

College Vs. Industry: Education or Training?

"It's about time someone — some economist or business administration instructor in a far-away school — woke up to the fact that the teaching profession is doing a wholly inadequate job of acquainting students with the needs of industry and then did something about it."

Speaking was an advocate for better college training, Lon D. Barton in Chicago.

He accused colleges and universities of being guilty for the executive shortage: "They have failed to equip graduates with an under-

standing of the needs of industry and thus they must be held largely responsible for the shortage of executives which threatens our economy."

The Much-Accused

"It is true that in recent years colleges of business administration have been accused of furnishing a lack of direction," said Dr. Stuart Hall, University of Nebraska professor of Economics.

"But we are dealing with undergraduates who may not know exactly into which business or industry they will go," Hall said.

"And the main reason it's difficult to give specific advice is that there are all kinds of businesses with all kinds of different demands."

According to the professor, other complainants, and there are many, say that in colleges and universities too much emphasis is placed on the vocational aspect and also that the graduate is trained but not educated.

"We want to give them a liberal education," Hall pointed out. "Parents send their kids to school with the idea that they are going to have an education when they

are finished. At public expense, why should we train a man for a specific job — we want to educate him."

On the other side of the coin, Barton continued, "No one has taken the time to discuss with young men the qualifications employers will accept for executive development or analyze the routes for them to follow in achieving administrative and executive success. I have found universities and colleges are reluctant to examine this problem."

"Recruiters for business who come to the University campus twice a year place emphasis on the ability to communicate and then to have something to communicate, to think coherently and independently," Hall said.

Daniel Remigio, plant manager of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., elaborated on the expected qualities of a young man going into industry.

Quoting the late P. W. Litchfield, ex-chairman of the board for Goodyear, Remigio listed:

- good health
- character (the individual must be honest and trustworthy)

—ability (the ability to meet changing problems of materials and markets, of engineering and finance and industrial relations; willing to give and take counsel)

—teamwork

—thrift (continued success depends upon the gradual accumulation of savings to insure against the rainy day; this is just as true of business as it is of an individual.)

Need Vision, Courage

Remigio continued, "To remain successful, those who have reached high executive positions must have vision and courage in addition to these five fundamentals.

"Study hard through college," Remigio advised. "The student should get an AB degree or higher in business administration if his interests lie in sales and administration; an engineering degree plus a scientific masters or doctorate if his interests lie in research and production."

On-Job Training

Most corporations do have training programs for pushing ahead potential executives at a suitable rate, according to Remigio.



He suggested that college students should match the school's opportunities by being willing, anxious and capable of taking advantage of them, the net result being a quality education.

What about Remigio's own experience with college graduates? "We are happy with the

college graduates we have working for us," he said. "We have qualified recruiters and can be selective."

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Exams: Guide Professors In Understanding Students

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the question and answer oral sessions give the students the best chance to learn while taking the examination.

Koehl thinks oral testing is good if it is not done in a formal setting, but is the "on-going" kind done in classrooms.

Holtzclaw indicated that on the graduate levels this is good if the students know the answers, but can't quite explain it. A few hints from the instructor may be just what a student needs to formulate his answer.

Because a student must verbalize ideas to make them become his own, essay tests facilitate learning more than simple knowledge tests, Miss O'Donnell supplemented.

One problem of essay tests, Baumgarten brought out is

that many students use the exact words of the instructor. He said he would much rather have students apply knowledge in their own words.

Limitations

Shelley presented another drawback — the sampling of knowledge is more limited in an essay examination (4-6 questions in an hour) compared to the wider range of material covered in an objective test (50-60 questions).

Another point favoring objective tests is that the teacher is less likely to be subject to his own judgment when grading because he doesn't have the problem of reading a well written paper after a poor one, or vice versa, he added.

According to Belsheim, an essay test the good writer usually has a slight advantage

over the one who is not as good in expressing his ideas.

Facts—But More Too

Knowledge of facts is important, according to Colman, Holtzclaw, Baumgarten, and Koehl, but it is the way the students apply them to formulating concepts and using them creatively that is most important.

Although objective tests are more difficult to make into learning processes than essay or oral examinations, they have their advantages, Koehl added.

Even though they do not test the individual's ability to think originally or require him to express himself, they should be used as supplements to check the student's knowledge of facts, he continued.

Some of the other advantages of objective tests are: everyone answers the same way, there is no emphasis on handwriting, no emphasis on special skills, no emphasis on subjective grading, and a larger sample of the student's knowledge is revealed, Shelley and Lawson explained.

Other Tests

What do teachers think of other tests than classroom examinations?

According to Lawson, aptitude and intelligence tests are good indicators of personal trends, but should never be used as absolutes.

Scores Flexible

The scores and rules must be flexible enough to permit exceptions, Baumgarten stressed.

Videbeck added that many bright students are not motivated and consequently do not do well; others who are motivated achieve above and beyond what a test might indicate.

"We must take into consideration physical conditions — worries, illness, conflicts, fatigue — which may play a part in the test results," Koehl added.

As Videbeck said, while there are grades, there will be a need for some form of testing.

"Tests are not perfect, but I don't know a better substitute that would achieve the same ends, and until one is discovered, tests will have to do the job," Holtzclaw concluded.

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