

In fact, many Benson graduates return to their old shops and to their former teachers for part of their apprentice training with one of the labor unions.

This close relationship between teacher and market place can only be envied by the shop teachers' academic counterparts. This because college guidance counselors must deal with more than a thousand market places.

One of the major criticisms of most city vocational schools is that they are too shop oriented. That is, that the students spend too much time in the shop; too much time using their hands and not enough using their heads.

STRONG ACADEMIC DIET

Benson does not overemphasize shop work. The juniors and seniors headed for college spend no more than one-fourth of their time in shop, and the prevocational boys no more than one-half. All the young men are given a strong academic diet with the most up-to-date curriculums available.

One of the most popular electives at Benson is art. The day I visited the school, hooked rugs were hanging in the art room and displayed prominently in the main front hall. The boys first work out an original design with water color, crayon, or colored chalk, and then transfer the pattern to the hooked rug backing. The designs were exciting and the workmanship outstanding.

Benson also has managed to keep abreast of the needs of local industry by using teams of advisers representing labor and management to assist the school. The 12 major skills offered at Benson each have their own advisory committee made up of Portland business and labor leaders, and these committees advise on curriculum, teacher training, and securing of equipment to keep the shops abreast of the times.

INDUSTRY COOPERATES

One of the advisory committees, for example, suggested that Benson's new foundry teacher might well spend considerable time this summer working in industry. Accordingly, a few of the companies have cooperated to give him short-term employment—at full pay—for the summer months.

One school officer has the sole job of giving lifetime job-placement service to Benson graduates. Advisory committees assist him in this work. Prior to graduation each boy is helped to find a place in college, in the armed services, or in the world of work. After graduation he is free to return to Benson for further counseling about changing his job, getting further training, or returning to industry after a stint in the armed services.

I asked Mr. Nishimura about the academic program. "It is second to none," he proudly stated.

"We offer the SMSG [School Mathematics Study Group] math throughout, as well as PSSC Physical [Physical science Study Commission] physics, BSCS [Biological Sciences Curriculum Study] biology, and two sophisticated courses in 'new chemistry.'"

INNOVATIONS IN MATH

Benson also has math and science courses, related to the shop work, which it devised right there. For example, the SMSG geometry program, while quite suitable for a college-bound student, would not fit the needs of a student majoring in prevocational patternmaking and metal fabrication.

There wasn't any course in geometry related to this basic skill, so Benson wrote its own, combining the talents of the mathematics department with those of the shop teachers.

This is innovative education coupled with quality control.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, June 27, 1967]

OPPORTUNITY KEEPS ON KNOCKING

DENVER, COLO.—Bill Thompson is a dishwasher at an all-night diner. He's on from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. He sleeps in the morning, but at 1 p.m. he's at the Emily Griffith Opportunity School in downtown Denver studying to be a jet aircraft repairman. He has put in 1,000 hours of training, with 800 more to go.

Helen Lowe works for a large Denver firm. She is a secretary, but she has never been trained in taking dictation from a machine. Every morning she spends an hour at the Opportunity School in a course in dictation. When she has completed the course, she will be upgraded on the company pay scale.