

of the special challenges to leadership which should be met.

On the more personal side, it will be agreed by anyone who has been familiar with the internal politics in any organization bigger than a few dozen people that the leader's job as personal co-ordinator is no bed of roses. Every consultant who has come close to executive groups is always impressed with the need for a "father confessor" to iron out the personal maladjustments and frictions.

#### The Leader as a Trainer

On every hand today managers are giving at least lip service to the thought that the best executive is the best teacher, and that a major function of the executive's work is teaching. All this is doubly true of the creative leader. He can get nowhere unless he is mindful in the most concrete way of what the teacher does and how he does it and is applying this knowledge in his own hour by hour contacts.

The leader will make the best trainer if two or three broad facts are in the background of his mind. He should realize that formal schooling and intellectual discipline stopped between the ages of ten and fourteen for most of those associated with him, that a grammar school education is as much education as was obtained by at least eighty-five per cent of his group. Also, he should realize and not be bowled over by the facts about the distribution of intelligence or mental alertness in the community: Apparently the figures supplied out of the army experience about the distribution of mental alertness reflect in a rough sort of way the condition in the community as a whole. Some exceedingly sombre conclusions have been drawn by popular, pseudo-scientific writers out of these facts. Writers like Lothrop Stoddard, Goddard, MacDougall and others have prematurely become apprehensive about the possibilities of further education and even of self-government for people whose intelligence quotients fall so largely in the lower ranks. They tend to ignore the fact that mental alertness tests attempt to test only mental alertness and that other qualities are quite as essential in life and in industry. The value of factual knowledge, of persistence, of purposiveness, of the cultural setting in which one's experience occurs should not be lost sight of. And the discerning leader will realize that the possession

of different degrees of so-called intelligence on the part of his group argues little about the possibility of having them become increasingly effective, loyal and happy members of it. His problem is rather to fit responsibilities to individual capacities while looking always for the brighter members and doing everything possible by drill, information, example and enthusiasm to stir people to exceed their own previous performances. Differences of intelligence do not argue against the need for leadership—they argue only for leaders who capitalize on the facts and, as Lord Morley said, realize that he who would successfully lead mankind must not expect too much of it!

Another fact which the leader as trainer encounters is the fear and suspicion of further education among most adults whose education has stopped prematurely. It is felt by many to be a sign of weakness and a confession of incompetence to carry on with an adult educational program. The leader has this feeling to work against. And he must realize that any contemplated educational program must be along radically new lines.

#### Using a Training Technique

It goes without saying that the leader will use consciously all the principles of learning. This implies a number of things. It implies a recognition of the several different methods of carrying on instruction, of the essential nature of the learning process, of the place of the teacher in learning.

He must know the relative value of the following methods of instruction: (1) lectures, (2) demonstrations, (3) projects to do, (4) cases to analyze and solve, (5) discussion under leadership.

He must realize that learning is always a combination of mental and motor activity, different in essence from either telling, showing, or drilling, although perhaps involving at one time or another all of these. He must realize the important element of truth which there is in such statements as "the one who is doing the learning must do the learning," "we do not think our way into our living, we live our way into our thinking," "no one ever told anyone anything," and "we do not know a thing until we have done it."

The leader will realize that the old dictum about experience being a dear teacher applies not merely to fools but to most of us in most of the learning that we do. I do not say that this kind of human

trial and error is the only method by which humans learn, but it is from a practical standpoint still the most usual. This means that we learn more and faster when we are forced by circumstances to readjust ourselves to new conditions than we do from any other one cause. The surrounding conditions must support and help to foster the new objective and thus contribute to its realizing if a new habit is to be built. And the wise leader is the one who uses the whole environment to be sure that it does re-enforce the new aim. Perhaps an example will make my meaning clearer on this important point.

Take the case of a plant which wanted to take the discharge power out of the foremen's hands. The personnel man sold the idea to everyone but the foremen, of whom a substantial minority had grave misgivings, but the policy was put into effect over their objections. After a year's experience with the personnel department handling this and taking all these personnel adjustment problems out of the hands of the already overworked foremen, their opinion was again sought as to the success of the policy and the advisability of returning to the former method. All the foremen were found to be converted; and the change had come not through persuading or even, it seems to me, through overmuch autocratic assertion of power. It had come through creating a total experience which in its natural setting showed the new way to be more advantageous for the foremen. The surrounding conditions were allowed to mold and reshape their ideas as to how to get the departmental morale they wanted, and they found they liked the new way better. Good leadership had put the foremen through a successful learning process.

It may be commonplace to you and to me to say that learning takes place because of recognition of a problem to be solved, or because of an urgently felt desire which is not satisfied. But these are the two great prime movers to new learning, and until they are called into use nothing happens. If we could get industrial leaders to recognize and apply this principle about learning it would surely yield a thousandfold. Set people in a problem situation; guide the process by which they find the way out; stir people by the prompting of a new and strong desire; then help to show how they can satisfy it—this is good leadership strategy.

The relation of the teacher or leader to the learning process is thus important to make explicit. He can help to supply facts included among which are the experiences of others; he can help to interpret facts; he can help to create and place people in problem situations where new and educational experiences will take place. He can inspire them to thought and to activity by his own interest and enthusiasm in the project, but the learning itself must be done by each one afresh. It is learning and not "knowing about" *only when a new skill has been really acquired*, a skill capable of being called into use under the requirements of the special need. So much education today is conceived of as knowing about things, as verbal and informational in character, that it is hard to get the really revolutionary idea across that *true learning means the possession and ability to use at the right time skill of a particular sort*. I use the word "skill" here not in the restricted sense of a routine muscular accomplishment like ability to run a loom or a typewriter. I mean ability to confront successfully any typical executive problem like running a conference, getting a new policy put over, or starting a new program in some special field. It is easy to know in the abstract the methods that will make a shop committee vital; it is hard to be able to utilize shop committees to assure greater unity of corporate purpose and effort. But only the executive possessed of the latter ability can be said to be really educated about shop committees.

Of course, the leader will understand that all education starts where those to be led now are in point of their mental habits, outlook, interests and desires. It is fundamental in pedagogy that all learning starts with the known and the understood, and relates additional experience gradually to the existing body of understanding and ability.

It is important to remember also that there is a definite pace in learning and that the pace in adult learning is somewhat slower than that in children. The need for patience here will be better realized if the leader knows the shape of what is usually spoken of as the "learning curve" with its plateaus where discouragement and lack of progress inevitably occur.

One of the useful ways to overcome this universally experienced sense of discouragement has been found to be the providing of the learner with what are called "milestones of progress." It has