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CURRICULUM INNOVATIONS IN THE COLLEGIATE PREPARATION
OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS 1945 TO 1957

by

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A DISSERTATION

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Under the Supervision of Professor Royce H. Knapp

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TITLE

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PREVIEW

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING, PROBLEM, AND PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

While, in a real and important sense, all living experience exercises an educational influence, it is to the schools and institutions of higher learning that our society has assigned a special and chief responsibility for inducting youth into the culture and for developing in them the capacity wisely to modify that culture.--The Commission on Teacher Education

I. THE SOCIAL SETTING

Controversy, whether in education or in other areas of social life, has its basis in the contradictory yet interrelated needs, ideas, beliefs and values of men. Controversy is the intellectual expression of the conflicts, anxieties, and hostilities in society and serves to ease these tensions by permitting the peaceful processes of discussion and debate to minimize the danger of open strife and rebellion. Though some form of conflict is a precondition for controversy, controversy itself can channel these continuing conflicts in desirable directions that, by moving beyond the immediate dispute, can permit opportunities to develop for reasoned evaluation or resolution. Such creative interaction can prepare the society for intelligent change and progress.

Although conflict and controversy alone cannot account for all the many changes that take place in a society, they can, and do, set the stage for changes to occur. The United States as the most open, most mobile, most dynamic society in the world is also a society that is characterized by the greatest frequency of conflicts and controversies. The openness of a society is conducive to divergent ideas and beliefs. It creates an atmosphere for the acceptance of change. Many educators, as well as the general public, contend today that such an atmosphere existed in 1957. And, hence, the revolution in American education began with the conflict and controversy surrounding the launching of the Russian Sputnik. However, not all educators nor even the public at large agrees with this thesis regarding innovation and change.

Selected passages from Frank G. Jennings' article entitled, "The Revolution In Education: It Didn't Start With Sputnik" written for the Saturday Review, in September, 1967, provide a brief setting for the problem of this study and a rebuttal to those contending that the revolution in education began with Sputnik.

Early in October, 1967, begins Frank G. Jennings,¹ the American reading, viewing, and listening publics will be

¹Frank G. Jennings, "The Revolution In Education: It Didn't Start With Sputnik," Saturday Review, September, 1967).

invited to engage in some short-range historical accounting. Attention will be drawn to that earlier October morning, a decade ago, when the Russians did what we were planning to do. Our legislators demanded to know why the Communists got the prize that our free world scientists had been reaching for. The answers were loud and specific. Our schools were not doing their job. They would have to be brought up to the mark. Thus, it will be declared on radio and television and in the press, the continuing revolution in education was born on the fifth day of October in the Year of Our Lord, one thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven. But, argues Frank G. Jennings, this is just bold, bad history. The record is different. We are in the midst of an educational revolution more than twice as old as the one soon to be marked. If we are to look for watershed or some transforming series of events to account for the different way in which we now regard our educational problems, we must turn back beyond that earlier October to a date near the end of World War II when in 1944, the Veterans Readjustment Act, known more generally as the GI Bill, was enacted.

That piece of legislation, conceived and sponsored by the American Legion at the suggestion of President Roosevelt, was the most daring of many actions designed to provide secure re-entry of servicemen into nonmilitary society. More than 11,000,000 veterans of World War II made use of

its many provisions; more than 7,800,000 took advantage of its educational support before its termination in 1956. A total of almost \$13 billion was spent by the federal government on the education and retraining of the GI's. And, very little was said about the dangers of federal aid to education. Although the enactment of the GI Bill and its use by the returning veterans are of profound social and economic significance, they do not in themselves adequately indicate either the nature or the scope of the watershed that World War II represents in the history of American education. There were other events and occasions following the war that also powerfully affected the estate of our schools and our general culture. Science and technology, for instance, expanded each other's domains at home. A new internationalism beyond the dreams of Wendell Wilkie involved the country in local affairs from the Himalayas to the Andes. The American population, always mobile, resorted itself, moving into the great cities at a rate to make demographers wince. After 1945, the automobile and the airplane, together with the telephone, radio, and television, converted the United States into a truly national society. Our surging affluence made Henry Wallace's pipe dream of "60,000,000 jobs" a cheap reality. But a "hard core" of unemployed and unemployables made it painfully clear that the schools were not a sure social ladder for all the people.

America's 200,000 prewar school districts, continues Frank G. Jennings, were boiled down in the fires of local economics and politics to less than 50,000 at midcentury, but this consolidation had little apparent positive effect on the quality of school performance. The behavioral and social sciences offered new and old information about the way we learn and how we can be motivated to learn more effectively. The curriculum in the schools, however, seemed not to have changed at all. Although it is true that the schools and schoolmen had been talking since before the war with increasing earnestness about "problems in democracy" and about "aims in education" it is equally true that the public schools especially were increasingly responsive to demands for "practical" courses--instruction in home economics, driver education, general health, and business skills--courses which multiplied in the "nonacademic" curriculum.

But a sense of uneasiness persisted--something was wrong with the schools. Through the late Forties and early Fifties, the attacks on the public schools mounted in pitch and violence. Articles and books appeared with increasing frequency with provocative titles: "Lollipops vs. Learning," "The Failure of American Education," Quackery in the Public Schools, "Our Schools--Their Four Grievous Faults," and, of course, Educational Wastelands. Criticism of the schools persisted through the early Fifties, nurtured by some

ingredients of the contemporary context that were not being adequately attended to or accounted for by educational "statesmen." More important than the population explosion was the increased urbanization of the country, with its attendant spread of slum blight and the compression of the Negro at the cities' rotting centers. Parallel to this was the aggressive sprawl of the suburbs, the flight of the white, middle class into the new, trim-lawned "developments" which spread like bathroom tiles across former potato fields and orange groves. And preceding or following these was the rapid growth of the "aerospace" and electronics and other "clean" industries, all located in sub- or ex-urbia, all demanding highly skilled technicians and dependable work forces. On top of all this, the baby boom of wartime was being lowered on (and into) the classrooms. The population explosion which the 1945 report of the census predicted would not reach the 195 million mark until the century's end, would actually pass that mark in a single decade. Elementary school enrollments would jump from 20,000,000 in 1945 to over 28,000,000 in 1955. By midcentury more than 90 per cent of the nation's children went to high school and 40 per cent to college, and all trends continued upward. The shortage marched in step: too few teachers, not enough classrooms or laboratories or buildings or teaching

materials--but most of all, never enough local tax dollars to meet the demands or match the needs.

Not all the defenders of the public schools were pompous or self-serving, contends Frank G. Jennings, nor were all the critics superficial, wrong-headed, or reactionary. So vast an enterprise as "education for all American youth" requires constant surveillance and assessment. Some kind of performance inventory is necessary. But who shall have such a responsibility? Someone was saying that education is too important to be left to educators. The professional educator's response was, for awhile, almost monolithic. His defense was at first almost patronizing: of course, there were inadequacies; certainly, the major democratic goals were still partly beyond our grasp, but they were ennobling goals--"education for all American youth," "life-adjustment" to the real world by way of courses in "problems in democracy" and "family and home living," with "remediation" where needed and social promotion for "age and grade matching" to assure the proper socialization of even the reluctant learner. Progress, of course, was being made. But the attacks on the schools continued. And many leading educators were charged as being guilty of innovation without explanation.

Two developments, according to Frank G. Jennings, which had their beginnings in the Forties came to operational

readiness by the end of the decade. One was the emergence of the Ford Foundation as a national philanthropy with resources greater than many governments. It announced that as a result of its reorganization, education emerged as the major strand that ties together the purposes of almost our entire activity. The other was the establishment of the National Science Foundation (NSF) as an independent agency of the executive branch of the federal government, with a broad mandate to strengthen basic research and education in the sciences. With its vastly increased resources from the estates of Henry and Edsel Ford, the Ford Foundation entered all fields of education with great vigor and lots of hard cash. In 1951 it established the Fund for the Advancement of Education and the Fund for Adult Education. The former set in motion a variety of experimental programs (including the Master of Arts in Teaching), classroom television, teacher aides, and similar departures from past practice, while the foundation itself supported massive programs designed to upgrade education, especially at the college and university levels. Although the giant leap by the Ford Foundation was by far the most dramatic, other foundations with long traditions of support for education expanded their support of the schools and of teaching. The Carnegie Corporation launched the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools in 1948, to focus national attention on

the public schools and to make available to towns and cities throughout the country the experience of those communities which had been most successful in solving their local problems.

In conclusion to his article, Frank G. Jennings notes: "But it is clear that the continuing revolution in education didn't start with Sputnik--and its end is not in sight."²

This article, like many others, marks the fact that in recent years more and more people have become vitally concerned about the future of American education. Individual parents and citizens and organized groups of all kinds are taking a renewed interest in the conduct of their public schools and colleges.

II. THE PROBLEM OF THIS STUDY

Public education is the "growth industry" of the nation today. Next to defense, education is the single, largest enterprise in our political economy and, unlike even defense, it is the one American activity that in some way or at some time involves every single citizen. If public education is quantitatively important, then, the training of teachers is one of the most qualitatively important

²Ibid., p. 97.

undertakings of the entire educational enterprise. Indeed, the training of teachers is already the single largest undertaking of American higher education, since more college graduates enter the profession of teaching than any other vocation, and it may well be the most important undertaking of our colleges and universities.

The purpose of this study grows out of the previous discussion. Reform of programs for the pre-service education of teachers requires continuous attention. Therefore, the improvement of teacher education poses a persistent problem and challenge for those institutions where preparation takes place and the persons responsible for guiding that preparation. In light of the importance of this persistent problem, the specific purpose of this study is to identify, describe, and analyze some of the curriculum innovations appearing as requirements in the professional pre-service program of intermediate-grade, elementary school teachers from 1945 to 1957 at selected midwestern preparatory institutions.

The historical documentation of change and innovation reflecting reform and improvement in teacher education would tend to reject the hypothesis that the continuing revolution in education was born on October 5, 1957, with the launching of the Russian Sputnik.

Yet, as noted, the improvement of teacher education is a persistent problem confronting the American public, preparatory institutions and those persons responsible for guiding that preparation. Hence, this study is designed to provide a historical foundation to base judgments about American teacher education. All present practices and all proposals for the future of teacher education rest upon some interpretation of the past. Educational policies and decisions look both forward and backward. Whenever judgments are made, they rest upon some assumption or presupposition about the past as well as upon some hope or preference about the future. The study of the history of teacher education will not solve our present problems nor will it dictate the roads to the future, but intelligent decisions cannot be reached without it. Thus, the study of the history of education is one of the ways in which the profession and the public together should prepare themselves for making increasingly better judgments about American teacher education.

Although it is difficult to separate the liberal and technical functions of teacher education, this study deals with the professional education facet of the collegiate pre-service preparation of elementary school teachers.

Professional education, during the years from 1945 to 1957, came to include at least three major aspects: the foundations of education, a major field of competence, and a

period of induction to teaching experience. The foundations of education, although defined differently, have come to refer to a thorough-going study of the culture and of human behavior as these relate to the whole educational enterprise. Just as educators need a general education in common with other citizens, so should all professional workers in education have in common an understanding of the role of education in society, no matter what their specific professional task may be. Members of the profession need to understand the basic social trends in our culture, the dominant intellectual outlooks, the deepest values and commitments of democracy, and the conflicts and controversies that affect and shape the educational task. They need also to understand the processes of human growth and development and the mental, emotional, and physical behavior of the learners as well as the psychology of learning, adjustment, motivation, and personality development. This foundational approach is usually identified with courses in the history and philosophy of education, educational psychology and measurements, comparative education, and courses devoted to the social foundations of education (sociology, anthropology, economics, government, and social psychology).

Preparation in the major field of competence includes the subject matter specialization and the methods of teaching, administration, or guidance appropriate to the

special position for which the student is preparing. It includes attention to subject matter, curriculum development, materials and methods of teaching, and the whole range of activities whereby teaching may be enriched and improved at the particular level or in the grade or subject concerned. Great gains have been made in these respects, not only in the usual subjects of curriculum, but also in the preparation for special functions in guidance and counseling, psychological services, audio-visual materials, and administrative positions.

The induction to service includes an extended period in which the prospective teacher or administrator may have a wide variety of experiences in actual professional situations. Through observation, participation, student teaching, laboratory experience, and internships, the prospective teacher or administrator should gain the best possible insight into the conditions of dealing with students, parents, other teachers, and the community as a culminating experience leading to the first job.

Controversy has continued over the structure and function of the professional education curriculum since its inception. Consequently many persons responsible for guiding that preparation have assumed a defensive posture. Part of this defensive posture might be accounted for by their lack of historical perspective. By being involved in

the wealth of current educational controversy, some educators are led to believe that contemporary conflicts are the first or, at least, the greatest the schools have ever faced; they fail to realize that the disputes of the past were numerous and long and bitter.

III. METHODS AND SOURCES

The history of education is one of the oldest and most persistent elements in the professional preparation of teachers and administrators. In its earlier forms it had two dominant characteristics. It was concerned primarily with presenting factual information about the development of schools, their organization, administration, curriculum, and methods, but it gave relatively little attention to the role of education in the surrounding society and culture. Furthermore, it was often taught in a systematic, chronological way that failed to relate the past to the present and gave little help in bringing historical interpretations to bear upon the making of valid decisions about the present problems that face education.

This investigator has sought to preserve the merit of these earlier forms while avoiding their shortcomings. Hence, basic factual information about actual development of school practices and a variant form of chronological organization was maintained. To remedy some of the earlier

shortcomings of the historical approach, certain newer outlooks that have come to characterize more recent writings and teaching in the fields of history and the history of education were employed.

One of these characteristics is the cultural approach to the study of history and of education. Recent developments in the social sciences have stressed the importance of the concept of culture. The distinctive way of life of a society, developed in the traditions of the past and living on in the institutions, ideas, beliefs, and customs of the people, is summed up in the term culture. If educators and citizens alike are to understand and be able to deal with the problems of education, they need to understand the culture in which education operates and to which it contributes.

A second characteristic of recent scholarship in history and in education is increased attention to the persistent problems that face education in our culture. The "problems approach" is a significant development in teaching and learning at all levels of the educative process. The problem-approach, according to Bereday, may be used in the investigation of problems on a large scale, when all relevant data are brought to bear on the issue in question or in the analysis of more restricted topics. In the former category belong the types of problems included in the various

issues of the Yearbook of Education, e.g., "The Gifted Child" or "Higher Education"--and in the latter such topics as "Reform in France and Turkey" or "Indoctrination in Poland."

Although there are ramifications for the investigation of problems on a large scale, the problem for this study is of the more restricted variety, e.g., "The Reform and Improvement of the Pre-service Education of Teachers."

This investigator has tried to incorporate some of the problems approach along with the cultural approach in this study of a "period" of the history of American higher education. Much perspective on current problems can be gained by acquiring an historical orientation to each problem along with its social and philosophical bearings.

Another characteristic of recent scholarship is to consider it as intellectual history, also. Baumer notes that intellectual history claims as its special province the history of thought. What primarily interests the intellectual historian is not the value of ideas in the ultimate scheme of things, but their development and relation to each other in time, how and why they appear and spread at a particular time, and their effects on concrete historical situations. One of the major problems of intellectual history is to discover the climate of opinion of particular periods of history. Presumably, each period operates within

a specific intellectual climate, that is to say, a world view more or less peculiar to itself, which is based upon certain presuppositions and mental habits.

A review of related literature revealed that the educational intellectual climate of opinion immediately prior to and during the period of this study was progressive education. At least three progressive trends were discernible prior to 1945: (1) child-centered, (2) community-centered, and (3) social-reconstructionist. These trends as well as others were available to curriculum developers for reconsideration during the years of this study. They selected those trends that seemed to them to be most promising to treat the persistent problem of the reform and improvement of teacher education. These trends, in turn, were reflected in the innovations or plans of action they devised to solve this insistent and demanding problem.

Yet, history is an evolutionary process which never stands still. What we call an "age" or "period" contains both the fruit of the past and the seeds of the future. Hence, traditional philosophies such as perennialism and essentialism were also trends available for reconsideration prior to and during the years from 1945 to 1957.

History, of course, like nature, is a whole, the various parts of which--economic, political, social,

intellectual, educational--are organically related to and inextricably bound up with each other.

This investigator has attempted to incorporate this recent characteristic of the educational foundations, intellectual history, along with those previously mentioned. In selecting these characteristics and the writing of this study, the following works of a social and intellectual educational historian, Lawrence A. Cremin, have been highly influential: A History of Education in American Culture (1953); The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957 (1961); The Genius of American Education (1965).

Perhaps the most limiting factor in this study is that it marks the initial attempt of this investigator to write a small part of the social and intellectual educational history of higher education. And, hence, it reflects the trials and tribulations accompanying such a venture. Be that as it may, this study will be primarily limited to (1) the identification, description, and analysis of some of the curriculum innovations appearing as requirements in the professional pre-service collegiate education of intermediate-grade, elementary school teachers from 1945 to 1957 at selected midwestern preparatory institutions; (2) innovations and trends abstracted from thirty-two coeducational teacher-preparation institutions accredited by

the North Central Accreditation Association and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in the area of elementary school education.

This study primarily involved library research. For example, pertinent source materials for library research such as catalogs, bibliographies on education, and various foundations of education books, as well as other sources, were employed to solve basic problems attendant in the study. Such libraries as Love Library and the Professional Library, Teachers College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska; Memorial Library, Mankato State College, Mankato, Minnesota; and the Midwest Inter-Library Center, Chicago, Illinois, served as important centers of source materials for this study.

In determining the initial need for this study, various sources were surveyed. Part of this search process included contacting the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the National Education Association regarding the intended topic of the study. In response to this investigator's request for information Joel L. Burdin, Associate Secretary for the AACTE replied: "It seems that there is little specific information which can be provided concerning the collegiate preparation of elementary school