized thinking and research about it. It grew fast. Any place that offered instruction or classroom space—school, museum, library, church, or someone's living room, for that matter—could technically be called an adult education center. Since 1925, when the idea really got started, millions of persons have been studying in inestimable thousands of these centers throughout the United States. Today more than a fifth of the national population—30,000,000—are believed to be learning something at some time or other, in their spare time.

It would require about 100,000 teachers to serve these people on a full-time basis. Yet there is no teacher shortage in adult education, because many teachers in the movement are volunteers—the bank president who teaches economics on Saturday mornings, the housewife who shows brides how to bake, the town editor who lectures on propaganda, the steel-workers' spokesman who talks about labor and management. It is an American kind of enterprise. It belongs to the people.

Answers to such questions as the over-all status of adult education today, how can it be improved, how can it better serve Americans, and what its job in the future is, were found recently by the Institute of Adult Education of Teachers College at Columbia University in New York City. Teachers College is a pioneer in the movement. Its institute was established for a 10-year period in 1941 by a \$350,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. With the University of Chicago it is one of the only two major adult education research agencies in the United States. Its purpose is to study the "opportunities, problems, materials, and methods of adult education and to train leaders and workers in the field"

To see how the adult education movement was shaping up, Paul L. Essert, institute executive officer, went out and looked it over in 80 towns and cities in 34 States across the United States. The trip took a year in 1947-1948. He interviewed about 400 adult education leaders and teachers and talked to the people they worked with.

After he got back to New York, Mr. Essert was convinced that the more rapidly the United States could develop a strong body of leadership in adult education the sooner will the nation move toward a real era of peace. His conclusions and recommendations are based on a study of the movement in public schools, colleges and universities, management and labor's job in educating the worker, rural and farm groups, and public libraries. He reports that:

Adult education in America is still mainly concerned with helping people meet their personal—especially occupational

—needs. Helping to find ways—to meet these needs is a major goal.

Americans want more culture—there is a growing, but still vastly undeveloped, field of adult education in music, art, literature, nature study, travel, the motion pictures and theater.

Because people like to think for themselves, adult education should encourage the honest expression of doubt and give the facts and sources of facts. It should, for example, help people find laboratories in which they can share in determining the policies and responsibilities of government.

Adult education will seek a stronger tie-in with the notable advances made in the United States in family education, counseling in labor and industry, and intergroup education for racial and religious tolerance.

Americans like to go off by themselves occasionally. Adult education should help the people welcome occasional solitude, teaching how to use it to attain an attitude of quiet reflection and a sense of inward communication.

Agricultural extension education will continue to do its most important work in rural areas. Farm folk, however, will get social as well as vocational education. Some new subjects here will be consumer prices, flood control, and farming as affected generally by disasters in war and peace.

Adult education in cities will be promoted increasingly under the leadership of universities and colleges and labor and management. This will go on until State or Federal aid to the movement develops on a wide scale. State aid, as provided in a few States today, will shift the leadership from universities to public schools, with the former taking on a higher level of research.

Large Federal programs in workers' education are possible—a modest program, somewhat the same as early grants-in-aid to agricultural extension work, is probable in the near future. Here, too, universities will cooperate in labor-leadership projects and will probably assume major responsibility. Universities and labor may clash over control, but both will make concessions: labor needs the university to give status to the plan and to help develop a national group of labor educators.

It is felt that management will go along with a workers' education program partly because it will increasingly recognize organized labour as an accepted institution of the national economy, and because many industrial leaders would welcome a more educated labor leadership.

Leadership of universities and colleges in adult education will have to face the problem of how they can best assign some of their activities to local leadership to prevent spreading their own personnel too thin.

Public schools are developing adult education directors or specialists in evening high (secondary) schools, evening elementary schools, vocational

education, public junior and community colleges, and public adult guidance centers. There are indications that a few cities and States are thinking about full-time day-and-night adult education programs.

It was found that public schools are the most promising agency for the development of intercultural education of adults. Mr. Essert reports that the tradition of the American public school will place it in a good position to further adult education for better intercultural relations through adult education.

It is expected that management in business and industry will expand their purely occupational programs to include subjects leading to a broad, liberal education and a better understanding of the community. Public schools and colleges will be urged to support this program.

Museums and public libraries will increasingly serve as adult education centers for group discussion based on reading interests, community resources, and on films with social themes. Incidentally, museums are reported as having more opportunities at present for community education through exhibits and displays.

In the summer of 1949, Mr. Essert was codirector of a national conference to see how the people themselves can help plan new housing, roads, parks, schools, libraries, and other public and community necessities.

The future of the adult education movement requires more research for meeting the personal needs of people and for stronger adult citizenship. Workshops and short courses on special subjects are necessary for agricultural extension, college and university administrators, labor and management, civic and educational leaders, and for local and State school officials.

A major research undertaking for the 1949-1951 program of the Teachers College Institute of Adult Education will concentrate on the function of adult education in community development. A congested metropolitan area, a suburban and a rural district will be studied to see what adult education can do to help these communities help themselves.

Internationally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is charged with collecting and giving information on new techniques and methods in adult education and in collaborating with adult education organizations, leaders and persons prominent in the field, and to produce materials on international affairs suitable for adaptation and extensive use by adult study groups.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is considering the educational needs of the world's adult population, with the exception of adult illiterates, whose education is the concern of UNESCO's "fundamental education" program. The international organization of adult education was promoted at Elsinore, Denmark, in June, 1949, through UNESCO's 30-nation conference. America's—and the world's—school windows are burning brighter and longer these nights. The lamp of knowledge is spreading more light.

This article appeared in the Magazine Section of the January 14, 1950, issue of The Christian Science Monitor, one of the outstanding newspapers in the United States. The writer is a special correspondent of the Monitor and has written many articles for its Magazine Section.

A WORLD-WIDE MOVEMENT FOR ADULT EDUCATION

*A report of the International Conference on
Adult Education to the United States National
Commission for UNESCO (United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)*

By HERBERT C. HUNSAKER

*Acting Director, American Association for Adult
Education, and Dean, Cleveland College, Western
Reserve University.*

IN the summer of 1949 a meeting of great historical significance for the Adult Education movement and for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was held in Elsinore, Denmark. The International Conference on Adult Education which met there June 16-25, 1949, was the first such world-wide conference since August 1929, when the now-disbanded World Association for Adult Education met in Cambridge, England. For UNESCO the conference provided tangible proof of that organization's realization that it is itself engaged in a vast adult education task and that its aims cannot be fully realized without the support of a world-wide adult education movement.

One hundred and four delegates attended, representing 29 nations and 32 international organizations. Chairman of the United States delegation was Mark Starr of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

The delegates met with several purposes in mind: to exchange information with educators from other countries and to create those bonds of understanding and friendship without which any international effort is bound to fail; to study together the aims, subject matter, institutions, and problems of organization, methods and techniques of adult education; to advise UNESCO on its adult education program; and to explore ways and means of international collaboration in this field.

The delegates spent the first two days in plenary sessions, trying to arrive at a common conception of the broad aims of adult education. The following statement of these aims met with general acceptance:

To aid and foster movements which aim at the creation of a common culture to end the opposition between the so-called masses and the so-called elite.

To stimulate a genuine spirit of democracy and humanity.

To give youth the hope and confidence in life that have been shaken by the present world disorganization.

To restore the sense of community to people who live in an age of specialization and isolation.

To cultivate an enlightened sense of belonging to a world community.

It is easy to criticize these aims for their generality, but it was precisely because they are general and broad that they served to provide common ideals for a conference so heterogeneous in culture, tradition, and level of civilization.

After the initial sessions the conference divided into four working commissions. Commission I dealt with the content of adult education; Commission II with agencies and problems of organization; Commission III with techniques and methods; and Commission IV with means of establishing permanent international collaboration. In final plenary sessions the conference accepted the reports and approved most of the recommendations.

In the discussions of the content, methods, and agencies of adult education it was recognized that the wide differences in cultural levels, traditions, and needs made it impossible to agree in detail upon contents, procedures, or forms of organization that would be applicable everywhere. The commission agreed, however, on a broad guiding principle that should be used to direct thinking and planning about subject matter, methods, and agencies. This principle is well stated in the introduction to the report of Commission I.

While all education should be inspired by the real needs and potentialities of those for whom it is intended, this is even more true of adult education, which people must seek of their own free will and which, consequently, can attract and hold their interest only in so far as it meets their material and moral needs. Precise and detailed inquiries are necessary to find out exactly what these needs are before drawing up a program. With the results of such inquiries in mind, the kind of education must then minister to the needs of the individual as a person [and] as a social being.

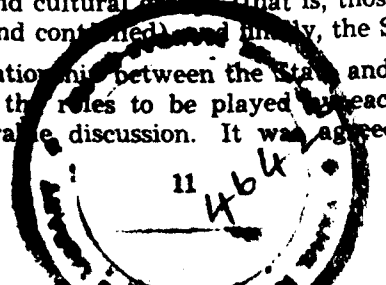
This commission stressed the universal importance of instruction in international understanding (including foreign languages); economic, political, and

social understanding; vocational competence; the understanding of science and its social implications; appreciation and practice of the arts and other leisure-time activities.

Commission III also emphasized the principle that education should help adults to meet their life needs. According to that report, " techniques and methods are only means to an end and not ends in themselves. They cannot be dissociated from the content, which is based on the way of life and the economic and social conditions of those they are meant to serve." The report urged the use of all available communication media to reach adults where they are, physically and psychologically. Implicit in a great deal of the discussion was the assumption that the methodological problem of adult education was not one of reaching isolated individuals, but one of reaching adults in and through their membership in communities and organized groups.

An attempt was made to identify specific agencies which could best participate in the work of adult education. Here again human needs were found to be of basic importance. Commission II, for example, concluded that "those agencies are most effective which in the historical and social context respond most closely to the essential educational needs of a particular community, as expressed by the members of the community themselves". Specific mention was made of schools and colleges, libraries, museums, the agencies of mass communication, voluntary social, economic, and cultural groups (that is, those privately supported and controlled) and finally, the State itself.

The relationship between the State and voluntary groups and the roles to be played by each came in for considerable discussion. It was agreed that the



State should facilitate the provision of adult education, at the same time scrupulously respecting the right of adult groups freely to choose their topics and programs. The importance of establishing cooperation among the various agencies conducting adult education within each country was discussed, with the emphasis on voluntary cooperation rather than on "coordination" by some central authority.

In the opinion of the delegates, voluntary groups occupy a place of special importance. Since such groups are "natural" in the sense that they come into existence to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of those who form them, their educational requirements are intimately and functionally related to those needs. It was, therefore, felt that such specialized agencies of education and communication as universities, libraries, museums, the press, radio and film had a special obligation to work with voluntary group in every possible way.

Because this was an international conference, it was natural that its most specific recommendations should have been concerned with establishing continuing means of international collaboration. It was felt that such international contact could best be achieved at this time not through the establishment of a permanent world organization for adult education separate from UNESCO, but through the establishment in UNESCO itself of a Consultative Committee on Adult Education to advise with the adult education division. It was recommended that the consultative committee should be composed of representative from the most important voluntary and public agencies engaged in adult education selected by UNESCO with due regard to geographical distribution and to differing stages of development.

Many recommendations were made regarding the contribution adult education can make to international understanding and specific steps to be taken to secure collaboration. Most significant in regard to international understanding was the recommendation that UNESCO take special steps to assist adult education in Germany and facilitate contacts between German adult educators and those in other countries. To help overcome the language barriers to international communication, UNESCO was requested to set up a panel of experts to advise on the most effective methods of learning modern languages. The existence of legal barriers to international communication and travel was recognized in the recommendation that UNESCO or some other agency of the United Nations study the question of freeing communications in such a way as to facilitate the interchange of persons travelling abroad for educational purposes.

In order to secure continuing international contact and exchanges among adult educators, UNESCO was urged: (1) to arrange frequent conferences of those engaged in the work of adult education; (2) to assist in establishing a two-way traffic of educators and students between countries of greater and lesser adult education development; (3) to assist adult education organizations in arranging international summer schools; (4) to organize an international seminar, if possible in 1950, for the study of international relations and adult education methods and techniques; and (5) to arrange facilities for carrying on research in adult education.

To facilitate exchange of information and materials on the various aspects of adult education, UNESCO was asked to act as a clearing house for publications and to provide a regular abstracting service, whose

function it would be to condense, translate, and disseminate both new publications and significant materials already in print. The issuance of a periodical bulletin was recommended as a means of spreading news of new developments in adult education.

Steps are already being taken by the UNESCO Secretariat toward the implementation of at least three of the conference recommendations: the establishment of a Consultative Committee on Adult Education, the publication of a periodical bulletin, and the holding of a seminar in 1950 to study methods of educating adults for international understanding.

In retrospect it seems that the conference was significant in at least four ways: (1) It made substantial progress toward the establishment of an effective world-wide adult-education movement. (2) Although it gave full recognition to the part which the State must play in adult education, the conference demonstrated the vital necessity for voluntary organizations of all kinds to participate fully in this educational work. (3) By electing to channel international adult education efforts through UNESCO, the conference greatly increased the responsibilities of the adult education division and made necessary a substantial enlargement of the staff and budget of that division. (4) The conference suggested many specific ways in which the various national commissions may contribute to and strengthen the adult education movement, and so inevitably the work of UNESCO itself.

No aspect of the educational work of UNESCO is of greater importance to the establishment of world peace and democracy than its work with adults, with the generation that today has the responsibility for

making the decisions on which the future rests. UNESCO must not be allowed to fail for lack of machinery to carry out its program of adult education.

UNESCO's characteristic ideal, "Peoples speaking to peoples", can be achieved in no better way than by the direct action of private, voluntary groups in all countries getting into communication with one another. There is some international exchange among professional groups, but this does not penetrate sufficiently to the grassroots of the population.

It is, after all, only as the masses of ordinary private citizens are drawn into personal activity in behalf of UNESCO's aim of world peace that the feelings of apathy and impotence in regard to the solution of world problems will be overcome. The individual is not helpless before the impact of world forces, but he will not gain confidence in what he can do and achieve a sense of responsibility, until he himself is personally involved in building the bridges of understanding that make peace possible.

This article appeared in the December 31, 1949, issue of *School and Society*, a weekly magazine published in the United States by the Society for the Advancement of Education, Inc.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM OF AN AMERICAN CITY

*In community centers New Yorkers escape the
boredom of a big city, build friendships, and
become better neighbors*

By RICHARD STROUSE

THE energetic little woman beat the air with both hands in time with the piano. "All right basses," she called, pointing at nine well-dressed men who sat in a group in brightly lit school-room. Heartily, and to a lesser extent harmoniously, the men burst into song. After the final chord, the 60 men and women in the room broke into laughter. It was unusual laughter, spontaneous and delighted—the kind heard among children or old friends. Yet the youngest person in the room was 21. Most of the group had never seen each other half an hour earlier. That scene occurred during the first session of a class in choral singing at the Taft Youth and Adult Center in New York City. The laughter was typical of the center. The center itself is typical of one American city's concentrated attack on the loneliness of a large city.

Officially, the attack is "an experiment combining recreation, adult education, and guidance for youths and adults" conducted by the Division of Community Education of the New York City Board of Education. It is being carried on at three similar neighborhood centers. The centers might be defined as municipally

sponsored settlement houses. They offer the resources of the public school system—including classrooms, auditoriums, shops, teachers, playgrounds, and gymnasiums—to the general public, of any age, after regular school hours. By education, recreation, professional guidance, neighborhood projects, and cooperation with local community leadership they try to meet the leisure-time needs of New Yorkers.

Their activities include afternoon recreation programs for preadolescents; similar evening programs for teen-agers and adults; evening education classes for adults; free use of public school classrooms for any organizations wanting to hold meetings; public forums and dances; and free advice to both groups and individuals.

The adult education courses are the major activity. During one semester the centers conducted 414 classes each week. Subjects ranged from conversational Spanish to puppetry. One school offered six courses in jewelry making, while another experimented with a course in X-ray technique and human anatomy. All center activities, including the adult classes, are free—or nominally so. Children's activities are unqualifiedly free.

The centers have proved sensationally popular. In 1946 more than 45,000 New Yorkers participated in their activities. Enrolment for 1950 is running 34 per cent higher. On the first night's registration for adult courses at one school recently, the line of applicants extended around three city blocks. Registrants were accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Six weeks after registration officially ended for the winter semester, New Yorkers were still trying to get into courses.

The centers are the products of a combination of history and the efforts of Mark A. McCloskey, the director of the Board of Education's Division of Community Education. During the last war, as head of the Office of Community War Services, McCloskey supervised 4,000 recreation centers for servicemen. After the war he decided to organize what he sometimes calls "metropolitan anti-tension stations" on a community-wide basis in New York. His idea was supported by an imposing list of civic groups and educators, and the Board of Education voted an original appropriation in December 1945. Two months later the first center officially opened.

Before each center's operations were begun, McCloskey and the director surveyed the community to be served. They ferreted out local leaders and organizations already working for better human relations and discussed with them the needs and frustrations of the area and its people. In each instance, they then organized a community-wide mass meeting at which the public was asked what it wanted the center to do.

This community participation has been continued. Each director today works closely with an advisory council composed of community leaders, and with an adult student council composed of one popularly elected representative of each adult education course at the center. The 40 members of the East New York advisory council, for example, include a municipal court judge, a State Senator, two State Assemblymen, the vice-president of a savings bank, a rabbi, a Negro minister, and the presidents of five Parent-Teacher Associations.

The council meets on the second Tuesday of each month. At a recent meeting, the council worked out

a program to welcome 1,400 new families who were moving into a housing project in the neighborhood; decided to invite a group of music students to repeat a concert that had been most successful when first presented; discussed fund-raising; and appointed a committee to find out if the shortage of sewing teachers could be relieved by obtaining instructors from pattern manufacturers or department stores.

Each center will set up a new course whenever 20 persons request one if an instructor can be found. All are located near major subway (underground) and bus lines so they can be reached easily and inexpensively.

On any "class" evening, adolescent and adult New Yorkers stream to the centers from subways and buses, and by private car and on foot. Because most activities are social as well as educational and recreational events, most enrollees are neatly dressed. As the classes and recreational activities get started the mood varies from willing concentration to unbridled gaiety. "If we do not produce pleasure and cooperation, we fail in our purpose," one of the center directors explains. His class in square dancing, conducted by a 60-year-old grandmother, is a social event. But a beginners' class in typing is just as gay.

All three centers attract representatives of every social, economic, and educational group in New York. The mother of one of the center directors attends a language and citizenship class regularly. A drawing class at one school included a police captain and a fashion model.

Because of their popularity, the centers have their problems. They are handicapped by shortages of

money, of space, and of teachers. The Board of Education pays the directors' salaries, and for janitor service, electricity, telephone service, and building maintenance. The center's sole other sources of income are the membership fees and contributions from co-operating individuals and organizations. Out of these funds the centers must purchase expendable supplies; pay extra teachers; finance permanent equipment like additional kilns and sewing machines; and, in some cases, pay for the clay and leather and wood needed in crafts classes.

Any licensed public school teacher is eligible to teach at the centers, but the directors have augmented their staffs with teachers from outside the regular city school system. The folk dancing instructor at one center is a well-known dancing teacher with her own studio. At another school, an Irish-born housewife taught a class in Gaelic which met in a room next to the one used by a class in Hebrew. As community enterprises, the centers have been able to induce interested organizations to sponsor courses and supply teachers for them.

The most popular activities at all three centers are the adult courses in sewing and dressmaking. But the next most popular activities are volleyball, social dancing, crafts classes, and courses in psychology and in drawing and painting.

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This article appeared in the Magazine Section of the March 12, 1954 issue of *The New York Times*, one of the leading newspapers published in the United States. The writer is a member of the staff of *The New York Times* and, in order to get the materials for this article, attended the classes he mentions.

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