

Trends in Teacher Education

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IN THE midst of rapid social and educational changes, it is not always easy to distinguish between fundamental currents and surface eddies. The latter often excite the most attention. The great whirlpool of Niagara creates a tremendous commotion and catches the tourist's eye in its violent reaction against the progress of the river. It seems to reverse the direction of the stream itself. Nevertheless, in spite of the perpetual sound and fury of its protest, the river presses on to the sea with irresistible power. The ever-broadening stream of education has its full share of pedagogical whirlpools and cross currents, but I shall try to concentrate on major trends or tendencies now being reflected in teacher education in secondary education in America.

I shall further limit this discussion to those trends which are of special significance for health and physical education teachers and administrators.

The professional training of teachers is little more than a century old. It has not yet attained the status of the older professions—law, medicine, or theology. It even lacks the prestige of the younger profession of engineering. It is on its way to new levels of competence and social recognition, but is retarded by many obstacles. Physical education training is only fifty years old and its program is still in the making.

One persistent source of confusion grows out of the dualism between the major agencies for training teachers. One-half of our teachers come from normal schools or teachers colleges with too little emphasis on subject matter and scholarship. The other half come from liberal arts colleges with too little emphasis on educational philosophy, methods, and practice experience. The teachers college is a product of the public schools. It is interested in training all the children of the people for the common life, for character, for citizenship, and for the common vocations. The arts college is the offspring of the university and has been concerned with training "scholars" for the learned professions.

The mutual misunderstandings and recriminations that grow out of these conflicting objectives and experiences explain in part at least the endless controversies as to the functions of education, its curricula and its methods. The secondary schools were once preparatory stages of training of a highly selected group preparing for college and university. Today this function is being submerged in the necessity for meeting the needs of all vocations and not merely the 6.7 per cent of the population who will emerge in the professions.

This conflict over the function of the secondary school comes to a focus in the curriculum. Shall the high schools prepare for college or prepare for life? The answer is to be found in the steady decline of the old "disciplines" of the classical tradition and the increase of natural science, social science, fine arts, laboratories, and other activity programs and the growth of technical, trade, and commercial high schools.

The discoveries of educational psychology in the last twenty-five years have accelerated the social pressure for change and even the well-endowed private colleges are falling into line. Those that are not endowed or are supported by public funds have to accept the credentials of the secondary schools. State institutions are required to do so by law and private colleges are compelled to do so by the economic necessity of securing a student body.

The whirlpool of reaction still throws up a few places like St. John's College where they are trying to revive the classics (minus classical languages). But the ancient shibboleths no longer overawe the modern public. They want a curriculum which fits the realities of today and tomorrow. They believe that culture, discipline, and mental ability can be developed and tested by the new curriculum as well as by the old.

The retreat is being turned into a rout by such popular books as "The Sabertooth Curriculum," a recent satire on the persistence of prehistoric curricula in modern education. We still have plenty of sabertooth curriculum left, but it is dying fast. The revolution in the curriculum of our schools and colleges explains some of the changes which are taking place in teacher education and sets many new problems before the modern teacher.

Current Trends in the Training of Teachers

1. *The Trend toward More Thorough Academic Training and Better Scholarship.*—The new teachers are expected to know their subject matter. The standards of the liberal arts colleges are making themselves felt. The days of the old short course normal school training are over. The teachers colleges are becoming academically respectable. They are becoming schools of liberal arts as well as schools of pedagogy. They are asking for scholarship.

2. *The Trend toward Broader Academic Training.*—The schools are demanding teachers who have a broad training as well as an intensive one. Superintendent Stoddard says they want teachers who know a field rather than specialists in a single subject. Extreme specialization is neither necessary nor desirable. The dissection of knowledge into minute fractions which has taken place

in the universities has set an undesirable pattern for the secondary schools. We need a more synthetic approach to the major fields by teachers who themselves have made such a synthesis. The old country school where one teacher struggled with all subjects had some advantages for both teachers and pupils.

3. *The Trend toward Individualized Education Through Guidance.*—Universal compulsory education and the lengthening of school years to middle adolescence compelled us to use factory methods of mass instruction. Uniform textbook assignments and instruction by lectures have covered the ground but smothered individuality. Specialized subject-matter teachers never got a chance to know much about any pupils except those who made the high marks and those who made the lowest.

Against these patent evils and limitations there is a most emphatic trend toward guidance through the use of scientific tests and measurements and a new personal relationship between teacher and pupil. We have repeated the ancient motto "Know Thyself" as the basis of all knowledge, but have done little to help the pupil to discover himself.

But guidance is more than a technical knowledge of paper tests and statistics; it calls for teachers who also have a good general knowledge of our contemporary world, its organization and its needs.

It also calls for a warm, sympathetic but clearheaded relationship between teacher and pupil. It needs an emotional bond like that which develops between the good coach and his players, for counsel is by invitation and not by prescription. This does not suggest (as some seem to think) that this is all that is required. Guidance requires technical skill, social insight, and warm personal relationships. The growth of specialists in personnel testifies to the validity of this trend.

4. *The Trend toward More and Better Health and Physical Education.*—The founders of this phase of modern education are still with us and in their lifetime have seen the almost universal acceptance of concern for the body. The field of service continues to broaden. Medical, dental, and nursing services, safety education, the multiplication of games and sports, the sports pages of papers and magazines, and the movies all testify to the growing cult of body worship. Fed by the public demand for competition and exhibition, it can hardly be kept within bounds. The real question before teacher education is how to control and direct this passion for youthful beauty, strength, and skill into long-range recreational activities and the development of organic efficiency. We also have to plan to serve all the children and not the upper 10 per cent already endowed by the gods. The trend toward more and better physical education continues strong.

5. *The Trend toward Cultural Recreation.*—There is a very definite trend toward increasing the training for cultural recreation. By this I mean an introduction by participation into all the fine arts and handicrafts. Teachers are now expected to supervise and promote a great many extracurricular programs including music, drama, folk dancing, social dancing, and social games. They are also expected to have skill and interest in working with wood, metal, leather, clay, and other mediums

which call for initiative and inventiveness on the part of the students. The new teachers are supposed to direct an ever-increasing range of such activities. They are also being trained to direct co-educational social life in its varied manifestations—hiking clubs, outing clubs, winter sports, and camping. All these new phases of modern recreational life are looking to the schools for guidance and direction.

6. *The Trend toward the Understanding and Direction of the Democratic Process.*—The modern teacher is expected to go far beyond the traditional, historical, and political organization of democracy into an understanding of the nature of social life. He is expected to be alive to the problems of national and international relationships and to be interested in the creation of a world fundamentally democratic in character. He must have both the theoretical and practical understanding of community organizations and the relationships between institutions. He must also be aware of the new philosophy and technique of group work which is becoming more and more a part of the life of the modern school. This includes the conception of leadership which is entirely different from the ancient role of "teacher." In short, the teacher must understand and make democracy live in his own institution. The training schools reflect this by increased attention to applied social science and student life and government.

7. *The Trend toward the Integration of General and Professional Training.*—The mere enumeration of all the new tasks which are being placed upon the shoulders of teacher-training agencies suggests one reason why there is a distinct movement to consolidate the general academic and cultural backgrounds with the technical and professional skills and methods for these new duties. The traditional pattern has been four years of liberal arts pure and undefiled by any vocational taint or practical application. With this body of pure knowledge, the graduating A.B. was supposed to turn to the professional school where he would learn the tricks of the trade. The present tendency seems to be for the liberal arts colleges to accept the inevitable and gradually make room for professional and vocational courses. On the other side, the old normal schools have gradually added the modern liberal arts courses and are rapidly securing accreditation as full-fledged degree-granting colleges. They are finding, however, that four years are all too short to meet these double requirements and so state departments of education are beginning to demand at least five years of training. Under such a program the old separations between theory and practice, idea and action, knowledge and skill have broken down. It can now be seen that the integration of these two aspects of life is much more effective than an artificial separation. If the present tendency to raise the qualifications of the teacher continues, it seems rather obvious that six years will be necessary.

8. *The Trend toward More Rigorous Selection of Teacher Education Students.*—The changes already outlined obviously call for more careful selection of teacher personnel. It will require superior persons to meet these new demands. The competition for placement enables cer-

tification boards and employing authorities to insist on higher standards and to enjoy a wider range of selection.

The better teacher-education schools are requiring higher entrance qualifications. If they are to place their graduates, they must have vigorous, well-adjusted, and intelligent persons. The biting criticisms of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on teacher personnel have been keenly felt by the profession.

The pressure for a higher quality of physical education teacher is also obvious. On the one hand we have a demand for greater specialization in health and safety education, and on the other hand a demand for double majors in physical education and some academic field.

Unfortunately we still have to face the fact that plenty of superintendents and school boards will sabotage a sound program of physical education for success in competitive athletics. Some recent college appointments of star athletes, without any professional training, to direct physical education and athletics are most discouraging.

The present tendency for hundreds of colleges and universities to set up physical education majors is very often little more than an academic pay-off for athletes already subsidized by varying degrees of board, room, and tuition. These alleged majors often have no real professional significance and help to destroy the standards which this new profession has been slowly and painfully building up.

While I am on this subject, I should like to draw attention to the practice of universities offering masters' degrees in physical education for courses completed in one year, when the candidates come up with a hodgepodge of credits from a general college, including an inadequate major or minor in physical education.

The certification regulations of state boards of education and civil service boards are helping to raise standards, but the final responsibility must rest on the vigorous support of the profession itself through its professional societies.

Conclusion

In concluding this incomplete summary of current trends in teacher education, I should like to express regret at the absence of one trend which I believe to be funda-

mental to all education and, therefore, fundamental in teacher education. I refer to the absence of any adequate provision for the moral and spiritual dynamics necessary for the support of a democracy. In a dictatorship the only required virtue is obedience to authority. In a democracy based on a large degree of individual freedom, there must also be a large degree of individual responsibility for society. Each member of a successful and permanent democracy, therefore, must have a strong sense of obligation to cherish the social good, to sacrifice for it, and to protect it against its enemies.

Instead of this attitude, I see an alarming percentage of our citizens who are willing to exploit and plunder the institutions they should be ready to defend with their lives. What is even worse is the neutrality of the rest of the community on these basic moral issues which undermine all our institutions—public and private. This lack of moral fibre, moral courage, loyalty, and honesty lies at the heart of all our troubles in the modern world—international, political, and economic. President Hutchins of Chicago University in a recent address said what we all know to be true:

"The great problem of our time is moral, intellectual, and spiritual. With a superfluity of goods, we are sinking into poverty. With a magnitude of gadgets, we are no happier than we were before. With a declining death rate, we have yet to discover what we should do with our lives. With a hatred of war, we are heading inevitably toward it. With a love of liberty, we see much of the world in chains."

Unless our schools can set a new and better pattern of voluntary social responsibility, there is no hope for an adult society. While we talk bravely of character and citizenship as major objectives of education, we know how far short we fall of even moderate success. Until we make these objectives a major issue in teacher education and select teachers who are themselves committed to the democratic ideal and all it means in social obligation, the schools will not be able to save this democracy from the fate of similar experiments in the centuries before us.

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