

TEACHING HISTORY: THE CULTURE PATTERN APPROACH*

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"The Culture Pattern Approach to Teaching History"

By Oliver Turner Ivey, Auburn University

In the "culture pattern" approach students are encouraged to compartmentalize, or view a society as it seeks to meet challenges common to all people, namely: (1) security, (2) sustenance, (3) an understanding of ontology, (4) personal identity, (5) knowledge, (6) self-expression. These challenges or needs correspond with political, social, intellectual, and aesthetic activities. A student is then encouraged to synthesize the interaction between these activities and societal institutions. The interaction of activities and institutions enables students to grasp the whole picture of history and to understand that there are no "uncultured" people. Instead, culture consists simply of the various techniques learned or developed by all people to meet their common challenges.

"The Culture Pattern Approach in the High Schools"

By Andrew M. Weaver, Auburn University

A recognition of the various troubles afflicting history teaching in the secondary schools is needed in order to bring about necessary changes. Public school teachers and administrators can help by grouping students for better instruction to adjust for differences in reading levels, emotional and intellectual maturity, and motivation. Present problems with teachers can be alleviated through hiring more qualified teachers and by providing in-service training for teachers. Beyond these internal difficulties lie public demands that

*Eds. synopsis of session

schools adopt new policies. Demands for the teaching of patriotism, that certain texts be censored, and that certain minority groups get more attention present problems for the secondary school history teacher. New requirements for competency tests on basic skills as a prerequisite for graduation pose a problem in that schools may place undue emphasis on areas covered in the tests, which often exclude history.

College and university level historians can help to alleviate some of these problems by providing a superior education for potential secondary school teachers and by writing textbooks and other materials which would be appropriate for use at the secondary level.

Another complicating factor in high school teaching is that history is much more complicated than other disciplines. Whereas the economist or political scientist can concentrate on a narrow area, the historian must explore all the social sciences to examine thoroughly past societies. How can the situation be improved so that students can cope with the complexity of history? The culture pattern approach seems to offer a course organization around which all history can be studied. This method permits the development of history courses that appeal to the various levels of students in our schools, and it hopefully will enable teachers to persuade students to read and study history.

"The Culture Pattern Approach at the College and University Level"

By Donathan Olliff, Auburn University

Dr. Olliff discussed how the culture pattern approach can be applied at the college and university level to make history more appealing for students of all abilities.