

CORE STUDIES

The aims of education in the American high school are not met when a student has learned a series of facts from history, read a selected group of writings from American and English literature, developed skill in mathematical manipulations, etcetra. Education must be related to the society in which a person lives. American democracy depends upon the education of its citizens, and education in our society is best when it is most democratic. That is why a high school education in Japan, in Germany, in Italy, or in any non-democratic country would not prepare a student for the responsibilities of citizenship in the United States. Also that is why traditional courses in history and English have not been effective in producing citizens capable of the degree of voluntary cooperation which is essential to the continued growth of the democratic way of life.

The members of a democratic society must be able to define their own purposes in life, choose a course of action, discover methods of work, find and use the materials necessary to achieve these purposes, evaluate their achievements and make new plans or set new goals on the basis of their experiences. That is the kind of learning and growing which continues throughout one's lifetime, but if the habits and abilities for such learning are not developed in the school, learning and growth stop for most people when they leave school. The problem solving approach emphasized in the core studies is the most effective means for accomplishing the goal of continuous growth which has yet been worked out in education.

English is used as a tool, and history is used as material together with the materials of the special course fields to study problems which are of interest to high school students. Since the tools which the good worker uses must be the best which he can acquire, constant attention must be given to the tool of English. It is the basis for all communication, social understanding, and cooperative action in our society.

Since we learn from experience, attention must be given to historical backgrounds as the record of experiences of peoples in the past, but it is more important to learn how to find and use the materials of history for a particular purpose than it is to acquire a factual knowledge of history with no such purpose in mind.