

FORUMS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND PLANS INVOLVED
IN PROVIDING FORUM DISCUSSIONS FOR HIGH-
SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS, AND FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

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FOREWORD

THIS PUBLICATION comes in answer to many requests for a brief study of forums which engage the interests of young people. It presents a summary of much material which has flowed into the Office of Education as a result of its sponsorship of community-wide public forums. In it will be found many ideas which are well-known to the teaching profession. For the present purpose these ideas have been put in relation to the forum movement.

Several different people have contributed to this publication. Frank Walser, author of *The Art of Conference*, collected much interesting material and prepared an organization of the subject, which proved helpful. New material was collected and much correspondence was carried on in connection with the preparation of the bulletin by Edward Walther, a research assistant. Chester S. Williams, Assistant Administrator of the Public Forum Project, and Paul H. Sheats joined me in revising and editing the final draft.

It is presented to educators and laymen in the hope that it will give valuable aid to the growing movement for vital discussion among young people. It is particularly prepared for teachers and supervisors of social studies, principals, and superintendents in the high-school field, and professors of the social sciences and administrators of universities. Leaders of adult education, we hope, will find it pertinent to their task of organizing community efforts for out-of-school youth, and utilizing the resources of high schools and colleges in providing interesting discussion opportunities for adults.

J. W. STUDEBAKER.
Commissioner of Education.



PUBLIC FORUM

CHAPTER I

WHY FORUMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

THE TITLE of this publication requires at the outset some attention to definitions. First, we must give definite content to the word "forum", and second, we must be explicit concerning groups included in the classification, "young people."

The Romans used the forum as a place where public discussions were held. Today the word "forum" is used loosely as a name for numerous kinds of meetings held for the purpose of considering almost any subject of interest. Lecture series on topics ranging from international policy and national issues to psychology and travel are sometimes called forums. Societies for the practice of parliamentary procedure in high schools are often called forums. The presentation of current events in club programs is known as a forum. The practices carried forward under this nomenclature are so many and varied that the term "forum" is a bit confusing.

But, for the lack of a better term to label the programs discussed here, we use it and qualify it. Our purpose in setting forth the basic contents of the word for this discussion is not to purge the ranks of the users of the term by insisting that its boundaries be contracted to fit our conception. Rather, let us exercise our role as definition makers with proper modesty and claim only that our definition describes that part of the current meaning of the term which serves our present needs.

WHAT IS A FORUM?

In this publication we use the term "forum" to denote an organized process of free discussion of public affairs. It refers not only to a method or technique of learning well known to pedagogy

as "socialized recitation" or "class discussion", but to a body of subject matter as well. In addition, it is descriptive of special organization to achieve the discussion of public affairs. This generalized conception may be clarified by listing the important aspects of a forum.

MEETINGS

1. The forum, used in the sense of an organized process, is a program consisting of a *series* of meetings. Each meeting may be called a forum, but all of the meetings put together may be called *the* forum. The term is used here to refer primarily to the program and not to an individual meeting.

SUBJECTS

2. The forum program is based very largely upon those public questions which agitate the public mind. The field of subject-matter covers those issues and current problems in modern society which are up for public consideration and decision at any particular time. The forum is not simply a method of dealing with all problems requiring understanding.

PARTICIPATION

3. The forum program is further based upon real audience participation through free discussion. Regardless of the device used to introduce and present the subject, a major emphasis is placed on the free expression of the members of the group through questions to the speaker, (if there is one) to others in the audience, and through the presentation of comments or points of view.

PREPARATION

4. The forum program also requires preparation on the topics discussed. Special speakers, debaters, or panels may be especially prepared to develop the discussions. Ordinarily a meeting to discuss some phase of public affairs which does not rest on the careful preparation of some one or more persons results in a "talk fest" rather than a "forum."

LEADERSHIP

5. The forum program needs the leadership of a competent person, skilled in promoting fruitful discussion and in guiding group thinking. The participation of the members of the

forum group in planning the meetings and selecting the topics for discussion is an objective of a competent leader.

These points of emphasis will be elaborated in the process of discussing the values of forums for young people and the types of programs.

WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE?

Having clarified what we mean by the forum, it is pertinent to draw the boundaries for the term "young people." This is likewise a difficult thing to do. The National Youth Administration defined "young people" as persons between 16 and 25 years of age. In community life, people are considered "young" according to the purpose of a particular age grouping. Those between 16 and approximately 35 are considered the "young people" in a political party or in such groups as the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and are organized together for certain activities. Rather than select any arbitrary age classification, let us divide the conception of "young people" as used here into three main categories.

HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS

1. These young people are associated together in school experience. While the term "young people" should not exclude the students in the lower grades in junior high schools, the discussion of forum programs contained herein refers more particularly to students in senior high schools and with special emphasis to the eleventh- and twelfth-grade students.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

2. These young people are also associated in a common learning adventure which makes the planning and administration of forums an institutional concern.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUNG PEOPLE

3. These persons are associated with older people in all but a few of their activities. Roughly speaking, persons between 18 and about 30 years of age may be considered within the boundaries of this classification.

The third group is usually best served by forums which are planned on a community-wide basis. Some provision is desirable, however, for the association of younger people in such an adult civic education program. The purpose of such special groups in an adult forum program is to promote a freer participation on the part of young people. Ordinarily, most young people in this classification will join in the regular community forums and their presence adds much to the value of the discussions. As will be seen in the material on the special youth forums in the demonstration centers sponsored by the Office of Education, the young people in the community including the high-school and college students attended the regular forums in large numbers, but seemed to gain special benefits from those meetings which associated student and out-of-school youth on certain occasions.

CLASSROOM FORUM

A distinction should be made at this point between a forum program for young people in high schools and colleges and classroom teaching. The techniques employed in a good forum program are applicable to the teaching of most subject matter. Indeed, the classroom should be a forum, in the broader use of the term. The discussion method is properly considered an important teaching device. It is particularly essential to good classroom teaching in the field of social studies.

But there are important differences between a forum program and the use of forum procedures in the classroom. What are these differences? First, when the discussion method is employed in the classroom, it serves primarily to further student understanding of the defined subject-matter in the course of study, while the same method used in the forum program is concentrated upon the current social, political, and economic issues which cut across the structure of the curriculum.

The teacher of history, civics, or social problems usually guides a class in a more or less orderly march through organized subject-matter, perhaps pausing here and there to test a principle by a current situation or to discuss a modern problem. The forum, on the other hand, builds its program on important current

problems involving public policy and sends the students back into subject-matter courses for resources, facts, and background material. It calls for the relation and integration of subject-matter courses. It affords practice in organizing ideas and calling up pertinent data for practical use.

If the teachers of various classes in the social studies are present during these forums as suggested in the programs outlined in chapter II, they will find ways of promoting this necessary integration and utilizing the discovered student interests in the pursuit of the subject-matter courses. With respect to this first point, the claim is not being made that the forum is different from the class discussion because it deals *exclusively* with current affairs and the class discussion is *wholly* related to background subject-matter. It is rather a difference of degree of emphasis. The fact that the forum is planned to place a major emphasis upon the current issues which stir the imagination of people young and old whose welfare is involved makes it a useful device for supplementing classroom discussion. The forum should also vitalize classroom discussion by bringing to it new interests and enthusiasms, and new eagerness for background material.

Second, the forum enables all of the students to gain the advantage of the specialized guidance of the most able leader of discussion on the teaching staff. It contributes to the class discussions. The ideal of classroom discussion calls for more teachers possessing the rare ability to guide free discussion than we now have. Some classes follow a more stereotyped method of considering the subject matter at hand than others. The forum experience benefits the classroom teachers or professors as well as the students if it demonstrates the successful employment of the discussion method.

While one may say that the same quality of discussion which is sought in the forum can be secured in the classroom, the fact remains that it is not achieved on a broad enough scale at the present time. If such discussion is desirable, it would seem good pedagogy to employ some device whereby the most skilled leaders of discussion may serve the need of students at this point through specialization. Here again the forum differs from the classroom discussion more in degree than in kind.

Third, the forum differs from the classroom in its psychological influence on the students. The organized process carries an indirect educational effect. It suggests to the students that they should take a definite interest in public affairs as young citizens; that the organized discussion of public questions as such is a basic procedure to democracy; that all points of view should be given a hearing and studied; that the most important purpose of education is the training of the mind to deal intelligently with the undecided issues which face mankind. Many of these things are borne in upon the student in a well-guided class in history or political science. But the forum, by virtue of its similarity in form and organization to the best institutions for public discussion in the community, not only exercises the indirect influences mentioned but habituates the student to the adult forum.

We have not yet learned how to organize education on a credit basis and avoid the psychological implication that the goal of mastery of subject-matter is credit and promotion. The forum should throw the whole emphasis upon problem-solving and inquiry. There are no correct or false answers to these issues which can be graded. The psychological influence is therefore different in kind and degree from classroom discussion. The classroom stands for a different thing in the mind of the students from the assembly period or the study period. The classroom discussion exerts a different kind of influence than an organized forum discussion.

RECOGNIZING THE REALITIES

Some educators will undoubtedly press the point that the values of the forum program should be attained in the regular classroom work. Teachers following good principles of classroom teaching will make extensive use of the discussion method, organize the course of study around the vital current problems, avoid examinations which primarily test memories, and develop the habits of mind conducive to problem-solving and critical analysis. Therefore, it may be argued that the differences we have suggested are more apparent than real. A special plan for the study and discussion of public affairs in schools and colleges is unnecessary

if all of the classes in the social studies and many others in addition are in effect class forums.

It would take us too far afield to discuss this thesis at length. But a brief digest of the reply of other educators who are active in advocating and organizing special forums for young people is in order. The desirability of having vastly more classroom discussion of current issues related to subject-matter is conceded. The forum program under the guidance of especially skilled teachers or professors is advanced in part as a practical means of improving classroom discussion. Changes in the educational organization and teaching procedures lag far behind the advocacy or even the acceptance of them. The differences seen now between the conduct of most classrooms and the operation of various forum programs are considered real because they exist. The comparison is being made on the basis of general forum practice and general classroom practice. The fact that much pedagogy and some classroom practice run parallel to the forum does not eliminate the differences between the two. Therefore, plans to devote a small percentage of school time and some after school programs to the discussion of public affairs in forums are offered as means of filling in the gap between theory and practice in citizenship education.

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

We are primarily concerned, then, about the ways and means of planning and organizing these forums for young people. The techniques and methods of conducting fruitful discussion are elaborated in other works, some of which are listed in the appendix. These techniques are based in part upon the principles of good classroom teaching. The material presented here is organized to meet the widespread demand on the part of educators for a brief exposition of practical plans for introducing the forum idea to young people. It is also designed to be of help to leaders of youth groups and specialists in adult civic education desiring to gear forum plans to the needs and interests of young people.

It should be pointed out here that in stressing the plans which

have been found more or less successful in vitalizing citizenship education, we are conscious of the inadequacy of the material at hand. The public forum demonstration centers sponsored by the Forum Project of the Office of Education have contributed some detailed reports on their specialized plans for young people both in school and out of school. But these represent only a few places and programs of short duration, being introduced only during the last year. Correspondence with hundreds of principals, superintendents, and university administrators revealed that experimentation and planning along this line have not progressed far enough to yield a bountiful harvest of experience. There are, of course, thousands of after-school discussion groups of various kinds sponsored by educational administrations, student organizations and civic bodies. But there are as yet few instances of regular forum programs for young people in high schools and colleges which are conducted as a regular part of the school-day program and integrated with the social studies classes.

A general survey of the field indicated that the time was not ripe for a thoroughgoing and comprehensive investigation of present forum programs because so few were reported on the first questionnaire. Therefore, efforts were made to get detailed reports from a relatively few places where interesting forum programs seemed to be in operation. The fact that the Office of Education was engaged in sponsoring adult forum projects attracted the attention of many people interested in or experimenting with forums for young people. Added material was collected as a result.

FORUMS RAISE PROBLEMS

High schools and universities deciding to foster forums or to increase their present emphasis on the discussion of public affairs naturally face certain problems. Correspondence and reports from all parts of the country have indicated what some of these practical problems are and have supplied us with many interesting points of view concerning them. The discussion of a few of

the major problems raised by the introduction of the forum into school and university programs will serve to illuminate the question posed for this chapter, namely: "Why forums for young people?" While there are many expressions of opinion both favorable and unfavorable to the extension of the discussion technique to which we refer, we confine ourselves to that body of material which relates to the primary object and function of the forum. This, of course, concerns the study and discussion of controversial and current questions of international, national, and local importance.

Much of this discussion applies to the inquiry about public affairs which goes on in the secondary classrooms and the academic halls of the universities. But because the forum is so definitely devoted to the consideration of public issues and current events, it serves as a focusing point for the debate over the desirability and methods of introducing young people to the free discussion of controversial issues.

This debate raises two problems: First, *should* young people, particularly those in high school, study and discuss controversial issues which their elders have been unable to solve? And, second, *can* such discussion yield them and society benefits which *cannot be secured* better some other way? A forum program must be justified by a frank and convincing answer to these two questions. This brief summary of the issues involved does not pretend to be exhaustive. It presents only the high lights from the significant expressions flowing into our files as a result of the surveys and broad correspondence of the last 2 years. Other contributions to these questions may be found in the other chapters in connection with specific reports.

"*Too young.*"—Some critics of the extensive discussion and study of controversial issues by young people in forums or in the classroom put forward the objection that "They are too young." This applies with particular force to children in the elementary schools. But this study is confined to forums for young people of high-school age or older, so the consideration of this objection with respect to the pre-high-school youth is left to other discussions.

The conflicting points of view may be briefed in parallel columns under three main divisions:

TOO YOUNG

High-school and even college youth are too young to have had enough practical experience in the work-a-day world. This lack of practical experience renders them unable to judge the meaning of events or to compare theory with life. Discussion of practical controversial problems requires mature minds balanced by theory and experience. Students are too irresponsible partly because they are not self-supporting.

OLD ENOUGH

While they may lack experience in the ways of the world, it cannot be denied that they are at the stage when habits of mind are being formed. They may overweight the theoretical and come to unsound conclusions. These can be revised in the light of later experience. But the practice in attacking social issues and the aroused interest in public affairs will influence their lives and improve their future citizenship.

II

They are too young to be introduced to the harsh realities and concerned with the injustices rampant in our world. "They will learn of these things soon enough." "Let them live their adolescence without worrying their heads about the world's problems."

If the realities are to be made less harsh and the injustices mitigated through democratic methods, it is important that these problems be studied and discussed by idealistic, hopeful, enthusiastic youth. Shielding them from these basic issues deprives them of the insights and understanding necessary to improve their own conditions later.

III

Youth is vulnerable and susceptible and easily persuaded to adopt utopian ideas. Their minds are pliable and easily molded. It is easy to exploit their idealism in behalf of nostrums for curing the world's ills. Controversial matters should be postponed until the young people are old enough to resist "dangerous propaganda."

High-school and college youth are showing many signs of skepticism and of looking at things with a critical eye. The forum discussion affords them practice in suspending judgment and analyzing propaganda. It develops a habit of mind and respect for facts which will help them throughout life in evaluating ideas and proposals generally.

The first and third points are applied to the discussion of current problems by college youth, while the second is mainly concerned with high-school young people. But there is less reluctance evidenced with regard to college discussions. The main concern at this stage is over social action of certain kinds which it is feared may be taken "prematurely" as a result of the stimulation by discussion of controversial issues. It must be remembered, however, that students do not live in a vacuum. They necessarily take certain types of social action. They are considered old enough at 18 to be recruited for war. Are they not then old enough to discuss the issues involved in war and express their views on a matter so vitally affecting them? It is also logical to inquire at what time later a person is likely to have the time, the trained guidance, the access to materials, and the relative disinterestedness to better pursue the study and discussion of these important matters.

One of the reports from a high-school principal detailed the story of a local citizen who had opposed the forums for young people primarily on the ground that they are too young to deal with controversial issues. He also opposed the adult forums on the ground that the great majority of the people were educationally unprepared to deal with such problems.

Impartiality.—Another objection to the promotion of study and discussion of controversial questions is based upon the fear that the process will not be guided impartially, or the assumption that teachers cannot avoid imposing their own conclusions. The forum provides an opportunity for teachers to "put over" their own social, economic, or political biases, it is claimed. If the schools and colleges adhere strictly to teaching subject-matter which is noncontroversial the students will accumulate a fundamental background which can be used to guide them in the consideration of public affairs when they face these issues later. We shall not run the risk of having their young minds molded to accept "unpopular" or "unsound" beliefs held by "some teachers and professors." Thus runs the argument.

This general point of view challenges the educational system as a whole as well as particular plans for forum discussion. It goes to the heart of the business of teaching. It questions the

possibility or desirability of education based upon freedom of inquiry.

The forum by its very nature asks for academic freedom. But it is academic freedom, defined in the sense of the right of the learner to learn, not of the teacher to restrict learning and impose his own choices. This conception of academic freedom does not entitle teachers and professors to assume the roles of evangelists or politicians. The procedures of good teaching are not suspended by the principle of academic freedom. It means what it plainly implies, freedom to guide students in an academic study. "Academic" does not refer to abstractions or subjects far removed from modern problems. It refers to a method of approaching subject-matter which is sometimes called "the scientific method."

The problem of impartiality gets down to a question of whether teachers and professors can be fair and unprejudiced in the field of controversial issues. This is a much larger question than it at first appears because the controversial takes in more ground than is usually conceded. If we are to retain the social sciences at all, we must expect to face controversial issues since "every topic in social science has been or is a controversial issue of some degree. Social science without controversial issues is inconceivable."¹

Whether teachers and professors can guide the study of controversial matters fairly and impartially is a question which affects a great body of present teaching as well as the forums which dwell on the current issues particularly. It is, of course, impossible to have educators who know something and believe nothing. Unless they are for some reason imprisoned within the covers of a textbook, they will continue to explore vital problems and will arrive at opinions and convictions of their own as a result of their inquiry.

What teachers and professors believe about controversial matters—whether their conclusions are on the popular or unpopular side—is beside the point, if they are really teachers and not preachers. They are not properly engaged in converting or indoctrinating students. Rather, they are regarded by modern

¹ Krey, A. C., Dealing with controversial topics. Junior-Senior High School Clearing House, 8 : 90-93, October 1933.

educators as instructors and guides to the students in their efforts to understand conflicting doctrines and what lies behind them. It is difficult for teachers who are not students of these modern problems themselves to be very helpful as guides to the pupils in their pursuit of the truth in the social studies field.

The forum with its specialized attention to the current controversial questions needs the leadership and guidance of the most skillful teachers. An administration should avoid placing this responsibility in the hands of those who because of limited training or temperament are unfitted to foster a full, free, and many-sided discussion. It must be admitted that some people have an evangelical approach to certain controversial questions. They want their conclusions and convictions to enjoy a monopoly advantage and to prevent persons of opposite opinions from even getting a hearing. Such people are temperamentally poor teachers.

An example is pertinent here to draw the distinction we are making. Supposing the subject of public *vs.* private ownership of utilities is scheduled for a forum discussion or is brought up in a class in civics. The forum leader or the civics teacher may hold a profound conviction as a result of a study of the subject on either side of this question or hold the opinion that both public and private ownership are desirable under certain circumstances. His convictions should have no bearing on his forum or class leadership. If he is a competent student of the subject and properly concerned about the public welfare, he ought to have definite opinions on this important matter. But it is both possible and desirable that he be impartial in guiding the discussion. What does this mean?

First, in any exposition of the subject he may make he takes special pains in presenting the facts and arguments on the side with which he personally disagrees. Realizing that his convictions make him subject to a bias, he admits to himself and perhaps to the group that he must exercise special care in presenting the other side or sides. It is so easy to set up a straw man. He displays his fairness by choosing those points which the protagonists for the other sides consider most important and quoting the best authorities holding those views.

Second, he enthusiastically welcomes the expression of opinion or the contribution of facts on any side by the members of the group.

Third, he scrupulously refrains from brow-beating the members of the group who take any particular point of view.

Fourth, he seeks to use well-known devices of forum discussion such as the debate, the panel, or symposium to carry as much of the load of presentation of the problem as possible, giving equal help and guidance to those preparing on any side of the question.

Fifth, he emphasizes in words and in action that the primary importance is understanding the problem in the light of all the facts and pertinent material. He does not fight for his position, oppose the introduction of any fact or material on some other side, or attempt to shut off expression which challenges his own personal conclusions. He demonstrates that the purpose of the discussion is not to win converts but to increase understanding and provide practice in the discussion of controversial questions.

Sixth, he offers a recommended reading list which is balanced and fair. He avoids weighting the list with weak books and pamphlets on any side by basing his selection on the recommendations of the authorities on both or all sides.

Seventh, he avoids summarizing the discussion with a plea for his position and instead makes it clear that he expects the students to arrive at their own conclusions. He stresses the need for further study and discussion. He emphasizes the scientific attitude which makes a person willing to revise his conclusions in the light of new facts. He wants the whole experience in study and discussion to develop in the students the habit of independent choice-making.

The question naturally arises as to whether, in guiding discussion on a controversial question, it is advisable for the leader to make known his own opinions or admit his convictions. Some educators who have contributed to our material have taken one side of this question while others have emphasized the contrary. Those who favor the clear-cut expression of the leader's position argue that this puts the members of the group on their guard; that the members of the group have a right to know in order to judge the whole discussion and evaluate it; and that it improves

the discussion by identifying the remarks of the leader. Opposed to this procedure are the arguments that the leader, by virtue of his age and position exercises an influence in favor of his opinions if he states his point of view; that certain students will try to win favor by agreeing with the leader; and that such frankness may often result in misunderstandings and community opposition to the forum and to the leader.

Some point out that no rule on this matter should be formulated, as what is done should depend on the total situation. In some communities where people are habituated to the discussion method; there may be little tendency to oppose teachers whose views are both known and unpopular as long as these teachers are obviously fair and impartial in guiding the learning process. In others, where large numbers of parents expect the teachers to hold certain generally accepted views, it may be necessary to be unusually discreet. Few will dispute the desirability of developing a community tolerance which will support teachers and professors regardless of their expressed views so long as they are clearly impartial in guiding study and discussions.

POPULAR OBJECTIONS

To the question, "Should young people study and discuss controversial issues which their elders have been unable to solve?", we have noted and discussed two popular replies. First, the young people are not prepared to discuss such matters, and, second, the teachers or professors aren't competent to lead them. In the course of exploring these two major objections we have covered much material which is pertinent to the main question raised for this chapter. Moreover, we have noted some of the problems involved in operating forums. The important point about these popular objections to the discussion of controversial matters is that unless they are met by a clearer understanding of the purposes and methods of good education, a forum program for young people will face all sorts of obstacles.

The confusion about the purposes and methods of modern education arises in great part from the fact that popular views about education were formed by the practices of a prescientific

era. Our system of education was founded during the closing decades of that past era and has carried over many of the conceptions for which we have little rational basis today. The separation of church and public education, of preaching and tax-supported teaching, changed the purposes and methods. But the popular objections to the consideration of controversial questions are based on the fear that teaching, which is not yet sufficiently clearly distinguished from preaching, will necessarily take sides and promote propaganda. The conception is still too widely held that it is the function of the teachers to mold the minds of youth, to implant the "right beliefs", to pass on and to secure adherence to certain ideas and attitudes just because they are held by large numbers of the older generation.

The scientific era has changed this conception both as to purpose and method. But the changed outlook has not generally penetrated the popular mind. It has been the subject of discussion largely in teachers colleges. If modern education is to do its job in guiding youth to a maturity suited to a scientific and democratic society, it cannot avoid the responsibility of providing vital experiences for students in the practice of the scientific method of problem-solving. The forum is a device for increasing the emphasis on learning *how to investigate problems* in the social field.

The popular misconceptions of the purposes and methods of scientific education must be corrected if this type of education is to survive and grow, whether in forums or in the classroom. It is not enough, therefore, for the profession to understand the need for discussion and study of controversial questions. That need must also be understood by the people in the community.

If adults are continuously engaged in similar forum discussions, they will understand more readily both the purposes and methods of a vital, democratic school program. They will understand how it is possible to achieve impartiality through skilled and fair management of the program because they will experience it. Free speech as practiced in a community forum should create a sympathetic, popular understanding of academic freedom.

The modest beginning of forums as a regular part of the school

or university program can also serve this larger purpose of adult education. Student panels, debates, and symposiums can be used in a community-wide adult forum program, or as a means of supplementing paid forum leaders.

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Not only does this publication deal with forum plans for young people, but it also suggests some ways by which schools and colleges may help provide forums for the community. Great values are to be derived from associating young people and older people in the discussion of current public problems.

A program for young people sponsored and encouraged by the institutions of education should evolve a broader program for the citizens generally. Good words on behalf of greater community responsibility and interest cannot carry as much influence as activity which associates students with citizens generally in the search for a clearer understanding of public affairs.

The natural tendency for the highly organized school to separate the young students from the pulsating life and thought of the community and Nation by centering their attention on the school community and the curriculum contains certain elements of danger to our institutions and to social progress. It is not considered good for young people to think of themselves as entirely set apart from the community with special privilege and separate interests due to their "school age." Nor is it healthy for the educational institutions themselves to be set apart from the citizens.

Indeed, quite to the contrary, the high-school or university students should combine their academic work with a definite and growing participation in the life and interests of the community and Nation. The institutions of education instead of being places to which young people are sent to "get an education" should become more and more agencies for spreading enlightenment to the community.

The widespread criticism of education which is founded on the thesis that it is "bookish", theoretical, and impractical would lose much of its force if organized education would reach out

MAKING IT FASTER THAN WE CAN ABSORB IT



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into the community to meet all kinds of learning needs. Students may avoid the pitfalls of theoretical "book-learning", partly by associating themselves with the activities of the community, particularly with those functions by which the citizens attempt to get a better grasp of social problems.

In a democracy, no problem is solved intelligently, in line with

the facts, until at least a majority of the people are ready to give their support to that solution. Sound ideas and logical propositions are not enough. The people must know they are sound and believe they are practical. A liberal education should produce people capable of cooperating with others to make democracy work. Therefore, a part of the education is gained from association of the students with older citizens in their struggle for understanding and social improvement.

Moreover, the research and findings of the student are of real value to other citizens in their search for truth. These findings should not be bottled-up in term papers. By sharing some of his findings and facts, and participating with older and experienced people in the community discussions, the student really comes to possess ideas and not merely cold fragments of unrelated subject matter.

The young person who discontinues his education when he graduates from high school is considered by himself and others as an adult with full responsibilities and community duties when he reaches 21 years of age. He may even take a role of leadership in some aspect of social life by that time. Why is it, then, that so many people who go on to the universities and supposedly increase their capacity for leadership, look at themselves and are regarded by others as "college boys" and girls, as immature and irresponsible? Can it be that this is due in part to the segregation of college students from the adult community and to the enormous and successful efforts to create a special kind of community for them which is different from the one for which they are preparing?

The forum offers a means of bringing young people out of the cloistered halls of the academic community to mingle and participate with adults in facing common problems. This sort of experience is a positive part of the learning process. This association of students with workers, businessmen, clerks, and farmers to discuss seriously the vital matters which concern the social welfare habituates them to their function as citizens. To hold them aloof from the life and problems of the community, from contact with all sorts of people, is to miseducate them.

It is most important that students in a democracy learn clearly

that they are not in a position to promote social progress by themselves or by virtue of their grasp of the problems which beset us. Progress depends upon their skill in helping the masses of people to understand their problems sufficiently well to advance *themselves* through the use of their democratic power.

Forums may help to unite school and community, and this constitutes another answer to the question, "Why forums for young people?"

IS IT GOOD EDUCATION?

There is one more important consideration involved in the topic of this chapter. It concerns the *degree* of emphasis on the discussion of the controversial. An eminent psychologist has recently expressed the opinion that controversial questions should be presented to young people sparingly, "because the answers to them cannot be demonstrated by crucial observations, experiments, and statistics." In other words, the forum does not satisfy all of the objectives of education. But those courses of study where the answers are known lack elements important to good education also. Certainly, few would want to overload the forum program with educational responsibilities. Indeed, the plans outlined in this study involve but a small part of the time and effort of the students and teachers. The most common supporting idea for the forum is that it supplements other educational work and contributes to its effectiveness.

One of these contributions consists of a more critical view of the regular classroom work. The forum draws the attention of teachers and students to the question, "What is debatable, controversial, uncertain, or unsolved?" To treat the debatable as if it were undebatable or to ignore it does not remove it from the field of controversy or of importance. Most materials which have to be considered in the social studies are controversial to some degree. It is important and vital that young people study social science as a controversial body of subject matter instead of being taught what some assert is the "truth" about social problems. The forum puts the students on their guard against the large amount of indoctrination which might be present in education

if it is assumed that what is generally accepted as true should be learned as truth.

CONCLUSION

These considerations are by no means the only ones to analyze in connection with the justification of a forum program for young people. Others are elaborated in recent books on education which are listed in the appendix. It will be seen by this brief discussion that the forum raises real problems and focuses attention of educators on ways of improving the school program. This is obvious from the mountain of correspondence which has accumulated in the Office of Education during the past 2 years. It is hoped that this publication will contribute to the thinking of the teaching profession and of laymen on this problem of finding ways and means to make secondary and higher education meet its civic responsibilities.

CHAPTER II

TYPES OF FORUM PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

A CLEAR VIEW of objectives is essential to the planning of practical ways and means to achieve them. Those who see the need for a more vital educational experience for young people in high school with respect to citizenship problems will fashion programs to this end. The purpose of the following chapters is to make available to teachers, principals, and superintendents some of the plans and ideas which have come to the attention of the Office of Education, in order that the general movement toward improved citizenship education may gain impetus from the sharing of practical experiences.

In this chapter we shall describe and discuss three general types of forum programs. It is impossible to arrange all of the plans being followed in various high schools under any rigid categories. The following three general classifications seem to be representative:

FORUM DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED

1. As a regular part of the academic program.
2. As an after-school activity.
3. In connection with other programs designed to promote civic understanding.

In chapter III plans for community-wide forums for young people irrespective of school or university attendance will be presented.

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF FIRST TYPE

Practically every high school of any size has a number of clubs or societies where discussions of social problems or international

affairs constitute at least a part of the program. These programs will be discussed under the second classification. But the extensive and planned use of the forum as a part of the school program is not as yet apparent in many places. Reports from principals and superintendents which formed the basis of this study, indicated that the secondary school relies largely on the extraclass activity program and the current events discussion in the classroom to secure the benefits of the forum. Therefore, special attention is given to the type of forum which is employed as a regular part of the academic work, and less notice given to the type of forum activity more generally known and used.

It is impossible to suggest all of the variations of this type of program, or to point out how it may be fitted to the different conditions to be found in the high-school field. We shall outline two sample programs which represent the salient points of such a forum plan. These points may be listed as follows:

1. The program attempts to include all of the students in the school or schools sometime during their high-school experience.
2. The forums meet regularly, usually once a week.
3. The most competent teacher in the art of promoting and guiding discussion is sought to take special or even full-time responsibility for leading the forums and working with the student committees and panels.
4. The size of the forum group may be larger than the ordinary class, but should range, if possible, around 100.
5. The teachers of the social studies and related fields should meet with the forums to assure the integration of the forum experience with the classroom work.
6. The students should participate in the organization of the program, selection of topics for discussion, presentation of at least part of the program through panels or debates, and free questioning of the speaker or leader as well as in the expression of opinion or point of view.

USE OF THE FORUM IDEA AND METHOD IN HIGH SCHOOLS AT DES MOINES¹

For many years the regular classroom work in the Des Moines

¹ The data used in this section has been supplied by R. I. Grigsby, director, Des Moines Public Forum, and N. H. Weeks, leader of junior forums, Abraham Lincoln High School, Des Moines, Iowa.

schools has emphasized current social problems. In the past, this has been done usually through the means of current events discussion. Beginning in 1933, however, a school forum program was introduced to improve citizenship training.

ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM

In the Abraham Lincoln High School, the social science students in the last 2 years are divided into five discussion groups. All those having social science classes at the same period are combined in one group which meets once every week during that period. The groups range in number from 70 to 100. A former principal, N. H. Weeks, who resigned in order to administer this project, is in charge of the forums. The procedure in these forums is similar to that employed in the regular adult forums.²

In the weekly period of 65 minutes the forum leader usually takes 20 or 30 minutes to open up the subject. In this presentation he seeks to present historical background and other materials needed for an understanding of the subject. The remainder of the period is devoted to questions, answers, and expressions of opinion.

But often the discussion is opened by a panel of students who have prepared themselves with or without the assistance of the forum leader to carry on the discussion. Seldom has the hour been long enough to allow all who wish to do so to take part, but the opportunity for discussion carries over into the next day's social studies classrooms. The regular teachers of the social science classes attend the forums with the students, an arrangement which makes it possible to continue the discussion begun in the forums in the smaller class sections.

² For further elaboration of the Des Moines adult forum see: Studebaker, J. W. *The American Way*. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1935. p. 84. *Education for Democracy*. (Office of Education, Bulletin, 1935, no. 17.)

ABRAHAM LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL
DES MOINES, IOWA

N. H. WEEKS, PRINCIPAL
BARON C. HUTCHENS, VICE PRINCIPAL
SUSAN BURCH HILL, GOLF ADVISER
GOLDIE ARNOLD, RED STAFF

June 15, 1936

Dr. J. W. Studebaker
United States Commissioner of Education
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Studebaker:

You have asked me to evaluate our program of high school forums here in Des Moines and to state whether I think the program applicable generally. I am happy to do this.

After two years of trial we feel that the forum plan is an established feature of our school. An accurate evaluation of its results, however, is impossible, since its influence will appear only in future years, and then in ways that cannot be measured accurately.

One question that was in our minds can now be answered. "Can high school students intelligently discuss topics relating to contemporary affairs?"

Probably not, if we are expecting them to present a solution to the problem, but decidedly "Yes" if the purpose is to develop a vivid interest, an attitude of seeking for the facts, and a real attempt to reach valid, if tentative, conclusions based on these facts. No adult forum furnishes an audience more intelligently interested in the subject, more able to consider the topic without prejudice, or more ready to ask pointed questions or to express well-considered opinions.

In reply to your second question, we believe that the experience of Lincoln High School with student forums can be duplicated in other communities and other high schools, large and small. The essentials are only a capable, interested social studies teacher and a community of adults sufficiently tolerant and enlightened to permit the discussion by high school students of the controversial social, political and economic issues of the day when it is clear that this discussion is carried on under the leadership of a capable teacher who recognizes his educational obligation to be as nearly impartial and objective as is humanly possible.

Obviously, the practice of discussion techniques, the weighing of arguments pro and con, the development of an interest in vital current public issues, provide the best sort of training for citizenship in a democracy.

Very sincerely,

N. H. Weeks

Leader of Junior Forums
Abraham Lincoln High School

NHW:S

A week's program

	One forum leader working with students from 20 classes in social studies and related subjects during the week				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
First period. 9 a. m.	3 classes. 82 students.				
Second period. 10 a. m.		4 classes. 104 students.			
Third period. 11 a. m.			6 classes. 143 students.		
Fourth period. 1 p. m.				2 classes. 65 students.	
Fifth period. 2 p. m.					5 classes. 120 students.

SUBJECTS

The choice of subjects is left largely to the interest of the students. Each class participating in the forums is asked to propose the subjects they desire to discuss. From these topics the forum program is prepared with the attempt to group topics of a similar nature. During 2 years of this experiment the following topics were discussed:

1934-35

Democracy or Fascism
Condition of American Agriculture
Remedies for Agricultural Conditions
Growth of Industry in the United States
Attempted Remedies for Industrial Conditions
The New Deal and the Constitution
Political Parties
National Issues in the Election
Local Issues in the Election
Labor Problems
Liquor Problems
Unemployment Problems
Tennessee Valley Authority

Public Utilities
First Session of the 74th Congress
Relief Program
World Court—League of Nations
Danger Spots in Europe
What is Happening in Asia
What is Happening in Russia
Fascism in Europe
United States and Foreign Affairs
Money
Money and Credit
Local Taxation
Iowa Legislature Problems
National Work Relief Program,
1935-36

Italian-Ethiopian Controversy	Agricultural Policies.
Conditions in Italy (conducted by a member of the class who was a guest of the Italian Government on a trip through Italy)	Industrial Policies
Political Parties of the Campaign of 1936	Utilities and Social Security
Long and "Share the Wealth" Party	Cooperative Movement
League of Nations and the Italian-Ethiopian Conflict	Balancing the Federal Budget
United States Neutrality and the Italian-Ethiopian Conflict	Germany and Dictatorship
Problems of City Government	Russia and Communism
City Manager Plan	The Cotton Industry in the United States
European War Threats	The Brookings Institution Report
The New Deal—What Has It Attempted? What Has It Accomplished?	Second Session of Congress
	Government Finance—What Do We Spend?
	Government Finance—How Do We Pay the Bill?
	Government Finance—Inflation

In addition to these, occasional discussion periods were held with no topic assigned, when students were free to bring up any subject for consideration.

STUDY AIDS

As might be expected, the preparation for discussion of such topics results in a demand for current materials in classrooms. In addition to regular texts and reference books, the daily newspapers, and miscellaneous contributions of pupils and teachers, a committee of teachers selects each year a list of publications to be placed in each grade-12 classroom. This classroom library serves as a source of information about current affairs. It also acquaints pupils in their last year of public-school experience with periodicals which are used by many adults in securing critical information about public affairs and emphasizes the

prevalence of differing opinions and viewpoints. The following list was selected for 1935-37:

Periodical	Number of copies	Periodical	Number of copies
American Observer	5	Uncle Sam's Diary and Teachers Bulletin	1
Current History	1	United States News	1
The Forum	1	Business Week ¹	1
Literary Digest	2	Harpers ²	1
Time	1	Scribners ²	1
Review of Reviews	1		

¹ Economics classes only.

² Civics classes only.

In grade 11, in which the study of American History is required of all, a common source of information about contemporary affairs is provided by the purchase of classroom bundles of selected student grade periodicals. The two periodicals selected for purchase in 1936-37 are: *The American Observer*, *The Scholastic* (social studies edition). Social-studies teachers are permitted, if the principal approves, to organize voluntary subscription clubs among pupils who subscribe for a wide variety of magazines and publications planned for high-school use.

OTHER AIDS

To the materials used as study aids in the Des Moines program other sources are suggested by those conducting forums in other schools and colleges. Data on public affairs is to be found in the issues of the following magazines: *Atlantic Monthly*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Congressional Digest*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy Reports*, *The Nation*, *New Republic*, *Readers' Digest*, *Survey Graphic*.³

STUDENT REACTIONS

There seems to be little doubt that the forums in the Des Moines High School are aiding students in developing an intelligent interest in public affairs. Replies to a questionnaire

³ For a more exhaustive list of books, periodicals, pamphlets, bulletins, newspapers, maps, and visual aids useful in public affairs discussions see: Office of Education Bulletin 1937, no. 3, Public Affairs Pamphlets. Also R. W. Frederick and Paul H. Sheats, *Citizenship Education Through the Social Studies*. New York, Row, Peterson & Co., 1936. pp. 200-214.

which students were asked to answer and return unsigned, giving one indication of the results, are tabulated below:

QUESTION	YES	NO
1. Do you know more because of the student forums?	108	5
2. Do student forums make you more alert toward current affairs?	102	11
3. Do they help you in more intelligent use of newspapers and magazines?	87	26
4. Do you find greater interest in your general reading?	77	36
5. Do you take more interest in foreign affairs?	93	20
6. Do forums make you want to examine both sides of a question?	84	29
7. Can you talk more intelligently on public questions?	91	22
8. Do forums make school work more interesting?	86	27

But what do the students themselves say about their school forums? A few brief statements will express the attitudes and reactions of hundreds of students.

"My knowledge of world affairs has increased more in this year than in all the other years put together", says one.

"The forums have caused me to think and not to believe everything I hear and read", says another.

"I never knew until this year how much the actions of foreign countries affect us", says a third.

"I now read more of the paper than just the stories and the funnies", testifies a fourth.

SIGNIFICANCE

The experience in school forums in Des Moines clearly indicates that high-school students can and will seriously discuss current issues if given the proper opportunity. That this interest in public discussion continues after the students have left the high schools is evidenced by the report of Hubert Herring, a leader of public forums for adults held at McKinley Elementary School, located near the Lincoln High School.

"I was surprised at the penetrating questions put to me—and the fine discussion at this little school in the Italian district south of the tracks—and then I learned that about half of my audience were graduates of Lincoln High School whose interest in public affairs discussion had begun in the Lincoln student forums 2 years before", he said.

J. E. Stonecipher, supervisor of social studies in the Des Moines schools, offers the following conclusions:

1. Des Moines high school pupils are becoming acquainted with a wide variety of sources for keeping informed about current affairs.

2. Live topics, including many of controversial nature, are commonly introduced into classroom discussions.

3. Teachers are recognizing the prevalence of bias and prejudice in the discussions.

4. Pupils are practicing the forum procedure. The forums give a hearing to conflicting ideas and provide opportunity for open challenge and discussion.

5. Pupils are learning to use better many facilities for forming opinions.

6. There is evidence that few teachers are requiring "one current event a week" as a pretense that they are stimulating a study of current problems.

7. Many teachers are centering upon very few developments in a given discussion period and are seeking for broader and deeper understandings rather than a scattering of superficial repetition of news clippings in the name of "current events."

8. The reports of many teachers show that, in their opinions, the interest in current problems, the ability and willingness to discuss them, and the ability to utilize sources of current facts has improved markedly during the past 3 years. This may be attributed to the pressure of the times, to the provision of more accessible sources of information (periodicals in the classroom library), to the influence of the adult forums, and perhaps to other influences. The improvement seems to be marked.

9. A general conclusion seems warranted. High-school pupils in regular classes *can* and *will* engage in and profit from discussion of current social, political, and economic developments

if given the opportunity to do so. The remarkably wide range of sources of information used by pupils and of the subjects regularly being discussed, including so many of those in the minds of adults as they search for sound opinions and judgments regarding contemporary problems, furnishes a telling answer to those critics of public schools who charge that schools deal only with dead, "safe" issues.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES

Is the Des Moines experiment applicable elsewhere? R. I. Grigsby, supervisor of forums and director of secondary education in Des Moines gives this answer:

Can the experience of Lincoln High School with student forums be duplicated in other communities and other high schools, large and small? We believe it can. The essentials are only a capable, interested social studies teacher and a community of adults sufficiently tolerant and enlightened to permit the discussion by high-school students of the controversial social, political, and economic issues of the day when it is evidenced that this discussion is carried on under the leadership of a capable teacher who recognizes his educational obligation to be as nearly impartial and objective as is humanly possible.

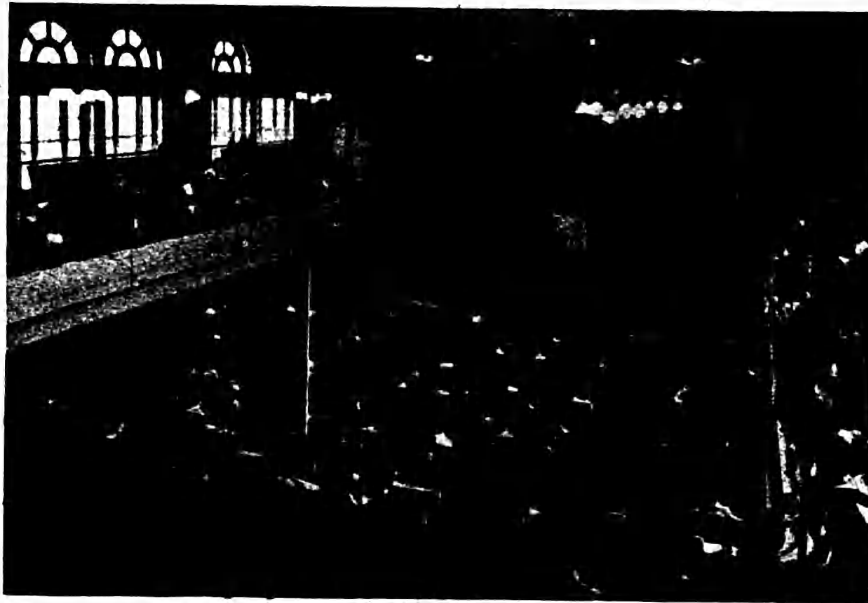
The question of academic freedom for the social science studies teacher is largely a question of the scholarly competency of that teacher and of the degree of tolerance for ideas which may be expected in the community. In developing this adult tolerance for the discussion of controversial issues, adult public forums under public-school auspices are urgently needed in many communities. We may find it necessary to educate the adults before they will permit us truly to educate their children.

PORTLAND SCHOOL FORUMS

Many of the plans worked out in the Des Moines High Schools were employed in Portland, Oreg., during the operation of the Public Forum Demonstration Center sponsored by the Office of Education between September 1936 and May 1937. Mrs. Zula E. Griswold, director of the Portland Public Forums,

reported on the forums for young people at some length. The following paragraphs are presented from her report:

In Portland, Oreg., the forum administration organized two types of programs—a State-wide demonstration of school forums, i. e., forums organized as a part of the senior high school program, and youth forums which were scheduled after school or in the



Youth Audience, Portland School Forum

evenings to which representatives from all types of youth groups—in and outside of the school—were invited.

The demand for the school forum program came from a group of high-school principals and school superintendents who sought wider use of the forum technique in the teaching of the social sciences and who saw in the forum a device for encouraging and stimulating students in the last 2 years of high school to take a more extensive interest in public affairs. Experimental centers were set up in the high schools of Portland, Oregon City, The Dalles, Bend, and Salem, Oreg. One social science teacher in each school was designated to direct the forum program. The Public Forum Office in Portland endeavored to supply these teachers with occasional speakers, outlines, bibliographies, and special pamphlet reading material on forum topics. Some secretarial assistance was also provided.

The actual operation in the various high schools was left to the

decision of the teacher in charge and the methods of presentation have been varied. In Jefferson, Lincoln, and Oregon City senior high schools, the forum became a weekly feature during which *all social science students of junior and senior standing were assembled in one large group during some one class period in the day.* During these meetings between two and three hundred students would be called together in an auditorium where a speaker would address them for a half hour and would then lead them for the remainder of the period in discussion.

Our experience demonstrated that this oversized type of forum meeting is not conducive to the best results with high-school audiences. Under such circumstances, the meeting tends to become more and more an added attraction or somewhat like a "show" in relation to the regular school work, and this is far from the intentions with which the forums were started. The very size of this assemblage tends to make the timorous student, who may be genuinely interested in what is going on, afraid to speak his mind and leaves the discussion up to a few exceptionally aggressive individuals who may not always be endowed with any superior ability. However, in spite of this fact, the teachers in these schools have voluntarily committed themselves to the effect that though the discussion at the time of the meeting may not have embraced a large proportion of the students attending, the meeting itself resulted in a considerable carry-over into the ordinary class work and in stimulating an unusual amount of reading on the part of many of the students.

At The Dalles, Bend, and Salem a different and more successful method of presentation was used. Here it was possible to accommodate the forum program to the school work without seriously upsetting the schedule of classes, and also possible to circulate the same forum program on a number of class periods throughout one weekday, thus, for instance, at The Dalles Senior High School, two, or at most three, classes of social science students of junior or senior standing would be invited to a forum at 9 a. m., two more classes would be given the same forum the following period and so on throughout the day, the program thus having rotated over all the social science classes by the end of the day. This procedure has been followed more or less faithfully in the Salem and Bend Senior High Schools. This plan has yielded far better results from the viewpoint of discussion. Here the speaker is never addressing a group larger than 90, and more often between 60 and 90 students, a more convenient size to handle. Smaller group discussions are livelier, more intimate, and more intelligent. It is possible in half an hour of discussion to have as many as 20 or 25 various questions and remarks. As a

matter of fact, so intimate and so interesting have some of these discussions been that the classes in attendance have generally stayed over during the recess between periods in order to devote these few extra minutes to further discussion.

STUDENT PANELS

As for the actual presentation of the subject matter, two methods have been followed. Either an adult speaker or a member of the forum staff presented about two-thirds of the topics in these schools, excluding Bend and The Dalles. The rest of the meetings have been lead by student panels under the supervision of the teacher in charge. This teacher summarizes the various points of view presented by the panel members in order to give the audience a more complete picture of the topic discussed.

Wherever possible a panel is to be preferred to a main speaker, because the panel consists of students who have been given a certain amount of time for preparation and furnished all possible



Student Panel, Broadway High-School Forum, Seattle

library aid from forum headquarters. One high-school principal says:

The student panel is not a perfect device for communicating information upon complex social problems. An outside speaker, addressing an audience on a subject strictly within his competence, is undoubtedly, more informative than a panel of students who may be committing their first impressions on a subject which has recently come to their attention. While I do not underestimate the theory that youth as well as adult forums should supply a generous amount of information, I believe that their greatest value is in stimulating thought and discussion, and, if that is our main purpose, then at least so far as the high-school audience is concerned, I think a student panel obtains better results than any other device which has been tried so far. This is particularly true if the chairman is sufficiently interested and capable of filling his proper function on these occasions, for through him the shortcomings of the viewpoints presented by individual students may be neutralized by explanatory and supplementary statements.

The success of the student panel as a form of presentation is further supported by the fact that both at Salem and at Bend the student panels have been asked occasionally to present their subjects before various civic and fraternal organizations. In Portland the demand from several of the neighborhood adult forum centers has been satisfied by high-school student panels supporting the regular forum leader.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

To illustrate the type of subject matter included in the forum discussions held in Portland schools, the following list of forum subjects is presented:

TOPICS DISCUSSED FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 1936, TO MAY 1, 1937.

AT THE PORTLAND, OREG., FORUMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Germany Under Hitler.

Battle of the Dictators.

Should Workers Have the Right to Strike?

Forces of War and Peace.

Can American Cities Govern Themselves?

Socialized Medicine.

America on the Move.

Women in Germany and Russia Today.

A Hungry Nation With Too Much Food.
 Is Social Security Possible?
 Liberty in a Democracy.
 What is Relief Doing to the Unemployed?
 China, Russia, and Japan.
 Cooperative Movement in Denmark and Sweden.
 Why Ten Million Unemployed?
 Four Patterns of Revolution.
 What is Japan Doing in North China?
 Cooperatives in America.
 Is America a Good Neighbor?
 American Interest in Philippine Independence.
 Legislative Bodies and Courts.
 America's Stake in China.
 Effects of Machine Production.
 Problems of Personnel—Civil Service and the Spoils System.
 What is Driving Japan?
 The Development of the Power of the Supreme Court.
 What Does Democracy Mean?
 The Many Kinds of Intolerances.
 Is There a Spiritual Solution to Our Universal Issues?
 Loosening Family Ties.
 What Today's Headlines About Europe Mean.
 Should the Power of the Supreme Court Be Altered?
 Boy-Girl Relations.
 Courtship in the Modern Manner.
 Differences of Children in the Same Family.
 Good and Bad Pressure Groups.
 How Can Family Finances Be Managed Democratically?
 Changing Rights to Income and Ownership of Property.
 Are Cooperatives the Answer?
 Improving Methods of Family Control.
 Civilization Downstream.
 The Tax Muddle.
 Underlying Causes of Fascism and Bolshevism.
 The Family Goes to School.
 The Family Goes to Church.
 Is Divorce a Social Evil?
 Movie-Made Children.
 The Family in Fiction—Ah! Wilderness; As the Earth Turns;
 If I Have Four Apples.
 Owners Without Power: The Role of the Corporation in the
 Modern World.
 Learning to Live in Families—Education for Family Life.

Competitive Armament: Causes and Dangers of the Naval Race Now Begun.

Guaranteeing Philippine Independence: Methods and Costs.

Rivalry for Raw Materials and Markets; the Rationale of Reciprocal Trade Agreements.

The German Menace: Can Germany's Needs be Satisfied Without War?

The Russian Ferment: Its Influence in Spain, Mexico, and China.

American Neutrality: Toward Europe; Toward Asia; and in the New World.

Youth and Unemployment.

Youth in Europe.

How Can We Break Down Prejudice?

United States and Latin America.

The Church in Social Action.

Humanity and the Machine.

King Cotton's Subjects.

The Share-Cropper Becomes an American.

Campus Issues and the New Leadership.

The Church and Labor Join Hands.

Nonviolence Techniques for Industrial Justice.

Getting Close to Reality.

American Utopia: Possibilities of the Future in the United States.

Mind and Machine: National Planning and Public Opinion.

Do We Really Believe in Competition?

Our Two Economic Systems.

Saving and Spending: The Problem of Underconsumption.

VARIATIONS

Obviously, the patterns of forum organization developed in Des Moines and in Portland cannot be expected to meet the needs of other high-school districts with enrollments ranging all the way from 25 or 50 students to large city schools with thousands of students. However, many variations from these patterns are possible. Thus, in Chattanooga, Tenn., one of the high schools scheduled the forum at assembly time with choice of attendance at one or the other optional to the individual student. In the Berkeley High School in California, "The Forum" which has been in existence for more than 40 years meets during the home-room period and is open to all students. In still other

schools students with free study periods are permitted to attend a forum if they so desire.

It is also entirely possible to schedule forums during the assembly period or, in schools with free activity periods, to offer the forum in competition with other school activities.

Such attempts to include a forum in the regular school program of study are, of course, commendable; first, because they introduce students to the forum idea and, second, because by keeping the forum activity voluntary and spontaneous, student interest is keen and genuine. However, it should be pointed out that such variations from the Des Moines or Portland plans frequently fail to reach all of the students in the school or to provide forum experience in groups small enough to make widespread participation possible. Insofar as possible, if the objectives of the program are to be realized, the elements already listed as essential features of the school forum program should be provided.

AFTER-SCHOOL FORUMS

Unlike the Des Moines or Portland forums, which are organized as an integral part of the school program and for attendance at which credit is given, the great majority of school forums now in existence operate as after-school activities. High schools in practically all of the larger metropolitan areas have such forum programs. These programs cover a wide field of discussion in which local, national, and international civic issues are considered. Programs are generally planned a semester ahead of time and visiting and local speakers are occasionally secured from the outside. These discussion meetings vary in procedure and embrace students of the social sciences and others who show an interest in the program. In many instances, student panels are organized and exchange forums are scheduled, in which students from one school present programs at other schools in the same community.

FORUMS IN CLUBS

A number of high schools have reported forums sponsored by one or more student clubs as a part of their discussion programs.

While these are not part of the regular curriculum and bear no direct relationship to it, they are, nevertheless, important as means for training students in the use of the forum method. The examples given here, like those above, are only typical. They by no means represent an exhaustive presentation of what is being done throughout the country, but are selected because they point the way in developing discussion programs among the students themselves.

New Haven, Conn.—The New Haven High School has two clubs—the World Affairs Club and the Social Problems Club—which hold forum meetings every 2 weeks after regular class periods. Membership is open to all juniors and seniors. Each club consists of about 50 students. Many students are members of both clubs and since the discussion of the World Affairs Club is primarily concerned with international relations, the meetings of the Social Problems Club are concerned with school problems and local affairs.

Programs are varied to include talks by students, faculty members, and speakers from the community, followed by open forum discussion. The report of the New Haven program emphasizes that “a spirit of investigation and an attitude of tolerance” are encouraged.

Boston, Mass.—Each high school in Boston has at least one discussion group. Membership is voluntary and is open to all. Meetings of 1 or 2 hours' duration are held after school hours as often as once a week. Free and full discussion of all vital topics of the day, whether social, political, legal, or economic, is encouraged under teacher guidance and supervision. Representatives of the various discussion groups compete in interscholastic contests with representatives of other high schools, academies, and college freshmen of the eastern New England area.

St. Joseph, Mo.—At the Central High School in St. Joseph, a voluntary student organization known as the “Forum Club” meets twice monthly to discuss subjects in the field of economics, politics, education, social problems, and religion. Outstanding students in public speaking, debating, journalism, and social science classes make up the membership of the club. Membership is open to all who show ability. The program includes debates,

book reviews, speeches by members and citizens of the community, followed by general discussion. Noteworthy is the fact that meetings are held in private homes rather than in public buildings.

George L. Blackwell, vice principal of the school in which the club was organized finds justification for the program in the belief that when community forums are established in Saint Joseph "our young people will have been sufficiently trained in that type of work that they will contribute in a large measure to their success."

Rochester, N. Y.—An example of a practical approach to the scheduling of discussion forums is that devised at the Benjamin Franklin High School in Rochester, N. Y. Here the Social Science Forum has been in operation since 1930. Each year a different teacher in the social science department acts as sponsor for the program.

Meetings are held on Monday afternoons at the close of school at 3 o'clock. A small assembly hall seating about 350 people is used. Announcement of forum meetings is made in the school assembly during the week previous to the meeting, usually by a student speaker. Special notice is sent to each social science class on the 2 days previous to the meeting. Attendance is open to any pupil or teacher in the school. No dues or fees of any kind have been asked for.

The meeting is in charge of a student leader, usually appointed by the teacher sponsor for any particular meeting. Occasionally a student leader has been elected by the group to serve for the term. A speaker is asked to give from one-half to three-quarters of an hour for his talk, and then he prepared to answer questions from the floor, which have usually been presented in large number by the students. The aim is to adjourn at approximately 4 o'clock, although many times the meeting has lasted longer.

The speakers who have appeared before the forum have been of great variety. They have been from Rochester as well as from out of town. It has been the aim of the forum to bring to it people who might be appearing in the city in connection with some convention or special meeting. Attendance has varied at the meetings from fifty to three or four hundred. Although there has been no set schedule for meetings, there have been approxi-

mately three or four during a school term. On three occasions very successful panel discussions have been held by members of the faculty. Participation of faculty members was not limited to the social science department, but was fairly representative of all departments of the school. One of these dealt with the question of war and military training. Another, more recently, dealt with the topic "Is America Going Fascist?"

W. C. Wolgast, head of the social science department, says, "I personally feel that this forum has been very worth while, and has served its purpose well for the students who participated. At all times the meetings have been in the nature of free and open discussion on any and all sides of a question. Students have handled themselves well, and I feel have profited from the meetings."

Albany, N. Y.—A foreign affairs discussion group has been organized among students of the social science classes of the city senior high schools. Two representatives from each class form the group which is organized as a club with teacher advisors.

The chief purpose of the group is to integrate the study of foreign affairs with programs given outside of the school. Before each meeting of the local branch of the Foreign Policy Association, the school groups assemble to discuss the topic which will be considered. The purpose of this is to supply a background of information which will enable the pupils to have a better understanding of the arguments of the speakers addressing the association meeting, and to formulate intelligent, worth while questions to be put to speakers. The association provides each student group with two free tickets for each social studies class represented. Representatives of the student groups report back to each social studies class following each meeting where further discussion is carried on in the classroom upon the topic discussed by the Association.

After each Foreign Policy Association meeting, student groups, together with other groups in the city, meet with representatives of the Association and the lecturer who has spoken. Discussing with the lecturer the topic on which he has spoken, a general summary of the arguments for and against any proposed policy

is made by the students attending and this report is submitted and discussed in the social study classes.⁴

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of these illustrations, it is evident that in school situations where, because of size, administrative organization, or other limiting circumstances, it is impractical to set up a forum as part of the regular academic program, there is still ample precedent for the formation of a forum group which meets after school. Such a group is likely to be most successful if the following conditions are observed:

- (1) Democratic organization and management, including student selection of topics and speeches.
- (2) Variety in the use of discussion procedures. It is usually advisable to introduce the panel method and the symposium as well as the more typical lecture discussion procedure.
- (3) Wherever possible, programs should be planned far enough in advance and with sufficient foresight that some continuity and carry-over in content from week to week is provided.
- (4) Adequate attention to the promotion and advertisement of the meetings. When attendance is voluntary as is the case in the after-school forums, this angle of forum management is extremely important.⁵

FORUM DISCUSSION INCIDENTAL TO OTHER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE CIVIC UNDERSTANDING

The forum idea and the discussion method have been introduced to many students in high schools which do not have forums as a part of the academic program or as an after-school activity. The programs described in this section and the suggestions made should be useful to the high-school principal or teacher who seeks a basis from which to project a wider use of the forum technique. The section also outlines a number of devices which might be used in schools which already have

⁴ For a complete record of the after-school program of forums developed in Minneapolis, Minn., see Appendix I.

⁵ See pp. 13-15, ch. IV, for promotional suggestions.

forums as a means of varying the pattern of forum activities and widening the scope of their appeal.

These variations from more typical patterns of school forum organization are difficult to classify, but examples are cited which demonstrate the discussion possibilities in (1) mock conventions and model assemblies, (2) student forums of the air, and (3) community-wide leadership service programs.

MOCK CONVENTIONS AND MODEL ASSEMBLIES

West Allis, Wis.—The model legislative program conducted last spring by students in the Social Sciences in the West Allis High School, West Allis, Wis., created a perfect forum situation, and may be a dramatic curtain raiser for many discussions in forums or classes. One hundred and eighty third- and fourth-year students, thoroughly organized, journeyed to the State capitol at Madison, and carried on a 2-day legislative session with a full complement of executive officers, State commissioners, and other necessary officials. The activities for the 2 days were as follows:

Friday 10-12 a. m.

- (a) Convening of assembly and senate-election of officers.
- (b) Joint session of assembly and senate to hear the student governor's message.
- (c) Introduction of bills and resolutions.

Friday 1:30-4 p. m.

Committee hearings on bills. Thirty-six schools in and around Madison were asked to send students to appear for or against the bills. Eight schools sent about 75 students.

Saturday 9:30-12 a. m.; 1:30-5 p. m.

Disposal of bills and resolutions.

The plans taken up in committee and considered by the whole legislature included such things as 30-hour week in industry, municipal ownership of electric light plants, amendment of the Constitution to provide for a unicameral form of government in Wisconsin, cooperative market associations, a health program for school children, and pure food laws.

Paul J. Bast, head of the Social Science Department of the

West Allis High School and originator of the program, has this to say about its results:

Probably the most inspiring sight of the entire legislative session was the committee hearings on the bills. This was a learning situation which would gladden the heart of the real educator. Not only were the bills seriously discussed, but a number of them were amended as the result of the discussion. Some of the committee discussed their bills over 2 hours. It was interesting to see knots of students continuing the arguments after the committees adjourned.

When the bills came up for the third reading and consideration on Saturday, the sureness of the exercise of the rather involved parliamentary procedure, the evident preparation on the background of the bills, and the intelligent discussion which followed drew the admiration of the newspapermen, State legislators, and other adults who attended.

The boys and girls learned much in organization, research, and in meeting and solving unanticipated difficulties but the greatest gain in democratic training came when they decided to consider those matters which best promoted the general welfare. This general cooperative effort for the common-good was what I had in mind when I initiated the problem and this result exceeded my fondest expectations.

Plans are being made by Mr. Bast and his associates to extend this program during the next school year so as to include more high schools and to have local legislative committees as well as State-wide sessions.

*Honolulu.*⁶—A model convention with small committee meetings and a general plenary session held late in the spring is one of the features of the social science program in the Honolulu high schools. Delegates are sent from each of the eight public and private senior high schools of the island of Oahu. The subject for discussion is chosen by the student committee in February so as to give social science classes an opportunity to arrange for the convention. Each school sends delegates in proportion to the size of its senior class. There are as many small committee groups as there are participating schools, and each committee group includes about 35 students.

⁶ This material is taken from an article by Alfred Church. The Honolulu High-School Forum, Social Studies Magazine, 27 : 173-176, March 1936.

These committees consider the subject usually with the services of an adult lecturer and bring a report to the plenary session at which about 2,000 students are gathered. The reports are informal and are limited to 12 minutes for a presentation of the problem as it was discussed in the group, giving any conclusions which may have been made and a fair statement of the minority opinion. An opportunity is granted for corrections from the floor. Following this procedure there is a guest speaker usually from the University of Hawaii who criticizes and comments upon the conclusions expressed and makes a further contribution of his own to the theme of the convention.

Since 1933, the following subjects have been chosen for discussion:

1933

General Theme: Pacific Affairs.

Trade Relations in the Pacific Area.

Political Problems of the Pacific Nations.

What are the Chief Trends in Hawaii's Racial Laboratory?

1934

General Theme: The Survival of Democracy.

Does Democracy Hold More Possibilities for the Welfare of the American People?

Does Democracy Hold More Possibilities than Communism?

What Specific Adjustments Must be Made in Order that Democracy may Survive?

How may Democracy be Made More Effective in Hawaii?

1935

General Theme: National Problems.

What Should be Our National Policy in Regard to the Manufacture and Sale of Munitions?

Does Fascism Offer a Greater Menace to the United States than Communism?

What are the Solutions of the National Crime Problem?

What Should be Our National Policy in the Far East?

What Tax Program Should be Developed in Hawaii?

Omaha, Nebr.—In the South High School in Omaha, four clubs, two for boys and two for girls, have inaugurated a joint program which has several interesting and unusual features. The first of these is the model congress. The two boys' clubs

have limited their membership, and one has become the model senate and the other the model lower house. Every other Monday the clubs hold "congressional meetings" at which "bills" dealing with social, economic, and political problems are brought in and discussed, amended, passed, or rejected by both houses. A debate coach has been chosen "president."

The next interesting feature is a travel program which brings the clubs to the State Capital where they visit the legislature and other institutions. They also take a 3-days' trip visiting various institutions within a 700-mile radius of Omaha. The travel program also makes it possible for one member of each of the four clubs to make a trip to either the east or west coast each year, traveling with a sponsor. The first year the group voted to go East and traveled in 2 of the Provinces of Canada, 22 States, and the District of Columbia. The distance covered was more than 5,000 miles. The money is raised for this program by means of plays sponsored by the four expression clubs and the debating squad.

Baltimore, Md.—Most effective and practical lessons in civics have recently been presented in Baltimore by the device of dramatizing national conventions. One of these was held at the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute on May 27, 1936, where a mock Republican convention was carried out in complete detail. On May 29, 1936, a similar mock convention was presented by the students of the Patterson Park Junior-Senior High School. These demonstrations were planned and conducted by the departments of history but the student body participated in each case. Both conventions were held in the respective auditoriums which were filled by the student body. Delegations carried their banners, appropriate music was furnished, and telling nominating speeches were made by the various student delegates. Great enthusiasm was displayed, and the participating students showed a remarkable knowledge of practical politics. Each convention, after due process of nominating by ballots, nominated a candidate for president in accordance with the same practices as are followed in an actual convention.

The purpose of these dramatizations of the proceedings of a national convention was aimed toward giving each student of the

school a vivid idea of the exact manner in which political parties carry on their business of nominating a candidate for the office of the President of the United States.

The fact that the Republican National Convention was chosen was due solely to the circumstance that it seemed the most interesting one from the standpoint of the number of possible candidates and the possibilities of controversy as to party issues.

New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, N. Y.—Working in cooperation with the New York City and Westchester County High Schools, the New Rochelle High School maintains two student clubs—the Current Events Club meeting on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and the International Relations Club meeting on the first and third Wednesdays.

Under the direction of a faculty advisor the two clubs in cooperation with similar clubs in city and county high schools hold interschool model assemblies, dramatizing the workings of the League of Nations and World Court.

These clubs select a team of three members—a captain and two aides representing each school participating. Seated at small tables upon the stage these teams may outline a line of discussion on whatever topic they choose. Each team may decide which of the members shall speak, but only one of them may speak on each topic. The discussion generally lasts for 1 hour. No prizes are given for excellence of speaking as the meetings are not conducted as contests but rather as informative sessions open to all students.

The participating schools offer regular courses in International Affairs and World Peace as a related subject. Regular meetings are held by club members in assemblies at which outside speakers address the club members and nonmembers.

There are 32 chartered clubs in the association.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significant in these illustrations is the multiplicity of objectives to which sponsors are committed. The device of duplicating an out-of-school situation is used in the hope that a more vital and real learning situation may be created. In this learning thus stimulated, mastery of facts and information still bulks large, but,

with increasing and encouraging frequency, training in discussion techniques and use of the tools of knowledge are also emphasized.

Noteworthy, too, is the part played by the debate coach and public-speaking department in many of these programs. The traditional debate procedure with affirmative and negative speeches is gradually yielding to a more informal approach to controversial issues through the medium of organized discussion.⁷ In the words of one of the youthful correspondents of the Office of Education, "Forums are different from debates. In a forum people do not argue just to prove a point or feel that their side wins. They try to stick to the truth. In a forum there is no decision—nothing wins but the truth."

STUDENT FORUMS OF THE AIR

A number of successful instances of school radio forums are on record. At least two procedures might be used.

Under one plan the forum leader precedes his weekly meetings with the student forum groups in each school with a half-hour radio broadcast early in the week in which he presents the essential facts on the topic under discussion, and to which the members of the student forum listen. Thus, when later in the week he meets with the various student groups in their school forums he can plunge at once into the discussion of the controversial issues raised in his broadcast.

Under the second plan a student panel drawn from the various forum groups in the school system presents a discussion over the air which is listened to in the participating schools and followed by a half hour of extended discussion in each of the school forum groups.

Variations from these patterns are, of course, possible. Thus, in Orange County, Calif., seven high schools participated in a series of broadcasts organized as panel discussions for each of which one high school provided a discussion team. These programs were rated by lay judges and a trophy presented to the winning team.

⁷ See Earl S. Kalp. The Discussion Contest. Complete citation from bibliography.

The high schools of the city of New York have recently carried on an interesting experiment in cooperation with the radio program known as America's Town Meeting of the Air which originates in Town Hall in New York City.

The plan is best described by Michael Levine, chairman of the social science section, New York Society for the Experimental Study of Education, in an article in Secondary Education.*

TOWN HALL OF THE AIR

Under a plan initiated by the social science section of the New York Society for the Experimental Study of Education and developed in cooperation with the Social Studies Council, the League for Political Education, and the National Broadcasting Co., the New York City High School Division has been exploring the possibilities inherent in the use of the radio as an aid to classroom instruction in the social studies.

For an orientation period of 6 weeks lasting from February to April 2, 1936, high-school seniors carefully selected from classes in American history and economics have been attending the Thursday evening programs of America's Town Meeting of the Air broadcast directly from the Town Hall in New York City. These students report back to their classmates on the following day and lead the class discussions which are devoted to the broadcast subject. The broadcast itself is assigned as homework to those who do not go to the Town Hall.

The preliminary discussion period conducted by Prof. Lyman Bryson, which does not go "on the air", and the inspirational effect of a direct association with personalities of national repute give the young delegates a vital message to transmit. America's Town Meeting of the Air was selected for this experiment because of its emphasis on major social problems of contemporary America, its presentation of different points of view by authoritative spokesmen, its nonpartisan and noncommercial character, and primarily because of the generous cooperation and educational vision of its directors and sponsors.

According to the educational plan developed, the pupils in the experimental classes are tested in advance of each broadcast as to their attitudes toward various phases of the subject under discussion. The same test, consisting of 10 questions of the objective type, is repeated a week later in order to ascertain

* 5 : 142-145, May 1936.

whether the broadcast and the subsequent class discussions and reports have had any effect on student attitudes.

The entire experiment, it should be mentioned, is of a purely voluntary nature from the point of view of the schools, social studies chairman and teachers participating. In each of the 40 high schools cooperating, the experiment has been entrusted to a voluntary teacher and only one class. The spirit dominating the project is also manifested by the fact that a volunteer committee, directed by Sidney Barnett of the Richmond Hill High School, has been devoting a good deal of time after regular school hours preparing test and discussion questions, bibliographies, and other materials in connection with the school phase of each broadcast.

Not only have these high schools cooperated in this plan, but at least two of them, New Utrecht and Richmond Hill High Schools, have been conducting their own town meetings, conducted in the same general manner as America's Town Meeting of the Air with the audience participating and asking questions of the speakers who are students. The New Utrecht High School, for example, conducted a town meeting on May 2, 1936, on the subject The Supreme Court and the Constitution with the social studies and the English department collaborating in the preparation of the program.

Student reaction to the project has been most enthusiastic, according to Mr. Levine. He says:

The student delegates have invariably been thrilled by their experiences at Town Hall as members of an adult audience cooperatively engaged in the consideration of a serious problem in the presence of authorities of national repute. The keen interest of the students was also shown by the amount of voluntary supplementary reading, by the enlivened class discussions on the days following the broadcasts and by the activity in preparation for school town meetings with a large number of students voluntarily participating in essay contests, oral tryouts, and serious study.

A surprising and hopeful thing coming out of this experiment was the amazement of the students at their own ability to discuss intelligently and think deeply about problems facing our greatest statesmen. Equally surprising was a realization on the part of the students that they were intellectually at home in an intelligent adult audience. Surprising, too, was the large amount of

'criticism' to which well known authorities were subjected by the students for offering too many judgments unsupported by facts.

The possibilities of such a program should not be minimized. They point the way to a fuller utilization of the facilities of modern science in the educational process, and are important to the vitalization of the social science curriculum. Where such programs are attempted, records such as those which have been kept in this project are invaluable for improving and expanding the program.

DAYTON PROGRAM

At Dayton, Ohio, the Public Forum in cooperation with the Dayton Classroom Teachers and Station WHIO worked out a program of radio forums which were broadcast regularly on Monday evenings. The plan provided that the forum leader should present the problem for discussion over the air on Monday. This program was listened to by the students who were members of the forum group in the high schools and followed during the week by school forums at which the leader appeared to guide the discussion. In several cases these school forums were also broadcast by remote control.

Acting President Evangeline Lindsley, of the Dayton Classroom Teachers' Association, made the following report on the project:

Cooperating with Captain Brown's office the Dayton Classroom Teachers' Association sponsored a series of junior forums which were held in the auditoriums of the various senior high schools throughout the city. A central committee of the association arranged for a series of radio broadcasts, but the detailed planning for each assembly was left in the hands of the respective high-school principals.

At the beginning of the series there were two radio presentations by forum leaders of subjects which were to be discussed later in the week by the students in their assemblies. These proved most successful in stimulating questions and arousing interest. Outlines and bibliographies were distributed early in the week and these proved quite helpful.

One of the junior forums was broadcast over WHIO from the auditorium of Roosevelt High School. This broadcast was arranged as a panel discussion—the faculty committee having

selected six students to take part. About 10 minutes before the time to go on the air they met with Dr. Ingvoldstad, the forum leader, who talked to them briefly. There was no pre-arranged "set up." Each student had written down on paper a question about the subject which he wanted the leader to discuss. During the course of the broadcast there was some student discussion and differences of opinion were expressed.

This broadcast was quite successful from the standpoint of the radio audience, but the 600 students in the auditorium were not so enthusiastic. They wanted to ask questions and make comments and the idea of listening in without the opportunity of talking was not to their liking. For this reason no more broadcasts were arranged although the radio station was anxious for us to do so.

To summarize:

1. The junior forums were interesting and valuable. They did not unduly interfere with class procedure and as a civic project provided worth-while training for the students.
2. The distribution of an outline and bibliography of the subject at least a week before the forum provided an excellent stimulus to discussion.
3. Confining the forums to eleventh- and twelfth-year students assured a more lively and mature discussion of controversial issues.
4. Those forums were most successful where the forum leader refrained from lecturing and invited questions instead.
5. The presentation of the subject over the radio by the forum leader on Monday proved successful in arousing discussion the following Wednesday.
6. The panel discussion which was broadcast in the auditorium in the presence of the student body proved interesting but not as thought provoking and therefore not as valuable as the regular forum.
7. If a junior forum is to be broadcast, it would seem best to arrange it in the form of a panel discussion and conduct it in the studio of the radio station rather than in a high-school assembly.

ADVANTAGES

The use of the radio in connection with the promotion of school forums has several advantages. In the first place, with limited expert leadership available, time and energy may be conserved by broadcasting the leader's analysis of the problem under dis-

cussion with follow-up discussions in the school classroom. In the second place, if a complete discussion is presented over the air using a student panel with a specialist in group discussion as the forum leader, the program has great potentialities as a model which both listening teachers and students may follow in adapting the technique to other content materials.

Moreover, in the case of high schools equipped with public-address systems, the size of the discussion group can be kept small enough to permit rather general participation. That the disadvantages which result from the absence of direct contact with the total personality of the leader are great is, of course, not to be denied. A plan such as that used in Dayton, permitting the radio forum leader to act also as leader of the face-to-face discussions in the participating schools, would seem most to be desired.

The radio may be used for two main discussion plans. First, it may be used to transmit speeches or forum discussion to the students on which basis they will carry on their own discussions. Second, it may be used to broadcast discussions organized and planned by students and of value to all kinds of listeners.

One plan which came to our attention involved the organization of school discussions based upon the radio series presented by the Educational Radio Project of the Office of Education, "Let Freedom Ring." Students were asked to listen to these Monday night programs on the history of the struggle for civil and personal liberties and note the problems raised for discussion at the end. In some cases, regular classes in civics carried on discussions of these problems, while in others, these radio presentations were the subject of special forums during or after school.⁹

Any forum program, whether during or after school, will gain much in the way of stimulation and material if the leader or a student committee will study the weekly radio presentations in the field of public affairs and advise the students generally of significant listening events. The discussion of what is heard is

⁹ The scripts for these radio series are being published. High-school dramatic groups may secure copies in order to reproduce them either before school forums or assemblies or over local radio stations. Those interested in further information should write to the Educational Radio Project, Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

an important educational step in the process of using the current broadcasts.

COMMUNITY-WIDE LEADERSHIP SERVICE PROGRAMS

Most of the specific examples of school forums described thus far have been limited in their operation to one school. There are several instances on record of a community-wide forum leadership service supplied through the cooperation of all the high schools in the community. Two examples will be given, one from Chicago, Ill.; the other from Long Beach, Calif. Note that the Long Beach program differs from the Chicago plan in that it provides student rather than adult forum leaders to appear at the meetings of various community organizations.

The Chicago Civic Forum Bureau.—An interesting feature of the Chicago high school forums is the Civic Forum Bureau. This bureau was organized several years ago by social science teachers and local civic leaders. Its aim is to promote cooperation between social science teachers and local organizations in obtaining speakers and demonstrating to students how well-conducted model forums are run. The bureau is operated by a board of directors consisting of one member for each of the local civic organizations participating and three members representing the social science teachers. It functions in behalf of high-school students, both those attending schools which have forums of their own and for the particular benefit of students attending schools at which no discussion program is carried out. Meetings are arranged at regular intervals.

The bureau conducts model forum programs at locations central to all high schools. Speakers unable to visit individual schools speak to the combined groups. Pupils thus observe the forum procedure in action even though their particular school may have no forum of its own. In this manner students are able to obtain information on social and economic questions and thereby take a more active interest in the study of the social sciences. Students participate in the management of the monthly meetings, exchange information, plan programs, choose subjects, prepare radio forum programs, and interchange programs between schools.

Long Beach, Calif.—A community-student innovation which has resulted in a forum for which academic credit is given, is that which has evolved in the senior high schools of Long Beach. This plan embraces not only the interests of students in the public schools but those of local social, civic, professional, and religious organizations as well. Here a "Junior Speakers' Bureau" has been in operation for more than 8 years. Materially increasing its functions since 1933, the idea behind the organization was originally conceived by the local Realty Board which sponsored a monthly discussion of current affairs by high-school students. The organization then consisted of small groups of students selected from the senior high schools who demonstrated particular talent in preparing and presenting speeches on current topics.

An outgrowth of this activity has been the organization of "Speakers' Workshops" in the various senior high schools. These groups have been created during the past 5 years in the larger schools under the direction of a regular social science teacher who directs each group's activities. These activities consist of presenting both sides of student and local problems. Outside organizations call upon these groups to prepare and present data on various questions. The local bar association called for a debate on *Congress vs. the Supreme Court*; the churches called for a symposium on "World Peace"; the City Safety Council called for short speeches on "Traffic Safety"; the Better Housing Council of the Chamber of Commerce used student speakers on "Better Housing".

Preparation in answer to student and outside calls is made in these workshops where all speeches are carefully checked for forcefulness and accuracy as well as comprehensiveness in scope. This preparation of material is thrashed out in regular meetings at which these details are discussed. Membership is based upon ability to select, organize, and present a topic before an audience. The different school groups meet together, and efforts in gathering material and presenting speakers are thus pooled.

CHAPTER III

FORUM PLANS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

VOLUNTARY DISCUSSION GROUPS among college students are a rather well-known adjunct to the activity program of most American colleges. As a general rule, however, these groups are maintained by a relatively small proportion of the student body, and are not actively participated in by most students.

Exceptions might be cited which apply in certain situations. In the first place, it is relatively easy to secure a rather respectable turnout at the average university for prominent speakers. Further, there is usually good attendance at well-publicized gatherings where issues are to be discussed by different speakers from several points of view in symposiums, with opportunity for audience participation at the end. Particularly is this true when the subject matter or the panel suggests that a sharp clash of opinion is in prospect. Such willingness to attend contentious meetings is not confined to meetings devoted to adult speakers. Interest is frequently as keen in properly managed, sufficiently publicized forums presenting prominent student speakers, providing the issues are vital, and the students feel that something is to be gained.

TYPES OF COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

The types of forums already in operation in universities and colleges include:

1. Informal discussion groups around some larger foundation as Y. M. C. A.'s, religious foundations, etc.
2. Student discussion leagues as part of the regular student body program, usually offering student leaders in debates or panels.

3. Lecture meetings at which students are afforded an opportunity to question the speakers afterwards, and in some instances, particularly if there is a strong student club interested in such matters, to hold their own discussion on the basis of the lecture.
4. Student conferences sponsored by quasi-campus and inter-college organizations, such as the Y's, the International Relations Clubs, and similar organizations, and, finally, open forum symposiums offered by the university as part of a series presenting professors, and permitting audience expression of opinion.¹

In only one instance, the Drake University program to be described later in this chapter, has any college or university, so far as this office has been able to discover, organized any part of its social science program in connection with a forum discussion series with regular university credit.

This chapter will describe typical examples of these various types of forums giving, wherever possible, samples of their programs and some indication of the extent of their appeal to students.

In addition to reporting typical forums, this chapter will include a summary of data compiled from questionnaires sent to all colleges, indicating the nature and scope of the college forum movement, and its appeal to students, in the eyes of the particular reporter.

DRAKE UNIVERSITY

During the 1935-36 academic year at Drake University, two classes were conducted on civic problems using the forum method as the basis for study. Although the particular program described here was not continued beyond the first year, it is outlined in some detail because of the unique introduction of the study of contemporary affairs into the college curriculum which it represents. This university is located in Des Moines where an

¹ The National Student Federation of America has a standing committee on university student forums. Data and information may be secured from the federation by writing the organization at 8 West Fortieth Street, New York City.

extensive community-wide program has been in progress for several years. The introduction of this particular plan was frankly an experiment. The fact that it was not regarded as a practical permanent program in its experimental form does not detract from its contribution to the experimentation in this field.

The university administration explained its reasons for not adopting the experiment as a permanent feature of the curriculum as follows:

. . . because of the difficulty of integrating such a project with its many speakers. . . . The chief difficulties of the program were related to the manner in which City Forum leaders were used to present the issues and to lead the discussion once a week. Faculty members led the discussion once a week and coordinated it with the work of their two departments, Economics and Political Science. Because of the short periods in which the forum leaders were present, the course was disjointed.

It seems to me that, if possible, the same leader should be retained for an entire term. If that were done, such a program dealing with immediate issues would be of real benefit.

Other expressions of opinion will be found below. It should be pointed out that the program reached a very small number of students because it was in effect simply another regularly scheduled course in the social sciences. However, the experiment did serve to point out important values of the forum to the social sciences. The credit feature seemed to make the group feel more like a regular class, and this is reported to have reduced its value to the university as a whole. The description given is based on a report from the administration of Drake University.

The total enrollment was about 24 in each class and 2 semester-hour credits were given by virtue of an essay type examination at the end of the course designed to test the student's grasp of the contemporary problems touched upon in the course. The first course was entitled "A Survey of Contemporary Political Problems", and the second, "A Survey of Contemporary Social and Economic Problems." While enrollments were taken for these courses carrying regular college credit, students and adults were encouraged to attend as auditors without fee and without credit. This feature brings the experiment within the scope of this study.

HOW FORUMS ARE CONDUCTED

As planned and carried out, these courses consisted of a series of forum discussions each Tuesday morning presented by visiting professors and members of the Des Moines staff of forum leaders. On Thursday of each week the regular Drake professors in charge of the courses continued these forum discussions, suggested library and collateral reading, and otherwise sought to illuminate the subjects.

Following is a statement of the course topics:

Contemporary political problems

[Public forum discussions on the Drake campus—] to 10 a. m.

Date	Forum speaker	Subject
Thursday, Feb. 6.....	Garfield V. Cox, professor of finance, school of business, University of Chicago.	Why We Have Business Depressions.
Tuesday, Feb. 11.....	Thomas S. Barclay, professor of political science, Leland Stanford University.	The Role of Business as a Force in Present-day Politics.
Thursday, Feb. 13.....	I. L. Sharfman, professor of economics, University of Michigan.	The Problem of Due Process of Law and its Constitutional Interpretation.
Tuesday, Feb. 18.....	Johannes Steel, foreign correspondent, New York Evening Post.	Failures of Dictatorship, Germany.
Tuesday, Feb. 25.....	Johannes Steel.....	Failures of Dictatorship, Italy.
Tuesday, Mar. 3.....	do.....	Failures of Dictatorship, Japan.
Tuesday, Mar. 10.....	Walter J. Millard, field representative, National Municipal League.	City Government and the City Political Machine.
Tuesday, Mar. 17.....	Walter J. Millard.....	The City Manager.
Tuesday, Mar. 24.....	do.....	The Citizen's Job.
Tuesday, Mar. 31.....	Gustav Beck, former director of the Labor Temple School of N. Y. C.	The American Dream.
Tuesday, Apr. 7.....	Gustav Beck.....	The Problem of the Melting Pot.
Tuesday, Apr. 14.....	do.....	American Mass Psychology.
Tuesday, Apr. 21.....	David Bryn-Jones, former professor of economics, Carleton College; pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Minneapolis.	Youth and Dissolving Views of Politics.
Tuesday, Apr. 28.....	David Bryn-Jones.....	Youth Moves to the Right and the Left.
Tuesday, May 5.....	do.....	Youth and the Problems of Moral Standards.

Contemporary social and economic problems

[Public forum discussions on the Drake campus—10 to 11 a. m.]

Date	Forum speaker	Subject
Thursday, Feb. 6.....	Garfield V. Cox, professor of finance, School of Business, University of Chicago.	Why the Severity of the Present Depression?
Tuesday, Feb. 11.....	Garfield V. Cox.....	Can We Manage Money and Credit?
Thursday, Feb. 13.....	do.....	Is the System of Private Enterprise Worth Saving?
Tuesday, Feb. 18.....	George E. Haynes, executive secretary of department of race problems of the Federal Council of Churches.	Land Tenure and Social Problems in Southern United States.
Tuesday, Feb. 25.....	George E. Haynes.....	Land Tenure and Social Problems in Southern United States.
Tuesday, Mar. 3.....	do.....	Land Tenure and Social Problems in Southern United States.
Tuesday, Mar. 10.....	Frank Bohn, journalist.....	Has Socialism Failed in Russia?
Tuesday, Mar. 17.....	do.....	Has Fascism Failed in Italy and Germany?
Tuesday, Mar. 24.....	do.....	Will the Farmer and Labor Rule the Future U. S. A.?
Tuesday, Mar. 31.....	David Bryn-Jones, former professor of economics, Carleton College; Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Minneapolis.	Youth in a World of Economic Disintegration.
Tuesday, Apr. 7.....	David Bryn-Jones.....	Youth Moves to the Right.
Tuesday, Apr. 14.....	do.....	Youth and Radical Movements.
Tuesday, Apr. 21.....	W. E. Williams, secretary British Institute of Adult Education.	The Long Divorce Between Industry and Art.
Tuesday, Apr. 28.....	W. E. Williams.....	Is Mass Production an Enemy of Art?
Tuesday, May 5.....	do.....	The Civic Art of Town-Planning.

PERTINENT QUESTIONS

Some of the questions which the experiment raises might be as follows: What was the basis of grading in the course? What percentage of the time was devoted to discussion? What kind of students came into the course?

Grading was on the basis of the students' understanding of the problems discussed during the year as shown by a final examination, of the essay type. No effort was made to keep a record of the number and kinds of questions asked by the students

or of their other contributions to the seminar discussions. No term paper was required.

Fully 50 percent of the time was devoted to discussion which took place during the Thursday session, since the visiting lecturers took all of the time on Tuesday. Professor Bohlman, of Drake University, expressed himself as believing that there was a distinct gain in the ability of class members to enter into the give and take of class discussion of controversial issues. It was his observation that there was active participation in the discussion by most of the members of the group. He also felt that the students gained in the quality of reading material they selected on current problems.

The students who came into the course had, in the main, better than average scholastic standing. In other words, they were the more alert and able students. A preponderance of the students were juniors and seniors, since the professors in charge discouraged the enrollment of lower division students and the less able.

EVALUATION

What has been the success of this experiment at Drake University? One answer can be given in the words of some of the students enrolled in the courses. In the issue of May 15, 1936, of the Drake student paper some representative students were quoted as follows:

1. I think the course was valuable . . . it gives one a newer and broader understanding of present-day problems. I would take the course if it were offered next fall.
2. I think it is the best course I took this semester. Cultural and educational benefits derived from contact with men of the caliber we have heard supersede that of any other course I have had.
3. I think that it was an interesting course. Lecturers who had direct contacts with the contemporary situations they were discussing were valuable.
4. The lectures I heard were very interesting . . . I would advise students to enroll because of information on current day affairs they don't get in other courses.

The testimony of the Drake professors in charge of the courses may next be adduced in evidence.

Says Dr. Herbert Bohlman:

From the standpoint of interesting students who were enrolled, I believe the course was a great success. Although they did not read as widely in the suggested references as I had hoped, still from the conversations which I had with members of the class I am positive that they did read political and economic news items more regularly than previously. I feel justified, therefore, in saying that the course was a success in stimulating an interest in current problems.

Dr. Frank Herriott reports:

The students in my group dealing with contemporary political problems indicated in two ways that they not only enjoyed but profited by the lectures they heard. First, I was impressed by the steady, alert attention which the students gave the various speakers. I need not tell you that when such interest is steadily manifested they think they are getting something worth while. College students are rather difficult to hold to a high level of attention. Second, a number of students have voluntarily expressed themselves to me as having enjoyed the lectures very much. In general, therefore, I can express myself as believing the forum lecture series to be a success so far as my own experience and the reflection of the students indicate opinion.

Dr. D. W. Morehouse, president of Drake University, says:

We are more than delighted with the students' response. We have two well-attended forums at 9 and 10 o'clock on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. From the standpoint of our student body, it is a great success. Keen interest is taken by the students, especially since it entitles them to 2 hours' credit. Drake University is grateful for this opportunity and wishes to continue its cooperation in every way.

OTHER COLLEGE PROGRAMS

PURDUE UNIVERSITY, LAFAYETTE, IND.

A program which integrates radio, classroom activity, and practical public performances has been inaugurated at Purdue. Under this plan, known as the "Hoosier Town Hall", students enrolled in public discussion and argumentation classes receive classroom instruction on the principles and techniques of discussion and argumentation. Specific subjects of current interest

are presented by the class professors, followed by general classroom discussion of the issues involved. Student panels are formed to discuss social, political, and economic issues in connection with their study of the theory and practice of discussion and argumentation.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION BROADCAST

Once each week these classroom discussions are picked up direct from the classroom and broadcast from the university radio station WBAA. In relating this instruction to a specific subject of current interest, a different question is discussed each week.

STUDENTS LEAD COMMUNITY FORUMS

To afford practical experience in the practice of their studies, selected students are called upon to address and lead discussion at open forum meetings held jointly by various discussion groups in communities in the vicinity of the university. Following each classroom broadcast the same subject covered in the classroom discussion is presented by two students from the class at these community forums during that same week. These students address and lead discussion at each of the forum meetings in the communities visited.

Thus the students not only receive practical experience in forum leadership, but the program encourages the organization of forums and discussion groups among both high-school students and adults in these communities. This arrangement affords Purdue students direct contact with outside groups and gives them valuable experience which could not be derived through classroom study alone.

OBERLIN COLLEGE, OBERLIN, OHIO

Students in the department of public speaking at Oberlin present about 40 public forum debates on current political and economic questions before such groups in northern Ohio as Rotary clubs, lodges, civic clubs, high-schools, Parent-Teacher Associations, church clubs, and other civic, professional, and

religious organizations. At these meetings student panels usually discuss pro and con the issues involved in the topics selected for about an hour after which members of the audience participate in the general discussion through questioning the speakers and expressing their own views on the subject. A number of the Oberlin Department of Public Speaking attends these meetings and later criticizes the work of the student speakers. Following these meetings instruction and criticism of the way in which the students handled the meeting is discussed in the classroom. According to William E. Utterback, of the public speaking department at Oberlin, students may secure academic credit for this work if they like, but most of them prefer to carry it as extracurricular activity.

Other discussion projects carried on at Oberlin include mock political conventions and various intercollegiate student conferences on public affairs. Each year the college brings many speakers to the campus to discuss current political and economic questions. These addresses are usually followed by an informal forum discussion in which the students participate.

MILLS COLLEGE, MILLS COLLEGE, CALIF.

Discussion groups are organized among students of the regular courses in government and international relations at Mills College. These groups constitute two open forums—the community forum, meeting on the first and third Mondays of each month, and the student forum, meeting on the second and fourth Mondays. The groups are organized with faculty advisors and offer student panel discussions of current political, social, and economic questions. Occasionally faculty members act as leaders presenting lectures covering some chosen subject and often outside speakers are invited to address the forum meetings.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, COLUMBIA, MO.

For a number of years the University of Missouri has conducted an open forum as an extracurricular student activity. This forum program is administered by a joint faculty-student board.

Here the debating society presents semimonthly major debates upon some social, political, or economic problem of current interest. Following the debate an open forum is conducted in which the students comprising the audience discuss the subject presented by the debaters.

ROCKFORD COLLEGE, ROCKFORD, ILL.

"The forum", a student organization at Rockford, is composed of students actively interested in public discussion of local and national interest. The function of the club is twofold: It carries on intercollegiate debates and arranges for the discussion of local questions before community organizations. The Forum fills many requests from high schools in neighboring cities to present demonstration open forums and nondecision debates on economic and social questions. Members of the organization act as judges at high-school contests in public speaking. The organization has as its director and advisor a faculty member who assists in the selection and preparation of topics for presentation.

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

A student experiment in government is the George Washington Union, a new legislative forum of 101 delegates elected from the student body of the George Washington University. The union is dedicated to the study and discussion of the domestic and foreign policies of the United States.

The idea of a union was first conceived in the spring of 1936. A group of 12 students met and discussed ways and means of interesting George Washington University students in planned discussions of national and international affairs after the manner of the National Congress. Precedent for the idea was found in the Oxford and Cambridge Unions in England, and the Yale Political Union in this country. Plans have been carefully carried forward. There have been speeches by prominent leaders in American life, intramural debates have been held, pamphlets have been written, and the press, both university and metropolitan, have commented at length on the union idea.

The union, created in 1936, by a university-wide ballot, is composed of 101 members elected from the university student body on a basis of proportional representation. The union itself is composed of three political parties—Right, Center, and Left. Briefly, the party of the Right stands for laissez-faire attitudes in public administration; the Center advocates some control through Government regulatory bodies; while the Left stands for social ownership and operation of natural resources and major basic industries. In campus-wide election, the Center captured 55 seats; the Left 24 seats; and the Right 22 seats.

There are noteworthy features about the union: First, that its inception took place in the National Capital, the seat of the Government of the whole people; second, that the union is composed of three separate and distinct political factions, each having an integrated social philosophy—this is significant in view of the changes occurring in the national political set-ups; third, that the union was elected on a basis of proportional representation; and fourth, that it is conducting its deliberations on a committee-system basis after the manner of the United States Senate.

It seems evident that the George Washington Union will not only provide an atmosphere and testing laboratory for the acquisition and exchange of ideas, but it will likely set up a mechanism for obtaining practical experience in politics, parliamentary procedure, and group leadership. In a larger sense, the union will undoubtedly stimulate a more thorough consideration of the basic factors which determine national policy; will awaken among college-trained people a keener sense of responsibility for intelligent and active participation in public affairs; and will aid students to acquire an appreciation of the values of citizenship.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

In the spring of 1935 a unique program was set up in the University of California at Los Angeles, unique in that it was managed entirely by the student-body organization, with the single stipulation that the list of subjects should be registered

with the university administration. Student speakers were used, usually in a panel discussion. Effort was made to avoid the usual sort of college debating, by the presentation of various aspects of the subject under discussion made more in the spirit of clarification of that point of view with an eye to subsequent discussion by the audience, than in the spirit of contest.

Meetings were held every 2 weeks, with an average attendance of from 150 to 250. The students who attended came with the intention of participating, and the discussions after the presentation by the scheduled speakers usually took up at least half of the time; in meetings which averaged more than 2 hours. Subjects dealt with ranged over a whole field of political and economic problems. Will Fascism come to America?, Will the Conservative or the Radical Tendencies in the New Deal finally triumph?, What Philosophy Should the College Student Accept—Conservatism, Liberalism, or Radicalism?, are typical examples.

The fact that this forum evoked wide student interest, and that attendance was consistently high, shows clearly that it is possible to get college students to discuss important public issues among themselves. At this same university public forum programs with faculty and outside speakers have been scheduled, with no more success than the present program, if as much. The students proved to be alive to important issues, and were willing that the presentation precedent to their own discussion should be made by student speakers.

Such a program has its difficulties, as borne out by experience in the University of California. While students are willing to listen to other students, the student speakers must be good, not only as speakers, but in their mastery of the material they are presenting. Subjects scheduled must be even more carefully selected than in a program where faculty or outsiders are featured, and where the presumption might be made that value can be obtained simply from passive listening, so long as information of some sort is imparted.

In the student forum each attendant knows that benefit can come only if the subject is important enough, and clear enough, to warrant collective examination. Propagandists of the various "isms", seeking to pervert discussion into partisan harangues,

present another danger. They cannot and must not be suppressed, since their contribution is a vital one to any real examination of the issue. On the other hand they must not be permitted to monopolize the stage, if only for the very practical reason that meetings which degenerate in that fashion lose all appeal to other students.

Finally, it is essential that unbiased discussion by the student leaders be secured. It was found that this required care in the selection of the student committee responsible for managing the forum, as well as care on the part of that committee in seeing to it that if the leaders presented purely descriptive or analytic talks they understood clearly what ground they were to cover, and seeing to it that if partisans were selected enough points of view were set forth to make an objective picture.

IN THE FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION CENTERS

In addition to the varied patterns of college forum organizations suggested by the specific programs just described the aim of the demonstration forum centers sponsored by the Office of Education may again be referred to. As a part of the Santa Ana, Calif., program, forums have been conducted each week at the two junior colleges located in Orange County. The director of the forum reports that the attendance at these meetings is made up of political science, sociology, and history students. The students attend one of the regular adult forums each week, follow up the discussion under the guidance of a faculty member during a regular classroom hour and in a third hour during the week meet again with the forum leader, whom they heard, in a reconsideration of the questions raised. By this approach two objectives are served. First, the students acquire considerable information on both sides of a current political or economic problem; and, second, a laboratory course in forum leadership and the techniques of group discussion is provided.

In the seven county area served by the North Carolina project there are nine colleges. Five have collaborated with the public forum administration in making available to their students a class in Techniques of Forum Leadership. Each class meets once a week for a 2-hour session. A regular forum is held during the first

hour and a half of the class session with leaders from the public forum staff. The last half hour is devoted to an analysis of the procedures and techniques employed by the leader and the reactions of the group to them.

All of the adult forum programs maintained some kind of relations with the universities in the areas served by these special



Negro Youth Forum, Atlanta, Ga.

projects. The universities cooperated in two ways. First, local professors and student panels contributed much to the regular adult forums in the community. Second, the administrations and the study bodies introduced or extended the forum idea in campus life.

The University of West Virginia conducted its own student forum, and is investigating plans for enlarging this type of program next year. Some of the adult forums were held in the university and attracted large numbers of students. The professors reported that the community-wide forums made real contributions to their class work in the social sciences.

The University of Minnesota not only cooperated with the community-wide program in many ways, but has made plans for introducing summer and winter courses in forum leadership.

Likewise, in Oregon, Washington, Texas, Georgia, California, Kansas, Colorado and Arkansas, various forum activities were undertaken by colleges and universities in cooperation with the forum demonstration centers. Additional information about these programs can be obtained by writing to the Office of Education or to the administrator of the particular project in which one is interested.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY

The Office of Education sent a questionnaire to the heads of liberal arts colleges and universities asking them whether or not a forum program was carried on at their school, either formally or informally. One hundred and eighty-seven replies were received, and the following facts were digested from them.

(1) One hundred and fourteen, or 61 percent, of the 187 colleges and universities reporting had forums.

(2) Of the 187 institutions answering: 104 were sponsored by sectarian bodies, of which 59, or 57 percent, had forums; 48 by private groups of which 31, or 65 percent, conducted forums; 35 by public agencies of which 24, or 69 percent, planned forums.

(3) In the 114 institutions reporting forums, the management of the forum was shown as follows:

	<i>Number of forums</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Administration	10	9
Faculty	16	14
Student body	25	22
Faculty-student committee	63	55

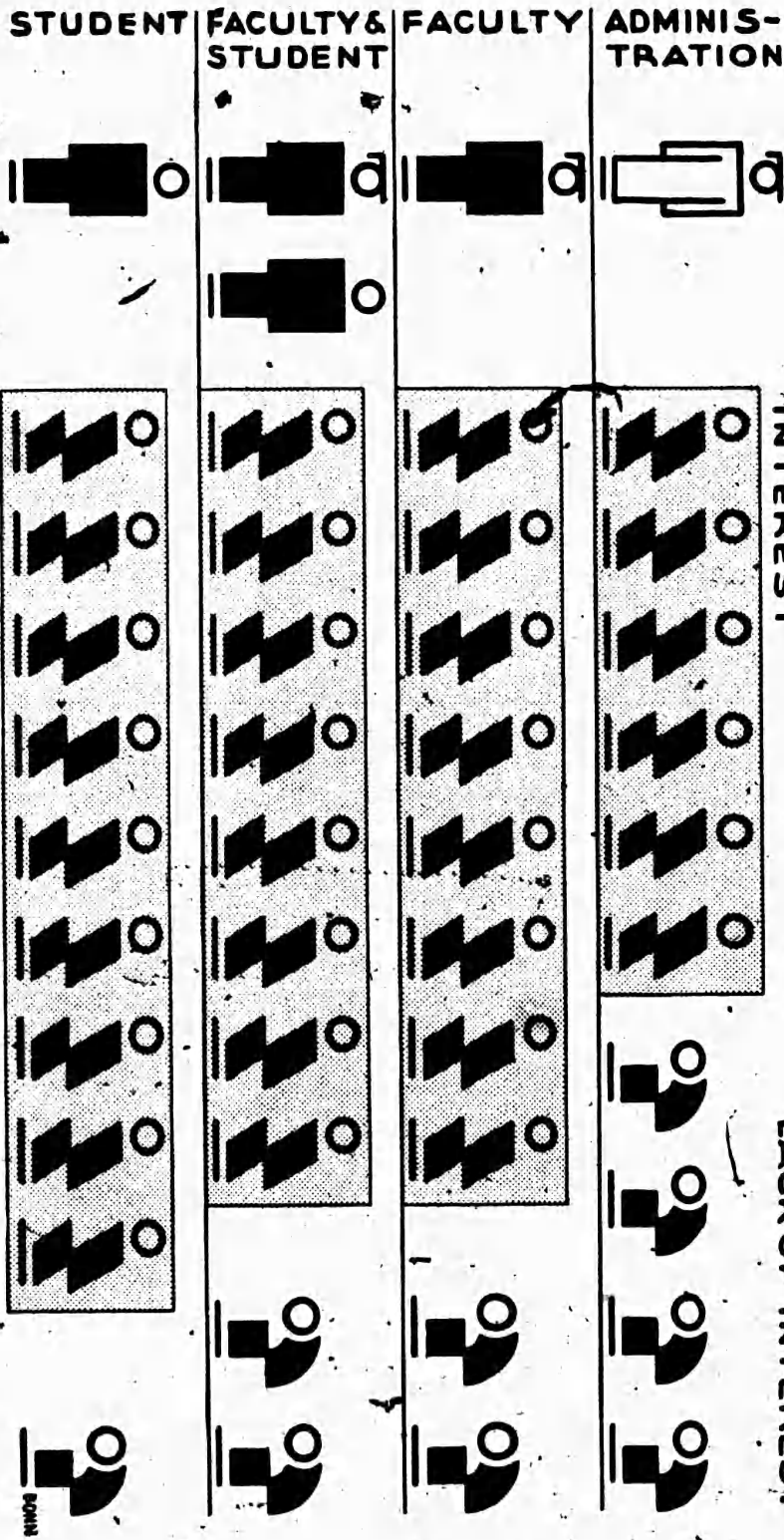
(4) Sixty-eight percent of these forums secured outside speakers. Of these the speakers were:

	<i>Percent</i>
Always paid	42
Sometimes paid	31
Never paid	27

(5) College administration judged student interest in forums as follows:

	<i>Percent</i>
Keen	47
Average	37
Fair	10
Poor	6

DIVISION OF INTEREST BY MANAGEMENT



Division of student interest tabulated according to the management of the program showed:

	Percent
Forums sponsored by school administration	60
Forums sponsored by faculty	82
Forums sponsored by faculty-student committees	86
Forums sponsored by student body	88

(See pictorial graph.)

These figures on student interest seem to demonstrate that those forums sponsored by the administration alone are considerably less successful than those sponsored by faculty, faculty-student, or student committees. Students also seemed somewhat more interested in outside speakers than they were in speakers selected from the faculty.

The survey summarized above brought with it many letters and started much correspondence between the Office of Education and university leaders interested in the forum program. Its main value lies not in what it proves or indicates about forums in universities and colleges. The supporting evidence seems to bear out the figures taken from the questionnaire which show that the colleges and universities are not reaching the majority of the students with planned forum discussions of current affairs. But, in addition, the interest of administrators and professors in developing more adequate programs of this type has been greatly stimulated. New plans are being reported to us constantly. These reports put the Office of Education in position to be of greater service to schools of higher education. The forum counseling service has been organized for this purpose.

In the future, the trends and developments of forums in colleges may be surveyed with much more profit than at present. For this purpose a more comprehensive survey would have to be organized, and can probably be carried forward best by the Higher Education Division of the Office which is regularly engaged in gathering factual material about university programs.

CHAPTER IV

FORUM PLANS FOR YOUTH ON COMMUNITY-WIDE BASIS

THUS FAR we have given consideration to various types of high-school and college forum programs. To round out our discussion of Forums for Young People there remains the description of community-wide programs organized with particular attention to the needs of the out-of-school group. As suggested in chapter 1 (see p. 3) this group may roughly include persons, between 18 and 30 years of age, who, although associated with older people in most of their activities are, nevertheless, group conscious and vitally concerned with the solution of problems which bear with particular pressure upon their future happiness and security. It is a fact that while both in- and out-of-school young people will attend adult forums and to some extent participate in the meetings, community-wide forum programs are most successful when special forums are scheduled in which problems of special interest to youth can be faced and discussed more frankly and freely than in a group of widely varying ages.

Youth forums are discussed here not with a view to discouraging the participation of young people in regular adult forums but rather in the belief that discussion experience secured by young people in forums of their own will enhance the value of contributions made in the adult meetings. As one of our correspondents puts it, in the age group to which the youth forums appeal are those "who are not yet so opinionated that they cannot be stimulated to use critical judgment. They need the forum as a means of orientation into civic life—with which they are not yet familiar. They want to be informed; they are eager to discuss, but they like to be associated with people of their own ages and interests. They like to have a part in running things."

In this chapter we shall consider (1) several examples of successful community-wide youth forums, (2) suggested topics, (3) desirable discussion procedures, (4) promotional aids, and (5) ways and means by which young people may contribute to and share in the meetings of community-wide adult forums.

SUCCESSFUL YOUTH FORUMS

Two of the most successful youth forum programs reported to this Office were conducted in Milwaukee, Wis., and Minneapolis, Minn. In Milwaukee during a 4-month's program 42 youth forums were held with an average attendance at each of 170.¹

The program was committed to the following objectives:

- ✓ 1. Make current social issues seem real and important to young people.
- ✓ 2. Supply new and reliable facts and information.
- ✓ 3. Build attitudes of tolerance for new and unfamiliar ideas and critical examination of ideas, both new and old before acceptance.
- ✓ 4. Develop confidence and poise in young people through self-expression and participation.
- ✓ 5. Help toward a realization of the complexity of social problems and the necessity for seeking more than "slogan" solutions.
- ✓ 6. Awaken an interest in extensive and purposeful reading. Carefully compiled bibliographies were given out at every youth forum.
- ✓ 7. Make a wide appeal to youth of every class, race, religion, degree of education, and economic status to meet together for a democratic discussion of the common problems that require a common solution.

The program was planned and organized with advice and assistance of a youth forum committee on which prominent educators and representatives of the various youth groups in the community were invited to serve. Five forum centers were eventually established, three in school buildings, one in a CCC camp, and one in the Courthouse. Meetings were held weekly and topics were selected which "followed the headlines."

¹ The descriptive material on the Milwaukee youth forums is taken from the reports of Walter S. Nichols, director of the Milwaukee public forum, and Jack Telfer, a member of the forum staff in charge of youth forums.

In Minneapolis a somewhat similar program was offered. Throughout a 9-months adult forum program special meetings were held for youth. The youth forum committee or executive council as it was called, assumed responsibility for arousing interest and support among young people's organizations and aided in the selection of subjects and speakers. Meetings were held in three centers each week at 8 o'clock. In addition three special city-wide meetings were sponsored by the executive council. A special institute for youth meetings was held prior to the opening of the series in order to train student chairmen and to demonstrate the various discussion techniques which might be employed.

At the close of the year's program the director of the Minneapolis forum, Katherine Kohler, has the following suggestions to make:

- (1) First of all—youth forums, like adult forums, should not be an overnight growth. They should be started in a small way, and built up as the demand for them increases. With such a large project, after the first burst of curious interest in a "big thing" dies down, there is not enough genuine interest to sustain good, substantial forums. People must be educated gradually to the idea.
- (2) Youth should help choose speakers and topics. The experiment this year has shown that youth must have a part in the selection of topics and in the planning of meetings as well as in publicizing the program. Although neither speaker nor topic needs to be essentially different for youth groups than for adults, it is important that the young people feel that they have had some part in the planning.
- (3) Need for trained chairmen. There is of course a great need for trained and skillful young chairmen. A training session such as the institute that was held should be made a regular part of the year's program. Needless to say it is almost impossible to have good panels or symposiums unless the members are trained on the forum techniques.
- (4) Necessity for good leaders. As for forum leaders, age has little to do with their success. Young forum leaders have not always been as successful as older ones have. The requirements for a good speaker for youth groups are much the same as for an adult audience. Some of the requirements especially stressed are:
 - (a) He must know his subject thoroughly.

- (b) He must be able to lead a discussion skillfully as well as to speak well.
- (c) Above all he must be human.
- (d) He must talk across not down to his audience.
- (e) He must relate his topic to the lives and experiences of his audience.
- (f) He should speak not like a walking encyclopedia but like a thinking, living human being, enlivening his talks with personal experience and anecdote.
- (g) He must maintain a friendly attitude. Young people especially seem to resent the teacher attitude on the part of the speaker.
- (h) Youth seems to demand a well-knit argument. Although they enjoy wit and humor they dislike having the speaker make an obvious attempt to be amusing and entertaining.

To use a homely metaphor they want their food to taste good, to be well seasoned, but most of all they want something to "chaw on", something they can put their teeth into. The speaker who comes with the idea of putting in an evening "entertaining the kids" falls flat.

- (5) Need for reaching unorganized youth. There has not been enough attendance by young people not connected with any club or organization. Advertising in factories, stores, and offices should perhaps be stressed more in the future. At any rate youth meetings offer a wide field for experimentation. There are fine possibilities for developing a post school educational agency that will help to orient the young man and woman into the complex economic, social, political, and cultural life of our time.

SUGGESTED TOPICS

Subjects discussed in the youth forum meetings cover the same wide variety of fields apparent in adult forum schedules. There is considerable interest in questions affecting international relations, particularly war and peace. Subjects prove a greater factor in attracting audiences than the prominence of the speaker. In almost every case a special attempt is made in the wording and treatment of the topic to bring out its particular application to youth. The type and variety of questions discussed in these youth forums is indicated by the sample list here tabulated:

Youth forums—Subjects discussed—Milwaukee, Wis.

WISCONSIN AVENUE SCHOOL

Date	Subjects	Attendance	Speakers
Feb. 12	Set-Down Strikes	110	*J. H. Felt, head, department of economics, University of Rochester. Arthur O'Shea, business agent, Plumber Union with the A. F. of L.
Feb. 19	Does the Government have Youth a Liveline?	97	*Paul Porter, editor, Kenosha Labor. Lewis Stockton, Junior, Chamber of Commerce.
Feb. 26	Under Which Party Would Youth Have the Best Opportunity?	100	Thomas Byrne, Democratic committee-man. Eugene Schaefer, former Republican Congressman. Carl Minkes, State secretary, Socialist Party of Wisconsin. John Kaplan, State Secretary, Young Communist League, Wisconsin. Joe Eichhardt, Socialist-Labor candidate for Governor, 1936.
Mar. 5	Have Parents a Right to Their Children's Earnings?	96	Dr. Samuel Kirk, education department, State Teachers College. Agnes Kenny, manager, Women's Department, First Wisconsin National Bank.
Mar. 12	What Has Religion to Offer Youth?	215	*Dr. DeLoach, president, Webster College. Arthur H. Jones, field secretary, National Recreation Association, N. Y. C.
Mar. 19	What Does Business Require of Youth?	193	B. W. Fleming, personnel manager of Boston Store, Milwaukee. Martin Zarowski, Student at the Vocational School.
Apr. 2	What is the Future of America's Racial Problem?	184	George Teter, Head of the English Department, State Teachers College. William Kelley, President of Milwaukee Urban League.
Apr. 9	Are Cooperatives the Way Out?	127	*Dr. Ebba Dahl, professor of history, University of Washington. *Homer C. Chaney, banker, economist, California.
Apr. 16	Alcohol—Fun or Folly?	225	Julius White, author and lecturer, Health Extension Service, Nashville, Tenn. Dr. Herman Heffe, staff physician, Columbia Hospital.
Apr. 23	What Would Make America Fight?	175	*Upton Close, author and lecturer.

*Staff forum leaders. Other speakers are forum-minded citizens, who served without compensation.

Youth forums—Subjects discussed—Milwaukee, Wis.—Continued

WISCONSIN AVENUE SCHOOL—Continued

Date	Subjects	Attendance	Speakers
Apr. 30	Does the Supreme Court Need Reform?	145	*Dr. John Stratton, head of department economics, Illinois College. Dr. Paul Mundie, head of social science department, Marquette University.

STEBEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Mar. 12	Do Consumer Cooperatives Work?	120	*Dr. J. H. Foth. *Col. Victor A. Rule, lecturer, secretary Consumers' League.
Mar. 19	Music—Old and New.....	106	*Manoah Leide-Tedesco, composer and conductor.
Apr. 2	Can the United States Stay out of War?	185	*Dr. Ebba Dalin. Dr. George Hunt, professor of history, University of Wisconsin.
Apr. 9	Do Machines Make Jobs or Take Jobs?	172	Manfred Olson, professor physics at Milwaukee State Teachers College. Arthur H. Jones.
Apr. 16	What Has Religion to Offer Youth?	210	Father Paul Tanner, Catholic priest. Herman Levitz, instructor, Temple School. Rev. Robert Eads, Baptist minister.
Apr. 23	Does the Supreme Court Need Reform?	212	*Dr. John Stratton. Dr. Paul Mundie.
Apr. 30	Race Relations in Milwaukee	168	George Teter. William Kelley.

DOVER STREET SCHOOL

Mar. 12	Under Which Party Would Youth Have Best Opportunity?	73	Thomas Byrne. George Morton, Republican Party. Carl Minkley. Leon Kaplan. Joe Ehrhardt.
Mar. 19	Are Cooperatives the Way Out?...	93	J. D. Malloy, executive secretary, Fruit Association. (Dealers.) *Dr. Ebba Dalin.
Apr. 2	Do Machines Make Jobs or Take Jobs?	52	Manfred Olson. Arthur H. Jones.
Apr. 9	What is the Future of America's Racial Problem?	56	George Teter. William Kelley.
Apr. 16	Shall We Pack the Court?.....	260	*Dr. John Stratton. *Homer C. Chaney.

*Staff forum leaders. Other speakers are forum-minded citizens who served without compensation.

Youth forums—Subjects discussed—Milwaukee, Wis.—Continued

DOVER STREET SCHOOL - Continued

Date	Subjects	Attendance	Speakers
Apr. 23	Can the United States Stay out of War?	133	Mrs. Clinton M. Barr, Secretary, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Dr. John K. Warren, former professor of history at Marquette University.
Apr. 30	Are Depressions Caused by the Profit System?	60	*Walter J. Millard, secretary, National Municipal League. Dr. Myron V. Baxter, former Socialist mayor of West Allis.

BLUE MOUND-HONEY CREEK CCC CAMP

Mar. 11	Has Youth a Future?	39	F. W. Van Dyke, attorney and well-known local speaker. *J. J. Wald, Junior Chamber of Commerce.
Mar. 18	Do Machines Cause Unemployment?	47	Manfred Olson. Arthur H. Jones.
Mar. 25	Youth's Greater Opportunity—City or Country?	23	Max Kaplan, research director, Milwaukee Public Forum. Kenneth Goff, progressive youth leader, Walworth County.
Apr. 1	Help Yourself to a Job.	19	Wallace R. Harris, project engineer, WPA.
Apr. 2	What the Forests Mean to Me	11	Rudolph Grabow, U. S. Forest Service, Assistant Chief of Information.

WISCONSIN AVENUE SCHOOL

May 7	Sweden: Where Youth Can Find a Job. (natural color motion picture.)	410	*Wilfred L. Husband, famed globe-trotter and lecturer. Mrs. Husband, in native Swedish costume, operates the projector.
May 21	Will Europe Fight Again? (Debate.)	175	*Dr. J. Martin Klotzke, professor of history, Milwaukee State Teachers College. *Dr. Fred Ingvaldstad, European traveler and observer, nationally known forum leader.
May 28	The Plow That Broke the Plains (talking motion picture.)	135	Max Kaplan, director, research department, Milwaukee Public Forum.

*Staff forum leaders. Other speakers are forum-minded citizens who served without compensation.

Youth forums—Subjects discussed—Milwaukee, Wis.—Continued

STUBBS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Date	Subjects	Attendance	Speakers
May 7	Youth and America's Future	128	*Howard Y. Williams, member of the American Legion and world-wide traveler.
May 21	Sweden: Where Youth Can Find a Job	417	*Wilfred L. Husband.
May 28	Will Europe Fight Again?	201	*Dr. J. Martin Klotzsch. *Dr. Fred W. Ingvaldstad.

DOVER STREET SCHOOL

May 7	The Incredible Youth of Europe	65	*Dr. Fred W. Ingvaldstad.
May 21	The Plow That Broke the Plains	52	Peter Walraven, Resettlement Administration executive, and Max Kaplan.
May 28	Has the Second World War Begun in Spain?	45	*Dr. Ethan Colton, authority on national and international affairs. Has traveled in more than 40 foreign countries and colonies.

COURT HOUSE FORUMS

Apr. 16	What Can Cooperatives Mean to Me?	375	*Dr. Ebba Dalin.
Apr. 23	Inferiority Complexes	125	*Garry C. Myers, psychologist, teacher, author.
May 6	Education for Parenthood	360	*Alma L. Binzel, widely known lecturer, Mother's forum leader.

*Staff forum leaders. Other speakers are forum-minded citizens who served without compensation.

SUMMARY

	Number		
Youth Forums	42	Total attendance	7,133
Speeches by staff leaders	28	Average attendance	169.8
Speeches by local persons	48		

DESIRABLE DISCUSSION PROCEDURE

Directors agree that meetings should be no shorter than 1 hour and not longer than 2 hours, and whenever possible run in series on related topics dealt with by the same leader. Elvena Miller, director of the Seattle Public Forum, estimates the ideal youth forum group as one with an attendance of about 75.

Different meetings employ different procedures. Some centers use the lecture-discussion approach with the leader taking half the period to present the background and essential facts of the issue under consideration. The balance of the period is devoted to free discussion. Questions may be asked, of course, but students



Youth Panel Forum, Greenwood School, Seattle

are encouraged to express their own ideas, opinions, and points of view.

Other centers find the panel-discussion method more suited to their purposes. The leader shares the first half of the period with the members of a student panel who have ~~much~~ preparation for the discussion and who are selected to represent as many points of view as possible. It should be noted that unlike school debaters such panel members present points of view honestly and not artificially held.

Katherine Kohler, director of the Minneapolis Public Forum, believes that the symposium method is particularly successful

in youth forums. By this method several sides of the issue under discussion are presented in short 10- or 15-minute speeches followed by open discussion. Miss Kohler also emphasizes the importance of having a young person act as chairman at a youth meeting. In Minneapolis both rotating and permanent chairmen were tried and the consensus at the end of the year was that the same chairman serving the same group throughout the year becomes adept at handling the forum audience and introduces desirable continuity in the forum series.

PROMOTIONAL AIDS

Forums for young people which are held entirely apart from the regular school program, if they are to be successful, must be promoted with special care and thoroughness. As the youth forum director in Milwaukee, Jack Telfer, puts it:

A good program is not enough. A hall is filled with young people not by the enjoyment of stimulating speeches and discussion once they are present, but by their enthusiasm for what they *expected* to experience. Of course the recollection of a good forum is the best possible stimulation to attend another, but even recollection must be awakened. For that reason an effective appeal must constantly be made to all groups. Attendance seems chiefly a problem in promotion.

Since promotion and publicity are so essential to the success of the forums, we have placed the chief emphasis of our work upon it through the following means:

1. **GETTING THE SAME CROWD BACK.**—It is easy to set good records if the "customers" return, hopeless if reliance must be placed upon new ones each week. Therefore, we do everything to establish friendly, informal, personal relations with as many as possible.
2. **MIMEOGRAPHED FLIERS.**—Widely distributed with fresh design and color each week. They are always prepared in time to send home with each member of the audience. Many schools are supplied with enough for teachers' boxes and sometimes for each pupil. The Library and the "Y's" take several hundred.
3. **ATTRACTIVE POSTERS.**—These have been placed in schools, shops, employees' rooms, libraries, and churches. All are of cardboard and have space for insertion of the current flier which is mailed to these locations each week.

4. **SCHOOL PUBLICITY.**—Through announcements over address systems, and in classes; by interviews and forum report in the school papers; encouragement of students to base themes, speeches, and class reports on the Youth Forum topics; personal promotion among principals and teachers is well rewarded.
5. **YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—Has consisted of about 8 real workers drawn from schools and vocations. Cordial relations have existed between this group and the Director, resulting in many council meetings and effective coordination in promotion schemes.

Functions:

- A. Promote the Youth Forums in own school or group with fliers, announcements, news stories, and personal "plugging."
 - B. Organization of a speakers' bureau to invade new fields with short, well-prepared promotional talks.
 - C. Counsel—discussing objectives, difficulties, and subjects frankly, and giving whole hearted criticism and support.
 - D. Service—the chairman of this committee, a high-school senior, has served as chairman for one of the largest youth forums with great credit. Other members have acted as efficient ushers and messengers.
6. **PERSONAL CONTACTS.**—While the importance of this activity was recognized from the start, a new place has been found for it as a result of recent experiments. Some anxiety was felt about the attendance at the forum on "Alcohol" so to counteract the possible drop, we listed all persons and organizations known to be keenly interested in this topic. Calls in person and by telephone resulted in an increased attendance for that one forum and in addition to later forums from groups never before interested. Since then, when we feature a speaker or subject of particular appeal to a certain group, such as a church, patriotic society, labor organization, specialized school, or racial group, we seize the opportunity to gain their support and cooperation in promoting the meeting.
 7. **RADIO AND NEWSPAPER.**—Weekly announcements over local radio stations. Schedules and occasional write-ups of youth forums in the city papers. Neighborhood weeklies have been very generous in devoting news space and editorials to publicizing and encouraging the Youth Forum.

OTHER TYPES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

In the discussion of ways and means for promoting youth forums it is of course apparent that much of our material has been drawn from centers in which a full-time, paid forum organization has had personnel with which to plan and promote the programs. The question may well be raised as to how this is going to be done in communities without Federal demonstration forums to carry the load of leadership and personnel required.

Several suggestions would seem to be in order. In communities where school forums are scheduled as a part of the regular school program it is a logical extension of this activity to schedule some meetings with a broader audience appeal as a service to out-of-school young people's groups. This can be done at no great financial cost. For example, in Milwaukee two-thirds of the leadership service in the youth forums was volunteered by public-spirited lawyers, doctors, teachers, and businessmen in the community.

In other communities where an adult forum program is already under way the youth forum may be introduced as a supplementary activity. Thus from Newton, Mass., Walter M. Taylor, executive secretary of the Newton Community Forum, writes that young people in the schools and colleges of Newton are represented in the adult forum organization by a junior forum committee composed of some 35 young men and women chosen by appointment.

Members of this junior committee serve on the senior committees of the forum organization and assist in planning and promoting the forum program. Mr. Taylor reports that as a result of this cooperative effort 25 percent of the audiences are made up of young people who actively participate in the discussion following the forum leader's remarks.

Other centers have used panels composed of young people who have made a special study of the topic under discussion in their own discussion groups and who then appear in the adult forum as panel members to help bring out the chief issues at stake.

It may be argued that none of these more or less makeshift programs are entirely satisfactory. The point is that they at

least constitute a start toward providing educational opportunities to the recently out-of-school young people's group who perhaps more than any other section of our population need the forum as a means of orientation in the responsibilities of active citizenship. Moreover, such efforts deserve added commendation because they make some small contribution to the provision of a community-wide program of education which looks upon the in-school years as only one segment of a process of learning which must go on year in and year out if present-day political and economic dilemmas are to be resolved democratically.

CHAPTER V

VITALIZED COMMENCEMENTS

RECENT INNOVATIONS looking toward the vitalizing of high-school and college commencement exercises have aroused so much interest and comment that it has seemed wise to include a detailed description of at least two of the experiments, which have been reported to this Office. Both were attempted for the first time in June 1936, one at the Central High School in Kalamazoo, Mich., the other at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. In both commencements the traditional program with an imported speaker was abandoned in favor of a panel discussion in which members of the graduating class participated.

Kalamazoo, Mich.—The subject to the consideration of which 10 graduating students addressed themselves was, What Should Education Be? The discussion, which took place on the stage about tables facing the audience, assumed the nature of an open public hearing, with a member of the Central High School faculty, presiding.

Superintendent Hunt, of the Kalamazoo schools, reports as follows on the preparation for the panel:

In preparing for the commencement panel discussion four or five meetings previous to the selection of the panel itself were held. In attendance at these meetings were 50 or 60 graduating seniors and several high-school counselors. At these meetings the students discussed extemporaneously the subject, What High School Has Done For Me. Permanent selection to panel membership was made on a basis of both thought content and presentation, and a group of 10 graduating seniors was finally selected. To work with this group and to act as chairman of the panel a high school counselor was selected. This group of 11 then held several meetings, and out of an early meeting came the decision to select as the panel topic the question, What Should Public Education Be?

To aid the students in discussion of the subject, copies of the published goals of public education in Michigan as formulated in 1935 by the Michigan Educational Planning Commission were made available. In part the actual panel discussion centered about these goals, being supplemented naturally by the students' own experience and reactions.

In commenting on the way in which the discussion was planned and supervised, Mr. Nevins, the panel chairman made these observations.

I interfered as little as possible, either in reaching the decision or in censoring argument, wishing to preserve all I could of spontaneity and natural expression. At first some of the students were inclined to ride their hobbies of criticism, being rather all-inclusive in their iconoclasm, but after a full and free session in which they blew off steam to their complete content, I asked them if that was the type of program they wished to present at commencement. Of course, they saw the point and from then on we had nothing but a serious effort to discuss the topic to the best of their several abilities.

The only part of the discussion deliberately staged or planned in advance was the beginning. We arranged that the opening statement was to be made, from there on it was to be impromptu. I had asked certain members to prepare to take the lead in discussing certain topics, so that there would be a minimum of awkward pauses in moving from one point to another, but that was as far as the preparation of speeches went. Familiarity with the topics was engendered by the preliminary meetings, but no two of the discussions were alike.

This sort of program has much to recommend it. It gives the community a graphic idea of the quality of thinking being done by students, and it gives the commencement exercises back to those to whom it belongs. Many commencement speakers have little of permanent value to offer to either the students or their adult audience. The panel, on the other hand, through its novelty, and through its need for rather wide preparation on the part of a large proportion of the graduating class, heightens the interest of both audience and students.

University of North Carolina.—The principal speaker, John W. Studebaker, Commissioner of Education, spoke scarcely 20 minutes, converting the occasion into a public forum by calling on four members of the graduating class and one undergraduate to suggest individual programs for the future development of the Nation.

The idea behind the program was to understand what young

America, as represented by a student panel, is thinking most about at the present time and what social and economic objectives it has in mind.

Choosing as their subject *Where Do We Commence?* members of the panel outlined the points which they thought should be the beginning of efforts to promote a just moral code. Speaking for approximately 45 minutes, student members of the panel sketched some of their objectives for social improvement and discussed problems involved in achieving their goals.

The procedure followed in planning the program was as follows:

About 10 days before the commencement exercises, copies of the leader's opening remarks outlining certain general questions growing out of the topic under discussion were sent to the members of the panel. It was suggested that each member think through these questions without consulting the other students on the panel and without preparing a formal speech setting forth his position. The following suggestions to panel members were made by Commissioner Studebaker:

- A. Read the opening remarks of the leader to become familiar with the general background to be given for the discussion.
- B. List a few major objectives which you feel should be included in a program for the future of our Nation.
- C. Consider how these objectives may be stated clearly and concisely.
- D. List them in the order of importance as you see them, realizing that there will not be time to make all of the points which might be suggested for a program of national progress.
- E. Ask yourself these questions about your points:
 - (1) Are they mutually exclusive, really different purposes?
 - (2) Why do I feel that each purpose is vital to American progress?
 - (3) Can they be realized through the machinery of self-government?
 - (4) What are the obstacles that seem to be in the way of the adoption of your objectives?

NOTE.—The discussion will not be organized on these points in this order. These questions are merely suggested as a means for clarifying your own concepts.

- F. The discussion will be divided up somewhat as follows:

	<i>Minutes</i>
(1) Opening remarks by the leader	20
(2) Statement of objectives by panel	12-15

(3) Discussion in improving democratic machinery of developing ways and means of assuring greater efficiency in self-government in attacking our major problems; the role of public education and of educated men and women in preserving democracy	20
(4) Conclusion by leader	3
Total	65

G. Procedure on point F.—(2) statements of objectives:

When I have finished my opening statement I shall call on one member after another on the panel to submit two or three objectives they would like to include in a program for social improvement.

I will appreciate it if each one will list the points he wishes to make and exchange points of view in a preliminary panel conference the day before commencement. These points can be brought together under various headings to comprise a general outline of this section of the discussion.

In addition to this I will appreciate it if you will write a one-sentence statement of each objective on a 3 by 5 card. When you have stated your objectives prior to the discussion, you can then hand me the card containing your statements.

H. Procedure on point F.—(3) the discussion:

Having spent 12 to 15 minutes in a presentation of your objectives, we will turn our attention to the discussion of the question "Where Do We Commence?" and take the remaining time to exchange views on the problems involved in carrying forward *any* program of social improvement within the framework of democracy or under some other conception of social organization which any member of the panel may wish to propose and defend. Some of the questions which may arise in this discussion are suggested below:

- (1) Does our democratic system need special attention by the oncoming generation if we are to achieve solutions to public problems by the process of majority consent?
- (2) Are there any discernible threats to the democratic institutions of civil liberty, academic freedom, etc., in America?
- (3) What role must public education assume in creating a more enlightened public opinion? Should public schools deal with current controversial questions?

- (4) Should educated men and women take an active part in public affairs; in public discussion of current issues?
- (5) What important steps should be taken by persons interested in strengthening self-government?
- (6) There seems to be a tendency to avoid the discussion of the more basic social and economic problems. Why is this and how can the tendency be overcome?
- (7) What can be done about such problems as "machine politics", bribery of public representatives, or other practices which discredit and impede democratic action?
- (8) Is it necessary for the college graduates to go on studying public affairs, or is a college education sufficient to enable them to pass intelligent judgments on problems as they arise in the future? How shall they pursue such a study of public affairs, if they should?
- (9) Can democracy be made equal to the demands for action in a highly complex society? If it is not equal to these demands, can it survive even though it has the theoretical support of most of the people?

NOTE.—We cannot possibly raise all of these questions in the short time allowed. The points which will be raised in this section of the period will be determined by the trend of the discussion. It will be desirable for you to give considerable time to reflection on these problems, as this part of the period will be even more informal than the second part.

I. General procedure:

- (1) You will be seated in a semicircle, two on one side of the leader and three on the other. The two on one side will share a microphone, the leader and one next to him on the other side will share a second microphone and the remaining two will share a third microphone. We will remain seated except that the leader will stand when he presents his formal statement.
- (2) We will try to avoid long statements. This is not a procedure by which the members of the panel make prepared speeches.
- (3) I hope there will be disagreement. In this type of discussion members of the panel should ask each other questions to clarify the points made or state the basis of their disagreement with what other members of the panel have said. In other words, we want a genuinely sincere discussion.
- (4) The leader may raise questions as a means of guiding the

discussion. The members of the panel may question the leader concerning points on which he has gone on record. He is not necessarily in a position to answer all the questions propounded for discussion in "Where Do We Commence?"

On the day before the discussion was to be held the members of the panel met, discussed questions of procedure, tested the public address system. No attempt was made to rehearse for the discussion the following day although points of view were exchanged and duplication of points eliminated.

An hour before the commencement exercises were scheduled to begin, Commissioner Studebaker met with the panel members for an informal get-acquainted session. At the commencement exercises the usual order of procedure was followed, the panel discussion simply replacing the regular commencement address.

CHAPTER VI

GUIDEPOSTS TO ORGANIZATION

FOR THOSE INTERESTED in starting a program of forums for young people the following suggestions may be helpful. Keep in mind that there are no hard and fast rules to be followed in setting up a discussion program within the school. Peculiar characteristics of the school and the community must be taken into account. Experimentation may be necessary to prove that the plan is feasible and workable, that students can discuss public affairs intelligently, and that the carry-over of such training into adult situations can be demonstrated. Here are a few guideposts to point the way:

1. TYPE OF PROGRAM

Decide first of all whether you want to sponsor a forum specifically designed as a part of the high-school or college program in which you may be participating or whether a community-wide youth forum appealing to all youth groups in and out of school would be preferable.

2. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In either case take steps to insure that your program will receive wide community support. Its purpose and general features should be explained to interested community organizations before and not after the program begins. In the case of a forum which is set up as an integral part of the school program, this is, of course, the concern of the school superintendent and his board of education. Even in this case, however, it has been found advisable to go beyond the board in setting up some sort of advisory committee of interested local citizens which will

assume some responsibility for defending the program if it should be attacked by overzealous pressure groups unfamiliar with its real purpose.

3. PLANNING THE PROGRAMS

In a school program the forum should be organized on a long-term basis if possible in order that some continuity in the discussions from week to week may be preserved and to the end that forum discussions may be correlated with the regular classroom work.

4. SELECTING SUBJECTS

In the selection of topics student interest guided and directed by faculty advisers should be the primary consideration. Subjects should be phrased so as to present a specific issue in challenging form. For example, Does Society Owe Youth a Living?

5. SELECTING THE TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

The time of the meeting will, of course, depend upon the type of program anticipated. If scheduled during school hours, some plan must be devised to insure that all students who desire to attend may do so. This has been accomplished in some cases by setting aside a special period, in other instances by staggering the forum hour at different times on different days.

Selection of a meeting place is much more important than ordinarily thought. The room or auditorium chosen should be suited to the size of the audience anticipated and should possess facilities conducive to carrying on a good discussion such as good lighting, movable seats, blackboard space, etc. Care should be taken to see that conflicts with other important student activities are avoided.

6. ADVERTISING THE MEETINGS

Where attendance is voluntary and where an appeal to a wide variety of youth groups is planned advance plans should be laid

for giving adequate publicity to the program through the use of posters, announcements, school and community newspapers, and by drawing the attention of school and community organizations to the meetings.

7. SELECTION OF CAPABLE LEADERS AND CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

It is no exaggeration to say that the forums will succeed or fail in direct ratio to the quality of leadership provided. Hence, it is well to reemphasize the importance of canvassing the school or college staff, the community, and the possible outside leaders who are available for use on the programs. Since sustained programs, especially in schools, usually depend upon regular staff members from the social science or public-speaking departments to assume the main burden of leadership, it is especially urged that extreme care be exercised in their selection. Among essential qualities which such a forum leader should possess the following are particularly important:

- (a) Specialized training in the techniques of leading group discussions.
- (b) Flexibility in adapting procedures to a wide variety of situations.
- (c) Impartiality in the treatment of controversial subjects and assumption of responsibility for seeing that all important points of view are presented for consideration. This is important both as protection against those ever quick to charge propagandizing and also out of loyalty to the educational purpose of the discussion method itself.
- (d) Sensitiveness to currents of thought in the discussion group and ability to synthesize these currents.

CONCLUSION

Students and teachers alert to democracy's need for an improved and vitalized program of citizenship education in the schools have found in the forum and the discussion method at

least one effective means to the meeting of this need. In the forums high-school students are given the opportunity to hear both sides of controversial issues presented and to participate in the discussion of them. They learn to distinguish propaganda from fact, to avoid snap judgments on complex problems, to be critical of the nostrums and panaceas offered by the self-appointed leaders of our time. In learning the techniques of discussion and skill in self-expression they enhance their present and future value to the community as good citizens.

It is to be hoped that many schools and colleges not now offering the type of vitalized citizenship education which the forum seeks to provide will introduce such a program. School life must stimulate students to look forward as well as backward. It must provide training in the skills of discussion and methods of critical analysis. The chief function of the school in a democracy, preparation in citizenship is best fulfilled by organizing practical opportunities for the students to practice the processes of group discussion by which they will be able to keep abreast of the changing times and act with intelligence in the common welfare.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON

FORM NO. 7.

REPORT OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF UNIVERSITIES AND
COLLEGES TO PUBLIC DISCUSSION

1. Does your curriculum offer any special courses on discussion leadership, forum techniques, etc.?
(Please attach any printed announcements.)
2. Are you planning to inaugurate such courses?
3. Do you offer any course with credit designed to develop through the use of forum techniques the capacity of the students for active participation in group discussion of public affairs?
4. Does your institution sponsor public forums as an extra-curricular activity in which students may participate freely?
If so—
 - (a) Is the forum program managed by the faculty? faculty student committee? student body organization? or administration?
 - (b) Are outside speakers presented? are they paid?
 - (c) Is the student interest very keen?
5. Does the university sponsor a discussion program open to the public? If so—
 - (a) Are outside speakers presented? are they paid?
 - (b) Do faculty members participate? how?
 - (c) What is the average attendance?
 - (d) Is any admission fee charged?

REMARKS.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

Institution

Name

Title

Date

APPENDIX I

REPORT OF HIGH-SCHOOL PROGRAM OF THE MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC FORUM PROJECT

NOTE.—The following description of an after-school program of forums for young people as developed in Minneapolis, Minn., is reprinted from the report of Katherine Kohler, director of adult education for the Minneapolis public schools and director of the Minneapolis Public Forum as sponsored by the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Education.

DURING THE PERIOD of the Minneapolis Public Forum experiment 8 out of the 10 high schools in Minneapolis cooperated with the forum administrators in sponsoring regular forums for high-school students as an after-school activity. These forums were known as junior forums.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for which junior forums were set up have been summarized as follows:

- (1) To offer the students information and material in addition to their regular social studies work.
- (2) To encourage the use of the discussion methods by developing knowledge of this procedure and by practice in the use of it.
- (3) To increase attendance at future forums by making the students forum-conscious.
- (4) To make the students more conscious of social problems facing the world today.
- (5) To develop in the young boys and girls, through participation in forums, the feeling that they are already functioning citizens in a democracy.
- (6) To prepare them for later participation in civic affairs.

PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATION

Shortly after the forum program had its start, junior forums began in some of the high schools. Members of the committee on youth meetings conferred with the various principals in the high schools, explaining the forum set-up and discussing the possibilities of establishing a forum in the school. In most cases the suggestion was made that the forum be sponsored especially by one department, preferably the social science department.

In almost every instance, the principal called a meeting of the social science department and a committee member explained what the forum was trying to do. At these meetings arrangements as to time and place of meeting were made, and often the speaker for the first meeting was selected. In order to acquaint the students with the forum idea, an auditorium period was planned in which a committee member talked about the forum and a forum speaker gave a regular talk. These auditorium periods were quite successful in arousing interest and in informing the whole student body about the forum.

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

With one exception, meetings in every school were held from 3 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The period of 50 minutes was usually divided so that the first 25 minutes was used by the leader, the last 25 minutes for discussion. Every meeting was ended promptly at 4 for many students had to get home or to work. Teachers felt that running meetings overtime served to cut down attendance.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The amount of student participation in the various phases of junior forum activity varied widely in the schools. In some schools there was little participation, while in others the forum was almost entirely run by students.

- (1) *In sponsorship.*—In most schools the social science department was the special sponsor of the forums in the school. Usually the head of this department helped with the plan-

ning. Other departments helped to promote attendance when the subject was of special interest to them. Student groups, too, acted as sponsors. On one or two occasions, school clubs were in charge. For example, a talk on Mexico was supported by the Spanish club. Members of the sponsoring clubs then acted as chairmen and took charge of publicizing the meeting by such devices as posters, notices on the bulletin boards, room announcements.

Club officers acted as hosts of the meeting, greeting the speaker and seeing that he was introduced to the teachers and other students. In two schools, debate clubs took a special interest in the forum and their members acted not only as chairmen but as members of symposiums, panels, and debate teams.

(2) *In presentation of the topic.*—The use of forum techniques varied widely in the schools.

- (a) Two centers decided that they preferred to spend the first part of the period in lecture. They felt that the greatest value would come from the information the leader could offer to the students.
- (b) Other centers believed that the chief value of the forum lay in the opportunity for training the student to take part in the presentation of a subject as well as in the discussion. In these centers there was extensive experimentation with the:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1. Panel | 3. Socratic dialogue |
| 2. Symposium | 4. Debate |

Variations in technique, too, were instituted here, for instance, when "The Value of a High-School Education" was discussed, the speaker presented a philosophical discussion of the subject and several students presented the opinions they had arrived at from going to school. Some of the students were on one side of the question, some on the other, while the speaker tried to make an analysis of the situation from both points of view. Both teachers and forum staff members feel that a variety of techniques should be used because:

- 1. Discussion is stimulated.
- 2. Both pre-forum and post-forum study of a problem is encouraged.
- 3. Students gain experience in participation.
- 4. Students come to feel that the forum is their own activity.

- (c) In one school, due to the very nature of the physical set-up, only lectures could be used. Extensive discussion on the part of the group was not feasible, but even so, a great deal of interest was generated by the speaker, and class discussion was stimulated as a result. The students still felt the forum was their club.
- (3) *In discussion.*—Forum leaders were high in their praises of the liveliness of discussion in junior forums. Questions were intelligent and often showed that the students had a fine background of information. Comments from the floor or criticisms of speakers' remarks often were thoughtful and well considered. There was not a noticeable difference in the amount of participation by the groups which had listened to lectures and those that had heard symposiums and debates. There was, however, a noticeable increase during the year in the ability of students to take part in discussion. In one center the teachers dominated the discussion. Here it was difficult to get students to speak up.
- (4) *In selection of speakers.*—At first teachers in conference with a staff member of the forum arranged for topics and speakers. Later, however, questionnaires were prepared to discover the interests of students in various topics. From that time on the interests of the students were consulted as much as possible, and the forum office tried to consider student preference in the way of topic and speaker. In several schools, both teachers and pupils wanted to make the forum a permanent school activity. Student forum committees were organized. They tried to learn as much as possible about running forums, and at the beginning of the second school semester, they sat in with the teacher in charge of forums and a forum staff member and outlined the program for the rest of the school year. Whether or not there is a Federal public forum program next year, these groups will keep on with the forum. Occasionally the selection of the topic was made on the basis of work being done in social science classes at the time. Usually this was neither possible from the standpoint of administration nor desirable from the student's point of view. Most often the interests of students dictated choice of subject.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

Except for Miller Vocational High School where everyone listened to the speaker over a public-address system in the school.

rooms, attendance at junior forums was voluntary. Only in one school was any check on attendance made. Here the students wrote their names and their social science teachers' names on slips of paper which they handed in to the teacher in charge. Credit was given for attendance only if the slips were turned in.

In all other centers, students came because they were interested. Extra credit was given by some teachers if students reported the discussion to the class.

It was interesting to note that in one center where attendance was voluntary, the attendance often exceeded that of centers where credit was given. It would seem that checking on attendance and giving credit makes the forum seem too formal and academic and too much dominated by the teacher.

Outside of giving credit, the forum was publicized in the school by: (1) Announcement in auditorium; (2) Classroom announcements; (3) Posters on bulletin boards; and (4) Articles in school newspapers.

Posters were usually supplied by the forum office. Poster committees in the schools were responsible for seeing that they were put up.

FORUM PROGRAM AND REGULAR INSTRUCTION

Since speakers were not always prepared to talk on the subjects being discussed in the classroom, a tie-up with the regular program of instruction was sometimes not at all possible in the junior forums. Whenever teachers made special requests for a forum on a certain topic, the forum office did its best to fill the bill. For example, when American History classes were studying the labor question, a junior forum was held on The American Federation of Labor and the Committee for Industrial Organization controversy.

A more flexible tie-up was the use of mimeographed outlines of forum speakers for class discussions. Even when the speaker wasn't available his outline and suggestions for outside reading were used. A great deal more use could be made in the future of these outlines especially for superior students who want to do extra reading.

Outlines were sometimes distributed to classes a week before the scheduled talk. Students then had an opportunity to prepare for the forum.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

- (1) *Indifference and inertia on the part of the faculty.*—A few teachers took a real interest, but for the most part the faculty did not bother themselves about the forums. At one school, the teacher in charge stated, "If we can secure the whole-hearted support of the faculty, the forums are bound to be successful, for certainly the students are interested." A principal remarks: "The faculty in general has not been interested in the forums except to extend more verbal support and in a few cases urge attendance by the students. Very few of the faculty have attended. In part that is because of the fact that many of them live at some distance from our school and also to the fact that by the end of the day many teachers are weary of group activity and seek quiet, and because many of them simply do not sense the importance of taking a lead in many of the significant areas of human experience which affect young people now or eventually."
- (2) *Conflicts with other activities of students.*
 - (a) Extracurricular activities. All teachers remarked that it is impossible to schedule a forum for a day when several other activities are going on at the same time.
 - (b) Work. Many students have to leave early to work or help at home and cannot attend after-school meetings.
- (3) *Inability to plan ahead.*—It was difficult to work out junior forum schedules for leaders because most junior forums were extra meetings for them. Programs could not be planned for a long time ahead because it was not known what speaker would be available.
- (4) *Faculty dictation and domination.*—In some centers the faculty wanted to run things and were not willing to turn the meeting over to the students. In one center, faculty members monopolized a good part of the discussion period.
- (5) *Lack of trained chairmen and members of symposiums.*—Some meetings suffered from the lack of training of student leaders. In a debate at one center, the presentation dragged discouragingly because the speakers stumbled around. This is a good chance for public-speaking groups to train adequate chairmen, panel members, etc.
- (6) *Difficulties arising from speaker's inability to adapt his method to*

young people.—One point stressed again and again by teachers in connection with the forum is that if the forum is to be successful, there must be speakers who can talk on the level of the high-school students so that they will understand. One teacher says, "When initial questions are presented in an interesting and fair-minded way, I believe a response will always be forthcoming", and again—"Above all we must have inspiring, capable speakers who present subjects of vital interest. If we can have them the rest will take care of itself." Leaders must adjust their speech in content and vocabulary to the level of the students. "Our students seemed to like a direct, practical talk—not above their level." Speakers considered most successful were said to have had "a sympathetic manner of including their audience, of interpreting student questions, and of provoking thought." Talks that were not well organized did not go across.

EVALUATION OF JUNIOR-FORUM PROGRAM

The junior-forum program this year has generally been considered fairly successful, both by students and by teachers. The students are eager to have the program continued another year. They have enjoyed meeting the various speakers and getting the benefit of their wide experience and information. Discussions have been lively and many students have remarked how much they liked talking over the problems.

Here follows a list of comments by teachers on the value of the program:

- (1) Some speakers helped to clear up problems that had bothered the student.
- (2) I felt that students recognized more source materials.
- (3) They were informed on both sides of a question.
- (4) There was much discussion.—A stimulated interest in current affairs.
- (5) I felt that the presence of the speakers from other places had a good effect. The students seemed to feel themselves a part of a broader group of society.
- (6) This is good training for the students (acting as chairmen).
- (7) I believe that the forums have served a great purpose. The students enjoyed them and profited by them.

- (8) The numbers of students who feel confident to take hold of these problems and discuss them in the classrooms has increased because of this confidence (gained in forum discussion).
- (9) One of the things that struck me about the meetings here was that they excited in each group a great range of opinion. The students would sit down in a laboratory of opinions.
- (10) The students acquired a degree of understanding of what constitutes a good discussion group.
- (11) They discovered also the principle "the more you know the less you know."
- (12) I am convinced their horizons were lifted considerably.
- (13) The intelligent and mature questioning often amazes me. That the forums are making a valuable contribution to civic education seems to me quite beyond a doubt.
- (14) A pupil will frequently quote forum speakers and thus correlate with the classroom work.
- (15) Interest in current affairs has been greatly stimulated as is evidenced by the awakened interest and freer participation in discussion in social-science classes.
- (16) Larger groups rather than just individual classes have worked and discussed together, all of which tends to develop greater appreciation of and greater tolerance toward each other.
- (17) The value of the forum to the students of our school cannot be measured by any yardstick. Both faculty and students agree that it was the finest project of our educational system for quite some time.
- (18) The forums gave the students practical training in concentration and in constructive thinking.
- (19) Students have an increased interest in the resources of their own community (e. g., the speaker)—a stimulated desire to go into subjects more comprehensively.
- (20) Speakers brought out new problems and a better understanding of the old.

APPENDIX II

THE DISCUSSION METHOD

Selected Reading References to Materials Useful to Promoters and Leaders of Forums for Young People

THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY presents a short list of annotated references on the methods and techniques of group discussion. Some of the materials listed deal directly with the use of the discussion method in the schools either in extra class forums or in the regular classrooms. However, references of a more general nature are also included in the belief that teachers and prospective youth forum leaders will desire to consult a variety of sources in discovering and improving techniques suited to the particular situation in which leadership is to be supplied.¹

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

BOWMAN, LE ROY E. *How to lead discussion: a guide for the use of group leaders.* New York, the Woman's Press, 1934. 31 p.

Presents a simplified statement of the value of discussion methods, the job of the leader (characteristics, participation, etc.), preparation for meetings, general rules for conducting meetings, intervals between meetings, and possible pitfalls. A valuable manual for beginning groups.

BROWN, MARY-ELLEN. *Panel method of discussion.* Four mimeographed pages, nos. 16122m-16124m. Lincoln, University of Nebraska, Agricultural Extension Service.

CUMMINGS, MILTON C. and WALSER, FRANK. *Discussion guide.* Works Progress Administration for Connecticut, Emergency education program. Hartford, Conn., Works Progress Administration, 1936. 13 mimeographed pages.

Valuable hints for planning and conducting group discussions. Difficulties in the use of the method are frankly faced and limitations acknowledged.

¹ List of references prepared by Martha R. McCabe, assistant librarian, Office of Education.

DEWEY, JOHN. *How we think*. rev. ed. Boston, New York, D. C. Heath and company, 1933. 301 p.

A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process, which has entailed a re-writing of the previous edition. The study is suggestive in the training of thought, with especial reference to making the subject definite and clear to teachers.

DISCUSSION: A brief guide to methods; and, *How to organize and conduct county forums*. D-1 and D-2, rev. Washington, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, 1936. 2 v.

A brief and concise statement on the value and types of discussion methods with suggestions for planning and conducting discussion group meetings.

DISCUSSION GROUP LEADING. Los Angeles, California State Department of Education. 4 p. mimeograph.

General remarks on procedure and leadership. One of a series of four leaflets on workers' education.

ELLIOTT, H. S. *The process of group thinking*. New York, N. Y., The Association Press, 1928. 225 p.

This has been called a "how" book. It is a complete and detailed study of the technique of discussion, full of sensible suggestions of what to do, and what not to do. It is especially valuable for group leaders and for those working with young people of senior high school or college age.

——— *The why and how of group discussions*. New York, N. Y., Association Press, 1923. 56 p.

EWING, R. L. *Methods of conducting forums and discussions*. New York, N. Y., Association Press, 1926. 43 p.

Useful to leaders in groups discussing present-day questions. Detailed outlines given of programs and procedures, and references for further reading.

FANSLER, THOMAS. *Discussion methods for adult groups*. New York, N. Y., American Association for Adult Education, 1934. 149 p.

Describes what actually takes place in the forum or discussion groups, the methods used, criteria for evaluating success of methods. Especially for group leaders, teachers, and supervisors of adult education.

——— *Effective group discussion: A guide for group members*. New York, N. Y., Division of general education, New York University, 1936. 22 p.

Written for the participant in group discussion rather than for the leader. Helpful to an understanding of the purpose and potentialities of group thinking.

HERRING, JOHN W. and OSMAN, LEO T. *Forums and a community forum program*. New York, N. Y., New York University, Division of General Education, 1936. 40 p.

Contains sections on "Standards in public discussion" and "Types of forum methods" as well as valuable suggestions on organizing an open forum.

JUDSON, LYMAN S. A Manual of group discussion. Urbana. University of Illinois, Agricultural Extension Service.

KLINEFELTER, C. F. Points on leading group discussion. Washington, D. C., Works Progress Administration, Education Division, 1935. 5 p. mimeograph.

Presents three aspects of educational procedure, when to use discussion, and helps in handling discussion.

LEIGH, ROBERT D. Group leadership. New York, N. Y., W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1936. 259 p.

Emphasizes the elements in and techniques of problem-solving as basic to effective group leadership. Also presents in the appendix modern rules of procedure for the conduct of meetings.

OHIO STATE FARM BUREAU. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. Cooperative discussion circles. A guide book on the organization and leadership of discussion groups. Columbus, Ohio, The Bureau, 620 East Broad Street.

The Panel method of conducting discussion. Washington, D. C., American Association of University Women, 1933. 4 p. mimeograph.

A brief analysis of the procedure in conducting this type of group discussion.

PARKES, JAMES W. International conferences. New York, International Student Service, 8 West 40th Street, 1934. 158 p.

Though this handbook has been written mainly for students in international conferences of all types, it is full of helpful advice on how to deal with problems in discussion and how to lead discussion effectively.

SHEFFIELD, ALFRED D. Creative discussion; a statement of method for leaders and members of discussion groups. 2d ed. rev. New York, The Association Press, 1927. 63 p.

This pamphlet will stimulate interest and answer the first questions of those starting to organize or lead discussion groups. It describes methods by which a group, even without skilled leadership, may deal with an issue and arrive at some solution that does justice to all essential interests and facts.

—— Training for group experience. New York, N. Y., The Inquiry, 1929. 105 p. diagrams.

A syllabus of materials from a laboratory course for group leaders, given at Columbia University in 1927. Recorded by A. D. Sheffield; conducted by Prof. H. S. Elliott, through the Columbia University extension.

STUDEBAKER, J. W. The American way. Democracy at work in the Des Moines forums . . . New York and London, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1935. 206 p.

An account of the community-wide adult civic education developed in the Des Moines public forums. Intended for those "interested in improving the American way of making social progress", giving many suggestions concerning the work of leaders of forums, among others, subjects for discussion, instructions to panel members, and samples of study guides.

— and WILLIAMS, C. S. Education for democracy. Public affairs forums. Washington, (U. S. Department of the Interior. Office of education. Bulletin 1935, no. 17). U. S. Government Printing Office, 1935. 74 p.

A handbook for forum leaders and managers. Devoted mainly to techniques and methods. Presents factual material on Des Moines and other forums.

THOMPSON, CLEM O., ed., Curriculum elements in adult education. Educational research project no. 15. Chicago, Ill., University of Chicago, 1936.

This massive work is designed to assist teachers in adult education to prepare more adequately for unit discussions in their respective fields. The main body of the text deals with "the basic elements of an educational program for adults", grouped under seven major categories: Communicating ideas; measurement of space, quantity, and time; social relations; living and non-living things; our quest for the beautiful; handicraft; and "we are all consumers." The section on social relations—of chief interest to forum workers—covers more than one-third of the text. A valuable addition to the library of persons interested in adult education.

THOULESS, ROBERT H. Straight and crooked thinking. New York, N. Y., Simon and Schuster, inc., 1932. 261 p.

An excellent book to aid the group discussion leader in detecting and exposing some of the more common fallacies which obstruct and hamper clear thinking.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. Public affairs pamphlet. (Office of Education. Bulletin 1937, no. 3) Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1937. 85 p.

An index to inexpensive pamphlets on social, economic, political and international affairs.

U. S. Federal board for vocational education. Commercial education service. A manual for conference leaders. Prepared for the Laundry owners national association. Washington, The Board, 1926. 55 p. Mimeographed. (Its Miscellaneous publication no. 771.)

Educational procedure suggested for leaders—materials for instruction, handling men in a conference, group attitudes, and danger points.

WALSER, FRANK. The Art of conference. New York, N. Y., Harper & Brothers, 1933. 305 p.

This book supplies both the principles and methods of increasing the practical value and usefulness of all conference activities, whether in small or large groups. It is a guide to the practice of conference procedure founded on principles that are based on a wide contact with experts in Europe and America. The various points are illustrated by an analysis of actual discussions.

WIESE, MILDRED J., and others. Let's talk it over. Chicago, Ill., University of Chicago Press, 1936. 41 p.

Suggestions for organizing and leading a series of discussions using the University of Chicago "American primers" as source material.

WILEDEN, A. F., and EWBANK, H. L. How to conduct group discussion. Extension service of College of Agriculture (Circular No. 276), Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1935. 64 p.

Intended primarily for rural organization programs.

WILLIAMS, A. P. Conference procedure in teaching vocational agriculture. Use of the Conference in agricultural evening classes. rev. ed. Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1932. 35 p. (U. S. Federal board of vocational education. Bulletin no. 147; Agricultural series no. 38.)

Especially for use of farmers in evening schools, but same procedure may be used in day schools and part-time school work. Suggests general characteristics of conference procedure, teaching by conference procedure and conference devices.

PERIODICAL REFERENCES

AUBLE, PAUL W. Panel discussion method in high school. Quarterly journal of speech, 19:534-40, November 1933.

"The panel discussion method is one by which divergent views are brought together and, to a certain extent, reduced to an understandable conclusion." Describes the method as used in a high-school discussion class of juniors and seniors; mentions dangers in controversial questions, and the value of training the rising generation in the mechanism and methods of group discussion in order to develop a higher technique in constructive understanding. Short bibliography given.

BARNETT, SIDNEY N. Group discussion in the social sciences. High points, 17:73-74, September 1935.

Brief description of the use of the multiple small group method of class discussion, followed by keen comments on the method by different students. Numerous comments by students on the value of method.

BEDELL, EARL L. The Panel discussion method. Industrial arts and vocational education, 22:203-5, June 1933.

Presents the possibilities of this form of discussion and its value in the development of group thinking and group planning. Suggests meeting would be more efficient if a technique for conducting them could be observed.

BENNETT, H. ARNOLD. Limits of the discussion method. Educational method, 10:104-9, November 1930.

Applies to school and college classroom. Discusses the dangers; uses as a type case the discussion of the eighteenth amendment; has in mind the debate rather than the panel, or round-table type.

BOHLMAN, EDNA M. The teaching of current events by the panel-forum method. Social studies, 26:91-96, February 1935.

BOYLE, WILLIAM D. Developing discussion leaders. Agricultural education, 7:136, March 1935.

Presents material on training boys to lead discussion, with an interesting description of the method used and some of the difficulties met, and the need of such training. Gives good advice on how to select certain pupils to lead agricultural discussion, and how to train them.

CARTWRIGHT, MORSE A. The panel. Journal of adult education, 5:37-42, January 1933.

An enlightening presentation of the subject of the panel form of discussion, especially in its bearing on adult education. Intended as a "first chronicle of a new and probably useful piece of discussion machinery."

CHURCH, ALFRED. The Honolulu high-school forum. Social studies, 27:173-76, March 1936.

Very interesting description of a carefully developed high-school forum, in which 8 high schools cooperated, both for discussion in small groups and hearing speaker and comparing group results in large assembly forum, the next day. Pains were taken to develop group leadership skill and interest in forum technique among chosen students.

COURTIS, STUART A. Cooperation in thinking. Progressive education, 10: 85-88, February 1933.

The methods and technique of panel discussions presented. "This new social tool encourages creative thinking on a cooperative scale, and eliminates those twin bugbears of conferences—passivity on the part of the audience and competitive exhibitionism on the part of speakers."

DE LONG, L. R. and SMITH, H. B. Discussion technique. School and society, 33: 704-8, May 23, 1931.

The techniques discussed may be used in classrooms of schools and colleges; uses the White House conferences as typical. Presents material in tabulated form.

FOSSUM, O. A. Profitable use of radio in classroom. *Montana educator*, 11: 5, January 1935.

Brief description of a novel project involving much practical, purposeful discussion. Plays and historical events dramatized—were broadcast to the class and to the rest of the school, as a means of teaching English and History. All the arrangements, even the mechanical ones, were planned and attended to by the pupils themselves, meeting in conference and then delegating the various "jobs." There was vital interest in group achievement and therefore in arriving at group decisions.

GRIFFITH, NELLIE L. Criteria for a discussion period. *Texas outlook*, 17: 13, December 1933.

A short note on the discussion hour in school, concluding with long and detailed lists of points under "Purpose of discussion" and "Place of the teacher." (See chapter I of this handbook.)

HANSEN, A. O. Discussion technique. *School and society*, 34:93-95, July 18, 1931.

A further discussion and reply to the study by De Long and Smith in the May 23 number of this periodical, in which the author questions the value of the method.

HYDE, STANLEY B. Using group discussion in conferences of youth. *Religious education*, 30:130-32, October 1935.

Description of an excellent plan for alternating discussion with lectures—the two coordinated in such a way as to be mutually helpful for understanding—in an older boys' leadership conference in Maine. Training in leading group discussion was given both to boys and to adult men by means of much practice in leading groups followed by personal interviews with the discussion expert.

KEYES, NELLIE F. Socialized work in general science. *Education*, 54:167-71, November 1933.

Excellent description of a valuable method by which a large high-school class was divided up into groups of six pupils each, each group to study, investigate, and write a book on a subject chosen by it. Comments on the method written freely by the students afterwards, are also given.

A market-place for ideas. An exemplification of the panel-discussion technique. *Journal of adult education*, 4:240-84, June 1932.

This journal has devoted a large part of the issue to the subject; topics discussed are: Social values in adult education; education for culture; education for citizenship; unemployment educational guidance problems; and, occupational education.

McMURRAY, FRANK M. The fine art of discussion. *Childhood education*, 10:227-29, February 1934.

Well-written statement on main requirements for good discussion. Reasons are clearly given why discussion so often has little value. The author, Professor-Emeritus of Teachers college, Columbia university, has college-student discussion mostly in mind, but the article is equally valuable to high-school teachers.

MERRILL, DORIS P. Panel discussion in the high school. *Progressive education*, 11:423-25, November 1934.

Describes her experiences with English classes in high school, which she thinks were very successful. States that the panel method develops honesty in thinking and expression, "and is one of the most interesting possibilities" of modern adult and secondary education.

NEEDHAM, IRENE B. The uses and limitations of the discussion method. *Journal of home economics*, 24:514-15, October 1935.

A very brief presentation of the discussion method, its democratic aspects in that it gives one an opportunity to learn by doing, gives understanding by participation or practice, by listening to discussions; by having one's opinions disagreed with. Shows some of the needs for skillful leaders.

The open forum of the College of the City of New York. *School and society*, 38:459, October 7, 1933.

"Any group of students in good standing at the college . . . may be granted permission to hold meetings in the college buildings to discuss matters germane to college interests."

PEAR, T. H. The desirability of teaching school children the technique of discussion. *British journal of educational psychology*, 6:9-22, February 1936.

An academic discussion of the usefulness of discussion and its application to all school work. This article ends with useful comment on the bad effects of high-school debating and on the comparison of debating with discussion.

POLLARD, ELIZABETH W. Give youth discussion practice. *Educational research bulletin (Ohio State University)* 13:148-50, September 19, 1934.

A brief presentation of the advantages of discussions in classroom and young people's club work; and the responsibility we have in training young people not only as individuals but as groups to participate in public affairs, and to cooperate in effective social, economic, and political procedures in our national life.

POWERS, J. ORIN and BLACK, FLORENCE M. Exploring the panel method scientifically. *Progressive education*, 12:85-88, February 1935.

Authors give an account of measuring results in a seventh-grade panel method; describes its use, and the reactions of the children, in social studies classes. Three groups were used in order to find measurable comparisons of the panel discussion method and the Morrison unit method.

REYNOLDS, WILLIAM H. The panel discussion in the high-school classroom. *Secondary education*, 4:235-38, September 1935.

Good advice is given on the use of discussion in high-school classes.

SHEFFIELD, ALFRED D. Discussion, lecture-forum, and debate. *Quarterly journal of speech*, 18: 517-31, November 1932.

A constructive study of the technique of group discussion, a typical group being analyzed, namely, a college group to study "disarmament." Deals with treatment of the personnel, the leader, participation, and other points.

SMITH, H. B. and DE LONG, L. R. Discussion technique; a reply to A. O. Hansen. *School and society*, 34: 533-35, October 17, 1931.

A reply to Dr. Allen Hansen's article in this journal for July 18, 1931. Arguments based somewhat on the learning process and the type of learning that goes on during the discussion period, and the resulting advantages and disadvantages. Mostly at the college level.

WALTZ, MAYNARD C. Learning by group discussion. *Journal of education*, 116: 312-13, June 19, 1933.

Describes and defines the discussion method, gives examples of concrete cases, mentions a number of principles of learning; and tells of the dangers of discussion. The field is class discussion in schools.

WARD, S. R. Technique of public discussion. *Institute of world affairs*, 13: 249-53, 1935.

WICKLING, ANNA M. Children's work improved through discussion. *Childhood education*, 10: 127-30, December 1936.

Much excellent advice on the usefulness of discussion in the elementary grades by the principal of an elementary school in a State teachers' college in Minnesota. This article contains good analyses of thoughtfulness, honest thinking, and cooperation among children; and can be useful also to high-school teachers.

WRIGHTSTONE, J. WAYNE. An instrument for measuring group discussion and planning. *Journal of educational research*, 27: 641-50, May 1934.

Describes a possible instrument of measurement to be used by the classroom teacher to evaluate the degree to which individual pupils take part in cooperative planning and discussion. Suggestive for other aspects of the educative process.