

SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS

for Becoming a Teacher



Forrest W. Parkay

Social Foundations for Becoming a Teacher

Forrest W. Parkay

Washington State University



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Preface

Teaching is one of the world's most important professions—and one of the most challenging. With continuing calls for higher standards, greater teacher accountability, and legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, becoming a teacher requires more professionalism and expertise than ever. To facilitate your journey toward becoming a successful teacher, *Social Foundations for Becoming a Teacher* will provide you with an understanding of the societal influences on our nation's schools. The book explains the trends, issues, and forces that influence teachers in today's high-stakes environment of education. The book illustrates how social forces—parental concerns, popular culture, gender, ideologies, beliefs about race and ethnicity, and historical events, to name a few—come together to determine teachers' daily experiences in the classroom.

The book also presents a realistic description of teachers' working conditions, so you can make a critical decision about becoming a teacher. Several features of the book are designed to give you an accurate picture of the world of teaching and to prepare you to take advantage of teachers' expanding leadership roles.

A Teachers' Voices feature in each chapter presents a short, first-person article written by a teacher to illustrate how teachers apply chapter content to actual classroom situations. The features will provide you with firsthand insights into real-world challenges teachers face and practical solutions for meeting those challenges.

To help you get the most out of your teacher education program, each chapter of this book includes a feature titled Relevant Standards. This feature illustrates how chapter content relates to standards developed by four professional associations: the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Praxis Series: Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Each chapter also includes a Case for Reflection designed to give you an opportunity to reflect on the contemporary issues teachers must deal with on a daily basis. The cases focus on controversial trends and issues that have aroused public opinion and have attracted media attention.

A Technology in Teaching feature in each chapter illustrates how educational technology is related to chapter content. This feature also provides current examples of how educational technologies are influencing schools and the profession of teaching.

Social Foundations for Becoming a Teacher also includes many learning aids to help you prepare for a rewarding future in teaching. Guiding Questions at the beginning of each chapter present the questions posed in the main headings within each chapter. Realistic opening scenarios present decision-making or problem-

solving situations teachers frequently confront. At the end of each chapter, Reflective Application Activities (Discussion Questions, Professional Journal, Online Assignments, and Observations and Interviews) present further opportunities to apply chapter content.

The book also includes a Professional Portfolio feature that will enable you to document your professional growth over time. These features present guidelines for creating portfolio entries that you can use when you begin teaching, or you may wish to use selected portfolio entries during the process of applying for your first teaching position. As a further study aid, Key Terms and Concepts are bold-faced in the text and listed with page cross-references at the ends of chapters. A Glossary at the end of the book can help you quickly locate the definitions of key terms and concepts and the text pages on which they appear.

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Forrest W. Parkay

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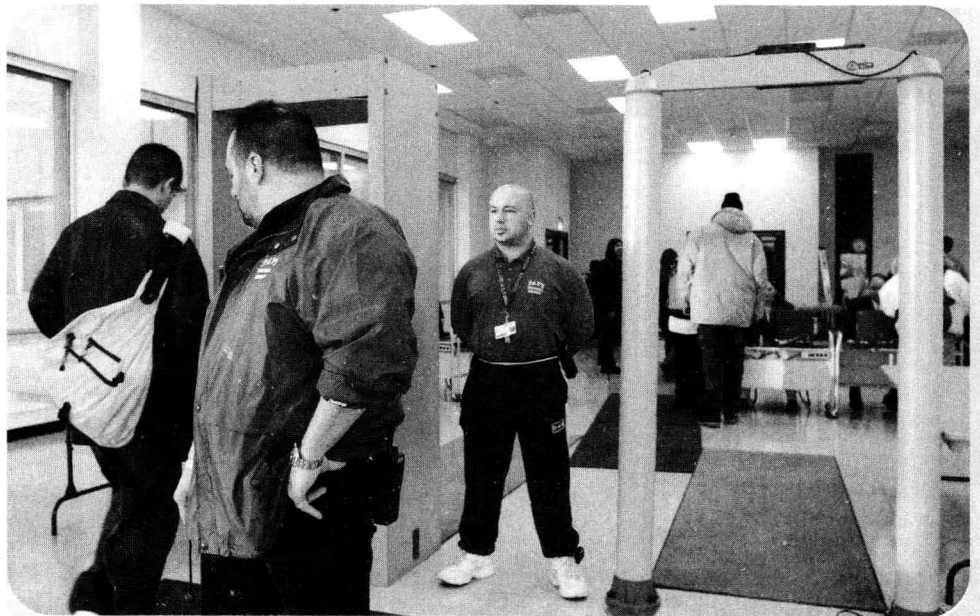
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**Social Foundations
for Becoming
a Teacher**



1

Societal Influences on Education



We would be naïve if we did not realize that there are factors in our culture that can have negative effects on teachers and their students.

—Carl Glickman, Stephen Gordon, and Jovita Ross-Gordon
SuperVision and Instructional Leadership, 2004

Ann is a fifteen-year-old African American who lives in a poor area of a large city. She is the oldest child in a family of six children. Three years ago, her father left the family because he was unable to find a job. He knew his family would receive more financial support from the government if he left the family. Since her mother works during the evening, Ann must take care of the apartment and her younger brother and two younger sisters when she gets home from school. The apartment has only three rooms and is continually infested with cockroaches. It has poor plumbing, and occasionally hot water is not available. During the winter months, the children must wear heavy sweaters or jackets to stay warm. The children usually go to school without breakfast, and they frequently go to bed hungry.

Frank is a fifteen-year-old white boy who lives in a middle-class suburb of the same city. He has a seventeen-year-old sister. Frank's father is a physician who works at a hospital downtown and commutes daily, often arriving home late in the evening. Lately, his father has been staying overnight at the hospital two or three times a month. Frank's mother is socially active, and she has a serious drinking problem. His parents often have loud arguments and have begun to talk about divorce. Frank's sister uses cocaine, and she often spends the weekend with her boyfriend. Frank is well fed, lives in a large home, and receives a generous monthly allowance.

Harold is a fifteen-year-old white boy who lives near a factory at the edge of the same city. He has an older brother and older sister. Harold's father works at the nearby factory on the assembly line. Harold lives in a small, but comfortable, three-bedroom home. The family doesn't have money for "extras," but the family's basic needs are well satisfied. Harold's parents are deeply religious, and he attends church every Sunday and again on Wednesday evening. His father, a Vietnam veteran and member of the local VFW, often shows visitors three medals in a framed display case hanging on a living-room wall. Harold's parents spend much time with their children. Often, they overhear their parents talking about how "liberals" and minority groups are "taking over the country."

Guiding Questions

1. What are the social foundations of education?
2. What are society's goals for schools?
3. What are the characteristics of schools in our society?
4. As social institutions, what are schools like?
5. What are the characteristics of "successful" schools?
6. What can we learn from the foundations of education in other countries?

All three of the youth in the above scenario attend the same high school and many of the same classes. Harold walks four blocks to school, and both Ann and Frank ride the bus. Obviously, Ann, Frank, and Harold are unique with regard to the social backgrounds from which they come. Their teachers, however, must deal with the differences they bring from diverse social backgrounds. On the other hand, their teachers must understand the similarities among these and other students and provide them all with appropriate learning experiences.

What Are the Social Foundations of Education?

To effectively teach students like Ann, Frank, and Harold, teachers must have a unique array of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. They must have knowledge of themselves, their subjects, their students, and educational theories and research, for example. Successful teaching also requires knowledge of the **social foundations of education**—the trends, issues, and forces that shape public and private education in the United States. The foundations of education influence the effectiveness of schools and the development of youth and children across the country. The ability of schools to address issues such as poverty, school violence, drug use, and homelessness has profound consequences for students and their teachers.

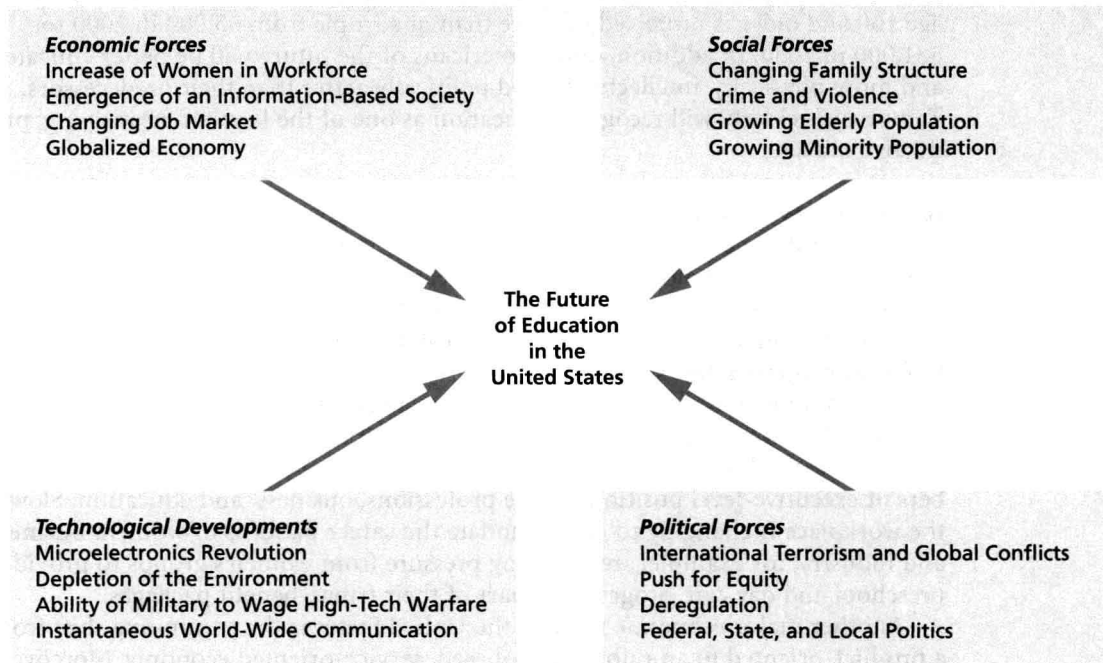
To facilitate your journey toward becoming a successful teacher, *Social Foundations for Becoming a Teacher* will provide you with an understanding of the societal influences on our nation's schools. The book will explain how social forces such as parental concerns, popular culture, gender ideologies, beliefs about race and ethnicity, and historical events influence the profession of teaching. A companion volume to this book, *Political Foundations for Becoming a Teacher*, examines four additional foundations of education—political, legal, philosophical, and economic—and how these foundations are related to continuing calls from various groups for educational reform and teacher accountability.

Today's Influences on Tomorrow's Schools

Schooling in the United States is shaped not only by the *past* and the *present*; it is shaped by the *future* as well. Society is continuously changing, not static. As a result, teachers must continually modify their understanding of how society influences schools. Success as a teacher requires continuous reevaluation of the past, the present, and the future.

Though no one can predict the future, it has a profound effect on teaching. As Alvin Toffler (1970, 363) stated decades ago in his best-selling book, *Future Shock*, “All education springs from some image of the future. If the image of the future held by a society is grossly inaccurate, its educational system will betray its youth.” Among the factors that will influence schools in the future are social, economic, and political forces and technological developments (see Figure 1.1).

Social Forces Soaring numbers of runaway children and cases of child abuse suggest that the family is in trouble. Tomorrow's teachers will find that more and more

Figure 1.1 Significant forces shaping the future of education in the United States.

of their students are from families that are smaller, have working mothers, have a single parent present, or have unrelated adults living in the home.

While crime and delinquency may have declined recently, they will continue to impact tomorrow's schools. Much of the crime that occurs in and around schools is related to students' use of drugs. Violence and vandalism in some schools have already reached epidemic proportions. What was originally characterized as an urban problem has now spread to the suburbs and rural areas. Certainly, the reduction of school crime and violence is one of the critical challenges tomorrow's teachers will face.

The United States of the future will be even more culturally diverse than it is today. African Americans, Latino and Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and Alaskan Natives, and others will come to represent an ever-increasing proportion of the total population. Teachers of the future will be responsible for developing curricula and instructional methods that cultivate the potentialities of students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

With computer-age advances in health care, the life span of Americans is steadily being extended. The 85-plus group is the fastest-growing demographic segment in the United States, and the number of people 100 and older has exploded as well.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the number of people age 85 and older could increase from 4 million in 2000 to 19 million by 2050. And the number of people age 100 and older is projected to more than quadruple from 65,000 in 2000 to 381,000 in 2030. In addition, older Americans of the future will be better educated and more physically, intellectually, and politically active than their predecessors. Tomorrow's elderly will recognize education as one of the keys for a satisfying, productive old age.

Economic Forces The jobs we are trained for today may not exist tomorrow. During the last half decade, for example, very few kinds of work have been unaltered by the onrushing developments in computer technology. Today's worker must be able to learn to operate an ever-increasing array of technological devices. Workers who excel are measured not by how much they can produce but by how quickly and well they can learn new skills.

The composition of the workforce is also changing. As a result of gains made by the women's movement, for example, more and more women are not only moving out into the workforce, they are moving up. Women are obtaining increasing numbers of executive-level positions in the professions, business, and education. Slowly, the workplace is changing to accommodate the career patterns of women. Business and industry, for example, are receiving pressure from women's groups to provide preschool and day care programs as part of their fringe-benefit packages.

Another major economic force in the United States is the continuing shift from a product-oriented to an information-based, service-oriented economy. Moreover, this "new" economy is not the isolated, self-contained economy of one nation; it is a global economy. Our participation, cooperation, and competition in this global economy depends on rapid communication of information around the world. Information is steadily becoming the critical resource of our age and the ability to learn it and to use it the chief aim of education.

Political Forces Education in the future will certainly be strongly influenced by political forces at the local, state, and federal levels. As a result of continuing deregulation of business and industry, the way has been paved for the corporate sector to become more involved in education. Comments made by Frank Shrontz, Chairman and CEO of the Boeing Company, at Washington State University's College of Education typify the willingness of business to participate in improving American education:

Providing our children with a world class education is not just desirable—it's a matter of our national survival. The challenge is too big for one sector of society to tackle alone. That leaves us no real alternative but to foster a true partnership of effort from individuals and groups in both the private and public sector.

Companies such as Boeing, IBM, Coca-Cola, RJR Nabisco, and General Electric, recognizing the stake they have in improving education, are making unprecedented grants to encourage educators to restructure schools.