

In My Opinion

The Big Goals

It is not new to point out that there is change and upheaval in the college curriculum. And it is no secret that many undergraduate institutions are undergoing extensive overhaul of their entire structure of education. But what is not clear is that inherent in all this is a reassessment of goals and objectives of the entire educational enterprise.

While some student groups, faculties, professional organizations, and the public quarrel and dispute about the tactics to achieve change, there is little concrete talk about ends and goals. In short, our attention has been largely focused on what is going on rather than where we are going.

To a less publicized degree this picture is duplicated in the secondary schools, and while the ferment is there too, it is more diffused and with less explosiveness.

The future planners have much to say about directions and goals, and they are keenly aware of scientific and technological achievements and potential. In fact, Eric Hoffer's perceptive statements about our society's rising level of expectation creating a rising level of frustration indicates quite well that science and technology have been successful. Glen Seaborg points out that these scientific achievements have changed the world, but precisely because so many believe in science's great power, lies the dilemma. Our society does believe that things can be better and science has proven the validity of that belief.

Now in our inability to formulate our big goals, we have the ultimate frustration and discouragement. We have the beautifully constructed vehicle, and we are moving, but we cannot see the road and we do not know where we want to go.

Education reflects society's dilemma. But more importantly, education reflects society's goals, confused and amorphous as they are. Perhaps, it is time for educators to make proposals for our big goals and to make them operational, if only to reduce the frustrations so apparent in our own work.

There are many educators who have made provocative and perceptive statements about all this. There are some scientists, notably biologists, who have done likewise. What we desperately need is for biology educators to address themselves to our "big goals" for they interpret where we are in biology. Most agree that biology, among all the sciences, has the most explosive potential. Until we interpret this in the light of where we should be going, we shall be unable to break out of the circuit of rising expectations leading to rising frustrations.

We have our passports for a journey, but this does not guarantee a trip or a destination. Let us not await the inevitable moment when we are told where we must go.

Editor

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