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Educational Inflation

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With the "tell it like it is" phase hitting the country, it shouldn't be long before the American people realize that because every person in the country has a high school diploma, it does not necessarily follow that every person in the country is literate. For some time now, the American system has been suffering from what might be termed "educational inflation." A direct product of this system is the cliché, "today you need a college degree to get the same job you needed a high school diploma for yesterday." The question is, however, how long are we going to delude ourselves by believing that higher degrees are necessary because today's youth are smarter. The truth may be that a college degree is necessary because the high school diploma has been prostituted.

The apex of this insanity was reached when certain educators and students demanded that the college admit "x" number of students regardless of their academic qualifications." This action is supposed to "put the system right." If these demands are met, tomorrow's cliché may well be, "hurry up and get a graduate degree."

Would it not be better to make the criteria for diplomas and degrees more stringent and consistent? Do employers have a right to assume that a job applicant with a diploma or degree has acquired certain basic skills?

It appears that in our society today, the basic criterion for a diploma or degree is becoming, more and more, "time in service." Regardless of the requirements a school sets, it is becoming apparent that if a student is willing to work hard and keep out of trouble, he will, more than likely, receive his gentleman's "C" and eventually his diploma or degree. It is unfortunate that today's instructors, with all their learning, are unable to differentiate between being kind to a student and being fair to him.

The time has come to ask whether the high school diploma (or college degree) is for the person who earned it or for his parents. There are literally hundreds of respectable jobs that do not require a college or even a high school education: auto mechanic, cook, truck driver, jeweler, cashier, carpenter and cosmetologist, to name but a few. Vocational schools might be part of the answer. It makes more sense for parents, teachers and students to spend less time protesting and striking and more time voting and tutoring. By pulling the bottom up instead of the top down, we might produce a better society.