

POSTON SCHOOLS

Objectives of Our Schools Teachers' Statements October 1942

My chief desire during this year in teaching will have to do with giving the children a little more sense of security through their school environment, by making their school experience as "normal" as possible for them. This can be done, I think in several ways, among them the following:

1. Keeping their schoolroom as much as possible the kind of place they think a good schoolroom should be--both in appearance (as much as possible) and in classroom procedure.
2. Encourage freedom of expression to counteract possible repressions and sterner discipline at home.
3. Create an orderly atmosphere in school, a definite routine without monotony.
4. Include a wide variety and broad range of subject matter (on 2nd grade level) to make up for the "cultural deficiencies" in geographic isolation here at Poston, in reading and conversation.
5. Encourage thinking of Poston as a city.
6. Give special emphasis on English (American) speech and habits and customs for easier transition back to "outside society" later.
(Teacher A)

1. To enrich the personal life and experiences of every student by exhausting every resource in Poston.
2. To establish lasting friendships by finding common ground.
3. To prepare our young people for ready assimilation into post-war communities.
(Teacher B)

Poston, a necessity as seen by the Government but a cross to those it was meant to protect, should be made as profitable an experience as possible, restoring normalcy and confidence to all as far as possible.

For the keeping of a true perspective our teachers' meetings should be frequent and sincere panel discussions.

We who are experiencing and witnessing the phenomenon of Poston should give a sincere, sympathetic interpretation of conditions and feelings to the outside world.

In every way help the child live and grow; steadily and happily learn to strengthen and build life for overcoming obstacles in the future.

Restore confidence in people, religion and government (Teacher C)

1. Poston, a necessity as seen by our government and a project with

which we all should cooperate: To restore, confidence in our form of government and in our people; to provide training that will help them to adjust easily to postwar society; to help them to adjust themselves to life here in the Settlement and to enjoy being here.

2. We who are here as teachers and who come in contact with the Japanese people should be missionaries of good will thus helping many outside the Settlement to a better racial understanding. A continuation of general discussions as we have had this week.
3. To restore confidence in our government and in our people. To provide happy working conditions. To train the children in such a way that they will gladly cooperate in the community life here at Poston and thus receive training that will help them participate in group life after the war when they return to their homes.
(Teacher D)

1. Statement as to the objectives in adult education: Each individual busy and interested in a worthwhile study that will add to the enrichment of the individual's life and the peace of the world.
2. Statement as to the need of education in Poston as a whole: To realize the need of world peace--in doing some work toward peace, as a basis for keeping in contact with the world and in making plans for the future.
(Teacher E)

Aim of Education in Poston: For each person to acquire skills and attitudes which will help him meet postwar conditions and conditions in Poston.
(Teacher F)

When I came I thought Poston was to be a permanent thing for the duration, after which most people would go back to their "homes" most of them in California.

During the past few days it seems the best thing is for the Japanese to go out into new locations and be absorbed into new communities, away from the coast. In view of this change, it is most important to help the children to be prepared to be citizens in new schools and towns; for each individual to feel adequate within himself to meet the situations.
(Teacher G)

The main objective here is to establish an understanding between pupils and teachers as to the problems of living here happily as evacuees, and at the same time keeping abreast of the outside world.
(Teacher H)

To develop right attitudes toward the present situation and towards the future. To develop a spirit of humanity which enables men and women to see the human values. To develop an understanding of the individual and help him to do better those things which he will have to do and to lead him to higher activities. (Teacher I)

Like a pair of clasped hands, the objectives of a teacher at Poston, Arizona, are two-fold, each distinct yet intertwined:

The fact (?) that the child's sojourn here is temporary should be kept constantly in his mind. Every activity and study should be tested by the question, "Will this help the student when he again enters what we fondly call normal life?"

The other hand consists of the fact that life is the time-that-is; and it should be the teacher's satisfaction to help the child understand and critically appreciate the values that are to be gained here for himself and his community, for both now and the time-to-come. (Teacher J)

My aim is to try to show these students the opportunities and possibilities here in Poston which can afford a full life and prepare them for the America of tomorrow. (Teacher K)

1. Retain perspective.
2. Provide tie-ups with the outside.
3. Present situations that are conducive to unsuppressed self-expression.
4. Understand, not justify, the ills of the world.
5. Provide an American classroom at its best.
6. Learn to know ourselves and our students.
7. Work matters out together with students and teachers without becoming frustrated by lack of equipment to which we were once accustomed.
8. Laught and laugh often.
9. Keep faith. (Teacher L)

In our zeal to find the objectives of education unique to this situation, we should not lose sight of the broad general aim of education applicable to all times and places. This, stated in non-technical terms, I believe to be the development of individual personality as nearly as possible to the maximum limit of its capacity in order to insure greatest satisfaction in life to the individual and great service to his group.

The specific aims for this particular situation seem to be two-fold:

1. To help the individual adjust himself to his present environment and make suitable changes and improvements in it in such a way as to make the time spent here a period of growth and soul-satisfying accomplishment, rather than a "blank period" in his life as Mr. Head so vividly expressed it.
2. Preparation of the individual and group for rehabilitation into normal life again when the time comes. (Teacher M)

1. Stimulation of the idea that the school work at Poston must be a cooperative endeavor on the part of the faculty and students, if we are to "work against odds", such as inadequate equipment, inadequate housing, etc.
 2. Encouraging full pupil-participation in drawing from their experiences the materials upon which future units of work will be built.
 3. Blocking out of a program of "feelers" (community life - school, recreation, present and future needs, etc.) for a program of integrated activities which will articulate the work of core studies with that of the specialized educational subjects.
- Objectives (long-view) for the school year:

1. Answer the questions:
 - A. To Poston from where?
 - B. Why Poston?
 - C. What Poston?
 - D. Poston and Arizona - what are the implications?
 - E. Arizona and the Nation - what are the responsibilities?
 - F. The National and the World - Is there such a thing as a world consciousness?
 - G. Where does the individual fit into the picture?
 - H. What of the family?
 - I. What do we as individuals mean to a democratic society?
 - J. After Poston, what? (Teacher N)

To help the children think through and act together on the problems which face them now and to show them the means of acting on problems which might face them later on, for the common good.

(Teacher O)

1. To acquire a thorough education regardless of the many handicaps.
2. To create friendliness in the classroom.
3. To share their tools and materials.
4. To become creative thinkers.
5. To develop their skills and talents.
6. To develop responsibility.
7. To develop courteous manners in speech and act.
8. To become responsible for others property.
9. To develop the habit of taking turns.
10. To develop habit of helping one another.
11. To develop habit of cooperation. (Teacher P)

1. To develop in the individual those traits of character which make for desirable and better social life, such as: Cooperation, initiative, courtesy, self-control, etc.
2. To develop interest and enjoyment in the school activities,
3. To give my pupils a better understanding and to help them know this community better.
4. To be a real friend and guide to my pupils (Teacher Q)

I believe the objective of education is to teach children to live in their social and physical environment and furthermore to enrich life by the acquisition of useful knowledge, attitudes, skills and techniques which make possible the extension and deepening of the understanding of life activities. (Teacher R)

1. Have the child learn with an interest and initiative for further learning.
 - a. Purposeful activities carried on in the classroom.
 - b. The learning of the "3R s" in a useful and practical method.
2. Prepare the child for the future (postwar conditions).
3. Orient the child to Poston, pointing toward democracy.
 - a. Constructive criticism.
 - b. Cooperation
 - c. Sharing
 - d. Community living. (Teacher S)

1. Democracy
 - a. Encouraging children to think for themselves for independence,
 - b. Let children share their own tasks leading toward "responsibility."
 - c. Prevent the development of hatred and unfriendliness toward other people through the study of democratic ideals.
2. Friendship
 - a. Through classroom activities children can be taught to get along well with all kinds of people now and in the future.
3. Appreciation.
 - a. Through the study of art and music, a knowledge of appreciation of finer things can be developed for finer life. (Teacher T)

The main objective on the second grade level is to promote the child's knowledge of appreciation of his neighbors. This level includes the study of the community such as the post office, hospital, press bulletin, fire station, warehouses, canteen, and various buildings which constitute the community. (Teacher U)

Objectives as you see the situation: To help individuals adjust themselves to the new society and aid in building citizens for a

democracy.

List of questions from which we should be working:

1. Are our objectives being fulfilled to the greatest extent?
2. What shall the children learn?
3. Are we proceeding by the correct means?
4. How can the interest among children be upheld? Are they enjoying the work?
5. Am I doing my part as a guide and counsellor? (Teacher V)

To establish a feeling toward creating the best possible for this local situation. A preparation for taking our places in the new world of freedom and to fall in step with the outside without loss of time or the breaking down of morale. (Teacher W)

Education at Poston, as I see it, has as its objective the leading of these young Americans to understand their environment, both immediate and more distant, present and to come, to learn from it and contribute to it, especially in its social aspects, and gradually to find the meaning of the life abundant. (Teacher X)

Our objectives as teachers in Poston will be to help the children, better adapt themselves to their surrounding environment and prepare them to meet any changes that may come in the future admirably and well in their stride. (Teacher Y)

Children to become more "secure." Children be prepared to fit into any school (without a gap) after they leave Poston. Develop more friendship and understanding between our races. Develop our school as a big home. Strive always to develop more confidence (on the part of the Japanese) in the administration. To get along day by day with a minimum of friction. (Teacher Z)

I believe our main goal of education here in Poston should be to teach and help the children in such a manner that they shall be adequately prepared to face life "after Poston," that they shall not be cut off from life outside and find that they are behind the times when they emerge into normal life, or, rather the post-war era of reconstruction which will be entirely different from pre-Poston and Poston life. (Teacher AA)

1. Keep standard same as other schools.
2. To develop sympathetic understanding.
3. To develop the meaning of democratic citizenship in harmony and cooperation.

4. To develop leadership, initiative and abilities and skills.
5. To increase the knowledge and ability to use material at hand.
6. Appreciation and care of things we have.
7. Increased wholesome interest about which to talk and think.
8. Development of Civic pride.
9. Development of habits of loyalty, honesty and open mindedness.
10. To develop individual and group satisfactions.
11. Development of individual responsibility in the group.
12. To develop confidence and trust through sincerity and truth and emotional satisfactions.
13. To help solve soluable problems. (Teacher BB)

In building educationally for a new society in a post-war world I believe three things to be paramount:

1. The fatherhood of God.
2. The brotherhood of man.
3. The philosophy of the Golden Rule.
4. Economic independence.

To give the child a working knowledge of that philosophy is my aim and objective. In my estimation it is the only perfect solution to the problem by which we are confronted. (Teacher CC)

Excel, if possible standards of the outside schools, in knowledge, health, and spirit.

Great stress placed on constructive thinking and making the schoolroom a home room. Here the mothers will be made free to participate to make it a room in which they may relax and work in evenings.

Making use of obstacles that arise in our pioneering in Poston, toward a better way of life with individual and group satisfaction. Contacts, many as possible with the outside. This I feel, of greatest importance.

Parents club to meet with me once in six weeks.

Will make a great endeavor toward a happy and harmonious situation in my group as well as those with whom I come in contact. (Teacher DD)

1. To do the best job I can with as little friction as possible.
2. To increase my pupils confidence in their government, and in themselves.
3. To leave no doubt in the minds of the pupils nor their parents, as to what they are learning or trying to accomplish.
4. If at all possible, to help them to appreciate all the very good

things the United States of America has done for them so that they will dwell less on their misfortune. (Teacher EE)

1. To foster a desire for learning in unawakened individuals.
2. To feed the great desire for learning which is common to a great proportion of the Japanese.
3. To keep in mind the necessity for so ordering the curriculum that students will not lose pace with their former classes but will be able to resume their places in the schools should they be free to do so after the war.
4. To give such vocational training that students will be prepared to go back to the business world.
5. To further democratic processes of living in every possible way.
6. To constantly strive to develop better social techniques for the control of our scientific and mechanical advances. (Teacher FF)

"What do I think of Poston?" you ask. You ask this question and I am reminded of those impressions which starry eyed tourists have written in the book supplied for the purpose in the Bright Angel Camp as to what they thought of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. One writes, "These wonders of the West defy description!" Another writes "How sublime!" But as an example of sheer frustration in his powers of description the Texas cowboy writes, "Good gollics what a gully!" And I find myself rich in the mood of the cowboy as I say, "Good gollics what an experiment is this Poston! "

Science and technology have given to us the tools for a better civilization. Instead through these same implements which science gave to us we have been catapulted back into the abyss of savagery, out of which so short a time ago in point of chronological time we had climbed.

However, in spite of this return to the primeval all is not lost. I feel that barring astronomical disturbances, earthquakes, and such seizmatic shocks known as Acts of God and destiny of America as well as the world lies mostly in the hands of manking. That is it lies with us if we are brave enough; if we are strong enough; and if we are resolute enough. The future is what we are going to make of it. But we are fighting men brave and resolute themselves and possessed with diabolical cleverness and cunning; we are fighting these men not alone in the combat zones.

I feel that we teachers should teach our students, either Japanese or Caucasian, that we aren't going to get anything through unless we work for it, the days of wishful thinking are over. And because of the great and majestic resources of America, which were given unto us in so great an abundance that not even the wastefulness of ours could exhaust them, and because of the sheer will to win and the desperate courage of all our Allies each American knows that at last and finally the war will be won by us, the Democracies, or rather one should say for the sake of that brand new science called Semantics, the Allied Nations rather than democracies.

But when the shooting and the shouting and the marking is all done the end has not been found. No. No, for the battle will be little more than joined. Indeed the crisis will be at its most critical stage. We won't be able to stop thinking and working although the killing and bombings will be done at long last. There is not going to be any going back to any age of normalcy. This age, now passing as we wait, will be as dead and long past as the one portrayed in Bullfinch's Age of Fable. It will be talked about, this now passing age of ours, in groups where those with long memories gather together, presaged by the inevitable, "say...don't you remember when...?" But it will be gone forever.

Whether we like it or not we've definitely got to go on, whether it be upward and forward, or downward and backward. In James Reston's book, "Prelude to Victory", from this Elnor Davis likewise quotes, we find that the two Chinese characters meaning crisis are, respectively, Danger and Opportunity. Elnor Davis also points out that there is both danger and opportunity for us in the years crowding hard upon the heels of this era of war and desolation, and blasted and broken hopes and hearts.

These years ahead are going to be years of transition, however. Right now too we are so close to the danger that opportunity seems little more than a nebulous and fantastic will o' the wisp dancing eerily through a Florida swamp. It is too nebulous even to be believed in at all.

At this time in our nearby desert are boys, not boys but men, soldiers, suffering the ordeals of desert warfare in preparation for a later strafing in the hell of the Libian campaign. These men from Florida, California, the Pacific North-West, the Corn-Belt and Maine...how strange and ridiculous it seems that these lads, lean and brown and straight shooting, are to be sent to far away Libya, long but a memory among nations; and to the Solomons to fight for... America. But it is on these fronts that it is best to fight that the fighting does not come home to us.

Through this promise of the global nature of this sanguinary conflict I shall attempt to get it over to my students that this same far flung battle front and what happens affects each and every one of us. Admiral Yamamoto meant it when he said last December that he looked forward to signing the peace treaty in the White House. And in a few weeks he was indeed a few thousand miles nearer his objectives than he was when he said this.

I shall try too to teach them what it would mean to them to live in a world dominated by these creatures who crush out the life of little villages, humble and inoffensive along with proud cities; what it would mean to live where folk like us might be tortured because the rulers liked the sadistic joy of the torture chamber; I shall tell them about those little children who starve to death each day in those conquered lands.

I shall try to teach them that there is no compromise with such as these lords of creation who think arbitrarily that all others not of their race are an inferior people. And through this promise I

shall point out the fact that while Democracy as set forth in the "Constitution," which is only an imperfect instrument made by an imperfect people" as Alexander Hamilton said has not failed. No; Democracy has not failed anymore than has the Christian religion, nor the Christian marriage relation in spite of the fact that marriage in Hollywood seems a matter of a vernal or autumnal relation only. The trouble lies with Man himself. I shall tell that there can be no sort of compromise peace with those men of the Axis nations. There would be no sort of security for anyone, with this sort of a peace. And I should still further drive into their minds that the Bill of Rights and the Constitution are the most sublime documents ever written and inspired by the great God Himself. And while Democracy in its essence surely seems to have disintegrated and crumbled into the dust of Paston in the case of the Japanese evacuees, it has not failed there, only hate and fear has crept in, and the reasons for all of this persecution of a helpless people has been that the roots lie too, too far back in history to dig out now. These roots have lain and mouldered too long removed from the light of progressive, constructive thinking.

As best I can too I shall get over to my students that when the war ends at last we shall be very weary, we shall be weary unto death. We shall want to sit down supinely with folded hands and merely rest. But there will be no rest for any of us. H.G. Wells said at the time of the 1st world war, the prelude to this present conflict, "that humanity was involved with a race between education and catastrophe." We all know that catastrophe won in the other war. But, fortunately we are going to be given another chance. Let us not fumble this chance. God forbid that we do! No, for it will be the very last chance we shall have to keep these specimens of the human race now so riotously cavorting over the patient earth as they pursue their evil way from taking over for a long, dismal age of darkness.

I read Major de Soversky's book the other day, the one on the capabilities of the airplane in warfare. It struck me as a workable blueprint for combat in the next war to come. If we have those super combat planes, won't the other nations have them too? And will there be one wee small spot on all the earth where a man may gather about him his family and say, "Now here at least we are safe."

I shall try to point out to my students that before ever this war has ended we must have learned to live in peace and amity among ourselves. I shall strive to point the fact that there must be neither Nationalism as we know it now, nor Internationalism, but somehow...I don't know how...we must chart a course and steer our craft somewhere between these two shoals of danger. And getting back to what Paston means to me, it seems to me that this dust-bowl which lies beneath this brazen, pitiless sky of Arizona, is in reality no more than a laboratory in which we are striving to find the answer to the questions which cry out for answering. We are but humble scientists, and all scientists are humble, who weigh and evaluate, and test and prove the material with which we are to work.

And finally with tears of humility in mine eyes I shall drive home the fact that it is up to them, these young Japanese-Americans, that it is up to them here in this San-ado pale of Poston, and these Caucasians too beyond this pale, to learn to think; and act; and behave; and live more intelligently than their ancestors have done. And with the fine bright courage which encases them as if in armour which I have seen among these evacuees I feel faith somehow in this still so nebulous future.

And in the words of the immortal Little Tim, I say, "God bless us all, Amen!"
(Teacher GG)