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THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

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The professional training of teachers is still young. This is especially true for secondary and for higher schools. As a consequence the content of the curriculum in teachers colleges and in schools of education is unsettled and chaotic. To have this impressed upon one's mind, one needs only to inspect the catalogues of a half dozen different universities having teachers courses. Lack of a common technical nomenclature makes the apparent chaos greater than the actual. The term 'Principles of Education' for example, means one thing in one place and quite a different thing in another place. The boundaries between the different subjects are seldom drawn twice at the same points. As a result, a student having taken a subject in one school may be obliged to cover much of the same ground again when taking a different subject in another school.

The problem of the content of the pedagogical field may perhaps be best approached by asking of what the professional training of the teacher should consist. What subjects are essential for the teacher in training to pursue? This question may be asked here just as it may be asked for the prospective physician, lawyer, or engineer. In each case the answer consists of a list of subjects covering the various aspects of the student's later professional activities.

The diversity of subjects mentioned in the catalogues of training schools for teachers may, it would seem, be reduced to following list.

- Adequate Academic Preparation
- General Psychology
- Child Psychology
- Principles of Education
- Principles of Teaching
- History of Education
- School Management and School Law
- School Hygiene
- School Administration
- School Supervision
- Special Method
- Observation of Teaching
- Practice Teaching

The academic preparation of the teacher must be regarded as at least semi-professional, for it comprises the stock in trade that the teacher uses in plying his calling. It will needs vary with the grade of school and the subjects which the student intends to teach. No definite standards have yet been evolved in this country, but they are becoming manifest in several directions. It is quite generally the custom now for the grade teacher in the city system, and even in the progressive country district, to have at least a normal school diploma. This has in many places been made obligatory by school boards, who act in response to social and professional demands. The normal school course stands for approximately two years of preparation beyond the four year high school. These two years include the time for the more strictly professional subjects, to which about half the time is given. For country school teachers a lesser amount of preparation is being provided in some places, notably in Wisconsin. This is done by means of county training schools, which admit from the eighth grade and grant a diploma after the completion of a two year course. Similar courses are also provided in some of the normal schools in various parts of the country.

For high school teachers, preparation equivalent to the standard bachelor's degree is being more and more demanded. Rules making this demand obligatory are now on the minutes of many city school boards. This is the minimum. For the high schools in the larger cities, applicants holding the master's and even the doctor's degree are preferred.

Technical professional training for high school teachers is still in its infancy, but this, too, is rapidly coming. A number of the states already demand by statute that a certain minimum amount of time shall have been devoted to professional subjects by the prospective teacher before he is allowed to teach on his diploma without examination. Teachers colleges, and schools and departments of education have recently been, and are still being organized in connection with most of the larger universities of the country. These have for their avowed aim the training of high school teachers. Degrees in education and professional diplomas are granted on the completion of the course including the professional work. Even the professional training of college teachers is beginning to be discussed.¹

At present the professional work in colleges is counted toward the bachelor's degree and no more units are required of the student for the professional diploma and the degree than have been demanded heretofore for the degree alone. This is well if it proves to leave enough time for the academic work,

¹See the *School Review* for March, 1908.

but if it does not, a year should be added in the teacher's course, making that course five years beyond the high school instead of four. If the bachelor's degree is then conferred at the completion of four years of work, the master's degree might be conferred in conjunction with the professional diploma at the completion of the next year. Altogether this would no doubt be a better arrangement for the adequate professional training of high school teachers.

While the academic work should include something of all the principal branches of knowledge, in the teacher's course, as in the other courses, the major part of it should be, and usually is, grouped about a few related topics so as to insure adequate preparation in the branches the student wishes to teach. The subjects cannot well be left freely elective, but the restriction would be such as any wise student would make for himself.

There are a number of subjects that bear an especially close relation to the professional work of the teacher, being in fact preparatory for it. Among these subjects should be mentioned biology, sociology, philosophy, logic and ethics.

Education is largely a biological and sociological function and, therefore, it is highly desirable that the teacher should include in his academic preparation introductory courses in biology and sociology. Without these he must necessarily be more or less handicapped. Sociology lays the foundation for the appreciation of the meaning, aim and value of education, and biology lays the basis for psychology, makes explicit the fundamental principles of development and introduces the student to the evolutionary point of view, without which one cannot have a sympathetic appreciation of modern culture. Some neurology is needed as a basis for psychology, but as the psychological texts usually cover the needed parts of this subject, a separate course is not strictly required.

History of philosophy, logic and ethics is also desirable as an element in the teacher's training. The history of philosophy gives a conspectus of the development of man's conception of the meaning and value of reality, life and mind, and so forms an almost indispensable correlate of the history of education; logic, inductive and deductive, is necessary for the thorough understanding of the typical methods of instruction; while ethics correlates with the Principles of Education and is needed every day in the schoolroom. An introduction to modern philosophy, for its synthesizing value, is scarcely less desirable.

The connecting link between the academic and professional subjects in the teacher's course is formed by psychology. On which side this subject should be classed is disputed in theory and is unsettled in practice. It is generally agreed, however,

that the subject is essential and basic in the teacher's training. Psychology gives a knowledge of the known facts and principles of the mind, and as it is the teacher's immediate function to bring about mental changes, he must know psychology if he wishes to proceed intelligently. Mere empirical knowledge is as inadequate here as it is in agriculture or engineering. Just as the engineer profits by the facts and principles of mechanics, so the teacher profits by the facts and principles of psychology.

It is becoming customary in colleges to give three hours a week for half a year to the introductory course in psychology. This is enough time for the text-book work, but allows no time for experimental work in the laboratory, to which the prospective teacher should also be introduced.

Child psychology has not yet won for itself so definite a place in the teacher's professional curriculum as have most of the other subjects mentioned. It is only just emerging from the pupa stage of 'child study' in which it did not always command the highest respect. The texts in the subjects are still too long drawn out. But there are certain facts known here with which every trained teacher should be acquainted. A separate course in the subject should be provided, but if not, the work should form a part of some other course, perhaps the course in Special Method. Here it forms an ideal part of the introduction, and the phases especially needed may be emphasized. By the high school teacher, for example, the adolescent period should be most fully studied. In the college course, however, the subject is worthy of an assignment by itself.

No place is here given to 'genetic psychology'. In the undergraduate curriculum no special place seems to be needed for it because its ground is sufficiently covered by Child Psychology and by the Principles of Teaching. In the graduate department it may well receive a separate assignment.

The next two subjects, the Principles of Education and the Principles of Teaching,¹ have so far usually been given together under such names as the Science of Education, Philosophy of Education, General Method, etc. There are here two distinct lines of thought, however, and it is well to keep them measurably distinct in practice. Together they may form a year's work of two or three periods a week, the time being equally divided between the two.

The distinction between, and the function of, these two subjects are lucidly discussed by E. L. Thorndike in the introduction to his *Principles of Teaching*. He says: "What

¹ 'Education' is here used in the generic, and 'Teaching' in the specific sense.

changes should be made in human nature by primary, grammar and high schools and why these and not other changes should be the aim of the schools, are questions usually answered under the heading of 'Principles of Education'. How most efficiently to make such changes as educational aims recommend is a question usually answered under the headings 'Principles of Teaching', 'Methods of Teaching', 'Theory and Practice of Teaching', or 'Educational Psychology'." (p. 2.) That is, the function of the former is to raise and answer the question of the *What* and *Why* of education, while that of the latter is the *How*. Together these two subjects form the backbone of the teacher's professional training on the theoretical side.

The Course in the Principles of Education gets its data mainly from biology, psychology, sociology and ethics. It discusses chiefly the meaning, aims and values of education, deducing therefrom the historical-social significance of the curriculum and the criteria for the evaluation and selection of subject matter. It is the broadest, most unifying subject in the teacher's curriculum and for that reason some prefer to call it 'philosophy of education'. These, however, usually like to inject metaphysical speculations which are out of place here, in the undergraduate course at least.

The teacher in the classroom is mainly concerned with the 'how' of teaching, and only indirectly with the 'what' and the 'why.' The subject matter of the curriculum is determined by those higher in authority and by social forces outside the school, and the teacher usually has little power to modify it. But this does not constitute a ground for his remaining ignorant of its underlying principles. A teacher cannot work intelligently in any part of the school system without appreciating in some definite degree the purpose and function of education as a whole. He is no mere wheel in a machine but an intelligent worker aiming to assist in the achievement of the purpose of the whole.

Methods of teaching, too, are in many instances dependent upon what one understands to be the aim of education. A teacher who conceives the aim of education to be acquaintance with environment is likely to teach physics, for example, quite differently from one who conceives the aim to be mental discipline. It is because of this relation that the Principles of Education should logically precede the Principles of Teaching.

The subject here designated Principles of Teaching, is the course that applies the principles of psychology to teaching and is more commonly called 'educational psychology'. If the subject were merely an application of psychology to teaching, the term might be satisfactory, but as we have just seen, the

Principles of Education also furnish some data, and logic furnishes others. What we literally have here are the principles of teaching, or of imparting instruction, and these principles spring from various sources, of which psychology is but one, although the main one.

The function of this course has already been sufficiently indicated. It is to assist the teacher in becoming an intelligent, resourceful, and progressive worker in the immediate task of imparting instruction and of developing character.

The History of Education gives a view of what education has been in the leading nations and epochs of the past, what aims and methods have been dominant and why, what have been the causes of success and of failure, and how the present problems, aims and practices of education have come into existence. Little that is presented is directly applicable in practice but its value, both to the individual teacher and to the profession, is great, nevertheless. It gives (1) a common historical background to the profession, thus adding conventional and cultural elements to the teacher's life and ministering to the social consciousness and professional spirit of the group; (2) leaders like Socrates, Pestalozzi and Horace Mann, serve as an inspiration to all that make their real acquaintance; and (3) educational values and practices are seen, not to be absolute and fixed, but relative to the social and political life of the times, although the underlying principles are ever the same. On the more practical side the subject (4) aids in selecting successful, and in discarding unsuccessful methods; and (5) it helps in understanding a variety of pending problems that cannot be adequately understood or managed without a knowledge of their historical origin and growth. Such problems are the doctrine of formal discipline, the relation of interest and effort, the teacher's attitude toward the child and the place of the classical languages in the curriculum.

School Management, also designated 'Classroom Management' and 'School Economy', deals with the management of the classroom with a minimum of friction and loss of time. Quick, quiet and harmonious control is its aim. The beginning teacher can gain much here from the experiences and experiments of others as recorded in text-books, and without the knowledge so gained he is likely to commit many blunders that he might otherwise have avoided.

School Hygiene deals with the physical care and welfare of the pupils of the school, and through them reaches the home and society at large. It is closely related to School Management, which subject it may logically follow in the curriculum, although the two should not be identified. The two subjects together should be given at least two hours a week throughout one year.

As an element in the teacher's training, School Hygiene is still far from having achieved the recognition it deserves. This is no doubt owing largely to the fact that the courses given in it in the past have not been sufficiently intensive and scientific; they have not been given by people with adequate training. The teacher needs to know not only the psychology of nourishment and fatigue, how to adjust desks, how to heat and ventilate a schoolroom, but also how to test for defects in the senses and the nasal passages, and how to detect the beginning of certain contagious diseases. To this end it would be well to have the course given by one who has taken a degree in medicine; but if this cannot be had, by one who has at least had thorough training in general bacteriology, physiology and psychology.

In state training schools, School Law is frequently treated in connection with School Management. Schools that train for no particular state cannot well cover this subject, but in a measure it may there be combined with School Administration. This subject deals, or should deal, with a comparative study of the organization, administration and support of state, city, county, district and foreign school systems. As yet its boundaries are not sharply enough defined, and it overlaps the fields of Management and of Supervision. There is still altogether too much of this overlapping in educational subjects, which is owing to the unorganized nature of the field. This wastes no small amount of time for the student.

In its relation to teaching, Administration must be classed with the Principles of Education and the History of Education, rather than with the Principles of Teaching, Management and Hygiene. Its bearing on the problems of the schoolroom, and those of the teacher outside the schoolroom, is more or less indirect, but none the less vital.

If foreign school systems are omitted here and are left to the graduate department, or are alone included, two hours a week throughout the year given to this subject, together with Supervision, would probably be a fair allotment of time. Supervision may follow Administration as Hygiene may follow Management.

School Supervision is only just beginning to differentiate from the somewhat amorphous fields of Administration and Management. It is of most vital concern to superintendents and principals, but it is well for all teachers to be acquainted with its leading principles so that they may be more able to work in intelligent and sympathetic harmony with the efforts of their supervisors. But both Administration and Supervision might perhaps be left as electives in the undergraduate work. Normal schools as a rule do not give this work at all in sep-

arate courses. Treatises and text-books in these two subjects are still far too scarce.

The aim of the course in Special Method is to select the appropriate elements from the various courses pursued and focus them down to the problems that a particular group of students will meet. The contents of this course will needs vary with the grade and type of school in which the members of the class are preparing to teach. It would be different for the high school than for the grade or the kindergarten teacher.

Review of subject matter is not Special Method, and when necessary, should be elsewhere provided. In preparing for high school teaching, for example, this course should at least consider (1) the meaning and function of secondary education, (2) foreign secondary education as compared with our own, (3) the relation of the high school to the college and to the grades, (4) the history in outline of secondary education in America, (5) recent tendencies in high schools and their causes, (6) adolescence and its relation to the high school, (7) the criteria for the evaluation and selection of subject matter, (8) the educational value, content and method of presentation of the different high school subjects, and (9) the organization of courses of study. For the grade teacher a corresponding list of topics should be selected, adapting them, perhaps, separately to the upper and the lower grades. There is material enough here to keep a class profitably busy two hours a week throughout a year.

This work should of course come late in the teacher's course, after most of the other theoretical subjects had been completed, for it rests upon them. Students, however, want to rush into this work first, thinking that learning to teach is learning some knack or device instead of the application of laboriously acquired principles. There is no short cut to intelligent teaching.

The person to give the course in Special Method is the educational expert, and not the specialist in subject matter, at least until the latter is pedagogically trained. As yet the teachers of science, language, etc., too seldom have the pedagogical outlook, and when they give the work the time of the class is too often wasted. To appreciate this fact, one needs only to examine the books on Special Method in the several so-called 'Teachers Series.' Some of these are entirely misleading, and scarcely half of them are worth casual reading, to say nothing of studying, yet these books are so planned that a class would fritter away two hours a week for a whole year in learning to teach one subject. This is certainly an instance of 'lay pedagogy' going to seed.

The capstone of the teacher's training is formed by the course in practice under guidance. This is as essential in the

right training of the teacher as is the hospital practice for the physician or the shop work for the engineer. Without it the student feels no vital need for the theoretical work, and so cannot properly assimilate and retain it. It might even be maintained that without it the student had better go out and get some practical experience before systematically taking up the professional work. Even a year of teaching goes far in laying the basis for the assimilation of theory. But beyond question the best method is to let the practice work run along side of the later theoretical work.

By having the first teaching done under intelligent and sympathetic guidance, much is gained for the teacher. He will be led (1) to form the connection between the theory and the practice, and (2) he will be started off with right teaching habits. In my experience as a supervisor of practice teachers I could almost invariably tell if a student had taught before or not, even though I had no previous knowledge of the fact. I could do this by the difficulty experienced in breaking habits, such as the repeating of the answers of the pupils. If the student had taught much, it was in many cases quite impossible to reform habits.

The connection between theory and practice is seldom formed effectively by the student himself. He may know all about the theory of the development, study, review and drill lessons, but without assistance he wastes much time in learning where and how to apply this theory, and often fails altogether.

The amount of time to be given to practice teaching is not easy to indicate. It should probably vary with the needs of the student. The time given by normal schools varies all the way from 10 to 60 weeks, and the responsibility of the student varies from being put in charge of the class for just one recitation period to having charge of the whole school for half a day and even a whole day. The tendency is to place more responsibility upon the student for a shorter time. The median time at present is approximately 20 weeks, or half a year.¹

Facilities for offering practice work are at present one of the burning problems facing the teachers colleges and the schools and departments of education in our universities. How may this best be done?

The work in Observation is usually easy to provide, but the teaching observed should be of an expert variety. It may be given in conjunction with the Principles of Teaching, the

¹ See Ruediger: *Education*, Vol. xxvii, p. 174 f., Aspects of the professional work in normal schools; and *Educational Review*, Vol. xxxiii, p. 271 f., Recent tendencies in the normal schools of the United States.

course in Special Method, or it may form the introduction to the practice teaching.

It has been the aim here to present an outline only of the undergraduate work in the teachers course. In the graduate department a variety of other courses is naturally provided and considerable deviation is in place. Still, even graduate work is not entirely chaotic. It naturally falls into two or three cycles. The first cycle should lead the student into a broad acquaintance with his specialty, introducing him particularly to special treatises and to monographic literature; the second cycle should instruct him in methods of research and give him practice therein, carrying along with this a review of the literature of the special topics investigated; and if a third cycle is provided, it should be a seminar where students and teachers come together for the discussion and criticism of original work.