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by the crude methods of the lengthened school year and school day, a fifth of our students can complete a four-year program in three, such technological gains should bring more marked savings of time and effort for both students and institutions. The above takes no account of possible curricular pruning and coordination, which might effect further savings.

Résumé and Recapitulation

Wartime acceleration was by no means an isolated war-caused episode, but rather a reappearance of a long-recognized problem. Early and recent studies are in agreement in indicating that younger students tend to be the best students and that the educational lockstep has tended to slow the progress of the ablest students to the rate of the average. Available data agree that early completion of collegiate education tends to be associated with success in adult life. All these conclusions appear supported by basic psychological data indicating that American higher and professional education, before the war, had tended to extend beyond the ages of greatest readiness for such learning and to encroach upon the best years for beginning adult socioeconomic life. These problems are now being accentuated by interruptions in education resulting from the war. There is evidence also that wartime acceleration, although for the most part hastily planned and crude in method, was often successful, and scattered but challenging evidence indicates that better methods are available or might readily be devised which would permit more, and better, acceleration. Since the majority of our youth have had their education interrupted, since there is a shortage of individuals with advanced and technical training, and since most universities are swamped with students, the closing question is: What may be done to meet this situation?

The great need is for a reorientation of faculty thinking with regard to this whole problem. Faculties are correct that all-year school endangers their health, restricts their research and scholarship, and makes some students stale and narrow; that mass acceleration, especially in professional schools, asks too much of average and below-average students; and that the heavy schedules of the war period were exhausting for faculty members and many students. The proposals do not involve lengthened school years or heavier course loads for either the faculty or most students. They involve, not mass acceleration, but selective acceleration in proportion to ability, thus facilitating the work of both faculty and students. Faculties are right that standards should not be lowered, and since academic units are ordinarily expressed in terms of time taken (a four-year curriculum or a five-hour course), reduction of years or hours becomes suspect. The unsatisfactory nature of such terms would, however, seem clear: charges of lowered standards against efforts to save time are perverse. Faculties are right that education should not be hurried, but that fact does not justify unnecessary extensions of educational programs into the best years of young adulthood. Faculties are right that gain in intellectual maturity is a major goal of education, but there is evidence that undue extension of educational programs tends rather to prolong adolescence, and that maturity may be furthered by desirable acceleration. Faculties are tragically wrong in the persisting attitude that somehow ingenuity, imagination, and efforts at time and labor saving are inappropriate in higher education, and that during the war or now with the flood of returning veterans all they can do is to lengthen the school year or school day or add staff to do the same old things in the same old way. Continuing practical experimentation to facilitate the work of the faculty and the progress of students should become a regular and expected part of the work of an educational institution. Technological advances are possible in education.

We all thrill when advances in medicine add years to life. Such steps as mentioned above could, in effect, add years to the productive adult life of our ablest young people, markedly increase the efficiency of our educational institutions, and aid faculties in the present emergency. If only such steps could be taken now, at this time of greatest need for them, there might be notable advances not only in science and industry but even in education!

References


Scanning Science—

With the exception of the advancement of scientific research there is no subject more important to men of science than the adequate teaching of the sciences in our colleges and schools. The efforts now being made by the Natural Science Department of the Educational Association to properly coordinate higher and secondary scientific education should be heartily supported, and those who have read in Science the addresses by Profs. Bessey, Carhart, Freer, Jordan, and Gage, at the recent meeting of the N.E.A., will understand what excellent leadership controls the movement.

4 September 1896