
FOUNDATIONS
of **EDUCATION**

*Perspectives on
American Education*

John Martin Rich

**F O U N D A T I O N S
O F E D U C A T I O N**

**P E R S P E C T I V E S O N
A M E R I C A N E D U C A T I O N**

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■ P R E F A C E ■

This text is an introduction to the foundations of education. Its central aim is two-fold: to provide students with current information and research about our schools and to help students learn to think critically about the process of education and their role as educators in that process. The text strives to provide students not simply a catalog of the basic information about the history, philosophy, and social context of education in our country, but seeks, by examining basic themes across the foundations, to help students see the fundamental forces and concepts that have shaped our educational system and our ideas about what education is and should be. The central question that the text encourages students to ask and helps them explore throughout is what does or will this information I am reading mean to me as an educator. It is hoped that by offering students a thematic, integrated picture of the foundations and by assisting them to think critically about schooling and the education process that they will better retain and use this information to reflect on and understand what they do as professionals in their classrooms and school systems.

ENCOURAGING CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTIVE TEACHING ■

You will find a lot of questions in this text. In fact, some chapter sections are devoted to trying to answer with the student a single, specific question. For example, “Is Teaching a Profession?” in Chapter 2 and “Is Teaching Possible?” in Chapter 6. Certain basic questions about education informed the writing of much of this text, questions like: What is education? What is teaching? What are the aims (both professed and actual) of education in our country? Is a certain kind of

knowledge of greater worth than another kind? These and other questions are usually posed directly in the text. Doing so accomplishes two purposes. First, it encourages students to enter into the text. Everyone who wants to be a teacher has some conception of what education and teaching are. Second, trying to answer such questions provides a meaningful framework within which to present and discuss what others have thought and/or what research has shown. Moreover, because students at times have, at least in a preliminary way, accessed their own thoughts about a topic or issue, students have an initial frame of reference from which to compare and contrast (i.e., think about) the information being presented. Not only does this encourage students to think along with the text, it also increases the chances that they will remember what they read.

■ SPECIAL FEATURES

Pause to Reflect

Throughout the text, an effort is made to get students to synthesize what they have read, to tie the information being presented to their own experience, and to show the relevance of material to actual practice. One of the ways this is accomplished is through the use of a feature called “Pause to Reflect.” (See pages vi–viii for a list of these.) In this feature, students are asked questions relating to the section of text they just read. These also provide excellent opportunities for class discussion and highlight some key educational issues confronting teachers today.

Educational Issues

Though educational issues are raised throughout the text and in the “Pause to Reflect” features, several important issues are also pulled out into “Educational Issue” boxes, where opposing views on an issue are presented for consideration and discussion. (A list of these is presented on pages viii–ix.)

Pedagogy

To help students focus on and understand critical information, the text of each chapter contains a brief overview, with a topic outline; margin notes; and bold-faced key terms. At the end of each chapter are the following pedagogical features: a detailed and integrative summary; key terms; discussion questions; learning activities; suggested readings; and notes. The book also contains a comprehensive glossary.

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