

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION



CLAPP • CHASE • MERRIMAN

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PREFACE

In the summer of 1927 the School of Education of one of our universities scheduled thirty-nine courses in education. For the following semester it offered a somewhat larger number. All these were in addition to courses offered in the Department of Physical Education and the Department of Industrial Education and Applied Arts. Still other work in education was offered in the form of teachers' courses in a dozen or more departments of the College of Letters and Science and in the several divisions of the College of Agriculture. Ordinarily, this institution requires the prospective teacher to pursue no more than five courses in education. Since this situation is fairly typical, it is evident that the American student who is preparing to teach acquires a knowledge of but a small part of the entire field of education. So minute, indeed, has specialization become, that it may truly be said that students are in grave danger of being unable to see the forest on account of the trees. Yet the work and the professional relationships of any teacher are such that he should have a general acquaintance with many of the divisions of the field as well as an intimate knowledge of those comparatively few phases that relate directly to his own work. An acquaintance with the general field will also help the student to interpret special courses in a more effective way than would be the case otherwise. The recognition of these facts has led various institutions to offer an introductory and orienting course in education.

By the experience gained during a number of years in shaping and conducting such an introductory course, the content and character of this book have been determined. This experience has led to the belief (1) that prospective teachers should possess a real understanding of the social and political prin-

ciples and of the educational philosophy that determine their country's system of education, — such understanding as can be gained only by a study of those agencies and influences that created and shaped the system as it now exists; (2) that, just as in other fields of learning, an understanding of one's own school system and its evaluation are made easier and more reliable by a knowledge of the systems found in foreign countries; (3) that all students of education should know the general problems of organization, curriculum, support, and control as found in the various divisions of our educational system, namely, elementary, secondary, vocational, and higher; (4) that no one can understand to any satisfactory extent the more formal aspects of an educational system, such as those just named, unless he knows, in a general way at least, the processes of learning and the fundamental methods of teaching.

These four subject phases have been treated briefly but definitely. The general procedure has been to present conditions and principles concretely rather than in general terms. For this reason the book will be found to contain an unusually large number of facts presented in tables and in the form of descriptions of actual situations. The idea of the authors is not that this detailed information shall be committed to memory, but that it shall be perused carefully. They believe that it is through contact with such material rather than with general statements that the student comes to have a real understanding of the conditions and the problems that confront a nation in connection with its schools. In the treatment of those topics in which psychology is involved, the authors have afforded glimpses of various new hypotheses but have omitted the more radical theories and have sought to avoid confusing the student by the presentation of too many conflicting theories. It has been their endeavor to make the book teachable by effective organization, abundant cross references, questions and exercises for each chapter, and serviceable bibliographies. Also sufficient charts, maps, and graphs have been supplied to afford necessary illustration material.

Prospective teachers do not constitute the only class of students that should know the general field of education. In a democracy such as the United States, where every man and woman comes into contact with the schools in some responsible way, there should be a large percentage of the population intelligently informed regarding education in general. It is the hope of the authors that the book may find its way into the hands of many students who, though they may never teach, will become a part of that great body of public-spirited men and women upon whose understanding and sympathy the welfare of our schools so largely depends.

THE AUTHORS

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