

VITALIZING ADULT EDUCATION

(Part of a committee report on adult education in the Division Superintendents' Convention in Baguio from May 10 to May 15, 1948)

Democracy as a way of life cannot be fostered in communities denied of the blessings of education. To practice this way of life the people should share in the responsibility of governing themselves, share in the power of determining measures to promote their welfare, and share in the benefits, that cooperative planning and execution produce.

Objectives. For parents and teachers the challenge is clear: (a) To help eradicate illiteracy. (b) To lift the cultural level of the masses through an effective educational program for adults so that they may live efficiently and happily as freemen and (c) to enable the people to raise their standard of living by increasing their economic efficiency and productive capacity and by developing in them habits of conserving natural resources.

Institutions to Be Used. To achieve these aims it is advantageous to use established institutions that have educational influence besides the school, the family, and the church. These institutions are the parent-teacher associations, the community assemblies, and the barrio meetings.

Some Pitfalls to Be Avoided. However, it is well to avoid certain failings of these institutions. In the past the parent-teacher associations were mere collecting agencies for contributions of money, labor and material. Their educational functions were slighted if not entirely forgotten. Others were downright antagonistic.

Of the community assemblies no less

can be said. They failed to give a consistent educational program to the people of a barrio because generally the assembly was held only once or twice a year in one place. Sometimes the feasting that accompanied it distracted much attention. Then, too, some teachers felt it a burden to be going to so many places and hearing lectures that in some cases they already heard previously. The barrio meeting led by the teniente offered a good medium for mutual planning of activities and consultation on common problems but even such meetings lacked the uplifting social direction that a well-planned and life-like educational program can offer.

Four-Point Educational Program for Adults. Integrated with the educational scheme now being carried out in schools for children is a four-point educational program for adults which is outlined below:

a. *Instruction.* The meetings should provide opportunities for instruction utilizing to the best advantage all audio-visual aids that are available.

(1) *Lecture.* A brief lecture should be followed by an open forum. The needs of the people on *health, citizenship, character, home life, recreation* and their *occupations* should guide lecturers in the selection of subjects. Furthermore the undesirable practices, conditions, and influences revealed in surveys should be remedied by constructive and specific suggestions. While literary polish is not desirable the practical value of the lecture should

be held paramount. High-brow scientific explanations should be simplified by pictures, diagrams, objects, and other illustrations. Questions that waste much time should be disposed of politely but firmly.

The lecture may be delivered by the teacher or a capable member in the community. If desired a guest lecturer may be invited among municipal and provincial officials. Doctors and nurses should be asked to lecture on health. Judges and lawyers are competent lecturers on laws and citizenship. Field men of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Animal Husbandry, Bureau of Forestry, Bureau of Fisheries, and other offices are also suitable lecturers.

(2) *Demonstrations.* Two kinds present advantages that make them desirable in meetings: namely, demonstrations of pupils and those of adults. Children can demonstrate to their parent the learning of health habits and traits of character. In addition they can show work activities in food production and handicraft. By being informed of the school activities of their children the parents will be enabled to cooperate with teachers in implementing in the home what is taught in school. Furthermore the parent will have opportunity after the demonstration to contribute ideas in developing the school curriculum. Under this set-up teachers and parents will reduce the possibility of engaging in mutual recrimination when children go wrong.

There are also appropriate and worthwhile activities that need to be demonstrated for adults by adults. How many farmers know how to caponize a cockerel or castrate a pig? Can it be taken for granted that farmers know how to select seeds properly, apply fertilizer intelligently, plant seeds or

seedlings at proper distances, give fair trial to new varieties of rice or corn, milk carabaos and make compost piles to accumulate fertilizer? How many mothers know how to feed babies, bathe and clothe them, and take care of them when they are sick? How many housekeepers know how to sweep hygienically, cook vegetables to conserve food values, or broil meat without making it tough? How many can repair rattan chairs, make a market basket, weave a door mat, or manufacture hair oil that does not become rancid? These and many other needs revealed by community, industry and home surveys provide countless opportunities for demonstrations.

The teacher should give lecturers a chance to vitalize their lectures by demonstrations if possible. Persons in the community who excel in any of the activities named above should also be asked to do demonstrations during meetings.

(3) *Classes.* A third feature of instruction is the possibility of conducting adult education classes. By basing teaching on the principle, *each one teach one*, the Laubach method makes reading contagious and may even possibly make it an epidemic. The barrio teacher need not worry that he has to teach all the illiterates in the barrio at one time. A small group would be a good start.

Classes need not be limited to reading, writing, and figuring. Some mothers may wish to learn some first-aid treatments. Surely there are many things that people, even as adults, may want to learn.

b. *Information.* Free people need free information from free sources. It is, therefore, desirable that in meetings of the people there should be an information period using such audio-visual

aids as can be made available to disseminate local, national, and world news as well as information about the activities of the government. The information period may present new ordinances and laws, orders of health authorities and announcements and instructions from the mayor, the treasurer, and other government officials.

c. *Consultation.* If life is ever to be democratized in each community the meetings should provide a period for mutual consultation on *problems of the homes, the community, and the school.* The fixing of common irrigation ditches, the beautification of the village square, the reconditioning of the barrio road, the cleaning of the village spring or well, the repair of the schoolhouse, the control of agricultural pests, the celebration of a fiesta, — all these and many other similar problems need the pooling of the resources of the people which can be effected best through the mutual consultation and planning of activities.

d. *Recreation.* It is natural for people, no matter how poor and hard-working they are, to seek recreational outlets. Personality balance requires this. Farmhands need recreation to soften hardship during busy times and minimize the enervating influence of idleness and the temptation of vices during slack periods. The lure of the fighting cock should be minimized by more wholesome sports. Programs that elevate taste for music, dances and literature may be presented at the beginning of the meetings. One or two dances or a few songs that give relief to tired minds and give food to starving spirits are desirable. Since dramatizations have a powerful appeal a brief presentation prepared by the young men and women of the village or by the school pupils will be welcome. In these activities the teacher should

lead in developing Filipino folkways so that even under modern influences they will continue in modified forms to enrich life.

Language to be Used. It is obvious that if the four-point program described above is to be made effective the language to be used should be the dialect. In the lectures, demonstrations, classes, and information period it is needless to state that the dialect is the logical language to be used.

Time. How often should there be meetings in the community among adults? This question should be left to the community to decide but if instruction is to be made effective the meetings of a literacy class should be at least twice a week. The other parts of the four-point program may be attended to as often as the people find a need for them.

Evaluating the Four-Point Program. Teachers can lead in appraising from time to time the achievements of the groups. Desirable changes in the children, the parents, the homes, and the community should be noted. On the other hand, the balance sheet should show what undesirable practices need to be eradicated and what wholesome influences and conditions should be removed. Many activities are observable hence the evaluation can be based on objective evidence.

Some of the evaluating questions to ask are: Is literacy increased? Have the people acquired better health habits? How much have the people improved their community in civic enterprises? Are they informed truthfully of current events and of ordinances and laws of the government and of rules, orders, and announcements of government offices in which they are concerned? Are they engaged in worthwhile home industries during slack periods in their occupations? Are

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