

Whose Business Is Education ?

There are various definitions of education, but certainly it is a continuing process which is necessary in order to advance vocational competence, social responsibility, and the spiritual values without which few people can find complete satisfaction.

You of ASTD have a unique opportunity and obligation to assist other people in developing their greatest potential. That should be a source of stimulation and satisfaction to each of you. Ideas differ as to the effectiveness of our methods, but perhaps the opinion of an outsider may be interesting.

Last winter an Argentinian was in the United States on a government-sponsored program. Over a period of four months he had the opportunity to visit a number of cities, several universities, and a dozen or more industries. In his final report he indicated that he was completely overwhelmed by the progress achieved in this country to make life more practical, more profitable, and more pleasant for everyone. The credit and the responsibility for these results are shared by our educational institutions, business and industry. Chancellor William P. Tolley of Syracuse University has envisioned the following results of a university education: (1) emotional maturity, (2) a continual involvement with books, (3) the habit of accuracy, (4) a reflective mind, and (5) an ever-widening curiosity.

We all know that our schools and colleges have been under severe criticism for their teaching methods, curricula, and lack of discipline, but how demanding have we in business been in our standards? Are we providing the environment which motivates our generation in wanting to become leaders? As training directors, perhaps one of our greatest responsibilities is to set forth the areas of need and indicate the avenue through which each may be explored. After that, it is largely up to the individual.

In a recent manpower study in one organization, it was found that the number of employees apparently competent for promotion to the higher echelons of management during the next five years was only one third of the anticipated needs. Does not this situation raise a question as to the climate in that organization for developing management potential? Are we who have a particular responsibility for guiding, developing, and inspiring employees really carrying out our functions?

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