

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University
Ohio State Engineer

Title: Liberal High School Training

Creators: Heck, Edward S.

Issue Date: May-1926

Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 9, no. 4 (May, 1926), 21.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/33815>

Appears in Collections: [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 9, no. 4 \(May, 1926\)](#)

LIBERAL HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING

EDWARD S. HECK, '29.



IN the last issue of this magazine an article appeared stressing the advantages of a technical or trades High School training for the engineering student. As an engineering student and a graduate of an arts high school, I do not exactly agree with the author of that article. Perhaps it may be a matter of personal opinion, but I wish to bring out some of the advantages that are enjoyed by the man who has not specialized on technical subjects or shop work while in High School.

The requirements in the non-technical line for admission to the Ohio State Engineering College are only three units of English and two units of foreign language, still we find that the admission board "strongly recommends" that the elective subjects be taken from the foreign language, history, and geography group. The reason for such a recommendation is that the board believes that the man with a good background of such subjects will make a better engineer. In Survey of Engineering we learn that a great many engineers take up executive positions within a short number of years after graduating, and indeed it is in such positions that the engineer finds the most profit. To handle such positions the engineer must be something besides a mechanic or a technical encyclopedist. He must be able to associate on equal terms with people of culture, and if he has little knowledge of languages, literature, or expression he will be handicapped. The man who knows nothing but his work is apt to be a bore. He may not even be given credit for being an expert technical engineer.

I do not wish to create the impression that it is not important to have the best possible ability in the science and practice of engineering. That is the thing of most importance, but any man who graduates from Ohio State will have that. The graduate of the technical high school may have an easier time the first few quarters, and may make better grades, but the student from the arts high school in the end will get just as much from the course. He may even get more, if he has had to work hard. As an example take Engineering Drawing. The technical high school graduate has had two or more years of drawing and the course may be easy for him at first; if he shows marked ability he may even get credit for the first quarter by examination, but in the end the man who plugs through college drawing will know as much about the subject or even more. So it is with most subjects, the man with training in high school may have a better start, but the Arts High School student gets there just the same, and is the gainer for having mastered something difficult. The point I wish to make is that the high school brand, technical knowledge, or conceptions of engineering one may have before he comes to college will not affect the finished product.

It is argued that a trades education will help the prospective engineer earn his way through school. I admit that in some cases he may have an advantage. It must be remembered though, that the man from the ordinary high school has not necessarily wasted his time, he may make just as much money in a shoe store as the other makes in

a drafting room. It is easy to find examples of students who have perfected themselves even in some technical profession without help from their high schools. Some men from such schools hold commercial radio licenses.

But after all, I agree with Mr. Winter that in the final analysis success is a matter of the individual rather than of the high school. If he has ability, the lack of high school engineering training will not flunk him, and if he has personality, and the ability to express his ideas, lack of high school training will not affect his success.
