

T H E S I S   A B S T R A C T

BRIDGING THE GAP

A Proposed Curriculum for the  
Senior Year of High School

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## ABSTRACT

The problem discussed in this paper is the restructuring of the twelfth year of formal education to better bridge the gap between high school and the future by providing a continuity of experience for the student whether his immediate goal is post-graduate education, a temporary or permanent job, or marriage. The hypothesis formed by the author was that the senior year could be structured to (1) provide more adequately for the college-bound student, (2) permit the non-academically oriented student access to a greater amount of vocational guidance and job training, (3) educate the near-adult in those aspects of family life and adjustment that he would soon need, and (4) integrate the graduate into his community as an adult member of the society.

The author has cited trends such as early high school graduation, early college entrance and increased college costs, increased emphasis at the national level on vocational education and career guidance, retention of former 16-year-old dropouts in the secondary schools, the lowering of the maturity age to 18, the growing dissatisfaction among students with the present curriculum, and communications difficulties between the school and the town to justify the need for a change in the senior curriculum.

In general, the paper proposes a senior year of high school in which all formal educational requirements have been

satisfied. Each student would spend half of a semester as a volunteer working in the community. Approximately 12 hours a week would be spent outside the school learning about one or more occupational fields. During this community service period, one day a week would be devoted to either large group sessions with outside resource speakers, lecturers, or related audio-visual presentations; or small group discussions on topics of interest and concern to the class. The student could receive a combination social studies-English credit for this program.

During the period he is in school, the student would have several options. One, college level courses could be taken which would give him both high school and college credit. Two, he could enroll in regular high school courses. Three, vocational programs would be available such as those offered in business and industrial arts. Four, mini-courses varying in length and covering topics in the fields of personal adjustment, family living, and special interests would be offered. These course would be practical in content and give credit towards graduation. Five, a student could choose a completely vocational course in which he would spend his entire year in a job situation. This would be a training or apprentice program for which he would receive both compensation and credit towards graduation.

The paper discusses each component part of the proposed program in detail, and in the final section, propounds a schedule incorporating all aspects of the program for the Bethel High School class of 1975.