

# Adolescence and Guidance in the Early Comprehensive High School: An Analysis of the Works of Milo H. Stuart, 1917-1931

Kyle Steele    Joshua Garrison  
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh

## Abstract

Milo Stuart rose to national prominence as a high school principal, lecturer, and author. In 1916, he was chosen to serve on the NEA committee that produced the influential *Cardinal Principles* report (1918). His subsequent works were firmly rooted in his position as a practitioner-author and reveal his ideas about adolescence and guidance, as well as his commitment to developing schools that prepared all young people for their roles in increasingly complex, urban-industrial communities.

## Background and Stuart's Influence

The child of Quakers, Milo H. Stuart was born in 1871 in Hamilton County, Indiana, just outside of Sheridan and forty miles north of Indianapolis. Tall and slender (one friend referred to him as the "Hoosier sycamore") he was a precocious and hardworking student, known for his public speaking ability and, in the words of a memorial booklet published upon his death, an "insatiable desire to learn." Stuart began his career as an educator when he was just a teenager. He worked for schools in and around Sheridan while a high school student and, too, as an undergraduate at the University of Indiana. Following his years in Bloomington, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1898, he studied botany for a year at the University of Chicago (Arsenal 1940, 11-12).

Stuart then embarked on his remarkable thirty-year career in administration, which has been largely unexamined by historians of education. He took over as principal of Sheridan High School in 1899 and was chosen superintendent of all Sheridan public schools the same year—just shy of his thirtieth birthday. In 1900, having caught the attention of school leaders in Indianapolis, he was hired to teach

botany at the Manual Training High School, which had opened as the city's second high school in 1895. Stuart left for two short years to serve as principal of the Cleveland Grade and High School in St. Paul, Minnesota, but returned to Manual as an assistant principal in 1909 and was promoted to principal in 1910 (*Faculty and Students* 1940, 14-15).

While at Manual, Stuart presided over a nationally renowned program in manual and industrial education, which, in the words of the school's motto, offered its pupils an "Education of Mind, Hand, and Heart" (Griffin 1969, 6). Situated on Indianapolis' more working-class South Side, Manual initially stood in contrast to Shortridge High School, Indianapolis' first high school (founded in 1864), which was located on the more affluent North Side. At Shortridge, pupils engaged with a decidedly narrower and more academic curriculum (Gaus 1985, 25-30). Historians such as Kliebard (1999) and Engs (1999) have documented well the national rise of manual education in this period, making clear that it was often framed by its proponents as more suitable for the children of the working class, as well as Black and Indigenous students. In this regard, Indianapolis, with its clear North-South curricular division, was more similar than different.

Owing to sheer demand, the Indianapolis school board decided to open a third public high school in 1912, and they chose Stuart to lead it. The new school, eventually named Arsenal Technical High School, or Tech for short, was notable for two reasons, both of which made it novel in Indianapolis but emblematic of prevailing national trends regarding the urban public high school. First, Tech was massive. It was situated on a former United States arsenal (operational from 1863 to 1902), and had also been used as the Winona Technical Institute

from 1903 to 1911 (Faculty and Students 1940, 26). As such, the beautifully wooded, seventy-six-acre campus was already outfitted with multiple classroom buildings, a quadrangle, a library, and a cafeteria. In a few years' time, Tech was the largest high school in the city and, by 1925, educated over 5,000 students per year (Stuart 1926, 4).

Second, Tech was comprehensive in organization. As was the case with a growing number of large urban high schools, Stuart and his staff offered more paths to graduation than ever before. Some, for the college bound, were academic; others, for those who planned to immediately enter the workforce whether they graduated or not, were vocational. By the mid 1920s, this meant that Tech, on a single campus, provided training for higher education and jobs in the areas of "automobile construction, machine shop work, sheet metal work, foundry, plumbing, pattern making, cabinet making, carpentry, electrical construction, agriculture, home economics, printing, drafting, and commercial art" (Stuart 1926, vi-vii). No matter a student's likely path or interests, Stuart and Tech provided options.

Even early in his tenure as head of Tech, Stuart spoke and wrote often about his work leading a cutting-edge comprehensive high school. As a marker of his standing professionally, he was chosen in 1916 to serve as a member on the committee of the National Education Association (NEA) that would produce the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* report, released in 1918. Historians have aptly characterized the influential *Cardinal Principles* report as a direct repudiation of the NEA's 1892 Report of the Committee of Ten (Reese 2011; Kliebard 1995). The latter, led by then-president of Harvard Charles Eliot, argued that high schools should provide a college preparatory curriculum for all students, no matter their plans after high school. The former, led by Clarence Kingsley, a retired high school educator, claimed that "college prep for all" was elitist, undemocratic, and, all told, a waste of time and money (Mirel, 2006). Instead, the report argued, America needed more high

schools like Tech and more high school leaders like Stuart. Students needed a training in service of the seven objectives it listed: "health," "command of fundamental processes," "worthy home membership," "vocation," "citizenship," "worthy use of leisure," and "ethical character" (Commission 1918, 10-11).

During and after his work on the *Cardinal Principles* report, Stuart continued to lead Tech and to write extensively about high school leadership and organization. For the purposes of this essay, two of his books and two essays, written in a fourteen-year span, provide the opportunity for an analysis of his ideas about adolescence and guidance in the comprehensive high school, as well as the school's role in an urban, industrial community: "The Manual-Training High School" (1917), *The Organization of a Comprehensive High School* (1926), "The Problem of the Ninth Year" (1927), and *Guidance at Work* (1931). These texts demonstrate the import of the *Cardinal Principles* report on Stuart's career, but each is tinged with the urgency and pragmatism of a school leader rooted in a community and in the throes of day-to-day operations and decision-making. They offer, therefore, a unique window into the ways in which national curricular trends—watersheds like the *Cardinal Principles* report—were developed over time, and how they found life in the minds of school leaders and in the halls of American public high schools, an enduring challenge for historians of education (Cuban 1984; Cohen 1990; Tyack and Cuban 1995).

While Stuart was an active school administrator during this period of publishing, it is worth noting, too, that his influence extended well beyond these texts and his control over Arsenal Technical High School. Like many other administrators of his time, he found regular opportunity to discuss and disseminate his ideas. He was, among many roles in professional organizations, the president of the North Central Association of High Schools and Colleges (1922-1923), president of the Secondary School Principals in the NEA (1929-1930), and president of the Indiana State

Teachers' Association (1930-1931). In his time away from Tech during the summers, Stuart taught courses for the University of California, the University of Michigan, and Columbia University. Shortly before his death in 1933, moreover, he served at the request of President Hoover on a White House committee on vocational education (Faculty and Students 1940, 8-9). In an era of remarkable growth of the comprehensive high school, Stuart was among its leading voices and staunchest champions.

### **A Note on Race**

While Stuart's ideas about the comprehensive high school merit investigation, his reticence on race is notable, especially because the secondary schools in Indianapolis were subject to a segregation order during the period under study. As Jackson (2000), Pierce (2005) and Thornbrough (1993) have explained, the high schools in Indianapolis had been integrated since their beginnings in the nineteenth century. As the number of Black students interested in pursuing secondary education rose in the early twentieth century, however, several civic groups—the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Civic Clubs, of note—began pressuring the school board to segregate the system. In 1922, with hundreds of Black students enrolled in the city's high schools, the board acquiesced. It took several years before the new segregated school was built, but in 1927 (under the direction of a school board backed publicly by the Ku Klux Klan) the all-Black Crispus Attucks High School welcomed its first students.

For Stuart, this remarkable change in service of a segregated and racist school system meant, in practical terms, that Black students he led as principal were moved from Tech to Crispus Attucks under his watch. As this process played out, a period in which Stuart published regularly, he wrote next to nothing about the role of race in the high school. In line with his administrative peers nationally, he conceded on occasion that the comprehensive high school had to take account of *all* students.

In one illustrative example, he wrote that “a public secondary school has no choice but to meet the interests, the abilities, and the economic necessities of its every individual student, be he dull, normal, or brilliant, and irrespective of his social position, wealth, creed, or race” (Stuart 1926, 3). Stuart's thoughts and actions as a school leader and reformer, then, reflected the maintenance of the existing racial order of his time, both in Indianapolis and much of the nation. His stated position on race, or lack thereof, reflects Tyack's (1974) observation that “[u]rban schools did not create the injustices of American urban life, although they had a systematic part in perpetuating them” (12).

### **“Occupational Civics” and the New Industrial Order**

Chief among the *Cardinal Principles*' concerns was how to reorganize the secondary school and its curriculum in order to prepare youth to be responsible and productive members of a new urban-industrial order. The factory and its machines required a new sort of specialized worker, while the city and its temptations threatened to upend traditional American systems of social control. “These changes in American life call for extensive modifications in secondary education,” wrote Stuart and his fellow members of the Commission, and, as noted, they provided seven objectives to guide that work (Commission 1918, 8-11). Stuart's writings never strayed from these principles, and his professional mission was to operationalize the ideas found in the Commission's report, which had been in development in high schools across the country well before its 1918 release. As Kliebard (1995) explained, the *Cardinal Principles* report was less of a trailblazing document than a concise reflection of “the winds of change that had swept the educational world in the previous quarter-century” (99). For Stuart, Tech was the site of that operation, an urban laboratory deeply connected to the city of Indianapolis and its industries, where he and his staff conducted organizational, curricular, and pedagogical experiments in their efforts to realize the

promises of “industrial democracy” (Commission 1918, 8).

First-year students at Tech were introduced to the complex and changing world in which they lived. From there, they were carefully guided in their efforts to find a place in it. This process—from introduction to placement—occurred during the freshman year, in an exploratory course on “occupational civics.” The first year of high school was an especially important one, as it was the age at which Indiana’s compulsory education laws provided “the legal right of a child to break his training” (Stuart 1927, 127). Quitting school was “socially dangerous” (Stuart 1931, 79) and would consign the dropout to “that great army of occupational drifters who are helpless in our economic scheme” (Stuart 1926, 46). In response, the year-long civics curriculum at Tech sought to provide students with a social and vocational purpose that would “develop an appreciation of the real business of going to school” (Stuart 1931, 41) and would “inspir[e] children with strong enough purpose to go on intensively after the ninth year” (Stuart, 1927, 126).

Freshmen began by studying their immediate environment—the school—where they had just entered “as into a new country, with strange laws, customs, and traditions” (Stuart 1926, 47). The school was conceived as a “prototype” of society at large, a social organization unto itself, in which the new arrivals would have to find a place and a purpose. From the school, the first semester student moved to a “general survey of community life” and studied “the essential nature of the organization of modern society” (Stuart 1931, 37). It was hoped that students would begin to see themselves as members of cooperative social groups, whether those groups be educational, recreational, political, industrial, or otherwise. “When an intellectual basis for appreciation of social organization has thus been established,” wrote Stuart, “the essential factor in citizenship is to get the individual to sense his own peculiar relation to such an organization

and to get himself best adjusted therein” (Stuart 1926, 47).

For Stuart, the most important social relationship for the urban-industrial citizen was “the economic one,” as vocation defined one’s purpose and place in the social and economic order (Stuart, 1926, 48). But work was more than a means to earn money and status. Stuart elevated vocation to the level of service. It was one’s civic duty to do “that work in the community for which he is best fitted” (Stuart, 1931, 38). Choosing a vocation might determine an individual’s prospects, but it was also an important choice that would greatly impact the welfare of society. Wrong choices would lead to “social waste,” while the right ones would contribute to the general good. So conceived, Stuart’s vision of vocational education modeled the one set forward in the *Cardinal Principles*: “Vocational education should equip the individual to secure a livelihood for himself and those dependent on him, to serve society well through his vocation, to maintain the right relationships toward his fellow workers and society, and, as far as possible, to find in that vocation his own best development” (Commission 1918, 13). Vocational education, in Stuart’s mind, was not strictly a utilitarian endeavor; it was a communal one, and one vital to the civic health of society.

### **Adolescence and Bureaucracy**

In pursuit of his mission to fit young people for their adult roles, Stuart unsurprisingly developed an educational philosophy of adolescence, and his most complete formulation of it is found in M.V. O’Shea’s edited volume *Types of Schools for Boys*, where he authored a five-chapter essay on the manual training high school. The project, which also included sections on military and church schools, was premised on the position that modern social and industrial life required a variety of specialized institutions of secondary education “to give the kind of training which is deemed to be most suitable for the different industrial, economic, and social groups” (Stuart 1917, n.p.). Stuart eschewed footnotes and

rarely referenced scholarly works in his writings, making it difficult to provide a genealogy of his scholarly inspirations; still, it is apparent that he was influenced by the major progressive thinkers of his day, John Dewey and G. Stanley Hall included. It is impossible to determine whether Stuart studied these thinkers directly, or if he received their ideas indirectly, through secondary interpretations in professional publications and conferences, which is where Stuart found his intellectual home. His surface-level understanding of each does not qualify one to label him a “Deweyan” or “Hallian” per se, but traces of each can be found throughout his works. Stuart was, at times, reminiscent of Dewey in his unwavering faith that student interest should inform curricular decisions and in his organic view of social life in which the individual was deeply connected to the whole.

For Dewey, it was a “pedagogic blunder” to ignore the adolescent’s natural interest in exploring the connections between self and the social whole, an interest that was more pronounced during adolescence than at any other time in life (Dewey, 1896, 9). Dewey recommended that high school students study “social ethics,” a guided examination of social life based on the premise that the individual and whole were interdependent: “Society is a society of individuals and the individual is always a social individual. He has no existence by himself” (Dewey, 1903, 8). Stuart’s course on occupational civics is strikingly similar to Dewey’s social ethics. Further, the overall mission of Arsenal Technical High School—to connect adolescents’ individual interests to a course of study that had as its ultimate aim the improving general welfare of society—was markedly Deweyan.

The spirit of G. Stanley Hall lingers, too: both Hall and Stuart worried that the modern adolescent would be corrupted by the urban-industrial environment; each man romanticized and revered the adolescent to an almost cloying degree; and both respected student interest and, more importantly, entrusted the adolescent with the freedom and responsibility to pursue those interests. Stuart institutionalized and

operationalized some of the key educational reforms recommended by Hall in his seminal 1904 work, *Adolescence*. Considering Stuart’s membership on the NEA’s Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, it is worth noting that *Adolescence* contained a lengthy and incisive critique of the Committee of Ten, whose work had been built on “three extraordinary fallacies,” among them the belief that fitting students for college was the same as fitting them for life, a position that Hall found absurd and irrational (Hall 1904b, 510). Hall and Stuart both argued that subject matter should be subservient to student interest; Stuart, a strong advocate for the elective system, wanted students to choose courses “which will best serve his interest, no matter what this may be” (Stuart 1931, 83). But the freedoms granted by course election required a faith on the part of educators that the developmental capacities and instincts that accompanied adolescence could and should inform educational choices. Stuart possessed this faith, arguing that educators should work to grasp the “connection between what a boy craves and what his whole system needs” (Stuart, 1917, 144-145). A more concise summary of Hall’s child study movement can hardly be found.

That is not to say that Stuart, Hall, and other educators focused on adolescent education did not harbor deep suspicions and uncertainties about those youth they cherished most. *Adolescence* was a developmental stage rife with risks, and adolescents could quickly slide into “abnormal,” “antisocial,” and “criminal” behaviors that could undermine the efforts of even the most expert pedagogue. The problem of truancy, for example, was a special one during adolescence, a period when “youth long intensely for the utter abandon of a wilder life” and instinctively rebel “against limitations of freedom and unnatural methods of education” (Hall 1904a, 348). Hall argued that a youthful tendency toward truancy was natural and drew from his theory of recapitulation to locate its cause in those “primitive” instincts that subsumed adolescence. Stuart accepted the “world-old truant boy” (Stuart 1926, 70) as a

professional given, and characterized adolescence as “period of impatience” and “restless energy” (Stuart 1917, 147). But each thinker possessed a simple solution to the problem of absenteeism. In Stuart’s case, truancy and school failure could be solved by “adapting the work of [Arsenal Technical High School] to the needs of Indianapolis youth” (Stuart 1926, vii). Thus, while truancy might be a symptom of the adolescent stage, Hall and Stuart argued that the cure to this and all other problems of adolescent education lay in carefully study of their needs, seriously considering their interests, and crafting a responsive curriculum that would engage them. In Stuart’s words, “cases of irregularity are not so much cases for discipline so much as they are symptoms of maladjustment and such that need helpful guidance” (Stuart 1931, 70-71). G. Stanley Hall made a similar point, albeit a touch more poetically:

The apex of the runaway and truancy curve is here. It is the age of spring fever, when previous life seems dead, and the soul would moult it and be done with it. It is the most vulnerable and difficult of all the periods after infancy, the severest test of parent, teacher, and pedagogical methods...What shall we do with the hobbledehoys, *Backfische*, larrakins, is the oldest problem of education, and one answer is plain. We must first study them (Hall 1901, 34-35).

And study Stuart did. Arsenal Technical High School was not just an educational laboratory, it was designed with impressive bureaucracy to function as an observatory as well. Much of *The Organization of a Comprehensive High School* (1926) and *Guidance at Work* (1931) were devoted to meticulous and technical descriptions of a complex and insatiable information-gathering network of offices, committees, and forms. No detail, however small, about a student’s life was deemed insignificant in Stuart’s effort to reveal each individual’s aptitudes and interests.

All members of Tech’s administrative and teaching corps participated in the study of the school’s students. Teachers were not merely instructors, they were “mental and social diagnostician[s]” (Stuart 1926, 79) who took into account classroom performance as well as “all the elements of home surroundings, family attitudes, and personal traits” (Stuart, 1931, 14). The ideal teacher, according to Stuart, would be described by a student as someone “who knows all about you and likes you anyhow” (Stuart 1926, 84). Teachers recorded grades, as they always had, but they were also expected to maintain a “record of personal traits” of all their students (Stuart 1931, 88). Stuart instructed his staff to conduct “a natural and moral observation of individuals such as occur in the affairs of everyday life” (91) and log those observations on a card. They were to record instances in which students exhibited “desirable personal qualities under one of three types” (89). Over the course of an entire four-year career at Tech, each student generated forty such cards, all of which were included in the “pupil’s permanent record and becomes an item of specific, definite, and lasting evidence of the pupil’s personal worth.” Finally, each card was measured and ranked against other students’ cards and students falling within the top quintile were recognized as “superior” (91).

Stuart’s “system of record of personal traits” did “not provide for record of adverse qualities”—that work fell to other personnel and was recorded on different forms (Stuart 1931, 91). Tech’s imposing bureaucracy included the sinister sounding “Department of Reclassification” and its erudite partner, “The Council of Research and Personal Record.” The former concerned itself with failing students who had no hope of earning credits for a class in which they were enrolled. “It is futile to have the machinery for detecting the needs of pupils,” Stuart wrote, “unless there be established at the same time the machinery to make teaching adjustments to meet individual needs” (65). Only the most thorough system of record keeping and analysis could help Stuart accomplish his ultimate goal: to provide a

population of 5,500 students with “a program of courses which would make possible five thousand five hundred curriculums, each adapted to the five thousand five hundred individual needs” (Stuart 1926, 4).

“The Council of Research and Personal Record” had an equally ambitious assignment: “collect, classify, and interpret information about individual pupils and to make such available for every other agency of guidance within the school” (Stuart 1931, 67). All manner of academic details, personal information, and even physical characteristics were collected, as were IQ scores and results from the Thorndike Test of Word Knowledge. Further, the Council was endowed with the power to administer further tests if circumstances warranted. “[C]onstantly active in finding new ways to find new facts about pupils,” the research group served as a clearing house, disseminating information and recommendations to all of Tech’s administrative, counseling, and teaching personnel (69). Such work, in Stuart’s mind, took full “advantage of aids which modern science is fast applying” (69).

Stuart sought to transform his high school into a full-fledged technocracy. At times, Tech is portrayed as an overwhelmingly bureaucratic environment, governed by a corps experts and “scientists” who endlessly tabulated the interests and aptitudes of students and recorded their findings on a stack of dull forms. But Stuart was also a humanist. This spirit was best captured in his 1917 publication “The Manual-Arts Training School.” “For a school worth the name is not building nor equipment, nor even course of study. It is people. Wherever boys and girls are drawn to a real man or woman and there learn the beauty of soul and mind, or useful accomplishments, there is a great school,” he wrote (Stuart 1917, 130). He also claimed that the modern manual arts high school was “one of the least ‘institutional’ and most intensely human projects that has entered into the heart of a man for a long time” (133). The school Stuart built was decidedly institutional, and his later works are less sentimental, far more technical, and chronicle,

perhaps, the efforts of a man committed to serving G. Stanley Hall’s romanticized adolescent while simultaneously remaining loyal to the professional imperatives of his day, social efficiency and scientific management included.

### **Guidance and Social Sorting**

According to Stuart, the high school freshman “is ready to consider life as a whole and he is going to think out what he wants to do” (Stuart 1927, 128). But incoming secondary students also required careful and expert guidance from teachers and administrators to ensure they selected vocations that fit with their individual interests and aptitudes, since most “come to high school lacking purpose in any form. All that they do is a result of chance. They change their courses according to whim; oftentimes their decisions are determined by the prejudices of a chum” (Stuart 1931, 37). In response, the first year at Tech was “considered a year of exploration and finding.” Male students were provided with numerous opportunities to test and try out various “industrial processes” in the building and metal crafts. The exploratory courses continued into the following year, by the end of which sophomore completers were exposed to “12 distinct processes of industry,” including carpentry, automobile construction, cement work, and foundry work (56).

As was typical nationally, vocational courses were segregated by sex, and female students, after studying the “evolutionary history of woman’s work” in occupational civics, were introduced to those occupations associated with home economics, with especial focus on domestic, culinary, and textile work (Stuart 1926, 49). While the boys tried their hands in the wood- or machine shops, girls divided their time between the food and clothing “laboratories,” where “an attempt is made to present to the girl such a range of activities as will awaken a new interest in the science and art of home making” (Stuart 1931, 58). This was considered foundational work for those young women who hoped to join fields deemed

appropriate, such as “journalism, dietetics, salesmanship, occupations in libraries and laboratories, social service, secretaryship, nursing, [and] interior decorating” (48).

None of the above signaled a departure from the *Cardinal Principles*, where the idea of guidance played a significant role. But Stuart did define the term more broadly. The Commission typically paired “guidance” with “vocation.” Stuart’s definition, on the other hand, was more expansive. He reimagined guidance as a more holistic endeavor. To be sure, successful navigation through Tech’s comprehensive course catalog—which contained over 270 semester-long offerings—would require careful guidance, but Stuart frequently reminded his readers that the purpose of secondary education extended well beyond the formal curriculum. Among the high school’s most important objectives, he wrote, was fostering “the development of every desirable personal attribute”; ultimately, the educator’s primary aim lay in “molding human lives.” To accomplish this “higher purpose,” Stuart called for every administrator, department, and faculty member to be “integrated and unified in the interest of the care and guidance of each individual pupil” (Stuart 1931, 3).

Though all students were met with a robust and complex system of guidance at Tech, some, in Stuart’s mind, needed more attention than others. He sparingly addressed the social inequalities wrought by industrial capitalism and was careful to explain the sorting of students at Tech as more practical than socially reproductive. However, he made as clear as any of his contemporaries that the project of the comprehensive high school, with its myriad options and attention to the individual, “were not introduced primarily for the sake of the pupils who were in the schools [already], but for those who were out of them” (Stuart 1917, 138). He accepted that the nineteenth-century high school, with its narrow and largely academic curriculum, had worked well for the small number of mostly middle-class children who had attended it.

Instead, his most coherent thoughts on social class centered on the children of the working-class or poor, who left school before freshman year or earlier to earn money as “elevator boys, and cash girls, [and] delivery boys.” He acknowledged they were likely proud to be wage-earners with some level of independence, but he feared they might be inattentive to the reality “that most of them are doomed to remain among the unskilled” (Stuart 1917, 138). At Tech, as an alternative, they might have a chance to consider their prospects and catch “a vision of the possibility of training in exactly what they wished to do” (146). He accepted, nonetheless, the likelihood that “the personal limitations” of a student’s “economic and social environment [were] factors in determining the degree to which the abilities of the individual may be developed” (Stuart 1926, 3). The world needed management and labor; the high school, Stuart discerned, should begin fitting people for jobs in both.

Despite his demonstrably classist views on student potential, Stuart took seriously the task of framing the various subjects of study at Tech, whether academic or vocational, as equals. To his mind, other subjects had followed a similar trajectory in the past, both in the high school and the academy. “Physics has done it; chemistry, botany, zoology, and modern languages. Skepticism regarding these has almost vanished,” he noted. The process would be an uphill battle, however, because of what he referred to as the “taint of toil.” That is, while physics and botany recalled for most the degree-holding and sophisticated scientist, sheet metal work and plumbing were “connected in our minds with toil, real manual labor which soils the hands and calls for overalls. We might as well own it.” It was a class-based “bigotry,” one “which mental training has always assumed toward manual,” and, he believed, one that implicated “our colleges and universities” and the common person alike (Stuart 1917, 151-152). It was more society’s problem than the high schools’.

Along those lines, Stuart viewed the practice of definitively labeling classes as

“vocational” or “academic” (he often used the term “cultural” for the latter) as a difference of perspective at its best and implicitly elitist at its worst. “Greek is a vocational study to the future Greek professor, and [a class in] forging a real piece of culture, acquainting [the future professor] with a contrasting phase of life,” he argued. “This is just as true as is its converse, that to the future blacksmith forging is vocational and Greek purely cultural” (Stuart 1917, 168). What truly marked the difference—between the professor and the forger—was unrelated to whether their studies led directly to an occupation, and was instead tied to a value judgement, inexorably bound to social class, of the importance and status of their lines of work. Stuart explained sardonically that “[w]e deserve no credit at all in this country for not having a caste system. Fancy our trying to rate a man’s social standing according to his occupation!” (174).

No matter the path one might pursue at Tech, Stuart saw the time his pupils spent together in high school as the great “introducer” of the social classes. Under ideal circumstances, the future manager and laborer could study together, maybe even developing a respect and mutual appreciation that would be unlikely should they have an encounter as adults, hardened by the realities of the workplace. “Right beside the boy who is taking auto construction because he wishes to understand his father’s Packard touring car, works a boy who will run a Packard truck instead,” he explained. Just down the hall perhaps, “[a]long with the boy who intends to make printing his trade, studies the boy who will inherit his father’s printing establishment” (Stuart 1917, 193). Aside from serving as a safeguard against future class animosity, Stuart also believed there was great benefit in the future managers studying the trades in-depth and with seriousness. A manager “may, or may not, assist in the manual work himself, but he must understand it in every detail.” In the same vein, the head of a business “may not keep his own books, but he must know when it is rightly done.” Judging from the records of students,

Stuart found that an appreciable number of his well-to-do pupils agreed, noting that “[m]any of our most purposeful boys in the shops are sons of manufacturers” (178).

Ultimately, Stuart viewed the comprehensive high school, regardless of its efficacy as a lever of social uplift, as among the bottom layers of an expanding social safety net. Because society recognized that schools such as Tech existed to educate all young adults, “be [they] dull, normal, or brilliant, and irrespective of...social position, wealth, creed, or race,” he knew they could not simply ignore or turn away pupils (Stuart 1926, 3). The cost to society was too great, though his rationale on this point was distinctly more practical than romantic: “And ‘keep him in [school]’ must be the verdict for the sufficiently normal if future society is to be spared an unduly institutionalized population” (4). As with the *Cardinal Principles* report, Stuart portrayed the institution of the comprehensive high school—as complex and substantial as it was—as vital.

## Conclusion

Through careful study and constant guidance, Arsenal Technical High School sought to pair individual interests and aptitudes with the needs of a growing city. Stuart designed his school to foster curiosity in those technical and industrial disciplines “for which there is a recognized community demand” (Stuart 1926, 14-15). But Stuart’s educational vision was not purely vocational; he “believe[d] that if our school should attempt to make a boy of high school age a mechanical expert without a grasp of the social problems of the community at large...it would be failing its duty to the individual and to the state” (23). He hoped Tech’s graduates would be free and thinking beings, not mere cogs in an industrial machine. If their work did not inspire thought, then the student “needs to be educated all the more to think for himself above the grind of the machinery” (Stuart 1917, 179). Stuart’s approach—however “modern,” “scientific,” and sometimes bureaucratic it was—had a

humanistic element at its core. He wanted Tech to humanize both individuals and their labor.

Beyond Tech, Stuart's role in producing the *Cardinal Principles* report, along with only twenty-five other committee members, places him among the most cited and influential authors on the high school curriculum from his era. Returning to the texts that he produced on his own in the wake of the report, however, allows for important historiographical lines of inquiry. It situates Stuart's ideas among the most prolific writers on education and adolescence of his day, including John Dewey and G. Stanley Hall, which serves to recognize that he found his intellectual home among professional educators but did not operate in a theoretical or conceptual vacuum. Moreover, the analysis captures the perspective of Stuart as a prolific practitioner-author, one who evolved over time, was limited by the constraints of time and money, was rooted in time and place, and who dealt daily with high schoolers and the staff who served them. If the comprehensive high school was, as Stuart put it, its own "country, with strange laws, customs, and traditions," then the ideas of its leader and innovator provide a glimpse into such a place (Stuart 1926, 47).

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