

The basic philosophical assumption underlying the creation of the New School is that some high school students are capable of assuming primary direction over their own education. Thus the objective of the New School is to provide the opportunity for the individual student to become responsible for his own education, thus developing greater self-confidence and purpose in life through his accomplishments within the school system.

The New School hopes to meet its main objective through a variety of specific methods. These include an attempt to continually recreate democracy through a General Assembly, which shall be composed of the students and teachers of the New School, each having one vote. A second technique is the abandonment of the rigid period structure of the traditional high school, along with its reliance on the grouping of 25-35 students and one teacher in one room each day of the school year. In its place we shall rely on three other modes of teaching/learning: large-group presentations, small-group discussions and independent study. We shall fully achieve the individualization of education by our heavy emphasis on independent study and the cooperative writing of individual contracts by students and teachers. In the accomplishment of our objective of making the student responsible for his own education we shall also accomplish the general social objective of making the institutions of our society humane.

LARGE-GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTION

Lectures, films, and other large group presentations can be a very effective part of the New School's instructional program. The effectiveness of teacher-dominated large group work depends on the small group work and independent study that follow it. (large group presentations should motivate the student to think in new ways and to do individual work from a broader point of view).

To make these large group presentations most effective, three purposes should be kept in mind. The presentation must be motivational, as it arouses student interest in learning more about the subject; it must be informational, as it provides facts, ideas, and points of view not otherwise readily available to students; and it must also be directional, as it suggests activities for students to do following the presentation. Since the large group presentation acts as an initiator in these three ways, its effectiveness largely contributes to the success of the whole instructional program.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

Conversations with other students help to clarify ideas and stimulate further study. Small group discussions also help to develop many skills such as effective communication, talking about controversial matters, listening and dealing with the opinions of others and relating to people with different interests and backgrounds. The discussions also reinforce and use some of the knowledge the students gain in large groups, and exchange that knowledge gained in their own independent study. This process allows participants to refine their interests, opinions, and planned activities.