

# Marketing a Sloyd Curriculum

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## Abstract

This essay discusses a successful effort to market a woodworking curriculum to an international audience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—before “marketing” was used as a noun, much less considered an academic discipline. The curriculum, known as *educational sloyd*, was based on the writings of Comenius and Pestalozzi and promoted by Swedish entrepreneurs August Abramson and Otto Salomon. Its effects are still in evidence today.

## Marketing a Sloyd Curriculum

This essay examines the work of August Abramson (1817-98) and Otto Salomon (1849-1907), two Swedish entrepreneurs who marketed a woodworking curriculum called *educational sloyd* to consumers throughout the world. The curriculum, based primarily on the writings of John Amos Comenius and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, promoted individualized learning and the enhancement of cognitive skills. Abramson and Salomon’s efforts occurred long before “marketing” was used as a noun, much less considered an academic discipline (Bartels 1976, 3). By the early twentieth century, the two men’s impact was evident in elementary and secondary schools and higher education institutions in countries throughout Europe and South America, as well as in the United States, South Africa, and Japan. In 1903, Salomon remarked that their curricular principles were so widely accepted as to be seen as self-evident; therefore, the program should be discarded like a well-worn casting model that had outlived its usefulness. Its influence is still apparent today.

The exploration of this historical case of marketing a curriculum is especially important in light of the role entrepreneurship and marketing play in current educational discourse. In 2007, Frederick M. Hess, director of policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), declared, “To an unprecedented degree, this is the era of educational entrepreneurship” (Hess 2007, 3). Only two years earlier, Henry M. Levin, director of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, wrote a paper for AEI’s Conference on Educational Entrepreneurship. In “Why Is Educational Entrepreneurship So Difficult?” Levin acknowledged that “the historical record documenting substantial and sustained departure from conventional educational practices is scant” (Levin 2006, 4). Nevertheless, he urged educators to continue to seek “beneficial change through spirited entrepreneurship” (Levin 2006, 29).

During the last five years scholars have discussed examples of educational entrepreneurship through growing private sector involvement in American public education. In *Hidden Markets: The New Education Privatization*, Patricia Burch noted that “Education is rapidly becoming a \$1 trillion industry, representing 10% of America’s GNP and second in size only to the health care industry” (2009, 156). Burch studied the impact of private companies on schools over a period of time following the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind; she concluded that although companies have a role to play in education, the “center of gravity is shifting” such that education policy is now being remade “to fit the needs of the market” (Burch 2009, 136).

This essay will argue that while the global spread of educational sloyd during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has been attributed to “the efforts of individual, highly dedicated men and women,” (Thorbjornsson 2006, 11) it was largely the result of the systematic marketing efforts of Abramson and Salomon. An examination of primary and secondary sources reveals that while individual sloyd proponents were instrumental in advancing the program, they were influenced by, and highly dependent on, Abramson and Salomon’s strategy, careful planning, and access to resources in promoting this innovative curriculum throughout the world.

### Sources and Review of Literature

In his seminal work, *The History of Marketing Thought*, Robert Bartels connected the development of marketing to the rise of industrialization. New inventions created new products; the population expanded; education and personal income increased; and new social values affirmed financial success. The change was dramatic. Historically, trade had been conducted between countries or groups (not individuals), with prices being set by treaty or administrative decision. With industrialization’s emphasis on mass production, “[t]he motives of trucking and bartering”—which, according to Bartels, were not previously seen to exist—were “assumed to be inherent” (Bartels 1976, 6). In this environment, trade focused on the consumer rather than on the seller; furthermore, markets—previously thought to be determined by supply—were now seen to be affected by demand. By the turn of the twentieth century, economic theorists recognized that consumer demand was influenced not only by the ability to purchase, but also by desire. Advertising and sales initiatives demonstrated that promotional efforts could create desire and

thereby increase demand. Middlemen (people standing between producers and consumers) were performing new functions, one of which was to create forms of value that, in turn, enhanced the ability to sell a product.

In an environment of growing industrialization in Sweden, middleman August Abramson (a retired hardware merchant and landowner who had amassed great personal wealth) and his nephew Otto Salomon (a largely self-educated teacher who studied one year at the Institute of Technology at Stockholm) developed and promoted an educational sloyd curriculum that was at “the international forefront” by the turn of the twentieth century (Thorbjornsson 2006, 11). A number of primary and secondary sources document their efforts. One of the most important is *The Theory of Educational Sloyd* by Salomon (1900), which discusses the curriculum and its growth. Sloyd’s theoretical underpinnings are documented in the personal correspondence of Otto Salomon and Uno Cygnaeus, the father of Finnish folk schools and pioneer in educational arts and crafts (Karanjola 2006). The 1891 letters of Flora White—a U.S. citizen who attended Salomon’s sloyd classes in Sweden—provides a unique perspective by showing how teachers across the globe learned to teach educational sloyd at Naas and publicized it upon returning home. The delivery of the sloyd curriculum is further documented in writings by Gustaf Larsson, a Swedish protégé of Salomon who became the principal of the Sloyd Training School in Boston. Larsson’s books—*Sloyd* (1903), *Sloyd for the Three Upper Grammar Grades* (1907), and *Elementary Sloyd and Whittling* (1906)—reveal the practical aspects of implementing the curriculum in classroom settings in locations outside Sweden. Secondary sources include the essays of Hans Thorbjornsson (1994, 2006), curator at Abramson and Salomon’s

historic school, who characterizes sloyd as an international education movement and details the manner in which it was disseminated across the globe. Other sources document the growth of educational sloyd within individual countries. Brehony (1998) demonstrates educational sloyd's presence in the English Froebel movement as well as in Japan; Herrera (1997) shows sloyd's influence in Cuba, while Henry and Williams (1985) connect educational sloyd to the immigrant community in Boston through activities of the North Bennet Street School. *The Sloyd Bulletin*, a publication of the North Bennet Street School, provides further testimony from sloyd proponents, including Gustaf Larsson (1899) and Flora White (1899). Eyestone (1992) highlights the enduring influence of sloyd in arts education in the United States. Bennett (1937) and Cremin (1969) contextualize educational sloyd as it related to other educational developments of the period. Cremin, in particular, links educational sloyd to efforts by Calvin M. Woodward and others to promote manual education in the United States.

### **Creating the Educational Sloyd Product**

It is ironic that educational sloyd--a curriculum created and marketed during a period of rapid industrialization--was closely tied to traditional Swedish handcrafts. *Slojd*--or "sloyd" in English--is a Scandinavian word meaning "craft" or "manual skill" (Thorbjornsson 1994, 1). Until the late nineteenth century many rural Swedes spent winter evenings making household and farm utensils from wood to supplement the family income. As industrialization transformed Swedish society--and work and school were removed from the home and institutionalized--there was growing support for promoting home industries by teaching young people traditional Swedish handcrafts. In response to this sentiment,

the government provided funds to set up private sloyd schools to develop skilled workers and reaffirm the values of good citizenship. August Abramson became an early supporter; in 1868 he founded a sloyd folk (neighborhood) school and four years later established a sloyd work school for boys on his estate in Naas, near Gothenburg. Having recently lost his wife (a popular opera singer) and with no progeny, Abramson invited his nephew Otto Salomon to live at Naas and assist him in his work. In 1874 the two men began a sloyd training school for girls. The curriculum at Naas incorporated a broad range of studies and a separation of craft work along gender lines--wood-sloyd, turnery, wood-carving, or saddlery for boys and weaving, spinning, knitting, sewing, and cookery for girls. By 1886 the girls' and boys' schools had merged. Abramson and Salomon closed the school in 1888 to devote full attention to training teachers in sloyd methods.

Abramson and Salomon had already been experimenting, for a number of years, with sloyd training for teachers. Although their initial plan was to train artisans to become sloyd teachers, Salomon modified that approach when he visited Uno Cygnaeus in Finland in 1877. Cygnaeus convinced Salomon to organize sloyd on an educational rather than an economic basis and incorporate it into the elementary curriculum. Salomon thereby began a scientific study of sloyd as a means of education. He developed five-week courses for Swedish teachers and in 1882 discontinued the artisan training program. In addition, he dropped other forms of sloyd in favor of wood-sloyd. Eventually Salomon offered four courses for teachers annually--each lasting six weeks--as well as two summer courses for men and women, a spring course for women, and a winter course for men. He called the program the *Seminarium for Teachers*.

Training in traditional Swedish handcrafts seems an unlikely point of departure for reforming schools in an industrializing country; however, Salomon--beneath his conservative demeanor--had ideas about education that were "progressive, even radical" (Thorbjornsson 1994, 2). He convinced teachers at Naas that handcrafts were a critical medium for transforming the elementary school and moving away from mass education emphasizing superficial knowledge. While Salomon delivered sloyd instruction--promoting individualized learning and independence of thought and action--Abramson maintained good relations with the conservative Swedish king, Oskar II, and other influential Swedes. Keenly aware that their Jewish family had been forced to migrate to Lutheran Sweden seventy or eighty years earlier, Abramson and Salomon wanted to demonstrate they were good Swedish citizens. Showcasing the country's handcrafts helped to deflect criticism that might have otherwise been aimed at their school.

Salomon borrowed ideas from Comenius and Pestalozzi as well as Locke, Rousseau, Salzman, Froebel and Spencer. He read in their own languages the works of educators and philosophers who favored physical activity as a means of formative education. As a result of his reading, Salomon believed elementary schools placed too much emphasis on rote learning, and that children suffered from spending too much time at desks without physical movement. The core of education, he felt, was developing a child through his or her own learning. He articulated several principles of educational sloyd:

1. To instill a taste for and an appreciation of work in general.
2. To create a respect for hard, honest, physical labor.
3. To develop independence and self-reliance.

4. To provide training in the habits of order, accuracy, cleanliness and neatness.
5. To train the eye to see accurately and to appreciate the sense of beauty in form.
6. To develop a sense of touch and to give general dexterity to the hands.
7. To inculcate the habits of attention, industry, perseverance and patience.
8. To promote the development of the body's physical powers.
9. To acquire dexterity in the use of tools.
10. To execute precise work and produce useful products (Thorbjornsson 1994, 4).

Salomon's curriculum consisted of series of woodcraft exercises of increasing difficulty--88 in all--designed to incrementally develop the student's physical and cognitive skills. [(In 1902 Salomon reduced the number to of exercises to 68) (Thorbjornsson 1994, 6).] The curriculum also included a series of models of everyday household items that students could build from wood. Students were supposed to accurately reproduce the models by working at their own speed, with the teacher acting as a guide but not interfering in the work process. As students moved through the curriculum, they increased their skill levels with new--and increasingly complex--shapes, tools, and procedures. Salomon encouraged teachers to know their students throughout the process, and to develop a knowledge base in crafts as well as theoretical subjects so they could understand each child's mental, physical, and moral development. As educational sloyd began to gain international notice, Salomon also encouraged followers to develop a model series that was relevant to various cultures in which sloyd was taught.

Each day at Naas, Salomon involved participating teachers in six to seven hours of practical handcraft work and one to two hours of theoretical lectures and discussions. Classes were free and offered in more than one language.

Salomon's lectures focused on varied subjects including educational history, handcraft teaching methods, psychology, morals, and hygiene. He hoped to develop the will, morality, and interests as students learned to solve problems at higher and more complex levels.

### *Marketing the Curriculum*

Robert Bartels wrote that marketing was not officially named until 1906-11 (1976, 3). Nevertheless, Salomon's efforts in curriculum and instruction were matched by the energy he and Abramson spent in marketing educational sloyd. Contemporary marketing practitioners often cite the Four Principles of Marketing—*product, price, place, and promotion*—as key components of their work. A fifth principle is sometimes added—*people* (Offord n.d.). A review of primary and secondary sources shows that all five components were evident in Salomon and Abramson's efforts to market educational sloyd.

Almost from the beginning, the men identified the international arena as the *place* where their *product* would be *promoted*. In 1876, Salomon and Abramson published the first part of *Slojdskolan och Folkskolan* (Handicraft School and Elementary School) and distributed the book throughout the Nordic countries to supporters of handcraft teaching. That same year the two men sent models, plans, and a description of Naas to the World Exhibition in Philadelphia. In 1877 Abramson sent a series of sloyd models as a gift to the Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro. When Abramson received encouragement to send a model to Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II, he obliged. As a result, one Naas model was used at a Brazilian deaf-blind institute, and another was exhibited at the Brazilian Bureau of Education. The following year Abramson sent a description of the Naas sloyd schools and a cover letter to several Swedish ambassadors in Europe.

Abramson asked the ambassadors to give the description to appropriate government officials in the host country and invite them to visit the Naas stand at the 1878 World Exhibition in Paris. In 1880, a German delegation visited Naas, as did groups of teachers from Belgium, Russia and Austria. Over time, Abramson and Salomon invited participants from over 40 countries who came to Naas to make woodcrafts and attend Salomon's lectures (Thorbjornsson 1994, 4). One of the participants, Hjalmar Berg, wrote the following favorable description of the Seminarium:

Naas is a good Sloyd school, and much besides. It is the meeting place of leading teachers of all degrees and all nationalities, for common work, and for the interchange of ideas. Professors, inspectors, secondary and elementary teacher, women as well as men, there meet on common ground as comrades (Salomon 1900, xi-xii).

Every one or two years, Salomon traveled through western or central Europe, frequently conversing with "international greats" on the subject of handcrafts [(The "greats" included Woldemar Gotze of the Training College in Leipzig and Gustave Salicis, a manual training leader in Paris.) (Thorbjornsson 2006, 15).] Salomon gave several lectures in Denmark, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland in 1884. In 1904, he embarked on a long lecture tour through Britain and Holland and in other years visited Italy and Austria to study and establish new contacts. He also lectured in the Nordic countries and participated in international conferences on handcraft.

Since instruction at Naas was free, educational sloyd was *priced* to sell; however, participants had to pay for their own

transportation. The peace that existed in Europe between 1875 and 1914, as well as advances in travel, made this possible. Railroads had expanded to link the large cities of Europe and North America, and regular steamship service connected Europe with the other continents. Before Salomon died in 1907, approximately 1500 participants from 40 countries had studied educational sloyd at Naas, and a few hundred delegations and individuals from other countries made short visits there (Thorbjornsson 1994, 4). The establishment of an international postal service also allowed Abramson and Salomon to promote educational sloyd globally through correspondence. Although Salomon featured the Naas sloyd curriculum at World Exhibitions in Chicago in 1893 and in St. Louis in 1904, he never traveled to the United States— even after receiving personal invitations from John Dewey and Euphrosyne Langley to deliver a series of lectures at the University of Chicago. Salomon had to decline because he was committed to teaching classes at Naas, and his alumni assumed the role of publicizing educational sloyd to U. S. audiences.

The fifth marketing principle—*people*—was an essential part of Abramson and Salomon’s strategic *promotion* of their curriculum. As early as 1885, Salomon had established a small newspaper, *Slojdundervisningsblad fran Naas* (Handcraft Teaching Pamphlet from Naas) to inform handcraft teachers about new models and changes in the educational sloyd curriculum. The newspaper had a circulation of one thousand, which included one hundred readers from outside Sweden (Thorbjornsson 2006, 17). Salomon encouraged Naas students to write about their experiences when they returned home, and they did so. Over one hundred books were published on educational sloyd at Naas, written by authors from a range of countries including Belgium,

Italy, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Argentina, Cuba, and Brazil. Additionally, over one thousand articles on Swedish educational sloyd appeared in newspapers, magazines, and journals throughout the world. Finally, over one hundred Naas supporters from across the globe gave lectures about teaching sloyd handcrafts (Thorbjornsson 2006, 16).

Abramson died in 1898, but Salomon remained “the spider at the centre of the sloyd web” (Thorbjornsson 2006, 11, 17). Salomon “received and sent four to five, often long and substantial, letters a day while he resided...[there]. Perhaps half of them were sent to and from his handicraft friends on different continents” (Thorbjornsson 2006, 18). Throughout his correspondence, Salomon encouraged recipients to summarize their experiences and problems with educational sloyd, and describe the educational system and teaching practices in their country.

Thorbjornsson attributes the “personal contact between Salomon and the course attendants at Naas” as “the key to the widespread distribution of Naas educational sloyd” (Thorbjornsson 2006, 26). Thorbjornsson also cites Salomon’s dedication to the cause, his hospitality at Naas, his ongoing correspondence, and the fact that “his ideas fitted with the times” and “awoke new thoughts” (Thorbjornsson 2006, 26). Additionally, Thorbjornsson made note of the “way of life at Naas,” with “hard work, interesting lectures and pleasant company during the many hours of daylight, with singing and games in the beautiful countryside” (Thorbjornsson 2006, 26).

Flora White’s correspondence shows that Salomon met her upon her arrival in Sweden in the summer of 1891, and that she had contact with both Abramson and King Oskar during her stay there. In a letter to her mother and sister

White described the “exquisitely simple” surroundings of Naas. She reported that she and her fellow teachers were in the work room from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with a half hour lunch break. They stood for their work and had exercise in the Ling system of gymnastics twice daily. White reported that despite the hard work that was required them, “the rooms are so pleasant and the views so lovely when we look up that nothing seems a hardship” (Flora White to Harriet and Mary White, 31 May, 1891).

Teachers who returned from Naas promoted educational sloyd through existing professional organizations, or created new ones. In 1888, the Union of Sloyd Teachers in England Trained at Naas was established, along with the Association of Sloyd Teachers in Great Britain and Ireland. In the U. S., the National Education Association (NEA) demonstrated an early interest in educational sloyd. Although speakers at the NEA annual meeting in 1896 were described as “all male, and almost all administrators” (Rousmaniere 2005, 106), Flora White (1896) presented a paper at that meeting titled, “Physical Effects of Sloyd.” It was subsequently featured in the *Sloyd Bulletin*, a publication of the Sloyd Training School in Boston. In 1899 the NEA Committee on Normal Schools proposed the inclusion of sloyd in the four-year curriculum of normal school students. By 1902, an organization of alumni of the Sloyd Training School in Boston featured Gustaf Larsson and two Swedish-Americans on its board. Teaching organizations to support educational sloyd also were established in Switzerland in 1886 and in Austria and Belgium in 1887.

These organizational initiatives were supplemented by teachers who returned from Naas and incorporated educational sloyd into their own pedagogy. In White’s case, she “crusaded” for the inclusion of “[fine and gross]

motor activities” in U. S. schools (Pickwick 1941, 5). From 1892 to 1895 she taught at Westfield Normal School where she introduced sloyd into the two-year teacher training course. She then moved to Boston to become associate principal at Baron Nils Posse’s Normal School of Gymnastics (utilizing her Naas experience with Ling gymnastics) and in 1897 founded Miss White’s Home School for Children in Concord, Massachusetts where she again included sloyd in the curriculum.

In promoting educational sloyd in the United States, Flora White never forgot the program’s antecedents. When she presented her paper to the NEA she explained:

Cygnæus bared his head to child life, and for what was revealed to him strove with all the persistency of a Finn, till the elementary schools of Finland were reformed and made fit study for the world.

Herr Otto Soloman [sic], by Cygnæus’ side, looked where he looked, and found that to which he devoted his life, creating a new era in Swedish schools, and sending forth a new hope to American schools through his pupil, Herr Gustaf Larsson, whom it is your misfortune not to have with you today.

Mr. Larsson is the leader of sloyd in this country, and he has ably demonstrated that sloyd is no finality, no system, no course of models or tools or materials, but such a use of tools and materials that space and opportunity are afforded for the growth and development of the child in the direction of his individuality (White, 1896, 5-6).

### **Salomon’s Dilemma**

Despite the spread of educational sloyd, it had critics. Salomon felt compelled to defend the strange-sounding Swedish name by reminding

audiences that the German word *kindergarten* initially seemed odd but, over time, became a household word. Some professors of education found educational sloyd to be too practical, preferring instead to focus on theoretical subjects. In the U. K. and the U. S., tradesmen and craftsmen in industry wanted to train their own apprentices rather than leave the job to teachers. Perhaps most important, a system that focused on Swedish handcrafts had limited appeal for other cultures and traditions.

The international interest in educational sloyd presented Salomon with two choices: create a fixed, easily accessible system of handcrafts for use in Swedish elementary schools, or create a flexible system based on principles that could be applied differently in countries and cultures across the globe. He chose the latter. Nevertheless, Salomon's approach did not gain favor in Germany, which had strong and competing pedagogical traditions of its own. Although Salomon won the support of eminent U. S. psychology professor William James, other prominent U. S. educators (including G. Stanley Hall, Francis Parker, and Caroline Pratt) found sloyd to be too rigid and lacking in opportunities for student creativity. While today educational sloyd is credited with being an important influence in art education (Eyestone 1992) and a forerunner of technology education in the U. S. (*New Hampshire Technology Education Curriculum Guide* 2001), its support began to decline early in the twentieth century. Still, between Salomon's death in 1907 and the transfer of the program to Linköping University in 1966, an additional 5,000 to 7,000 teachers received training at Naas in the sloyd system (Thorbjörnsson 1994, 9).

*Enduring Legacy of Educational Sloyd in the United States*

In the United States, a major center of sloyd activity was Boston, where Naas graduate Gustaf Larsson directed the Sloyd Training School located in the North Bennett Street Industrial School building. The school offered instruction to immigrant children through the support of philanthropist Pauline Agassiz Shaw, daughter of famed scientist Louis Agassiz. (She was married to Boston financier Quincy Shaw, one of the richest men in New England.) Prior to Larsson's arrival, Pauline Shaw had established nurseries and kindergartens throughout Boston to serve the growing immigrant population. Larsson persuaded her to fund free sloyd instruction to Boston's kindergarten and elementary teachers, and by 1892, 23 sloyd teachers had graduated from the school. By 1917, the number had risen to over 400 (Hoffman 2000, 364). When Shaw died that year, Larsson offered the following description of her interest in educational sloyd:

After painstaking and thorough observation Mrs. Shaw became convinced that sloyd was founded on the same principle that underlies the kindergarten system, namely, that the mental and moral growth of the human being must be the first consideration of *every* teacher and that occupations, whether of mind or hands, must serve only as a means to that end (1917, 1).

In implementing educational sloyd in the United States, Larsson made three important modifications to the curriculum. He altered the use of drawings to permit more spontaneity in students; he also reinforced Salomon's assertion that sloyd models could be modified to meet everyday needs of people of various cultures and locations. Additionally, Larsson expanded sloyd work to include new media such as bookbinding, printing, machine work, metal work, forging,

cement work, and furniture-making. The Sloyd Training School continued to operate until 1921, two years after Larsson's death. As early as 1903 Larsson estimated that graduates of the school had influenced 34,000 students across the United States (Henry and Williams 1985, 20). Larsson described the difference between the teacher of sloyd and one who used more "mechanical" methods:

The Sloyd teacher does not say, "Now I will teach this boy to saw, and he shall continue to saw until he can saw well," regardless of monotony or the too prolonged use of the same muscles. The problem of the Sloyd teacher is to find the tool, whether knife or saw or plane, and also the series of exercises, best adapted to the present need of the average pupil, and also to vary or alternate the tools and to graduate the exercises with constant reference to the growing capacity, the formative age, and to the various activities of the body and mind (1908, 22).

Larsson also specified the general presentation procedure that teachers should follow in their lessons "in order to give the children a clear idea of what they are to do" (Larsson 1906, 3). He suggested that teachers begin by presenting the model, and through questions and explanations, "lead the children to a correct understanding of both the model and its use" (Larsson 1906, 3). Utilizing large blackboard drawings and student sketches and rudimentary working drawings, teachers should follow the following procedure:

- First: From the model.
- Second: From model and drawing.
- Third: From drawing alone.

Fourth: From the children's own suggestions guided by the teacher (Larsson 1906, 3).

In *Sloyd for the Three Upper Grammar Grades*--Gustaf Larsson wrote that the sloyd teacher would be well advised to ask the following questions:

First. Are the child's positions and movements while working such as are likely to be injurious or beneficial to his physical development?

Second. Is he doing his own thinking unprompted and uninterrupted by the teacher?

Third. Is his work so carried on that self-respect is developed rather than vanity?

Fourth. Is he learning to recognize and to love excellence of workmanship, as shown by becoming more and more critical of himself and of his own achievements?

Fifth. Is he learning to recognize good form and to avoid unsuitable decoration?

Sixth. Is he getting some training in good citizenship by working for others?

Seventh. Does the finished product represent the child's own effort, and is the workmanship good, or was the problem too difficult? (Larsson 1907, 2).

In addition to Gustaf Larsson, other educators who promoted educational sloyd in the U. S. included Charles Kunou, Larsson's fellow student at Naas who came to the U. S. in 1890 with the intention of helping him in Boston. Instead, Kunou went to Pasadena, California, to establish the sloyd department at Throop Polytechnic Institute, now California Institute of Technology. One of Kunou's students, Ella Victoria Dobbs, had a distinguished career advancing the ideas of educational sloyd—as a full-time faculty member at Throop, and in

supervisory positions Los Angeles, California, and Helena, Montana, public schools. Dobbs studied at Teachers College of Columbia University where she worked on methods of correlating art and handwork in the regular school curriculum. In 1909, Dobbs joined the faculty of the University of Missouri, where she inspired a generation of teachers with the idea that handwork was both an end in itself and a means to an end.

Educational sloyd's pervasive influence can also be seen in a 1910 article in the *Elementary School Teacher*, which noted sloyd was one of two systems of European industrial education adopted in the U. S. over the previous quarter century, the other being the Russian system of manual training promoted by Victor Della Vos. The article observed, "These forms of handwork with various modifications have been gradually introduced into our schools until today the city system which does not include manual training from its primary grades through the high school is considered unprogressive" (Fletcher 1910, 8).

### **Epilogue and Conclusion**

Lawrence Cremin wrote that sloyd advocates in the U. S. had hoped to find a balance between manual work and intellectual activities through the first twelve years of education, thereby providing appropriate education in an industrial age. However, sloyd was eventually eclipsed as tool work moved from wood to steel, hand tools were replaced by machines, and production rather than artistic handcraft became a primary focus. In his final years, Otto Salomon understood that his opportunities to market the sloyd curriculum were waning. He offered a candid appraisal:

I believe that the so-called 'Naas-system' has had its day; it lies in the past, not in the present, still less in the future. While most of the principles have become so universal that they are stated to be self-evident, even by persons who certainly would not like to promote anything that comes out of Naas, there is no further need for a 'Naas-system' in the domain of manual training.

May it die and may it rest in peace! I will not be found among its mourners. I have long ago lost my belief in systems within the Art of Education, and believe now only in personalities (Thorbjornsson 1994, 9).

The lives of August Abramson and Otto Salomon illustrate how micro-histories can add to an understanding of the role marketing and entrepreneurship have played in promoting a curriculum. Even though marketing, according to Bartels, was not formally named until 1906-11, Abramson and Salomon were clearly marketing an educational program during the late nineteenth century--using political connections, networks, pricing, and promotional methods to connect to an international audience. The story of educational sloyd suggests that, while the present era has been heralded as the age of educational entrepreneurship, people have been engaged in curriculum marketing for a long time. Given the growing influence of the market in our current educational system, additional research is needed on the historical antecedents of the so-called "age of entrepreneurship" — its processes, opportunities, and pitfalls.

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