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Arthur Bestor's Rationale for the Intellectual Disciplines

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ARTHUR BESTOR'S RATIONALE
FOR
THE INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINES

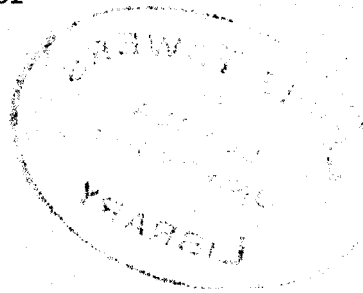
by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

June

1976



Loyola University of Chicago

ARTHUR BESTOR'S RATIONALE

FOR

THE INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINES

Arthur Bestor, professor of history at the University of Illinois, lectured and wrote extensively throughout the 1950s to repair and restore the teaching of the basic intellectual disciplines in the schools. He declared the purpose of education to be mental training through the intellectual disciplines. By the work of scholars spanning millenia, all experience has been delimited, investigated, and analyzed in the systematic structure of the disciplines to give man mastery over his environment. The study of the disciplines trains the powers of the mind in abstract thinking. The generalizations and the ability to apply them to new situations remain with the student so that the disciplines are the best broad and basic, although indirect, preparation for life. Great historical figures, such as, the founding fathers of our country, attest to their worth. Reserved for the aristocracy in former times here and in modern times elsewhere, liberal and liberating education, free in means and end, is the right of all our citizens.

The crucial period of liberal education is the years of secondary school. Endorsing the scholarly pronouncements of the Committee of Ten of 1894, Bestor called for a secondary curriculum comprised of courses in the five basic areas: history, English, foreign languages, science, and mathematics. These intellectual disciplines are the basic preparation for life in modern society and the necessary foundation for higher

studies. They should be taught according to high standards maintained by rigorous examinations, especially college entrance examinations. Unpromising students would be discouraged from continuing after the period of compulsory schooling; superior students, especially the needy, should be given aid for subsistence through competitive scholarships.

However, Bestor found that progressive education for life adjustment was replacing the fundamental disciplines with functional education responding to the felt needs of youth and the needs of society. Vocational training and social conditioning were supplanting intellectual discipline in the schools. While the core curriculum failed against systematic and cumulative learning, the social studies program was deteriorating because of the intrusion of units dealing with contemporary adolescent and societal needs. Professional educators, claimed Bestor, were responsible for lowering the educational standards to the level of mediocrity.

The educators argued that the schools had increased enormously in attendance and catered to a vastly more heterogeneous student body when compared with those of the turn of the century. The curriculum had to be adapted to their needs and interests. Functional education was demanded by pragmatic members of the school boards. Bestor upheld the educator's duty to promote the disciplines in the face of indifference to avoid creating an elite by offering liberal education to the few and a poor substitute to the rest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Rosemary Donatelli has directed the author in the composition of this dissertation with unflagging interest, sympathetic understanding, and helpful guidance. It has been a pleasure to work under her. To Dr. Gerald Gutek is due gratitude for proposing the topic and for guiding the development of it along lines consistent with Bestor's expressed theory. Dean John Wozniak has given encouragement and has influenced the selection of certain facets of Bestor's doctrine. A final word of gratitude is in order for Dr. Bestor himself for facilitating the author's work in generously sending him a list of bibliographical and biographical references.

PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to define and describe Arthur Bestor's theory for the teaching and learning of the basic intellectual disciplines in the American educational system. The aim entails an exposition of Bestor's critique of the philosophy of professional educators and its practical application in progressive education. It includes an evaluation of selected aspects of Bestor's position.

Essays of substance in support of liberal education are always welcome to a student of Cicero's Pro Archia. Indeed, the ardent zeal on the part of many authorities and students to expunge the classical languages from the secondary curriculum in seminaries has been disturbing. A more general innovation is the preoccupation with the needs and interests of youth and society reflected in changes in curriculum and methods of teaching. The relaxed atmosphere and the practical adaptation of studies to life are counter-balanced by less studious habits and by pursuit of activities dubiously related to intellectual improvement. At times it seems that the high road to learning has been diverted into a cul de sac by progressive education.

At the suggestion of his professor, Dr. Gerald Gutek of Loyola's School of Education, the author undertook the study of Arthur Bestor's critique of mid-century American education. Dr. Gutek had the privilege of working under Dr. Bestor in earning his degree in history at the University of Illinois. The author was sent the nucleus of his

source material by Dr. Bestor himself in a select list of his writings arranged in reverse chronological order. The hub of the learning of the disciplines, the secondary curriculum, was of great importance in Bestor's writings and has been of similar concern to the author during his thirty years of teaching in secondary schools.

While attention is given to the three Rs of elementary school and the liberal education curriculum of the college and teacher training institutions, the major portion of the dissertation treats of the five basic disciplines in the curriculum of the secondary school. Writings which Bestor cited and other authoritative sources of like conviction, which have served to elucidate Bestor's theory, have been quoted and commented upon. In contentious material, such as, views on the teacher training program, an attempt has been made to represent both sides of the issue. Although there are numerous differences with Bestor's doctrine, whether given as a conclusion of the dissertation or as exemplified in the works of other critics, the general tenor of the dissertation is in agreement with Bestor's concepts.

VITA

The author, Rev. Robert Joseph Zimney, C.M., is the son of Anton Zimney and Nellie (Flannery) Zimney. He was born November 9, 1917, in La Salle, Illinois.

His elementary education was obtained in St. Patrick's School of La Salle, Illinois, and secondary education at St. Vincent's College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. In May, 1934, he entered St. Mary's Seminary of Perryville, Missouri, and in June, 1938, received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in philosophy. On May 24, 1942, he was ordained to the priesthood.

During the ensuing years he has taught Latin, Spanish, and religion in St. John's Seminary, San Antonio, Texas, St. Louis Preparatory Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, De Paul Academy, Chicago, Illinois, and St. Vincent De Paul Seminary, Lemont, Illinois. On October 27, 1949, he was awarded the Master of Arts in Latin and Greek by Catholic University of Washington, D.C., and on June 8, 1969, he was awarded the Master of Arts in Spanish by Loyola University of Chicago.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
PREFACE	iii
VITA	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION: CONSPECTUS	1
II. EDUCATIONAL THEORY	23
III. THE FIVE BASIC DISCIPLINES	57
IV. PROCEDURE THROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL	84
V. COLLEGE AND TEACHER EDUCATION	119
VI. DEFICIENCIES OF EDUCATION FOR LIFE ADJUSTMENT	156
VII. CRITICAL REVIEW OF RATIONALE	199
BIBLIOGRAPHY	238

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CONSPECTUS

Arthur Eugene Bestor, Ph.D., is an authority on history and education of international renown. His professional life has been spent in the teaching of history in universities and complemented by numerous publications in books and periodicals, learned and popular. At present he is professor of history at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he has been since 1962.¹ In the field of education he is a staunch supporter of intellectual discipline through the basic subjects of the liberal arts. He has lectured widely throughout the land on his convictions. His defense of all phases of basic education for all has inspired a great amount of controversial literature. Since 1952 until the present day he has been regarded as one of the outstanding proponents of education in the fundamentals. Even his opponents concede that some elements of his critique of American public education have been of significant value.

Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr. was born September 20, 1908 in Chautauqua, New York. For thirty years his father was president of the Chautauqua Institution (1915-1944). The younger Bestor grew up in Chautauqua, Chicago, and New York City. In 1939 he married Anne Carr, who died in 1948. He married Dorothy Alden Koch, an assistant professor of English

¹Who's Who in America, 37th ed., s.v., "Bestor, Arthur Eugene, Jr." This is from a photostatic copy of the original. Two pages of such biographical articles and sources were kindly sent us by Dr. Bestor's secretary,

at Vassar College, on November 23, 1949. William Porter and Thomas Wheaton are his sons from the first marriage, Theodore Charles from the second.

In New York City Arthur Bestor graduated from Lincoln School of Teachers College in 1926. He took his Ph.B. with honors with his major in English at Yale in 1930. Membership in Phi Beta Kappa and the Elizabethan Club together with two prizes in English composition and mathematics graces his undergraduate years. The Ph.D. was granted him by Yale in 1938. His dissertation, "American Phalanxes: A Study of Fourierist Socialism in the United States," was awarded the \$500 John Addison Porter Prize.

Meanwhile, Arthur Bestor had begun his teaching career as instructor in English (1930-31) and history (1934) at Yale and American literature at Albertus Magnus College, New Haven (1934-36). Thence he went to Teachers College, Columbia, as associate in history and then became assistant professor there (1937-42). Assistant professor of humanities at Stanford University was his title for three years (1942-45), after which he became assistant professor of history there in the following year. The year 1946 saw Dr. Bestor in Chicago with a teaching fellowship at Newberry Library. He taught at the University of Wisconsin in 1947 and, during the summers, at Minnesota (1946), Northwestern (1949), Wyoming (1953), Boston College (1959), Washington (1961), and State University of New York at Stony Brook (1965).

It was in the fall of 1947 that Dr. Bestor became assistant professor of history at the University of Illinois and full professor in 1951. In 1956-57, on leave from Illinois, he taught at Oxford as the Harold Vyvyan Harmsworth Professor of American History and was awarded

the M. A. degree from Oxford "by decree." Lincoln University of Pennsylvania also granted him an LL.D. in 1959. The years at the University of Illinois, until 1962, were most active and exciting because of the polemics on mental discipline as the aim of education. Much of the spirited opposition to Dr. Bestor came from faculty members of the College of Education at Illinois. Since 1962 Dr. Bestor has been professor of history at the University of Washington in Seattle. In 1967 he was the Fullbright Visiting Professor at the University of Tokyo.

Professor Bestor has been an active member of the American Historical Association. In December 1952, as a means of realizing the safeguarding of sound intellectual training in the schools, he proposed to the membership certain tenets and resolutions dealing with curricula and teacher training especially. Sixty-two members sponsored the resolutions and 695 scholars of various learned fields from all parts of the country signed in support. Although the proposals were not officially adopted, they were given sympathetic approval and Dr. Bestor was appointed to the Special Committee on History in the Schools (1953-56) for the improving of the quality of teaching.² He has contributed articles to the American Historical Review, such as "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships Between Social Reform and Westward Expansion."³

Scholars and scientists "look to a single great organization, the

²Arthur Bestor, Educational Wastelands (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1953), pp. 197-206.

³See American Historical Review 58 (April 1953): 505-526.

American Association of University Professors" to safeguard the standards of the profession.⁴ In its journal Professor Bestor published one of his first critical essays on contemporary education entitled "'Life-Adjustment' Education: A Critique."⁵ The Illinois State Historical Society gave Dr. Bestor, president 1954-55, an award in 1960 for distinguished service to American history and published his article, "State Sovereignty and Slavery: A Reinterpretation of Proslavery Constitutional Doctrine, 1846-1860."⁶ Moreover, he was vice-president of the American Studies Association in 1962 and was made a member of the executive committee of the Organization of American Historians in 1964.

In religion Bestor is a Unitarian, in politics a Democrat.⁷ He cites at some length the famed Unitarian minister, William Ellery Channing. In 1837 Channing spoke thus in support of thorough education for all for the good of American society: "The poor man. . .is equally susceptible of improvement and would receive as great advantages as others from a well-bestowed education."⁸ Bestor is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union and was appointed to its state board of

⁴Arthur Bestor, The Restoration of Learning (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 224.

⁵See American Association of University Professors Bulletin 38 (Autumn 1952): 413-441.

⁶See Journal of Illinois State Historical Society 54 (Summer 1961): 117-180.

⁷Current Biography Year Book 1958, edited by Marjorie Dent Candee (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company), p. 41.

⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 85-86.

directors in 1964. Moreover, he belongs to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. His views on freedom, especially in teaching, are to be found in "Enlightenment and Liberty," Part Four of The Restoration of Learning. Herein is incorporated much of the thought of his Phineas L. Windsor Lecture, "Thomas Jefferson and the Freedom of Books."

Since Arthur Bestor, Sr. was president of the Chautauqua Institution for nearly thirty years, it is not strange that Arthur Bestor, Jr. exercised his literary talents as editor of the Chautauquan Daily (1931-34). His first book was Chautauqua Publications: An Historical and Bibliographical Guide (1934). He is also the author of "Chautauqua and Chautauqua Institution" in Historic Annals of Southwestern New York (1940) and "Chautauqua Movement" in the Encyclopedia Americana, 1966 edition.

Stanford University Press published Bestor's David Jacks of Monterey and Lee L. Jacks, His Daughter in 1945. The next year Backwoods Utopias: The Secretarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America, while still in manuscript form, won the American Historical Association's Albert J. Beveridge Memorial Fellowship Award for Dr. Bestor. In the same vein under the auspices of the Indiana Historical Society in 1948, he edited this work: Education and Reform at New Harmony: Correspondence of William Maclure and Marie Duclos Fretageot, 1820-1833. Because of these works and numerous essays in learned journals and books, Bestor is considered as one of the outstanding authorities on communitarian movements in the United States.

Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1950, Backwoods Utopias was well received here and in England. One theme of

this work dealt with the school at New Harmony, Indiana. In 1825-26 Robert Owen and William Maclure co-operated to establish superior teaching by experienced Pestalozzian teachers at New Harmony. They also introduced practical labors by the pupils after the Fellenberg manner in the curriculum with good results. But in August of 1826, Owen tried to replace Maclure's science program, systematically taught by scholarly teachers engaged in research, with lectures given three times a week on various trades and occupations by lecturers with only practical experience to recommend them. There was contention between Owen and Maclure. In June of 1827, Owen left New Jarmony after spending about \$100,000 in the venture. Maclure continued the school and published both his own numerous articles on education and the scientific volumes of his colleagues on his own fine printing press. The Owenite lectures on trades and occupations opposed to the Maclue program of systematic teaching of sciences foreshadow the great controversy between life adjustment education and the intellectual disciplines in the schools.

In December 1950, Bestor read a paper to the joint session of the American Historical Association and the American Civilization Conference in Chicago. Therein he warned of the dangers of narrowness, provincialism, and limitation to the familiar and contemporary surroundings in education.⁹ But it was his lecture, "Aimlessness in Education," on February 12, 1952 at the University of Illinois under the auspices of the department of humanities that set off a string of explosive polemics of at least six years duration. His article under the same title was

⁹Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., "The Study of American Civilization: Jingoism or Scholarship," William and Mary Quarterly, ser. 3, 9 (January 1952): 3-9.

published in the Scientific Monthly.¹⁰ Bestor assailed "the interlocking public school directorate" of professors of education, local school administrators, and state and federal officials. They were arraigned on counts of weakening public education, watering down the courses, and directing the curriculum toward vocational training and the discussion of the trivial problems of youth. The objectionable organization close at hand was the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program.

Dr. Bestor followed "Aimlessness in Education" with several articles in The American Scholar, the AAUP Bulletin, the New Republic, School and Society, and the Christian Register. All were enlarged on in his book, Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools, published by the University of Illinois Press, 1953. The main points were these: the need for knowledge of fundamentals and of the broadening subjects of a liberal education, the democratic aspects of this training for disciplined intelligence, the lesser or nil value of regressive education and education for life adjustment, the excessive power of the interlocking directorate of educationists, and the need for reform in teacher training.

Professor Bestor had entered into a dispute over the educational curriculum that had been going on since the end of World War Two. Witness to this conflict were critical books such as these: And Madly Teach by Mortimer Smith (1949); Crisis in Education by Bernard Iddings Bell (1949); Quackery in the Public Schools by Albert Lynd (1950); The Conflict in Education by Robert Hutchins (1953). While Hutchins,

¹⁰See Scientific Monthly 75 (August 1952): 109-116.

former president of the University of Chicago, was the only educator of great repute among these authors, academic and education professors had been embroiled on opposite sides in the strife. In 1951 Edwin H. Reeder of the University of Illinois urged "free discussion leading to mutual understanding, compromise, and . . . eventual consensus" for "name calling and vituperation have gone on long enough."¹¹ The immediate occasion of this plea for peace was the local Phi Beta Kappa presidential address of Dr. Harry J. Fuller, professor of botany at the University of Illinois. He expanded upon these topics:

The falsity of the basic assumptions from which education professors commonly proceed in their anti-intellectual activities; the deterioration in the contemporary training of students, particularly in high schools; the substitution of "societally significant" subjects for sound education in the humanities, the arts, and the sciences; the confusions and inconsistencies that dominate the thinking (perhaps my use of this word is inexcusably charitable), the utterances, and the activities of many education professors.¹²

In rebuttal Dr. Willard B. Spalding, Dean of the College of Education, gave an address, "The Bewildered Botanist," in which Fuller was depicted as "a master of the pointed phrase rather than the finished thought."¹³

¹¹Edwin H. Reeder, "The Quarrel Between Professors of Academic Subjects and Professors of Education," American Association of University Professors Bulletin 32 (Autumn 1951): 521.

¹²Harry J. Fuller, "The Emperor's New Clothes or Prius Dementat," Scientific Monthly 72 (January 1951): 33.

¹³Courier, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, January 9, 1952, p. 3, cited by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, pp. 181-182.

Scholarly opposition to Bestor's "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools" and "Aimlessness in Education" came from the College of Education at the University of Illinois in a lengthy article entitled "A Scholar's Documents," written by Professor Harold C. Hand and Associate Dean Charles W. Sanford. These educators alleged that Bestor had established his charges of anti-intellectualism by isolating statements out of context and by ignoring reams of material promoting in detail the study of the liberal arts. Education for Life Adjustment and the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program were democratic and well suited for the seventy times greater secondary school enrollment. Bestor's attacks were not helping the cause of education. "A Reply to 'A Scholar's Documents'" by Bestor claimed that his "competence and integrity" had been attacked in challenging his representation of documents: there was more mimeographed material by him than his opponents had acknowledged. Professor Hand answered in "Comments on a Scholar's Reply" that Bestor ignored the important elements of the educators' literature and used statistics on school enrollment wrongly to support his own views. This series appeared in the National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin in the April and December issues of 1953.

Educational Wastelands evoked a booklet by two professors of education of the University of Illinois, Two Critiques of Educational Wastelands. R. Will Burnett again stated that the offerings of modern education are diversified and suited to the students' abilities. He pointed to the failure of the old system as proven in the results of the Regents' Inquiry in New York in 1936. Harold C. Hand in detail accused Bestor of "gross misrepresentation" through selection and omission of citations from Life Adjustment and Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program Literature.

These movements aimed to strengthen sound teaching in the fundamentals and care for the emotional and physical development of all youth.¹⁴

William Clark Trow, professor of educational psychology at the University of Michigan, found Bestor using "loaded value words" like 'trivia', 'preposterous', 'inanity', etc., in a manner unbecoming a scholar. Moreover, Trow singled out Bestor's vague use of the word disciplines to mean ability to think, fundamental studies, and methods of investigation. Old, rejected faculty psychology seemed to Trow to be at the base of Bestor's idea of mental training.¹⁵

June 29, 1954 Professor Bestor engaged in debate with Arthur F. Corey, executive secretary of the California Teachers Association, before a section meeting sponsored by the Joint Committee of the National Education Association and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Bestor upheld the fundamental disciplines of the curriculum of 1900 as one that had caught up with the progress in man's knowledge made over two centuries and fitted for the single ladder of education for our democracy.¹⁶

¹⁴R. Will Burnett, "Mr. Bestor in the Land of the Philistines," preprinted from Progressive Education 31 (January 1954) in Two Critiques of Educational Wastelands, pp. 10-11; Harold C. Hand, "A Scholar's Documentation," preprinted from Educational Theory 4 (January 1954), ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹⁵William Clark Trow, "Academic Utopia?" Educational Theory 4 (January 1954): 18, 23.

¹⁶Arthur E. Bestor, "The Retreat from Learning," National Parent-Teacher 49 (October 1954): 30, 32.

Corey, while maintaining that public education was sound and free from the alleged excesses of life adjustment, declared that special provision had to be made for the less gifted pupils and the sixty percent who would be dropped because of Bestor's rigorous standards.¹⁷

According to the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times, Bestor was accused by Corey of resorting to "the lower levels of political demagoguery" to bring about a return to 19th century education. Moreover, the audience of educators "murmured its disapproval" of the critics of education. Albert Lynd was the other conservative critic so received. The defenders of the schools received applause. The Tribune editorial said that both Bestor and Lynd deserved a medal, "if a medal were being awarded for intrepidity."¹⁸

In 1953-54 Bestor was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship for research. On this sabbatical leave he carried on much correspondence with people interested in education. He gave numerous lectures on his views of education "before a large number of educational associations, learned societies, colleges, teachers' colleges, and civic organizations" in eighteen states and the District of Columbia.¹⁹

¹⁷Arthur F. Corey, "Dr. Bestor's Wastelands," National-Parent-Teacher 49 (October 1954): 29, 31.

¹⁸"The Lions' Den," Chicago Tribune, 8 July 1954, sec. I, p. 10; New York Times, 30 June 1954, p. 24. Both articles were quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 183.

¹⁹Bestor, *ibid.*, xvi.

He was happily impressed by a "large number" of superintendents and principals and a "certain number" of professors of education who were "disturbed ... at the dangerously anti-intellectual tendencies of such programs as 'life-adjustment' education."²⁰

During this time he wrote The Restoration of Learning: A Program for Redeeming the Unfulfilled Promise of American Education, published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1955. This book, twice the size of Educational Wastelands, incorporated much of Bestor's previous material and added to it. The essential ideas remained the same. While holding for basic instruction in the fundamentals and the mental disciplines of the liberal arts for all students and maintaining standards to be met, Bestor set forth at length a plan of review and advancement in the total curriculum to keep mentally homogeneous groups together. His proposals to the American Historical Association in 1952 were made the theme of the book. The four general ideas outlined are these: sound education in the fundamentals and intellectual disciplines for all; the ills of American education as occasioned by increased attendance, as consisting in the life adjustment program, and as promoted by powerful educationists; the remedies to be applied in a sound curriculum guarded by scholars, in adequate standards, and in reformed teacher training; freedom to study and explain all aspects of science in institutions of learning.

In the summer of 1956 the controversial essentialist authors, Arthur Bestor, Harry J. Fuller, and Mortimer Smith, united with such other fundamentalists as Harold Clapp, professor of romance languages at

²⁰Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, xi.

Grinnell College, Paxton Blair, former justice of the New York Supreme Court, and Howard A. Meyeroff, executive director of the Scientific Manpower Commission, Washington, D.C.²¹ With others they founded the Council for Basic Education with its office in the nation's capital. A grant of \$114,000 financed the first years of the operation. Bestor was the first president, 1956-57. Ten scientific and learned societies entered into affiliation with CBE. Its publications have been the Bulletin, published ten months of the year, Occasional Papers, twenty-two to date, and eleven books, "research and publication projects of special significance to the strengthening of basic education."²² Among the authors and editors are Mortimer Smith, James D. Koerner, Jacques Barzun, Clifton Fadiman, Harold Clapp, Arthur Bestor and Admiral H.G. Rickover. This statement of purpose is from the inside closing cover of the Occasional Papers: " ... the primary purpose is the strengthening of the basic subjects in American schools, especially English, mathematics, science history, and foreign languages." Its general aim was formulated in part thus:

The Council for Basic Education ... insists that only by the maintenance of high academic standards can the ideal of democratic education be realized--the ideal of offering to all the children of all the people of the United States not merely an opportunity to attend school, but the privilege of receiving

²¹Robert A. Skaife, "Neo-Conservatives Are on the March with 'Sound Education' as Battle Cry," The Nation's Schools, May 1957, pp. 54-56.

²²James D. Koerner, ed., The Case for Basic Education, with an introduction by Clifton Fadiman (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), v.

there the soundest education that is offered any place in the world.²³

In November 1956 in U. S. News and World Report, Bestor maintained that the United States could learn from Russia in the matter of an effective school curriculum was too heavily weighted in favor of math and science. For American education had declined to the consideration of contemporary problems and vocationalism down from the high standards in the basic disciplines set by the Committee of Ten at the turn of the century.²⁴ There followed a symposium of opinions on Bestor's ideas in the June 7th and June 21st issues. In October 1957 Sputnik was launched. In the issue of January 23, 1958 Bestor maintained that the lack of scientists and mathematicians in the face of the Russian threat to superiority was due to low standards in public education in the United States. He quoted President Eisenhower reviewing Russian accomplishment and urging every school board and PTA "to scrutinize your school's curriculum and standards to see whether they meet the stern demands of the era we are entering."²⁵ The moribund condition of education for life adjustment gave rise to guarded optimism. Bestor described it thus:

Recently there has been a good deal of retreating on the part of the educationists who have attacked foreign languages and attacked sciences and have advocated "life adjustment." The "life adjustment" educational program is certainly not talked about as much in educational circles as it was five years ago, and I think it probably is going to be decently buried soon.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Arthur Bestor, "Are We Less Educated Than Fifty Years Ago?" U.S. News and World Report, November 30, 1956, p. 82.

²⁵President Eisenhower, Radio address, November 13, 1957, quoted by Bestor in "What Went Wrong with U.S. Schools," U.S. News and World Report, January 24, 1958, p. 71.

I believe this is all to the good. I am not by any means convinced that this represents a genuine change of heart I'm suspicious that a lot of this is band-wagon jumping at the last moment.²⁶

In the next decade Bestor directed his efforts to further the teaching of history under the title, History, as a separate subject from the rest of the social studies. History was to occupy the secondary school student's time every year, with the possible substitution of a course in geography and a senior year in political science. Bestor took exception to Conant's proposal of a senior class in problems in democracy for heterogeneous groups exchanging ideas on contemporary political topics, especially economics.²⁷ Bestor's course would be a "methodical study of constitutional principles and political structure."²⁸ Debates and free discussion of current problems might take place in meetings of clubs sponsored by the school as extracurricular activities.

Subsequently Bestor wrote to mark the distinction of the structure and method of history from those of the social sciences. Even though all the social studies, concerned with man in society, borrow from each other, they should be taught separately. Historical method should be explained to the student who should be led to see the patterns of cause and effect in history. The study of economics deals with a much narrower field than

²⁶Bestor, *ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁷James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959), pp. 75-76.

²⁸Arthur E. Bestor, "History, Social Studies and Citizenship: The Responsibility of the Public Schools," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 104 (December 15, 1960): 555.

does the history of man, a study of universal scope. The methods and generalizations of sociology deal mostly with present society and are handled differently from the evidence of history. Sociology is best delayed until college years. Thorough courses in history should be given sufficient time in the secondary school curriculum so that the student might have background from the study of the present problems of society. While scientists and scholars had secured adequate programs in science and mathematics, the historians still had to struggle for proper time in the secondary school curriculum for history.²⁹

The rioting of students in the universities throughout the world from 1964 until 1971 prompted Bestor to advise the university faculties to hold firmly to the teaching of objective truth and to refuse to be forced into propagating the predetermined proposals of activist revolutionary groups. No part of the university program should be formulated because of the "jejune rationalizations" of "militant disrupters." Nor should any changes in administrative policy, instituted by intimidation without full, deliberate approval of the faculty, be made permanent. The university should be free in policy and teaching for productive discovery and dissemination of research.

The threat to freedom had shifted from the right wing of the investigators of Senator McCarthy to the New Left of the student demonstrators. This New Left called the establishment fascist while having itself many of the repressive, violent tactics of Hitler's party

²⁹Arthur Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in the Schools," The Role of History in Today's Schools, Occasional Papers, No. 10 (Washington, D.C.: Council for Basic Education, 1966), p. 35.

members. In the international panorama of the riots in the universities, there seemed to be no common cause for the demonstrations. Against all militant disrupters in institutions of learning, the motive of resistance should be "to encourage the expansion of knowledge, not to keep the intellectual activity of men within bounds that someone else thought proper to prescribe."³⁰

Professor Bestor, then, has devoted his life to scholarly activity. Since 1937 he has taught history in the universities: five years at Teachers College, Columbia, fifteen at the University of Illinois, and twelve at the University of Washington. Experience abroad came with his year as professor of history at Oxford. Backwoods Utopias established him both here and abroad as a specialist in the history of communitarianism in the United States. In addition, he has, through the years, contributed historical articles to books and learned journals on various aspects of American history and scholarship.³¹ A mark of recognition of his work is that in 1950 Dr. Bestor was chosen to be a member of the Committee on American Civilization of the American Council of Learned Societies.

The dispute over the curricula of public education had been going on across the nation since the war, as can be seen from James B. Conant's "A Truce Among Educators"³² and from the books by Smith, Bell, and Lynd

³⁰Arthur Bestor, "In Defense of Intellectual Integrity: A Manifesto for the Contemporary University," Encounter 39 (October 1972): 25.

³¹Arthur Bestor, "The Transformation of American Scholarship, 1875-1917," Library Quarterly 23 (July 1953): 164-179.

³²See Teachers College Record 46 (1944-45): 157-163.

at the end of the decade. "The Study of American Civilization," read by Bestor before the American Historical Association on December 28, 1950, was a call for broad, liberal studies in the universities and a condemnation of narrow education, whether in national outlook or vocationalism or the trivia of daily living or contemporary problems. His formal entry into the lists on the side of the academic professors was made at the University of Illinois February 12, 1952. Bestor represented the Department of Humanities in delivering "Aimlessness in Education," an attack on the educationists. His later articles in 1952 were "Liberal Education and a Liberal Nation" and "'Life-Adjustment' Education: A Critique."

The meeting of the American Historical Association in December of the same year was the scene of Bestor's declaration of eight educational principles on which to found a proposal for a Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education. These resolutions, which were "discussed sympathetically," were not adopted but referred to future business.³³ At the same time Bestor read the paper, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," wherein he criticized the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program and Life Adjustment Education by name with instances of unsound practices. All the foregoing articles and others were incorporated, verbatim in some passages, and expanded upon in Educational Wastelands and The Restoration of Learning.³⁴ Lawrence Cremin in treating the life-adjustment movement had this to say of Bestor's work: "Taken together, these writings constituted by far the most serious, searching

³³Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 205.

³⁴Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools, 1953, pp. 226; The Restoration of Learning: A Program for Redeeming the Unfulfilled Promise of American Education, 1955, pp. 459.

and influential criticism of progressive education to appear during the fifties."³⁵

The College of Education of the University of Illinois furnished the first and most meticulous critics of Bestor's articles, specifically "Anti-Intellectualism" and "Aimlessness." The impressive title of their lengthy criticism gives an idea of the power of Bestor's opposition:

A Scholar's Documents: An Analysis by Harold C. Hand, Professor of Education, University of Illinois and Charles W. Sanford, Director, Illinois Curriculum Program, and Associate Dean, College of Education, University of Illinois, in Collaboration with the Executive Committee of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, the Curriculum Planning and Development Committee of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, the Executive Committee of the Illinois Curriculum Program and the National Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth.³⁶

The case was made, with detailed instances, that Dr. Bestor by prejudiced selection and suppression of documents misrepresented the Illinois Program.

"A Reply to 'A Scholar's Documents'" by Bestor contended that he had quoted statements that in his judgment were representative of the program;

"Comments on a Scholar's Reply" by Hand again contended that Bestor's charge of anti-intellectualism was based on faulty evidence.³⁷ Professor

Hand continued to impugn Bestor's evidence in these subsequent writings:

"A Scholar's Documentation;" "A Scholar's Devil Theory."³⁸

³⁵Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1961; Vintage Books, 1964), p. 344.

³⁶See National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin 37 (April 1953): 460-504.

³⁷NASSP Bulletin 37 (December 1953): 159-168; 169-180.

³⁸Educational Theory 4 (January 1954): 1-23; The High School Journal 41 (April 1958): 270-286.

In U.S. News and World Report there was a series of articles on contemporary education. Three were critiques by Bestor, two in the form of interviews.³⁹ Two were composed of responses to Bestor by critics of some standing in education.⁴⁰ Both sides of Bestor's vigorous debate with Arthur F. Corey, executive secretary of the California Teachers' Association, at the NEA meeting in 1954 in New York were printed in substance in National Parent-Teacher.⁴¹ Bestor and Karl W. Bigelow of Teachers College engaged in controversy published under the title, "How Should America's Teachers Be Educated?"⁴² Most criticisms acknowledged some value in Bestor's critique but objected to his rigid stand for an exclusively academic curriculum and high standards for all.

In certain specifics, the views of James Bryant Conant and Bestor were parallel. Bestor found Conant's requirements of two years of "unadulterated history for every high school student" to be worthy of commendation, while objecting to the senior course in problems in democracy.⁴³ Both agreed that the academically talented and highly gifted students should have adequate college preparatory subjects. But Conant recommended vocational courses for interested students, contrary to Bestor's tenets.⁴⁴

³⁹U.S. News and World Report, November 30, 1956; June 7, 1957; January 25, 1958.

⁴⁰U.S. News and World Report, June 7, 1957; June 21, 1957.

⁴¹National Parent-Teacher 49 (October 1954): 28-32.

⁴²Teachers College Record 56 (October 1954): 16-24.

⁴³Bestor, "History, Social Studies and Citizenship," pp. 555-556.

⁴⁴James B. Conant, The Comprehensive High School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), pp. 58-59.

In his interview, "What Went Wrong with U.S. Schools,"⁴⁵ Bestor cited with approval Rear Admiral H. G. Rickover's article, "A Size-up of What's Wrong with American Schools."⁴⁶ Rickover had recommended a national educational commission of recognized scholars and scientists to advise educators in establishing and implementing curricular programs in the basic disciplines for sound school policy. Among the eleven books in its publications, the Council for Basic Education lists Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs Are Better by Admiral H. G. Rickover (1962). The Restoration of Learning was evaluated by Rickover as "scholarly, thoroughly documented, well-written." Of the author he said, "Professor Bestor is one of the first educators courageously to have uncovered the deplorable state of education in the United States."⁴⁷ However, Rickover's selective proposals for directing the average youth of high school age into vocational training and concentrating only on the talented were strongly criticized by Bestor when Rickover addressed the CBE at its annual meeting in October 1963.⁴⁸

Bestor commended the work of CBE under its president Dr. Howard Meyerhoff in "rallying important scientific and scholarly groups in

⁴⁵U.S. News and World Report, January 24, 1958, p. 75.

⁴⁶U.S. News and World Report, December 6, 1957, pp. 89-91.

⁴⁷H. G. Rickover, Education and Freedom (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1959), pp. 227, 228.

⁴⁸Max Wingo, Philosophies of Education: An Introduction (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1974), p. 80.

defense of schools against anti-intellectualism."⁴⁹ Mortimer Smith was a co-founder of the Council for Basic Education and has been editor of its Bulletin since 1961. When he reviewed Smith's The Diminished Mind, Bestor found it "sober and thoughtful" because of rejection of life adjustment education and an exhortation to educators to search for better methods to teach the slow learner the solid subjects containing the cultural heritage. Bestor strongly approved of Smith's objection to the jealous power of educationists.⁵⁰ The Case for Basic Education (1959), edited by James D. Koerner, is a publication of CBE. It contains twelve essays on the individual liberal disciplines by such scholars as Carlton J. H. Hayes, Joel H. Hildebrand, and Douglas Bush, with an introduction by Clifton Fadiman. Bestor rated it as an "impressive start" in a scholarly re-examination of the high school curriculum.⁵¹

While these and other authors likewise worked, though with some differences, for sound education in the fundamental and academic subjects, Dr. Bestor signally stressed the concepts of mental discipline and a liberal education for all. Among the numerous critics of education for life adjustment, Dr. Bestor was the most outstanding and most effective. However, critical, well-reasoned responses were made by educators with opposed convictions upon the publication of his books and many of his articles.

⁴⁹Arthur Bestor, "What Went Wrong with U.S. Schools?" U.S. News and World Report (January 24, 1958): 71.

⁵⁰Arthur Bestor, review of The Diminished Mind, by Mortimer Smith, in Saturday Review, 15 June, 1955, p. 21.

⁵¹Bestor, "History, Social Studies, and Citizenship," p. 553.

CHAPTER II

EDUCATIONAL THEORY

The following excerpts from Bestor's proposals to the American Historical Association give the central thought of his theory of education:

An indispensable function of education, at every level, is to provide sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking represented by history, science, mathematics, literature, language, art, and the other disciplines evolved in the course of mankind's long quest for usable knowledge, cultural understanding, and intellectual power. . . .

The great intellectual disciplines are not mere collections of facts and formulas, but ways of thinking with organized structures of their own. The learning of facts is not intellectual training, unless those facts are seen as the conclusions of systematic inquiry and as part of a larger structure of knowledge.¹

Scholars have produced this theory through thousands of years of sustained effort. Their "scholarly and scientific disciplines" have been handed down in the "traditional programs of liberal education."² The disciplines have liberated the powers of the human mind for mastery over the elements of nature and for informed, critical judgments by the individual on his life in the physical universe and in society. By

¹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 203.

²Arthur Bestor, "Liberal Education and a Liberal Nation," The American Scholar 21 (Spring 1952): 146.

intellectual discipline the powers of the human mind have been organized. Each area of knowledge requires its own proper mental skills for mastery. In traditional liberal education the mind is introduced to and trained in these proper intellectual skills. Not just the conclusions, facts, and formulas of an area of knowledge produce the power of mental discipline, but intellectual skills in the methods of reasoning proper to the different areas of knowledge are the essence of mental training. The broad areas of knowledge in liberal education are themselves limited in number and the number is comparatively small. Bestor described the origin and utility of the fundamental intellectual disciplines in memorable rhetoric thus:

The disciplines represent the various ways man has discovered for achieving intellectual mastery and hence practical power over the various problems that confront him. He lives in a world of quantity and relationship, and he has put four thousand years of ingenuity into creating the mathematical tools by which he handles quantity and relationship. He knows that the wisdom of mankind has been set down in a multitude of languages, and he has cultivated the linguistic disciplines so that he may unlock this storehouse, and then add to it with his own ideas, expressed with precision and vigor. He realizes that his present is influenced by his past, and he has therefore devised, through unremitting effort, the historical techniques which provide the maximum of reliable knowledge concerning this aspect of his environment. He works every day with matter, and he has subdued matter to his purpose by sorting out its various characteristics in his mind and eventually creating the sciences of physics and chemistry, which have grown more useful to him in proportion as they have grown more abstract and theoretical. There is nothing arbitrary or fortuitous in any of this. The older disciplines have emerged, and newer ones are emerging, as responses to man's imperious need for that wideranging yet accurate comprehension which means power--power over himself and over all things else.³

In these disciplines the distinct intellectual skills presuppose

³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 35.

that the student acquire a certain amount of factual knowledge. This fund of information makes the rational pursuit of further learning possible, for one has to have some basic information to understand scientific articles in reference books.⁴ However, facts and formulas are not sufficient. There should be a lengthy period of mental training to think in the way proper to each discipline. The mathematician must think mathematically, the scientist scientifically, the philosopher critically, and the historian historically. The student must exercise "systematic thinking" in the "logical organization of knowledge" in order to see the "structure of the science" being learned.⁵ Instances of some of the accomplishments of historical thinking are found in the distinction and evaluation of primary and secondary sources, the chronological ordering of events, the explanation of "how forces of various kinds combine to produce particular unique situations," and the comprehension of the similarity of past cases to current events.⁶

Therefore, careful analysis is necessary in the study of each area of knowledge. The ways of thinking, the principles of investigation, are different for each discipline. Depth in knowledge and a good grasp of the structure of the discipline are the goals. For instance, to investigate mathematics only as it illustrates a course in chemistry is not sufficient for the study of mathematics. Likewise, to limit study of history to

⁴Ibid., p. 62.

⁵Ibid., p. 36.

⁶Arthur Bestor, "History, Social Studies, and Citizenship: The Responsibility of the Public Schools," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 104 (December 15, 1960): 553.

topics as they appear in sociology confuses two different disciplines and leaves the student with a disordered knowledge of the chronological sequence in history. If a synthesis of disciplines is to be made and studied in a course, such a survey should be made after the fundamental skills of each combined discipline have been mastered in separate, previous courses. Otherwise, there will not be any depth to the course; it will be "a survey of accumulated facts rather than an inquiry into the processes by which these were discovered."⁷

Intellectual discipline must be systematic. The student should proceed by logical steps from one level of learning to another. Knowledge is cumulative and is acquired in progression. No one learns calculus from an encyclopedia without having been trained in the lower forms of mathematics. "The school must push its students steadily forward from simple intellectual tasks to increasingly complex ones," declared Bestor.⁸ Progression and continuity in learning are essential.

The complexity of the matter in any scholarly area requires long-continued study, practice, and investigation. Composition, mathematical problems, and laboratory work should be constant and prolonged. An instance of necessary perseverance for accomplishment is the requirement

⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 65.

⁸Arthur Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," Vital Speeches of the Day 24 (September 15, 1958): 727.

of colleges of at least two years spent in language study. The authorities judge that at least two years of collegiate study are necessary for any adequate comprehension of the language. Bestor aptly applied the psychological term, "threshold," to this learning response and maintained that similarly a period of years is usually necessary for a grasp of any intellectual discipline.⁹ He also asserted that four years of a foreign language are "ten to twenty times" as valuable as two years, due to the "cumulative character of learning."¹⁰

Generalization and abstract thinking are proper to the intellectual skills of the disciplines. Not a mere memorization of a list of facts, a liberal education is a "transcending of facts to interpret them for meaning and value in the discipline of the mind."¹¹ Facts, necessary in the learning process, are the "scaffolding on which generalizations are erected."¹² The most efficient means to teach the processes of abstraction and generalization are verbal. Bestor noted the practicality of abstract thinking thus:

A formula is abstract not because it has lost touch with facts but because it compresses so many facts into small compass that only an abstract statement can sum them up.¹³

⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 405.

¹⁰Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

¹¹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 18.

¹²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 337.

¹³Ibid., p. 28.

The intellectual skills of abstract and generalized thinking are to be developed in five fundamental disciplines, mathematics, science, English, history, and foreign languages. It is crucial that these form the curriculum for all in secondary school. Elementary education prepares for them, college years offer an elaboration upon them. These five fundamental disciplines are so important because "contemporary intellectual life has been based upon these particular disciplines."¹⁴

"A realistic appraisal of the modern world" shows the necessity of these studies. The Committee of Ten in 1893, composed of learned men and scholarly administrators and advised by sub-committees of scholars and scientists, created this curriculum. They replaced the "so-called 'classical curriculum' of the early nineteenth century" with their new offerings, "equally intellectual in character but more acutely aware of the crucial problems of modern thought."¹⁵ The Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies by the Committee of Ten was the "result of the most searching, critical, realistic, and responsible re-examination of the curriculum" ever, the culmination of a century of "adjustment to intellectual and social developments." These adjustments dealt with scientific discoveries and advances, "profound modifications of social attitude," and the modern "cultural nationalism" of history, modern languages, and vernacular literature.¹⁶ These developments had been evolving over centuries. The curriculum adopted was one to last for a century; to change it radically was a mistake.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁶Arthur Bestor, "The Fundamentals of Education," Vital Speeches of the Day 20 (August 15, 1954): 659.

Education was to be for intellectual discipline. Although "new disciplines replaced older ones" according to needs of the time, "the concept that education was concerned with intellectual discipline went unchallenged, except by a small lunatic fringe."¹⁷ The Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies specifically named "the logical faculty" and "the reasoning faculties" in its delineation of mental training. Here is a description of mental training from the Report of the Committee of Ten:

The principal end of all education is training. In this respect history has a value different from, but in no way inferior to, that of language, mathematics, and science. The mind is chiefly developed in three ways: by cultivating the powers of discriminating observation; by strengthening the logical faculty of following an argument from point to point; and by improving the process of comparison, that is, the judgment.

As studies in language and in natural sciences are best adapted to cultivate the habits of observation; as mathematics are the traditional training of the reasoning faculties: so history and its allied branches are better adapted than any other studies to promote the invaluable power which we call judgement.¹⁸

Bestor was not as specific as the Report, which spoke of developing the "judgement" and "the logical faculty." He defined intellectual training thus: "But it means no more than deliberate cultivation of the ability to think."¹⁹ He equated a universal liberal education with "development by every man and woman of his or her capacity for disciplined thought."²⁰ That the "common man" of our democracy has the "intellectual ability" for culture and active citizenship was the belief of the nation's

¹⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 46.

¹⁸Lawrence A. Cremin, advisory editor, Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies, American Education Series (New York: Arno Press, 1969), p. 168

¹⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 28.

²⁰Arthur Bestor, "Liberal Education and a Liberal Nation," p. 139.

founders. Bestor continued thus: "The function of the public school was to convert this potential intellectual capacity into actual intellectual power." He argued to the democratic "right of every citizen to develop his intellectual powers to the fullest extent possible."²¹ Bestor cited William Ellery Channing, co-founder of the Unitarians, in support of democratic education and, in so doing, approved of the soul as the source of the cognitive process. Channing reasoned in this way:

Has he [the humble mechanic] not a soul of as great capacity as the former [the governor of a state]? Is he not sustaining the same relations as a parent, a citizen, a neighbor, and as a subject of God's moral government? The poor man, as to his natural capacity, does not differ from others. He is equally susceptible of improvement, and would receive as great advantages as others from a well-bestowed education.²²

The expressions, "potential intellectual capacity," "ability to think," "intellectual powers," etc., as used by Bestor do not imply a division of the soul into faculties with specific activities, as the faculties of observation and discrimination. Rather, the intellect is a unit to be trained in "systematic thinking."²³

Moreover, training of the mind develops specialized "intellectual skills" for dealing with different aspects of experience. These organized skills constitute the various scientific and scholarly disciplines. The skills are proficiency in "methods of investigation and thought."²⁴

²¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 84, 85.

²²William Ellery Channing, address at Taunton, Mass., quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 85.

²³Arthur Bestor, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," New Republic 128 (January 19, 1953): 11.

²⁴Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

The areas of experience, organized over thousands of years by scholars for investigation form the relatively small number of intellectual disciplines, e.g., history, mathematics, the fine arts, economics, etc. The methods of investigation of the distinct disciplines are different from each other. Mental training is concerned with the acquiring of the intellectual skills of these disciplines. The skills are the "powerful tools" with which to solve the problems of life. Bestor's specific reasons for the intellectual disciplines are practical.²⁵ Nor does Bestor name any discipline as having strengthening powers for any particular intellectual faculty. Therefore, Bestor's theory of mental training does not meet all the requirements of the following definition of formal discipline.

Formal discipline refers to transfer which is supposed to result, not from subject matter or methods of study acquired, but from the strengthening of a particular power or powers. Underlying this theory is the assumption that the mind is a substantive reality having a number of powers or faculties such as memory, attention, observation, reasoning, and will, and that these may be improved individually - as muscles are improved - through exercise. Just as it does not matter much what a man exercises his biceps on, so long as he exercises them, it does not matter a great deal what sort of material his mental faculties are exercised on. The important thing is the amount and vigor and consistency of the exercise, especially during the formative years.²⁶

However, systematic, sustained, and rigorous mental discipline is necessary for a liberal education. It must be constantly directed toward "developing those powers of mind whose potency lies in their very

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Walter B. Kolesnik, Mental Discipline in Modern Education (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), p. 6.

abstractness."²⁷ Habits of critical thinking are thereby engendered. On this score Bestor objected to easy, permissive education. He said this of public school pupils of the fifties:

I can't help thinking, moreover, that many of them have developed sloppy habits of thinking that are almost worse than ignorance itself. They have been allowed to get by without serious effort for so long that they've lost the ability to buckle down to hard work with their minds.²⁸

Habits of rigorous and precise thinking are to be realized in the exercise of the skills of the fundamental intellectual disciplines. Only in the mental disciplines and the skills or tools produced from their manipulation does proper mental training take place. Bestor illustrates this concept in talking of liberal education thus:

The ideal itself remains the same - to graduate a body of men and women who understand in common the fundamentals of intellectual life in its varied branches, and who can apply to their problems not a single specialized technique but a choice of powerful intellectual tools over which they have achieved some measure of disciplined control.²⁹

The fundamental areas of knowledge, for example language and mathematics, give the material for mental training. Bestor stated, "These organized skills constitute the various scholarly and scientific disciplines."³⁰ Since each discipline has skills or systematic processes

²⁷Bestor, "The Study of American Civilization," p. 5.

²⁸Arthur Bestor, "We Are Less Educated Than Fifty Years Ago," U.S. News and World Report, 30 November 1956, pp. 70, 74.

²⁹Bestor, "The Study of American Civilization," p. 4.

³⁰Arthur Bestor, "The Choice Before Us in American Education," The 32nd Discussion and Debate Manual, 1958-1959, edited by Bower Aly, vol. 1 (Columbia, Mo.: National University Extension Association, 1958), p. 83.

of thought proper to itself, these skills should be taught the pupils. Generalization and abstract thinking are the means for bringing them out. It is not enough that the student learn only facts and formulas; the distinct structure of the discipline should be grasped. Bestor underscored this learning of systematically ordered skills, each with its specialized techniques of research and its distinct, ordered structure produced by millenia of scholarly work, in the following:

Whatever the subject may be, the teacher of its must strive to make clear to his students the distinctive way of thinking that has made the discipline in question so powerful a tool in the mature world of scholarship But it ceases to be instruction at all if it ceases to aim at initiating them into the systematic processes of thought on which civilization rests.³¹

Therefore, the ideal pupil will be equipped with a trained mind, habitual skills in the fundamental disciplines, knowledge of the structure of the disciplines, and the ability for abstract thinking and generalization. The question is whether there is transfer of training from the disciplines since they train for life indirectly. Bestor stated flatly that transfer of training occurs; if it does not, he said, the schools should be closed. Here is his statement:

Much is said about "transfer of training." It is quite true that persons who have learned to think accurately in one field sometimes fail to do so in other fields. But to believe that a person who has never learned to think accurately about anything is going to come up with sound answers to his own problems or the world's is a fantastic act of faith. If accepted, it is not an argument for crowding the schools with a miscellany of

³¹Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in Schools," p. 31.



"activities." It is an argument for having no schools at all.³²

These deductions about the transfer of training seem to follow from Bestor's doctrine on mental discipline. Education is to teach youngsters how to use their mind effectively."³³ The only adequate way is through the fundamental, intellectual disciplines. These should be apprehended in systematic processes, each with its proper skills. The structure of each discipline is to be learned in generalizations and ascending levels of abstract thought. Such an education is crucial for decisions in the adult world. Vocational training does not suffice because it is too narrow. The fundamental disciplines build a broad foundation for intellectual life, although they may be immediately concerned with theoretical rather than applied aspects of learning. Bestor said this of liberal education:

It teaches a man, not the answers to particular problems, but the way to use his general intelligence to find the answers to all kinds of problems, especially to those without precedent.³⁴

So, one may conclude from Bestor's statements that it is the mental training in the intellectual skills of the fundamental disciplines that remains with the person and transfers over to habitual use in adult life. The habits of mind disposed toward operating skillfully in the areas of the disciplines remain. A facility in the processes of abstract thought

³²Arthur Bestor, "Are We Less or Better Educated Than Fifty Years Ago?" U.S. News and World Report, 7 June 1957, p. 127.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Arthur Bestor, "The Education Really Needed for a Changing World," Harvard Educational Review 27 (Winter 1957): 7.

proper to the discipline and generalizations arising from the disciplines remain to be used in solving practical problems of life.

In his report on the Woods Hole Conference called by the National Academy of Sciences in 1959, Dr. Jerome Bruner maintained that there is great transfer of training. It is best brought about by learning the structure of the discipline with its fundamental, general principles. This stand is similar to the inferences drawn from Bestor's statements. Bruner's most significant declaration was this:

Virtually all the evidence of the last two decades on the nature of learning and transfer has indicated that, while the original theory of formal discipline was poorly states in terms of training of faculties, it is indeed a fact that massive general transfer can be achieved by appropriate learning, even to the degree that learning properly under optimum conditions leads one to "learn how to learn." These studies have stimulated a renewed interest in complex learning of a kind that one finds in the schools, learning designed to produce general understanding of the structure of the subject matter.³⁵

In no uncertain terms Bestor stated, "It is the job of the school to teach young men and women to think."³⁶ The only satisfactory way is through the fundamental disciplines. They give rise to habits of disciplined thinking. Leonard Carmichael asserted the transfer value of ancient and modern languages and mathematics thus:

Today it is clear that the study of these subjects can be given a new kind of psychological justification. "Hard" subjects of this sort are good academic aptitude tests. Their mastery requires the acquisition of habits of intellectual diligence. Real facility in the use of language and of symbols

³⁵Jerome S. Bruner, The Process of Education (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 6.

³⁶Bestor, "Choice in American Education," p. 82.

today is recognized as playing a special part in many subtle and important mental processes. Adequate training in language and the operations of mathematics is now seen - possibly uniquely - to foster the creation in the individual of flexible and effective intellectual powers.³⁷

The study of the fundamental disciplines is not only for those who are going to college, although it is evident that a more complete liberal education is founded on the disciplines. A liberal education, whether terminal at the secondary level or continued through college is preparation for life. Bestor stated it thus:

Through intellectual training men are most effectively prepared for citizenship, for the vocations and professions of practical life, for the profitable enjoyment of their leisure time, for the advancement of knowledge and of civilization, and for the realization of their own high personal destiny as rational beings.³⁸

Quite often the utility of the liberal education is indirect. The theory behind the practice and facility in critical thinking from the mind supply the tools for accomplishment in actual life. The "know-how," "the tricks of the trade," are to be learned on the job. Intellectual training is in "the intellectual components of a profession, the scholarly and scientific disciplines underlying it."³⁹ A changing world requires a knowledge of general truths and intellectual skills. Every task

³⁷Leonard Carmichael, Introduction to The Child and the Curriculum and The School and Society by John Dewey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; Phoenix Books, 1956), ix.

³⁸Arthur Bestor, "'Life-Adjustment' Education: A Critique," American Association of University Professors Bulletin 38 (Autumn 1952): 414.

³⁹Arthur Bestor, "Education and Its Proper Relationship to the Forces of American Society," Daedalus 88 (Winter 1959): 77.

includes "an intellectual component," especially in the present age of technology in which every vocation has grown to be more complicated.⁴⁰

Democracy demands that all the citizens be trained in critical thinking through the fundamental disciplines. For intelligent citizenship is necessary in the complex world of the present day. The citizen should be "loyal" in identifying with the traditions and ideals of the community, "well-informed" with exact knowledge pertinent to governmental affairs, and "thoughtful," capable of analyzing and making critical judgements for the public good.⁴¹ Such qualities come from intellectual discipline, especially in history and the social sciences.

Formerly only the aristocrats were trained in the intellectual disciplines since only they exercised political power. Now it is proper to all citizens of the republic to be given the education of the aristocrats. Liberal education will make each man equal to the other in his opinions, based on broad learning. If intellectual discipline is offered only to the few and the others are given vocational or life-adjustment education, a government by an elite will be sponsored by the system.

The adverse elements of the environment of the lower classes should be opposed by better methods of teaching in the fundamental disciplines. For intellectual ability is distributed throughout all classes of society; the democratic assumption is that the ability to learn does not diminish with the lower economic levels.⁴² While the gifted child should be the pace-setter for the school and the curriculum for the

⁴⁰Bestor, "Education for a Changing World," p. 8.

⁴¹Bestor, "History, Social Studies and Citizenship," p. 549.

⁴²Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 36.

average should be a "derivative" of that of the gifted, the slower students should be streamed into classes in the fundamentals that advance more gradually.⁴³ Traditional, liberal education for all is necessary to the vitality of the democracy. Bestor stated it thus:

Our republican system requires citizens highly literate, accurately informed, and rigorously trained in the processes of rational and critical thought.⁴⁴

Memorable support for universal liberal education was found by Bestor in the writings of President Thomas Jefferson, founder of the University of Virginia, of Horace Mann, nationally influential secretary of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts from 1838 to 1849 and founder and editor of the Common School Journal, and of Henry Barnard, United States Commissioner of Education from 1867 to 1870 and editor of the monumental American Journal of Education from 1855 to 1882.

Jefferson wrote, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, . . . it expects what never was and never will be." "The general mind," he wrote, "must be strengthened by education." The purpose was "to inform their discretion" through the "spread of information" and "the diffusion of knowledge."⁴⁵ Jefferson was writing about intellectual discipline. Mann meant mental discipline in the fundamentals when he spoke of "enlarging the cultivated class" and the "development of the mind"

⁴³Arthur Bestor, "Educating the Gifted Child," in The Great Debate: Our Schools in Crisis, eds. C. Winfield Scott, Clyde M. Hill and Hobert W. Burns (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 79.

⁴⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 26.

⁴⁵Thomas Jefferson on Democracy, ed. by S.K. Padover, quoted *ibidem*, p. 24.

through public school education.⁴⁶ For a "degree of intelligence" great enough to take care of the needs of the republic, Mann called for "well-appointed and efficient means for the universal education of the people." "Succeeding generations," said he, "have outstripped their predecessors just in proportion to the superiority of their mental cultivation."⁴⁷ Likewise identical, liberal education for all was the aim of the secondary school according to these celebrated words of Henry Barnard:

A Public High School is not . . . a public or common school in the sense of being cheap, inferior, ordinary. . . . It must make a good education common in the highest and best sense of the word common--common because it is good enough for the best, and cheap enough for the poorest family in the community.⁴⁸

From the origin of our republic until the present, liberal education in the fundamental disciplines has been though necessary for the proper functioning of our democracy. Moreover, mental training in the fundamental disciplines continues to be the only adequate way to prepare the individual for life. Bestor expressed it thus:

The principal value to society of a man's cultivating the power of abstract thought is that he is thereby enabled to deal more effectively with the problems of modern life. . . . The basic argument for the intellectual disciplines is not that they lift a man's spirit above the world, but that they equip his mind to enter the world and perform its tasks.⁴⁹

In the study of the intellectual disciplines a man perfects the powers of his mind. They are strengthened in the use of intellectual

⁴⁶Horace Mann, "Twelfth Annual Report," Massachusetts Board of Education Annual Reports, quoted *ibidem*, pp. 91, 92.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸Henry Barnard on Education, ed. by John S. Brubacher, quoted *ibidem*, p. 86.

⁴⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 29.

skills in reasoning. Requisite knowledge is acquired and expertness in judging is sharpened by constant practice in cumulative and progressive mental experience. This experience is centered about the broad areas of knowledge that have been set off in the disciplines by the scholars and scientists from the distant past to the present time.

If a man is trained in the basic disciplines, he has the mental power to "command facts and make them serve his varied purposes."⁵⁰ For in order to solve the complicated problems of life, man has developed these "specialized intellectual skills" for dealing with the different aspects of all experience.⁵¹ The main purpose of education is mental training. The mind is to be disciplined through rigorous exercise in the specialized techniques that are necessary for each of the disciplines. While deprecating the contrary error of Robert Owen, Bestor implied the necessity of comprehension of the structure and techniques of a discipline for mental training. Here are his words:

Owen . . . regarded the entertaining presentation of a body of ascertained results as the equivalent of a laborious and painful discipline in scientific thinking.⁵²

Mental training in a liberal education effects in students "the realization of their own high personal destiny as rational beings."⁵³ Education is self-realization through the development of the highest qualities of an individual's manhood. These are the abstract powers of

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 57

⁵¹Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

⁵²Arthur Bestor, Backwoods Utopias, 2nd ed., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), p. 192.

⁵³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 37.

the mind. Of a liberal education Bestor makes this requirement, "Is it constantly concerned with developing those powers of mind whose potency lies in their very abstractness?" His answer is, "If so, it is liberating and liberal."⁵⁴ It will free him from narrow preoccupation with workaday tasks and from blind acceptance of spiritual and temporal authority by "enlarging and disciplining his powers."⁵⁵ The abstract powers of the mind include the intellectual skills, knowledge and expertness in performance.

Thus the self is liberated by mental training in the disciplines to engage in the highest human activity of reasoning, thinking creatively and willing. Man will be freed from inactivity, mental passivity, or helplessness in the face of facts. He will actuate his potentiality in arriving at progressively higher levels of abstract thought and more inclusive generalizations. He will "fulfill his own high personal destiny," and will realize his individual self in intellectual activity. Liberal education will give control over the environment and will help man attain his end of realizing the powers of his soul. Bestor gave this basic thought:

Then we shall know that we are fighting for a world in which there is opportunity for development by every man and woman of his or her capacity for disciplined thought, for artistic creation, and hence for enduring satisfaction. Then we shall have faith once more in liberal education as both an indispensable means and an ultimate end.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 37.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁶Bestor, "Liberal Education in Nation," p. 149.

The inference drawn in this dissertation is that Bestor's theory of mental discipline follows the epistemology of Immanuel Kant. The powers of the mind impose logical order on the sense perceptions of the world. Conscious reason is the unifying element for all our sensory experience. The impressions of sensation enter our consciousness in a confused mass; reason distinguishes and orders these perceptions by "Two predispositions for perceiving the qualities of sensation . . . space and time;" understanding "fits these perceived objects into their respective classes . . . according to similarities and differences."⁵⁷

The respective classes are called categories. Quantity, quality, relation and modality represent the main divisions of our conceptions. In all, the understanding deals with twelve categories of conceptions. These powers of classification are innate in the intellect. Without them there would be no recognition of sense-perceived objects for what they are. Knowledge proceeds from within man outward toward the cause of our sense perceptions. But the "thing-in-itself" is impossible to know: it enters the perception of man only through chaotic sense impressions of the outside world by the intelligence with its categories.

Bestor described the evolution of the disciplines as a conscious activity of the intelligence in ordering, classifying, and marking out the relationships of the sensory perceptions of phenomena according to categories. The corollary is that the mental powers must be trained for efficiency by liberal education in the resulting disciplines. Bestor

⁵⁷J. Donald Butler, Four Philosophies and Their Practice in Education and Religion (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1951; 3rd ed. 1968), pp. 129, 130.

wrote this in Kantian terms:

Consider how the disciplines of science and learning came into being. The world enters the consciousness of the individual - and it first entered the consciousness of mankind - as a great tangle of confused perceptions. Before man could deal with it at all he had to differentiate one experience from another and to discover the relationships among them: similarity and diversity, cause and effect and the like. Gradually he discovered that one kind of relationship could be investigated in one way (by controlled experiment, it may be), and another in another way (by the critical study of written records or of fossil remains, perhaps). Thus the separate disciplines were born, not out of arbitrary invention but out of evolving experience.⁵⁸

As cognition, for the greater part, is from within, from the intellectual powers of man, so also is morality. Kant held that ethics is "rooted in reason," not in experience. All men have a sense of duty to observe moral laws and avoid any act "that cannot be practiced universally by all men." After the manner of the other intellectual categories the sense of moral duty is a categorical imperative, according to the nomenclature of Kant.⁵⁹ Likewise, Bestor found that reasons directs morality and that a person can benefit morally by mental training. This passage from Bestor reflects Kantian thinking:

Intellectual training . . . implies no unnatural distinction between the mind and the emotions, for men can think about emotional and aesthetic problems and can be taught to think more clearly about them. It implies no opposition between the intellectual and moral realm, for ethics is applicable to the thinking process itself and rationality is a constituent of every valid ethical system. Morality enters the classroom and the study as it enters all the chambers of life. It assumes special form as intellectual honesty and as that species of reflectiveness which converts a mere taboo into an ethical imperative.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 34.

⁵⁹Butler, Four Philosophies, p. 131.

⁶⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 28.

In proposing the necessity of disciplined control of the emotions for higher, rational purposes, Bestor said, "It is through the disciplined use of intellectual powers that we gain a greater insight into our emotions and hence a greater ability to use them constructively."⁶¹ He gave this norm for practice: "The school, even in its academic work, maintains, and therefore, helps to inculcate the ethical standards of the surrounding culture, whenever issues involving these . . . arise in the classroom."⁶²

Great historical personages, models for imitation, received their formation in the intellectual discipline of liberal education. Whatever his native ability may be, the member of our democracy will develop the powers of his mind for greater achievement by similar training. Bestor pointed to proof from the past in this selection:

The real evidence for the value of liberal education lies . . . in history and in the biographies of men who have met the valid criteria of greatness. These support overwhelmingly the claim of liberal education that it can equip a man with fundamental powers of decision and action.⁶³

Beginning with familiar experience, liberal education "is directed toward increasingly higher generalization," "seeks through rigorous comparison to gain perspective," and "is constantly concerned with developing those powers of the mind whose potency lies in their very abstractness."⁶⁴ The study of the systematic structure of the discipline

⁶¹Arthur Bestor, "Education for Intellectual Discipline," in Philosophies of Education, edited by Philip H. Phenix (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1961), p. 39.

⁶²Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 79.

⁶³Bestor, "Aimlessness in Education," p. 115.

⁶⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 37.

endows the powers of the mind with knowledge and skill to probe more deeply into the order and relationship of phenomena. The search for ultimate causation in the pursuit of liberal education was illustrated by Emerson thus:

Show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as it always does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; . . . and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.⁶⁵

A broad and deep insight into experience, systematically ordered by the intellectual disciplines, gives the student power of command over "the universe of human endeavor and natural process." Bestor said, "A liberal education frees man by enlarging and disciplining his powers." It is the education: worthy of a free man." The mind trained in the intellectual disciplines should have broader interests, deeper and more systematic reasoning processes, and, consequently, more valid conclusions, more penetrating analyses, and more viable solutions of problems. Bestor said of the liberally educated man in relation to those in authority, "In the things of the mind he is their peer, and he can decide for himself, on as good grounds as they, the great human issues that confront him." This conclusion followed: "His is a disciplined mind. And because his mind is disciplined, he himself is free."⁶⁶

Out of history the person of disciplined mind draws on the vast and varied experience of the past "to apply that experience to his own great decisions." In the natural sciences the educated man is freed from

⁶⁵Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 97.

⁶⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 38-39.

"preoccupation with the superficial hubbub of the physical world about him" to arrive at a command of natural forces through understanding of "the principles behind the phenomena." Science and scholarship are "the tested means" of "acquiring intellectual power" and "preserving intellectual freedom."⁶⁷

The schools of the nation have the duty of promoting intellectual freedom by maintaining rigorous programs in the basic disciplines for all. Anti-intellectual tendencies in the curriculum show a lack of esteem for the values of intellectual accomplishment and concomitant intellectual freedom. Lack of endeavor is disciplined, critical thinking leaves a vacuum for "totalitarian fanatics of the left and the right" to fill. This responsibility is insistent: "We must restore to the schools the clear and disciplined intellectual purpose that will make them once again the bulwarks of thought, and hence of freedom of thought."⁶⁸

In education academic freedom and intellectual freedom are necessary complements of each other. Bestor said, "Of all the forms that anti-intellectualism is taking in contemporary America, none is more menacing than the attempt to restrict freedom of inquiry and freedom on teaching."⁶⁹ However, prerequisite for academic freedom in the schools is loyalty to the United States government. All teaching in the schools should foster devotion to our country as founded on the Constitution; no teacher should

⁶⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 422.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 423.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 411.

be allowed to advocate overthrowal of the government. Bestor endorsed the patriotic policy of Jefferson and Madison in establishing the University of Virginia in 1825 in the following:

Jefferson and Madison believed that the governing body of an educational institution possessed the right to impose standards of political and constitutional loyalty upon its faculty. They not only believed in the right, they actually exercised it. . . . The major assumption of Jefferson and Madison--that standards of political and constitutional loyalty do not in themselves violate the principle of academic freedom--is unquestionably the assumption made today by public opinion and by the majority of agencies and associations concerned with academic policy. It is, in my judgment, a valid assumption. Requirements with respect to loyalty are in themselves perfectly compatible with academic freedom, provided they are established and applied in the same spirit and according to the same procedures that govern the establishment of other standards affecting the teaching profession.⁷⁰

The first obligation of academic freedom is that the teacher should work to produce "men and women who can employ effectively the various specialized skills--especially the intellectual skills--upon which civilized human life depends." The second is that he maintain "the standards set by his professional colleagues."⁷¹ Professional standards of "competence and integrity" would rule out gross lack of responsibility on the teacher's part in "willfulness, carelessness, or ignorance." These standards should be set by scientists and scholars. For they are best qualified to know what knowledge and skills in the fundamental disciplines are of signal importance for training the mind.

⁷⁰Arthur Bestor, "Thomas Jefferson and the Freedom of Books," in Three Presidents and Their Books by Arthur E. Bestor, David C. Mearns, and Jonathan Daniels (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), p. 29.

⁷¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 414.

In the schools academic freedom extends to the right "to investigate critically every field of human knowledge and to discuss in responsible fashion the great issues that arise in public affairs."⁷² However, there are limitations imposed on this freedom by the very nature of education. "The school is not a legislative assembly, a town meeting, or a public forum," said Bestor.⁷³ It is for training in the basic mental disciplines. Consequently, the teacher should not be continually concerned with controversial issues of contemporary society. If these controversial issues arise in the logical development of the discipline in the classroom, the teacher can and should investigate and discuss them in scholarly fashion. The public can be expected to allow the teacher this much immunity from harassment by partisan groups from outside the school because the main effort is expended on the discipline as a whole. Should the class be constantly devoted to seeking solutions to current controversial issues, pressure groups could demand a hearing in the classroom with some right. Bestor commented thus:

Though complete objectivity on contemporary questions is unattainable, the community can properly be asked to allow the historian, the political scientist, or the economist to deal freely with contemporary issues, provided these form part of a systematic study of his discipline as a whole. . . .For the sake of education, thoughtful citizens are prepared to allow the responsible teacher to round out his treatment of the subject by carrying his discussions into the area of highly controversial current issues, so that he may clarify and exemplify for his students the real significance of the discipline.⁷⁴

⁷²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 412.

⁷³Ibid., p. 136.

⁷⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 137.

In the study and presentation of truth, the professor is to be objective, giving both sides of controversial issues. If his conclusions, arrived at by rigorous research, are unpopular, he is to announce them to his students nevertheless. The university and its faculty are not to be directed by outside influences to practice "politicisation," "to choose sides on the critical issues of the day," and to "'tilt' its offerings toward the favored side."⁷⁵ Such a policy would mean a surrender of "the ideal of objectivity" for "the role of complacent apologist for the status quo." In the fifties 'McCarthyism' was the first attempt to politicize the universities with the idea that whatever the McCarthy group took objection to was wrong; in the sixties the campus militants rioted for "the establishment of their own particular political and social doctrines as the official standard of truth for the entire institution and all its members."⁷⁶ Bestor outlined the proper policy for universities and, one can conclude, for the schools thus:

Moreover, the university is an activist institution . . . when it makes sure that its own proper work goes steadily forward in classrooms, laboratories, and libraries. . . . And as an institution for the advancement of knowledge it serves the world best by insisting that its members conduct themselves as scholars, not propagandists, and by protecting from interference and intimidation those who carry out honestly their professional duty of inquiring critically and objectively into the whole range of human concerns and announcing their documented, if often controversial, conclusions.⁷⁷

If there is question of a teacher violating the limits of academic freedom as set by standards of loyalty, the reasoning behind his conclusions is to be examined. Methods of reasoning that are independent,

⁷⁵Bestor, "In Defense of Intellectual Integrity," p. 19.

⁷⁶Bestor, "In Defence of Intellectual Integrity," p. 20.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 24.

scholarly, and responsible in accord with professional standards make for irreproachable teaching. Scientific investigation and logical reasoning should afford a teacher who has arrived at unpopular conclusions protection against criticism. Freedom of research and veracity in teaching the results are required in a teacher. For this reason the communist should not be allowed to teach; in accepting the dictates of the party line, "he has subordinated his own judgment, in a professionally indefensible manner, to the dictates of a political bureaucracy." However, the responsible teacher who arrives at some conclusions identical with the current communistic policy should not thereby be condemned. All controversial issues that arise in the classroom are to be reasoned out "according to the methods of free, objective, critical, scholarly inquiry."⁷⁸ In order to be free universities and schools demand "that the various disciplines be taught in strict accord with the recognized principles and standards of each." "Intellectual conformity" to this norm guarantees "professional integrity and responsibility."⁷⁹

Freedom of speech should allow the student very wide latitude in discussing controversial issues and positing dissenting political opinions in class. Thomas Jefferson tolerated dissident political opinions inimical to the Constitution, but he fought them "with all weapons of controversy that men have ever deemed legitimate and honorable."⁸⁰

⁷⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 417-418.

⁷⁹Bestor, "Jefferson and Freedom of Books," p. 30.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 14.

faculty members of institutions of learning do well in following his example.

Freedom of research is to be even wider than freedom of speech. Again Bestor cited Jefferson's view as exemplary: "Suppression of facts, of ideas, and of books belonged, in Jefferson's opinion, to the representative systems of government from which the United States had declared their independence."⁸¹ All publications essential to research in the disciplines should be made available to students regardless of their philosophical point of view. If the concepts, especially in political matters, are erroneous or if alleged facts and conclusions are mendacious, the scholar should detect these faults by free scientific investigation and critical reasoning. Bestor said, "The believer in freedom must not attempt to make his ideas prevail by suppressing or censoring or impeding the circulation of writings with which he disagrees."⁸²

Influential writings, even though partially or totally inimical to our political views, are to be read with a strong antidote of opposed, orthodox literature. A "positive approach to loyalty" will influence the schools to see that the books and documents essential to understanding the American polity are available to students and that teaching and texts are ordained toward loyalty to the government as founded on the Constitution and interpreted by judicial decisions. Movements toward book burning, censoring of texts, and scrutiny of political leanings of

⁸¹Ibid., p. 11.

⁸²Bestor, "Jefferson and Freedom of Books," p. 24.

competent teachers are to be discouraged. Bestor gave these Jeffersonian guidelines on the use of dubious and potentially harmful books:

Permit the books to circulate freely, but encourage the most searching criticism of them and work vigorously to bring the criticisms to public attention.⁸³ . . . Permit the books to circulate freely, but encourage men to read so widely that they will not be intoxicated by the style or misled by the errors of any one book.⁸⁴ . . . Permit the books containing these ideas to circulate freely, but direct men back to the original sources, so that they can weigh for themselves the evidence behind every conclusion.⁸⁵

Freedom characterizes both the means and the end of liberal education. "The test of every educational program is the extent to which it trains a man to think for himself and at the same time to think painstakingly," said Bestor.⁸⁶ Lack of freedom produces narrowness in learning and indoctrination in teaching. Broad learning in depth with training in independent, critical thinking processes is offered through the freedom essential to a truly liberal education.

Liberal education centers on discipline of the mind. For this mental training the student should begin abstract thinking through verbalism as early as possible. While laboratory experimentation is necessary in the sciences, the use of realia and participation in active

⁸³Bestor, "Jefferson and Freedom of Books," p. 16.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 38.

projects in the community by students are a waste of time. Education should always be primarily, if not totally, concerned with abstract thought and generalizations.

The systematic processes of the intellectual disciplines have to be taught. This learning will result in the mental skills possessed by the powers of the mind. Thus these mental powers or capacities will be developed. By constant practice, rigorous effort, and steady progression to higher levels of abstraction, these powers of the mind will be strengthened and readied for practical use. A store of knowledge must be acquired; the structure of the discipline must be comprehended; the processes of thought in acquiring these skills must be systematically ordered; there must be continuity in application to a discipline, usually for periods of years; practice in the skills is necessary; finally, there should be steady progression to higher levels, measured to the ability of the student.

The intellectual disciplines are limited in number. They cover the broad field of all human knowledge. In their delimited, systematic ordering of the universe is the learning of thousands of years of scholarly investigation. The individual disciplines are to be studied separately, the knowledge and principles analyzed. After sufficient comprehension they may be studied in the synthesis of survey courses for broader knowledge or more adequate skill for solving the problems of life.

"Indirectly" is the way that the mental disciplines prepare for life. They "develop those powers of the mind that come closest to universal applicability."⁸⁷ Their practical application to the problems of life

⁸⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 75.

depends on the transfer of training. Such transfer is a necessary postulate of education; otherwise, there would be no point to having schools. The disciplines give fundamental skills for all practical purposes. For their extension covers all areas of intellectual achievement. The powers of the mind, developed and fitted with the skills of the disciplines, are made ready in the best way for the solution of life's problems. Bestor made the point thus:

The sheer power of disciplined thought is revealed in practically all the great intellectual and technological advances which the human race has made. The ability of the man of disciplined mind to direct this power effectively upon problems for which he was not specifically trained is proved by examples without number.⁸⁸

Bestor's "mental discipline" demands an indirect practical utility to be had from intellectual skills brought out in the powers of the mind by rigorous application to the fundamental areas of knowledge. It is only these fundamental disciplines that produce proper mental training. Kolesnik said that the theory of formal discipline likewise stresses "developing the powers of the mind by strengthening them, preferably on difficult, abstract material, such as Latin." He continued, "For disciplinary purposes, the content of school subjects is held to be of secondary importance."⁸⁹ Bestor's thesis is that mental training should be in the basic disciplines, such as languages. The powers of the mind, trained in the logical and systematic processes of these fundamental disciplines, develop intellectual skills basic to the solution of all

⁸⁸Bestor, "Aimlessness in Education," p. 115.

⁸⁹Kolesnik, Mental Discipline in Education, p. 4.

problems.

The powers of the mind to be developed with intellectual skills are not divided into separate faculties by Bestor. Christian Wolff had initiated the theory of faculty psychology by assigning to the soul "faculties or capacities which are definite and distinct." Such are the faculties of "knowing and feeling" with subdivisions of "perception, imagination, memory, understanding, etc."⁹⁰ The Report of the Committee of Ten had designated languages and the natural sciences as "best adapted to cultivate the habits of observation:" and mathematics as "the traditional training of the reasoning faculties."⁹¹

Bestor assigned no particular utility for any discipline in relation to a specific faculty. His contention was that all the disciplines train a man to think effectively, creatively, and critically. The mind or soul was treated as a unity with powers or capacities; these powers are brought into actuality by the skills of the disciplines. In speaking of ethics, Bestor even alleged that "there is no unnatural distinction between the mind and the emotions."⁹² For these reasons it is to be concluded that Bestor did not base his theory of mental discipline on faculty psychology but on the potency of the mind developed into actuality, the powers endowed with intellectual skills.

Finally, there was Bestor's advertence to the good of our republic

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 97.

⁹¹Lawrence Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, p. 168.

⁹²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 28.

and its citizens. Our democracy demands universal mental discipline in the schools. The tradition of our country upholds the concept of "the single ladder in education." A "liberal and liberating" education is the prerogative of all the citizens of our democracy. Academic freedom serves loyalty in a positive way.

CHAPTER III

THE FIVE BASIC DISCIPLINES

Mental training, said Bestor, can be effectively had only by application of the mind to matters of intellectual content. His favorite instance was the developing of intellectual skills of critical judgment through the study of history. Such intellectual concentration contrasts with narrow vocational training in technical skills for practical, utilitarian purposes, e.g., the training of the reflexes in the practice of typing. Mental training in the intellectual disciplines was Bestor's way to impart aristocratic education to all members of the democracy as a broad, though indirect, preparation for life.

Bestor's view of the rightful place of the disciplines in the educational curriculum was as follows. In the long history of scholarship, it has been found that there are systems of mental processes, limited in number, that give intellectual command over man's experience. These are the mental disciplines. At present there are five basic disciplines, fundamental to solving the problems of life and to any further progress in scientific and scholarly skills. They are English, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and history. These disciplines should make up the curriculum for all secondary school students; primary school should prepare for them and college should expand upon them.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the schools and colleges were too intent on transmitting the knowledge of classical times. The language and learning of the ancients were the center of

higher learning. In the classical curriculum there was no room for the natural sciences nor did any of the other modern intellectual disciplines receive adequate treatment.

However through the century the natural sciences, "which for two centuries had been demonstrating their intellectual cogency," took their place in the curriculum. Modern languages and "the cultural achievement embodied in the magnificent national literatures" were also fully recognized. History was broadened in extent to "all times and all places." The different social sciences were taught and the schools and colleges "made the analysis of contemporary society a legitimate academic enterprise." Engineering, agriculture, and "vastly expanded programs of medical training" were "utilitarian applications of theoretical knowledge" in professional curricula of the institutions of higher learning.¹

But even through the 1880's, colleges were still demanding a knowledge of Greek and Latin as entrance requirements. In 1887 Harvard offered a substitution of Latin for Greek to applicants for the degree of bachelor of arts, while Latin was still required for applicants to many new college programs.² A further difficulty lay in the variety of works of Latin, Greek and English literature which the applicant encountered in the entrance examinations of the various colleges.

Therefore, many high schools offered the Classical course, "which included little but Latin, Greek and mathematics." Moreover they had a General course, called also Latin-Scientific, with no Greek. Commonly

¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 45-46.

²Edward A. Krug, The Shaping of the American High School: 1880-1920 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 29.

there was in the schools an English course of "miscellaneous subjects" such as bookkeeping, manual training and household arts. In some schools there was a Modern Language course, with French or German in place of Latin.³ There was a general practice of teaching subjects to those bound for college in a way different from that in which they were taught to the others.

Discontent with the curriculum and a widespread desire for better articulation between secondary schools and colleges led to a quest for uniformity and less emphasis on Latin and Greek. For this purpose a Commission of Secondary Education was formed by the National Education Association. In the summer of 1892, the executive Committee of Ten was formed to call for conferences of scholars and teachers from colleges and secondary schools according to departments of instruction. There were nine categories of studies, e.g., Latin, English, other modern languages, etc. Ninety conferees, ten for each conference, of which forty-seven were from colleges and universities, met in different sites from December 28-30, 1892. They were to determine the mechanics of teaching and curriculum, the purpose of the various subjects, and the adjustment of the courses to college entrance requirements. Some of the well known scholars and administrators in the project were these: U.S. Commissioner of Education William T. Harris, President James H. Baker of the University of Colorado, President James B. Angell of the University of Michigan, Professor Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard and Professor

³Ibid., pp. 5-6.

Woodrow Wilson of the College of New Jersey. Noting the cooperation of scholars and administrators, Bestor described the group thus:

In 1893 appeared the Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies, appointed by the National Education Association. Its chairman was President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard and its membership included five college presidents, one college professor, one high-school principal, the heads of two private preparatory schools, and the United States Commissioner of Education. Its recommendations on history, civil government, and political economy were drawn up by a group that comprised six college professors, one college president, two high-school principals and one private-school headmaster.⁴

This array of national scholarly and administrative talent gave great authority to the recommendations of the Report. All participants were deeply learned in the fields in which they were concerned. The four sets of subjects that they recommended were a broad, fundamental preparation for life for the terminal student as well as for the few who were bound for college. All the subjects of all four sets of courses were academic, intellectual disciplines. They were to be taught in the same way to all. The Report said this of the schools:

Their main function is to prepare for the duties of life that small proportion of all children in the country - a proportion small in number, but very important to the welfare of the nation - who show themselves able to profit by an education prolonged to the eighteenth year. . . . A secondary school programme intended for national use must therefore be made for those children whose education is not to be pursued beyond the secondary school.⁵

The main task of the conferences was to adjust the articulation between secondary schools and colleges by choosing appropriate courses,

⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 170.

⁵Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, p. 51.

determining the incidence of classes during the week and judging the number of years necessary to be devoted to each subject. Having recommended four academic programs, the Committee stated this as their opinion:

The satisfactory completion of any one of the four years' courses of study embodied in the foregoing programmes should admit to corresponding courses in colleges and scientific schools. They believe that this close articulation between the secondary schools and the higher institutions would be advantageous alike for the schools, the colleges, and the country.⁶

"A course of very feeble and scrappy nature" was rejected in favor of "thorough training." The subjects studied were to be "used for training the powers of observation, memory, expression and reasoning."

"Four years of strong and effective mental training" were to be the effect of any one of the courses.⁷ The conference on foreign languages, of which C. H. Grandgent was chairman, had this to say of modern language study in relation to mental training:

It will train their memory and develop their sense of accuracy; it will quicken and strengthen their reasoning powers by offering them, at every step, problems that must be immediately solved by the correct application of their own observation; it will help them to understand the structure of the English sentence and the real meaning of English words; it will broaden their minds by revealing to the modes of thought and expression different from those to which they have been accustomed.⁸

The conference on history, civil government and political economy gave this observation on mental training:

⁶Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, p. 53.

⁷Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁸Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, p. 96.

To sum up, one object of historical study in the acquirement of useful facts; but the chief object is the training of the judgement, in selecting the grounds of an opinion, in putting things together, in generalizing upon facts, in estimating character, in applying the lessons of history to current events, and in accustoming children to state their conclusions in their own words.⁹

So, there was no doubt that the aim of education for the Committee of Ten was training of the mind through the intellectual disciplines. Four curricula were arrived at, three without Greek and two without Greek or required Latin. The sets of courses had these revealing titles: Classical, Latin-Scientific, Modern Languages, English. All had six courses in science except the Classical, which had three; all four curricula had courses in physics and chemistry for one year. Algebra and geometry were common to all; trigonometry and higher algebra were optional in all others but required in the English. History was required for four years only in the English, while in the others an optional third year was offered. There were no vocational courses in the official program.¹⁰ Bestor had these words of approbation for the proposed curricula and clarifying explanations of the Report:

The school program that the twentieth century received from the nineteenth did not depend upon tradition for its principal support. It was based upon a realistic analysis of the intellectual needs of the modern world and an extraordinarily prescient forecast of what the great issues and

⁹Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁰Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, pp. 46-47.

concerns of succeeding generations were likely to be. It was a curriculum not for the year or the decade, but for the century that was about to commence. The curriculum of the twentieth-century school, thus soundly conceived and tested, was to consist essentially of disciplined study in five great areas, carried progressively through the grades and continued and elaborated in college.¹¹

The "five great areas" of study have resulted from man's analysis of all experience and his development of specialized intellectual skills for dealing with the different aspects of experience. These skills have been organized and systematized in the various scientific and scholarly disciplines.¹² The five that are basic to intellectual life and of most extensive application here and now are English, foreign languages, mathematics, science and history. These disciplines are general classifications of all the courses offered in Table IV of the Report.

Mental training is the aim of education for Bestor, as it was for the authors of the Report. "Intellectual skills" are to be developed in the student through the disciplines. Bestor does not specify any particular faculties of the mind for development by any particular study. On the other hand, the Report does name "the reasoning faculties" to be especially benefited by mathematics and the "judgement" by the study of history.¹³ Bestor limits himself to talking of the general powers, capacities and intellectual skills to be developed and exercised. The activities of the mind, e.g., "weighing of evidence" and "the

¹¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 48-49.

¹²Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

¹³Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, p. 168.

continuous exercise of critical judgement" in the study of history, are stressed.¹⁴ The activated powers and capacities of the mind to be disciplined in the intellectual skills are Bestor's target for education. Bestor names the activities but gives no individual faculties of the mind.

The universal teaching of the five fundamental disciplines would bring about a closer adjustment between the secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Such a coordinated sharing of means and aims would be the result of the curricula proposed in the Report.

"Contemporary intellectual life has been built on these disciplines," said Bestor.¹⁵ However they are not being taught widely enough or well enough. For Bestor's criticism was this:

Serious weaknesses there are in certain aspects of our structure of learning; notably in the lack of adequate preparation by the lower schools for the complex intellectual problems which men today must meet by intellectual means.¹⁶

Bestor declared that the university faculties of the liberal arts were overwhelmingly of the opinion that the level of preparation and the attitude of the students and authorities of the secondary schools toward learning was "unsatisfactory." He recalled the counsels of the Report

A greater harmony of purpose between secondary and higher education clearly existed at the end of the nineteenth century than exists at present. Whether it can be restored

¹⁴Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 726.

¹⁵Bestor, "Fundamentals of Education," p. 659.

¹⁶Arthur Bestor, "The Transformation of American Scholarship: 1875-1917," Library Quarterly 23 (July 1953): 179.

so that American education as a whole can attain intellectual standing commensurate with its financial resources and its physical plant, is without doubt the most burning issue in American education today.¹⁷

However the prime purpose of the intellectual disciplines was both for the Committee of Ten and for Bestor a preparation for "the duties of life." Youths are to be trained in them whether they go to college or not. As free men all have the right to share in the cultural heritage of their democratic society by mental training in the disciplines. "Effective, critical, and creative thought" is best prepared for and achieved by exercise in the fundamentals of the five disciplines.¹⁹ This is true for participation in politics and for mastering the intellectual components that underlie the occupations in our technological society. In a number of publications, Bestor repeated this specific statement of the value of the disciplines for solving the problems of life:

It is hard to see how any intelligent man, realistically examining the world in which we live, could deny the relevance of these studies to the intellectual life of every modern man. Science is clearly one of mankind's central interests today, even more than in the nineteenth century. Mathematics underlies not only science but also the increasing host of other modern activities that make use of quantitative data. History is a discipline peculiarly relevant to a

¹⁷ Arthur Bestor, "The American University: A Historical Interpretation of Current Issues," College and University 32 (Winter 1957): 188.

¹⁸ Bestor, "Are We Less or Better Educated?" p. 127.

¹⁹ Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

changing world, for the nature of change is one of its primary concerns. Moreover, most of the world problems we have to face can be understood only in terms of their historical matrix. Command of his own language and its literature is one of the indisputable marks of the educated man. And among nations that must hang together if they do not hang separately, knowledge of more than a single language is prerequisite to really effective citizenship.²⁰

"Science is a source of power, whatever be the organization of the state," said Bestor.²¹ Citizens who participate in the decision of whether to use atomic energy for peace or for war will make better informed judgments if they have a fundamental knowledge of the sciences. All should have at least one year of physics, chemistry and biology.²² These are the three sciences that Bestor constantly named for the secondary school curriculum. They are to be taught separately so that their distinctive processes will be learned; then they may be combined to solve particular problems. Since the sciences offer broad, fundamental skills, the new discoveries such as Einstein's theory of relativity in physics may be fitted into their structure without disruption of the course. Not the applied aspects but the theoretical principles of the sciences are to be learned to give fundamental knowledge.²³ The total structure of the science in its systematic processes is to be grasped. To understand how the principles of science have been arrived at and to make learning a matter of personal discovery, there should be constant laboratory practice for the student. The educational authorities

²⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 51.

²¹Ibid., p. 94.

²²Arthur Bestor, "The Soft Curriculum," Good Housekeeping, May 1958, p. 120.

²³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 41.

underestimate the talents of the average student by allowing him to choose an easier subject than science. Bestor pointed out that forty times as many primary and secondary students were studying physics in Russia as in the United States and eighteen times as many were studying chemistry.²⁴

Algebra and geometry train the mind in the skills of abstract reasoning in quantity and relationship. Precision in mathematics is widely needed in modern life. The fundamentals of algebra and geometry are a necessary prerequisite for higher mathematics. The comprehension of the total structure of the mathematical science is important. In geometry the student should learn "the orderly process by which a group of postulates can be made to reveal their implications in theorems of increasing complexity."²⁵ Algebra and geometry merit individual courses. And there can be no proper treatment of any branch of mathematics if it is taught only as it illustrates another science. The gifted student should progress to trigonometry, advanced algebra, analytic geometry and the beginning of calculus in secondary school.²⁶

English should be taught through classes in literature and written composition. Classical and modern, English and American works of recognized cultural content are to be studied.²⁷ For the older students

²⁴Bestor, "The Choice in American Education," p. 73.

²⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 36.

²⁶Bestor, "Do We Do Enough for the Gifted?" p. 80.

²⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 267.

these works will be writings of deep thought "to be chewed and digested" according to Francis Bacon.²⁸ Thus the student will analyze the works of literature that contain the great ideas of our culture. His analysis will take him through all the forms of writing, poetry, fiction, drama, and philosophic discourse.²⁹ Some of the books he can be urged to read with profit are the biographies of great men, which prove the value of a liberal education.³⁰ Imitation of the style of these authors should be one of the benefits of his reading. Written composition is of the utmost importance for the English student. He should write constantly and in all genres, even poetry. The teacher should correct his writings according to "rigorous standards of grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and style."³¹ All his themes and examinations, including those in courses other than English, should be criticized by the teacher according to these standards. The aim will be to develop his powers to write with "clarity, accuracy, fluency, and cogency."³² The implication is that the student's formal speech will reflect his literary attainments. Bestor described the ideal English course, that of the turn of the century, thus:

First was study directed toward command of the student's mother tongue. It began, of course, with the rudimentary skills of reading and writing, it proceeded to the systematic study of grammar, and it continued uninterruptedly with the reading and analysis of increasingly difficult examples of

²⁸Bestor, "The Soft Curriculum" p. 120.

²⁹Bestor, "Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

³⁰Bestor, "Aimlessness in Education," p. 115.

³¹Bestor, "The Soft Curriculum" p. 120.

³²Bestor, "Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

literature and with incessant practice in writing under competent guidance and criticism.³³

Language study, whether native or foreign, is of great help for "clear and accurate analysis and communication of ideas."³⁴ Choosing the fitting words to express one's concepts makes for clear thinking. Once chosen, the precise expressions communicate our ideas accurately. The more aptly that our chosen expressions portray our thought, the better will be our communication of ideas.

The study of a foreign language increases our skills in our own language. Increased vocabulary, a deeper appreciation of proper grammatical usage and precision in the expression of thought are the results. Without such study youths are liable to be handicapped in the use of English. It is a common tenet that practice in translation is practice in English. Once Bestor expressed regret that there was no course in classical languages in his own Lincoln School of Columbia University; he said that they had been "sacrificed to modernity--a serious mistake."³⁵ Of the value of all foreign language study for English, Bestor said the following:

Moreover, studying a foreign language is an essential part of learning to use one's own language. It was Goether, I believe, who said that no man knows his own language until he knows another. One of the reasons for the decline in effective use of the English language is that so few students today have any knowledge of any other language, and, therefore, any knowledge of the principles of language in general.³⁶

³³Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 49.

³⁴Bestor, "Education for Changing World," p. 3.

³⁵Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 45.

³⁶Bestor, "We Are Less Educated," p. 71.

The compelling reason for universal foreign language study is the good of the country. Representatives who understand the language are needed to conduct political, military and business relations with foreign countries. In allowing the percentage of foreign language students in the schools to decline, the educational authorities are acting in the "ostrich way" in the face of responsibility and crisis.³⁷ Moreover, for the ordinary American the knowledge of a foreign language is beneficial for intelligent citizenship in the world today. Knowledge of the language and culture of another nation helps one to understand the people.³⁸

Continuity of study over a sufficiently long period of time is necessary for the development of any of the intellectual skills. Educational authorities have judged two years of college study necessary for any adequate mastery of a foreign language. Bestor's belief was that "this figure is too low."³⁹ The study of a foreign language should begin in grade school and be continued through secondary school. Thus the pupil will study the "grammatical analysis" and develop a "usable intellectual skill" in the language.⁴⁰ Gifted pupils should begin the study of a second foreign language in high school.

³⁷Arthur Bestor, "Education," Time, 16 November 1953, p. 65.

³⁸Bestor, "We Are Less Educated," p. 71.

³⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 405.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 50.

History is essential for effective citizenship in our democracy. Any society is formed by "linkages" among men "that stretch deeply into the past."⁴¹ Just as the individual by knowledge of his past comes to "some degree of self-understanding and foresight," so the citizen realizes his role and prepares himself to deal with change and guide the course of the future through a knowledge of history, especially that of his own country. In broader scope man facing the future has in history "the accumulated experience of the race."⁴²

The study of history and the social sciences makes for a "loyal, well-informed, and thoughtful" citizen. He identifies with the "traditions, ideals, and procedural habits of the community;" he will have a goodly store of pertinent, exact knowledge in politics; and he will have developed skilled processes of mind for analytical and critical judgments about public policy.⁴³ Moreover, history aids anyone in solving the personal problems of life for history is an intellectual discipline in the skills of weighing evidence and making critical judgments.

"The knowledge gained from the study of true history is the best of all educations for practical life," said Polybius. His reason was that we learn from the mistakes of others to avoid hurting ourselves in trying to choose "the best course to pursue."⁴⁴ William Smith called the historical basis of practical judgment "a similarity of cases" between

⁴¹Arthur Bestor, "The Humaneness of History," in The Craft of American History, vol. 1, ed. A.S. Eisenstadt (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1966; Harper Torchbooks), p. 9.

⁴²Bestor, "Education for Intellectual Disciplines," p. 38.

⁴³Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 549.

⁴⁴Polybius, Histories, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 133.

past events and "present contingencies." He claimed, "The grand business of history is to make men wiser in themselves and better members of society."⁴⁵

Bestor proposed that current economic and political problems are best solved by knowing their historical origins and development. Moreover, the study of the past acquaints one with powerful forces that may be temporarily dormant but ready to be restored to a status of cogent influence on men's affairs. Study of history is "vicarious experience" to be applied to making critical decisions.⁴⁶ History gives men "data from which they can calculate their expectations." Bestor continued thus about the value and limitations of history: "In the gamble of life, the odds are on foresight. . . . History, properly understood, can give man the advantage of these odds."⁴⁷

Historiography is an act of discovery, a science of inferences made from evidence existing in the present. From artifacts and written records, gathered and compared, the historian draws his narrative of the past by a method of logic. First he makes his conclusions on individuals and specific events. He finds a chain of causes and effects. Next come generalizations about groups of individuals, parties, and nations. Bestor said, "At this second level of reasoning, the logical processes of history are substantially the same as those of the social sciences."⁴⁸ They are "a statistical conception of human affairs." But the third level of generalization is unique to history. For the historian advances to

⁴⁵William Smith, Preface to his translation of Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War, quoted *ibidem*.

⁴⁶Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 551.

⁴⁷Bestor, "The Humaneness of History," p. 14.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* p. 12.

study the relationships between the different eras of time, change in human events as it has gone on through the centuries. Although the basis of the total narrative is specificity in causes and effects, individual men and societies and their times, "generalizations of a very high order" are the result. Bestor said this:

The story of mankind as a whole is told by linking together, end to end, these specific explanations. The explanations are specific, but they are by no means simple. They are the products of an intricate chain of reasoning, carried on at the three levels I have described. Despite their apparent specificity, historical conclusions about cause and effect in a particular situation are actually generalizations of a very high order. And the ability to make them is the ability to think historically.⁴⁹

General laws of history akin to the laws of physics do not exist. There are "some few historians" that attempt to establish such laws from the resemblances that exist between events in different societies and epochs. Most historians, if they speculate upon these resemblances, do so "with trepidation and reserve." "A smaller few," among whom Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee are outstanding, have seen "in universal history certain recurrent patterns that explain (or even determine) the vast movements of the whole." But although there are occasional "coincidences of pattern," the unfolding of history has no ultimate design or general laws.⁵⁰

In the same category is Georg Friederich Hegel's theory of history. According to Hegel all history has been worked out as "the realization of the Idea of Spirit." The great leaders of the past have acted by impulses of which they were not cognizant. Their historic actions were

⁴⁹Bestor, "The Humaneness of History," p. 13.

⁵⁰Ibidem.

the result of the will of the World-Spirit directing the process of history. Although Hegel had many followers in philosophy, few historians accepted his theory of history.⁵¹ Philosophers, idealists and transcendentalists, have held the Hegelian theory that the World-Spirit is immanent and active in the order of the universe and the reasoning processes of man; historians do not recognize the Absolute in the causality of history. Bestor rejected any proposal of such metaphysical speculation as a theory in historiography in the following: "By insisting that ideas are historical realities, the intellectual historian surrenders the right to treat them as transcendental forces, capable of influencing events by means that are hidden and mysterious."⁵²

Great ideas have influenced the course of history. The historian is to determine that influence and the amount of it by empirical investigation. For there exist in history the influences of materialistic forces. The dialectical materialism of Karl Marx would make ideas a deterministic result of the economic class struggle. The "economic interests" of Charles A. Beard, as found by him in the Constitution of the United States, combined materialism and one phase of the thinking of the founding fathers of our country in Beard's historical treatment. Some historians, extending Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier hypothesis," have maintained that "physiography, climate, and natural environment generally" are the prime movers of man in shaping history. In the determination of causes the middle road is the best. Bestor said,

⁵¹Bestor, "Intellectual History to 1900," Thirty-First Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies (Washington, D.C.: 1961), p. 135.

⁵²Ibid., p. 138.

"Ideas are neither all-powerful nor completely powerless - this is the conclusion . . . which present day intellectual history accepts."⁵³

Since "ideas are historical forces," the historian determines their influence on events from empirical evidence. His task is "to weigh evidence and look for relationships" in judging critically of the affairs of men and nations.⁵⁴ The chain of cause and effect and the chronological order of events are marks of history. While it trains the mind by developing the power to judge critically in current and future crises, history deals with the past in all aspects. Bestor said this:

History today professes to be nothing less than the documented and interpreted record of past activities in every domain of human life - politics included, to be sure, but only as every other crucial interest of mankind is included.⁵⁵

History supplies "vital data" to the social sciences and employs "principles and concepts derived from each of them."⁵⁶ Together with history the social sciences investigate in an orderly fashion "social relationships and human occurrences" and have "man in society" as their common subject.⁵⁷ But in structure and methods of investigation, history

⁵³Bestor, "Intellectual History to 1900," p. 139.

⁵⁴Arthur Bestor, "'And Gladly Wolde He Lerne, and Gladly Teche,'" American Conference of Academic Deans, Proceedings of Sixteenth Annual Meeting, Boston, 12 January 1960 (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1960), p. 25.

⁵⁵Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in the Schools," p. 30.

⁵⁶Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 553.

⁵⁷Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in Schools," p. 33.

is unique. The social sciences deal with limited aspects of man's activity and do not have the past as their proper object. History treats of the widely inclusive "relationships between past and present, or between a remote past, and one less remote." Bestor continued with history's broad scope thus:

This is its concern with change - not change within a narrow segment of time, but change as it has gone on through an endless procession of centuries; not change affecting one particularized area of human activity, but change as it has pervaded the whole of human affairs, creating historical eras that are distinguished from one another in all their multifarious yet interrelated aspects.⁵⁸

The social sciences arrive at general, abstract observations on society from a reckoning of particular characteristics shared by individuals in society. They normally deal with the contemporary world. Their techniques of research are controlled experiments, field studies and statistical analyses. History explains the particular events throughout the past by evaluating causes of all kinds. Joined together in the systematic order determined by relationships especially of chronology and causality, these events tell the story of mankind's past. The evidence of the historian lies in all records of the past. Bestor gave the methodological difference thus:

History is essentially a synthesizing discipline concerned with explaining how forces of varied kinds combine to produce particular unique situations - situations that never recur in the same form. By contrast, each of the social sciences is essentially analytic, seeking to pick out, from a multitude of diverse situations, certain common elements and principles, the validity of which is, in some sense, universal.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Bestor, "Humaneness of History," p. 12.

⁵⁹Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 553.

Bestor contrasted the methods of history and economics in this way:

Whereas the historian attempts first to bring the largest possible range of causative factors into view and then goes on to examine their impact upon a single unique happening, the economist, by contrast, attempts first to eliminate all except strictly economic factors and then goes on to study their role in as wide a variety of comparable situations as possible.⁶⁰

Since the social sciences are distinct in structure and methodology, they should be taught separately. The student is entitled to more than just the conclusions of these sciences; he rightly should learn the methods, processes, and the distinctive outlook of each science. In history he should apprehend the chronological pattern of the multiple causal forces in particular past happenings. Without the processes of generalization the student of history ends up with an intolerable burden of facts to memorize by rote. If the conclusions of the other social sciences are added, the situation becomes worse. Moreover, chronological order, the proper perspective of events in time, is lost if history is taught only as it illustrates one of the social sciences. No combination of two sciences should be made into one course for students before a thorough understanding of the structure of each discipline has been achieved. Bestor theorized thus:

Because these methodological differences are fundamental, it is impossible for a course in one of the social sciences to be made the vehicle for inculcating the systematic ways of thinking characteristic of any one of the others. Because each of the social sciences constitutes a unique method of inquiry, it must be presented in such a way as to bring out not only the facts it has ascertained, not only the methods by which it has uncovered these facts, but also the way in which these facts and these methods constitute an ordered whole.⁶¹

⁶⁰Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in Schools," p. 35.

⁶¹Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in Schools," p. 32.

Analysis should precede synthesis in the mental disciplines. Bestor said, "Until these various methods have been mastered, each in its own terms, the interdisciplinary approach is sheer illusion."⁶² It is by analysis of experience according to the methods of each discipline that the mind is trained; the student sets experience in order systematically by the processes of each discipline. But to take the "unresolved chaos" of experience in life's problems and to attempt to solve these problems by the combined conclusions of the disciplines is not mental training. The mental capacities remain undeveloped and the problem remains un-analyzed, confused, and unexplained in solution to the student. To purpose "to train man to perform the culminating acts of thought while skipping the antecedent steps" is similar to "building a house from the ridgepole downward."⁶³

History is the discipline of the social sciences that should be taught throughout secondary school. The title, History, should be used for these courses in the official catalogue, not the "ill-defined" Social Studies. For in social studies courses, history is liable to be treated only as it illustrates phases of some other social science. Moreover, the latter title leaves the door open for non-intellectual courses for social efficiency such as driver training.

In the teaching of history there should be constant reference to geography, which might even be offered as a separate course. In general, material from the other social sciences is to be used by the teacher to explain the events of history. Introductory economics might be an

⁶²Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 552.

⁶³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 61.

elective for seniors. Bestor said, "Systematic introductions to sociology or anthropology or social psychology . . . are best deferred to the university."⁶⁴ He conceded that it is an "open question" whether social science courses should be offered to some students to replace "one or more units that were traditionally assigned to history."⁶⁵

History is the logical foundation for the study of the social sciences. Bestor gave this reason:

In the first place, the chronological unfolding of events is far closer to the actual experience of young persons than are the processes of abstraction - often high-level abstraction - employed in the social sciences.⁶⁶

Moreover, the material of history is more varied and more inclusive; the social sciences take much of their data from history; historical knowledge about the data should precede the "theory-making" in the social sciences.

Bestor offered this history curriculum as "appropriate" for the secondary school: in seventh grade "a course in American history, with considerable emphasis on exact geographic knowledge"; in eighth "ancient and medieval history, illuminated by constant attention to ideas, to literature, and to the arts"; in ninth "the history of Europe, including the history of England, from the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century"; in tenth world history in the twentieth century, "stressing international relations and paying careful attention to

⁶⁴Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 555.

⁶⁵Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in Schools," p. 36.

⁶⁶Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 554.

geographic elements"; in the eleventh the history of the United States studied on "a vastly enlarged basis of comparison and evaluation"; in the twelfth political science, which would "examine the constitutional system of the United States" thoroughly in keeping with legislation and would make "comparisons with other governmental systems."⁶⁷

More courses in American history than the two recommended would tend to destroy interest and make for an undesirable "nationalistic pre-occupation." Bestor commended his course on world history in the twentieth century as "more manageable than the amorphous survey of world history with vast chronological sweep that is sometimes attempted." Moreover, he would have the tenth-year students make "a few retrospective excursions into the earlier history of certain selected non-European areas." For the advanced course in United States history, Bestor recommended stress on "the foreign relations of the United States." The final year possibly might be devoted to another social science although political science "almost certainly" should be the choice.⁶⁸

A summation of Bestor's doctrine is as follows. Education is mental training in the intellectual disciplines. The axis of the educational course is the secondary curriculum. The intellectual disciplines of this curriculum are English, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and history. The basic thinking on this curriculum is to be found in the Report of the scholars and administrators of the Committee of Ten of 1893. By these fundamental disciplines education will offer the best preparation for life and for further study in college.

⁶⁷Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 555.

⁶⁸Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 555.

English should stress the study of literature, classical and modern, and the constant practice of written composition according to the rules of grammar and rhetoric. It is not enough that the pupil be able to express himself orally on topics of current interest. Writing is to be criticized for spelling, syntax, punctuation, paragraphing and style. Mathematics is to be in the form of algebra and geometry with progression to trigonometry and the beginning of calculus for the gifted. The deduction is that "general mathematics," a popular course in the arithmetic of measurement and business, is of too low a level of abstraction for proper mental training. Likewise, "general science," an integrated physical science course, should not replace physics, chemistry and biology. Moreover, study of their theoretical principles should not be supplanted by courses in applied science, for example television and photography.

There was some difference in details between Bestor and the Report. He seemed to be more insistent on biology in the curriculum for all than was the Report. Latin and Greek were very prominent in the curricula and comments of the Report, whereas Bestor wrote almost entirely about modern languages. The Report had remarks about the specific value of language study for developing the faculties; Bestor was content to classify it as a mental discipline. The value of foreign languages for developing skills in English was given in more detail in the Report, which named Latin and German as most effective for this purpose. Bestor stressed their practical need in the modern world. Both concurred in advising that foreign language study be begun in the elementary grades.

Both Bestor and the Report agreed that the student be practiced in the mental processes pertinent to history. Bestor maintained that students of history learn that ideas, materialism or economic interests,

and geographical environment had part in historical causality. The Report stated the following:

History is a subject unequalled for its opportunities of comparison, for it is preeminently a study of the relation between cause and effect. History combines the advantages of a philosophical and a scientific subject; upon the one side, it is a study of the human mind, of character, and motives; upon the other hand, historical records form a body of material which, in the demand its analysis makes upon the mind, may be compared with that of chemistry or geology.⁶⁹

All of Bestor's work on teaching history under its own title and with its proper allotment of time, as a discipline separate from the social sciences, was occasioned by developments after the time of the Report. Then Social Studies came into being as the curricular title under which history and other aspects of "man in society" were taught. Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, the NEA report of the Commission on the Reconstruction of Secondary Education published in 1918, gave great impetus to this practice. In opposition to subsequent developments minimizing the importance of history and the time allotted to it in the curriculum, Bestor proposed a return to the history curriculum of the Report of the Committee of Ten. Bestor said that history should be taught first because it is a basis for the others and because it is more comprehensible to the neophyte than the highly abstract processes of the social sciences. Nor should history be integrated with the others since they are distinct sciences as to their methods of investigation. If subordinated, history taught to illustrate points of another science would leave the pupil with a fragmented, disordered knowledge of the past.

⁶⁹Cremin, ed., Report of the Committee, pp. 168-169.

History with its chronology is a fundamental discipline. The social sciences are a sequel to history.

Therefore, Bestor proposed, with minor modifications, a return to the disciplines and the thinking endorsed by the Committee of Ten. The five disciplines should constitute the curriculum for the secondary school. But the wide variation in native ability and in the rate of mental growth in youth coupled with culturally deprived environments cause enormous, almost insurmountable difficulties in teaching the academic program of the disciplines to all. Recognizing the task, Bestor held fast to his program in the disciplines for all in all years of compulsory schooling. Slower progress through the educational system by the slower students would ensure adequate comprehension of the disciplines and worthy mental training.

CHAPTER IV

PROCEDURE THROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mental training in the fundamental disciplines is necessary for intelligent citizenship in our republic. Once the prerogative of the aristocracy, a liberal education is now the right of every citizen of our democracy. Consequently, compulsory education should be concerned essentially with the fundamental intellectual disciplines. Physical education courses, functional education for social efficiency, and vocational training merit the school's attention after the liberal education requirements are taken care of. All such courses are to be extra-curricular and non-credit. Under these conditions a few practical courses in typing, home economics, or wood working could be offered in high school. All students should have a curriculum consisting of the basic intellectual disciplines until the age of seventeen. A concise statement of Bestor's position is the following:

Such vocational work would not be permitted before the completion of high school, because, in my judgment, compulsory school attendance should mean attendance upon a standard academic program.¹

Sufficient achievement in reading, writing, and arithmetic is a necessary condition for progress in fundamental learning. Remedial programs are to be offered the slow learners. While there are history, geography, art, and other studies to be introduced, the teaching of the

¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 329.

three Rs to all is the primary responsibility of the elementary school. It is not enough that the eleven-year-olds be able to "stand on their own two feet before a group of their contemporaries and express their opinions on subjects of interest and importance to them." They should be able to spell, punctuate, and write properly according to grammatical rules.² The following "easy, anti-intellectual way out" adopted by too many educationists denies "the importance of the fundamental disciplines in the education of the masses of men":

When we come to the realization that not every child has to read, figure, write, and spell . . . that many of them either cannot or will not master these chores . . . then we shall be on the road to improving the junior high school curriculum.³

Bestor directly opposed such lax attitudes toward mastery of the three Rs in the first six years of schooling. Although he conceded that "absolute standards of achievement for each separate grade" are probably not feasible, he held firmly to a demand for success in achievement by the end of the first six years. These are his words:

But the elementary school has charge of pupils long enough to bring all but the gravely retarded up to the point where they possess, in sound and usable form, these indispensable means of study, work, and of enjoyment. The overriding responsibility of the elementary school is to do this. It should not be permitted to pass pupils on to a higher level until they have developed the proficiency in language and numbers that is absolutely prerequisite to every kind of intellectual, professional, and vocational activity.⁴

²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 134.

³A. H. Lauchner, "How Can the Junior High School Curriculum Be Improved?" National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin 35 (March 1951): 299, quoted in Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 53.

⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 49.

To bring all pupils up to a standard of practical proficiency in the fundamentals and introduce them to history, natural sciences and geography in the primary grades and to continue in high school with mental training in the five intellectual disciplines is a well nigh impossible task. For the mental ability of the lower segment of the population does not allow for adequate academic success in the traditional twelve years of graded schooling.

A pessimistic view of the total prospect of secondary education was that of Dr. Charles E. Prosser. In his proposal for life adjustment education in 1945, Prosser declared that twenty percent of the students are capable of college preparatory work, another twenty percent are capable of vocational training, and the remaining sixty percent have capabilities best suited for less demanding courses in education adjusted to the situations of adult living.⁵ The President's Commission on Higher Education in 1947 was more optimistic in its outlook. Its estimate was that thirty-two percent are capable of "advanced liberal or specialized professional education," while forty-nine percent have the "mental ability to complete fourteen years of schooling."⁶ In his nation-wide study funded by the Carnegie Corporation in 1957, Conant recommended that the "academically talented," at least the top fifteen percent, should have a

⁵U. S. Office of Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951) p. 16, n. 2, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 116.

⁶President's Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education for American Democracy, 6 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), I: 41, quoted *ibidem*.

total academic program, while others in the "next lower ten or twenty percent" bracket in scholastic aptitude should have "similar but less rigorous programs"; he said the rest should have general or vocational courses of their choice.⁷ In his survey of 1,878 high schools in 1965, Conant found that 34.5 percent of the graduates entered colleges, 11.4 percent entered junior colleges, and 9.5 percent entered technical and other schools.⁸ However these reports differ in assessing the prospects of secondary school pupils for academic training, they all point to the great difficulty that besets the process of instructing all in the intellectual disciplines.

The trouble comes from the great variation in natural ability in the student population. The main cause for inequality in cognitive skills is natural personal endowment at birth and the greatest secondary cause is a person's environment. Christopher Jencks put it thus:

The available data suggest that:

1. If we could equalize everyone's genes, inequality in test scores would probably fall by thirty-three to fifty percent.
2. If we could equalize everyone's total environment, test score inequality would fall by twenty-five to forty percent.⁹

Individual differences in aptitude and achievement are able to be measured and compared in standardized intelligence tests. Since the time that Alfred Binet published the first of these tests in 1905, they have

⁷James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), pp. 57-58.

⁸James B. Conant, The Comprehensive High School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 76.

⁹Christopher Jencks et al., Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Scholling in America (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972), p. 109.

been improved upon and used widely as part of the normal educational procedure. By extensive testing an average mental age has been determined for each year's chronological age group up to fifteen. The pupil's mental age is found by giving him the intelligence test and equating his score with the mean score corresponding to a certain chronological age. His intelligence quotient is obtained by dividing his mental age by his chronological age and multiplying by one hundred. The chronological divisor never goes beyond fifteen (sixteen in some tests) because, after this age, mean scores on practically all intelligence scales do not increase significantly with chronological age.¹⁰ The I. Q. measures and predicts "rate and efficiency of learning" since the intelligence quotient has been found to remain "relatively constant" throughout one's lifetime. Bestor adopted these classifications of Maud A. Merrill for the various I. Q. levels: 140-169, very superior; 120-139, superior; 110-119, high average; 90-109, normal or average; 80-89, low average, 70-79, borderline defective.¹¹

In another description of grouping and estimation of ability according to I. Q., it was said that three percent of the population are in the 130-165 range, "a large number" in the 110-130 group, forty-five percent in the 90-110 group, and three percent below 70. In a general estimate a 90 I. Q. would represent one who would graduate from grade school with great difficulty, 110 the average high school graduate, and 130 the average graduate of a more selective college.¹²

¹⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 313.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 295-296.

¹²J. M. Stephens, Educational Psychology, rev. 2d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1956), pp. 123-124.

The different aptitudes for learning begin to be evident in the very first years of schooling. As the years go on, the gap between the slow learner and the bright pupil continues to widen. Although all children progress in learning, they do so at widely different rates of speed and efficiency. Bestor cited for the middle two-thirds in the second and sixth grades a range of 2.2 years and 3.2 years respectively in mental age. Walter W. Cook summarized the situation as follows:

One may conclude from these and other data presented in the study that in a typical school: 1) the first-grade teacher will find that two percent of the pupils have mental ages of less than four years and two percent will have mental ages of more than eight years; 2) the sixth grade teacher will find that two percent of the pupils have mental ages of less than eight years and that two percent will have mental ages of more than sixteen years; 3) the high school teacher will find a range of from eight to ten years in mental age at each grade level; and (4) these conditions will be found to exist whether the school enforces strict policies of promotion and failure or promotes entirely on the basis of chronological age.¹³

Achievement tests show the same range of scores for the elementary, secondary, and college levels of schooling. After giving extensive data on the range in test results in knowledge and skill in particular fields of elementary school learning, Bestor cited this analysis:

The most important generalization that may be drawn . . . is that in the primary grades a teacher may expect a range of from four to five years in achievement, while above the

¹³Walter W. Cook, "The Functions of Measurement in the Facilitation of Learning" in Educational Measurement, ed. E. F. Lindquist (Washington, D.C.; American Council of Education, 1951), pp. 9-10. The study cited by Cook and Bestor, is that of Terman and Merrill done in standardizing the 1937 revision of the Stanford-Binet tests. The 2,106 subjects were in grades one to twelve and within the age limits of six to eighteen.

primary level almost the complete range of elementary school achievement is present in every grade.¹⁴

These individual differences present a problem in our present graded school system. Now that the differences are able to be measured by intelligence and achievement tests, means should be found to educate the slow and the fast learner, the superior and the low average thinker. The intellectual disciplines are to be taught to all subjects of compulsory education. Changing the content of the curriculum, "at least for the majority," as had been begun by educationists in the life adjustment program, is to be rejected. Teaching the "really capable students" the academic courses and exercising over the rest "a merely 'custodial' function by assigning to them various harmless tasks of busy work" is shirking the task of universal education for citizenship. "Accelerating" the superior and "retarding" the slower pupil has been shown to be inadequate by the data on the great range of mental age and achievement, gained from psychological testing.¹⁵

Essentially the graded structure of the educational system is to be retained. Bestor said, "A meticulously graded school . . . is virtually indispensable to orderly, systematic, sequential instruction in a large-scale educational system."¹⁶ Individual instruction in the classes of such a system means either five minutes given to each pupil or a

¹⁴Ibid., p. 11, quoted in Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 287.

¹⁵Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 283-285.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 298.

continuous forty minute or hour period devoted to one pupil alone. Obviously the pupil will have to await his turn in a sizeable class. Such individual or individualized instruction is not as efficient as that given every day to all the pupils. Let the student pay attention and participate. Thus, in Bestor's words, "he learns far more per day than he would from the few minutes of individual instruction that he would receive in a parceling-out of the teacher's time."¹⁷ The policy that advises that "the teacher must be prepared to lead each child through the next steps in his development, regardless of the level he has achieved" was called by Bestor "a retreat to the chaos of the old ungraded common school."¹⁸

Homogeneous grouping is the most effective means for coping with the problem of individual differences. Bestor said this:

In point of fact, only homogeneous grouping can really enable the teacher to deal sympathetically and skillfully with the problems of individual students, for it is the only system which brings such problems within limits really manageable for the teacher.¹⁹

The best students should be "pushed along toward higher levels of understanding at maximum speed," while the slower ones should be streamed into slower courses in the intellectual disciplines. The slower pupils are not to be "shunted off into speciously 'practical' courses."²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁸Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, p. 299.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 292.

²⁰Bestor, "Education for Intellectual Discipline," pp. 42-43.

However, Bestor found that homogeneous grouping has its defects. There is not an adequate plan for fitting the students who have proceeded at their own pace back into the regular graded structure of the school. In the process "an indefinite number of school programs" could be created. Separating the superior students from the rest for the whole scholastic course might give the objectionable, undemocratic impression "that they differ so fundamentally in the quality of their thinking as almost to constitute a distinctive species."²¹

Bestor proposed his own innovative type of homogeneity for the school system. In academic classes students ought to be "grouped according to the point they have reached in their educational development."²² In all other activities besides the academic, they are to be grouped according to chronological age for their psychological and social development. The reasoning behind the proposal for homogeneous, nonchronological grouping in academic matters is that all students continue to advance in mental age even though the slow learners are some years behind the high average. Bestor said this:

Ninety percent of the population, however, grow steadily in mental age throughout the years of compulsory school attendance and can count on attaining a mental age of at least twelve years before the end of that period. There is nothing whatever to show that all of them cannot develop in those years a command of important intellectual skills and a mastery of substantial bodies of knowledge if their natural pace of learning is respected.²³

²¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 293.

²²Ibid., p. 303.

²³Ibid., pp. 295-296.

Bestor's plan called for a "drastic change" in the graded system of the schools. The placement and progress of the pupils in the grades should correspond to their readiness measured by their mental age and achievement. The length of primary school would be proportionate to the ability and accomplishment of the individual pupils: nine years for those of low average intelligence (80-89 I. Q.), eight and seven years for those just below and above the mean (100 I. Q.), and six and five years for the high average (110 plus I. Q.) and superior (120 plus I. Q.) students respectively. The superior group would start in the second grade immediately after kindergarten and skip all years that would comprise mostly work of review. Forty-five percent, the average pupils, would spend one or two years more than at present in elementary school courses.

Secondary school requirements for graduation would consist in the successful completion of "a minimum of twenty-four consecutive courses" in each of the five fundamental disciplines. Additional electives in the academic subjects and a few noncredit, vocational courses of great utility would be offered. Bestor stated, "A sound minimum roster of courses for the secondary school would consist of at least five years of graded work in each of these fields, with two languages being offered-- a total, in other words, of thirty courses or units."²⁴

The secondary school pupil of superior intelligence would have four academic courses each year, the one of high average intelligence would alternate between three and four, the one of average intelligence above the mean (ca. 105 I. Q.) would have three, the average just below the

²⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 326.

mean would alternate between two and three, and the last group would take two courses each year. Assigned hours in study hall and regular sessions with a supplementary teacher would be given to those with less courses.

This would mean that these pupils would graduate at these respective ages: at sixteen after six years, at eighteen after seven years, at twenty after eight years, at twenty-three after ten years. The low average group would have twenty credits after ten years at the age of twenty-five, should they persevere. The lowest sixth of the school population (minus 80 I. Q.) would have the option of continuing in vocational training at the age of seventeen since their maximum scholastic achievement would be limited to elementary school work. Vocational training would be offered to the low average and the average at seventeen and nineteen years respectively, Although they could go on with academic courses. Bestor said that the superior student would probably spend his seventeenth year in junior college "acquiring substantial additional knowledge" for his college entrance at eighteen.²⁵

Assignment to particular elementary grades would be determined by the pupil's mental age and achievement level. The means would be intelligence tests, "a battery of examinations of all kinds, particularly those that test specific achievements," and "the teacher's judgment, based on personal knowledge of the individual pupils."²⁶ In the secondary school the course load of the pupil would be determined by achievement tests weighed with the pupil's I. Q. and his past scholastic performance.

Although chronological age was not to be a factor in placing the

²⁵ Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 333.

²⁶ Bestor, Restoration of Learning, 322.

student academically, it was to be of primary importance for his social and athletic endeavors. In these activities students of the same age were to be kept together. Bestor used this terminology for his hypothetical school system: elementary school for all from five to twelve; high school for adolescents from thirteen through sixteen; junior college for those seventeen and over. For academic matters the terms were primary and secondary school. Although all would transfer to high school at the age of thirteen, the slower pupils would take classes in primary school material. The rapid learners would complete from one to three years of secondary school courses while still in the elementary school plant. Most would finish secondary work in junior college. High school diplomas might be given to the class completing its sixteenth year of age since most states require compulsory attendance until then and there is a sizeable loss after this age. The secondary diploma would be given only on completion of the necessary academic courses.

Administration of the program would require a deputy dean of education for secondary courses in the elementary school, a dean of secondary education in the high school, and a dean of secondary education in the junior college. The principal of the high school would have charge of social, athletic, and extracurricular activities together with counseling and the good order of the institution. The junior college principal would also take care of vocational and adult educational programs. Not as an institution of higher learning but as a community college with only a few extension courses offered and administered by the universities, the junior colleges would limit their academic activities to secondary school courses. The deans of secondary education in both the high school and the

junior college would have complete jurisdiction over academic studies.

Maurice R. Aherns, head of the department of education at the University of Florida, called Bestor's plan "completely impractical, unrealistic, and fantastic." Great confusion would result, said he, from the constant changes in the placement of the pupils due to a wide range in achievement despite homogeneous grouping according to mental age. Part of the difficulty would arise from the proven fact that "emotional, social and physiological growth factors have an extraordinary impact on learning." Thus, there might be a range in chronological age of as much as five years in the one classroom. Ahrens forecast the absolute impossibility of implementation of Bestor's plan in small schools and had doubts about large schools. The cost of education would rise with the multiplication of classes. Many would be deprived of formal education since dropouts would increase in Bestor's program wherein the superior children are primarily focused upon.²⁷

Bestor said of his hypothetical program, "The general principles are obviously more important than any tentative organizational details!"²⁸ The great range in mental age in each class at any point in the school structure has been brought out by the plan. Homogeneity in grouping according to the level of development in mental age and achievement is the recommended means for dealing with it. The teacher should be aware of

²⁷Maurice R. Aherns, "'Redeeming' American Education?" Saturday Review 38 (September 10, 1955): 31.

²⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 310.

the wide range and use all methods recommended by psychological research in education to teach effectively.

High standards are to be maintained. Lengthening the period of schooling by two or three years for the pupil of average ability would be the normal way to insure mastery of content. It is to be demanded that elementary school graduates "have developed the proficiency in language and numbers that is absolutely prerequisite to every kind of intellectual, professional, and vocational activity."²⁹ The secondary school diploma should not be primarily "an attendance certificate" but a testimonial of successful achievement in requisite courses of academic content.³⁰

Bestor cited this innovative practice:

In Appleton, Wisconsin, for instance, a student who has pursued a serious, substantial program received a Diploma, which "confers the honors of graduation" on him for having "satisfactorily completed the Course of Study prescribed by the Board of Education for the High School." A different kind of student, however, receives a document that looks the same but merely records the fact that he "has attended this High School through the Senior Year and is therefore entitled to this Certificate." This is a sensible and honest distinction, which ought to be universal, but isn't.³¹

In Bestor's hypothetical grade system all children would receive an academic education. The intellectual disciplines would not be only for an elite but for all future citizens of our democracy. There is no

²⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 49.

³⁰Ibid., p. 308.

³¹Arthur Bestor, "Diplomas the Easy Way," Good Housekeeping, June 1958, p. 14.

reason to suppose that "intellectual capacity" is dependent on the socio-economic class of the family. It is the responsibility of the schools to remedy the lack of cultural background in students of the lower class.³² While the gifted student is to be the "pace-setter of the school," the average student should pursue an academic curriculum derived from that of the gifted.³³ The Russian school program has shown that the student population of the United States can achieve more than at present. In the Soviet Union all pupils under compulsory education take two years of algebra, from one to four years work in biology, chemistry and physics, and three years in a foreign language. Bestor continued thus:

That the American public-school system has sacrificed the gifted child is so obvious that even die-hard educationists concede the point. The view that by doing so we have succeeded in offering a better education to the average and below-average child is a dangerous misconception, fully exposed by any comparison with the Soviet achievement. The aimlessness and the low standards of so many of our public schools have deprived our children as a group, whatever their level of ability, of the full measure of opportunity for sound education that a democratic nation should have offered them and that the American people believed they were furnishing the means to provide.³⁴

Mental training in the five intellectual disciplines is the primary purpose of Bestor's proposed secondary school curriculum. Courses in the fine arts and music are to be offered to individuals interested. The training should supply the student with "a store of knowledge" and require

³²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 113.

³³Bestor, "Do We Do Enough for the Gifted Child?" p. 79.

³⁴Bestor, "Choice in American Education," p. 78.

constant practice in "the use of the recognized tools of language and thought." There should be laboratory work for "a grasp of the method of scientific investigation." The learning should be systematic and cumulative with continuity and progression "usually over a period of years." There should be no other kind of procedure. Bestor continued with this reasoning: "If we offer a portion of our children an education different in kind and hence inferior--narrow job-training or shoddy "life adjustment"--then we are treating them as second-class citizens."³⁵

Class sessions based on the problems of youth would have no place. Nor would the core curriculum or common learnings course, in which these problems would be discussed, be allowed. The common learnings course runs from one to three hours per day for all the time of secondary school. The description of it has been given thus: "The content of the common learnings course, drawn from the subject matter of all areas of the curriculum, is organized in terms of youth and societal needs."³⁶ Bestor declared that the needs of youth can be cared for by other agencies and that the "felt needs" of adolescents are not to be compared with the needs of the nation to be fulfilled in education.³⁷ Officially endorsed problems, for example, developing tinkering hobbies and doing parlor stunts, were described by Bestor as "trivia . . . elaborated

³⁵Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

³⁶Victor M. Houston, Charles W. Sanford and J. Lloyd Trump, Guide to the Study of the Curriculum in the Secondary Schools of Illinois, I.S.S.C.P. Bulletin No. 1, August 1948, p. 22.

³⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 118-120.

beyond all reason."³⁸ Content in terms of youth and societal needs would violate the order of systematic learning. This situation, given by Bestor, seems pertinent:

If he is expected to pick up "snippets" of information from one "project" after another--if his program skips about from topic to unrelated topic--then he will not go forth with a disciplined mind. He will have been trained as a mere intellectual grasshopper.³⁹

Integrated courses, in which a number of disciplines are combined, are not desirable until the last year of secondary school or, preferably, college years. Each discipline trains the mental capacities to analyze experience and to systematize this knowledge and skill. Each has its own proper methods. Bestor said of the disciplines, "They break down the involved situations of life into separate problems susceptible of handling by powerful specialized methods."⁴⁰

Analysis of experience accordint to the separate systems of the individual disciplines must precede syn thesis of the disciplines. To combine them in the classroom without thorough analytical learning in each of them is a proposal "to train men to perform the culminating acts of thought while skipping all the antecedent steps." Bestor said of integrated courses taught prematurely, "The sponsors seem to imagine that they have found the secret of building a house from the ridgepole downward."⁴¹ He continued thus:

³⁸Ibid., pp. 145-146.

³⁹Bestor, "A Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

⁴⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 61.

⁴¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 61.

When presented at the introductory college level--and a fortiori when developed in the high school as a "core curriculum"--the omnibus "integrated" course almost inevitably degenerates. It tends to become a mere survey of accumulated facts rather than an inquiry into the processes by which these were discovered. If taught by several instructors, it tends to break down into several courses, each too slight and brief to accomplish any serious intellectual purpose. . . . its discussions tend to deteriorate into mere expressions of uninformed opinion.⁴²

Class time is to be dedicated to "accurate and ordered learning." Freedom of expression should be allowed for amplified clarification of material presented. However, in discussions the teacher has the responsibility of guarding and stating clearly the objective truth. Out of his own learning he has the duty of "giving judgment for knowledge as against ignorance, for reasoned argument as against prejudice, for intellectual seriousness as against frivolity."⁴³ Bestor took issue with James B. Conant's proposed twelfth-grade course on American problems or American government. Bestor's thought was that there would be in such a course a lack of authoritative guidance by the teacher in methodical study. Conant intended "a free discussion of controversial issues" by "a cross section of the school" for developing "mutual respect and understanding between different groups of students."⁴⁴ While seeing the utility of discussions of public issue for students about to enter into adult society, Bestor recommended that they take place in assemblies or

⁴²Ibid., p. 65.

⁴³Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 556.

⁴⁴James B. Conant, The American High School Today, pp. 75-76, quoted by Bestor ibidem, p. 555.

clubs. He ended with this suggested adjustment of "free expression of opinion" and "acquisition of precise knowledge" in the schools:

The public school can encompass both, but only if it finds the means of creating, in the extracurricular realm, a genuine forum for the discussion of controversial questions, and only if it preserves inviolate the original and indispensable dedication of its classrooms to thorough, accurate, and ordered learning.⁴⁵

A full curriculum of courses in the history of the United States and other governments from ancient times to the present would occupy all but the final year of secondary education. For the seniors Bestor recommended a year of political science on the constitutional system of the United States in comparison with other governments. The study of history must be systematic, according to chronological sequence, and the methods of the science of history should be taught. History is not to be mixed with the social sciences in social studies courses on contemporary problems.

A fortiori, the personal problems of adolescents, driver training, first aid, accident prevention, and the use of drugs and alcohol are not to be treated as units of social studies, taking up time that should be devoted to history or political science. These topics, sometimes introduced in accord with ill-advised state legislation, afford no intellectual training, make for a presentation of unrelated bodies of facts, and have only "the most superficial resemblances and only the most tenuous intellectual connections" in relation to the social sciences. They arise out of a preoccupation with life adjustment and the "evanescent

⁴⁵Bestor, *ibid.*, p. 557.

'real-life' interests" of the pupil.⁴⁶ Bestor spoke of social studies thus:

As offered in many American schools today, they provide no cumulative knowledge, they lead to no over-all conclusions, they lay no foundations for advanced study, they generate none of the intellectual competence prerequisite to mature citizenship.⁴⁷

In like manner, the content of English courses has been "curtailed and disorganized" so that "the widespread illiteracy that has resulted from deficiencies in public-school programs in English composition and literature is apparent."⁴⁸ The secondary school curriculum is for the systematic pursuit of the fundamental disciplines. Bestor gave this description of the "lack of quality" in the school curriculum:

For a generation, American schools have been fooling around with "soft" courses that have nothing whatever to do with teaching a child to think. When the Office of Education last surveyed the offerings of American high schools, it reported 274 different subjects were being offered for credit. Here are some of them: "beauty culture," "fly tying," "vocational selling," "radio speaking and broadcasting." Almost equally valueless for the mind are the watered-down courses in basic subjects: "girls' science," "socialized high-school arithmetic," "English experience course."⁴⁹

To maintain the systematic and scholarly content of history taught as background to contemporary problems, or organized in units, or integrated with other social sciences in social studies, Bestor proposed that a series of source units in history be published under the auspices

⁴⁶Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 551.

⁴⁷Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 552.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 550.

⁴⁹Bestor, "The Soft Curriculum," p. 47.

of the American Historical Association. The move was a concession to current practice. About fifty units would be prepared from appropriate curricular topics on history, political science and contemporary problems for high schools. Maps, pictures, cartoons, and graphs with teaching aids and annotated bibliographies should accompany each pamphlet-unit. Historians, a teacher, an editor, and special consultants would cooperate in the work. Bestor described the well-ordered and scholarly content of the proposed pamphlets thus:

In summary, each "unit" would consist of (i) an introduction emphasizing background, (ii) a narrative of the topic itself, (iii) an analysis of the issues which the topic raises, (iv) a carefully organized selection of sources presenting the evidence on these issues, (v) a conclusion and summary pointing up the relation of the topic to contemporary problems, and (vi) a discussion of teaching aids.⁵⁰

Six years later he was able to say this:

An admirable example of what can be done is afforded by a series of pamphlets (now numbering 30) that have been published since 1957 by the Service Center for Teachers of History, sponsored by the American Historical Association, Washington, D. C.⁵¹

Teaching is essentially a verbal process, Relia may be used to great advantage in the early years of elementary education to arouse interest and stimulate abstract thinking. However, when the child has a good grasp of abstract symbols, he learns "more quickly, accurately,

⁵⁰Bestor, The Restoration of Learning, pp. 237-238. The whole memorandum was proposed to the Committee on Teaching April 14, 1954.

⁵¹Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 554, footnote.

and systematically from the printed page" than from audio-visual aids, realia and activity programs.⁵² Although it is necessary to begin with the experience of the child and to arouse and stimulate interest, mental training is essentially intellectual discipline through abstract thinking. Interest is a means to the end of learning. Puerile experience must lead to the abstractions taken from all experience and systematized in the processes of the intellectual disciplines. Ultimately the interest of the pupil in studies must come from within. In relying on sensory objects and activity programs too heavily, the educationists are projecting the methods of the primary grades upward into the secondary school. Dewey had this to say:

Anything which can be called a study, whether arithmetic, history, geography, or one of the natural sciences, must be derived from materials which at the outset fall within the scope of ordinary life-experience. . . . But finding the material for learning within experience is only the first step. The next step is the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organized form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person.⁵³

Examinations are necessary to maintain the standards of the school system. The objective test may serve as the ordinary daily quiz and even as the examination for the course. Bestor noted this advantage: "In view of the large number of students to be handled in present-day schools, the quickly (even mechanically) scored 'objective' test is a

⁵²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 109.

⁵³John Dewey, Experience and Education, pp. 86-87, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, pp. 109-110.

useful tool."⁵⁴ But essay-type examinations are more indicative of depth of understanding. The essay type should especially be used for comprehensive examinations. Whereas objective tests show the possession of certain knowledge and skill, the essay examination requires the use of this knowledge and skill in active and systematically structured reasoning. Bestor gave this support:

Only a well-designed examination of the essay type comes close to requiring a student to function as an educated man must function in a real situation. Only such an examination requires him to bring all his varied powers to bear upon a problem. . . . He must express himself clearly and cogently, not by marking the right square, but by writing clear English sentences, composing them into coherent paragraphs, and practicing the varied arts of composition and organization.⁵⁵

Comprehensive examinations should be given to all students at the completion of elementary school, at the end of the period of compulsory school attendance, and as the final examination for the secondary school diploma. The Regents' examinations and those of the College Entrance Examination Board might serve as models. These examinations should be "administered on a state-wide basis and graded by independent examiners."⁵⁶ Moreover, Bestor proposed that federal funds be used to set up "an independent, nation-wide system of examinations that would test, by common standard, the results of the operations of our 48 separate State school systems." To motivate citizens to improve conditions he urged that

⁵⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 335.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 336.

⁵⁶Bestor, "Future Direction of American Education," p. 377.

"objective comparisons of the results" be published.⁵⁷

Maintenance of objective standards by state-wide examinations would entail the failure of students much below par. Bestor said of the public school student, "There is nothing undemocratic in judging him by his achievement, and in refusing to hand him on a platter what he has shown himself unable or unwilling to learn."⁵⁸ The need for remedial work would be pointed out to the secondary school authorities by these examinations and, in general, they could provide for different programs to suit the varied abilities of the incoming students.

The examinations at the end of the period of compulsory schooling would mark out students of outstanding ability who would be intending to give up school because of poverty. Bestor proposed that "special financial assistance, covering subsistence" be given them by the school system. It was found that one-fifth of the top 25 percent (about 100,000) did not remain to graduate from high school.⁵⁹ This is the group to which "scholarships for impecunious students of high intellectual ability" should be offered. Students of low ability and low achievement, little interest and no effort, could be let depart with no regret. Certainly 100 percent attendance until the end of high school should not be the ideal "if that holding power is achieved by watering down the curriculum and debasing all the standards of academic achievement." Bestor

⁵⁷Arthur Bestor, "What Went Wrong with U.S. Schools," U. S. News and World Report, 24 January 1958, p. 73.

⁵⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 353.

⁵⁹John D. Millett, Financing Higher Education, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 363. The figures represent the estimate of the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training.

continued thus:

If we keep a student in school under compulsory attendance laws until the age of sixteen or seventeen or eighteen, we have done our fell duty by him in terms of educational opportunity. If no spark has been lit by then, if the student has not by then been inspired to second the efforts of the school by serious, conscientious, faithful intellectual effort of his own, then we should allow him to depart in peace.⁶⁰

Bestor's scale of priorities listed in eighth place "programs--'life adjustment' and the like--the principal purpose of which is to attract the least able and least ambitious back into the classrooms." First in importance is the "standard program of intellectual training in the fundamental disciplines, geared to the needs of the serious students and the capacities of the upper two-thirds." The provision of "special opportunities for the exceptionally able" is second. The expense of added small classes should be borne gladly since "the real educational investment of the community" is in this "highest third" of the class. Next come "adequate remedial programs for the lowest third."

In fourth place should be a program of physical education for all children, "sharply distinguished from an interscholastic athletic athletic schedule." Any interscholastic athletic program should rank in ninth and last place. Elsewhere Bestor said, "Physical education makes sense only if it is linked with a knowledge of physiology." To be opposed is "the diversion of school resources into the subsidizing of gladiatorial contests between muscular mercenaries."⁶¹ Vocational training and extracurricular activities would rank fifth and sixth

⁶⁰Bestor, "Future Direction of American Education," p. 376.

⁶¹Bestor, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," p. 12.

respectively. In seventh place would be the innovative program "to ensure the continuance in school of all students of top ability."

Bestor added, "This effort must be carefully planned, for it may involve scholarship grants carrying allowances for subsistence."⁶²

Pupil hours spent in the first five activities should determine the amount of the state foundation grant to the local school systems. The major teaching of the disciplines should be weighted twice, the special programs for the talented and the slow once each, and physical education and vocational training one-half each. The other programs would not be considered because they are not as important nor do they benefit the state as much. As a result, local authorities would "bring as many as possible . . . into their fundamental programs." They would "give first attention in their budgets to the fundamentals." Less expenditure elsewhere would render more likely a much needed increase in teachers' salaries.⁶³

At the end of secondary school, there should be "a rigorous set of examinations" for students in vocational training. "Special diplomas" should be issued to such graduates to guarantee their competency in their types of work to their future employers. Vocational training should be "taken seriously, and not regarded merely as a program for the academically incompetent."⁶⁴ These courses should be "carefully planned in terms of the actual opportunities in the community, and the actual

⁶²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 364-365.

⁶³Ibid., p. 371.

⁶⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 355.

expectations with respect to continuance in school of the students enrolled in the courses."⁶⁵ Vocational training, the complement of liberal education, should come "as late in a student's educational career as possible." No more time should be given it "than is absolutely necessary to assure the necessary technical proficiency."⁶⁶ However, the courses should be "thorough and systematic." The desired procedure is that vocational courses "in general would not be open to students under the age of seventeen." Bestor gave as an exception "one or two noncredit courses in such everyday skills as cooking, sewing, carpentry, typing or automobile-driving."⁶⁷

The secondary school diploma, to be given only to those who have completed the required courses (twenty-four units) in the five fundamental disciplines, should be dependent on success in the final examinations. The student who would spend the normal time in high school "without completing the standard academic program" would be given only a certificate "with his actual achievement recorded on the back." In all justice the diplomas should have genuine significance for both the colleges and the future employers of the graduates. Bestor recommended state-wide finals in these words: "These examinations might also serve for college entrance provided they are prepared and administered by an agency independent of the local school system."⁶⁸

Beyond the tenth year in school and past sixteen in chronological age, the general period of compulsory schooling, education should be

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 365.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 80.

⁶⁷Ibid., 326.

⁶⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 355.

treated as "a privilege to be earned." Its rewards should be earned by "merit and effort." Bestor continued thus:

The high school is obliged to admit every child of appropriate age, but it is not obliged to graduate every child. Public policy as written into law, points to the last years of secondary school as years of sifting and winnowing. The senior high school is the appropriate place in our system for making a gradual transition from the principle of offering education to everyone, regardless of ability or interest or effort, to the principle of encouraging merit, rewarding industry, and providing further educational advantages to those only who are willing to earn them.⁶⁹

The educationists' plan to extend universal education upwards is wasteful of public money and unjust to the able student. For universal education is "inseparable from deleterious effects." Education before sixteen, universal and compulsory, is an expenditure necessary to "national security" to combat "mass ignorance"; expenditures for advanced training are "educational investments, for they create the productive intellectual capital of our society."⁷⁰ No great profit can come from secondary school programs "high in theatrical interest but low in content" that require neither homework nor examinations. Such lowering of standards retains lazy dullards "by depriving the ablest students of incentives." Intellectual challenge and competition are much-needed stimulants for the serious, capable student. Necessary classes and depth in teaching the fundamentals may not even be offered because of preoccupation with potential drop-outs. Bestor added, "The

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 362.

⁷⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 359.

fundamental program of the school can be buried under a mass of trivia."⁷¹

Secondary school graduates bound for college should be required to take college entrance examinations. Thereby the student gives evidence that he has acquired the knowledge and skills of the disciplines of secondary education. Bestor called for essay examinations to raise admission standards. He said this:

College and university faculties must take the lead in re-establishing comprehensive essay-type examinations as the basic means of evaluating educational preparation and measuring educational achievement. The obvious place to start is in connection with admission to college, for an alarming decline in the standards of American higher education can be attributed to the gradual abandonment of searching and effective entrance examinations. Professional educationists seem to prefer aptitude tests. . . . But a college needs students who are not merely apt but well-trained, if it is to be an institution of higher learning.⁷²

The "unselective" admission policies of state-supported colleges and universities "do not represent the considered judgment of the faculties of these institutions as to the standards that ought to be maintained."⁷³ The fact that "small, privately supported colleges" have produced a disproportionately large number of "intellectually productive" graduates seemed to Bestor to be due, in part, to their selective entrance policies.⁷⁴ His own impression from a comparison of his experience in both types of institutions was that the lack of selective

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 363-364.

⁷²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 341.

⁷³Ibid., p. 382.

⁷⁴R. H. Knapp and H. B. Goodrich, Origins of American Scientists; R. H. Knapp and J. J. Greenbaum, The Younger American Scholar; cited by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 381.

entrance standards in the state universities reduced competition and caused "intellectual apathy" among the capable students. More concrete evidence of students admitted with poor preparation is the practice of "enrolling college students in what are actually high-school (and sometimes elementary-school) courses."⁷⁵ The fault, to be remedied by rigorous entrance examinations, lies in defective training in the secondary schools. Bestor expanded thus:

The college was becoming a preparatory school in its first two years primarily because it had discovered that the high-school courses for which college entrance credit was being given were so varied in quality and content that the college could not depend upon them to furnish a common basis of knowledge upon which advanced work could be built.⁷⁶

Therefore, rigorous entrance examinations should be required by all colleges and universities. To avoid competition for larger enrollments at the cost of quality in the student body, universities should band together to have entrance examinations standardized and made uniform. Bestor gave this recommendation: "The College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service are agencies with experience applicable to the problem."⁷⁷

The higher admission standards would call for a distinction between entrance and matriculation. Although all students would be admitted "as at present," they would enter no courses for college credit until they had passed the matriculation examinations. Meanwhile they could enroll in courses reclassified as "preparatory." As a result, secondary schools

⁷⁵Bestor, "Choice in American Education," p.67.

⁷⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 346.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 351.

would be under pressure to prepare their college bound students well. All college work would be "genuine higher education" and, in some cases, "the college program could be shortened to three years" even with a gain in the level of attainment.⁷⁸

The quality of the student body could be improved by higher standards in admission and subsequent courses. Bestor had this specific plan:

What I suggest amounts, therefore, to gradually eliminating the academically least fit quarter of the students who are currently able to get by in college and replacing them with an equal number of genuinely able students.⁷⁹

The opportunity was being offered in the prediction that college candidates would increase by one-third within five years. "Extravagant waste" of taxpayers' money should be avoided. Quality should be preferred over quantity in the student body. The strained facilities of higher education should not be expanded for ten or twenty years, when higher standards were well established. Existent "low-grade vocational programs and courses of an even more meaningless kind" would be abolished. Bestor prophesied this happy result: "The quality and efficiency of American higher education would be raised immeasurably by such a step, and the tonic effect of really vigorous intellectual competition would enhance the result."⁸⁰

The President's Commission in 1947 had declared that "at least 49 percent of our population has the mental ability to complete 14 years of schooling" and "at least 32 percent . . . to complete an advanced

⁷⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 350-351.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 383.

⁸⁰Ibidem.

liberal or specialized professional education." The figure of 32 percent was arrived at from the score of 110 achieved by 90 percent of the college graduates and 32 percent of the others in the Army General Classification Test, administered to ten million men. Therefore, the Commission proposed "an increase in undergraduate enrollments of 'about 50 percent more than the continuation of prewar trends would produce.'"⁸¹ Bestor noted that the judgment of the Commission, deduced from correct statistical reasoning, meant this:

In effect the Commission is saying that every person in the United States whose mental ability is equal to that of the poorest college graduate of today ought to go to college, and that the cost of enabling him to attend for four years should be met largely out of public funds.⁸²

The realization of this program for an enrollment of 4.6 million students would require "a physical plant valued at 12.8 billion dollars, more than treble the 4 billion dollars already invested."⁸³ Bestor found it to be too expensive an investment for the mediocre education of the many without talent.

The only adequately productive investment was to raise scholastic standards, maintain the existing facilities, and replace the lowest quarter with more able and industrious students. For these purposes scholarships should be established on a large scale. Although students of

⁸¹President's Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education for American Democracy, vol. 1, pp. 39-43, quoted in Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 374.

⁸²Bestor, *ibid.*, p. 375.

⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 376.

wealthier families might compete just for the honor, "the actual stipend, however, should be fixed in terms of some objective index of the student's financial need."⁸⁴ So that privately supported institutions might benefit, the scholarship student should be able to go to the college of his choice.

The need for incentives and financial help to move talented students toward college is seen from these figures: "For the top 25 percent of the eighteen-year-olds, 40 percent enter college and 54 percent graduate."⁸⁵ It has been estimated that 40 percent of the top quarter of high school graduates lack motivation to continue, "20 percent would go if they had financial assistance," and the rest enter college.⁸⁶ Competitive scholarships would give motivation and aid to the deserving. Bestor recommended this proposal as a base capable of wide expansion:

The Commission on Financing Higher Education suggests a program that could be expected to bring into the colleges each year approximately 151 thousand young men and women who belong to the upper quarter of the population in intellectual ability but who do not now attend an institution of higher learning. The cost is estimated at 226 million dollars a year. . . . only one-sixth of that which would be required for a blanket expansion of the sort proposed by the President's Commission.⁸⁷

A scholarship system for the able and industrious would offer universal educational opportunity. Scholarship winners and other students

⁸⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 388.

⁸⁵John D. Millet, Financing Higher Education in the United States, p. 49, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 388.

⁸⁶Byron S. Hollinshead, Who Should Go to College, p. 162, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 392.

⁸⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 299-300.

of high ability should replace the lower quarter of the college student body. Only thus will the educational investment avoid wasteful spending and receive a return of public service from the trained graduates. Rigorous and thorough essay-type examinations should decide the scholarship competition and the matriculation into college courses. Meriting the secondary school diploma and graduating from elementary school should be determined in like manner. Agencies independent of the school system should administer the examinations at the transition from elementary to secondary school and from thence to college. Determination of the efficiency of the school system would result from the state-wide and nation-wide comparison.

Competent proficiency in the three Rs is mandatory for the elementary school graduate. The diploma for secondary school should be given only to the students who have completed a full curriculum of courses in the fundamental disciplines. Vocational training should be in non-credit courses. However, if the pupil has concentrated his effort in vocational courses, he should be given a special vocational diploma after thorough examinations. A conglomeration of other courses should merit a certificate in place of a diploma.

Learning in the secondary school should be principally by verbal means with little time allowed for visual aids, realia, and field trips. Courses should be analytic and systematic, not a treatment of a series of unrelated problems calling for the use of all disciplines. The teacher should direct the class to the learning of accurate knowledge; no class should degenerate into shallow, voluble discussions teeming with fallacious opinions. Driver training and instruction in first aid should be extracurricular. Social studies especially should be free of these

unrelated units and be dedicated principally to periods of history.

Every effort should be made to accommodate teaching to the great differences in intelligence among the pupils. Homogeneous grouping is the most efficient means to guarantee rapid and extensive learning for the academically talented. Slower advancement in the fundamentals can be adequately offered to the slower pupils in homogeneous groups. Although chronological age is to determine extracurricular activities, teaching should be adapted to the point of development in mental age reached by the pupil. A reconstructed grade system with periodic years of review and slower advancement for the less talented was an original proposal by Bestor.

All education is to be concerned with the fundamental disciplines. A command of these is to be required of secondary school pupils for graduation. The student who lacks ambition and talent would do well to drop out at the close of compulsory schooling. Watered down courses are a waste of time and money. On the other hand able and industrious students are to be encouraged to continue with aid for subsistence, if necessary, even in high school. An extensive scholarship program should be set up throughout the nation. There should be universal training only in the fundamentals during the period of compulsory education. Universal educational opportunity will be used to advantage only by those with ability and merit.

CHAPTER V

COLLEGE AND TEACHER EDUCATION

The five disciplines of secondary school give the broad and deep foundation necessary for further liberal education in college. To see that high standards are maintained, rigorous entrance examinations should be set up by all higher institutions, especially state universities. Bestor's counsels were that universities unite in administering the examinations in a common project, that they employ the services of the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service, that they cut off the lowest quarter of applicants for economical and educational efficiency, and that they require students to take non-credit, preparatory courses in fields in which they will have been found to be deficient. With high standards of scholarship thus assured, colleges and universities would proceed more productively in the dissemination of higher learning in the mental disciplines.

College is essentially for a liberal education. The disciplines with their distinct systems of reasoning, which are to a greater degree involved in all the intellectual activity of life, are to be offered to all. Other disciplines of less application in extension may be available for specialists or advanced students. Bestor said of the more necessary disciplines, "Some disciplines are fundamental, in the sense that they represent essential ways of thinking, which can be generalized and applied to a wide range of intellectual problems."¹ Examples given

¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 396.

are "controlled experimentation," "historical investigation," and "philosophical criticism." These fundamental ways of thinking, few in number, should be determined by the colleges and placed in the curriculum. The student should be limited to these fundamental disciplines in choosing his courses for liberal education. Thus the unity of all knowledge would be followed in study and a satisfactory common learning experience in the cultural tradition would be shared by the students. Bestor said this of the college curriculum:

The ideal of the college of liberal arts and science is to raise up a body of men and women who understand in common the fundamentals of intellectual life in its various branches, and who are able to apply to their own problems not one, but a choice of powerful intellectual techniques over which they have achieved some measure of disciplined control.²

The prevalent practice in colleges is to impose on the student a requirement of general education courses. Bestor preferred the term, "liberal education," to exclude "rambling, catch-all courses, geared to the meager abilities of the marginal student" and "college versions of 'life-adjustment' training."³ General education requirements vary widely in the number of credit hours and in the content and structure of the classes. They range from direct, systematic study of the basic disciplines to broad, interdisciplinary surveys; there are studies of facts, conclusions, actual usage, and the problems of contemporary, individual life as opposed to the in-depth study of the systematic

²Ibid., pp. 395-396.

³Ibid., p. 403.

structure of the humanities and the sciences. Some outstanding features of general education requirements have been described thus:

A common conception of general education is that all students, whatever their ultimate specialization, can profit from a program of general education (regarded often as some portion of the liberal arts) taken prior to or concurrently with their professional or specialized curriculums. . . . Proposed solutions differ in the extent of choice accorded the student regarding his courses; the number of courses or hours of general education required; the central emphasis of the program; relevance to immediate problems of living; continuity, sequence, and integration; and relationship to specialized education. . . . Some form of general education requirement, involving as much as 50 percent of the degree requirements, is common in liberal arts colleges. Requirements of 30 to 40 percent are found in teachers colleges and 20 to 30 percent in institutions with technical and pre-professional curriculums. . . . General education courses fall into at least five groups: communications, social science, natural science, humanities, and personal adjustment. . . . Although the original survey course came under heavy fire for superficiality, broad courses in science, social science, and the humanities remain as one of the most easily recognizable earmarks of general education.⁴

Liberal education in the colleges of liberal arts and sciences was praised by Bestor because of the similar interests shared by the students as a result of their common courses in the intellectual disciplines. Considered as a transitional phase between the secondary school and specialized graduate study, the college fosters both freedom and individual responsibility in studies together with common intellectual interests. Bestor found the free exchange of ideas related to the college courses to result in "the habit of discussion and mutual understanding." Of the students Bestor said, "They are preparing themselves for the kind of public life in which a fundamental unity of

⁴Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 3rd ed., s.v., "General Education," by Paul L. Dressel and Margaret F. Lorimer.

purpose and principle underlies even the most striking differences, thus permitting honest compromise."⁵ Thus, in Bestor's opinion, the liberal arts college has helped the United States and Britain avoid the serious political disruptions of Continental Europe.

The courses in liberal or general education should stress the methodology, the theoretical reasoning, the distinctive way of thinking proper to the discipline that is being taught. For the specialist in the course, the facts and formulas will have to be mastered extensively for thorough knowledge. For the non-specialist a comprehension of the processes of reasoning, the systematic structure, the theory and methodology of the discipline is more important. A good many facts and formulas will be learned this way indirectly because "memory and disciplined thinking do go hand in hand," although "it is the latter that really counts."⁶ Bestor decried the lack of depth in the following: "Courses originally planned for specialists have been adapted for general students by eliminating or reducing the discussion of methodology and theory, and crowding in as much purely factual information as possible." His counsel for classes for non-specialists followed thus: "The instructors in charge would eschew the encyclopedic approach, should select with care the topics that exemplify basic methodological and theoretical questions, and should concentrate upon making perfectly clear the kinds of thinking involved."⁷

⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 395.

⁶Ibid., p. 400.

⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 401.

Survey courses tend to alight methodology and theory in favor of a great accumulation of factual subject-matter; they offer the conclusions without the substantiating reasoning processes. Interdisciplinary survey courses or integrated courses are "primarily ... for students already specializing in the general area of knowledge dealt with."⁸ Since each discipline has its own structure and techniques of investigation, each discipline should be learned separately before integration or synthesis with another for learning purposes. Bestor explained the matter more fully in this selection:

The use of interdisciplinary research, however, derives from the fact that each discipline has developed--by virtue of being an independent, organized discipline--certain powerful tools of its own complementary to, but different from the tools of its sister discipline. Until these various methods have been mastered, each in its own terms, the interdisciplinary approach is sheer illusion. The power to generalize presupposes the power to analyze.⁹

It follows that interdisciplinary survey courses are not introductory courses but advanced ones. Therefore, they normally should be deferred to the later years of college, "where they can contribute greatly to unity of intellectual life." Bestor asserted the lesser value of such a course given at the beginning of college:

It tends to become a mere survey of accumulated facts rather than an inquiry into the processes by which these were discovered. If taught by several instructors, it tends to break down into several courses, each too slight and brief to accomplish any serious intellectual purpose.¹⁰

Distribution requirements in liberal or general education could,

⁸Ibid., p. 64.

⁹Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 552.

¹⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 65.

in Bestor's opinion, be improved by more apt concentration. "Three distinct kinds of intellectual training" are to be found in liberal education: "thorough, and hence creative', command of one discipline"; "control over the basic and related intellectual skills that are necessary to successful work in his field of specialization"; "breadth of intellectual understanding."¹¹ To secure breadth of understanding for the student, the practice of colleges is to require a number of courses in widely dispersed disciplines. Bestor's contention was that not enough time could be allotted to the study of any of these numerous distribution requirements for adequate mastery. Psychologists and physiologists, said Bestor, found that a certain measurable intensity of stimuli is necessary to produce a response; below the critical point of intensity there is no reaction. It is inferred that here Bestor was applying the theory of Johann Freiderich Herbart, originator of the concept of "threshold of consciousness," and the Weber-Fechner law of stimuli and sensation. Bestor's argument was that prolonged study even in lesser subjects was necessary to bring about the critical point of intensity of stimuli or the threshold status in understanding. Confidence and enjoyment in the discipline comes only then. As a measure Bestor pointed to the two college years generally agreed upon as the bare minimum for a language.

Therefore, Bestor would convert the distribution requirements into courses concentrated on the study of a minor. The result would be more adequate depth of learning. Determining the nature of the minor would

¹¹Ibid., p. 403.

take care of breadth of intellectual understanding. Bestor's required minor would be in a field of study whose "processes of thought" would be of "almost opposite character" to those of the student's major. He gave this illustration: "The discipline of chemistry, for example, is at an opposite pole from the discipline of literary criticism."¹² At the end of two or three years of study, "which would bring the student well beyond the threshold of genuine understanding," there would be a comprehensive examination on the minor. Thus, in place of the too widely dispersed effort of the distribution requirements, the student would have adequate and useful comprehension of a discipline far removed from his major field; as a result, he would have a better understanding of the intellectual endeavors of others of opposite interests. In continuing education the minor would afford the basis for an interdisciplinary course.

The student's major field of specialization should be accompanied by a selection of related, supporting courses. Bestor said this:

The greater his achievement as a specialist, the broader must be his fund of general knowledge and the wider his acquaintance with other ways of thinking. . . . Genuine specialization always involves the careful study of related fields.¹³

If it becomes necessary for an advanced student to take a course in a new field, he should be allowed to enroll in the introductory course for full credit. This is contrary to the general practice, which requires him to take an advanced course for full credit "without knowing anything of the fundamental processes of thought involved."¹⁴ No student should

¹²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 406.

¹³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 398.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 399.

seek out courses of low intellectual content as an easy way of amassing credits. This practice is possible to some extent because of the free-elective system. To combat it and to uphold high standards of learning, Bestor urged comprehensive examinations in the major and related fields at the end of the four years of college.

Liberal education was characterized by Bestor as "training in the scholarly and scientific disciplines basic to intellectual life."¹⁵ It is concerned not with "training in the 'know-how' but training in the intellectual components of the profession, that is to say, the scholarly and scientific disciplines underlying it."¹⁶ Liberal education is to give the broad, fundamental disciplines that are the base for the intense, narrow study of the professional disciplines or the skills and "body of practical information connected with some specified vocation." Courses narrowed down to practical professional or vocational training are not to be classed as liberal education. Bestor stated this conviction:

The vocational or professional aspect of the training is something added to liberal education. It should not be reckoned as a part of liberal education at all. . . . There is no place in genuinely liberal education for a major in journalism, or home economics, or pedagogy, even though courses in these vocational subjects may be taken as supplements to a program in liberal education.¹⁷

It is to be concluded that the general education requirements of a college should be satisfied only by the broad, fundamental disciplines

¹⁵Bestor, "Education and Society," p. 78.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 398.

of the liberal arts and sciences. This standard, Bestor reasoned, would also preclude courses in "social conditioning," "indoctrination in the attitudes, customs, and standards of the culture."¹⁸ Therefore, the following innovations as general education requirements in communications, mathematics, and personal adjustment are unacceptable:

Traditional practices in teaching grammar, theme writing, and formal speaking have given way to new practices which direct attention to the language needs of the students, to the problems which they confront daily, and to an increase in language power which will more directly help them achieve their own ends and make some contribution to society. . . . Consumer mathematics courses, treating problems of insurance, taxation, mortgages, and simple statistics, are sometimes given but as a rule are not highly regarded by mathematicians. . . . The topics found in such courses include personal and social adjustment, marriage, health, study habits, vocational adjustment, and philosophy of life.¹⁹

In addition to liberal education, there are professional education and vocational education. This is demanded by the needs of society and the accepted motivation of the typical student for social and economic betterment. Whereas liberal education is broad, fundamental mental training, indirectly applicable to life, professional education and vocational education are specialized, "concerned with the application of knowledge to specific practical problems and specific occupations."²⁰ Professional and vocational training should be "the final stage in education." For, special training for a vocation can be useless if a

¹⁸Bestor, "Education and American Society," pp. 77-78.

¹⁹Dressel and Lorimer, "General Education," pp. 576-577.

²⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 66.

person decides not to follow that walk of life. All the prerequisites for professional and vocational training should be determined and taught as general education requirements, not as "special pre-vocational courses." No more time should be devoted to such training than is deemed necessary to guarantee proficient performance in the vocational occupation, whether the time be months or years. Experienced practitioners should determine the courses necessary for adequate training. These programs should be "thorough and systematic" with rigorous tests for validation of achievement.²¹

The intellectual content determines whether education is liberal, professional, or vocational. The fundamental intellectual disciplines of liberal education give a reason for the distinction between professional and vocational education. Professional education is more directly related to them inasmuch as the professional student specializes in intensified study of particular disciplines narrowed down for his professional needs. In general, the further a student goes in liberal education before professional or vocational studies, the greater will be his potentiality of achievement in profession or vocation. The tradesman or technician can do with much less basic training in the arts and sciences than can the professional men. Vocational education is concerned with a body of practical facts, established data, and the general techniques of their application to limited fields of endeavor. There is no study in depth of the reasons behind the facts nor great

²¹Ibid., p. 81.

demand for original research. Bestor described the types of education in this way:

Professional education . . . consists of advanced and highly specialized education in the intellectual disciplines that are particularly needed in the practice of a given profession or occupation. . . . The studies themselves are not different from the studies that belong to liberal education. What is different is the narrow and intense way in which they have to be pursued. Vocational education involves narrowness raised to the second power. . . . The concern of vocational education is with the practical skills used in a given occupation, as contradistinguished from the theoretical knowledge that underlies it and through which it advances. . . . Liberal education differs from both . . . in treating the student first of all as a member of the human race rather than as a potential member of some particular profession or craft. The emphasis . . . is upon those great interests which men possess in common, and its object is to develop those powers of mind that come closest to universal applicability.²²

Mental training in the fundamental disciplines is the prime purpose of the college and university. The major effort of higher education should be dedicated to liberal education. All courses, professional and vocational, should have a great amount of analytical, abstract intellectual content. "Social utility" should not be the norm for establishing programs and courses. Bestor contended, "The question for higher education is not how intrinsically important a given vocation may be, but how much knowledge and what degree of intellectual mastery are prerequisite to engaging in it."²³

The historical change in the neoclassical curriculum of the university to include the sciences and professional and vocational education took place in the last part of the nineteenth century in the United States. When the new programs were begun, intellectual content

²²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 75.

²³Bestor, "The American University," p. 185.

was an essential attribute for each and all. Sciences were set up on a par with the liberal arts because they contained the great intellectual interests and accomplishments of the learned world from the time of Newton. Not "immediate and practical vocational utility" established the sciences in the curriculum but their intellectual content with its tremendous impact on society did so. Bestor said of the reason for the scientific curriculum, "The real argument is that no man can be intellectually competent in the modern world without a reasonable command of the various ways of thinking that are embodied in its basic disciplines, of which chemistry is certainly one."²⁴ Law and medicine, curricular offerings in foreign universities from their rise, are "learned professions, dependent on vast bodies of organized knowledge and requiring the exercise of highly disciplined intellectual powers." "Newer professions were acquiring the same characteristics, notably engineering and scientific agriculture," Bestor continued. Even the land-grant colleges of the Morrill Act stressed intellectual content when established "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."²⁵

In the twentieth century the trend has been toward utilitarian and vocational courses of narrow, factual, and practical study as opposed to broad, abstract, and theoretical learning. Courses increasingly have reflected "the direct approach" to practical utility, teaching "not botany but vocational agriculture, not economics but business management,

²⁴Bestor, "The American University," p. 183.

²⁵Ibid., p. 185.

not chemistry but home economics, not scholarship and science but applied pedagogy."²⁶ A different point of view of the amalgamation of the intellectual and the practical in the new courses follows:

It became the one function of the university movement in America to blur the distinction that had long existed between the connotation of profession and that of vocation. . . . The university would offer itself as an appropriate agency of instruction and preparation for all careers for which some formal body of knowledge existed. . . . The elective principle brought within the range of undergraduates all kinds of courses and programs of concentration for which the most compelling argument was their usefulness in preparing for a career. . . . The American university . . . thus became a collection of postgraduate professional schools, schools which replaced the apprentice system in law, put responsibility into the study of medicine, tended to relegate theology into a separate corner, created education as an advanced field of study, and respondent to the felt necessities of the time or the region, thus spawning appropriate schools . . . of business administration, forestry, journalism, veterinary medicine, social work, or Russian studies.²⁷

Adhering to mental training through the intellectual discipline as the purpose of education, Bestor found numerous specific practices open to criticism in the university vocational programs. He charged that undergraduates can find and elect "programs that have very little intellectual content . . . programs that exist only to let mediocre students get by." He continued thus: "But universities are cluttered up with a lot of courses in radio announcing, advertisement writing, retail-store management, home economics and the like, that belong in trade schools, not

²⁶Ibid., p. 184.

²⁷Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Random House, 1962; Vintage Books), pp. 339-343.

universities."²⁸ Graduate study offers many courses "which cannot conceivably be justified in intellectual terms and which represent the capitulation of the university to the crassest kinds of vocational pressure." Among others, Bestor cited the following titles of vocational courses: "Sales Campaigns"; "Library Service to Children and Young People"; "Advanced Advertising Principles"; "Evaluation of Recreation Resources and Programs."²⁹ Colleges and departments of education offer numerous pseudo-vocational programs in administration, an occupation "in which highly specialized technical knowledge plays little part." Some examples given by Bestor are these: "Educational Administration"; "School Finance"; "Public School Business Management." Bestor condemned these doctoral courses as "endlessly repetitious" and "devoid of intellectual content."³⁰

The remedy is to remove from the university curriculum courses and programs that are of low intellectual content. Bestor gave this norm: "The question for higher education is not how intrinsically important a given vocation may be, but how much knowledge and what degree of intellectual mastery are prerequisite to engaging in it." But he said, "The difficulty is that the line is hard to draw and even harder to hold."³¹ The judgment often will be subjective. Bestor said as much when he classified particular undergraduate degrees according to liberal arts and sciences, professional and vocational. His admission was, "This classification rests upon an act of judgment of my own, for which

²⁸Bestor, "We Are Less Educated," p. 76.

²⁹Bestor, "The American University," pp. 185-186.

³⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 69.

³¹Bestor, "The American University," p. 185.

I assume full responsibility."³²

Vocationalist groups, creating and implementing the programs, have been powerful in the politics of the university and "can appeal to unthinking support from without."³³ Support for vocational programs comes from students interested in economic and social advancement and from prospective employers of the vocational graduates. Bestor pointed to the free-elective system as the initial means for the introduction of the sciences. He then remarked critically that it also brought into the university applied sciences and job training. The free-elective system is "debilitating" to the strength of the curriculum in Bestor's opinion, for it allows the student to seek out a number of easy courses, mostly vocational, of little intellectual content and use the credits for qualification for graduation. Bestor proposed comprehensive examinations for the bachelor degree as an antidote.³⁴ A general summary of Bestor's pertinent thought follows:

That liberal education must often be supplemented by specialized professional or vocational training is obvious. Equally obvious is the fact that the fields in which such training may appropriately be offered grow more numerous with the passage of time. But the notion that vocational training can take the place of thorough study of the fundamental intellectual disciplines as a preparation for successful accomplishment and for mature citizenship is a fallacy so thoroughly exploded that anyone who propounds it thereby confesses his invincible ignorance of human experience.³⁵

Although teaching in the university is a profession, said Bestor, teaching in the elementary and secondary school is a vocational

³²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 77.

³³Ibid., p. 18.

³⁴Bestor, "American University," p. 187.

³⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 83.

occupation. However, the actual status is not the ideal, for Bestor claimed, "Teaching, we will all agree, ought to be considered a profession and not a mere vocation or trade."³⁶ The outstanding reason for the teacher's lower status lies in the current system of teacher education. Teacher training neglects the fundamental intellectual disciplines, Bestor protested. There is too much concentration on pedagogy, methods and practice, the "know how" of teaching, by both undergraduate and graduate students. Consequently, they lack the training in the disciplines essential for professional standing. Bestor's estimate of the necessary qualifications for a profession is this:

What differentiates a profession from a skilled occupation is the fact that the former presupposes and draws upon a vast reservoir of organized knowledge, theoretical reasoning, and developed intellectual power which each member of the profession must command.³⁷

According to Bestor the knowledge necessary for professional status will be acquired by teachers through a thorough education in the liberal arts and sciences. The fundamental disciplines are to be treated as they are in themselves and not diluted in essentials by adaptation to the purposes of teaching. Survey courses in the liberal arts and sciences are not to be multiplied in the teacher training curriculum.³⁸ Courses in education or pedagogy should be postponed by the undergraduate until the end of the course. They should be few in

³⁶Arthur Bestor, "How Should America's Teachers Be Educated?" Teachers College Record 56 (October 1954): 16.

³⁷Bestor, "How Should Teachers Be Educated?" p. 17.

³⁸Ibid.

number and "provided through electives that are a normal complement of a college program."³⁹ The graduate work of teachers should be "continued training in the fundamental intellectual disciplines."⁴⁰

The teacher should give instruction from a solid foundation in the liberal education he is endeavoring to impart to his students. The old adage, "Nemo dat quod non habet," applies to the teacher. He must have command of the fundamental disciplines in order to teach them. A more comprehensive and profound knowledge redounds to the benefit of the pupils. Bestor expanded thus:

Wide learning is a professional asset to a lawyer. To a teacher it is an absolute necessity. For him the fundamental disciplines are not supplements to, but the very essence of, his stock-in-trade. The teacher never knows when he may be called upon to give instruction in any or all of them. The students whose work he directs are entitled to genuine sympathy and understanding from him regarding their various interests and ambitions.⁴¹

The teacher's mastery of the disciplines and love of learning should be such as to win the respect of his students and inspire them to intellectual accomplishment. Bestor said, "Learning and teaching. . . are two phases of one single activity." From knowledge of the principles of investigation of the disciplines and his own continued discovery out of "an inquiring mind," the teacher guides the pupil to the analysis of the "crucial problems" of experience as encountered in

³⁹Arthur Bestor, "On the Education and Certification of Teachers," School and Society 78 (September 19, 1953): 83.

⁴⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 245.

⁴¹Bestor, "How Should Teachers Be Educated?" p. 18.

the systematic study of the disciplines. The necessary guidance of the scholarly teacher produces this result: "Through his own labors, the student comes to realize the power inherent in ordered intellectual inquiry."⁴² A thorough liberal education is especially needful to teachers of academically talented students. Bestor reasoned thus:

To do justice to our able students we must have not only a sound curriculum but also instructors capable of inspiring students with first-rate minds. A teacher whose training has been mainly in methods of teaching will rarely, if ever, succeed. The dull student can be manipulated by experts in manipulation. But the respect of the student with intellectual interests will be won only by the teacher whose knowledge is broad and deep enough for him to lead his students on to further knowledge. The schools of the world that specialize in educating the ablest students rightly demand teachers whose training has been, first and foremost, in the basic intellectual disciplines.⁴³

In undergraduate teacher training, courses in liberal education should be taught in their full scope and depth as disciplines for all. They should not be substantially changed by ordination and adaptation to teaching. The teacher should be educated as a person to take her place among adults with "mature intellectual interests of her own" cultivated by her liberal education. Disciplines limited and oriented completely toward teaching, especially elementary teaching, cannot contribute adequately to the teacher's personal needs. However, it is common practice in teacher training to change the structure of liberal education for pedagogical purposes. An example cited is a course entitled

⁴²Bestor, "'And Gladly Lerne'," pp. 21-22.

⁴³Bestor, "Educating the Gifted Child," p. 85.

"Science in the Elementary School," published with the addendum, "No science background is assumed and no attempt is made to cover content."

Bestor generalized thus:

A frequent phrase in educational literature is "professionalization of subject matter," which means, in effect, the study of a subject not in its own terms but simply from the point of view of the way it can be subsequently used in teaching. This narrowly utilitarian approach to the basic intellectual disciplines is precisely what a genuine profession tries to get away from as it raises its standards.⁴⁴

Multiplication of survey courses under the classification of liberal education is common in teacher training vocationalism. The fallacious reasoning is that the student will get "the most 'subject-matter' for the least expenditure of time and effort." However, survey courses in great numbers produce wide but shallow knowledge, acquaintance with facts and conclusions without explanation in depth, "generalities" concerning the extensive material of the survey. Bestor would limit their use thus: "Survey courses have a place in liberal education, but not at its heart." He gave this summary of the faults of liberal education in teacher training:

At the undergraduate level the greatest danger from pedagogical interference is not the substitution of courses in education for courses in fundamental disciplines (serious though such displacements can sometimes become), but the subtle distortion of that part of a student's program nominally in the arts and sciences. A collection of courses from academic departments does not constitute a liberal education unless the principle on which they were selected and fitted together was a liberal and not a vocational principle.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 162, footnote.

⁴⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 243-245.

"Postponing to the very end the highly specialized training needed for the actual practice of the profession" is the order for the education of teachers. Their undergraduate program should consist of "a thorough education in the liberal arts and sciences." Although Bestor's norm leaves the door open for a postgraduate year of internship, there is no positive call for a fifth year. However, to underscore the determined vigilance of educationists' "opposition to every suggestion that teaching be built on firm foundations," Bestor cited critically the opposition of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to a "four year program of general education to be followed by a year of internship," proposed for Arkansas in 1952 by the Ford Foundation.⁴⁶

Ideally there would be no state requirements of credits in education. Bestor said, "The first step to reform is to clear the statute books of those provisions which specify a fixed number of hours in education (that is, in pedagogy) as a requirement for certification." State certification should be granted automatically to any experienced and successful teacher, to any novice completing a period of practice teaching (institutional requirements in education courses would probably be attached thereto), and to any teacher in "specially designated schools which would offer on-the-job training" to the inexperienced.⁴⁷ It would be a certificate in teaching proficiency. The "minimum of pedagogical requirements" connected with institutional practice teaching would be

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 162-163.

⁴⁷Bestor, "On Education of Teachers," pp. 85-86.

satisfied by undergraduates in elective courses. All control of undergraduate teacher training courses would be taken away from the department of education.⁴⁸ Bestor described the projected, minimized activities of the education department thus:

The end result will be a small undergraduate department of pedagogy, offering a few courses in the general principles of pedagogy, supervising practice teaching, and perhaps offering an enlarged extension program of on-the-job training for inexperienced teachers.⁴⁹

The rest of Bestor's program of certification would relate to the departments of liberal arts and sciences. Each teacher would specialize in one or more individual disciplines for limited and advanced certification therein. Undergraduates would gain this certification in as many subjects as possible; graduates would be at liberty to continue the process. This type of "professional growth" could be made the basis of increments in salary. In addition, the department of psychology would carefully design for elementary school teachers a program leading to a certificate in the psychology of education. The same would be done in the field of educational administration by the departments of political science, economics, and law. Bestor gave this description of his plan:

Another certificate should be provided for each of the fundamental disciplines of public-school instruction. Ideally these certificates should be granted on the basis of state-administered comprehensive examinations in the subject, periodically offered to all persons who believe themselves qualified. There should be at least two levels of such examinations, one leading to limited, the second to advanced certification in the subject or discipline. Pending

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 83.

⁴⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 250.

the development of such examinations, limited certification ought to be granted on the basis of 15 or 20 semester hours of college work in the subject, advanced certification for 30 or 40 hours. The certification should be in specific subject matters rather than general areas. In other words, there should be certificates in history, in political science, and in economics; a teacher of social studies would be expected to possess at least limited certification in two or three of these subjects.⁵⁰

A similar program for the M.Ed. and Ed.D. was proposed by Bestor.

Both the certification and the advanced degree programs, which could run concurrently, would require that undergraduate courses be made available by the university to graduate students. In the degree program the candidate would first "round out" his knowledge by more courses in his college major; then he would proceed to take instruction in another course from the point at which he had stopped in his college career; he should "work that field up systematically in the way in which undergraduate majors do." Bestor outlined the procedure thus:

So it should be with each of the fields in which he has done previous work, or in which he is required to teach, or in which, perhaps, he develops an interest for the first time. . . . A student who pursues such a well thought-out program for a full academic year beyond college graduation and who brings his command of two subjects up to certain pre-established standards should receive a Master's degree. A student who pursues it with distinction for three years beyond college graduation and who brings his command of five subjects up to the standards set should be entitled to a doctorate.⁵¹

Additional stipulations would be these: thirty credit hours; a reading list of classics in the discipline; at least one substantial,

⁵⁰Bestor, "On Education of Teachers," p. 86.

⁵¹Bestor, "On Education of Teachers," p. 84.

original essay for each discipline studied; a comprehensive written examination in each subject offered for the degree; the foreign language requirement of the graduate school satisfied; special elective programs in educational psychology for elementary school teachers and in educational administration; a comprehensive oral examination on all five fields of work for the doctorate.⁵²

Bestor's certificate and degree programs would so replace and minimize the education courses of teacher training as to change it radically. To his mind, education courses are empty of learned content, concerned with immediately practical skills, multiplied beyond reason, and excessively repetitious. He quoted curricular titles from the catalogue of the University of Illinois that illustrate all these points in courses in administration and supervision.⁵³ Moreover, the same university afforded a typical example of the excessive division of limited areas of knowledge into numerous courses; undergraduate courses in education numbered sixty-one. "The state-enforced requirement in pedagogy is the taproot of the great educationist upas tree," said Bestor. Moreover, indoctrination in "the view that course work in pedagogy is the one thing of supreme importance" impels experienced teachers to return as graduate students "to thresh out old straw in departments of education." All teachers and administrators know that "professional growth" is necessary for promotion and advancement in salary. Again the University of Illinois offered evidence of the success of "the academic empires that can be built by such methods."

⁵²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 247-248.

⁵³Ibid., p. 69.

Bestor testified, "The inflation at the graduate level is even more preposterous, for seventy-four courses at the very highest graduate level are listed."⁵⁴ The curriculum was produced by this faulty process:

University catalogues had to carry enough courses in pedagogy to constitute a program for students who became candidates for the Ed.D. degree, enough to keep the professors of education fully employed, and enough to impress the public with the size and hence the importance of pedagogy as a subject of study. These imperatives of academic politics and public relations overrode all considerations of the question whether there was substance enough to justify more than a tiny fraction of the advanced courses listed. Even the then dean of one prominent College of Education has publicly conceded that "there is little value in most present courses and texts in education."⁵⁵

Bestor received numerous critical testimonials from disgruntled classroom teachers on unappreciated courses in education. This general reaction was found consistently from teachers by one inquiring university professor of English, who relayed it to Bestor: "That all such courses are a waste of time or that the present excessive number of them could profitably be reduced to one, or at the most, two." Here are some others:

For three years and twenty-two hours of education courses, I have been imbued with the need to help our modern youth . . . I have spent more time in being taught how to teach and not enough time in what to teach.

I had not ever taken any Education courses so I made the state requirements up during the year. I was appalled, sickened, intellectually insulted, infuriated at the monumental waste of time they are.

⁵⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 167-168.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 161-162.

The teachers are trapped in the college-state licensing requirements. They are so busy taking refreshers in "Education" that there is not time nor money for courses in any chosen subject-matter area.⁵⁶

Bestor's thought on unsubstantial and repetitious courses in education was this:

One cannot convert a vocation into a profession simply by labeling its particular know-how a "science" and creating pretentious instructional programs therein. Such, however, is precisely the educationists' plan. Courses in pedagogy--the mere know-how of teaching--are multiplied, expanded, subdivided, amplified, protracted, inflated, spun out, and padded. The real service that one or two such courses might perform for the prospective teacher is completely lost sight of in the frantic effort to make each petty detail into a separate course.⁵⁷

Bestor cited the historical development of normal schools into teachers colleges and state colleges as a reason for the multiplication of courses. As the departments of the liberal arts and sciences were added, the education faculty used "all the devices of academic politics" to expand in proportion. Necessary means were multiplying distinct courses, requiring credits in education for secondary school teachers, and teaching them methods heretofore applied only to elementary schools. Bestor's words, somewhat prejudiced in assigning motives, were these:

To justify such an expansion, a multitude of new courses had to be invented. Students had to be found for them, with the result that pedagogical requirements began to be imposed on secondary-school teachers. The philosophy expounded in these courses had originally been developed with the elementary school in mind, hence the

⁵⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 210-213.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 271.

new courses began that projection upward of inappropriate pedagogical theories which I have already discussed.⁵⁸

Another reason given by Bestor for the low quality of courses in education is the lack of interdisciplinary research, training, and teaching in departments of education. In the beginning at the turn of the century, professors of education in graduate schools were trained at an advanced level in the liberal arts and sciences. These philosophers, historians, and so forth "were to conduct research and also to be mediators between the more advanced and the more elementary sectors of the educational world." Theirs was the task to adapt the developments of science and scholarship to the classroom "to advance the ideals of liberal education." Present professors of education who have been trained only in departments of education do not meet the original standards. Bestor criticized them thus:

Their knowledge of the disciplines that are required to solve pedagogical problems is for the most part elementary and second-hand. And this knowledge is being passed on, increasingly diluted and increasingly out-of-date.⁵⁹

Philosophy courses taught by them are liable to have "lost touch with living philosophical thought" and to be repetitions of their past instructors theories, "congealed into educational dogma."⁶⁰ This dogma quite often is "propaganda for a particular point of view" taken from interpretations of one author, such as, John Dewey. The history of education often lacks proper perspective and propagandizes. Bestor gave this reflection:

⁵⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 158.

⁵⁹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 160.

⁶⁰Ibid.

Torn from its context of general change, the history of school systems becomes a chronicle almost devoid of meaning. Worse than that, it may easily become a kind of distorted history which presents the past as a mournful catalogue of errors, redeemed by some feeble gropings toward that perfection of wisdom which the present generation (and the instructor in particular) alone possesses.⁶¹

To put knowledge and content back into the courses dealing with education, Bestor would require that all courses emanating immediately from the fundamental disciplines be placed in charge of their respective departments. For example, the history of education would be under the department of history. The education department would be converted into a "small undergraduate department of pedagogy" occupied with a few courses in the "general principles of pedagogy" and practice teaching. Methods courses in the teaching of particular school subjects would be under the departments of those disciplines, "where the problems would be dealt with by men who know, in the first place, what the discipline is about."⁶² This would do away with the anomaly of the doctor from "several colleges in Oregon" who was "classified as an expert in teaching the 'teaching of the sciences'" without having taken a course in any of the natural sciences.⁶³ Bestor made this special recommendation: "Though courses in the teaching of history would be offered in the department of history, interdepartmental courses in the teaching of the social studies might be set up by the departments of history, political science, economics, and sociology." The history of education, the philosophy of education, and educational psychology, sociology, and administration would be included in their respective general departments,

⁶¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 251.

⁶²Ibid., p. 249.

⁶³Ibid., p. 213.

where they would be treated in relation to teaching and research on the whole fundamental science. They would also thus be kept free of "indoctrination and vocationalism." Bestor gave this specific directive on administration:

Courses in the administration of public education must be placed, along with other courses in public administration, in departments of political science, where they can be seen in the perspective of governmental responsibility generally, not from the narrow point of view of a single, specialized, power-conscious bureaucracy.⁶⁴

It seems useful to view these proposals under the present circumstance of the existence of the department of education. For, Bestor proposed to establish a "Faculty of Teacher Training" in its stead for the coordination of this program. Courses in the teaching of specific disciplines, especially for secondary school teachers, might well be placed under their particular departments. At San Francisco State College, this practice has been followed in the post-baccalaureate, fifth year program in teacher education. It has been described thus:

During this semester, in addition to the observation-participation program and advanced graduate study in the candidate's chosen subject areas, the student enrolls in a special methods course in each of his major and minor areas. The special methods work is under the jurisdiction of the various subject departments at the college.⁶⁵

An alternative would be to have a member from another department, skilled in methods of teaching his subject, teach these methods in the department of education. Objectively it would suffice for the teaching

⁶⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 249-251.

⁶⁵Daniel Tanner, "The Case for Certification," in Great Debate: Schools in Crisis, pp. 118-119.

of a discipline of education in the perspective of its relationship to the whole field of history, psychology, and so forth to have some professors in the school of education with advanced degrees in these general fields. A doctor in history with special study in education should compensate for the weaknesses of a doctor in the history of education with extensive study of history in general and vice versa. Exchange between departments of professors and students could serve as an antidote to narrow indoctrination in special theories and limited vocational knowledge and outlook.

The accusation of lack of content in teacher training courses ultimately arrives at the question of whether there is a body of organized knowledge sufficiently large and intellectually stimulating to merit programs of graduate study. This would depend on scholarly and scientific research. Bestor maintained that at the turn of the century, when professorships in education were newly instituted in universities, there was "effective interdisciplinary research in education." It was directed by "thoroughly competent psychologists, philosophers, historians, statisticians, linguists, and others." These newly created professors of education were responsible and effective in their research. But subsequent professors of education, influenced by the spirit of the old normal school, lessened the zeal for study and research. Dropping language requirements, they recognized as research projects studies, "naive in technique," that had "little to do with advancing knowledge."

⁶⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 159.

There was a "similar watering down" of courses. Conceding that there was some worthy work going on, Bestor had this to say: "These research results, however, were far from sufficient in quantity and importance to justify the tremendous number of advanced courses that departments of pedagogy demanded the right to offer."⁶⁷

Bestor's theory was that progress would be advanced by making educational research projects interdisciplinary in character. On the collaboration of scientists on educational projects of research, he said: "The university ought to provide the opportunity, the facilities, and the funds to bring these specialists together for co-operative research, without detaching them permanently from the departments to which they now belong." They would work in an "autonomous Institute of Educational Research." Although graduate students might work with the institute on research projects, they would take the Ph.D. in their own fields. Bestor continued, "They would be psychologists with a specialty in educational psychology, or political scientists with a specialty in school supervision."⁶⁸

To Bestor the department of education should be "the department concerned with 'the art, practice, or profession of teaching; especially, systematized learning or instruction concerning principles and methods of teaching.'"⁶⁹ The general principles of pedagogy would be limited

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 161.

⁶⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 252.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 248.

limited by this definition taken from the dictionary to methods of teaching. Since methods are only one part of the study of curriculum, there is not enough matter there to occupy a whole department. But granted that the other facets of education belong to the department of education, there exists in abundance a large body of intellectual material for study and for research projects. It is to be found in the history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and administration of education. Bestor contended that the results of research in the first half of the twentieth century were not extensive enough to warrant the great multiplication of courses in the same period. This is true if the statement is confined to methods alone; it is invalid if it takes in the whole scope of the study of education. The conclusion is that the body of organized knowledge existed and was being increased in adequate measure for extensive study; but the knowledge was badly distributed and poorly taught, creating some courses lacking in content and repetitious. In assigning the history of education to the department of history and so forth, Bestor acknowledged the intellectual content of these studies of education. He implied the same in calling for a doctorate in psychology with a specialty in educational psychology. It could be argued that this differs little from a doctorate in the psychology of education built on the broad foundations of psychology.

In actual practice in colleges and universities, the other departments share the responsibility for teacher training with the department of education. Although there is contention over the proper proportion of courses to be required in professional training and liberal education and over the department best suited to wield dominating power in teacher training, the prevalent practice in all higher institutions is to devote

about one-fourth of the undergraduate credits to education courses is the teacher training program.

Extensive study of the theory of education is philosophy, psychology, history, and sociology has been judged necessary for teaching, as has the study of professional theory been required for the practice of law and medicine. In his professional studies the teacher acquires knowledge and skills pertinent to the nature of the learner and the learning process, general and special methods of instruction with useful techniques and materials, measurements of aptitude and achievement, bases for academic and social guidance, the structure of the American educational system, and the social needs of the pupils. The specific need for education courses for elementary school teachers is brought out in the following:

A course in children's literature, for example, both familiarizes the future teacher with available material and gives her methods of selecting books for youngsters who vary in reading ability, in interests, in background. No college course in American literature can quite do that.⁷⁰

Teaching reading to six-year-olds requires special skills of the teachers. They are given here:

Well, they do it because they've had a course teaching them when to introduce phonics and how to teach them-- and when and how to teach blends, digraphs, variant endings, root words, compounds, prefixes, suffixes, and syllabification.⁷¹

⁷⁰Robert H. Beck, "How Well Are Our Teachers Being Taught? Never Better," Great Debate: Schools in Crisis, p. 108.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 109.

An incident in the Minnesota schools in 1950 shows the need of education courses for teachers. A shortage of teachers prompted the hiring of fifty-four college graduates whose teacher training had to be supplied with a six-week course because none had had college courses "in child growth and development nor in teaching reading and arithmetic." At the same time 183 teachers with certificates were hired. While 22 percent of the hurriedly trained teachers persevered in the classroom, 43 percent of those with certificates did so. The untrained "were overwhelmed by an experience for which they had too little preparation." One of the teachers of hasty preparation who persevered wrote that her problem lay in lack of knowledge of child psychology and teaching methods.⁷²

Although Bestor would have available for teachers university courses in the history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology of education, he would make very few of them mandatory. A liberal education would give the basic qualifications for teaching. Courses in education are courses in "how to teach," not "what to teach." Multiplied beyond one or two, they are empty of intellectual content and repetitious. On the other hand, that courses in education rightfully examine education as a specialized study of the liberal arts, deepened by research, as well as a study of practical pedagogy and school administration is the view of departments of education. That such training is necessary for good teaching and that more of it probably makes the teacher more

⁷²Beck, "How Are Teachers Taught?" pp. 110-111.

effective is the prevailing sentiment, sanctioned by state requirements.

A statement of this philosophy follows here:

A teacher must have a clear idea of educational purpose, a considerable understanding of children, a grasp of social realities and their implications for schools, resources of scholarship, and ability to use these resources to facilitate the growth of children according to guiding purpose. . . . The ends of education have been the subject of argument for centuries and the prospective teacher ought to think his way through to a position on these matters.⁷³

Bestor maintained that present graduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences are not suited to the school teacher's needs. For further mastery of subject matter, the teacher's post-baccalaureate study should be in undergraduate courses in the liberal arts and sciences.

He criticized current programs:

We force the teacher to choose between a research program that is thorough and scholarly but too highly specialized for his needs, and a pedagogical program that is superficial and blatantly anti-intellectual and that solemnly and tediously reinstructs him in vocational skills he already possesses.⁷⁴

However, the lack of adjustment between graduate study in the liberal arts and the needs of teachers fostered the growth of departments of education. The problem and its resolution are told in the following:

There is obviously much more difference between the traditional graduate programs and what is called for in teacher preparation than there is between the graduate study of political science and the professional study of law, the graduate study of biology and the professional study of medicine, the study of English and journalism,

⁷³Karl W. Bigelow, "How Should America's Teachers Be Educated?" Teachers College Record 56 (October 1954): 21.

⁷⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 245.

and so on. With this in mind, the emergence of the professional teachers' colleges and schools of education becomes a necessary and logical development.⁷⁵

Some, but not all, education departments multiply courses to the point of superficiality in treatment while some are so restrictive "as to be unable to meet the demands of the teachers in their localities." Course titles "which deal with the applied or utilitarian character of the course content" appear anti-intellectual: they do not reveal the generalizations or intellectual theory that may be contained therein. Courses arising from their dissertations are instituted for new instructors and, although narrow in scope, are continued. Inept titles and descriptions may be given courses in the catalogue. These two faults are to be found not only in departments of education but also in others.⁷⁶

Bestor's criticisms on anti-intellectual, vocational, and repetitious education courses have substantial validity. However, his plan for specialization in reconstructed graduate study does not seem to hold a superior attraction for teachers. The existing courses in education, while faulty, seem better suited to the practical needs of the elementary teacher. A master's degree in his subject with required hours in his other subjects and in education does seem to be somewhat better preparation for the secondary school teacher. However, if he prefers his master's in education with the necessary amount of credits in the

⁷⁵Gilbert E. Case, "'Quackery in Public Schools': An Answer," Public Education Under Criticism, eds. C. Winfield Scott and Clyde M. Hill (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 180.

⁷⁶Case, "'Quackery': An Answer," p. 181.

subjects he teaches, his choice is to be respected as one of merit and one possibly more useful to him. The practical preferences of teachers have been described thus:

Elementary teachers have to teach in all the subjects of the elementary curriculum; few of them can specialize. The curricula of teachers' colleges are adjusted to this. High school teachers usually must teach two or three different subjects, sometimes in wholly unrelated fields. In practice, the applicant for a high school job frequently must have competency in a major subject, a minor subject (minor to him), a third subject which he can teach if necessary, and some knowledge of an extra-class activity which he can supervise. He is not much interested in one-eyed graduate specialization.⁷⁷

In summary, Bestor has held for the liberal arts and sciences as the essential part of higher education. Professional education is a refinement of higher education, narrow and intensified. Vocational education is knowledge and training of applied science in practical skills. Bestor classified teacher training as vocational education. However, he gave the basis for the deduction that the study of history, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and administration of education should come under the definition of professional education. The prerequisites of vocational training are to be determined: all are to have a thorough liberal education. Vocational education is to be delayed to the end of the course. It is to occupy the time necessary for efficient training, whether it be two months or two years; it is not to be extended beyond the necessary period. Vocational training, while producing baccalaureates in ever greater numbers at the cost of proportionate diminution in numbers of graduates in the liberal arts and sciences,

⁷⁷Case, "'Quackery'; An Answer," p. 180.

should always remain based on thorough collegiate discipline in liberal education. Social utility should not supplant the broad learning of the fundamental disciplines.

Bestor held that teacher training in college should be almost completely composed of liberal education, with pedagogical courses relegated to the electives. Survey courses and courses in the disciplines radically changed by adaptation to teaching do not make for liberal education. Moreover, Bestor would abolish graduate courses in education, which offer "professional growth" and lead to a degree. The M.Ed. and Ed.D. in education would be given on a basis of proficiency in the liberal arts and sciences. Any courses in the liberal phases of education would be taken in the departments of history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and political science or public administration. Bestor found education courses forced on unwilling teachers, empty of intellectual content, repetitious, narrow in view, and prejudiced in favor of the point of view of educationists. While admitting the existence of some notable defects in their program, the sponsors of the established system claimed a substantial amount of intellectual discipline for the program of teacher training and asserted that it is well adapted to the practical needs of teachers.

CHAPTER VI

DEFICIENCIES OF EDUCATION FOR LIFE ADJUSTMENT

The national Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Secondary School Youth, created in 1947, and the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, inaugurated the same year as an autonomous project, stimulated most of Bestor's criticism of the schools. To Bestor, they represented "regressive education," which was lacking in a proper gradation of values and was a threat to vocational and liberal education alike. Affiliation of the Illinois program with the national organization eventually took place because of similarity of viewpoint on the magnified importance of "life-adjustment" and the "basic needs of high-school youth" in education. Bestor said: "The controlling body adopted the name 'Steering Committee of the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program and the Illinois Life Adjustment Education Program.'"¹

Life Adjustment Educational originated in the prolonged study of the Vocational Education Division of the United States Office of Education entitled, "Vocational Education in the Years Ahead." At the final conference in June 1945, Chairman Charles A. Prosser proposed the historic Prosser Resolution. Directed to the United States Commissioner of Education, it called for the formulation of a suitable program of secondary school education for 60 percent of the youth. This should be "hte life adjustment training they need and to which they are entitled

¹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 83.

as American citizens." While 20 percent could be trained for skilled occupations and an equal amount prepared for college, the rest of the youth were to be given a program to be worked out by "regional conferences between an equal number of representatives of general and of vocational education."²

In response to the resolution, the Commissioner of Education called on the Division of Secondary Education and the Division of Vocational Education of the United States Office of Education to convoke regional conferences on Life Adjustment Education. Five were held across the nation with twenty-five participants at each one. The conferees were classified thus:

. . . state directors and supervisors of vocational education, superintendents of school systems, staff members of state departments of education, administrators and professors from institutions which prepare teachers.³

The first of five national conferences was held at Chicago in May 1947. The personnel was similar to that of the regional conferences, representing "national leadership in the various aspects of vocational education and general secondary education."⁴ There the Commission on

²Franklin R. Zeran, "Life Adjustment Education in Action, 1944-1952," in Life Adjustment Education in Action, ed. Franklin R. Zeran (New York: Chartwell House, Inc., 1953), p. 34.

³Zeran, "Life Adjustment," p. 36.

⁴Ibid., p. 39.

Life Adjustment for Secondary School Youth was officially constituted by the United States Commissioner of Education for a period of three years. Renewed only once for an equal terms, it was ultimately composed of nine representatives from such organizations as the National Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Education Association, and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. For the states the structure was set up in the following manner:

The organization on the state level should function under the state department of education and/or some organized state educational authority, and should function through an advisory committee or committees which are representative of state professional educational organizations, including classroom teachers, and also representatives of industry, business, agriculture, labor, parents, and other interested lay groups.⁵

The Steering Committee of the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program and the Illinois Life Adjustment Education Program functioned along the national guidelines. Colleges of education, especially that of the University of Illinois, state and local superintendents, and associations of administrators, teachers, parents, unionized laborers, and manufacturers were represented. Administrators and superintendents composed the central committee of twelve. Charles W. Sanford, Associate Dean of the College of Education of the University of Illinois was the director.⁶

⁵United States Office of Education, Life Adjustment for Every Youth, p. 38, quoted by Zeran in "Life Adjustment," p. 42.

⁶Charles W. Sanford et al, The Story in Nineteen Schools, Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Bulletin no. 10, Sept. 1950, pp. 367-369.

In the national movement the Prosser Resolution was reworded "to avoid confusion through the previous use of 20-60-20."⁷ Its meaning and implications provided the agenda for the first national conference. The term, "Prosser Resolution" was changed to "Life Adjustment Education" at this conference.⁸ The last part of the revised paragraph of the resolution read as follows:

In the United States the people have adopted the ideal of secondary education for all youth. As this ideal is approached, the high school is called upon to serve an increasing number of youth for whom college preparation or training for skilled occupations is neither feasible nor appropriate. The practical problems connected with the provision of a suitable educational program for this increasing number are so great and the schools to date have had, comparatively, so little experience in this enterprise that the problem merits cooperative study and action by leaders in all aspects of secondary education. We believe that secondary school administrators and teachers and vocational education leaders should work together to the end that the number of attempts being made in secondary schools to meet this need will be greatly increased and to the end that the pronouncements made in recent years by various educational groups which are suggestive of needed curriculum patterns will receive increased study and implementation.⁹

Life adjustment education was deemed necessary for all youth.

Attention would be focused on the youths as individuals and there would be special concern for Prosser's 60 percent. The Commission worked out this definition in the 1948 conference in Washington, D.C.:

Life adjustment education is designed to equip all American youth to live democratically with satisfaction

⁷Zeran, "Life Adjustment," p. 34.

⁸United States Office of Education, Life Adjustment for Every Youth, cited by Zeran in "Life Adjustment," p. 40.

⁹United States Office of Education, Life Adjustment for Every Youth, quoted by Zeran in "Life Adjustment," p. 34.

to themselves and profit to society as home members, workers and citizens. It is concerned especially with a sizable proportion of youth of high school age (both in school and out) whose objectives are less well served by our schools than the objectives of preparation for either a skilled occupation or higher education.¹⁰

"Guiding principles" were adopted at this conference. Meeting average norms in "rigidly patterned curricula" was rejected in favor of "individual development" according to the "pupil's characteristics, his purposes, and those of society." All normal adolescents were to start and finish secondary school, and their needs were to be met therein. "Pupils, parents, teachers" and "organized civic, lay, industrial, and business groups" were to participate in the implementation of life adjustment education. Records were to be used "constructively rather than as instruments for eliminating certain pupils from school and advancing others to higher grades or schools." Evidence of a pupil's educational progress should be "skills" and "understandings" made evident in his "participation in individual, family, work, community, and civic activities rather than in terms of ability to master abstract concepts in logically organized subject matter courses." Functional education was promoted thus:

Learning experiences required of all are selected and planned for inclusion in life adjustment education programs in terms of common, recurring problems of living faced by all people. . . . The emphasis is on direct pupil-teacher planning, sharing, and participation in real life experiences while seeking solutions to individual, social, and civic problems. Such an approach

¹⁰United States Office of Education, Vitalizing Secondary Education, quoted by Zeran in "Life Adjustment," p. 43.

requires the abandonment of the concept of "extra-curricular activities" and makes excursions, travel, community surveys, schoolwork programs, study and hobby clubs, and any other form of direct experience for pupils integral parts of the educational program.¹¹

The Commission adopted many of the innovations of progressive education. New curricula based on pupils' needs and interests, participation in community activity, and emphasis on counseling and guidance were elements common to the progressive and life adjustment program.¹²

Moreover, commissions and committees of national organizations in professional education were the sources of the essential educational concepts disseminated by the Life Adjustment program. The revised Prosser resolution had recommended for study and implementation "the pronouncements made in recent years by various educational groups which are suggestive of needed curriculum patterns."¹³ The American Youth Commission studied the problems of youth and proposed more functional and democratic secondary school programs.¹⁴ Direct reliance was placed on the proposals of the Educational Policies Commission, created in 1935 by the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators. This commission sponsored curricular changes for

¹¹United States Office of Education, Vitalizing Secondary Education, quoted by Zeran in "Life Adjustment," pp. 43-44.

¹²Wilford M. Aikin, The Story of the Eight-Year Study (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pp. 46-86 passim.

¹³Zeran, "Life Adjustment," p. 34.

¹⁴American Youth Commission, What High Schools Ought to Teach (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1940).

more functional education in keeping with the needs of youth and society; it called for "common learning experiences" needed by all youth; it stated the well-known "ten imperative educational needs of youth," which began with "salable skills."¹⁵ A summary of these concepts was published with illustrative sketches by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.¹⁶ All became identical with Life Adjustment Education, Speaking of Education for All American Youth, Harl R. Douglass said, "It is clear that Education for Life Adjustment is a continuation, with very slight change, of this sort of development in American education."¹⁷

Official bulletins were issued by the United States Office of Education from the time of the creation of the Commission for Life Adjustment Education. The definition, guiding principles and purposes of the program were given therein. Functional education, adapted to the needs of the individual youth, was proposed for all. It was to be directed to real life situations and inter-related with the activities of the community. Suited to the abilities of individual pupils, it was to make for worthy "ethical and moral living" and "physical, mental, and emotional health." It was important to interest the pupil in some

¹⁵ Educational Policies Commission, Education for All American Youth (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1944)

¹⁶ National Association of Secondary School Principals, Planning for American Youth (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1944).

¹⁷ Harl R. Douglass, "Breaking with the Past," in Education for Life Adjustment, ed. Harl R. Douglass (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), p. 36.

phase of school activity so that few, if any, would drop out upon reaching the age limit of compulsory attendance. "The present problems of youth," as well as "their preparation for future living" were to be attended to by the school.¹⁸

The states had their own programs, some well organized and active, others limited to distributing literature. The vigorous Colorado State Commission on Education for Life Adjustment declared the optimum programs in education should help students "to solve problems which are meaningful and significant to them." "Meeting common needs in all areas of living" and modifying the studies "so that they contribute to the solution of real life problems" were desirable aims. Community resources were to be used "to enrich the educational programs and to afford more opportunity for work experience and the practical application of learning to life's problems."¹⁹ Resultantly, in small high schools academic courses were to be considered after those in functional education. A "jury of experts" ranked physics, chemistry, modern language, algebra, and plane geometry twenty-third to twenty-eighth in importance among thirty-one subjects of the high-school curriculum. Problems in democracy, home economics, industrial arts, agriculture, and general mathematics were third, fourth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth respectively.²⁰

¹⁸United States Office of Education, Life Adjustment for Every Youth (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 4-5.

¹⁹Douglass, "Breaking with the Past," pp. 39-40.

²⁰Albert I. Oliver, "Life Adjustment in the Small High School," in Education for Adjustment, ed. Douglass, p. 450.

The most widely publicized means of fulfilling the purposes of Life Adjustment Education in the schools was the core curriculum. It was also called common learnings, self-contained classrooms, block-scheduled courses, or basic living. As conceived by educators in a life adjustment program, the core curriculum would arise from the problems of the youths and society. For the solutions the teacher and pupils would draw on all disciplines. Stratmeyer of Teachers College gave this authoritative principle: "Life situations are the curriculum; organized bodies of subject matter are resource areas."²¹ The manner of classroom activity is described here:

Thus a group of students may have a variety of problems relating to, "How can we improve our relations with others?" They can profitably spend a considerable period of time, possibly two to eight weeks, . . . exploring various aspects of the problem. Students may draw on psychology, sociology, literature, history, political science, family relations, and possibly other areas.²²

The Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program named fifty-six problems from life for selection in a poll of thousands of teachers, parents, students, and graduates. The approved problems, the percentages of pollsters endorsing each, and the graded value attached to them by the respondents were published for consideration and suggested use in the classroom. A sampling of the list of the problems follows:

²¹Florence B. Stratmeyer, Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living, cited by Bestor in Educational Wastelands, p. 83.

²²Marcella M. Lawler and Gordon M. Mackenzie, "The Curriculum in Life Adjustment Education," in Life Adjustment in Action, ed. Zeran, p. 147.

The problem of getting a job and making good at it . . .
of acquiring the ability to get along happily with other
people . . . of improving one's personal appearance . . .
of developing intellectual interests in order to become a
more cultivated and cultured person . . . of selecting a
family dentist . . . of providing for the future through
learning how to buy insurance and other securities wisely . . .
of developing one or more "making things," "making it go,"
or tinkering hobbies . . . of acquiring the social skills
of dancing, playing party games, doing parlor stunts, etc. . .
of becoming a more cooperative person . . . of developing and
maintaining wholesome boy-girl relationships . . . of deciding
whether or not to go to college.²³

How some or all of these problems were to be worked into the
curriculum was to be decided by local authorities. It was stated, "The
Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program does not suggest any one
type of curriculum improvement project as best for a given school." How-
ever, the directive was given "to bring content and teaching method into
the world as it is and is becoming." Concern for "improvement of
personal and public health" and efforts for democratic participation of
all students "in group processes" were to "cut across subject areas
regardless of school organization." Related subjects might be combined
in lengthened periods. The core curriculum was recommended thus:

Revision would provide for a common learnings course for
a portion of the school day, to be required of all students
with provisions for electing under guidance regular courses
during the remainder of the day. The required portion, from
one to three hours per day, would run through all of the years
of the secondary school. The content of the common learnings
course, drawn from the subject matter of all areas of the
curriculum, is organized in terms of youth and societal needs.

²³Kenneth B. Henderson, Principal Findings of the Follow-Up Study
of the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Bulletin No. 17,
October 1951, pp. 13-15.

Teaching methods vary widely in terms of cooperatively planned purposes. Schools which develop common learnings courses also offer the usual courses in English, science, mathematics, foreign language, social studies, mathematics, foreign language, social studies, industrial education, homemaking, business education, and the like, but on an elective basis. A given student's program might include two or three hours of common learnings and two or three hours of other subjects depending on the length of the school day.²⁴

The core curriculum theoretically would serve a heterogeneous group better since each would be expected to contribute to the solution of problems according to his ability. Relationships between different areas of learning would be brought out. Lengthened periods would give more opportunities for field trips, projects in the community, and lectures on their specialties by successful laymen.

This was a common view of life adjustment educators: "The teacher is a counselor for pupils enrolled in his core class."²⁵ For he would have the best opportunity of fulfilling the counselor role advised by this goal, "Every child should be known intimately by at least one member of the faculty, preferably more."²⁶ Deterrence of drop-outs, study of personality development, promotion of mental and emotional

²⁴Victor M. Houston, Charles W. Sanford, and J. Lloyd Trump, Guide to the Study of the Curriculum in the Secondary Schools of Illinois, Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Bulletin No. 1, August 1948, p. 22.

²⁵Maurice R. Aherns, "Organizing the Curriculum," in Education for Life Adjustment, ed. Douglass, p. 301.

²⁶Zeran, "Life Adjustment," p. 46.

health, and making instruction more functional in relation to the abilities, needs, and interests of youth were some duties of counselors. The eminent estimation of guidance in the national program for life adjustment was given thus: "An intimate, comprehensive, and continuous program of guidance and pupil personnel services must constitute the basis on which any efforts to provide life adjustment must rest."²⁷

Life adjustment educators held that the core curriculum and other methods of progressive education prepared the student for college just as well as the traditional curriculum in the disciplines. Heavy reliance was placed on the Eight-Year Study sponsored by the Progressive Education Association from 1936 to 1942. From schools using experimental methods, 1,457 graduates were carefully matched in their college careers with like students from traditional schools. It was found that the graduates of the experimental schools had higher grade averages in college in all subjects except foreign languages. In general, they were equal or slightly superior to the traditional group. Students from the most experimental schools were found to be strikingly more successful than their matched partners. The less innovative schools produced graduates hardly dissimilar from the traditional; indeed, they were slightly excelled by their control group. The primary inference of the study stated, "First, the assumption that preparation for the liberal

²⁷United States Office of Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, p. 17, quoted by Ramon L. Charles in "Guidance Services for Life Adjustment Education" in Life Adjustment, ed. Zeran, p. 376.

arts college depends upon the study of certain prescribed subjects in the secondary school is no longer tenable."²⁸ The conclusion expressed in the report of Chairman Herbert E. Hawkes was this:

The results of this study seem to indicate that the pattern of preparatory school program which concentrates on a preparation for a fixed set of entrance examinations is not the only satisfactory means of fitting a boy or girl for making the most out of the college experience. It looks as if the stimulus and the initiative which the less conventional approach to secondary school education affords sends on the college better human material than we have obtained in the past.²⁹

Bestor attacked all phases of education for life adjustment. He alleged that progressive education of the 1920s, after experimenting successfully "with more effective methods of instruction," had turned into "regressive" education, lacking in a sense of values; a most extreme form was life adjustment education, both anti-democratic and anti-intellectual. Of the effect of Bestor's literary criticism, "that ripped savagely into the theory and practice of the life-adjustment movement," Lawrence Cremin gave the following evaluation: "Taken together, these writings constituted by far the most serious, searching, and influential criticisms of progressive education to appear during the fifties."³⁰

²⁸Aikin, Story of Study, p. 118.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 147-150.

³⁰Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York: Random House; Vintage Books, 1964), p. 344.

The "sixty percenters," declared by Prosser in his original resolution to be uneducable, were arrived at from the estimate of Louis M. Terman "that an I.Q. of 110 is needed for success in traditional, classical, highschool curricula and that 60 percent of American youth rank below this I.Q. level."³¹ Another explanation was found by educationists in the actual economic picture of occupations, distributed thus: 20 percent skilled workers, 20 percent professional and technical men of extensive post-secondary training, 60 percent workers with no specific training prior to their employment. This picture was borne out in a study of 25,455 workers in the industries of Trenton, New Jersey.³²

Bestor flatly contradicted the foregoing estimate of the abilities of American youth. He stated the following:

I am condemning the sweeping conclusions concerning the intellectual incapacity of the American people which are being pronounced by educational administrators who are not themselves psychologists, which are supported by little more than subjective impressions, and which frequently confuse a lack of background and interest with a lack of intellectual capacity. I am condemning the reckless re-making of the public-school curriculum on the basis of these completely unverified conclusions.³³

After stating that Prosser must have drawn his 60 percent figure "out of a hat," Bestor cited a highly respected estimate of "at least 49 percent"

³¹Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Random House; Vintage Books, 1963), p. 350.

³²J. Dan Hull, "Development of the Current Life Adjustment Movement," in Education for Life Adjustment, edited by Douglass, p. 6.

³³Arthur Bestor, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," New Republic 128 (January 19, 1953): 13.

capable of fourteen years of schooling and "at least 32 percent" capable of advanced education.³⁴

There is much dispute among psychologists and educators regarding the proportion of students capable of completing the academic curriculum successfully. One optimistic estimate includes more than half of the students. Terman's calculations would admit 40 percent to possible success in an academic curriculum. Interest, good teaching, and amount of study are potent factors that make for successful achievement by serious and diligent students who are not above the average in academic talent.³⁵

All should be given a liberal education was Bestor's contention. Slower students should be taught the same fundamental disciplines at a rate suited to their mental growth and abilities. The lowest one-sixth of the population should be taught the elementary fundamentals until seventeen, at which time they could leave or take vocational training. Secondary school training in the five disciplines would be lengthened for all except those of superior intelligence according to the ability and achievement of each. Seventeen or nineteen would be the age in which to enter optional vocational training.³⁶

³³Arthur Bestor, "Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," New Republic 128 (January 19, 1953): 13.

³⁴President's Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education for American Democracy, vol. 1, p. 41, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 116.

³⁵Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in Life, pp. 350-351.

³⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 330.

With such education students would have the opportunity to develop their capacities "for disciplined thought, for artistic creation, and hence for enduring satisfaction."³⁷ Their education would be that of the aristocracy; it would fit them best for active participation in our democratic society.

Prosser's revised resolution called for a new curriculum for the "ever increasing number of secondary students," a number approaching "the ideal of secondary education for all youth." Specifying the increase as "more than sixfold" since 1910, Bestor proposed in contrast the increasing financial investment, "Three times as much is being spent per pupil as in 1910."³⁸ Better education, not the weakening combination of general and vocational education for life adjustment, was to be expected. The greater investment, "calculated with money of stable purchasing power," the greater amount of school days in the year, the multiplied school buildings, and the teachers with better training should produce higher standards and better results in mental training in the schools. However, the trend was downward in the disorganization and diminution of the teaching of the fundamental disciplines. Bestor said this:

³⁷Bestor, "Liberal Education in Liberal Nation," p. 149.

³⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 16-17.

The direction in which we are moving is the all-important question. That question, simply put, is whether the tendency of our public schools is toward greater emphasis upon the fundamental disciplines, organized as they are in the mature world of science and learning, or whether the tendency is toward a lessened emphasis upon these disciplines in the school program as a whole and a diminished belief in the importance of presenting them in systematic form to the students. My own experience as a teacher and my own reading of the most publicized curricular proposals of professional educationists convince me that the latter is the direction in which we have been moving for a quarter of a century at the very least.³⁹

But, said the educationists, the "increasing numbers" created a heterogeneous student body of dissimilar abilities, backgrounds, purposes and needs. Professor Hand and Dean Sanford of the College of Education at the University of Illinois gave their conception of Bestor's lack of appreciation of the actual conditions in the schools in the following:

In Professor Bestor's view there are simply seventy times as many students of approximately the same level of learning ability now in high school as there were in attendance in 1870--and not at all the "masses of students of every conceivable shade of intelligence, background, means, interest, and expectation"--in contrast to the former "fairly homogeneous group, on the whole, children of well-to-do families looking forward to the learned professions or to leadership in politics or trade"--which the Harvard Committee found when its members studied the secondary-school situation.⁴⁰

On the contrary, Bestor contended, the families of lower social

³⁹Bestor, "Fundamentals of Education," p. 658.

⁴⁰Hand and Sanford, "A Scholar's Documents," pp. 463-464. The quotation is from the Report of the Harvard Committee, General Education in a Free Society, pp. 7-10.

and economic status produce offspring with as much native ability as those of higher standing. This is one of the fundamental principles of our democracy. There is no valid proof for the opposite. To offer intellectual discipline to the few who have the advantages of a culturally endowed environment is to create an elite by birth and to destine the rest to an inferior position in life. Bestor said this of the Prosser Resolution:

The resolution enthrones once again the ancient doctrine that the masses of men are destined from birth to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to a select and superior few. The "mudsill" theory of society has come back with a vengeance, and likewise the good old argument that schooling for the ordinary man must teach him to know his place, to keep it, and to be content with it--in short, must provide him with "life-adjustment."⁴¹

The duty of educators is to make up for cultural disadvantages in a child of poor background and to use all methods of educational psychology to bring the slow learner along as far as possible in mental training. In an unselective school "indifference" in attitude must be replaced by the "central, inspiring ideal" of highly regarded, serious, intellectual effort. The twentieth century discovery of measuring the great individual differences in intellectual capacity in students should not lead to uncourageous abandonment of the aim of mental training for the average pupil. Anti-intellectual curricula are not the proper remedy. More effective "pedagogical skills" and "remedial instruction" are to be used for intellectual discipline for all. In the end a radical change in the grade system of the schools might be necessary

⁴¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 117.

"so that the fundamental disciplines can be taught to all students, each being allowed to proceed at his own pace."⁴²

On the other hand, preoccupation with the holding power of the schools would cause anti-intellectualism; it would sponsor courses lacking in logical organization and in intellectual content with concomitant lowered standards. The group chairmen of the national conference for Life Adjustment Education had endorsed "standards of achievement" adapted to "various standards of ability." "Find successes for pupils who have had a series of failures, "was their counsel to teachers."⁴³ In opposition Bestor alleged that the Commission for Life Adjustment Education was willing to sacrifice the more efficient advancement of successful students for the retention of under-achievers, uninterested pupils, and drop-outs. Intellectual mediocrity was being proposed as the aim in education for all. For while planning "to meet the imperative needs for all youth," the Commission had declared, "Even more it is concerned with the types of education needed by adolescent youth who drop out of school because their needs are not being met realistically."⁴⁴

In the past educators had rightly stressed increased enrollment and had adjusted the schools for that purpose.

⁴²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 114-116.

⁴³Zeran, "Life Adjustment in Action," p. 46.

⁴⁴Commission for Life Adjustment Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, p. 7, quoted by Bestor in "'Life adjustment': Critique," p. 422.

But desired quantity in education had been achieved: three-fourths of all youths from five to nineteen were in school in 1954. To continue to be overly concerned with numbers was to suffer a "cultural lag," to sacrifice quality for quantity. The school's purpose of fostering intellectual effort and mental training was in danger of being diverted to some lesser social aim. Because of the efforts "to keep the youngsters in school satisfied or entertained sufficiently to make them want to continue in school," one pessimistic educator characterized the school thus: "It has become an agency of society to offset both juvenile delinquency and the possible competition of teen-age youth for jobs."⁴⁵ The schools should be selective of quality; the time to separate the wheat from the chaff was in the last years of high school. Bestor stated his position in the following:

We must get rid of the notion that there is any virtue in increasing the "holding-power" of the high school, if that holding power is achieved by watering-down the curriculum and debasing all the standards of academic achievement. Our democratic purpose is to offer educational opportunity. If we keep a student in school under compulsory attendance laws until the age of sixteen or seventeen or eighteen, we have done our full duty by him. . . . But the idea of democratic opportunity does not imply the indefinite prolongation of such schooling, that is, mere classroom attendance by young people without intellectual curiosity, mental ability, or willingness to work.⁴⁶

In the effort to retain all youth through secondary school, much emphasis was put on meeting the "felt needs" of the students. The

⁴⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 122.

⁴⁶Bestor, "Future Direction of Education," p. 376.

prelude to the "ten imperative needs of youth" was, "Youth have specific needs they recognize; society makes certain requirements of all youth; together these form a pattern of educational needs." This conclusion followed: "It is the job of the school to meet the common and specific individual needs of youth."⁴⁷

Bestor said that the aim was too extensive and did not take into consideration the nature and capabilities of the school. The school is for intellectual training. If the schools neglect intellectual training there will not be any; other social concerns, like health, will be taken care of by other social institutions. While some "ancillary functions" may be carried out by the school, its essential task is mental training.⁴⁸ Although it can contribute to vocational, physical, and moral development of the students "within the context provided by its own characteristic activity," the school cannot be "a home, a church, a workshop, and doctor's office, rolled into one."⁴⁹

The time of the school day is limited. "Whatever is done in school," said Bestor, "is done at the expense of something else."⁵⁰

⁴⁷National Association of Secondary School Principals, Planning for American Youth, p. 10, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 118.

⁴⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 28-30.

⁴⁹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 15.

⁵⁰Bestor, "What Went Wrong with Schools," p. 38.

Children's problems are interesting to children and the teacher has to begin with the child's experience; but interest is of no value in education if it leads nowhere. Bestor said, "And programs of the utmost triviality are defended time after time on the meretricious ground that they interest the student."⁵¹ All should be a preparation for the solution of problems in the adult world by a disciplined mind trained in the fundamental processes of knowledge. The lack of purpose and the lesser worth of general societal and adolescent needs as the central aim of education were stated by Bestor in the following:

Genuine liberal education is not a course in first aid. . . . When education becomes completely enmeshed in the petty, surface details of a student's everyday life, it loses the opportunity of equipping him with the intellectual powers that he will need to solve the deeper problems that lie beneath the surface. By frittering time away upon the "felt-needs" of adolescents, the school runs the risk of leaving its students helpless in the presence of the real "real-life" needs that will come later and that will put to the test all the resources of a mature and disciplined intelligence. In a vast number of American schools, the greatest of all contributions that the school can make to society--the production of well-informed and intelligent citizens--is being sacrificed in favor of a multitude of minor social services which, even in the aggregate, are of far less ultimate consequence than the things that are being irretrievably lost.⁵²

Three purposes, said Bestor, comprise the basic educational activities of any society: training for "the practical tasks on which the livelihood of all depends": indoctrination of youth "in the mores of the society, for transmitting to them its cultural traits and its ethical system"; mental training in the three Rs and the disciplines.

⁵¹Bestor, *Educational Wastelands*, p. 49.

⁵²Bestor, *Restoration of Learning*, p. 121.

By logic, tradition, and function the three are related primarily to different social institutions. "Training in practical skills" pertains to economic institutions. "Social conditioning" relates to the jurisdiction of the family, religion, and the state. "Training in the scholarly and scientific disciplines" is so completely entrusted to the schools that no other social institution exists to supply the lack if the schools fail in their duty.⁵³

However, educationists would disrupt this natural order of fields of competency of social institutions. They would make the school "a welfare agency" with vocational training, social conditioning, and intellectual instruction of equal rank in the curriculum. There would be no distinction in these matters between curricular and extracurricular activities. As a result, the learning of the disciplines would be curtailed in this way:

They are saying that the school as part of the curriculum should undertake to accomplish wide-ranging social objectives in addition to intellectual training. For great masses of students, this philosophy asserts, the pursuit of such other objectives may properly replace intellectual training.⁵⁴

The sponsors of education for life adjustment did not state that the nation "was obliged" to accept the "indefinitely extended responsibility of the school," but they claimed that it was "wise" to do so. Bestor emphasized the lack of need for narrow vocational

⁵³Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," pp. 76-79.

⁵⁴Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society, p. 81.

training and social conditioning. Contemporary economic conditions for employees and domestic conditions for homemakers rendered school training in industrial arts and domestic science of small or superfluous value. "Extreme specialization" and "on-the-job instruction" had become standard occupational practices. Moreover, "mechanical equipment and technical processes" that were "complex, specialized, and expensive" could not be dealt with adequately in school instruction. In the home, directions given with appliances, a plethora of published recipes for the preparation of food, and the abundance of publications for homemakers sufficed for household arts. Similarly, the institutions or forces for social conditioning, "powerful to begin with," were strengthened by the "new devices of mass communication."⁵⁵ Bestor continued:

Particularly dubious is the assumption that in the contemporary world the varied and pervasive forces that operate in any society to produce social cohesion, conformity to mores, and loyalty to accepted institutions have all but fatally weakened."⁵⁶

In seeking "to direct the process of social adjustment," school authorities, knowingly or not, are in a power struggle with other social agencies to increase the influence of the school in society.⁵⁷ However, their proper sphere of influence is in offering mental training to the pupils so that they may become intellectually independent citizens. Social conditioning is "basically training in conformity," entailing an

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 85.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 84.

inherent danger of loss of liberty. It is the duty of the schools to promote "resistance to the pressures for social and cultural conformity." Such conformity, promoted by anonymous groups, has been called "like-mindedness," "belongingness," "togetherness," and "other-direction." It seeks "law and order rather than devotion to principle, frictionless personal relationships rather than rationality, acceptance of group decisions rather than basic integrity of mind." Bestor reasoned, "Social, conditioning or 'life-adjustment,' if undertaken by a public day school, can only mean reinforcement of these pressures." As an antidote he called for development by the schools of "critical, independent, well-informed judgment by means of intellectual training."⁵⁸

Social conditioning in the schools proceeded from the philosophy, "It is the job of the school to meet the common and specific individual needs of youth."⁵⁹ The same view would put extracurricular and curricular activities on a par because "many of the social and psychological problems of young people can be handled more effectively through extracurricular activities."⁶⁰ Vocational training was elevated in official estimation to equality with the disciplines in this statement, "There is no aristocracy of 'subjects' in the Farmville curriculum. Mathematics and mechanics, art and agriculture, history and homemaking are all

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 86-87.

⁵⁹National Association of Secondary-School Principals, Planning for American Youth, p. 10, quoted by Bestor in "Crisis of Purpose," p. 723.

⁶⁰Bestor, "Crisis of Purpose," p. 723.

peers."⁶¹ It made way for multiplied vocational classes and for job training in lieu of the disciplines. The disciplines themselves, from this point of view, were looked upon as vocational courses of value only to those entering the professions. Bestor's example was this: "Science and mathematics, these educationists assume, are appropriate only for the few who are going to be scientists or engineers or doctors." The rest could get along without these disciplines or take them in "small dosages."⁶²

For Bestor, "indifference to intellectual values" reflects the anti-intellectual theory that schooling in the disciplines is only for attaining well-paid, prestigious positions. Rejecting transfer of training, this philosophy is in harmony with Prosser's conception of academic subjects serving higher institutions of learning as a "device for selecting the abler pupils and rejecting the others," "an outmoded technique."⁶³ It is not far removed from a common opinion of uneducated people, described by Bestor thus:

It may even appear to be training in an arbitrary set of subjects to which completely artificial distinctions have been attached--a kind of protective tariff imposed by the privileged classes to keep out possible competitors.⁶⁴

Bestor found that lowered standards and mediocre education in inferior schools would be given to all as a result of such views. In commenting

⁶¹Educational Policies Commission, Education for All American Youth, p. 142, quoted by Bestor *ibid.* The reference to Farmville is the model high school proposed by the Commission.

⁶²Bestor, "Crisis of Purpose," p. 723.

⁶³Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, p. 346. This is a paraphrase of Prosser's Inglis Lecture, given at Harvard in 1939.

⁶⁴Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 88.

on unwillingness to push the able student ahead after he has been identified," Bestor said the following:

It is the belief that democracy requires the leveling downward of the intellectually able. Take the recent report, issued on January 2, by the Educational Policies Commission. It pays lip service to the idea of "increased attention to the gifted young people," but it cancels most of this out by repeating a lot of antiquated nonsense about the danger of creating an "elite class." In particular, the report expresses nothing but hostility for "rigorous" programs of study for able students--exactly the kind that students of this caliber require--because in the past "such curricula were used to weed out the less able students and relegate them to inferior schools, thereby producing both an elite and a mass of followers."⁶⁵

During the first half of the century, the courses in the secondary curriculum had been varied, multiplied and broadened in harmony with the concern for meeting the needs of the individual student. Thus, the portion of the total student body taking certain disciplines greatly decreased. Bestor gave the following figures:

In 1900, 83.9 per cent of all high-school students were enrolled in courses in science; by 1949 this percentage had dropped to 53.8. In 1900, 85.6 per cent were studying mathematics; by 1949, only 54.7 per cent. In 1900, 72.7 per cent were enrolled in foreign languages; by 1949, only 21.8 per cent.⁶⁶

Science and mathematics in this period suffered in debilitating fashion "an important shift toward watered-down 'general' courses." By 1949 the new general science was being taught to 20.8 percent and new general mathematics to 13.1 percent. Moreover according to Bestor's

⁶⁵Bestor, "What Went Wrong," p. 71. Bestor commented on this report: Educational Policies Commission, The Contemporary Challenge to American Education, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁶Bestor, "Choice in American Education," pp. 76-78. These figures are from the Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1948-50, pp. 107-108, table 7.

observation, the "nondescript" general mathematics accomplished "a poor rate of salvage from among the tremendous proportion of students who are being allowed to neglect mathematics completely."⁶⁷

However, in rebuttal professional educators based their percentages on the total youth population in and out of school from fourteen to seventeen. In this way it was found that from 1900 to 1949 the percentage rose in algebra from 4.7 percent to 17 percent, in physics from 1.6 percent to 3.4 percent, and even in Latin from 4.3 percent to 4.9 percent. This conclusion followed: "These and other academic subjects are today actually being taught to much larger parts of the total population than they were in 1900."⁶⁸ Bestor pointed out that such a small increase contrasted sharply with the increase in "the total high-school enrollment from 11.4 per cent of the total population to 76.5 per cent." It indicated "an appalling decline in the effectiveness of our educational system."⁶⁹

The European schools had a much more effective program in the disciplines. Bestor said, "The first two years of an American college or university are roughly the equivalent of the last two years of most European secondary schools."⁷⁰ If a pupil attended a European secondary school of the sort that did not stress the disciplines in the curriculum, it was generally acknowledged that he was in an inferior school.

⁶⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 42-43.

⁶⁸M. L. Hartung, School Review 61 (December 1953): 511-512, quoted by Bestor in "Choice in American Education," p. 76.

⁶⁹Bestor, *ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 67.

Russia, which had recently launched the Sputnik, had compulsory education for all through seventh grade until about fourteen years of age. In 1956 there were as many Russian graduates from secondary school, their tenth grade, as there were from American secondary schools. Russia exceeded the United States in population by 20 percent; Russian secondary school extended only through tenth grade; drop-outs after elementary school were very high with only the top third graduating; the Russian curriculum was a fixed curriculum in the disciplines although too heavily weighted in favor of science and mathematics. Nevertheless, Russian accomplishments in three basic disciplines under a system of mass education greatly surpassed those of the United States educational system. Bestor gave this summary:

In the U.S.S.R. forty times as many elementary- and secondary-school students are studying physics at any given time, as are studying the subject in the United States. More than eighteen times as many are studying chemistry. Four times as many are enrolled in mathematics at the level of algebra or beyond. . . . Fifteen times as many are studying trigonometry as in the United States. Eight times as many are enrolled in foreign languages. . . . More than one hundred times as many Soviet young people are prepared to go directly to German, scientific, technical, and other literature.⁷¹

One of the reasons for Russian superiority was that courses in some disciplines were not offered in a considerable number of American

⁷¹Bestor, "Choice in American Education," p. 73. The statistics on Russia were taken from Alexander G. Korol, Soviet Education for Science and Technology (New York: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1957) pp. 17, 51. Those on the United States were from Kenneth E. Brown, Offerings in Science and Mathematics in Public High Schools, 1956 (Office of Education, Pamphlet No. 120, 1957), p. 31.

One of the reasons for Russian superiority was that courses in some disciplines were not offered in a considerable number of American secondary schools. For instance, in a thirty-six year period in 110 towns above a population of one thousand in Nebraska, foreign language students had declined from 57 percent of the high school students to 9 percent. The reason was that, out of 308 schools offering foreign languages in 1918-19 and 448 in 1933-34, all but 68 schools had dropped them by 1954-55.⁷² Neither physics nor chemistry was offered in 23 percent of all United States high schools in 1954; these schools enrolled 5.8 percent of all high school pupils. A similar incidence of curricular default was found with regard to plane geometry, while the lack of solid geometry, advanced algebra and trigonometry effected ten percent of the total student population.⁷³

Another factor contributing to the decline in the percentage of the school population studying the disciplines was that counselors were too much concerned with the psychological problems of youth and not concerned enough with their academic careers. Counselors were apt to advise students to elect 'soft' courses and neglect to urge them on to diligent study for academic achievement. Bestor said:

The fault is not primarily that of the students. The blame must rest upon educational authorities who have refused to stand up and say, with clarity and emphasis, that fundamental knowledge is still fundamental. In increasing numbers today, students are wandering off the

⁷²Bestor, "Education for Changing World," p. 5.

⁷³Ibid., p. 6.

high road of learning into the dead-end streets of job-training and life-adjustment education. In part this is the consequence of the counseling that students receive, guidance being too largely in the hands of those who are preoccupied with emotional and personal problems and too little in the hands of those who know from personal experience the satisfactions of intellectual endeavor.⁷⁴

As an explanation for the loss in percentage enrollments in mathematics and foreign languages from 1934 and in algebra, geometry, physics and Latin from 1915, the federal Office of Education gave this statement of approbation: "For the most part the changes are in the direction of more functional education. They represent efforts to meet the life needs of increasingly diverse bodies of students."⁷⁵ In answer Bestor gave this estimate of "functional education":

Educational advancement ground to a halt when educationists deserted the ideal of disciplined intelligence and accepted the fallacious notion that the character and content of school programs should be determined by the "felt-needs"--that is, the immediate, uncriticized, short-sighted demands--of those in society who had least comprehension of what education was for and how it accomplished its ends.⁷⁶

Vocational courses, if taken, should in no way interfere with the curriculum in the disciplines, said Bestor. Ideally these courses would be in generally useful occupations taken at the end of the educational career and would deal with the intellectual components of occupations,

⁷⁴Bestor, "Education for Changing World," p. 5.

⁷⁵United States Office of Education, Biennial Survey, 1948-50, cited by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 44.

⁷⁶Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 89.

principles that have general applicability. Courses like typing and wood working should be extracurricular activities. Bestor said, "The school makes itself ridiculous whenever it undertakes to deal directly with 'real-life' problems, instead of indirectly through the development of generalized intellectual powers."⁷⁷ However, contrary to his views, home economics and the industrial arts had shown the greatest percentage increases in students "among the broad subject fields" from 1934 to 1949.⁷⁸ "Slower learners" were not to be "shunted" into these classes but were to be directed in "streams" into courses in the disciplines suited to their rate of learning.⁷⁹ "Intellectual training for some of the people, vocational training and life-adjustment for the rest," said Bestor, "is the epitome of a class-structured educational philosophy."⁸⁰

Moreover, the teaching of the disciplines was either lacking or greatly minimized in "watered-down," "soft" courses. Of 274 credit offerings listed by the Office of Education, Bestor cited as a "waste" and "valueless for the mind" these among many such: beauty culture, vocational selling, English experience course.⁸¹ In Bestor's opinion

⁷⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 79. See chapter 6, "Training for a Livelihood," pp. 66-83 passim.

⁷⁸Bestor, "Diplomas the Easy Way," p. 218.

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⁸⁰Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 87.

⁸¹Bestor, "Soft Curriculum," p. 67.

the evasion of courses in the fundamentals of English was so common that no complacency could be taken in the rise of English students from 38.2 percent in 1900 to 92.9 percent in 1949. Hofstadter estimated that of the 274 courses only 59 "could be classified as academic."⁸² Bestor said that by such wasteful courses the average students were side-tracked down a dead-end street and the brilliant slowed down.

Neglect, diminution, and disorganization of the systematic teaching of the disciplines would result from the direct treatment of the problems of youth in class. The Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program proposed its official list of such problems to the public for consideration and selection. Bestor criticized "the grotesque disproportion between the problems presented." He continued in the following manner:

Trivia are elaborated beyond all reason and substantial matters are lumped together in a very small number of separate items, thus reducing them to relative insignificance in the whole.⁸³

This disorganization signified that "order, balance, discrimination, and a sense of values" would be lacking in any curriculum emanating from the problems.⁸⁴ The "trivia" named, for example, "'doing parlor stunts,'" were not worthy of the ideal of intellectual endeavor in the classroom. That the disciplines would be slighted was a foregone conclusion since

⁸²Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, p. 342.

⁸³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 145.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 147.

they were not directly named as related to any learning problem for youth.

The core curriculum was the chosen means of the professional educators to organize teaching "in terms of youth and societal needs." The Illinois Program said, "The required portion, from one to three hours per day, would run through all the years of the secondary school." The content would be taken "from all areas of the curriculum." The course was entitled, "Common Learnings Course." A similar core curriculum offering in the Illinois Program was called, "Enrichment in Broad Fields." It involved the "combining of materials from two or more subject areas in an effort to make topics more meaningful."⁸⁵ Since the solutions of the problems of youth were "elements" or "purposes which cut across the entire curriculum," the core of common learnings and enrichment could be almost identical in operation.

At best these core courses would fail to provide systematic, orderly study of the disciplines; they would lack depth of investigation, sustained concentration and practice, and cumulative learning; they would make excessive demands on the teacher, whose knowledge "would be spread thin in ranging widely over the material of the curriculum."⁸⁶ To benefit by combined courses, a student has to be mature and have a good grasp of the organized skills of each of the disciplines to be combined.⁸⁷

⁸⁵Victor M. Houston, Charles W. Sanford, and L. Lloyd Trump, Guide to the Study of the Curriculum in the Secondary Schools of Illinois, Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Bulletin No. 1, August 1948, p. 22.

⁸⁶Bestor, REstoration of Learning, p. 419.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 59-61.

There are no short cuts to learning, analysis precedes synthesis.

"Snippets of information from one project after another" and a program "that skips about from topic to unrelated topic" do not make for learning. Bestor continued, "The directing force of further study should be intellectual curiosity and its organization should represent the logical unfolding of the subject itself."⁸⁸

The core curriculum gave the opportunity for teachers to give guidance and counseling, said the life adjustment educationists. In Bestor's opinion psychological counseling should be limited severely for the teacher. In the matter of "emotional disorders, mental blocks, psychiatric disturbances," the teacher could apply immediate, first-aid remedies and then refer the matter to a qualified psychiatrist. Dr. Bruch, psychiatrist and pediatrician, commended "the school's alertness" and prudence in recommending special psychiatric care for many emotionally disturbed children early enough for the children's successful treatment. However, she had the following reservations about ordinary teachers who would be "psychological consultants":

Yet quite often the over-eagerness of some inexperienced, psychologically indoctrinated teacher has thrown parents into a panic about their own inadequacy and reinforced existing anxieties to the detriment of the child.⁸⁹

Critically Bestor specified that social studies classes have often been converted into "a clinic for discussing personal problems of adolescents." He continued thus:

⁸⁸Bestor, "Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

⁸⁹Hilde Bruch, Don't Be Afraid of Your Child, pp. 248-249, cited by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, pp. 31-32.

Professional psychological and psychiatric counseling should certainly be available in or through the school, but to furnish it is neither within the competence of the ordinary teacher of history and social sciences nor within the province of courses in these subjects.⁹⁰

Educationists appealed to the Eight-Year Study for proof that the programs of Education for Life Adjustment were as good a preparation for college as the established college preparatory curriculum. But Bestor contended that nothing was proved by this study for life adjustment education. He said, "Life-adjustment education was not even proposed until five years after the study was completed and published, and fifteen years after it began." In the 1930s, when the study was being conducted, progressive education was still largely concerned with sound improvements, developed in the previous decade. Bestor added, "Some deterioration had perhaps set in, but the extremes of regressive education were certainly never reached in the schools participating in the study." The statement of principles by the Commission for the Eight-Year Study was "quite consistent with the concepts of disciplined intellectual training." Bestor continued, "The first two of the 'underlying ideas'-- the crucial ones, in fact--include practically nothing that I should regard as tainted with anti-intellectualism."⁹¹ He cited the first two statements of principles in detail, for example, "Greater mastery in learning: acquisition of such techniques as reading with speed and comprehension. . . .More continuity in learning."⁹²

⁹⁰Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 550.

⁹¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 344.

⁹²Aikin, Story of Study, pp. 144-145, cited by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 344.

Therefore, although "rational and considered experiments" for furthering intellectual training were shown by the study to be likely to succeed, no judgment in favor of life adjustment or regressive, anti-intellectual school programs could be deduced from it.⁹³ Nor did the study prove its own conclusion, which read, "The assumption that preparation for the liberal arts college depends upon the study of certain prescribed subjects in the secondary school is no longer tenable."⁹⁴ Not the unique value of the traditional courses for preparation for college but the correspondence of the credits and grades given by the schools with their graduates' actual knowledge was rendered questionable by the study. Bestor asserted his conclusion from the study thus:

These school-attested credits were actually a most unreliable criterion of the student's developed mental capabilities and the eight-year study proved this fact by showing that students who met these nominal requirements were no better prepared than those who did not."⁹⁵

The fact that "the college was becoming a preparatory school in its first two years" was evident proof of the same.

Education for Life Adjustment was started and promoted by the United States Office of Education working through the state officials in conjunction with the professors of education in the universities and colleges. Superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and students

⁹³Bestor, *ibid.*, p. 345.

⁹⁴Aikin, Story of Study, p. 118, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, pp. 346-347.

⁹⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 347.

were called upon to cooperate in the movement. The chief means were propaganda for life adjustment education in bulletins from federal and state offices, studies of various phases of real life needs in relation to education based on polls of public opinion, and national and state-wide conferences on all aspects of the movement. Scholars and scientists, professors of the liberal arts, if called in as consultants, had negligible influence. Bestor said of the Illinois Curriculum Program's Steering Committee, "Out of a membership (in 1952) of fifty-eight, this steering committee contained only five representatives of college faculties other than education."⁹⁶ Although The Schools and National Security involved the work of twenty-five hundred professional educators and laymen, its "final conclusions were simon-pure educationalism, unpolluted by the ideas of scholars and scientists or the common sense of ordinary citizens." For the Steering Committee had, by its own admission, "sieved" the collected ideas.⁹⁷ Bestor described the organization of the sponsors of life adjustment in the schools in the following:

There is no mystery about the source of these proposals. By checking the list of authors and studying the rosters of sponsoring committees, one can fix responsibility, clearly and unequivocally, upon three closely connected professional groups. First of all, there are professors of education, so-called, in universities, colleges, teachers' colleges, and normal schools. Second, there are school superintendents, principals, and other local public school administrators, and supervisors. Third, there are state and federal officials and

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 171.

⁹⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 175.

bureaucrats. These three constitute an interlocking public school directorate. Collectively they glory in the title of "professional educators."⁹⁸

To remedy maladies caused by the "party line" of life adjustment education, fostered by the National Education Association, which had "deprecated" the disciplines, and publicized by the American Association of Secondary School Principals, scholars and scientists should rise up for action.⁹⁹ Theirs was the blame for allowing the disciplines to be replaced and sleighted in the curriculum by their silence. Professional educators had come to claim such great domination in curriculum formation that they looked upon scholars who offered opposing views as "meddlesome amateurs."¹⁰⁰

Although they had not done so in the past, scholars and scientists should provide, "through their learned societies, continuous, organized leadership in the process of developing and strengthening the secondary-school curriculum."¹⁰¹ There had been no great desire on the part of the teachers, parents, or pupils for life adjustment education.¹⁰² But there was public expectation of the opinion of scientists and scholars on curriculum development. For they are the ones skilled in the "several different kinds of thinking" of the disciplines necessary to train "men and women capable of thinking clearly and accurately."¹⁰³ Moreover, they are the best qualified in their fields for "sound planning in

⁹⁸Bestor, "Aimlessness in Education," p. 113.

⁹⁹Bestor, "What Went Wrong," p. 74.

¹⁰⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 222.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁰²Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 84.

¹⁰³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 415.

education." Such planning of the curriculum "requires careful consideration of the direction and rate of changes that are occurring in intellectual endeavors."¹⁰⁴

For these reasons Bestor proposed to the learned societies of the nation the creation of a Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education. It would be composed "exclusively of scholars and scientists in the various disciplines of learning." The following are two of the purposes of Bestor's proposed commission:

To analyze, with respect to their scientific and scholarly soundness, every major proposal (of the recent past, the present, and the future) affecting the content of the public secondary school curriculum; . . .

To cooperate with public educational administrators in devising sound programs for the public schools in the basic intellectual disciplines, on the understanding that the programs mutually agreed upon will actually be made the basis of curricular reorganization in the public schools.¹⁰⁵

Bestor found no reason for holding uninterested students in secondary school beyond the age of compulsory attendance. Quantity in numbers was achieved; quality in curriculum and teaching was to be sought. To increase holding power by a "watered-down" curriculum and an abandonment of standards was a mistaken move. Life adjustment education was so

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 225-226. These are excerpts from the resolutions proposed by Bestor at the meeting of the American Historical Association on December 27, 1952.

lacking in intellectual content that its graduates could merit no diploma by examinations. "For," said Bestor, "one cannot weigh moonbeams."¹⁰⁶

School standards would be lowered in functional education by exchanging "sound learning" in the curriculum for "trivia" connected with the "felt needs" of youth.¹⁰⁷ By abolishing the aristocracy of subjects and making the extracurricular activities as important as the curricular, the school would endorse anti-intellectualism. Bestor commented on the school's attitude toward intellectual value thus: "If it is indifferent, intellectual effort will be discouraged and destroyed wherever that school makes its influence felt."¹⁰⁸

Concern with the felt needs of youth and societal needs showed an undue preoccupation with interest on the part of the pupils. Although Dewey had said that the experience and interest of children must be directed toward the disciplines organized in an adult fashion, many professional educators had based their false theories on "distortions of what he, in fact, was saying." Bestor conceded this weakness in Dewey: "But he did emphasize the importance of connecting education closely with the personal interests of students." Educationists, Bestor maintained, had interpreted this emphasis as a justification to discard formal, systematic training in the disciplines and allow the students "to spend their time according to their own interests without direction from above."¹⁰⁹ Thus they had transferred the methods of the elementary

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 355.

¹⁰⁷Bestor, "Fundamentals of Education," p. 659.

¹⁰⁸Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 78.

¹⁰⁹Bestor, "We Are Less Educated," p. 71.

school into the secondary; they had prolonged Whitehead's "stage of romance" and "discursive activity," proper to the elementary school, into the secondary school. Thereby they had supplanted the "stage of precision" in learning, proper and necessary to the adolescent for mental training.¹¹⁰

Life Adjustment Education was the product of the "interlocking directorate of professional educators." There was no great desire for it on the part of teachers, parents, or pupils. This lack of enthusiasm or, even, opposition was shown from the Commission on Life Adjustment's reference to "enormous continuing pressures for teachers and principals to continue doing the things that they do well."¹¹¹ The unsympathetic attitude of the members of the "interlocking directorate" toward the systematic teaching of the disciplines was due to their infrequent and superficial contact with "the great world of science and learning." Bestor described their training thus:

The professional educator does not ordinarily hold an advanced degree in one of the established scholarly disciplines, but merely in the teaching of them, or in the supervising and administering of school systems. His advanced degree (and often his undergraduate one) is granted by a department of education or a teachers' college.¹¹²

To counterbalance the power of professional educators, Bestor proposed equal representation of educators, scholars, and representative laymen on any commissions of education. Moreover, he called for a state

¹¹⁰Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 550.

¹¹¹United States Office of Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, pp. 11-12, quoted by Bestor in Educational Wastelands, p. 83.

¹¹²Bestor, "Aimlessness in Education," p. 114.

advisory committee on education composed of professors of the arts and sciences and professional men.¹¹³ His outstanding remedial proposal was the call for the creation by the learned societies of a Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education.

Education for life adjustment made for mediocrity in education by lowering the ideal standards of achievement to the level of the slower student, said Bestor. The goal of 100 percent holding power would result in time and money wasted on uninterested and untalented students. Functional education, catering to the felt needs of youth immediate needs of contemporary society, should not determine the curriculum. The consequences would be a substitution of trivia or narrow vocational skills for the basic disciplines, a disruption of systematic and cumulative learning, and an inordinate preoccupation with adolescent psychological development. Scholars and scientists should restore the intellectual disciplines.

¹¹³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 230-231.

CHAPTER VII

CRITICAL REVIEW OF RATIONALE

Bestor's proposal for a Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education "to analyze every major proposal (of the recent past, the present, and the future) affecting the content and organization of the public secondary school curriculum" was not adopted by the American Historical Association. While appointing a committee to determine its own policy and to work for a common policy with other learned societies, the Association declared its concern to cooperate with professional educators. The pertinent part of the resolution adopted December 27, 1952 is contained in the following:

Thirdly, it is thought that any effective implementation of the sense of the resolutions would best be forwarded by taking into consideration the mature thought of the professional educators who are conscious of this problem and would wish to collaborate in the formulation of any comprehensive statement on national educational policy.¹

The desire that scientists and scholars participate more actively in the formulation and implementation of the educational curriculum, especially that of the secondary school, was commonly expressed by professional educators. Hand and Sanford of the College of Education of the University of Illinois stated:

¹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, pp. 204-206.

We are confident, however, that professional educators will require the help of university scholars if more adequate provisions for intellectual training at the high school level are to be made as rapidly and effectively as the need requires. By definition this help can come only from scholars who understand and who are in sympathy with the task of the public high school--that of providing for the educational needs of all the youths of the community.²

However, the long-standing antagonism between professors of the liberal arts and professors of education was likely to be increased by Bestor's writings. Regretted by Hand and Sanford, Bestor's hostile criticism was interpreted by Elam thus: "Bestor tries to drive the wedge deeper between so-called scholars and professional educators at a time when all teachers should join hands to tackle the frightening crises in education that accompany rapid economic, political, technological, and population changes."³ Butts, citing "the world of scholarship," "the needs of students," and "the values of a democratic society" as necessary factors in the curriculum to be designed by educators and scholars, criticized the same belligerency in the following: "Bestor's arguments are much too often couched in vitriolic terms. He used the word 'educationist' as a term of derision or as an epithet."⁴ Finally, according to Hechinger Bestor's Permanent Scientific and Scholarly Commission on Secondary Education would set up one more rival profes-

²Hand and Sanford, "A Scholar's Documents," p. 502.

³Stanley Elam, editorial, *Delta Kappan* 38 (January 1957): 21.

⁴R. Freeman Butts, review of Educational Wastelands, by Arthur Bestor, in Teachers College Record 55 (March 1954): 342.

sional group with closed-membership rules. It would be "likely to lead to the permanent splitting up into hostile camps, sniping at each other instead of working together to improve education."⁵

The changes in the secondary school curriculum, in keeping with a more functional education, were attributed by Bestor to the "interlocking directorate of professional educationists." Repeatedly he pointed to the lack of participation by scholars in the formation of policy for the curriculum. An instance is seen in the following:

By 1932 the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association saw nothing improper in establishing a ratio of ten educationists to one scholar for the Commission on Social Studies Curriculum that it created to recommend wholesale "adjustments" in the public-school program in this area.⁶

However, although the professors of liberal arts and sciences were poorly represented and their opinions held in reserve or passed over, the pragmatic desires of the businessmen and other layment of influence, expressed through the school boards, had great influence in the establishment of a more functional secondary school curriculum. The National Education Association Research Division reached the following conclusion from public opinion polls taken from 1950 to 1958: "For the most part, the American public is more convinced of the value of practical training than of the value of what is generally known as liberal education."⁷

⁵Fred M. Hechinger, "The Fate of Pedagogues," Saturday Review 36 (December 12, 1953): 20.

⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 171.

⁷Richard I. Miller, "Admiral Rickover on American Education," Journal of Teacher Education 10 (September 1959): 356.

The cooperation of educators with layment was described thus:

Why should all these educational bureaucrats gang up on the college professors? The source doesn't lie in any conspiracy. It lies in the culture. The superintendents, principals, and teachers are in contact with the people. . . . And they are the ones who determine through the school boards and legislatures what kind of education their children shall have. The professors of education are the ones who have studied the situation . . . and whose responsibility it is to help. . . . And the "federal officials and bureaucrats," who have no legal power, call meetings and conferences . . . and put in long hours trying to help the teachers.⁸

While Hechinger noted that it was the anti-intellectual, pragmatic thinkers on the School boards who attacked the humanities as "all that useless stuff" and exerted pressure to drop the academic subjects, he stated that the educators were vulnerable to criticism because, "instead of exerting educational leadership, they followed too closely the climate of public opinion."⁹

Bestor held the following conviction: "Educators may not take popular indifference to intellectual training as a mandate to guide them in the discharge of their public duties."¹⁰ He complained that state legislatures have required the schools "to teach many absurdly specific things," of tenuous relation to mental discipline.¹¹ Social studies have been singularly disrupted by such action, as is illustrated in the following: "Ill-considered innovations sponsored by educational

⁸William Clark Trow, "Professional Education and the Disciplines: An Open Letter to Professor Bestor," Scientific Monthly 76 (March 1953): 151.

⁹Hechinger, "Fate of Pedagogues," p. 19.

¹⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 93.

¹¹Ibid., p. 267.

theorists have combined with misguided pressures arising outside the schools to turn the social studies curriculum, in many school systems, into a mere catch-all."¹²

Narrow and direct training for specific problems of contemporary life is not the purpose of public education, said Bestor. However, the "effective" teacher should "clearly, painstakingly and tirelessly" point out "the bearing of every topic studied in the classroom upon the problems which the student will encounter in later life."¹³ The main purpose of education should be training of the mind in the fundamental disciplines, of wide and indirect application to practical affairs. Bestor said, "The school makes itself ridiculous whenever it undertakes to deal directly with 'real-life' problems, instead of indirectly, through the development of generalized intellectual powers." He endorsed as a model the liberal education of the founding fathers of our country as "general rather than specific, intellectual rather than 'practical,' indirect rather than (in the vocational sense) direct."¹⁴

Education is for training of the mind. It is for the development of the powers or capacities of the mind for disciplined thought. Education engenders and refines the skills in "the abstract processes of analyzing, generalizing, and criticizing."¹⁵ Its proper field of endeavor lies in the intellectual disciplines. "The scholarly and intellectual disciplines," said Bestor, "won their primacy in traditional

¹²Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 551.

¹³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 125.

¹⁴Bestor, Educational Wastelands, pp. 63-64.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 59.

programs of education because they represent the most effective methods men have been able to devise, through millenia of sustained effort for liberating and then organizing the powers of the human mind." Through the disciplines all experience has been investigated, delimited, and systematized as to its nature and relationships. When the methods of the disciplines are taught in accordance with their systematic structures, the knowledge and organized skills resulting give "each generation" the power "to master the new environment and solve the new problems that confront it."¹⁶

Although the learning of facts is a necessary part of mental training, the most important element is the comprehension of the systematic structure of the discipline. Each discipline has its own way of reasoning to be learned separately from the others. Bestor said, "The basic and scholarly disciplines must be presented, not as mere repositories of information, but as systematic ways of thinking, each with an organized structure and methodology of its own."¹⁷

Of the disciplines, which are comparatively few in number, there are five basic to liberal education. They are English, foreign languages, history, science, and mathematics. These disciplines formed the curriculum for secondary schools recommended by the Committee of Ten in Bestor described the essential and enduring nature of this curriculum thus:

¹⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 34.

¹⁷Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 36.

The school program that the twentieth century received from the nineteenth did not depend upon tradition for its principal support. It was based upon a realistic analysis of the intellectual needs of the modern world. . . . It was a curriculum not for the year or a decade, but for the century that was about to commence.

The curriculum of the twentieth-century school, thus soundly conceived and tested, was to consist essentially of disciplined study in five great areas, carried progressively through the grades and continued and elaborated in college.¹⁸

These five disciplines are the best scholastic preparation for life as well as for college, Bestor declared, following the doctrine of the Report of the Committee of Ten. Moreover, that there should be "no difference made in the teaching of any subject on the ground of whether or not a pupil was going to college" was one of the stipulations of the Report.¹⁹ While holding to the same disciplines for all, Bestor counseled that there be "streams in which the slower learners are being taught the basic disciplines instead of being shunted off into speciously 'practical' courses."²⁰

The curriculum in the five basic disciplines represented at the time of the Report "the almost unanimous judgment of scholars and scientists concerning the intellectual skills that were essential to more advanced work."²¹ Bestor sketched its relevance to modern intellectual life.

¹⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 48.

¹⁹Krug, Shaping of High School, 1880-1920, p. 65.

²⁰Bestor, "Education for Intellectual Discipline," p. 42.

²¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 48.

Knowledge of English and literature is "one of the indisputable marks of an educated man."²² The study of a second language is demanded by the close communications in the modern world and is of great help, according to most scholars, for a better understanding of one's own language. History, offering "the accumulated experience of the human race," prepares one "to face the fact of change." Sciences should be explored because they are "basic to life." Mathematics underlies the sciences and is "valuable as an intellectual discipline in its own right."²³

"Liberal education means deliberate cultivation of the power to think," said Bestor. Stressing the role of the "logical organization of knowledge" in education, he continued: "Students must be brought to see the structure of the science they are learning."²⁴ While facts will necessarily be learned for understanding, it is more important that the reasoning processes and the generalizations of the disciplines under consideration be comprehended and verified in practice by the student. The student is to know "the nature of reasoning, investigation, criticism, expression, and comprehension, as these appear in their various special forms."²⁵ These generalizations are remembered longer by the student. Bestor stated the following:

²²Ibid., p. 51.

²³Bestor, "Education for Intellectual Discipline," p. 38.

²⁴Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 36.

²⁵Ibid., p. 400.

Students forget a great deal of what they learn in any class. This forgetting is selective. The detailed facts disappear first. Generalizations have a more enduring life. And certain abilities, such as applying the principles learned to new situations, may actually increase even without further instruction.²⁶

It is the duty of the teacher to point out the relation of these facts and generalizations to real life, for the disciplines are a broad and indirect basic preparation for life. In this way the liberally educated person will be able to apply in his life "the varied resources and the developed powers of a mature and disciplined intellect to each successive problem as it arises."²⁷ "Cultivating the power of abstract thought" in liberal education enables man "to deal more effectively with the problems of modern life." Bestor continued thus: "The basic argument for the intellectual disciplines is not that they lift a man's spirit above the world, but that they equip his mind to enter the world and perform its tasks."²⁸

In opposition to Bestor's "training of the mind," William Clark Trow stated the following:

Professor Bestor's explication and defense of the disciplines is largely based on the now discredited faculty psychology. The older false analogy of the doctrine of formal discipline derived from it was that the mind is like a muscle that can be strengthened by formal exercise and used to perform many different acts. It is unnecessary to describe here any of

²⁶Ibid., p. 337. Bestor cited as proof the research of James E. Wert, "Twin Examination Assumptions," Journal of Higher Education 8 (March 1937): 139.

²⁷Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 87.

²⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 29.

the long series of experiments . . . that have revealed the fallacy of formal discipline. It should be emphasized, however, that this does not mean that the academic disciplines are neither valuable nor enjoyable, only that they do not "train the mind" in general.²⁹

Hofstadter said that faculty psychology described the mind as a "substantive entity composed of parts or 'faculties' such as reason, imagination, memory, and the like." Exercising the faculties "in a liberal education through constant mental discipline" strengthened them. The liberal arts, especially Latin, Greek, and mathematics, "had an established superiority as agents of mental discipline." Mastery of them had as its most important aim "to train the powers of the mind so that they would be more adequate for whatever task they might confront."³⁰

Developing the "powers of the mind" or the "intellectual capacities" was Bestor's aim for education. He did not speak of separate parts of the mind nor did he designate by name powers of the mind strengthened by particular disciplines. The Report of the Committee of Ten declared that foreign language study develops the memory and the powers of observation; reasoning is developed by mathematics and languages; the chief object of the study of history is the training of the judgment.³¹

Bestor limited his specific claims for effective transfer of the disciplines to fields related to them. For instance, he spoke of foreign

²⁹Trow, "Academic Utopia?" p. 23.

³⁰Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in Life, pp. 347-348.

³¹Cremin, ed., Report, p. 96, p. 168, p. 170.

language study as being necessary for a better understanding of English and he designated the study of mathematics as basic to science and "the increasing host of other modern activities that make use of quantitative data."³² The intellectual training that Bestor advocated was always concerned with "the basic and scholarly disciplines . . . each with an organized structure and methodology of its own."³³ Thus, the fundamental disciplines train the mind by fitting its powers with knowledge and skills applicable to fields related to the individual disciplines. Only the disciplines are basic and extensive enough in application to give adequate intellectual training for life. Faculty psychology and formal discipline as comparing the mind to a muscle to be trained for all eventualities by unrelated and difficult exercise do not underlie Bestor's concept of mental discipline. A good description of Bestor's thesis is to be found in the following hypothesis:

If mental disciplines were, after all, meaningless, everything that had been done in the name of liberal education for centuries seemed to be based on a miscalculation. The question of whether the mind can be disciplined, or generally trained, survived the faculty psychology and took on a new, more specific form: can training exercised and developed in one mental operation develop a mental facility that can be transferred to another? . . . Can the study of Latin facilitate the subsequent study of French? If a transfer of training did occur, a cumulation of such transfers over several years of a rigorous liberal education might produce a mind which was better trained in general.³⁴

³²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 51.

³³Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 36.

³⁴Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in Life, pp. 348-349.

Bestor's doctrine that the disciplines were an indirect preparation for life postulated the necessity of transfer of training. The schools should close, said he, if there was no transfer. He maintained that generalizations and adeptness in applying them to the solution of problems stay with the intellectually disciplined student.³⁵

Memorizing facts, arriving at generalizations, and understanding them, as well as developing skills in "the abstract processes of analyzing, generalizing and criticizing," are elements of mental discipline.³⁶

These habits of rigorous, sustained, and critical thinking remain as beneficial transfer from courses in the liberal arts and sciences. In this spirit Bestor approved the late nineteenth century view of scholars and educators thus:

Education itself was conceived of as intellectual training in the organized disciplines that men had developed for advancing knowledge. . . . But the concept that education was concerned with intellectual discipline went unchallenged except by a small lunatic fringe.³⁷

Support for Bestor's position is found in Jerome Bruner's conclusion that "virtually all the evidence of the last two decades" attests to the "fact that massive general transfer can be achieved by appropriate learning." Generalizations and the systematic structure of the disciplines, once understood, are most likely to transfer.³⁸ Leonard Carmichael claimed that "habits of intellectual discipline"

³⁵Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 337.

³⁶Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 59.

³⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 46.

³⁸Bruner, Process of Education, p. 6.

result from the 'hard' subjects and "flexible and effective mental powers" are developed in the study of language and mathematics.³⁹ A specific instance has been given with regard to Latin, which formerly "was supposed to have tremendous transfer powers" for "almost all intellectual virtues," in the following:

Although these great hopes have not been borne out, it does appear that Latin can be used to increase a student's ability to spell and to read English words and to help in the mastery of other languages. This transfer is more likely to occur if, during the study of Latin, students are deliberately encouraged to apply their new knowledge to aspects of other languages. Students who have taken several years of high-school Latin get along better in college than students who have had no Latin or very little.⁴⁰

Bestor acknowledged that in some instances transfer of training did not take place. He said, "It is quite true that persons who have learned to think accurately in one field sometimes fail to do so in other fields."⁴¹ Generalizations and the power to apply them to new situations are most likely to remain with the person, while many individual facts, necessary for initial comprehension of the generalizations, are liable to be forgotten. Bestor rejected the concept of the mind as "a sort of cold storage warehouse" in which "chunks of fact and information" would be available for future use in the problems of life.⁴²

³⁹Carmichael, Introduction to Child and Curriculum and School and Society, by John Dewey, ix.

⁴⁰J. M. Stephens, "Transfer of Learning," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, edited by Chester W. Harris, 3rd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1541.

⁴¹Bestor, "Are We Less of Better Educated?" p. 127.

⁴²Edwin H. Reeder, "The Quarrel Between Professors of Academic Subjects and Professors of Education: An Analysis," quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 33.

Training in the habits of accurate thinking and acquisition of the knowledge and skills of the structured disciplines makes the powers of the mind ready for solution of life's problems. The outstanding accomplishments of men of liberal education of the past are proof of transfer of training.

Bestor's theory of intellectual discipline postulated that experimental psychology had not destroyed the validity of the concept of transfer of training resulting from the powers of the mind endowed with the knowledge and skills of the fundamental intellectual disciplines. The experiments of psychologists on transfer had been impugned by Lyans and Judd on the grounds that they involved peripheral functions and not the higher mental processes, a reaction of nerves to stimuli and not the mental ability to generalize.⁴³ The Committee of Ten had said, "A deep mystery underlies all kinds of knowledge."⁴⁴ Bestor's Council for Basic Education, as Raywid pointed out, was highly skeptical of the findings of educational psychology. The philosophical reason was given by Joseph Wood Krutch, an officer in CBE, in the following:

A humanist is anyone who rejects the attempt to describe or account for man wholly on the basis of physics, chemistry, and animal behaviour. He is anyone who believes that will, reason, and purpose are real and significant; . . . that the unmeasurable may be significant; or, to sum it all up, that those human realities which sometimes seem to exist only in the human mind are the perceptions rather than merely the creations of that mind.⁴⁵

⁴³Kolesnik, Mental Discipline in Education, p. 56, p. 59.

⁴⁴Cremin, ed., Report, p. 122.

⁴⁵Joseph Wood Krutch, Human Nature and the Human Condition (New York: Random House, 1959), p. 197, quoted by Mary Anne Raywid in "CBE in Perspective: A Report on the Council for Basic Education," Educational Theory 14 (July 1964); 153.

The Council for Basic Education stated its position thus:

If we do not habitually genuflect at the mention of 'research' and 'instruments for measuring personality' and 'scientific' educational psychology . . . it is only because we are uncertain that information about such an elusive, not to say ornery, thing as the human psyche can rightfully be called a science.⁴⁶

The following statement by Bestor, though it deals primarily with critical interpretation, seems pertinent: "Whether one likes it or not, there are many kinds of knowledge that can be attained only through the continual exercise of judgment, with little help from the laboratory of the computing machine or the book of formal rules."⁴⁷

Asserting that science had proven the purposelessness of mental discipline and calling for interesting studies of immediate transfer to life's problems, Charles Prosser proposed the need for a practical, utilitarian curriculum in the secondary schools. He said:

On all these counts business arithmetic is superior to plane or solid geometry; learning ways of keeping physically fit, to the study of French; learning the technique of selecting an occupation, to the study of algebra; simple science of everyday life, to geology; simple business English, to Elizabethan Classics.⁴⁸

William Clark Trow upheld the desirability of the functional curriculum with this statement: "The requirements of modern life are faced by others as well as by future scientists and scholars."⁴⁹ An instance of

⁴⁶Council for Basic Education, "New Years Thoughts on an Old Theme," CBE Bulletin 4 (January 1950): 5, quoted *ibidem*.

⁴⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 437.

⁴⁸Charles Prosser, Inglis Lecture, 1939, quoted by Hofstadter in Anti-Intellectualism in Life, p. 346.

⁴⁹William Clark Trow, "'Basic Education'--Facts and Fallacies," School and Society 85 (March 16, 1957): 87.

the appeal of practical, vocational courses is seen from the fact that in 1957 approximately one-third of the girls in high school were in a stenographic-interest program. It was claimed that a curriculum for all in the basic intellectual disciplines would result in the following state of discontent:

American parents, laborers, farmers, businessmen, and industrialists would think poorly of any group (even scholars) who sought to deprive them of the business education, home economics, industrial arts, art, music, dramatics, athletics, on-the-job training, safety education, and other life-adjustment courses they fought so hard to get.⁵⁰

However, Bestor called for devotion to the cause of promoting the disciplines on the part of educators with this declaration:

"Educators may not take popular indifference to intellectual training as a mandate to guide them in the discharge of their duties."⁵¹ In his opinion there was no great desire on the part of teachers, parents, or pupils for life adjustment education.⁵² He attributed the functional education of life adjustment to the "interlocking directorate of professional educationists." In opposition to practical training of direct utility for life, Bestor promoted the disciplines in the following:

Liberal education is designed to produce self-reliance. It teaches a man, not the answers to particular problems, but the way to use his general intelligence to find the answers to all kinds of problems, especially those without precedent.⁵³

⁵⁰Nolan C. Kearny, "'Educating the Gifted Child': A Reply to Arthur Bestor," Great Debate: Schools in Crisis, p. 88.

⁵¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 93.

⁵²Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 84.

⁵³Bestor, "Education for Changing World," p. 7.

English, foreign languages, history, mathematics, and science are the five basic disciplines that compose Bestor's curriculum for the secondary school. Elementary school prepares for these disciplines and college elaborates upon them. The Report of the Committee of Ten established the five disciplines as the sole fields within which all its various course offerings were contained. Bestor endorsed the Committee's work thus:

It is not tradition--as sometimes falsely alleged--but a realistic appraisal of the modern world which points out these disciplines as fundamental. The disciplines that I have specified did not achieve their position in the curriculum in the long-distant past. They achieved it as a result of the most searching, critical, realistic, and responsible re-examination that occupied most of the nineteenth century. The end result was a curriculum that was thoughtfully attuned to the needs of modern life and also flexible enough to take care of future changes therein.⁵⁴

The one educational ladder demands "rigorous intellectual discipline and high cultural purposes in the public schools."⁵⁵ All subjects should be taught the same way, with the slower streamed into classes of more gradual progress, so that there will be no aim for "educational mediocrity." Vocational courses belong at the end of the student's education, ideally after secondary school; there should be no "new programs in which sound learning is replaced by trivia connected with the 'felt needs' of children."⁵⁶

⁵⁴Bestor, "Fundamentals of Education," p. 659.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

Education should treat of the disciplines "organized as they are in the mature world of science and learning" and present them "in systematic form to all students."⁵⁷ As a consequence, there should be no "watered-down courses in basic subjects," such as, "'girls' science,' 'socialized high-school arithmetic,' 'English experience course.'"⁵⁸ General mathematics and general science do not qualify as basic disciplines because of deviation from scholarly and systematic treatment. General mathematics was described by Bestor as "the hybrid that is supposed to appeal to the 'real-life' needs of pupils."⁵⁹ Driver training, "a mechanical skill," is not an intellectual discipline of the social sciences.⁶⁰ Applied science, such as, courses in radio or television, is not basic or broad enough to be an intellectual discipline.

The sciences most useful for the secondary school are physics, chemistry, and biology. The student should have at least a year of each. The theoretical principles of each science are to be learned in such a way that the total structure of the science in its systematic processes is grasped by the student. There should be constant experimentation in the laboratory by the student for realization of the principles and practice in the methods of analysis of the science.⁶¹

⁵⁷Bestor, "Fundamentals of Education," p. 658.

⁵⁸Bestor, "Soft Curriculum," p. 67.

⁵⁹Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 212.

⁶⁰Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 550.

⁶¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 41.

Because the individual sciences have their own structure and methods, each should be studied separately for analysis in thorough knowledge.

Mathematics includes algebra and geometry for all. The gifted student should have the opportunity to progress to trigonometry, advanced algebra, analytic geometry, and the beginning of calculus.⁶² Mathematics should be taught in its own right, not merely as it is needed in one of the sciences. The student of geometry should learn "the orderly process by which a group of postulates can be made to reveal their implications in theorems of increasing complexity."⁶³

Secondary school English is to presume an adequate mastery of the skills of reading and writing. Bestor stated the responsibility of the elementary school in teaching the three Rs to "all but the gravely retarded" thus: "It should not be permitted to pass pupils on to a higher level until they have developed the proficiency in languages and numbers that is absolutely prerequisite to every kind of intellectual, professional, and vocational activity."⁶⁴ The following "easy anti-intellectual way out" indicated to Bestor a permissive trend among educators debilitating to basic learning: "When we come to the realization that not every child has to read, figure, write, and spell . . . that many of them cannot or will not master these chores . . . then we shall be on the road to improving the junior high curriculum."⁶⁵

⁶²Bestor, "Do We Do Enough for the Gifted?" p. 80.

⁶³Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 36.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 49.

⁶⁵A. H. Lauchner, "How Can the Curriculum Be Improved?" quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 53.

On the contrary, said Bestor, the secondary school pupil should be required to read widely in the works of accepted cultural value. The reading should embrace the classics of the past and current successful writings in all genres. Graded progression should carry the student to appreciation of philosophical essays and other works of a highly intellectual nature. Formal grammar and rhetoric should be studied. Constant writing should continue through all years in all forms of expression, even poetry, and every literary effort should be corrected by the teacher. The purpose will be to develop in the student the ability to write with "clarity, accuracy, fluency, and cogency."⁶⁶

Foreign languages should be begun in elementary and carried through secondary school. For facility the language should be studied for four years. Gifted students should begin the study of a second language while in secondary school. While the Report of the Committee of Ten commented at length on the teaching of the classical languages, Bestor's remarks were confined almost totally to the area of modern languages. Against some educational authorities, for example, Robert Hutchins and the Harvard Committee on General Education, who held foreign languages not to be essential for general education, Bestor stated their irreplaceable position in secondary school courses. Foreign language study is necessary for a better understanding of English and for social relations in the modern world of facile communication in business and politics.⁶⁷ Moreover, knowledge of another language should be a

⁶⁶Bestor, "Crisis of Purpose," p. 727.

⁶⁷Bestor, "We Are Less Educated," p. 71.

resource available to all students in further study.

History should appear in all catalogues of secondary school curricula under the title History and not the currently used Social Studies. Bestor proposed a specific curriculum beginning in the seventh year with American history, continuing through the tenth year with ancient and medieval history, the western epic from the sixteenth to the twentieth century and world history in the twentieth. A more profound and extensive treatment of American history in the eleventh year would lead to the final year in political science.⁶⁸

The relationships between the events of history and contemporary issues and events should be stressed by the teacher. Defined as "the documented and interpreted record of past activities in every domain of human life," history is broader in scope than the other social sciences and draws on them for its content. The student should be brought to understand the processes of the discipline of history: the logical method of establishing the historical narrative from artifacts and documents; the chain of causality in specific events; the characterization of social units of specific eras of time; and the relation, the causal nexus, between the varied occurrences or changes in human events of different eras. The judgments resulting from these processes of causal analysis are "generalizations of a very high order," and in their formulation consists "the ability to think historically."⁶⁹

While the narrative of history can be brought down to the present

⁶⁸Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 555.

⁶⁹Bestor, "The Humaneness of History," p. 13.

day, the teaching of very recent or contemporary history requires far more work of the teacher than the treatment of the past. For there are neither systematic collections of sources nor orderly historical accounts of events to aid in the preparation. Impossible or adequate treatment are pedagogical assignments like that of the Illinois Curriculum Program, "Develop an understanding of the ways of living, attitudes and ideologies throughout the world."⁷⁰

However, the curriculum in history without admixture of the social studies, said Leo J. Alilunas, had been tried and found wanting in the first quarter of the twentieth century. By 1924 social studies had grown strong enough in the school system to share the time and usurp the title formerly allotted solely to the curriculum in history. According to the National Council for Social Studies, the curricular title includes "history, economics, sociology, civics, geography and all modifications or combinations of subjects whose content as well as aim is predominantly social."⁷¹ "New theories in educational psychology" and "new social and economic trends" had brought about their insertion into the curriculum. Whereas Bestor had stressed the power of professional educationists as responsible for the social studies move-

⁷⁰Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, The Schools and National Security, p. 230, quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 204.

⁷¹Leo J. Alilunas, "Bestor and the 'Social Studies'," Social Education 22 (May 1958): 239.

ment, Alilunas brought the work of historians, social scientists, and civic groups to the fore in the following rebuttal to Bestor:

He seems unaware of the influence of functional historians such as James Harvey Robinson, Charles A. Beard, and Carl Becker, who became leaders of the new history movement and wanted something for youth beyond a dreary chronological study of politics. They asked that history help modern society answer its questions. Bestor ignores the role of the political scientists, economists, and sociologists who, with the assistance of civic groups, built up pressure for a new secondary-school social studies curriculum.⁷²

Although Bestor recommended that the teacher of history should make use of material from the other social sciences in establishing and explaining the historical narrative, he was adamant in the conviction that history be taught in its own right throughout secondary school. The "systematic ways of thinking," "facts ascertained," "methods of inquiry," and "the way in which these facts and these methods constitute an ordered whole" are to be mastered separately in the study of each of the social sciences.⁷³ These disciplines are not to be combined in one course for solving current problems until the ways of thinking proper to each are mastered; this could be in the last year of secondary school or, better, in the final years of college. Since the "chronological unfolding of events is far closer to the actual experience of young persons than are the processes of abstraction" of the social sciences, history should be learned first to serve as a foundation for the others.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Bestor, "Historical Scholarship in Schools," p. 32.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 36.

In the twelfth year a course in political science is to preempt the curricular time of history. In the same year economics might well serve as an elective. At any time geography might be offered as an elective, although geographical elements are to be stressed with precision in the teaching of history. Bestor ruled out the following as too complicated for secondary school: "Systematic introductions to sociology or anthropology or social psychology . . . are best deferred to the university."⁷⁵

Practical considerations motivated a concession by Bestor to adapt methods of teaching to "the incorporation of history into general courses in 'social studies'." He proposed the scholarly composition of units in which a list of historical events would be explored thoroughly and related to current problems. This project would be for the purpose of "reintroducing into the courses, even those dealing with contemporary problems, a more adequate, extensive, and reliable treatment of the historical aspects of various topics."⁷⁶ This proposal to the American Historical Association was realized some years later in the series of pamphlets published by its Service Center for Teachers of History and recommended specifically by Bestor.

On the other hand, social studies should not be a "catch-all" for courses lacking in intellectual depth but deemed practical by civic groups and state legislatures, for example, driver training, first aid

⁷⁵Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," p. 555.

⁷⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, pp. 234-235.

and accident prevention. Nor should the concepts of life adjustment lead the teacher to turn the classes "into a clinic for discussing the personal problems of adolescents." Reprehensible also is the practice of treating a "succession of unrelated topics" chosen because of "evanescent 'real-life' interests" of the pupils. Systematic learning in depth is thus replaced by "causal encounters with snippets of historical data, presented as background to one or another contemporary problem." Sporadic contact with the principles of the other social sciences as they are exemplified in 'problem-solving' situations does not make for an understanding of these subjects "in terms of coherent theory."⁷⁷

The core curriculum is similarly defective in systematic treatment, depth in investigation, sustained concentration and practice, and cumulative learning. Bestor posited the necessity of the separate mastery of the systematic knowledge and skills proper to each discipline. Random treatment of the principles of intermingled disciplines as arising from real life problems of youth and society does not suffice for mental training. Bestor said: "But the so-called 'integrated' programs of the American schools--the 'core curriculum', the 'common learnings program', and the like--are efforts to produce a synthesis of knowledge before there is any analyzed and ordered knowledge to integrate."⁷⁸ In addition, Bestor pointed out that such programs would make excessive

⁷⁷Bestor, "History, Social Studies, Citizenship," pp. 550-552.

⁷⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 59.

demands on the knowledge of the teacher.

The core curriculum was never widely adopted in practice in the public school system. In 1948 only 3.5 percent of all public secondary schools had a core, "involving two or more class periods from subjects that would ordinarily be taught separately."⁷⁹ Krug, stating that the 1930s were the best years for core, continued thus: "Core was later to fall into disrepute, but a faithful remnant of core enthusiasts survived as an organization, the National Conference of Core Teachers, into and throughout the 1960s."⁸⁰

Bestor proposed the curriculum in the five disciplines as liberal education to set man free from servitude to daily routine by disciplining his mental powers, to give him control over his environment, and to make him equal to any other person in participating in and directing the course of society. Liberal education, the exclusive prerogative of the aristocracy of the past and, in other countries, of the present, is the right of all members of our democracy. Bestor said, "Intellectual training for some of the people, vocational training and life-adjustment for the rest, is the epitome of a class-structured educational philosophy."⁸¹

The predominant policy of the educational system regarded the

⁷⁹Harold Albery, "Core Programs," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 338.

⁸⁰Edward A. Krug, The Shaping of the American High School, 1920-1941, vol. 2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), p. 267.

⁸¹Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 87.

teaching of only the fundamental disciplines to all students as anachronistic. Attendance of the secondary school age group had swelled from seven to seventy percent from 1870 to 1950; the student body had changed from a selective, college-bound, upper-class group, destined for the professions or public leadership, to a student body representative of all classes and all types of future occupations; society had become more industrialized, urbanized, and less dedicated to cohesive family units. The following was a widely held view on secondary school curricula: "Traditional programs often do fail to meet needs because both the character of the school population and conditions of living have changed since the programs were established."⁸² Change in the curriculum had been necessitated by the "differing interests, abilities, aptitudes and needs" of the pupils.⁸³

Bestor held that the needs of modern society do not militate against the curriculum in the disciplines. Industry offers its own practical training in manual, technological, or managerial skills. Speaking of the family, religious bodies, and institutions of the state, Bestor said, "It is doubtful that institutions for social cohesion, conformity to mores, and loyalty have collapsed or greatly need re-enforcement by life adjustment education."⁸⁴ As for the needs of youth, Bestor declared the disciplines to be the best fundamental preparation of widest application for life. Vocational training should come at the

⁸²National Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth, p. 12, quoted by Harold C. Hand in "A Scholar's Documentation," p. 7.

⁸³Trow, "'Basic Education'--Facts and Fallacies," p. 87.

⁸⁴Bestor, "Education and Relationship to Society," p. 85.

end of the liberal education course and occupy only as much time as necessary to ensure adequate performance, whether two months or two years. Ideally it should come after secondary school or toward the end of college.

Consideration of the abilities of the youths does not afford sufficient reason for "watered-down" courses in the disciplines or the vocational or life adjustment courses that have taken the place of the intellectual disciplines in the schedules of many, especially the slower, students. Bestor said that much apparent lack of ability is really a lack of cultural background due to poor environment and not a defect of natural talent. He denied class superiority thus: "To assert that intellectual capacity decreases as one reaches down into lower economic levels of the population is to deny, point-blank, the basic assumptions of democratic equalitarianism."⁸⁵ With great effort on the part of all, the school can overcome this lack of background by supplying the needed cultural environment.

However, numerous surveys have testified to the fact that huge numbers of pupils without ability or motivation for mastery of the disciplines have left the schools, unable to meet scholastic standards. The New York Regents' study in 1936 showed that three out of five students left secondary school before graduation, one-fifth of these as soon as they could do so legally. With a median rank at the twenty-seventh percentile, more than a fifth of these drop-outs were failing

⁸⁵Bestor, Educational Wastelands, p. 36.

in one or more subjects. English, social studies, and mathematics were the causes of failure in descending order. More than half said they would continue if they could be assured of passing. Only one in twenty came from a comfortable home.⁸⁶

Bestor declared that students with neither ability nor diligence should not be encouraged to attend school beyond the compulsory age. With pupils beyond the age of sixteen the school should begin the process of elimination; those not meeting the high standards of mastery of the disciplines should not be awarded a diploma. Since 90 percent of all seven to fifteen year old youths were in school, the time had come for educators to concentrate on the quality of education and not continue to think of quantity in expansion. Bestor said, "We must get rid of the notion that there is any virtue in increasing the 'holding-power' of the high school, if that holding-power is achieved by watering-down the curriculum and debasing all the standards of academic achievement."⁸⁷ Only a solid curriculum in the intellectual disciplines will give the pupil a just return for his time spent and the citizens a profitable dividend for the tax money invested.

Educators, on the other hand, alleged that there was nowhere else for the youths to go except to high school and that there was such a variety of aptitudes among the youths that one 30 percent could satisfy

⁸⁶Burnett, "Mr. Bestor in the Land of the Philistines," p. 10.

⁸⁷Bestor, "Future Direction of Education," p. 376.

the standards of rigorous intellectual discipline. Their view was expressed in the following: "Economic and social pressures are forcing American youth to remain in high school."⁸⁸ Some had gone so far as believe a required standard of proficiency in reading in junior high to be as "illogical" as a demand that "each one must be able to perform on a violin."⁸⁹

Bestor maintained that the three Rs could be mastered adequately by all but the gravely retarded and that the disciplines, in whole or in part, could be imparted in mental training to the average pupil. The task of the secondary school was to offer only the five basic disciplines in the amount that the pupils would be able and willing to master. No alien or diluted courses should be substituted for the three Rs and the basic intellectual disciplines during the years of compulsory attendance. Only to the slower pupils at the age of seventeen should the school begin to offer vocational courses.

In all grades of elementary school there is a range of mental age among the pupils, four years in the second grade and eight years in the sixth; the range in each high school grade is eight to ten years; the middle two-thirds in the sixth grade have a range of 3.2 years. In addition to these data, Bestor noted that 90 percent of all pupils attain a mental age of twelve by the end of the period of compulsory attendance. Therefore, he declared that all these pupils can "develop in those years

⁸⁸Corey, "Dr. Bestor's Wastelands," p. 31.

⁸⁹Lauchner, "How Can the Curriculum Be Improved?", quoted by Bestor in Restoration of Learning, p. 53.

a command of important intellectual skills and a mastery of substantial bodies of knowledge if their natural pace of learning is respected."⁹⁰

Bestor offered an innovative plan giving in detail a hypothetical grade system through secondary school. From kindergarten upward there would be homogeneous grouping of the pupils in academic matters according to tested results showing mental age and achievement coupled with the teacher's judgment. In extracurricular activities the pupils would associate with those of their own chronological age even to the extent of moving into a high school building at thirteen while still taking elementary subjects. There would be a constant interchange of students in classes as they progressed according to the three academic indicators.

In elementary school the lower half of the students would have scheduled years of review. The pupil of the lowest sixth would have elementary school subjects in this manner until his seventeenth year, in which he could take vocational work or leave. Superior students would complete the whole course in eleven years by skipping years of review and taking at least four academic disciplines each year in secondary school. Limited to alternating between three and four subjects, the high average would have an added, a seventh year of secondary school. Slower progress in the secondary school, with a lighter schedule of two or three disciplines a day, would extend the schooling of the average pupil to fifteen and eighteen years from first grade through secondary school. Nineteen would be the age at which average pupils would be offered vocational courses, which could be taken by the

⁹⁰Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 296.

low average pupil after one year in the disciplines.⁹¹ Bestor said of the low average pupil:

During his last year or two in high school he would take certain courses of the secondary-school program, but his load would be kept light and he would be assigned to study hall and perhaps to a special supplementary instructor. Thus he would be able to do full justice to himself in the work of the class. . . .He could rightfully consider himself a well-educated young man, each of his acquirements being a substantial and recognized one.⁹²

Theoretically the student would be better prepared for college by Bestor's plan. The situation in which "the first two years of college constituted for most students not higher education but secondary-school work" would be remedied by the extended years in the secondary school of Bestor's system.⁹³ However, serious doubts arise as to whether high school students with three or four hours of study time during the school day would use it profitably. Moreover, only dictatorial power could impose this long school system on the American public. The proposal of dedicating more years of the life of the pupil of little talent or vocational interests to the disciplines would not attract great support. Even in the present twelve-year system, the view of modern educationists is that "life has too many demands to allow for time in education of youth for mental training."⁹⁴ Specific criticism of Bestor's plan embraced the following: placing too much dependence on mental age for further learning while ignoring psychological factors; probable confusion arising from changing groups according to individual development;

⁹¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 330.

⁹²Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 334.

⁹³Ibid., p. 346.

⁹⁴Kolesnik, Mental Discipline in Education, p. 136.

disciplinary problems resulting from a range of five years in chronological age in classrooms; the tendency to "stigmatize the less able pupil and place the halo of the 'chosen few' upon the intellectually superior."⁹⁵

However, Bestor prefaced his "comprehensive proposal" with this comment, "The general principles are obviously more important than any tentative organizational details."⁹⁶ Worthy features of Bestor's plan are these: solid hope for success in teaching the lower segment the three Rs by the end of the period of compulsory education; advisability of extended time for study and special help, whether by tutoring or remedial classes, for slower students; need for special programs offering to the superior students opportunities for more thorough and more extensive treatment of the disciplines; the merits of homogeneous grouping. The general conclusion on ability to be derived from Bestor is that slower pupils can be taught the three Rs and some of the fundamental disciplines before they go into vocational training toward the end of their schooling.

In matter and method the teachers were not to be preoccupied with catering to the pupils' puerile interests and needs. The children were being prepared to solve adult problems, not children's problems; the "felt needs of adolescents" were to be subordinated to the "real-life needs" of maturity. This meant concentration on the teaching of the

⁹⁵Ahrens, "'Redeeming' American Education," pp. 41-42.

⁹⁶Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 310.

three Rs and the five basic disciplines. Study of life adjustment topics was valueless; extracurricular activities should never be made equal in importance to scholarly pursuits; psychoanalysts, not the teachers, should attend to abnormalities. If a school had good content and methods in teaching, there was no reason to engage in a frantic quest for novelty. After the child had learned to generalize with the aid of quick, accurate reading, it was regressive education to tie him down to concrete, single objects, whether in counting apples, making community studies, or viewing visual aids. These sense-perceptible aids should be used prudently and sparingly to lead to abstract thinking. The proper place for their constant use was in the early stages of learning.⁹⁷

Higher education should consist in a deeper and more extensive study of the fundamental disciplines. College is essentially concerned with a liberal education. "The ideal of the college of liberal arts and sciences," said Bestor, "is to raise up a body of men and women who understand in common the fundamentals of intellectual life in its various branches."⁹⁸ Only toward the end of his educational career should the student specialize in vocational or professional courses. The requirements of general or liberal education, imposed by colleges on all students, should be in the most essential disciplines. Bestor found that distribution requirements were liable to leave the student with too meager an understanding of the disciplines because of the brevity of the study of each. Instead, Bestor proposed the requirement of a major with

⁹⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 109.

⁹⁸Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 395.

numerous courses in related fields and a minor "of almost opposite character."⁹⁹ Such a minor would assure a broad education while the student would certainly reach a 'threshold' of understanding after two or three years of application to the discipline. To abolish the abuse of students taking elective courses of little intellectual value in order to acquire credits easily, Bestor proposed comprehensive examinations in both the major and minor for the bachelors degree.

Teacher training should be "an education in the liberal arts and sciences." Making a comparison with doctors, lawyers, and engineers, "who must receive a balanced training in many intellectual disciplines which are not directly related to their professions," Bestor stated the following:

How much more does a teacher need such an education? For him the fundamental intellectual disciplines are not supplements to, but the very essence of, his professional stock in trade. . . . The last profession in which narrow vocational considerations should be allowed to interfere with thorough and well-balanced undergraduate preparation in the liberal arts and sciences is the teaching profession.¹⁰⁰

Courses in education, defined strictly as pedagogy by Bestor, should be few--one or two might serve a valuable purpose--and should occur as electives at the end of the educational career. In undergraduate education, Bestor found fault with the great number of courses in pedagogy at the expense of the disciplines and with the multiplicity

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁰⁰Arthur Bestor, "On the Education and Certification of Teachers," School and Society 78 (September 19, 1953): pp. 82=83.

of survey courses, especially in the integration of two or more disciplines. He charged that educationists urge a multiplicity of survey courses on undergraduates "in the belief that they will thereby get the most 'subject-matter' for the least expenditure of time and effort."¹⁰¹ Thereby, he said, they make room in the student's schedule for more courses in pedagogy. The survey courses were shallow and those in pedagogy were repetitious and lacking in content.

Bestor proposed that postgraduate courses for a masters or doctors degree in education be completely changed. They should consist of a broad study of the disciplines, developing knowledge to a point somewhat beyond that of an undergraduate major but not in the manner of the highly specialized, theoretical research of graduate studies. The state requirements in education demanded of teachers would be replaced by official certificates granted for successful practice teaching and for meeting standards of professional examinations in the disciplines. There would be certificates for elementary teachers in child psychology and for administrators, and some others. The reduced department of education would be limited to offering a few courses in pedagogy and to supervising practice teaching; all other courses in education would be under the pertinent departments in the university.

Citing the recent attacks of Bestor and other academicians on "the weak spots in teacher training, such as repetitious and contentless courses," William W. Brickman recalled the long-standing prejudice against professors of education on the part of the academicians. He

¹⁰¹Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 244.

pointed out that professors of education, such as I. L. Kandel, had "anticipated" these same criticisms in their writings. Brickman continued thus:

The stereotyping and collective vituperation by Bestor and his colleagues takes virtually no notice of this resistance. Nor do the learned professors make much use of the laws of logic and the principles of scientific and historical research. Had they done so, they would have uncovered scholarship among educationists, solid courses in education, opposition to aimlessness, and a serious regard for a curriculum of substance.¹⁰²

Educators contend that the average requirement that one-fourth of the credits of the program in teacher training be in education courses is not excessive and is based on a real need. Moreover, research has provided ample resources for postgraduate studies in education. Since teachers "must become sensitive to the insistent demands of today's complex society and to the nature and needs of today's children," teacher training should be a balanced combination of the liberal and professional, said Karl W. Bigelow. He gave the following summation:

This requires a vital general education for teachers. It calls for advanced study in their teaching fields that inspires enthusiasm, ensures mastery, and reveals significances for the children and the social order. And it demands as well professional studies that clarify purpose, create an understanding of children and equip the teacher with basic, methodological skills.¹⁰³

The following is a concise appraisal of Bestor's writings, which were termed by Cremin as "by far the most serious, searching and influential criticisms of progressive education to appear during the

¹⁰²William E. Brickman, "Criticism and Defense of American Education," School and Society 77 (June 20, 1953): 394.

¹⁰³Bigelow, "How Should Teachers Be Educated?" p. 24.

fifties."¹⁰⁴ Repetition and lack of content in courses, narrowness of view in philosophy and history, and cursory treatment in survey courses were criticisms of value directed by Bestor against the contemporary programs in teacher training. Bestor's works "ripped savagely into the theory and practice of the life-adjustment movement."¹⁰⁵ Life adjustment education in the schools was, from its name, to be satisfied with mediocrity: there would be no amelioration of the environment arising from mere adjustment. The Council for Basic Education, of which Bestor was co-founder and first president, stated in December of 1962, "The life-adjusters have disappeared from the educational scene or gone underground."¹⁰⁶ Application of methods suitable for elementary school to secondary school pupils and preoccupation with the interests or felt needs of the pupils were trends in educational literature that were justly marked out by Bestor as inept procedure. Bestor's opposition to the core curriculum was accompanied by lack of acceptance of the core in the schools. From his reasoning on mental age, there arises a substantial hope that all but the gravely retarded can be brought to a functional use of the three Rs by the age of fifteen; there should be no official toleration of inadequacy therein.

Mental training in abstract thinking according to the systematic processes of the intellectual disciplines is the purpose of education. Bestor's discourse on the nature and value of the disciplines and on

¹⁰⁴Cremin, Transformation of the School, p. 344.

¹⁰⁵Cremin, Transformation of the School, p. 344.

¹⁰⁶Mortimer Smith, ed., A Decade of Comment on Education, 1955-1966 (Washington, D.C.: Council for Basic Education, 1966), p. 3.

the necessity of the five fundamental disciplines in the schools as indirect preparation for life and as the basic foundation for further study is a thorough analysis of their nature, an eloquent testimonial to their value, and a persuasive argument for their essential role in education. Superior students, identified early, should proceed at a pace commensurate with their talents and be encouraged to continue in colleges and universities. However, Bestor's position that there be no adaptation of the disciplines to the abilities of the lower half of the student population and no vocational courses until the end of secondary school would ignore the needs of our urbanized society, the complexity of the student body, educational psychology, and the pragmatic outlook of the majority. Bestor's exalted defense of the disciplines was a strong corrective against the trend to adjust all education downward to the level of mediocrity. Bestor proclaimed: "The ideal of liberal education is to produce men and women with disciplined minds, cultivated interests, and a wide range of fundamental knowledge."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Bestor, Restoration of Learning, p. 242.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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