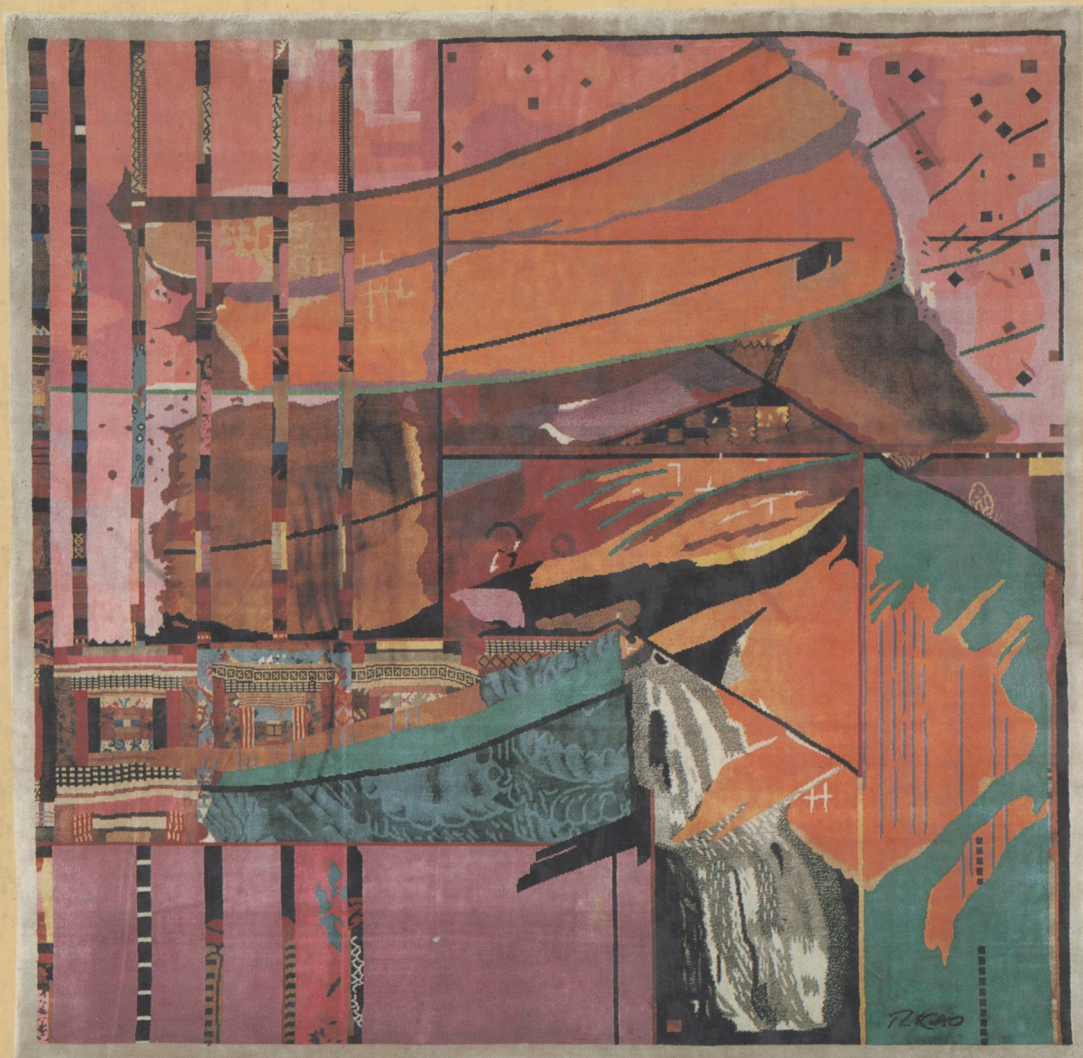


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Introduction to the Foundations of American Education

EIGHTH EDITION

James A. Johnson

Northern Illinois University

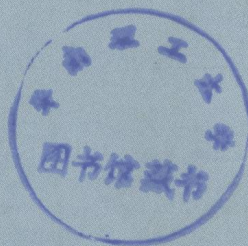
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Preface

This book will be an excellent resource to help you learn more while you are working in the schools and with young people during your teacher education program. We have included a variety of new features in this edition. For instance, the introductory page to each chapter includes a feature entitled “School-Based Experiences,” which suggests ways in which each chapter will be useful to you in your clinical work. We highly recommend that you carry out the activities suggested in this feature.

Chapter One contains a substantial section entitled “Learning about Teaching through Observation.” Be sure to read and reread that section carefully.

You will also find throughout the textbook a feature entitled “Professional Perspectives.” These brief statements will help you see the practical implications of the material being discussed. These professional perspectives provide clues that will help you to learn more during your clinical experiences in the schools.

At the end of each chapter in this textbook, you will find a feature entitled “Summary and Implications.” As the title suggests, this feature summarizes the major points of the chapter, but more important, draws the practical implications that the chapter has for practicing educators. In other words, these implications should be particularly useful as you practice what you have learned in each chapter.

You will also find at the end of each chapter a full-page feature entitled “Reflective Thinking for Teaching,” which will be of practical help to you as you work in schools and/or with children. This feature will help you learn more by describing how to observe educational activity more systematically and how to draw more valid conclusions from educational data you collect.

Yet another feature designed to help you learn the practical side of teaching can be found in the list of “Supplemental Activities” at the end of each chapter. Many of these activities require you to be in a school setting and to think more deeply about what you learn there.

A low-cost student guide and reader are available to be used with this text. The Study Guide contains a number of features designed to help you learn more while working in the classroom. Most of the exercises in this study guide are designed to help you learn more about the everyday work of a teacher. We recommend that you purchase this study guide even if it is not required—it will help you better “practice” what is “preached” in this text. The reader, entitled *Reflections on American Education: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, features seventy selections authored by leading teachers and educational researchers. The reader provides you with the opportunity to experience the original versions of some of the most powerful and influential essays ever written about education.

Best of luck in your quest to become an outstanding teacher.



Along with the editorial-production department of Allyn and Bacon, we would like to thank the administration, teachers, and students of the M. E. Fitzgerald School of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for their generosity in opening their classrooms to us for four days of photographing. We would also like to thank Nita Collins for her help with manuscript preparation.

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PART ONE

Professional Aspects of Teaching

In choosing a career, one must consider all aspects of the working conditions associated with a career field. Students weighing careers in teaching should seek information about what the average teacher is like, criticisms of and expectations about teachers, teacher supply and demand, teacher salaries, legal aspects of teaching, teacher and student rights, professional liability, and teacher organizations. The first part of the book discusses many of these important professional questions.

We do not suggest that teaching is an appropriate career for everyone. But people with the prerequisite commitment to education, adequate personal and social skills, and the basic ability to develop the technical skills should find a teaching career to be an excellent choice. Teaching provides an opportunity to work with other college-educated individuals, each committed to educating young people.

The entire field of education continues to be one of the largest employment fields in the United States. In addition to the 3.3 million classroom teachers, about 300,000 other educators serve as superintendents, principals, supervisors, and other instructional staff members. When the noncertified support staff of secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria employees, maintenance personnel, and others employed directly by the school are included, the total number of employees rises considerably.

Teachers represent the foundation of the educational system. Prospects for employment are excellent, but considerations related to salary and fringe benefits, the legal aspects of teaching, and membership in teacher

organizations should be reviewed carefully when one considers teaching as a profession.

A host of recent reports and studies produced by various agencies, commissions, and foundations focus on the status of education in the United States. Several reports suggest that not enough academically able students are being attracted to teaching and that teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement. The impact of these reports will also be reviewed in this section of the book.

We are in the midst of an educational reform movement in the United States that started about a decade ago as a result of national reports on the inadequacies of our schools. The current status of this reform movement is discussed in this first section of the book in Chapter 3, "Teacher Empowerment and Parental Involvement." If you are contemplating a teaching career, you should find this chapter particularly informative.

We believe that this first part of the book will provide you with an excellent introduction to the professional aspects of teaching. This information should answer most questions about the advantages and disadvantages of a teaching career. Most important, these first chapters should help you decide whether you want to be a teacher. Of course, we hope you will decide to join what we believe to be the single most important profession in our society. If you want to be a part of a dynamic, exciting, growing group of educators dedicated to helping young people realize their potential and work toward improving our society—read on.

CHAPTER 1

Teaching as a Career



FOCUS QUESTIONS

- ◆ Why do you want to be a teacher?
- ◆ What do you think the average citizen thinks about our schools today?
- ◆ How important do you believe teachers are in our society? Why?
- ◆ What are the characteristics of the best teachers you ever had?
- ◆ How would you rate American teachers as a group?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

A friend of yours tells you that you are a fool to consider teaching as a career. He says that there is currently little demand for teachers, the salary is low, there is little satisfaction in the work, teachers are not highly regarded by the public, and you will get stuck in a routine job with no opportunity for advancement. What is your response to your friend?

As a beginning teacher you decide to ask a sample of teachers and parents in your local school district what the most important problems are in the classroom and in the school. What do you think will be their probable response? Why?

SCHOOL-BASED EXPERIENCES

The material contained in this chapter is designed to help you decide whether you want to be a teacher. The next time you have an opportunity to be in a classroom, analyze what you observe, keeping the following three very important basic questions in mind:

Do I have the talent necessary to be a good teacher?

Am I willing to develop the skills I will need as a teacher?

Do I really want to be a teacher?

We suggest that you share your analysis with your fellow students and instructor if you wish.