

School Work

When Booker T. Washington, our nation's finest educator, started Tuskegee there was no school there at all. The students worked with him to build the school itself - including the actual school buildings.

I visited Tuskegee a few years ago. The buildings were very well built. They have fallen into disrepair – which should be corrected – but they are still beautiful buildings. This is illustrated in the 4 pictures here.

The students at Tuskegee learned in the classroom, but they also learned practical skills building and maintaining the school complex.

This is a model we could easily emulate. Our schools currently do a poor job, but they are intended to teach our children to think as well as practical life skills.

Why are we hiring janitors, landscape professionals, and maintenance personal to keep our schools in order? Our schools are filled with able bodied young men and women who need to learn to work.

The students would have a sense of pride in the school itself if they were involved in its upkeep. Some work would require supervision, but there are few maintenance tasks a 10-year-old cannot perform if shown how.

I propose that we institute a program in which the students are responsible for the upkeep of the schools. Some students would gravitate toward chores they liked best, but the program should expose every student to every chore on a rotating basis.

Doubtless there are lawyers who will tell us that having the students work is a liability. But are we going to let a profession as corrupt as the legal profession tell us how to run our schools?

Tuskegee University - Built by the students



BUILDING A NEW DORMITORY
Students draw plans, dig foundations, make the brick, cut timber, which they saw and make into joists and frames. The painting, plastering, plumbing and roofing are also done by the students under the direction of their instructors.



STUDENTS FRAMING THE ROOF OF A LARGE BUILDING



Alabama Hall - built by the students



Tuskegee Chapel - designed by a member of the faculty and built by the students