Lycurgus would never reduce his laws into writing . . . for he thought that the most material points . . . such as . . . the public welfare, being imprinted on the hearts of their youth by a good discipline . . . would find a stronger security, than any compulsion would be, in the principles of action formed in them by their best lawgiver, education.

Plutarch

Being a form of social action, education . . . is rooted in some actual culture and expresses the philosophy and recognized needs of that culture.

Alexis de Tocqueville
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As the world celebrated the close of the second millennium, a group of world-famous scientists met in New York to identify the most profound invention or discovery of the past 1,000 years. Some advocated the voyages of discovery, the internal combustion engine, space exploration, and the splitting of the atom, while others suggested the Big Bang theory of the universe’s creation, DNA, or the development of the microchip computer. In the final analysis, however, these experts agreed that no invention was more significant than Gutenberg’s use of movable type in a printing press in the year 1440. Thus, the most salient invention in terms of its impact on human life and culture originated as educational technology. Printing and the spread of knowledge did more to alter civilization than anything else. This illustrates just how powerful a force education and the dissemination of information can be.

The Examination of Social Forces. This book covers the social foundations of education, focusing on the history of education in the United States. It is not confined to tracing events specific to one aspect of the culture, such as the schools, but also deals with the underlying social and philosophical conditions that support those schools. Purposes and goals of educational institutions in a simple agricultural village in colonial or early national America were vastly different from those found in a modern, urban, diverse, multicultural community. Contemporary institutions are best understood by studying the history of how they evolved. Sociology of the community, different concepts of the psychology of learning, conflicting ideas about what values are most important, and issues about how schools should be controlled and supported are fundamental to comprehending education now.
Superimposed upon this is the accelerating rate of change and the vast increase in available information, which alter the learning environment and the curriculum for the future. Most adult Americans matriculated before personal computers and the Internet were universally available, and certainly before there was a global marketplace or an information economy. Therefore, history cannot ignore the social, philosophical, and psychological foundations of education. It must also treat themes such as the rapid rate of social change, new vocational and informational skills, educational issues and reform, and the shifting economy (agricultural-industrial-informational).

In this chapter, we will examine a few of the most important social forces that govern the relationship between educational institutions and the communities they serve. We will also treat educational history as a discipline and survey the intellectual forces that have had a major influence on American schools. Chapter 2 deals with the philosophical and psychological foundations of education.

No educational system is created in a vacuum. Schools exist now to serve the needs of contemporary American society, but like society itself these needs are changing rapidly. A good deal of confusion and conflict now exists about the goals of education and about what alterations should be made. This is easier to comprehend when we examine cultures less complicated than ours is now. Examples are found in colonial villages and nineteenth-century rural communities where agreement about the aims of education and the structure of institutions was easily reached. We will also briefly look at pedagogical models from society's antecedent to ours for comparison.

The authors assume that readers of this volume have some familiarity with modern American education, probably from having passed through the public schools. Firsthand experience is critical, and its great value in teacher preparation is
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widely recognized. This is why almost all colleges and departments of education require field experience prior to student teaching. But attending or working in a given school may create the false impression that there is universal agreement about the function, philosophy, curriculum, and learning styles. It may not reveal the deep divisions over educational policy found in many communities. This is why a broader historical study of educational institutions and the foundations upon which they rest is necessary for understanding as well as for participating in making changes in the future.

The Link Between Educational Theory and History. The fundamental link between any educational theory and the historical context in which it developed can never be ignored. No one in contemporary America would deny sexual, class, or racial equality so far as educational opportunity is concerned. Yet, we need look back only to the 1880s for a time when women had no control over their own property and acquired schooling only with permission of their husbands or fathers. Racially segregated schools were commonplace in the United States until the 1950s, while in parts of colonial America only boys from upper classes received formal education.

Today we try to provide schooling for every child, including those so severely handicapped or disabled that special education teachers must be sent to their homes, while those able to attend school are mainstreamed into regular classrooms in order to provide the least restrictive environment. Efforts are made to accommodate children who are not proficient in the use of English through bilingual programs, while the children of aliens not legally living and working in the United States are admitted to schools under the child benefit theory. Equality of educational opportunity is a core value, but there is much concern over the cost of programs that benefit only a small part of the population.

Obviously the ability to succeed in a multicultural, multiracial, society, to work in a global economy, to access the Internet, or to find employment in a foreign business environment were not goals of the founding fathers. Although we must constantly alter the schools to meet current and future needs, we are never free from the influence of the past. Social history shows why French, German, and Spanish are widely taught in American schools while Chinese, Russian, and Swahili are not. Should this be so? That a fifth of the world’s people speak Chinese is certainly an argument for teaching that language. Yet, if Chinese were to be taught to all American students, something else in the curriculum would have to be eliminated or time in school would have to be extended. The choice is a philosophical one, closely related to social theory and influenced by history.

As Alvin Toffler demonstrated in Future Shock, the pace of change and the creation of new information are the most significant characteristics of modern society. Schools were established for the express purpose of inducting the young into the culture of the society into which they were born and in which they must learn to live as responsible and useful members of the community. This is not so easily accomplished in an age of accelerating change. Schools are major social institutions. As such, they are constantly bombarded with new demands and challenged with alternative ideas about how goals might be achieved. Historical tradi-
tions and entrenched values conflict with preparation for an unknown future. American culture has long provided for opposing viewpoints to be passionately expressed, but debate is more intense today because basic values and the public philosophy are at stake.

Presently, the United States is recovering from the worst economic down cycle since the depression of the 1930s. Cold War-era threats of Communist domination and nuclear war have vastly diminished. Nevertheless, the world suffers from poverty, pollution, underemployment, starvation, ethnic strife, Middle East and Afghanistan conflict, threat of Iranian nuclear power, and the violation of basic human rights. That terrorism exists was clearly demonstrated by the attack on September 11, 2001. The appearance of safety and economic well-being does not guarantee that today’s students will be free to meet all of their future needs. Education must anticipate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for future success. Modern teachers are likely to be overwhelmed by the number and variety of demands made and by conflicting ideas about how these should be met. In this age of information overload—when the number of words electronically stored exceeds the total number in print—it is especially important for educators to have a theoretical base to serve as a guide through the labyrinth of opinions and facts. Misconceptions and misunderstandings can be avoided if teachers have the social, philosophical, and psychological foundations well in hand.

Our present culture has been built over time. The schools have always reflected the dominant ideology of a given period of history. In colonial times, the orientation was toward Europe, building character for salvation, and the preservation of values. There was no distinction between philosophy and theology. It was assumed that the future would be just like the past. Today, we must expect that the current rate of change will continue to accelerate. Our students must “learn” a living, build a foundation for continuing education throughout life, and contribute to solving the world’s problems. An understanding of how we evolved to this stage and a study of the sociology, psychology, and theory of education will aid in building a bridge to the future.

**Schooling in an Age of Change, as Revealed Through the Past.** The era of electronic communications, cybernation, the Internet, and mushrooming scientific discovery is upon us. Astronomers ponder an expanding universe filled with quasars, visible galaxies no longer in existence, rapidly spinning neutron stars, supernova explosions, and elusive black holes. At the opposite end of reality, quantum physicists study subatomic quarks, which are only virtual because they can never be seen or directly measured. Artificial intelligence and human cloning are on the horizon while superconductors are grown from organic crystal. In history, exact dates are fixed by comparing the decay of radioactive carbon-14 in living tissues with the more stable and common carbon-12.

To understand schooling in this age of exponential change, teachers must know how educational institutions developed, their relationship to society, what dangers and opportunities are linked to them, what future developments can be predicted, and the philosophical implications. In short, the theory and practice
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of education now are best revealed through the historical, social, philosophical, and psychological foundations. The relationship between these foundations and the schools is more easily seen in societies less complex than ours. The five following historical models illustrate efforts to educate prior to the evolution of many contemporary issues.

In 490 B.C., the first marathon runner arrived in the city-state of Athens to announce victory over the Persians. A school of the time would be located in one of the temples or public buildings, perhaps on the stoa (open porch). Students are adolescent boys of the citizenship class. Their status is apparent from their short woolen tunics with classic designs embroidered around the skirt hems. The teacher, a young man from a leading family, is chosen for his dignified bearing and knowledge of the culture. It is beneath his dignity to accept pay for the civic duty and privilege of teaching, although pleased fathers might sometimes give him a present. Responsibility for the education of sons rests with the fathers, who would have taught them basic reading before entering the school. Military training only is a function of the state, and these students spend their afternoons practicing martial arts and athletics. The curriculum this morning is based on the Iliad, a copy of which, on rolled parchment, is in the hands of the instructor. Each boy in turn recites a previously learned passage from the familiar poem. The pupils are evaluated for accuracy, attitude, clarity of speech, posture, and enthusiasm. Passing citizens pause to listen to the presentations and to praise good work. The boys understand the importance of learning their culture, which they believe to be the superior one not only in Greece but in the world. Language, literature, manners, customs, skill in debate, and national defense are vital to these boys, who will later proudly take their seats in the assembly of free citizens.

Half a century after the death of Julius Caesar and the dawn of the Christian era, M. F. Quintilian has opened his school of oratory in a room of his spacious Roman home. His fame and success enable him to charge high fees, and graduates of his school find high places in the governmental bureaucracy. Quintilian has written several books on education and invented pedagogical devices such as carved ivory blocks over which children move their fingers to learn Latin letters. The dozen well-dressed and well-groomed students obviously are from wealthy patrician families. They have learned to read Latin and a little Greek at home from their fathers or hired tutors. Now in the Institution of Oratory, they seek skills needed for clerks, legal advisors, and business managers in the service of the wealthy and politically powerful. Quintilian’s model is a “good man skilled in speaking.” By this he means one able to present logical arguments and to persuade, but also a person of character and integrity. The classroom is light, and one side is open to a fountain in the atrium. On a raised platform, a boy wearing a white toga as befits one running for public office is making a speech in favor of invading Gaul. His speech is judged for logic, clarity, and power to persuade. When finished, the whole class offers a critique, supervised by the master. Students here are motivated because they know upward mobility in the vast empire depends upon skill in speaking and forensics.

In the year 1636, as Harvard College is founded in the American colonies, the Moravian educator J. A. Comenius receives permission from the city fathers of
Amsterdam to open a school. Like most European cities at the time, Amsterdam has no system of public education, but the town council is anxious to promote learning and has raised a modest fund to help support the famous teacher. Comenius agrees to teach 30 boys and girls from Protestant families in the community who cannot afford private schooling and to furnish each with an illustrated textbook of 18 pages. Published in German, the text is used by pupils not prepared in Latin grammar.

Located in a loft above a grain merchant's warehouse, the school is furnished with stools, maps, scientific drawings, and objects designed to arouse students' interest. Comenius is a fatherly figure with a long, flowing beard and gowns appropriate to his office as bishop of the Moravian sect. There is an atmosphere of love and kindness here, with no corporal punishment or harsh discipline. Believing that all children including females should be able to read the Bible for themselves, the parents encourage these youngsters to learn. Everything is made easy by moving from the simple to the complex and from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Comenius believes in a curriculum as broad as life itself, but concentrates here on what each pupil is able to master at a given age. The students are clean and neatly dressed. The teacher makes a real effort to explain why the lessons are important and to create a family-like environment. Students feel fortunate to attend and will be sorry to see the school close in a few months. Civic leaders wish that there were more teachers like Comenius and that similar schools could be provided for all children.

At the dawn of the eighteenth century, a primary school is operating in the town of Deham in Massachusetts Bay Colony. Here, a plain clapboard building has been built by the town and furnished with benches, a fireplace, a board for writing sums with chalk, and an imposing desk on a raised platform for the master. Twenty-five pupils in attendance range in age from 6 to 14. Both sexes are represented, but there are no blacks or Indians or children from non-Puritan families. The teacher is proud of his 3 years of higher education at Harvard College, which gives him status in the community almost equal to that of the local preacher. This is a school of reading with a little writing and simple sums in addition. The New England Primer, the Psalter, and the Bible are in evidence, while younger children carry hornbooks. Students read and recite aloud. The schoolmaster maintains a stern and severe atmosphere and is ready to use his hickory stick at any sign of inattention or mischief. Learning here is considered a serious matter and a duty for every child. Today the opening exercise is a lecture on the behavior God expects from good children and the consequences of failure to meet those expectations.

Two years after the stock market crash in 1929, 30 pupils are seated in small chairs in a circle around their teacher. This is a fourth-grade class in a public school in Springfield, Missouri. The 16 girls and 14 boys are much alike in that they all come from middle-class homes. Although most are Protestant, there are four Catholic children and one who is Jewish. The teacher is pleased that two of the girls are black because most Negro children attend a school on the other side of town and she believes in integration. A graduate of the Normal school in Warrensburg, she has been steeped in the theory of progressive education and Gestalt psychology. She tries to implement principles such as interest as the guide to all work, scientific study of child development, and freedom to choose styles of learning. The teacher
very much admires John Dewey, whom she once heard speak in St. Louis. Before
the students arrived this morning, she “seeded” the classroom with potted tulips,
wooden shoes, cheeses, and pictures of windmills. The teacher expects that this will
lead to spontaneous interest on the part of the children in studying the culture of
Holland. The atmosphere here is open and friendly, and the teacher hopes that a
better understanding of other societies will improve relations among and between
her classroom charges.

SOCIETY AND EDUCATION: SCHOOLS
AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

World Events That Disrupt Education. Unexpected, dramatic, and unwanted
events may have a shocking impact that destroys the tranquil nature of a culture and
upsets the stable balance between society and education. Incidents of school violence
create turmoil and fear with which teachers must deal before normal instruction can
be resumed. Prime examples of disruption include the Civil War, the Great Depres-
sion, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and the terrorist bombing of the World
Trade Center in New York. Such happenings altered the world as we know it, and this
is especially significant when the causes and true nature of the occurrence are poorly
understood. American adults and pupils in schools could not easily comprehend the
reasons why innocent civilians would be attacked or disease-laden letters would be
sent. There are few incidents like the September 11, 2001, attack, but those few create
profound and lasting consequences. Consider the following examples.

After the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, Southern states confidently
expected that after a few military setbacks the federal government would allow their
secession. No one anticipated a destructive war lasting nearly five years, the impact
of the emancipation of slaves, the bitterness of the fighting, or the sacrifices that
would be made by every community. Whole academies of young men and their
teachers went off to join both armies, and public education in the South suffered for
generations following the war. At the end, the Union was preserved, sectionalism
and states’ rights declined, a new nation emerged, and the Old South was indeed
gone with the wind. The Civil War had a major and lasting effect on all aspects of
American culture, education included.

America escaped almost unscathed from World War I. There followed a period of
prosperity and optimism that was suddenly shattered by the stock market crash of
1929. Most Americans could not comprehend the reasons for the economic collapse
and the resulting unemployment, poverty, soup kitchens, and loss of confidence. New
Deal efforts to stimulate the economy were not entirely successful and the Depression
only ended with the wartime economy of 1941. No aspect of the culture escaped the
shattering of the American dream that permeated the society in the 1930s, but educa-
tion was especially hard hit. Teachers had to work with students from families that had
lost faith in the system and who had little hope for gainful employment in the future.

The ravaging surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, affected all
Americans as much as the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001. Neither
attack was anticipated, and both electrified the people and brought about a unified response. With Pearl Harbor, the enemy was known and the appropriate reaction was clear. Certainly there was fear, but at no other time in American history has the solidarity and resolve of the people been so clearly demonstrated. The educational system geared up with the rest of the nation to defeat the empire of Japan. Yet in both World War II and the recent terrorist attacks, there were aspects that passed the understanding of most Americans. For example, after Japanese military power had been largely destroyed, why would thousands of young men volunteer to train for suicide missions as pilots of kamikaze aircraft? The vast majority of these planes were shot out of the air but those that got through killed many sailors and sank numerous American navy ships. Likewise, following September 11, 2001, many asked why the terrorists hated us enough to commit these hideous acts, and why they would commit suicide to kill Americans. The restoration of order after chaotic events take place requires an effort to understand what happened so that teachers may help students comprehend the nature of the tragedy. History is the best tool we have for making sense out of otherwise incomprehensible events. From feudal times, Japanese society was dominated by the Samurai class of warriors with their strict code called *Bushido*. This required unquestioning loyalty and obedience and placed honor before life. Superimposed upon this were the emperor’s divine status and his god-like authority. Military leaders in Japan used this tradition as a basis for training generations of soldiers, including kamikaze pilots. Because they had complete control over the media and the schools, information about military defeats was suppressed while emphasis on fanatic patriotism and loyalty to the emperor continued to the end.

On the opposite side of the world, Islamic people developed a tradition quite different from the Japanese Bushido but with similar results. From 1090, an order of Muslim fanatics known as Assassins emerged in Persia and Syria. They believed it was the will of Allah that they kill Crusaders and other infidels. They interpreted the Qur’an to say that if they were killed while fighting nonbelievers, they would go at once to heaven and be given wonderful rewards forever. The Assassin tradition has been revived many times in history, especially during times of fundamentalist revolution such as occurred recently in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. It has been used in training camps for Islamic warriors and fits easily into the mind-set for terrorists, especially those who believe the United States is the great evil. Historical analysis should help in the discussion of outrageous events that must be part of the healing process before normal schooling can continue. Understanding is just as important as restoring a sense of safety.

Obviously the learning process needs safe and stable conditions and a feeling of well-being. During the Cold War, teachers had to deal with the very real threat of a nuclear attack. Students in schools that have experienced acts of violence by other students need to be calmed and reassured. American society has been vastly altered by the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent hunt for the culprits in Afghanistan. The changes brought about by the terrorism directed at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon cannot be ignored by educators. As the famous educational philosopher John Dewey held, schools must simplify, purify, and order the environment so that learning may proceed. All American teachers must now shoulder the difficult task of making students feel safe and comfortable in an age of terrorist fear.
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Roots of U.S. Education. The history of American education has its primary focus on the creation and evolution of schools in the United States. It also requires careful examination of the antecedents, especially those of European and Western civilization. This is not to imply that what happened in Incan, Chinese, or Egyptian culture, among others, is less important, but only that the direct historical roots of our modern system are found in ancient Greece, Rome, and the nations of Europe. As these cultures evolved, many practices and assumptions about schools became traditional. Schools have not existed in all cultures. They were not found in hunting and gathering societies prior to the agricultural revolution. Formal efforts to teach came with civilization, writing, literature, and distinct cultural values. Different answers to fundamental questions emerged quite early.

Upper-class Athenian fathers assumed responsibility for teaching their sons the unique parts of their culture that they believed vital for the good life and the preservation of their city. No provision was made for girls, slaves, lower-class Athenian boys, or foreigners. Sparta, with its warlike traditions, opted for a state-controlled military academy for both boys and girls of the citizenship class. Neither Athens nor Sparta believed in vocational education. Making a living was left to the servile class in Athens and to the Helot slaves in Sparta. Educational theory remained simple until Plato developed his sophisticated system (see Chapter 2). Basic questions such as who would be taught, qualifications of teachers, the curriculum, and how schools would be supported were answered by the ancients in ways that are not currently acceptable. Some things do persist over long periods of time. The Iliad was studied in ancient Athens, Rome, eighteenth-century British public schools, colonial America, and frontier colleges in the United States. Even with all the new subjects added and all the programs now required in contemporary schools, it is likely that all students will have some familiarity with Homer's classic poem, although perhaps not for the reasons it was studied in the ancient world.

Cultural Influences on Education. To understand the importance of the relationship between a culture and its education, we must trace the most salient forces that have shaped and continue to influence communities. Insight may be gained by considering the most uncomplicated culture we can imagine.

A familiar example before the American Revolution is found in Longfellow’s classic poem Evangeline (1847). Here, the Acadian farmers who make up the tiny village of Grand Pré, Nova Scotia, are all on a first-name basis with one another. Their forefathers are all from Normandy, they speak French, and they belong to the Catholic Church. No extremes of wealth and poverty exist. Everyone lives in a thatched-roof house of wood with similar outbuildings and gardens. All live by farming except Basil the blacksmith, Michael the fiddler, René the notary, and Father Felician. They all share the same customs, beliefs, taboos, and faith. For example, it is universally held that a fever may be cured by enclosing a spider in a nutshell. Decisions are made by mutual agreement with no need for formal government or law enforcement. The Church is the only institution in Grand Pré. Father Felician is both priest and pedagogue, teaching letters to Evangeline, Gabriel, and other village children. Nothing else is necessary because the notary...
writes the letters, mathematics is confined to measures of grain, and vocational training is by example. Grand Pré has no strife or conflict. It might have remained so had not a distant English king ordered the village burned. It is unlikely that any actual society as ideal as Grand Pré ever existed, but there were many in early America that were almost as simple. Clearly in such places there would be no issues over the curriculum, the qualifications of teachers, who should be taught, or support and control of education.

Since the development of sociology as a discipline by Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber early in the twentieth century, systematic efforts have been made to study social change. Space does not permit a full discussion here, but some themes must be treated in order to understand the history of education as it relates to the culture. Among these are the accelerating rate of change, the concept of cultural lag, and the shrinking of core values.

### ACCELERATING RATE OF CHANGE

For most of human history, women and men lived out their lives in periods of slow, evolutionary change. As Toffler argues in *The Third Wave*, past sweeping revolutions have been few and there has been time to adjust. The first major revolution came with the domestication of animals and the deliberate cultivation of crops. Before this, everyone had been engaged in hunting and gathering. There were no social classes, no division of labor, no cities, and no stable food supply. Agriculture allowed for civilization to develop, with rulers, priests, soldiers, and artisans living from the surplus that farmers could produce. The population expanded, cities were built, and inventions like irrigation, architecture, philosophy, law, and organized religion flourished. The revolution did not lead, however, to rapid improvement in agricultural methods or technology. It is estimated that in Plato’s time seven full-time farmers could produce only enough food to sustain one nonfarmer. Roman farmers tilled the soil by means of a noose around the neck of a horse or ox. The horse collar, which increased the land that one man could break by a factor of four, was not invented until the ninth century. Indeed, many centuries were known for only one major technological change, such as the chimney in the eleventh century, which altered architecture. Long after the Industrial Revolution had started, most Americans lived by farming and saw little need for schools to prepare for anything else.

**Change Fueled by Invention.** Breakthroughs in science and technology triggered an acceleration of invention in the eighteenth century known as the Industrial Revolution. This time the change was far more rapid, and almost every aspect of life was affected. From it we got factories, mass production, automobiles, electricity, labor-saving devices, and great wealth. It also brought pollution, slums, environmental destruction, crowded urban areas, and social unrest. It is misleading to conceive of the Industrial Revolution as an event in history—something that had an end. On the contrary, the changes this great transition brought continue to accumulate at an exponential rate. Although we are still adjusting to the huge impact of the Industrial
Revolution, the third wave is upon us. This is a revolution marked by the space age, automation, cyberspace, genetic engineering, computers, and the global information economy. It is a revolution of the magnitude of the agricultural or the industrial age, but this time we must adjust to the change in a single generation.

Most futurists anticipate that we will experience changes as great as this each decade into the future. It is this vastly accelerating rate of change that makes it difficult to plan for and anticipate the future or to get social agreement on what needs to be done with education. As you read these words, think of the new things you have experienced so far in your life. A child born today has a reasonable chance to see the dawn of the twenty-second century. Try to imagine what the world will be like then. More to the point, what must we do to prepare the child for survival and success in that world? World population doubled in the last 50 years to the current seven billion and is expected to reach nine billion by 2050. This rate of growth cannot be sustained. While China has reached zero population growth and Western birth rates are falling, many areas still produce more people than can be fed or educated.

**Ogburn Model of Adjustment to Change.** In sociology, the most famous treatment of social change was made by William F. Ogburn. He applied statistical methods to social change caused by advances in technology. Ogburn divided the culture into three parts—the material, the adaptive nonmaterial, and the nonadaptive nonmaterial. Material change is the dynamic and accumulative phase of the culture. Over time, the adaptive nonmaterial adjusts to technological change. For example, automobiles were invented and mass produced before there were licenses, traffic laws, or companies offering insurance, but these adjustments were made. However, the motor car also had an impact on personal freedom, houses built in suburbs, and the value system of adolescents—the nonadaptive nonmaterial culture.

The first four historical models presented were not subject to the stresses of rapid change, but the progressive school of the 1930s certainly was. Since the Great Depression, technological invention steadily gained momentum and became increasingly difficult to fathom. Those currently holding positions on school boards or making decisions about federal aid to education may still think in terms of an economy driven by industrial production rather than one based on computer software and microchips. Ogburn was correct in saying that it is difficult for the nonmaterial culture to adapt. This is reflected also in the work of other sociologists like Gunnar Myrdal, Karl Mannheim, and William Sumner. It is a major theme in Merle Curti’s *The Social Ideas of American Educators* (1968) and underpins almost all futures theory.

**Social Darwinism.** There are other interpretations of the impact of technological invention as a driving social force. Sumner was a social Darwinist who applied natural selection and survival of the fittest to social change. In his view, schools should be used as sorting and selecting agencies to pick out those of highest ability and to discard the rest. Social Darwinism is no longer widely accepted in the United States, but its influence can still be seen. An example is the familiar comparison of achievement levels in the American comprehensive secondary school, which admits and attempts to retain all students, with European or Japanese schools, which are highly selective in admission. Karl Marx saw materialistic invention as the basis of class struggle, which
is the driving force for all human culture. No longer dominant in Eastern Europe, versions of Marxism still influence educational theory in China, North Korea, and Cuba. The explanation of just how accelerating change and the creation of new information alter society may continue to be a subject of debate, but there can be no question about its impact upon all social institutions, including education.

CULTURAL LAG

The crisis facing those who shape education today cannot be explained entirely by the tempo of innovation in the material culture. Ogburn pointed out that scarcity of invention in the adaptive culture along with factors such as conservatism in social habits cause widespread maladjustment in society. He called this “cultural lag” and argued that it is most severe during periods of basic transformation such as the Industrial Revolution. This seems so obviously true that it has become a building block for modern sociology and is fundamental to the work of Pitirim Sorokin, Thorstein Veblen, and most futurists. Lag theory was quickly applied to economics, demography, and social psychology. It clearly shows how failure to adjust to material change causes devastation. An infamous example occurred in World War I when generals and political leaders insisted on following outdated Napoleonic tactics while their armies were killed by machine guns, tanks, poison gas, and airplanes. Culture lag in education happens when communities fall behind a transformation that is taking place. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that blacks could no longer be segregated in public schools, but many local districts did everything in their power to block the rule, even closing schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia.

Unequal rates of change create pervasive maladjustments when a series of industrial and technological revolutions occur within a short span of time. Common patterns of thinking and acting upon which collective action is based are disrupted during such periods. Sociologist Robert MacIver argues that serious and numerous lags in the nonmaterial culture can only be resolved by fundamental alteration in normative principles and institutional arrangements. No institutions, not even governments, are more fundamental to the success of society than educational institutions. In our dynamic and fluid world, education must not be allowed to lag behind. What is taught may be vital or useless to the student depending upon the current state of the culture. Skill in using typewriters and adding machines is obsolete, but keyboard skills apply to using computers and accessing the World Wide Web. Library research may teach students to compare numerous sources to verify the validity of a statement. The truth of statements found on the Internet is not so easy to verify. The problem of culture lag is revealed in the history of education, especially the most current history. It is also a problem all teachers face in the future.

Errors and misconceptions in the mass culture are another form of lag that poses a special problem for teachers. For example, in 1911, British physicist Ernest Rutherford developed his model of the atom. He said that the atom resembles a tiny solar system in which electrons orbit the nucleus just as Earth rotates around the Sun. So simple and clear was this model that it became the standard conception of atomic structure for generations of Americans. It persisted even though Niels Bohr had proved two years
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earlier that it could not be true. Today, science teachers trying to communicate the difficult notion that electrons are both waves and particles that make quantum jumps and appear to be in two places at once must combat the planetary model of the atom. The only part of Rutherford’s model still accepted is that atomic structure is largely empty space, but many adults still think of an electron as a miniscule planet.

CORE VALUES

Defining the final objectives of education is not in the hands of professional educators but rests with the wider community. Obviously there are conflicting ideas about the kind of social philosophy schools should encourage, character they should try to develop, subjects they should teach, and methods they should use. These issues are even more fundamental than arguments about support and control of education. Achieving consensus depends upon finding common ground—values upon which the whole community can agree. In a Greek city-state or a colonial village, the community was homogeneous and a core of common values was easily found. In the sophisticated, complex, multicultural, multiracial, and diverse modern society, the task is much more difficult. Some sociologists suggest that the core values in modern America may be breaking up, a condition leading to social chaos. Anthropologist Ralph Linton is credited with the clearest statement about the relationship between core and alternative values (see Figure 1.2). Decisions about the basic standards and norms (called *mores* by Sumner) are based on the cultural core, as are the most fundamental choices concerning education.

Linton held that all cultures have a solid, well-integrated, and fairly stable core of fundamental values and a fluid, constantly changing, and mostly unintegrated set of alternative values not shared by all members. In a simple agricultural village like Grand Pré, the core would be very large in comparison to the alternatives. Choices in such societies are limited to occupation and avocation. The community tolerates no choice in religion, moral values, lifestyles, or expressed opinion. The tyranny of nineteenth-

![Figure 1.2 Linton's Concept of Core Values](image-url)
Introduction: Applying History to Education Today

century communities has been well documented in history and literature. There was insistence upon rigid moral standards, customary modes of behavior, and even standard dress. There were certainly positive factors such as kinship, sympathy, and shared joys, but public opinion was almost irresistible. Arguments between members of the community existed, but they did not extend to differences in the core values.

A Myriad of Values. By contrast, modern society contains so many alternatives that the core of shared values is relatively small. Our society has minute division of labor, extreme heterogeneity, profound conflict of interests, and significantly different conceptions of the good life. In the twentieth century, new forces such as industrialization, specialization, urbanization, and improved communications contributed to the decline of the local community. Organized interest groups began to play a more important role because their members shared interests not common to everyone. Our century is a transitional era. It is a peculiarly strategic time in which rapid change has destroyed the old basis of an ordered society. Synthesis of core values, however, may still be found in some parts of the democratic tradition. Values such as equality of educational opportunity still form a core from which decisions may be made.

Although we must not overlook the fact that millions of people, all over the world, have been sincerely and passionately devoted to totalitarian ideology in fascist or communist form, our society is committed to the democratic ideal.

It is very important for education that a core of common values still exists—otherwise, there could be no social consensus concerning essential action. Americans differ sharply about how the school needs of students can best be served, but unite in the view that they must be served. Nevertheless, the search for pedagogical authority is more complicated in our fluid, dynamic, and rapidly changing culture than it was in our earlier history. Schooling in this nation is primarily a state function, but significant roles also are played by the local school boards and the federal government. A core of common values may be larger and more easily agreed upon at the local than at the national level.

Social forces are reflected in the relationship between philosophy and history. Parents in the early national period wanted their children to learn the three R’s and values such as patriotism and responsibility, but demanded little more. In the present multicultural nation with its myriad of conflicting religions, ideals, values, and ethnic cultures, much is expected of schools. Even so, some modern adults are primarily interested in seeing that their children learn the skills and information needed for success in the global marketplace. Others place more value on equality of opportunity, a violence- and drug-free environment, or the chance to participate in varsity sports. Whatever happens in the wider culture influences education as well.

Currently, the issue over teaching “intelligent design” as an alternative to evolution causes heated argument. Litigation brought by parents seeking admission for their daughters to all-male football teams led to the creation of new opportunities in sports such as women’s basketball and volleyball in high schools and colleges. School violence, especially instances of students shooting students, so profoundly impacted the public mind that demands for security became the number one educational concern in many communities.
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**FOCUS ON THE ISSUES**

**Cultural Diversity**

A few years ago, John Pulliam, one of the authors of this book, was teaching an extension course for teachers at the American school in Dhahran on the Persian Gulf. While there, the Saudi Ministry of Education asked him to address a group of female candidates for elementary teaching positions at a seminary in Riyadh. On arriving, he was shocked to find a heavy cloth screen suspended around the podium from which he was to speak. At the time, he was dean of a college of education in a major American university and respected by the Saudis as a scholar. Nevertheless, as a man, a foreigner, and a non-Moslem, he was not permitted to look upon the young women to whom he spoke.

Our history reflects failure to account for cultural diversity. In 1879, the federal government opened the first school for Indians not on a reservation at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Operated in a military format with uniforms, strict discipline, and rigid schedules, the Carlisle Indian School took no notice of Native American culture. Tribal values such as a casual attitude toward time or belief that young people must be silent in the presence of elders were ignored. To be successful at Carlisle, the Indian student had to abandon his heritage. In effect, he had to adopt the white culture and give up his own.

Likewise, the first schools to admit Negro children following the Civil War assumed that blacks had inferior mental capacity and could benefit only from simple vocational training. Even after school integration in the North, many teachers treated black youngsters differently from whites. Ignorant of black culture, they saw behavioral differences as differences in ability just as they saw girls as unable to benefit from the study of science and higher mathematics.

Not only is America now a multicultural society, but it is also part of a global society in the information age. American teachers now are certain to encounter students with values and traditions unlike their own. Education will fail unless it takes into account racial, cultural, national, and linguistic differences in students.

What Do You Think?

1. Have you visited a country in which you were a foreigner out of touch with the culture? What would it be like if you were a student there?
2. Is it possible that we attribute behavioral characteristics to people based on race, appearance, language, or sex? How can teachers guard against doing this?
3. Trace the evolution of social justice in our society. List two ways in which other nations with diverse cultures achieve social justice.

**How You Can Use This Text.** A complete history of American education is not possible in a book of this length. Many excellent treatments with more detail are available, and reference is made to most of them. The object of this work is to provide an outline of the most significant educational events, movements, and theories that shaped the American schools. It is designed to provide a sound historical base from which to evaluate modern educational practice and to plan for the future.

The level of information provided is sufficient for candidates preparing to teach and is about what most universities require of graduate students not majoring in educational foundations. This book should therefore prove useful in preparing for teacher certification. It is hoped that you will go beyond this volume for greater breadth and detail, but we believe that a sound foundation is provided within
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these pages. The broad chronological organization and time lines are designed to help you find topics and organize facts. Information about recent events is as current as possible.

HISTORY AND PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Reconsidering History from New Evidence. On February 23, 1987, the Canadian astronomer Ian Shelton photographed the Large Magellanic Cloud from an observatory in Chile and noted a bright spot that had not been there the night before. He quickly ran outside and became the first person in a century to view a supernova. This one was the brightest seen since Johannes Kepler recorded one in 1604. The discovery by Shelton duly entered the history books as fact in the manner that humans measure time, with the date noted. But the maelstrom exploding with the energy of 200 million suns was not there when Shelton viewed it. Traveling at 196,000 miles per second, light from the supernova required 167,000 years to reach Earth. Our ordinary conception of time in increments of hours, days, and centuries must be recast to accommodate space-time.

To be accurate, we must constantly rethink history. Consider the 5,200-year-old “ice man” recently found in a glacier in the European Alps. Tests on his hair made possible by new forensic technology revealed traces of arsenic. This shows that the ancient fellow was probably involved in smelting the bronze for the head of the axe he carried. Before this discovery, it was not known that the smelting of metals took place in this region at this early date. History does not change, but our techniques for understanding and interpreting it do.

New evidence forces us to reconsider history at all stages. This becomes more difficult as we approach the present. As futurists like Daniel Bell, Joseph Coats, and Robert Heilbroner are fond of pointing out, the rate of change is so rapid that it becomes ever more difficult to understand the forces that shape society. It is easier to demonstrate something in an objective way for times long past where vested interests no longer apply. Educational historians are more comfortable explaining the Freedmen’s Bureau role in serving educational needs of blacks after the Civil War than explaining why the gap between white and black school achievement did not decline in the 1990s as it did in the 1980s. The authors will provide as much guidance as possible, but ultimate interpretation of history must be left to the reader. The more independent sources consulted, the better the chances of being right.

Another difficulty with history is the multiplication of records as we move from the past to the future. Significant events were less numerous in former times. Few records and fewer artifacts survive from schools on the American frontier. By contrast, almost every county in the nation has a detailed history that traces local development of public schools. It is easy to enumerate early educational court decisions such as the Dartmouth College Case (1819), but the sheer volume of litigation in the past half century is overwhelming. One could spend a lifetime just reading the briefs pertaining to educational judicial decisions since 1995. By 1947, in the United States, 98.6% of all children through the age of 13 attended public or private schools.
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Because modern American education is such an enormous enterprise, its history is also mammoth.

Some long-standing decisions such as that schools should be public, state controlled, tax supported, and open to all are unlikely to be challenged now, but cultural events always demand educational responses. In 1842, the Citadel was founded in South Carolina as a military college for men. With women in military careers and female cadets at West Point, the Citadel found it necessary to admit females. It was soon caught up in the accusations and incidents of sexual harassment that plagued other military training centers. Such events force public schools to look again at sexual equality, bias in programs, and possible discrimination.

The Study of Educational History. As subjects of study or “disciplines” go, the history of education is relatively new. In a general way, it has been included as part of the field of history, but intellectual, social, and cultural history (of which the history of education is a segment) is much more recent than military and political history. Systematic study of the history of education has developed in America largely within the past century, although there were many earlier accounts of the training of particular individuals or unique groups. Thus, literature contains some history of education, as in the case of the life of Lycurgus in Plutarch’s The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans (1992), which provides considerable information about the training of boys in the ancient Greek city-state of Sparta. Biography is obviously a rich source of information about educational practices in times past, because authors nearly always attempt to account for character development by describing childhood experiences, schooling included. Historians have also been attracted by customs or practices that they considered rare or bizarre, so that atypical educational systems often have been described in some detail.

Modern history of education received its greatest stimulation from the theory that teachers should have, as a part of their professional program, knowledge of the development of at least their own national school system. Obviously, this belief was dependent upon some sort of formal training for teachers that did not occur in the United States until after 1825 and then only to a limited degree.

The common assumption that educational historiography started in the nineteenth century is largely true, even though one may point to numerous efforts to trace school development in earlier times. Quintilian, a Roman educator of the first century, included some history of education in his Institutio Oratoria; and Robert Goulet’s book, Compendium on the Magnificence, Dignity, and Excellence of the University of Paris in the Year of Grace 1517, helps us understand the origins of our modern university as well as linkages with our present secondary educational system. Similarly, Goulet’s On the Origins of the University of Paris, published in 1517, could be considered educational history. Professor Harry Good identifies Claude Fleury’s Treatise on the Selection and Methods of Studies (France, circa 1700) as the oldest systematic history of education. There were numerous histories of institutions of higher learning and some efforts to describe higher education generally, such as that of the Puritan minister Cotton Mather, who wrote about New England college programs around the year 1700.
Nevertheless, the history of American education was hardly a field for systematic study until Ellwood P. Cubberley of Stanford University published his *Public Education in the United States* (1934), followed by books of readings in the history of education and critically annotated bibliographies on the subject. Cubberley, who produced his books just after 1900, was a widely respected educator and scholar who had considerable influence upon the inclusion of the history of American education among standard subjects in teacher-training programs. Because normal school education had become common by the beginning of the twentieth century and education departments were by then established in many of the nation’s leading universities, courses dealing with history of education in the United States sprang up all over the country. Historians who were not also educators continued to avoid the field. But scholars such as Paul Monroe, with his *Founding of the American Public School System* (1940), and I. L. Kandel, with his *International Yearbook of the International Institute of Teachers College* (1st to 21st editions, 1942–1944, which explored adult education in other countries), contributed vastly to our knowledge.

History of education was identified by its broad area of coverage compared with other kinds of history. The emphasis of historians who were also interested in teacher preparation and school improvement was not simply on the development of the public system of education but also on the social factors that gave rise to the system. In this sense, the history of education may be called the earliest systematic treatment of cultural, social, and intellectual factors affecting the American people. No full understanding of the current educational situation in any nation is possible without knowledge of the evolution of its school system, together with the practices and theories that contributed to its growth. Thus, the educational historians do not limit themselves to a single field of knowledge but draw upon information from such disciplines as economics, sociology, anthropology, and psychology in an effort to get a true conception of educational development. For this reason, their approach should be considered interdisciplinary.

**Differing Points of View.** Leading historians of education have been more interested in the application of their studies to professional improvement of teaching than to the study of “pure” history for its own sake. This fact and the educators’ point of view have led to disagreements between modern historians of education and professors of history who are interested in studying education. Both groups add to the existing body of knowledge about education. The historian contributes special skill in the detailed study of limited periods, geographical areas, and special topics. Educational historians are usually interested in interpreting broad cultural trends in order to clarify the goals and aims of education, as well as in intensive work on specific topics related to schooling. Historians of education have differed on the interpretation of the facts, especially since scholars entered the field with a strong interest in sociology. Bernard Bailyn (1962) is an example of an author who feels the schools have generally supported educational equality, but Michael Katz (1971), Peter McLaren (1995), and Joel Spring (1990) argue that they have served the special interests of the dominant middle-class whites. Much of the current historical
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literature in education aligns itself with one of these interpretations of education's role in American culture.

Influence of Recent Changes. During the past few years, a number of changes have taken place in education that have had a marked influence upon the study of the history of education. Among the more important developments are the following: (a) rapid increase in scientific activity and the accumulation of knowledge, together with an extension of average time spent in school and a major increase in adult education and training by private industries; (b) substantial involvement of the federal government in educational matters, especially after the success of the Soviet space effort in 1957; (c) growth of graduate work in education attributable to a much larger demand for teachers with advanced degrees, bringing many more scholars to the field of history of education; (d) an increased interest in foreign school systems, the role of education in emerging nations, and the problems of social class, racial integration, gender equality, and poverty in America; and (e) the work of critics of the school system in the United States who have taken issue with the organization, methods, and especially the curriculum of our public schools. The history of education is therefore a developing rather than a finished area of study. It is concerned with building a full understanding of the current educational situation through the study of the evolution of educational practices, ideas, and institutions in social context. In a 1964 lecture to the Department of Education of Johns Hopkins University, William W. Brickman described educational history as that branch of history that deals with the development of thought, practice, materials, personnel, administration, organization, and problems of schools. Educational history also includes institutions and organizations that instruct the young and the mature, the mass media, and other learning experiences.

INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

American education is Western education, and therefore the intellectual roots for it extend back to ancient Greece and Rome. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle formed the basis of the school curriculum and also laid the foundation for educational theory. Classical studies especially stressed Latin and the culture of the Greeks and Romans. Humanism in the age of Erasmus (sixteenth century) looked back to Cicero and Quintilian for models of literary style. Leaders of the American Revolution were familiar with writings of classical antiquity and often quoted the ancient writers. (See Chapter 2 for a philosophic discussion of early writers.)

Force of Medieval Tradition. With the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, an intellectual and social stagnation began in Europe that continued until the several revivals of learning known collectively as the Renaissance. During this era, feudal patterns of social structure and economics developed, and philosophy and learning were handmaidens of the Church. Education was at a low ebb; the monasteries and a few cathedral schools were the chief instruments of instruction. Charlemagne made
an effort to revive learning at the end of the eighth century, but theological questions continued to occupy the minds of the learned elite while the great bulk of the people remained ignorant in an “otherworldly” society.

A reintroduction of ancient classical learning, especially the Arabic translations of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, gave rise to the higher level scholarship of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Medieval universities and the scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas eventually provided a basis for moving beyond the traditions of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, medieval influences were still very strong at the time of American colonization. They are to be found in the social structure, the dominance of religion, superstitions, and other beliefs widely held by settlers from all parts of Europe.

**Impact of the Renaissance.** The Renaissance, or rebirth of learning, began in the 1200s and lasted through the Reformation of the 1500s. Many aspects of this movement had some influence on American development. The Renaissance replaced a religious point of view with a secular one, making man rather than God the focal point with reference to art, literature, and the government. This emphasis on secular concerns, or humanism, was based partly on the transfer of wealth and political power from the Church to laymen and nation-states. The Renaissance also included a revival of interest in the classical culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Humanists studied and imitated the manuscripts of the great writers of the past. They also examined the ancient social order (especially of Rome) and made critical comparisons with their own time. Classicism protested against the narrow religious nature of education in the Middle Ages. Erasmus made editions of the New Testament in Latin and Greek and also criticized the ignorance of the clergy and the injustice of society. Renaissance emphasis on the development of the individual helped to purge ignorance and encourage education. Significant and new inventions made rapid progress in learning possible. As the Renaissance swept through Europe, a great desire for books developed that hand copying or block printing could not satisfy. By about 1440, Johannes Gutenberg had developed his technique for using separate pieces of raised metal type in a press. The resulting revolution in the production and availability of printed information had a profound impact on education in the Western world. The availability of books at a low cost allowed many more members of society to read and think for themselves, instead of accepting everything on the authority of scholars. Growth of cities, revival of trade, exploration, and increased mobility of scholars helped to spread information and expedited the exchange of ideas.

**Influence of Scientific Thinking.** From 1500 to 1700, significant changes were taking place in Europe, such as geographic exploration, religious revolution, the growth of nationalism, and the development of science. While the classical humanism of the Renaissance period continued to be the dominant educational force, commercial interests and cultural diversity gave rise to the growth of scientific facts and methods.

Around 1500, Leonardo da Vinci called attention to the importance of observation and experimentation in learning. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) popularized the
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scientific technique in *Novum Organum* (1863). The astronomical discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Bruno challenged traditional conceptions of the universe. William Gilbert made studies of electricity, Robert Boyle examined the chemical properties of gases, and Isaac Newton published basic laws of physics and mechanics. Mathematical support for science was found in the contributions made to calculus and analytical geometry by Leibniz, Descartes, and Newton.

Science was still suspect when the American colonies were founded. Very few learned people accepted the materialism and the concept of a machine universe expounded by Thomas Hobbes or Pierre Gassendi. Nevertheless, the scientific method of thinking did provide a challenge to established beliefs and laid a foundation for the enlightenment of the eighteenth century. William Harvey's theory of the circulation of the blood was discussed at Harvard while that institution remained a theological college strongly opposed to science.

**Significance of Religious Revolutions.** Probably no single movement so greatly affected colonial America as the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The tremendous impact of the Reformation on social, economic, and political life was of paramount importance in the formation of the United States, and some of the influences are still felt today.

In 1517, when Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, the Catholic Church was the most important educational agency in the world. At the close of the Thirty Years War, all institutions and every aspect of the culture had been affected. Most of the Europeans who came to America were Protestants, but there were many denominations. Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia settled in the Middle colonies, especially Pennsylvania. Puritans, Presbyterians, Huguenots, and several smaller sects represented followers of John Calvin. Anabaptists (followers of Huldreich Zwingli [1484–1531]) were persecuted by both Catholic and Protestant authorities, and therefore sought freedom in the New World. Much of the struggle known as the Reformation centered upon efforts to capture the minds of men, and therefore great emphasis was placed upon the written word. Obviously, schools were needed by both sides to foster the growth of each denomination or sect.

Luther's doctrine of the “priesthood of all believers” made it necessary for boys and girls to learn to read the Scriptures. Educational programs intended to give the masses the ability to read the Bible in the vernacular were started by Protestant groups in Germany and wherever Luther's concepts spread. Although the schools were often rudimentary, they offered universal education for all children, regardless of wealth, and were supported by both church and state. Protestants also provided secondary education of higher quality for the elite destined to enter positions in the government or the Church. Although Catholics played a substantially smaller role in colonial America, they were very much part of the Counter-Reformation. Leaders such as Jean Baptiste de la Salle and St. Ignatius of Loyola influenced Catholics in Maryland.

In England, the break with the Catholic Church came when Clement VII refused to annul Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. By the Act of Supremacy in 1534, Henry became head of the Church in England and proceeded to break up the monasteries. The English Church remained very much the same during Henry's
time, with the Reformation really starting under Edward VI. Mary I briefly restored Catholicism, but during the long reign of Elizabeth, Anglicanism was firmly established. Anglicanism is a moderate form of Protestantism, which preserves most of the organizational structure of the Catholic Church. English Calvinists who wanted to change or purify the Anglican Church became known as Puritans and were very important in the settlement of New England. Other dissenters from the Anglican faith included some called Separatists, who denied the establishment of religion and held that each man must be free to worship as he thought fit. Followers of John Knox (1505–1572) in Scotland (Presbyterians), Quakers, and Catholics tended to move to America when the political tide was against them in England. For example, the great Puritan migrations in the 1630s took place because of the persecution directed by Anglican Archbishop Laud.

**American Colonists: Conservatism and Change.** Students sometimes get the idea that the Renaissance and the Reformation were entirely progressive movements. In fact, they were often reactionary. Humanism looked to the past rather than the future for its model. The Reformation had a tendency to make religion once again the dominant intellectual interest of mankind. Other forces, however, tended to counteract the importance of the Reformation and the Renaissance. The American colonies were an integral part of a great English colonial empire. They were not isolated outposts or temporary communities but a portion of a larger capitalistic scheme brought about by a strong middle class for the purpose of material gain. The rise of capitalism was one of the strongest factors in the development of this nation. Economic motives and interests profoundly affected American civilization from the first. Even the New England Puritan, who came to a "stem and rockbound coast" in order to escape religious oppression, was not without economic concern. The soil in New England was shallow and unproductive. In order to make a living, Pilgrims and Puritans soon turned to timber cutting, ship building, fishing for cod, manufacturing, and trade.

In addition to capitalism, the colonists brought the parliamentary form of government to America. The New Englanders especially supported Parliament against the King. They wished to substitute their own body politic for the authority that had been vested in the crown. Thus, the effort of the Pilgrim Fathers in drawing up the Mayflower Compact, which served as a constitution and defined the responsibilities of the people as well as centering authority in the people, could hardly have occurred without the struggle for parliamentary supremacy that had taken place in the mother country.

Many other potent forces played a part in the intellectual climate out of which American educational institutions developed. The rise of science, British empiricism, the forces of rationalism, and the movement toward greater intellectual discovery all had their effect on the birth of American schools. The point to be made is that American educational and intellectual foundations have roots that run very deep into the European past. Many of the most conservative ideas, such as the evil nature of man, were preserved in America, but there were also factors tending to develop an attitude of change.
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FOCUS ON THE ISSUES

Judging the Importance of Historical Events

Do we correctly judge which historical events are important? Take for one example the Acheulian flint hand axe, the longest-lived human invention. This useful cutting tool was found in the oldest communities and probably predates language. The design was passed from generation to generation for thousands of years and may have been independently invented by different cultures. Such stone implements were commonly used by hunting and gathering peoples 500 years ago and are even occasionally seen in use today.

By contrast, the Pony Express had barely become operational when it was superseded by the electric telegraph in 1861. Express riders functioned for a few years only and the entire volume of mail carried was hardly more than a city postal worker now delivers in one day. Why then does every school child know about the Pony Express while the Acheulian axe is hardly remembered? It is because the romantic image of daring young men riding fearlessly through hostile territory to carry a sack of mail from St. Joseph to Sacramento in eight days strikes our imagination and brings to mind our ideas of the romantic Old West. It appeals to images of cowboys and Indians and beliefs about how the nation was settled. The importance of an event or invention is not limited to its actual impact on the culture at the time. It must also be judged by how it altered our concepts of reality and views of the past.

In The Lord of the Rings (1954), Tolkien tells us that history becomes myth and myth becomes legend. Did George Washington cut down the cherry tree? Since the first account of this is found in the second biography of Washington by Mason Locke Weems, it appears to be an invention aimed at selling books. Yet it remains in the collective American mind as the model of Washington's honesty.

What Do You Think?

1. Do new programs use the most important events for their headlines or the ones that are judged to be the most sensational?
2. One hundred times more American students are killed in automobile accidents each year than are harmed by incidents of school violence. Why is so much more attention paid to violence?
3. When we consider an educational event, do we always think about how many people will be affected by it and to what degree?
4. Give examples of social change and core values in education and society.

THEN TO NOW

The casual student of history may not immediately see the relationship of the remote past to the age in which we live. Nevertheless, connections do exist between the world of today and those past traditions that were once dominant.

The History of Curriculum. A better understanding of modern attitudes and ideas can be gleaned from an analysis of historical forces. Consider, for example, the curriculum of present schools and colleges. Medieval universities offered studies derived from ancient educational interests reaching back to Aristotle. These were the seven liberal arts that scholars believed to be essential to the life of the mind and the education of men. The basic or tool subjects were grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Advanced studies consisted of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and harmony. Although the
names have sometimes changed (music for harmony and language arts for grammar),
it is obvious that these medieval curriculum offerings are still found in the schools. It
is also true that modern groupings into the natural sciences, the social sciences, and
the humanities are based on these early subjects and that we still speak of a liberal
arts curriculum in reference to such studies. There have been many modifications and
additions, but the curriculum of the Middle Ages’ universities has not disappeared. The
whole idea of a university stems from the medieval organization of a guild of teachers
and a guild of students. The modern master’s degree is named after the guild prac-
tice of awarding master craftsman status for those who had demonstrated excellence
in their work. Our most modern research universities still have deans, lecture halls,
graduation rites, student organizations, and rectors (presidents), all of which were part
of the early universities.

**The Spirit of Inquiry and Dissemination of Knowledge.** The rebirth of
learning known as the Renaissance has never really ceased. Ideas from the clas-
sical past together with the humanism of scholars like Erasmus produced a new
desire to understand the forces that shape human society. When modern sociolo-
gists attempt to analyze the actions of groups of people, they are involved in the
spirit of inquiry that was the heart of the Renaissance. Educators today still debate
the role of humanistic studies in an age of scientific research and specialization.
Likewise, the invention of the printing press led to improved production and
distribution of information that is still accelerating. Modern telecommunications,
information superhighways, electronic media, and computer-based research are
current aspects of the revolution started by Gutenberg. It also should be obvious
that the secular scientific thinking started by Bacon, Galileo, Gilbert, and others
has continued to grow and expand at a rapid rate. The study of the history of sci-
ence in many universities and popular television programs like *Connections* and
radio programs like *Science Friday* illustrate the need for understanding the past
in order to cope with the present. Current issues over tax support for religious
schools may be linked to the struggles of the Protestant Reformation and the
Catholic Counter-Reformation.

**Identifying Currents of Thought Through History.** Although we are able
to get a better picture of the forces that shaped values and attitudes of historical times
than we can of the forces that shaped the values and attitudes of today, currents of
opinion and climates of thought are difficult to isolate in any age. It is easy enough to
mark the founding of the English settlement on the American seaboard with James-
town in 1607 and to mark the first major school law with the Old Deluder Satan Act
of 1647, but it is another matter to trace the cultural forces that shaped the minds and
deeds of the colonists. Nevertheless, whatever light can be cast on the intellectual,
social, ethical, and philosophic forces that created colonial culture will be useful in
helping to gain a better understanding of our own times. Just as the Puritan ethic of
eyearly America still casts its shadow over modern educational theory and practice (as
in the case of Bible reading and prayer in public schools), so the Puritans themselves
were influenced by mainstreams of thought going back at least to medieval times. As
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difficult as the task may be, cultural and intellectual history must try to identify main
currents of thought and influential values that set the parameters of basic cultural
beliefs. In this way, history can be a most useful tool in helping us to understand
ourselves and the times in which we live.

Because we tend to think in a contemporary time frame, it is important to recall
that many of the movements considered in this book occurred over a period of
years. The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation were not
single events like those reported every day on CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, and Fox
News. They were revolutions of many facets of society that took centuries to
develop and decades to complete, and their aftermath continues to be felt in con-
temporary society. Because of the brief treatment given to colonial history in the
common school history courses, it is easy to make the error of thinking of the colo-
nial period as brief. Actually, the years between the settlement of Jamestown and
the American Revolution cover almost half of the time that has elapsed since 1607.
In the passing of nearly two centuries, the changes that occurred in colonial Amer-
ica were dramatic and vast, even though they took place at a slower rate than mod-
ern transformations. The revolt against England and the birth of a new nation could
hardly have taken place in the conservative climate of opinion that existed in the
beginning of the seventeenth century.

Changing World Conditions. Educational development in colonial America
and its influence on the schools of later times can only be appreciated against the
backdrop of an earlier Old World culture. What is happening in education today
must also be evaluated in terms of changing world conditions. For the first time in
history, all of the school-age children in mainland China actually attend school. Mass
starvation and continuing ethnic conflicts in East and Central Africa make it impos-
sible for children there to reach their full potential or to achieve educational goals.
Currently, nations of the former Soviet Union are in the throes of trying to reconcile
Western capitalism with citizens’ demands for jobs and the sustenance protection
offered by the old communist regime. The Bosnian conflict also reflects a return to
the balance of power system so prevalent in history. Russia has emerged as a power
broker, influencing competing interests in Bosnia as well as in the Middle East. The
continuing pressures of an interdependent global community will influence our
economic system. All people are affected by the ways in which natural resources
are used, and all are demanding more human services, including education. An air-
port or a computer is much the same whether it is found in New York, Manila, or
Buenos Aires. Our educational history began with influences from many areas and
traditions; the future of education also depends on events and developments that
are global in nature.

Many causes were at work in the settlement of the American colonies. Adven-
ture, money, love of God, and a desire to convert the Native Americans gave rise to
the colonies. Many wished to escape oppressive governments and the hard times in
Europe, such as the English depression of 1595. The first settlers were Europeans,
dominated by English traditions. Modern society in the United States has been
greatly modified by the influx of other people and ideas, but the Protestant religions
and the English language remain dominant today although Hispanic culture and language are expanding. This dominance, like that of middle-class values in schools, creates a major educational problem in equal treatment of students whose first language is other than English or who represent religious backgrounds other than Protestant Christian.

**Why the Past Illuminates Today.** Most of the time and effort of teachers and administrators in schools is spent dealing with contemporary needs and problems. It is all too easy for us to think of events in the remote past as having no relevance for modern educators, if we think of such events at all. This is a fundamental mistake that may prevent us from making the best decisions for the well-being of our students and their communities. Religious conflicts starting with the protests of Martin Luther are still evident in current arguments over prayer in public schools. Attacks by the “ultra-right wing” on “secular humanism,” as well as by various other special interest groups including advocates of home schooling, can be clarified by an understanding of conservative theology, Renaissance humanism, and *laissez-faire* politics. Several states have passed or are considering passage of a law requiring schools to give equal time to the biblical theory of creation and the theory of evolution. It is not enough to link this matter with the work of Darwin or with the Scopes trial in 1925. The educator needs also to consider it in the light of the opposition to scientific knowledge in the time of Copernicus and Bruno. Historical knowledge is vital for placing current issues into perspective and making decisions that will stand critical analysis.

**Look to the Evidence.** Sources of educational history include deeds, contracts, oral history, archival records, newspaper morgues, personal correspondence, archaeological discoveries, museums, art, tools, garments, flyers, government documents, artifacts, charters, journals, texts, and diaries of the period, all of which provide avenues to understanding our past. Formal or primary sources for educational theory consist of the original writings of philosophers and treatments of schools of philosophy from idealism to postmodernism. Secondary sources are compilations or interpretations of original works. Educational theory can also be gleaned from values, attitudes, curriculum choices, and criticism of schools, whether or not they are linked to an articulated philosophy.

**How Does the History of Education Apply to Educators Today?** As one examines our educational history, one sees that cycles of change occur and reoccur. New terminology often covers age-old educational concepts and innovations. Plutarch’s Lycurgus sought critical thinking, discipline, and ethical conduct through education. Today people emphasize these concepts and the importance of character building. Although we have witnessed increased educational and employment opportunities for women, minorities, culturally diverse populations, those who are physically or mentally challenged, and senior citizens, debate over curriculum content, public and private education, and what is ultimately worth knowing continues now as in the past.
GAINING PERSPECTIVE THROUGH CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. Evaluate the process of making educational decisions in a culture with a large core of common values as compared to doing so in contemporary American society.

2. Describe the significance of each of the following forces on education:
   - Medieval tradition
   - The Renaissance
   - Scientific thinking
   - Religious revolutions

3. Identify three reasons why teachers and other educators can benefit from studying the history of education.

4. Give two examples of modern educators "reinventing the wheel" because they lack historical knowledge and perspective.

5. Compare and contrast the contributions of the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation on the development of education in colonial America. Identify some current religious influences on current educational practice. (It will be helpful to have a journal to record historical highlights and watersheds.)

6. Give an example of attempts to develop a classless society.

HISTORY IN ACTION IN TODAY’S CLASSROOMS

1. Interview a retired teacher or administrator. Ask him or her to discuss educational reform cycles and trends during his or her career. Does he or she remember one-room schools? Keep a journal of your findings to share in class.

2. What are some current forces that have shaped educational history as a discipline in recent years? Cite a journal or Internet article to support your opinion.

3. Trace the history of significant religious revolutions. Identify current religious movements and their effect on education.

4. Identify influences that lead to an accelerating rate of change in society, culture, and education. Discuss and answer the questions at the end of the Focus on the Issues features “Cultural Diversity” and “Judging the Importance of Historical Events.” These features are found within the chapter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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