Paper and Discussions occasioned by a Conference held at Stanford, California, June 9–14, 1954, under the joint auspices of the School of Education and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Stanford University, and the American Anthropological Association.

PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Theodore Brameld | Solon T. Kimball |
| Robert N. Bush | Alfred L. Kroeber |
| Arthur P. Coladarci | Dorothy Lee |
| William H. P. Cowley | William E. Martin |
| Cora DuBois | Margaret Mead |
| Lawrence K. Frank | I. James Quillen |
| John Gillin | Fannie R. Shaftel |
| Paul R. Hanna | Bernard J. Siegel |
| C. W. M. Hart | George D. Spindler |
| Jules Henry | Hilda Taba |
| Felix M. Keesing | Lawrence G. Thomas |

# EDUCATION AND ANTHROPOLOGY

*Edited and with a Foreword by*

GEORGE D. SPINDLER

*Preface by*

LAWRENCE K. FRANK

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# FOREWORD

Plans for the conference on interrelationships between education and anthropology reported in this volume began with exploratory conversations with Margaret Mead, David Baerreis, and John Whiting at the meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Philadelphia in 1952. Some of the ideas emerging there were put into motion with letters of inquiry to many anthropologists and educators during the next few months. On the basis of the interest shown in the replies to these letters, and the suggestions made, an application for subsidy for the conference and publication of the results was made to the Carnegie Foundation, and subsequently granted.

With this firm backing, a planning group was established at Stanford University including the following members of the School of Education and Department of Sociology and Anthropology faculties: James Quillen, Felix Keesing, William Cowley, Paul Hanna, John Bartky, Arthur Coladarci, Robert Bush, Bernard Siegel, Fannie Shaftel, and Lawrence Thomas. George Spindler acted as chairman of this planning group, coordinator of the conference, and editor of its results.

In order to broaden the base of the planning operations, subsequent planning meetings were held at the University of Chicago with Sol Tax, Jules Henry, Ralph Tyler, Dorothy Lee, Sherwood Washburn, and Preston Holder, and at the American Anthropological Association meeting at Tucson in 1953 with several different groups of anthropologists. Through these various phases of planning, involving both meetings and correspondence, educators and anthropologists representing ten major universities in widely separate parts of the United States made direct contributions to the development of the project, and many other persons in both disciplines from many other places were involved in some degree. The conference and its results therefore represent no single group of professionals from either discipline or from any single institution in the sense that both participation and conception in planning was as broad as it could feasibly be made. Not all interests or proposals are, to be sure, equally represented. The planning group at Stanford was responsible for mediating the proposals and interests gathered from these many places and persons.

The decision was made early in planning to cast the project in an exploratory framework. We were less interested in what had been done, and its evaluation, than we were in the frontiers of the relationships between these two broad disciplines and their concepts, data, methods, and problems. This volume reflects this exploratory framework in both its strong and weaker points.

Whatever defects in logic, content, or focal areas are represented here, the report of the conference contained in this volume makes interesting reading. It is pregnant with suggestions, hypotheses, and significant tenta-

tive judgments that should comprise a meaningful contribution to the development of both education and anthropology—one no less than the other—and to the future of their relationships.

The volume is organized into ten sections, each one comprised of three major parts—a paper within a topical area defined in planning, discussants' comments, and open discussion. The papers have served as springboards for the discussion, not as definitions of limit, so many unanticipated problems and topics are raised. This is one reason why the discussions, as well as the papers, make interesting reading.

The conference was held in comfortable surroundings at Carmel Valley, not far from Stanford University. Every attempt was made to create a situation that would break down interpersonal barriers, so that maximum communication could occur. That these attempts were successful is reflected in the use of first names, and other indications of informality in the discussion. This informal mood has purposely been retained in the edited portion of the transcription included in this volume, so that the reader can perhaps enter vicariously into the group situation, as those who participated directly experienced it.

My editorial commentary cannot close without an expression of personal gratitude to the many people who made this conference, and the volume, possible. The members of the planning group named in this Foreword are all due real credit. James Quillen, John A. Bartky, Felix M. Keesing, Sol Tax, Margaret Mead, and Dorothy Lee must be listed among those whose support and encouragement were particularly crucial in planning and other capacities. I am grateful to E. Adamson Hoebel for his careful reading of the manuscript and his suggestions for the volume. There are, as always, many others who performed large and small services as a contribution to the project, but a special debt of gratitude is owed to the staff that carried the heavy burden of paper and leg work. Barbara Angier, Roland and Marianne Force, Cynthia Shephard, Lynn Gilbert, who acted in various capacities as typists, dittographers, diagram drawers, managers of transcribers, and social expediters, all did yeoman work. Rose Wax, who acted as general secretary and *rapporteur* for the planning and conference, is due a very special thanks. And I am particularly grateful to Louise Spindler for her sustained and invaluable help as editorial assistant.

GEORGE D. SPINDLER
Stanford University

# PREFACE

The significance of the papers and four-day conference recorded in this volume may be more clearly recognized if we will recall what has taken place during the past fifty years in education. Beginning about 1900, educational theory and practice and the development of curricula and textbooks have been successively responsive to the contributions coming from various disciplines and professions. Thus education was greatly influenced by the psychologists who studied the learning process as exhibited by laboratory animals, developed a variety of standardized tests and educational measurements, studied the problem of transfer of training, and developed various programs of experimental education that emphasized activities, learning by doing, and a wide range of experiential and noncognitive learning. These contributions from educational psychology were supplemented and enlarged by sociologists and psychiatrists and mental hygiene groups who, through studies of communities and clinical investigations of school children, enlarged the thinking of educators to include the extra-school life and activities of pupils, especially their interpersonal relations with parents and siblings. Child guidance clinics in, or affiliated with, schools and counseling and guidance programs were established for the "problem children," now recognized as one of the school's responsibilities. This concern for the nonacademic aspects of children was furthered by the contributions beginning to come in the nineteen-thirties from studies of child growth and development, which showed that each child undergoes a regular sequence of development, but passes through these sequential changes at his own rate of progress and attains his own individual development. Thus chronological age is not a satisfactory guide to his educational needs and capacities. Also in the middle nineteen-thirties, the Progressive Education Association, generously financed by several large foundations (General Education Board and the Carnegie Corporation) established a series of commissions. The Commission on Secondary Education studied high school programs and produced a number of proposals for revising and enlarging the several subject-matter areas and improving teaching of those subjects. The Committee on Adolescence, organized by this commission, carried on intensive studies of high school students over a four-year period, focusing upon their needs and problems, intellectual and personal, and emphasizing the process of personality development in these years as revealed by these students. In the work of this commission and especially in the activities of the Committee on Adolescence, cultural anthropologists participated, probably for the first time, in planning and directing the studies of adolescents and their school life and also studying the community in which they lived.

The Commission of Relations of School and College conducted an eight-year study of high school students, in thirty secondary schools all

over the country. These students were observed and measured during their four-year high school programs and then followed through in their four-year college careers. The findings of this study indicated that many of the assumptions about secondary education and what was required for college work were in need of considerable revision. Moreover, it showed that effective learning takes place when the potentialities of the individual student are recognized and encouraged, as contrasted with the belief in a more or less rigid set of requirements imposed on all students.

These notable contributions began to appear in print just preceding and during the early years of the war. Unfortunately preoccupation with the war situation and the subsequent events has resulted in these significant contributions to education having been overlooked or forgotten, not only by the public, but by many professional educators.

The contributions of cultural anthropologists to education have been both indirect and direct, providing a wider perspective for educational thinking and research and also offering the more specific findings and conceptions developed particularly in the study of culture and personality. These studies of culture and personality began with the Seminar on Impact of Culture on Personality in 1930 at Yale, under the direction of the late Edward Sapir, professor of anthropology, assisted by John Dollard and a number of visiting lecturers, sociologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists. In 1934 the Hanover Conference on Human Relations carried further these inquiries into the enculturation and socialization of the growing child and formulated an outline which was never published but which served to guide a variety of investigations and educational programs, such as the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association. Following this conference, a number of volumes were published presenting this psychocultural approach to personality development and to the understanding of social order and community life.

In the years following these initial explorations, there have been numerous studies of culture and personality by anthropologists and also by psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and psychologists who have recognized the significance of enculturation in personality development as revealed by observation of children in a variety of cultures, including our own. Also there have been many studies of the ethnic-cultural groups whose children attend public schools where there are frequent clashes. Further, what is known as applied anthropology now comprehends studies by anthropologists of factories, hospitals, military organizations, recreational and leisure-time groups. It has been repeatedly suggested that a school or a school system should be similarly studied to reveal some of the implicit, little-recognized patterns and relationships in educational organizations.

The various explorations and studies carried on in the 'thirties made it clear that education is a continuous process beginning at birth and operating with cumulative intensity as a child grows, develops, and learns to live in the symbolic cultural world of his group traditions and to participate in the social order of which he is a member. These studies have also emphasized that each child is an individual organism with all his inherited



capacities: his personality therefore may be viewed as his individualized expression of these organic functions as they have been shaped and patterned by his care, nurture, and education in a culture. More specifically, it has been shown by a variety of observations and intensive studies that each child develops and learns in his own individualized way and continually strives to maintain himself as an individual while living in his social group. Thus it is becoming evident that education must recognize more clearly the problem of how the schools can contribute more effectively to the development of healthy personalities in children and youth, not viewed in terms of fitting the child into an existing set of institutions, as "a good social adjustment." Rather, the schools are confronted with the subtle and complicated task of helping children to grow up in a more or less disorderly social life where almost all our institutions and practices are being rapidly altered and in some cases superseded by new social inventions. This means educating children and youth as personalities who can achieve some degree of orderliness and stability in their lives, despite the weakening of traditional beliefs and patterns by which we have for so long been guided. Approaching the problems of education in this way, we realize that we must become self-consciously aware of what has rarely been recognized by people, namely, that they live in a cultural world of their traditions, the maintenance and improvement of which become the responsibility, in greater or less measure, of every member of that group, who, as a personality, along with all other personalities, constitutes the cultural group. Faced with such questions, the schools, more especially the university departments and schools of education which are largely responsible for the preparation of teachers and the development of teaching materials and practices, should look for whatever insights and understandings may be available from other professions to help them undertake these relatively new and unprecedented educational tasks. The disciplines or professional groups which are most closely associated with these problems are the psychiatric and clinical psychological group and the sociologists and anthropologists who are increasingly focusing their attention on personality in culture, cultural dynamics, and the patterning of interpersonal and group relations. Cultural anthropology has an enormous accumulation of materials on a great variety of different cultures. One of the threshold tasks is to formulate some sort of frame of reference within which the more relevant and significant findings of anthropologists can be made available to the educational group, and, in turn, the educational group can raise those questions for answering which they may appropriately ask the anthropologists to contribute.

This, then, was the two-way situation in which the conference group attempted to communicate, through a series of prepared papers, chiefly by anthropologists, which were then critically examined and discussed primarily by educators. Obviously in a four-day meeting all the relevant questions and exigent problems of education could not be considered or even recognized. Nor was it expected that the conferees at this meeting would in any sense attempt to settle and definitely resolve even those points

which were specifically recognized and discussed in the meetings. Readers of this volume therefore should not expect to find pronouncements but rather should look to these papers and the reported discussion as indicating significant areas in education and approaches to contemporary education problems to which anthropologists may offer promising, fruitful leads for further exploration and investigation.

Education in many ways is like medicine; the teacher and the physician are engaged primarily in developing and applying an art based upon scientific knowledge and the best available insights and understandings about the human organism-personality, approached both individually and in groups. Like education, medicine has undergone a succession of changes, such as the displacement of the old humoral doctrine of disease by cellular pathology and the resulting search for pathological lesions and sources of infection. A little later medicine became interested in the so-called normal, or nonpathological, functioning of human organisms as revealed through physiological studies and more especially through endocrinology, which led to an increasing emphasis on glandular disturbance. More recently psychiatrists have shown that many patients have severe emotional disturbances which give rise to a variety of illnesses and dysfunctions, so today medicine has become preoccupied with what are known as psychosomatic ills, calling for recognition of the "person in the patient," with his life history, his family and personality problems. More recently, medicine has become aware that important for diagnosis and treatment is a knowledge of the social-cultural matrix or "field" out of which the patient comes. This later development has reinforced the earlier programs of public health and preventive medicine and given further impetus to a concern for the investigation and, so far as possible, the alteration of the social-economic conditions and circumstances in which people live, work, and play, including their ethnic-cultural tradition.

Today the school is being asked to enlarge its responsibilities and to provide a variety of services, not only to pupils, but to their families, which development goes far beyond the traditional conception of the school as primarily if not exclusively for the teaching of a limited body of subject matter and academic skills. If schools are to meet these new responsibilities and to function not only more effectively but with an awareness of what they are doing to and for our social order, then it is imperative that educational administrators, deans of schools of education, and those engaged in educational research, development of educational materials and new practices, and the training of teachers should look to and accept from all the relevant disciplines whatever they provide as knowledge and guidance needed for these new and more or less complex tasks. Cultural anthropologists, because they have studied so many different cultures and have viewed the educational process as more than formal schooling, beginning from birth and continuing through the life cycle of adults, can make especially relevant and constructive contributions to education today. Moreover, in cultural anthropology we find an almost unique integration of the insights and awareness coming from the clinical studies of personality by psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis together with the findings on many different cultures and social orders. These contributions have an unusual relevance for education, as pointed out by Dean Quillen and by Dr. Spindler in their introductory papers.



This conference and this report will, it is hoped, serve to stimulate and to refocus some of the concerns of educators into the channels suggested in the various papers presented at this meeting. As pointed out earlier, the conference was of necessity limited in scope to what it could undertake in a brief period of four days. It is hoped that further meetings of this kind will be held in the near future to carry on and extend these discussions so that the educational group may press further its search for relevant materials and approaches and in turn the anthropologist may become better acquainted with the thinking and problems of the professional educator. Through such continuing communications it may be expected that both educators and anthropologists will gain and will be better able to carry on their respective professional activities.

Finally, it should be pointed out that this conference, both explicitly and by implication in various papers and discussions, has shown the need for more critical and imaginative thinking in the field of educational philosophy, not only to provide a more relevant, suitable framework for thinking about education, but also to dissipate, if possible, some of the contemporary confusions and controversies engendered by professional educators with widely divergent ideas and conceptions of education and by lay writers and speakers, many of whom are resistant, if not strongly opposed, to any attempts to advance and improve our schools. It is indeed significant how often parents who are extremely solicitous about obtaining the latest and best medical care and treatment for their children demand that their children be taught by the methods and procedures of 1900 or earlier, as if there had been no increase in our knowledge and understanding of children and of the educational process since that date. The anthropologist may be especially helpful in resolving some of these difficulties by showing us how we can wisely and effectively preserve and advance our enduring goal values, by reformulating and transforming our aspirations in the light of new knowledge and new techniques, taking advantage of the new requirements and opportunities offered by our emerging industrial society. Anthropologists also may help us to remember that the strength and the potentialities of a culture are evoked through people's efforts to cope with new situations and to grasp new opportunities by social inventions and a wise vision of traditions. The reorientation of education is urgent so that we and our children can continue to strive for that which we have long sought.

LAWRENCE K. FRANK
New York City

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