

Now, the revolution in adult and continuing education which you see in the Job Corps, in the Peace Corps, and the Headstart—you see it in a number of different programs—marks a radical departure from what conventional educators throughout the world have thought, which was “You are a good student or a bad student.”

When I open my school year in September, I am sure someone is going to get up from the admissions office and say, “Ladies and gentlemen of the faculty, we have the best entering freshmen class that we have ever had in history.”

I think you will hear this in a thousand colleges. The moment those words leave the lips, I think what he means is that the cutoff point this year is a little bit higher than it was last year.

If it was hard for a Negro or Puerto Rican to get in last year, well, he certainly had a job getting in this year, and if we got any of them, they are very, very good.

This is a traditional attitude. Professors always talk about “good students,” or “bad students.”

“College material” is what the high school educator says. “Not college material” is written off.

Adult education has patterned itself on this kind of approach to educational methodology.

If you go into the Mayo Clinic and you are treated and you break out into a violent rash because of the antibiotic, you don’t say, “This is a bad patient, let’s drop him out.” You say, “Let’s find out what we did wrong.”

We look at the human being as being infinitely elastic with respect to education. There is no giving up. If he doesn’t learn in this way, let’s try another method, or another technique.

If this situation isn’t the proper situation, let’s change the teachers.

I think in this new kind of education which is crystallizing in many different sectors today in the United States, and it is one of the most beautiful things in the American dream, where we are saying that education is no longer a matter, as I think it was when we began education, just for the teacher.

We are asking whether the man in private industry knows something about education. We are asking whether people in Government know something about education. We are no longer shocked by the fact that a large company has a training program.

We are no longer shocked that the Department of Defense runs the largest enterprise in the teaching of foreign language in the world.

We take some of their techniques, their books and if they are good, we use them.

It is very easy to lecture in a university hall these days. You don’t have to have the Ph. D.—you have to have commitment.

I myself when I first confronted this in 1964, I was horrified. I came to a meeting there, and they said, “We are going to set up Job Corps centers.”

I said, “Fine, this segment of youth need it.”

They were going to have contractors, and the academic hackles of the professor went up—contractor, what is that, no academic title?

Who will be the contractor—business firms, State governments, anybody?