THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION
SERIES EDITOR: A. G. RUD

palgrave pivot

A Brief History of Schooling in the United States

From Pre-Colonial Times to the Present

Edward Janak

palgrave macmillan

The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education

Series Editor
A. G. Rud
College of Education
Washington State University
Pullman, WA, USA

The Palgrave Pivot series on the Cultural and Social Foundations of Education seeks to understand educational practices around the world through the interpretive lenses provided by the disciplines of philosophy, history, sociology, politics, and cultural studies. This series focuses on the following major themes: democracy and social justice, ethics, sustainability education, technology, and the imagination. It publishes the best current thinking on those topics, as well as reconsideration of historical figures and major thinkers in education.

More information about this series at
http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14443

Edward Janak

A Brief History of Schooling in the United States

From Pre-Colonial Times to the Present

palgrave
macmillan

Edward Janak
Gillham Hall 5000-C
University of Toledo
Toledo, OH, USA

The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education
ISBN 978-3-030-24396-8 ISBN 978-3-030-24397-5 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5

Cover illustration: © Melisa Hasan

This Palgrave Pivot imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface

When No Child Left Behind was implemented in schools in the United States (US) in 2002 many people argued that it marked an unheard-of level of intervention in schools by the government. However, that is at best a misreading of history, at worst an overgeneralization. While many aspects of the act did mark more federal intrusion than in the past, the act itself is a reauthorization of a piece of educational legislation that emerged from Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The relationship between US schools and US government is even longer lasting than that; in fact, school-society-government ties on US soil predate the existence of the nation.

Arguably the first example of such legislation is the *Old Deluder Satan Act* passed in the Massachusetts colony. The governance of the colony was a theocracy; the school law passed was to ensure that all students could read and write scripture. Since in the eyes of the Puritans, all law was God's law and all time was God's time, then literacy was necessary to live a good life; mandating public schools for all citizens was doing God's work and, therefore, producing good citizens of the state. It is these Puritanical origins from which this work draws most immediately in its style, but not its content. The dominant text used in the New England Colonies was *The New England Primer*; this work is modeled directly—in scope and sequence—on it. The patterns throughout the introduction—the lists of vocabulary words and names, for example—are not pedagogically sound, but are included to mimic the original's style. The chapters follow the pattern of the early parts of the original *Primer*, taking a question/answer approach to covering topics. These chapters are organized around eras of significant reform in educational history rather than corresponding with more traditional US history epochs.

One significant difference, however, is the *type* of religion expounded upon within the work. While the intent of the original *Primer* was to inculcate young children in the basic tenets of the Puritanical form of Protestant faith practiced by the citizens of New England, the intent of this primer is to inform those involved in education—teachers (preservice and in-service), administrators, support staff, and the politicians at the local, state, and national levels that form educational policy—in the "civil religion," an American, secular faith that brings people together through a shared set of values, rituals, symbols, and experiences. In short, just as the *New England Primer* used schools to teach catechismal religion, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States* examines the civil religion.

The size of *The New England Primer* is another pattern this work intends to follow. A primer, by definition, is intended for a young audience and thus remains relatively brief; it is meant to serve as an introduction, a foundation on which later studies can build. This work follows suit; each chapter was designed to be as short as possible. The topics raised with the work are intended to provide a wide breadth of information with little depth; people can choose what they want to follow up on, particularly in today's cyberliterate wiki society. To facilitate this, certain names and key words are highlighted within each chapter, directing readers to the important concepts worthy of Googling.

Structure of the Chapters

Each chapter examines the development of schooling in a different time period. The chapters focus on the historical and philosophical patterns of schooling in each period as a means to examine how schools ultimately impacted US society. It is obvious that these educational eras do not necessarily match those found in traditional history or political science books, and major non-educational events such as war are ignored unless they impact the schools directly.

For each historic period represented, the chapters follow a similar pattern. Each chapter begins with an overview of the philosophic ideas that shaped the period. From there, each chapter examines the political and social concepts that shaped schooling of dominant and subcultures in the United States. Far from being merely concerned with theoretical foundations, each chapter also presents a snapshot of the "nuts and bolts" of schooling during each period, examining issues such as pedagogical devices, physical plants, curricular decisions, and funding patterns.

Ultimately the in-depth examination of the relationships between schools, politics, and society in their historical and philosophical contexts help political and educational readers to understand how interwoven these forces have always been in order to better understand present discussions. Far too many students of education conceive of work in the foundations of education as some sort of theoretical/historical "other"; few see the direct links to their own future classrooms. Policy makers are not knowledgeable about the foundations of education, the "why" behind much of what transpires in contemporary classrooms. This book directly addresses these weaknesses in two ways. First, each chapter concludes with a "Legacies" section clearly explaining current practices and challenges that emerged from the period in question. Second, each chapter presents a brief bibliography of critical primary and secondary readings of import to the period covered in the preceding chapter.

Acknowledgments

The writing of this piece spanned many years and two institutions. The first draft was written while a junior faculty member at the University of Wyoming; I wish to thank my students who allowed me the opportunity to hone the material in this book from class lectures I prepared there. I also wish to thank my colleagues from UW; specifically Dr. Peter Moran was a good sounding board of ideas, and dean Dr. Kay Persichitte provided support for my work during this period of my career.

I put the project on a back burner for a number of years, and dusted it off after my move to the University of Toledo. I wish to thank my colleagues and students here, particularly the graduate students who signed up for my history of education classes and provided me continual feedback on and an opportunity to update the material. I need to specifically thank Monica Klonowski for providing invaluable editorial guidance on an earlier draft; she suggested some of the pedagogical tools in the work and let me know where my references were too oblique for the casual reader and undergraduate student. Of course, any unintended errata in the text is attributable to me alone.

Toledo, OH Edward Janak

Contents

List of Tables

Introduction

Word Lists

Words/terms of two syllables

hornbook
praxis
private
public
schooling
thesis
testing
funding
standards
school choice

Words/terms of three syllables

at-risk youth
charter school
discipline
grammar school
inclusion
magnet school
normal school
petty school
performance
Smith-Hughes Act
Title IX
synthesis

Words/terms of four syllables

antithesis
"Blue-Back Speller"
Brown v. Board
curriculum
dialectic
diversity
evangelize
district of choice
education
hermeneutics
infrastructure
integration
intervention
logocentric
pedagogy
philosophy
pragmatism
talented tenth
technology

Words/terms of five syllables

A Nation At Risk
assimilation
behaviorism
civic religion
classroom management
Committee of Ten
desegregation
essentialism
gradualism
idealism
McGuffey Reader
New England Primer
No Child Left Behind
noncurricular
postmodernism
progressivism
specialization
tabula rasa
zero tolerance

(*continued*)

(continued)

	Word/terms of six syllables	
accountability	child-centered progressives	perennialism
Atlanta Compromise	existentialism	school-to-prison pipeline
Cardinal Principles	extracurriculum	special education
	Words/terms of seven syllables	
classical conditioning	deculturalization	professionalization
	neoliberalism	
	Words/terms of eight syllables	
administrative progressives		liberation pedagogy

An Alphabet of Lessons for Those New to Education

A	APPLES having become education's symbol By the end of their careers make most teachers ill
B	BACK TO BASICS is the common call Whenever society's perceived to fall
C	The CARDINAL PRINCIPLES, with clarion and fife, Changed "schooling for schooling" to "schooling for life"
D	Students with DISABILITIES, excluded they were, Until 1975, when IDEA became the cure.
E	A core of knowledge handed down with care The belief ESSENTIALISTS and Perennialists share
F	FUNDING based on locality Often perpetuates issues of inequality
G	By the Depression, GEORGE COUNTS understood Schooling to reform society was in fact good
H	In order to perpetuate all society's rules HORACE MANN expanded the common schools
I	INTOLERANCE combated every educator's canard, But tolerance must be seen as a minimal standard
J	JOHN DEWEY, the political and progressive hero Without whom our schools would amount to zero
K	KANSAS was one of four states combined In *Brown v. Board*, segregation undermined
L	The LAND ORDINANCE, which started federal intervention Passed in 1785, yet today gets little mention
M	MASSACHUSETTS was the state that gave birth To most matters of educational worth
N	NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND just another conception Of federal government's educational intervention
O	OPPRESSION'S end and defense of the weak What Paulo Freire taught teachers to seek

(*continued*)

(continued)

P	PROGRESSIVE educators, trying to reform Against corrupt politicians and society stormed
Q	Administrative progressives set school patterning, QUANTIFIED business models, not student learning
R	Fearing that not enough was being done, RECONSTRUCTIONISTS preached revolution without a gun
S	SOCIAL JUSTICE should be the goal Festooned from the highest pole
T	THOMAS JEFFERSON against the constitutional carnage Wrote "The Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge"
U	Postmodernists believe, as much as they can, That truth is UNSTABLE, created by man
V	VOUCHERS provide the financial tools To increase attendance at private schools
W	Noah WEBSTER knew to create a new nation, The schools would prove to be the salvation
X	EXISTENTIALIST teachers make it their mission To teach students all means of self-expression
Y	Ella Flagg YOUNG laid the foundation For schools to move to democratic administration
Z	After Columbine most schools got off the fence, Adopting ZERO-TOLERANCE policies to stop the violence

Some Proper Names of Men and Women from Which to Teach Those New to Education

Aristotle	Jean-Jacques Rousseau
B.F. Skinner	John Locke
Booker T. Washington	Lyndon Johnson
Charles Darwin	Martin Buber
Comenius	Maxine Greene
E.D. Hirsch	Nel Noddings
E.L. Thorndike	Noah Webster
Ella Flagg Young	Paulo Freire
Francis Parker	Plato
G. Stanley Hall	Socrates
George Counts	Theodore Brameld
Henry Giroux	Theodore Sizer
Hilda Taba	Thomas Jefferson
Horace Mann	Thurgood Marshall
Ivan Pavlov	W.E.B. DuBois
Jane Addams	William Bagley
Jean-Paul Sartre	William James
John Dewey	William Heard Kilpatrick

CHAPTER 1

Education in Precolonial/Colonial North America (Pre-1776)

Abstract This chapter explores education in the United States prior to the Revolution. It begins by exploring the multitude of Native American methods of educating their youth. It continues a roots-based examination of the European models of schooling brought into the United States by European colonists. It concludes with a discussion on the educational legacies of this period and recommendations for further reading.

Keywords Indigenous education • Native Americans • Deculturalization • Enlightenment • Old Deluder Satan Act • Petty schools • Grammar schools • Massachusetts Compulsory Attendance Law • Hornbook • Comenius

One of the greatest myths ever perpetuated by the educational textbook industry is the notion that education in the United States began with the English. According to most introductory textbooks on the market today, education began with the Reformation in Europe, moved through the Enlightenment, and ultimately was brought to the New World by the English under whom the schools flourished and education took its roots. Such an assertion completely ignores thousands of years of human development amongst the aboriginal peoples that occurred before the English arrived; it also shows a blatant disregard for the other African and European groups that were in the New World prior to the English arrival.

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5_1

To fully understand the development of schooling in the United States and its relationship to the building and continuance of the nation, one must fully understand all of the peoples who have lived in this nation.

Was There Education in Pre-European Exploration North America?

Before an exploration of education amongst the multitude of American Indian peoples commences, two serious and significant distinctions must be made. First, the reader must understand the difference between schooling and education. Education is any means that a society uses to transmit its culture. It includes schools, churches, mass media (including social media), families, friends, jobs, coworkers, and all other things/groups from which people learn on a day-to-day basis. Schooling, on the other hand, is the formal apparatus that a society develops to achieve specific educational goals, primarily to perpetuate its own norms and mores. The goals of schooling in the United States have developed over time: while the list has expanded and evolved, we have not fully eliminated any of the purposes that schooling has served throughout history. Goals/purposes of schooling include the following:

- Religious (ranging from preparing citizens to live in a theocracy to teaching character and morality);
- Political (preserving the United States as a republic);
- Social (making "good Americans" out of citizens by perpetuating Eurocentric, pan-protestant views);
- Economic (stabilizing the nation's economy, ranging from preparing workers for the factories to preparing workers for the twenty-first-century global economy); and
- Custodial (keeping children off the streets, out of the workforce, and out of trouble).

A second distinction that must be made is that, while it is easy to discuss education amongst the Native American peoples, this approach relies upon commonalities that border up on stereotype. Prior to Columbus' arrival, there were between 40 and 90 million people living in North America. It is difficult almost to the point of impossibility to count the number of distinct nations that existed prior to Columbus. Most

indigenous peoples in North America followed familial groups, clans, and bands. The number is made even more questionable due to the fact that some smaller groups were constantly merging into newer larger groups or disappearing entirely. It is a European notion to call these distinct groups "nations" any time a group of people shared a common language and customs. By 1700, there were between 50 and 60 distinct aboriginal "nations" east of the Mississippi River; there were at least 50 to the west. These numbers, of course, do not count the groups that merged without European knowledge. Some more liberal estimates argue there were over 2000 distinct languages and cultures spoken prior to European exploration.

Just as referring to a group of aboriginal peoples as a "nation" was a European invention, so too is the notion that because American Indian peoples lacked formal schooling, they also lacked education. Nothing can be further from the truth. Using the oral tradition, American Indian peoples had a very systematic method of education for their youth. Characteristic elements that cut across cultures included:

- It was community based; education of youth was the responsibility of all;
- It was deeply rooted in teaching balance in nature and preparing children to be stewards of the environment;
- It combined testing and play (similar to what we would consider a Montessori method today) to challenge and assess the youth via a system that emphasized cooperation, not competition; and
- Then, as now, the purpose of education was ultimately to produce good citizens that knew their role in society and functioned well within it.

Joseph Campbell and other similar scholars remind us the oral tradition was generally used for four overreaching purposes. First, it was a means of preservation of the history of the people, whether a family, clan, band, or "nation." Most groups had one member whose sole job was to remember the ongoing history of the people and pass it along to the next generation—a formalized history teacher, as it were.

Second, the oral tradition was meant to teach basic moral values. Children were taught essentially the same, if not higher, moral code as that was taught throughout the so-called civilized, formal Christian religious groups. While the Judeo-Christian tradition teaches that those who do ill

while alive get punished in the afterlife, many indigenous people taught their children the punishment would come while still in this world.

Third, the oral tradition was often meant to teach practical lessons in ways that people could understand. On one level, this meant a formalized system of apprenticeships that rivaled any European model. On another, this meant using faith-based stories to teach practical lessons. Instructing youth, for example, not to wander too far into the woods because either a wild animal or a rival group would get them would be heard as a challenge; telling children from their earliest days that there exist evil monsters beyond the trees and to be good meant they needed to stay near tended to keep the children close.

Fourth, the oral tradition was meant to satisfy curiosity, to explain the unexplainable. The natural world is full of mystery and wonder; throughout time, people have been coming up ways to explain these mysteries—the most obvious being, of course, "how did we get here?" One sample answer comes from the Arapaho people, who taught that the First Pipe Keeper floated on a limitless body of water with the Flat Pipe. He fasted and prayed to the Creator, who inspired him to send the duck to search beneath the water's surface. The duck emerged with a little bit of dirt, which the First Pipe Keeper put on the Pipe. Then he sent the turtle to the bottom, and it too returned with dirt which the First Pipe Keeper also put on the Pipe. The First Pipe Keeper blew off the dirt into the four directions which created the earth, sun, and moon. Soon after, he created vegetable and animal life, day and night and the four seasons. He created man and woman, and taught them the rites they would need.

Beyond Campbell's general purposes of the oral tradition, more specifically education amongst the American Indian peoples instilled all of the most commonly held attributes of being a good citizen: strong spiritual awareness, awareness of cultural heritage, respect for the land and the flora and fauna upon it, and vocational development. Children were playing, but the games were also means of assessing skills and sorting children into their likely future roles. Of course, the specifics of these purposes and techniques used vary greatly from region to region of what would become the United States. Unfortunately, the purposes of education among the indigenous people of the United States did not carry over through European colonization to impact the purposes of schooling in the "new world."

What Education Did the Pre-English European Explorers Bring?

- **Key terms**: Deculturalization

Before the English arrived, there were a great many people who landed in the New World. There is evidence that African explorers reached South America well before any Europeans. The Norse established a relatively temporary colony; the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Spanish and the French all had well established colonies throughout the Americas prior to the Pilgrim's arrival.

The Spanish primarily settled in what is now the southeastern United States and migrated westward. The Spanish chiefly came for both economic and religious purposes; they wanted to get spices and precious metals, and of course trained the natives to be happy, docile workers. In the process, they also wanted to save the souls of the "heathen" peoples (who, in actuality, had a much deeper spirituality, sense of community, and sense of morality than their so-called European "superiors").

To this end, the Spanish began a program of supervised segregation in which they opened up dormitory schools in an attempt to settle the migratory peoples then countered. These *encomiendas* were government controlled. Many granted ownership rights over American Indians to the colonists (as well as responsibility for the welfare of the people). Unlike the English that would follow, Indian slave children attended school side-by-side with the children of the colonists; however, this practice ended after the Pope Rebellion, an Indian revolt in 1680. At this time, a group led by Pope overtook the Santa Fe mission in an attempt at uniting the various Pueblo nations. However, internal discord among them led to their quick overturn, and the Spanish retook the city by 1693.

Spanish Jesuits established mission schools known as *reductions* at the same time. These mission schools used traditional European methods to teach Christian theology to Indian youth. The Jesuits attempted to keep the Indians from being insulated; they taught the aboriginal peoples to be self-governing in the European tradition. In the process, the Jesuits strove to sacrifice the culture of the American Indians in favor of a more "proper" European culture. Elements of this model of schooling included emphasis on competition, heavy discipline, and a Eurocentric curriculum rooted deeply in the Catholic faith.

The Spanish colonists established two purposes of schooling in the United States that are still perpetuated in some means today. The first is the religious purpose—education and to save souls. Why do we teach children to learn to read? So the children can read their catechism and *Bible*. Why did they teach children civic duty? Because they were essentially living in a theocracy, where all law is God's law. The religious purpose of education moved to the fore with the arrival of the Puritans (see Chap. 2).

The second purpose established by the Spanish was, to use a term coined by Joel Spring, **deculturalization**. Spanish colonists, Jesuit or secular, sought to destroy the culture of the Indian people and completely replace it with what they considered to be a superior culture. This form of cultural genocide was perpetuated in the United States well into the twentieth century, if not (as many argue) still happening today; this was demonstrated by such practices as the reservation system and Bureau of Indian Affairs-run schools which essentially killed off many aboriginal languages by refusing to allow their use.

Another European group that was well established in the world prior to English explorations was the French. Establishing a foothold in the New World in what is now known as Québec (known as New France until the 1759 Battle of the Plains of Abraham), the French spread from east to west, settling mainly in areas around Michigan through Wisconsin (although not as successful in Illinois). Upon discovery of the Mississippi River, many French sailed the length of the river, settling in what is now known as Louisiana. In fact, the people today known as Cajun came from a region of New France known as Acadia: "Cajun" is simply a shortened mispronunciation of "Acadian."

Amongst the French explorers, there were also Catholic schools; unlike the Spanish, their primary mission was not to save souls and deculturalize. Instead, they imparted some religious instruction and some simple French customs and manners. However, academics came secondary to economics: the French colonists, who rightly knew to survive the harsh winters of the north they must learn from the native peoples, were much more open to a blending of cultures. This assimilationist concept was best exemplified by the *coureurs des bois* (primarily of French heritage) and *Metis* (primarily of first nations heritage) peoples, true blends of French and aboriginal cultures.

In the French schools, segregation was prohibited; schools were open to any and all use. This is not to suggest the priests were pleased with the approach schools took. In fact, many missionaries were unhappy that they

couldn't model their programs on those of other nations, specifically the Spanish models of deculturalization. However, as the French colonies became more materially successful, the priests had to take a back seat.

What Were the European Roots and the English Model of Schooling?

- **Key terms**: Enlightenment, Old Deluder Satan Act, petty schools, grammar schools, Massachusetts Compulsory Attendance Law, hornbook
- **Key figures**: Comenius

Europe at this time was in the throes of the **Enlightenment**. This period brought about new ways of thinking, recognizing that reason should be the ultimate source of authority; thus, philosophers and scientists became highly valued members of society. Qualities such as liberty and tolerance moved to the forefront. Political systems that separated church and state into constitutional government were explored. As this new way of thinking came about, it became apparent that the common people needed to be educated, and the best way was to begin training young minds very early. A system of public education began to be explored ranging from education of the youth to formalizing higher education into permanent institutions.

Against this backdrop was born the "father of modern education," Jan Amos Komensky (1592–1670), known as **Comenius**. He argued that children should be educated according to their nature. As such, he created *The Visible World*, the first picture book for children. It was also one of the first educational books not written in Latin. He argued for concepts familiar to teachers today such as progression in education (spiral curriculum), lifelong learning, and practical knowledge as opposed to rote memorization. He also argued for equal education for women and the poor of society, though his educational advocacy did not include what modern society would consider a truly diverse student population (students who are of marginalized races, marginalized sexes/LGBTQ+, or are on either end of the special needs spectrum, disabled or gifted).

While the French and Spanish were colonizing the New World, the English were going through an educational revolution. From 1562 to 1640, school populations were broadened greatly while the Enlightenment

brought tremendously different thinking to the English people, the influence of which spread into the schools. In general, the English had a tremendous respect for, and enthusiasm about, their schools. They carried this enthusiasm with them over the Atlantic into the new world.

Just as there is a myth that education in the New World didn't exist prior to the English arrival, is also a myth that schooling was the same in all 13 colonies. Early settlers formed the colonies for a variety of purposes; therefore, the schools and the purposes they served varied greatly as well. The New England colonies were primarily religious colonies, meant to establish a kingdom on the hill in the New World; the middle colonies were religious enterprises of a different nature, tending toward religious freedom; the Southern colonies, on the other hand, were essentially economic opportunities.

The purpose of education in the New England colonies was religious. In his *Chrestomathy*, H.L. Mencken whimsically defined Puritanism as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."[1] These colonies were theocracies—everything went back to God. Puritans did want to teach basic literacy, but that was literacy in order to read *The Bible* and catechism. They wanted to save the souls of the people by instilling God's law. To this end, women worked as hard as, and learned as much as, men: it was the mother's duty to ensure that the children were raised to be good Christian youth.

It was the New England colonies where both the first education law in the first schooling law occurred. Most introduction to education books list the 1647 ***Old Deluder Satan Act*** as the first school law in the United States. This law required towns of 50 or more households to provide **petty schools** (equivalent to today's elementary); towns of 100 or more households were to provide both petty (elementary) and **grammar** (secondary) schools. The term grammar school is often misleading; many students read biographies of notable people from Europe to find the subjects had a grammar school education, and mistakenly believe they left school in the sixth grade. However, grammar school education was a privilege, not a right, at the time: people who obtained a grammar school education were often amongst the wealthiest and most elite in their respective societies.

Another differentiation that must be made to understand schooling is that of the difference between public and private. In today's world, a public school denotes one that receives public funds, is subject to public accountability, strives to improve the public good, and is open to all

residents of the district; a private school is tuition based, typically not subject to public school laws, and therefore not necessarily subject to public accountability and not beholden to open admissions. However, these are relatively new definitions; during this period, all schools were public in the sense that anybody who could afford them could attend and the strived to serve the public good, and all schools were private in the sense that all were tuition-based, for-profit enterprises.

Which brings the reader back to *The Old Deluder Satan Act*—which was, in fact, the first school law in the new world. However, it was not the first education act; that would be the 1642 ***Massachusetts Compulsory Attendance Law***, mandating that parents and masters of apprentices instruct all children in their households in reading, religion, and capital laws. You will note that this 1642 law did not mandate that households educate slaves; that is because slavery was not common in the New England colonies.

In spite of these two laws, education was unsystematic, unregulated, and discontinuous. There was a tremendous diversity in the types of institutions offering education. In the New England colonies, there were public town schools, moving schools (schools that literally moved from location to location), dame schools (schools set up by an older woman in the community as a means of support), and private venture schools (for-profit enterprises); the middle colonies featured denominational schools (Quaker, Lutheran, Anglican, Mennonite, Moravian, and Dutch Reform), private venture schools, and charity schools (set up for poor children to attend while not working); the South featured old field schools (buildings moved from fallow field to fallow field), endowed schools (schools privately funded for the public good, such as on a plantation but serving all community children), charity/free schools, private tutoring, and private venture schools.

Attendance was ultimately the parental prerogative—but all parents were required to educate all children in their households. To demonstrate just how valuable was schooling, particularly to the Puritans who viewed schooling as a religious obligation, schools grew at a faster rate than the population: from the nation's inception, it built schools *before* there was a need for them. In spite of this school growth, schooling was one of many sources of education in the early colonies. More commonly, children learned from family members within their households.

Particularly in the New England colonies, the church was a primary educator. Ministers gave perspective on current events, practical applica-

tions of theology, and printed sermons, providing the majority of reading material. The early colonies also had apprenticeships, particularly for boys aged less than 14 years. Under these, a master would assume the education of the apprentice in literacy, civics, and catechism in addition to the vocational art.

Schooling was not for occupational preparation unless that occupation was the ministry. Instead, basic literacy and numeracy were encouraged, as was fluency in multiple languages such as Latin and Greek. The first book most schoolchildren used was known as a **hornbook**, though it actually resembled a paddle more than a book. Handed down from generation to generation, students would put a piece of the vellum across the hornbook and trace the alphabet and the Lord's prayer, thus learning to write. Another common text was *The New England Primer*, serving multiple levels of students, it included as such age—appropriate lessons as "time cuts down all both great and small" and "the idle fool is whipped at school."[2]

What Are the Educational Legacies of These Periods?

The deepest roots of our contemporary schools did, in fact, emerge from the Enlightenment and from the colonies. The Enlightenment provided the belief that an educated citizenry was important, and that our best leaders should be the most highly educated (the concept of "philosopher kings"). It also taught that rationality was the key to humanity, particularly Christian notions of rationality.

Once Enlightenment education hit the shores of the new world, our notion that people who are "other" should be deculturalized was the saddest legacy. The very notion of schools as the preeminent means of education came from this period. From the outset, schools were deemed necessary to produce good citizens—which meant fluent in their respective religions. The religious purpose of our schools, and the beginnings of an economic purpose, emerged. While schools ultimately served to reinforce societal norms, the schools would soon take a more revolutionary turn.

"Going Old School": For Further Reading

There are a great number of works that helped shape the information shared in this chapter that came together over years of teaching and reading. Many of these works are worth reading in their own right. What follows is a list of recommended works that both shaped the content of this chapter and extend it.

Bernard Bailyn's *Education in the Forming of American Society*[3] is one of the seminal works in the field of the history of education. It presents a good overview of how education shaped, and was shaped by, the greater colonial society. The work is broken into two parts: "An Interpretation" which lays out the history of schooling and reminds us that there was enormous diversity in this nation from the outset, which is followed by "A Bibliographic Essay" focused on early schooling in England and the United States.

What has become one of "the" essential texts, Lawrence Cremin's *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607–1783*[4] is the first part of a trilogy in educational history. It is a lengthy, but detailed, overview. It sets forth the case for the interrelationship of the nation and its schools from 1607 to 1783. The book begins by detailing the intellectual history that shaped schooling in England and later the United States. Cremin includes information on the impact of the revolutions of 1689 as it impacted education and culture both in Europe and domestically.

Finding good resources that examine American Indian education on a very broad level can be a challenge to find. Luckily, Milton Gaither's article "The History of North American Education, 15,000 BCE to 1491"[5] presents a brief look at indigenous education prior to European exploration. It is a solid, succinct examination of the multitudinous purposes of education that cut across many of the indigenous peoples of this continent. It examines a wealth of diverse experiences and finds trends and commonalities upon which to focus.

Long out of print and somewhat rare, Clifton Johnson's *Old-Time Schools and School Books*[6] traces the beginnings of schooling in the colonies through the lens of examining the books taught and the practices of the teachers. While most heavily focusing on the New England colonies, Johnson also includes information on Philadelphia, New York, Virginia, and the Carolinas. The work is heavily illustrated with pictures of buildings and reproductions of material from the texts themselves as well as renderings of teachers and their classrooms.

Celebratory of the public schools in tone, Frank Klassen's "Persistence and Change in Eighteenth Century Colonial Education"[7] dates to the early days of the field of history of education. Klassen's article examines three influences on Colonial education: religion, the classics, and the scientific revolution. The article first examines the interrelationship between the church and the schools from legal and curricular points of view. It next looks at the tension between the ancient and modern curricula taught in the schools, linking the debate to social class. It moves on to looking at the influence of the Royal Society of London on similar groups and schools in the United States, what the author refers to as the "New Science in America" (p. 93).

Stories of the impact of education by women, particularly before the twentieth century, are few and far between and often very Pro-Protestant in nature. Carol Mattingly's "Black Robes/Good Habits: Jesuits and Early Women's Education in North America"[8] begins to fill this gap. This chapter presents a history of the role of Catholic missionaries in perpetuating women's education in European colonies, particularly among the French colonies. The chapter explores how different sects, particularly the Ursulines, worked alongside their Jesuit counterparts to spread education in the language of the indigenous peoples with whom they worked.

A printing and updating of a series of lectures Samuel Morrison delivered titled *The Puritan Pronaos*, the somewhat dated book *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*[9] is one of the most exhaustive on education in the New England colonies. Morrison's attitude toward schooling is revealed by his original title: just as a pronaos is the entryway or narthex of a classical church, so too did the Puritans see schools as the entryway to heaven. Morrison focuses both on tracing the development of institutions (schools and colleges) and related facilities (libraries, print shops, booksellers) that were cornerstones of intellectual life and exploring what citizens of these colonies actually did with the opportunities afforded to them by being educated in the new world.

Essentially picking up temporally where Gaither's excellent article leaves off, Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder's *American Indian Education: A History*[10] explores the education of the indigenous people of the United States after colonization through the present. It presents a solid look at the mission schools, and the models of education that came after. The first two chapters of the book focus on the work of early missionaries and detail the tragedy of western removal as well as the role that education served in this purpose.

While Comenius is mentioned in some histories of education, works devoted to his thinking about education and impact on schooling are relatively rare. Though old, John Sadler's excellent *J.A. Comenius and the Concept of Universal Education*[11] presents a philosophical and historical account of the entirety of Comenius' work in education. The first section of the book explores the philosophical roots of Comenius' thoughts and beliefs. The second section details Comenius' arguments regarding universal education and how to engage in continual reform. The third section looks at the instruments of education—schools, teachers, and books.

Joel Spring's brief but enormously important *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality*[12] outlines how schooling in the United States has deculturalized various historically marginalized groups throughout history. Early editions detailed the harsh impact of schooling on individual marginalized groups: American Indians, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic/Latino Americans. Later editions add chapters focusing on the civil rights movements in the United States and the negative impact of corporate America.

Notes

1. H.L. Mencken, *H.A. Mencken Chrestomathy*, Edited and Annotated by the Author (New York: Vintage Books, 1982).
2. *The New England Primer: Enlarged for the More Easy Attaining the True Reading of English to which is Added the Assembly of Divines Catechism* (Boston: S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1727), n.p.
3. Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972).
4. Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607–1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).
5. Milton Gaither, "The History of North American Education, 15,000 BCE to 1491," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2014): 323–348.
6. Clifton Johnson, *Old-Time Schools and School-Books* (New York: Dover Publications, 1963).
7. Frank Klassen, "Persistence and Change in Eighteenth Century Colonial Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1962): 83–99.
8. Carol Mattingly, "Black Robes/Good Habits: Jesuits and Early Women's Education in North America," in *Traditions of Eloquence: The Jesuits and Modern Rhetorical Studies*, eds. Cinthia Gannett and John C. Brereton (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 116–124.

9. Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (New York: New York University Press 1956).
10. Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *American Indian Education: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017).
11. John Edward Sadler, *J.A. Comenius and the Concept of Universal Education* (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1966).
12. Joel Spring, *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009).

CHAPTER 2

Education in the Early Revolutionary and Early National Periods (1776–ca. 1820s)

Abstract This chapter begins with the philosophical examination of idealist and realist origins before detailing the educational founding fathers and beginnings of federal and state support. It argues that the work of Jefferson, Webster, and others was significant in providing the blueprint for our contemporary system of public schools. It concludes with a discussion on the educational legacies of this period and recommendations for further reading.

Keywords Idealist • Realist • Dialectic • Thesis • Antithesis • Synthesis • Tabula rasa • Aristotle • Federalist • Anti-Federalist • Constitutionalist • Noah Webster • Thomas Jefferson • Manifest destiny • Infant schools • Benjamin Franklin

As the 13 colonies were dragged, in some cases kicking and screaming, toward eventual independence, the spirit of revolutionary fervor that swept the country took the schools in its wake. Revolutionary thinkers (who became our founding fathers) began to realize the value of a system of public schooling in our new nation. It was during this era that people began to realize the fate of the nation and the fate of its schools were inextricably intertwined.

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5_2

What Were the Philosophical Roots of This Period?

- **Key terms**: Idealist, realist, dialectic, thesis, antithesis, synthesis, tabula rasa
- **Key figures**: Aristotle

English schooling was directly influenced by thinkers from the Enlightenment and Reformation periods; however, as the revolution took place, the nation's thinkers returned to those that inspired Enlightenment thinkers. Philosophically they went back to the roots (the colonial version of going "old school," as it were) to the **idealists** and **realists**.

To an idealist, there exists an absolute state of perfection for everything in the universe; however, there is nothing in this world that achieves true perfection (including ourselves). Since humanity is flawed, we can never truly know what is "really" real. Platonic idealists believe we come to know through a **dialectic** (known as Platonic dialectic)—a process in which two or more people holding different points of view work toward establishing a truth through reasoned argument. Later thinkers came to encompass a more systematic dialectic (known as Hegelian dialectic): we start with an idea, known as our **thesis**; we develop a reaction to it that is in opposition to our belief, known as its **antithesis**; through reasoned debate and discussion, we bring those two concepts together and form a new belief, known as **synthesis**. This new belief—this synthesis—becomes our new thesis, and the process begins all over again.

To idealists, it is this ability to reason—to encounter antitheses and rationally debate them—that defines humanity. It is the dialectic that moves us closer to the ideal states in the universe. It is those who engage with this process most fully who should become our leaders; we should elect the equivalent of "philosopher kings" rather than people who are most like us. Contemporary idealists lament the loss of the dialectic. Modern mainstream media tends to air extremist views from both sides of the sociopolitical spectrum; it seems personalities who either choose to ignore, or lack the ability to engage in, the dialectic become popular while rational thinkers are pushed out of the way or shouted down. Indeed, watching either of the major 24-hour news channels or reading the comments section on any internet article would make Plato weep.

Due to a variety of reasons, there emerged a schism amongst the idealists of Athens. A new thinker, **Aristotle**, founded his own academy that focused on a philosophy almost directly opposite that of the idealists:

realism. To a realist, there wasn't some vague, undefinable, unknowable ideal existing in the universe; what is real is what can be sensed. We are all born **tabula rasa**—blank slates—and it is our job to try and fill our slates with as wide a set of experiences as possible. This notion places a heavy burden on teachers, particularly those in early childhood; carve inaccurate information onto the blank slates that are students and they're marred for life.

It was the quest to fill the tabula rasa with as much as possible that drove one of Aristotle's most famous students, Alexander the Great. It was also this dichotomous set of beliefs—striving to find universal perfection, but simultaneously sensing and experiencing as much as possible to fill our slates—that inspired our founding fathers, pre- and post-Revolution.

Who Were the Educational Founding Fathers?

- **Key terms**: Federalist, anti-Federalist, constitutionalist
- **Key figures**: Noah Webster, Thomas Jefferson

Noah Webster was one of the first to fully realize how close is the relationship between schooling and revolution. Granted, most contemporary readers are more familiar with Webster in terms of the dictionary. Webster earnestly believed if we were to be a truly independent nation from England, we needed an independent language. To this end, he wrote what would become Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* (today known as *Webster's American Heritage Dictionary*)—a book that set him in direct opposition to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The linguistic differences were subtle, but the usages called for by Webster were markedly different.

From a political standpoint, Webster understood that if the new nation was going to last, its people must have a shared language for use in its popular sovereignty; it must develop a shared culture to unite the disparate colonies. He knew that a new language needed to be diffused among its people. Having worked as a teacher to support himself through law school (and unhappy with the European dominated pedagogies and curriculum), Webster recognized that the schools were the key to forming and perpetuating a national identity. Accordingly, he designed a three volume compendium, titled *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, for use in multiple levels of schooling. Webster's "Blue-Back Spellers" infused not only the American dialect but a patriotic fervor in the youth of

the nation; for example, the title page of one of the volumes included the following: "Begin with the infant in its cradle. Let the first word he lisps be Washington."[1]

Webster was not alone amongst the founding fathers to appreciate the potential valuable role schools could play in our nation. During the Revolutionary and Early National eras, another purpose of schooling was added: political. The schools were seen as one tool amongst many to use in nation building. Many citizens of the new Republic recognize the fact that the schools were essential for our new nation, unfortunately, that was about the only thing on which they could agree.

After the Revolution, there was a political split among many of the US leaders. Two main camps formed: **Federalists**, who believed in a strong central government that united multiple states, and **Anti-Federalists**, who opposed a strong central government in favor of empowering the states (to the point of opposing the Constitution). **Thomas Jefferson** emerged from the Revolution as one of the most staunch Anti-Federalists in the new nation. However, Jefferson was also one of the most ardent supporters of education; the philosophically idealist Jefferson believed wholeheartedly that a natural aristocracy was better than hereditary or pecuniary aristocracy, that men should rise to positions of power based on ability, not money; he supported the idealist notion of philosopher kings.

In his attempt at getting the new nation—or at least one state of the new nation—on board with this idea, Jefferson thrice proposed the *Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* to the Virginia state legislature, and thrice it was defeated. In spite of never being implemented, elements of Jefferson's design provided the blueprint for what would become public school system across the United States. Jefferson's visionary plan divided the state of Virginia into 20 districts (the origins of contemporary politically drawn school districts). Within each district were hundreds of town-supported petty schools. Attendance at these schools for the first three years was free, followed by a set of testing. The best and brightest continued on via scholarship; the remainders were able to attend paying tuition (Fig. 2.1).

From there, Jefferson designated that each district would have a residential grammar school. These schools had a six-year course of study; one student out of every 10 (the highest achieving) coming out of the petty schools got scholarships. After each of the first three years, students would be assessed with the bottom third being sent home each year. Jefferson called this "raking the rubbish"; today we call it high-stakes testing.

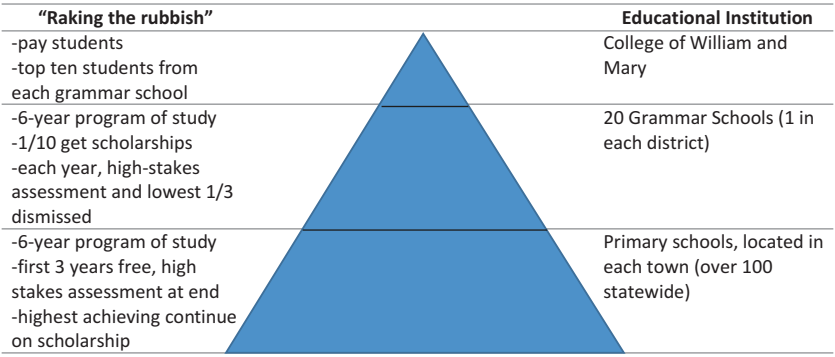

Fig. 2.1 Jefferson's model of schooling presented in the *Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge*

At the end of a six-year period of grammar school study, the top 10 scholars from each of the 20 grammar schools were to attend university at William and Mary tuition free; others could attend who could afford to pay the tuition. However, when William and Mary refused participate in any type of state-sponsored admissions, Jefferson founded a "Harvard of the common person," the University of Virginia. Jefferson's higher education project inspired all states to found systems of their own. From the University of Maine, to the State University of New York system, to the University of California system, universities founded upon Jefferson's vision have become some of the nation's best.

Jefferson had two aims when proposing his Bill. First, Jefferson recognized that an intelligent, literate populace was essential to the nation, and thus wanted to ensure the literacy of the general population. If the masses (and by masses it is meant landowning white males in Jefferson's time) were to be allowed to vote, the masses had to be well-educated enough to make sound decisions. Second, Jefferson wanted to use the public schools as a means of identifying and training future philosopher kings, knowing that the best and brightest might come from all populations, not just the wealthy elite.

The Virginia State Legislature saw it a little bit differently and voted for the bill down three times in 1779, 1790, and 1817. The reasons they voted against it were many. The bill would require taxation to support this school; then, as now, no politician wanted to be the one to raise taxes. With revolutionary fervor still fresh, the idea of centralizing state authority was abhorrent to many who cherished localism. More philosophically,

many argued that while the revolution was political, education was ultimately a social issue—and therefore, no place for the government to get involved. Predictably, but no less sadly, many of the privileged class that was the Virginia state legislature—white, male, and wealthy—were adamantly against mixing classes. This same group was also doubtful of the value of the American commoner. Then, as now, members of the elite classes were quite happy doing whatever they could to ensure they remain class divisions someone to tread upon, socially and intellectually.

While Jefferson initially was an Anti-Federalist, after taking office as president he "softened" into a strict **Constitutionalist**, someone who believed that the federal government is limited in its powers by the Constitution and that its legitimacy lies in strict adherence to those limits. It was under this guise that in his sixth presidential address, delivered December 2, 1806, Jefferson argued for a constitutional amendment creating a nationalized system of schools:

> Education is here placed among the articles of public care, not that it would be proposed to take its ordinary branches out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages so much better all the concerns to which it is equal; but a public institution can alone supply those sciences which, though rarely called for, are yet necessary to complete the circle, all the parts of which contribute to the improvement of the country, and some of them to its preservation. The subject is now proposed for the consideration of Congress … I propose an amendment to the constitution, by consent of the states, necessary, because the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated in the constitution, and to which it permits the public moneys to be applied.[2]

However, he ended his call with the simple admonition that educational funding "would have the advantage of being independent on war, which may suspend other improvements by requiring for its own purposes the resources destined for them."[3] If only recent federal governments recognized that nothing should supersede educational funding in the United States.

What Were the Beginnings of Federal and State Support?

- **Key terms**: manifest destiny, infant schools
- **Key figures**: Benjamin Franklin

Federal intervention in the schools started before the new nation had fully formed. Two years prior to ratifying the Constitution, the Congress of the Confederation passed the Land Ordinance of 1785 which divided all new lands into townships of 6 square miles. Each of these was subdivided into 36 sections of 1 mile each, every 16th of which was set aside for the support of the schools. This was followed by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, passed after ratification of the federal government as we know it today, which maintained the provisions of the Land Ordinance of 1785 and extended these provisions to territories before achieving statehood, providing the land grants for schools. The culmination of these bills effectively tied together religion, education, morality, and progress in the minds of American citizens for years to come.

States were not to let the federal government trump them in terms of public school support. Massachusetts passed the first state law (in 1789) supporting schools. It authorized towns to create district schools, updating the *Old Deluder Satan Act*. Towns of 50 or more families had to create an elementary school, while towns with 200 or more families had to create both in elementary and a grammar school. New York and Connecticut both began allocating state funds in 1795 to support schools. The New York plan annually set aside a portion of tax revenues to local school committees who in turn provided direct financial assistance to the public schools. The Connecticut plan provided a larger sum set aside from land claims (more than any other state) to this same end. These funds established a permanent school fund and subsidized teacher salaries. Interestingly enough, even though states were funding schools, they did not at that time choose to regulate the schools—such tight oversight and general mistrust would not happen until the twentieth century.

Unfortunately, it wasn't only funding in which that the federal government chose to involve itself. The 1790 Naturalization Act denied citizenship to Native Americans, Africans and African-Americans, Asians and Asian-Americans, and Hispanics and Hispanic-Americans. In fact, if you weren't of European stock (or even if you were a bit too Spanish), you were not considered a citizen, no matter how long you had been in the United States. This act set up a dichotomous social structure—you were a citizen (read: white), or you weren't (read: everyone else). In 1819, the federal government passed the Civilization Act. Originally seen as simply an experiment, this act truly reflected the power most people believed schooling to have—particularly as a means of cultural transformation. This was the act that created dormitory schools particularly for American

Indians in the hopes of "civilizing" them into proto-European beliefs (such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and environmental waste).

Not every member of white society bought into such discriminatory notions—there was resistance almost from the outset. The Quakers, particularly, became strong opponents of governmental discrimination. From 1770 to 1810, the African Free School Society was established, providing funds and teachers to schools devoted to teaching the children of slaves and freedmen. The year 1775 saw the creation of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, a movement that spread widely across New York into the New England states.

The Jesuit spirit of religious salvation via deculturalization spread to the Protestants in the aftermath of the revolution. In 1810, the American Board of Commissioners to Foreign Missions (ABCFM) formed amongst the Presbyterian and Congregationalist faiths. These groups sent missionaries to the newly forming reservations in attempts to spread their faith. In a strange fusion of politics and religion, the ABCFM used **manifest destiny**—the belief that America was destined to spread from coast to coast, used to justify the annexation of Texas and war with Mexico—to justify its actions.

What Were the Sources and Purposes of Schooling?

The types of schools in the Colonial and Early National periods remained essentially the same, with marked differentiation between the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies. There were two differences that emerged during this period: the first, an invention of Robert Allen, was the creation of **infant schools**. The reason behind infant schools was somewhat insidious: many leading citizens believed that the poorer members of society were incapable of raising their children properly, thus the children needed to be sent to school to save them from their families. This line of thinking is similar to the **deficit model** of viewing other cultures today. A second difference that came about during this period was that the people began to form politicized districts. Citizens of the states divided themselves up along geographic lines and taxed themselves to support their local petty schools, further blending today's concepts of public and private schools.

Schooling began to become systematized during this period. With the rise of state funding and taxpayer assistance to the schools came the beginnings of the rumblings of public control and regulation over the public

schools. Teachers were part time and itinerant; with the belief of "spare the rod, spoil the child," most of these itinerant teachers were male. The principal "motivator" for students was corporal punishment, which was considered appropriate as the majority of students in the colonial schools were male. There were a wide variety of means of corporal punishment during this time ranging from fairly tame (admonishing students verbally, keeping them after school, making them read a proclamation before the school announcing what they had done wrong and apologizing) to humiliating (students being forced into a cradle in front of the school and rocked throughout the day like a baby, forcing them to spend the day resting on a pillow instead of participating, locking them in a suspended basket in front of the school) to cruel and abusive (forcing students to drink spoonsful of hot tea, locking them underneath a hen coop for the day so they become covered in chicken waste, locking them in shackles, beating them with a rod).

The purposes of the schools expanded with the Early National period as well to include a blatantly political purpose. Schools in the early republic were charged with nation building: the newly independent nation wanted its own language, culture, literature, and tradition, and looked to the schools to create and perpetuate these. Just as to the Puritans it was essential that women were educated in order to teach their children in the house, so too did citizens of the new Republic believe girls should be educated in order that they were able to produce good citizens. Of course, educating women to *become* citizens in their own right was still 150 years away. Politicians realized how tenuous a fledgling democracy could be and wanted schools to help inoculate against corruption and tyranny. Furthering the notion of producing good citizens, the beginnings of a social purpose were in their infancy, as many believed schools could save children from unsatisfactory home influences.

The economic purpose was expanded as well: schools were now expected to get orphans removed from street life. Universities were still mainly training students in theology and the law, but the schools began to absorb some of the vocational responsibilities hitherto left to apprenticeships, beginning by adding science and engineering to the curriculum. **Benjamin Franklin** is considered by many to be the most visionary of the period. Recognizing that more and more students deserved a public school education, he helped open an academy in Philadelphia in 1751 that focused on life and work skills in addition to academics; his model would slowly spread throughout the young nation.

Of course none of these purposes could be fulfilled without a healthy dose of morality, which came from the still-present religious purpose. While not quite as gloom-and-doom, hellfire-and-brimstone as the Jonathan Edwards-inspired *New England Primer*, Webster's "Blue-Back Spellers" still contained lessons taken directly from scripture and reinforced the same puritanical notions of hard work and devotion.

What Are the Educational Legacies of This Period?

The legacies of this era are plentiful. The purposes of education were expanded to include political and social. The beginnings of state funding emerged and with them the beginnings of state control. State control, of course, begets standardization of materials and curriculum. The district structure came about: they were titled "districts" in rural areas, "wards" in urban. Toward the end of the period, grammar schools and academies were displaced in Boston, Massachusetts by a new invention known as the "high school."

The perceived importance of schooling was one of the greatest legacies: the general public began to believe that the public schools were essential to the very foundations of the nation, and education became interwoven with democracy, for better and for worse. In Massachusetts, a lawyer was churning this over in his mind and wondering just how effective the schools could be in not only creating, but preserving, the nation as a whole. Horace Mann would soon become state superintendent of public instruction in Massachusetts, changing the face of schooling in this country.

"Going Old School": For Further Reading

There are a great number of works that helped shape the information shared in this chapter that came together over years of teaching and reading. Many of these works are worth reading in their own right. What follows is a list of recommended works that both shaped the content of this chapter and extend it.

Before *Hamilton: The Musical* presented our founding fathers in a humanizing light, H.W. Brands' article "Founders Chic: Our Reverence for the Fathers has Gotten Out of Hand"[4] attempted much the same (minus the hip-hop references). We tend to ascribe sainthood upon the founding fathers of this nation; Brands' article complicates the fascination, and near reverence, many Americans have for the founding fathers of the

nation. It presents them as complicated men who made mistakes in an attempt to debunk much of the sainthood ascribed to them. It is a good read to fully appreciate the tone of this book.

The Quakers were profoundly influential during the nascent years of our nation's history, yet a thorough history of the faith is hard to find. Howard Brinton's work *Friends for 350 Years: The History and Beliefs of the Society of Friends Since George Fox Started the Quaker Movement*[5] helps fill this gap. Difficult to find as it was essentially self-published, this serves as a well-received overview of the history and influence of the Quaker movement in the United States. It balances teaching the core beliefs of the faith as well as the various social movements with which they were associated.

"The Promise of the American Revolution: 1776–1826," Part I of Freeman Butt's *Public Education in the United States: From Revolution to Reform*,[6] explores schooling in the early national period through the lenses of class and politics, Loyalists versus Patriots. Across three chapters, in theme and structure, he contrasts the goals of schooling (uniting the new nation, forming a national identity) with the diversity of the population (poor, multiple religions, slavery versus anti-slavery, regional differences). He points out the beginnings of capitalist influence on schooling and notes the shortcomings of schooling for African-Americans.

Very often the early philosophical schools of thought are seen as being too disconnected from our current society to be of any worth; many works exploring the early Western philosophies are written as academic texts, not overly readable by a general audience. Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein, two sitcom writers, took the challenge and produced *Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar … Understanding Philosophy Through Jokes*,[7] which encapsulates the more universal and profound aspects of European philosophy in an easy-to-read, understandable fashion. While the founding fathers studied Aristotle and Plato, this thumbnail/armchair guide will serve as an entrée to their thinking for most contemporary readers.

Based on three lectures delivered at the University of California, James Conant's *Thomas Jefferson and the Development of Public Education*[8] presents a good introduction to Thomas Jefferson as a thinker in education as well as many of Jefferson's writings on the topic. The main text is broken out into three chapters that detail Jefferson's innovative thinking in education, the mixed reaction to his proposals, and Jefferson's relevance in the twentieth century. The book also includes a large number of appendices of Jefferson's writings on education for those who like to go to the

original sources; included are the full text of the *Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* and Jefferson's 1806 address to Congress referenced in this chapter, as well as correspondence with other founding fathers.

Part II of his school trilogy, Lawrence Cremin's *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876*[9] presents a fascinating, detailed portrait of schooling in the time of the nation's emergence. Cremin clearly shows the link between building our new republic and building our nation's schools. He does an excellent job exploring the evolution of the nation from what was essentially a theocracy to a republic and the role that schools played in this evolution: schooling should foster the prioritization of public good over private interest, should produce citizens who practice independence while maintaining a coherent American identity, and should address how to improve the human condition. It makes for an interesting debate whether today's schools still fulfill these missions as evidenced by rhetoric in our current society.

While a work of fiction, Jostien Gaarder's *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*[10] is one of the best introductions to philosophical thought available. The plot involves a mystery surrounding a series of letters written to the teenage protagonist of the story, Sophie. The letters, coming from a mystery mentor, introduce Sophie to many of the Western schools of philosophy, from the ancient Greeks to Marx, Darwin, and Freud, and soon evolve into a series of conversations regarding these schools. The book, intended for an adolescent audience, is eminently readable—it is often used in introduction to philosophy courses because of its balance between accuracy and readability.

Part biography, part history, Joshua Kendall's *The Forgotten Founding Father: Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture*[11] is a thorough, balanced examination of the complicated figure that was Noah Webster. It details his relationship with George Washington, the difficulties with early drafts of his dictionary, and its less-than-favorable initial reviews. Kendall does a good job of pointing out Webster's role in getting citizens of the new nation to see themselves as Americans rather than English, particularly through the books written for use in American schools and Webster's decades-long work on the *American Dictionary of the English Language*.

In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, the debate about slavery took on an added import—as did how to incorporate free Blacks into society. John Rury's article "Philanthropy, Self Help, and Social Control: The

New York Manumission Society and Free Blacks 1785–1810"[12] looks at the Manumission Society's efforts both as anti-slavery crusaders as well as providing education to the free Blacks of New York. The article details the paternalistic nature of the Society's efforts as a tool for social control and the mixed response of the Black community—both acceptance and resistance to the Society's efforts.

Notes

1. Noah Webster, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking, Being the Third Part of the Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (Newport: Peter Edes, 1789), n.p.
2. Thomas Jefferson, "Extract from President Jefferson's Sixth Annual Message," in James Conant, *Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Public Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 106.
3. Ibid.
4. H.W. Brands, "Founders Chic: Our Reverence for the Fathers has Gotten Out of Hand," *The Atlantic Monthly* 292, no. 2 (2003): 101–110.
5. Howard Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years: The History and Beliefs of the Society of Friends Since George Fox Started the Quaker Movement* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2002).
6. Freeman Butts, "The Promise of the American Revolution: 1776–1826," *Public Education in the United States: From Revolution to Reform* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978)
7. Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klien, *Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar … Understanding Philosophy Through Jokes* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).
8. James Conant, *Thomas Jefferson and the Development of Public Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).
9. Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876* (New York: Harper Books, 1980).
10. Jostien Gaarder, *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994).
11. Joshua Kendall, *The Forgotten Founding Father: Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010).
12. John Rury, "Philanthropy, Self Help, and Social Control: The New York Manumission Society and Free Blacks 1785–1810," *Phylon* 46, no. 3 (1985): 231–241.

CHAPTER 3

Education in the Common School Period (ca. 1830s–1860s)

Abstract This chapter examines the perennialist tradition behind Horace Mann and the Common School Movement. It details the rise of normal schools and the development of a common pedagogy and curriculum. It questions exactly how common was common in the public schools, opening up questions regarding the treatment of historically marginalized populations. It concludes with a discussion on the educational legacies of this period and recommendations for further reading.

Keywords Nativist • Infrastructure • Curriculum • Committee of Ten • Civic religion • Pedagogy • Classroom management • Normal schools • Horace Mann • WASPs • Gradualism • Talented tenth • American Dream • Booker T. Washington • W.E.B. DuBois • McGuffey Readers • Messianic

When the word "common" is used, the rightful belief is that what is meant is, in fact, common—something shared by the majority, if not all. When it comes to the use of the term "common" in regards to education, the intent was to establish a system of schooling that would bring together all the children of the nation into one American belief system. As stated by one Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1842: "The chief end [of public schools] is to make good citizens. Not to make precocious scholars … not to impart the secret of acquiring wealth … not to qualify directly for

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5_3

professional success … but simply to make good citizens." However, one of the greatest misnomers in American history was the era known as the Common School Movement. While, in theory, the schools were developing a common pedagogy to be used covering a common curriculum based upon common public support, all too often, students from marginalized cultures were in schools that were more uncommon than common.

Who Was Horace Mann? What Is the Common School Movement?

- **Key terms**: nativist, infrastructure, curriculum, Committee of Ten, civic religion, pedagogy, classroom management, normal schools
- **Key figures**: Horace Mann, WASPs

American society was beginning to change as the nation entered the nineteenth century. One of the largest challenges facing the **White Anglo-Saxon Protestants** (WASPs) that comprised the nation's founders were two questions: who are all these people showing up who don't look like us, speak like us, or worship like us … and what do we do about them? Immigration was on the rise on both coasts of North America. On the east coast, a wide variety of predominantly European émigrés were making their way in through the large port cities (such as New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Charleston), finding neighborhoods of those who were like them in which to settle down or, in the absence of such, migrating their way inland.

When one says "nineteenth century immigrant" images of white Euro families in peasant garb standing under the Statue of Liberty's torch as they wended their ways through the halls of Ellis Island come immediately to mind. While these immigrants at least looked like those who had settled here previously when viewed through a racial lens, they were mainly not Protestant—those who practiced Catholicism from Ireland and Italy, those who practiced Judaism throughout Eastern Europe—and brought an incredible array of religious customs, foods, languages, and traditions. Between 1840 and 1860, four million non-English, non-Protestant immigrants arrived.

It cannot be forgotten that we were developing *two* coasts at this time, though. On the west coast, émigrés from Pacific Rim Asian countries such as China and Japan were making their way to the new world as well. Contemporary readers must also have images of Asian families in peasant

garb standing with the Coit Tower in the background as they wended their ways through the halls of Angel Island before moving on to find communities of people with whom they shared culture.

The influx of immigrants gave rise to a reactionary group known as the **nativists**. The nativists (depicted in the film *Gangs of New York*) believed in protecting the interests of native-born citizens over immigrants at all costs (not to be confused with Native Americans who were, by this time, all but relegated away from the coasts into the horrific conditions of the reservation system). Nativists viewed immigrants as comically underprepared at best, animalistic heathens to be loathed and feared at worst. At least slaves were property and thus were given some consideration—as the most expensive possession of a landowner, slaves were often treated similarly to a prize horse or family pet. This dehumanizing treatment should never be considered positive; however, many Irish and Polish immigrants would remind contemporary readers that the groups shared many of the same challenges. Both were considered inhuman, closer to apes than man; both were considered outside the protection of the laws; both could be used up in manual labor and discarded when broken without the slightest twinge of conscience.

What separated the two groups, African slave and European worker, was perceived potential. By the early decades, a lawyer from Massachusetts began to think that it was not beatings or jails that were the solution to the "Catholic threat" or the "Irish problem" facing Boston; instead, it was the schools. The lawyer, **Horace Mann** was appointed State Superintendent of Education and, once assuming office, became one of the most eloquent and influential thinkers in American educational history. Indeed, if Webster and Jefferson are the grandfathers of schooling in the United States, it is Mann who is one of the fathers.

Mann's vision was simple: create a common school system in which all students could attend, become instilled with the American tradition and American spirit, and all the problem members of society would be displaced by proper citizens of the Republic. In his *Common School Journal*, Mann wrote (italics in the original):

> *The common school is the greatest discovery ever made by man* … Let the common school be expanded to its capabilities, let it be worked with the efficiency of which it is susceptible, and nine-tenths of the crime in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalog of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be more

> inviolable by night; property, life, and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened.[1]

What do we mean by common schools? To begin, they must have a common **infrastructure**—physical facilities and grounds. School buildings should be instantly recognizable, separate facilities, not things housed in church basements or rolling sheds. By centuries' end, many states adopted a common set of blueprints dictating how schoolhouses should be built. Details included what direction they should face, what should be kept on the grounds, how many windows in each room, how many rooms they should have, even where the stove should be placed inside.

Within these walls would be shared a common **curriculum**, defined largely as what is taught explicitly and implicitly in the classroom. The common curriculum emerged as a good example of top-down reform taking place. The work of the common school advocates paved the way for a more top-down approach to curriculum reform.

Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, was frustrated with having such radically different preparation standards amongst potential enrollees. He called together a group known as the **Committee of Ten** who, in 1892, set forth a set of rigid course requirements. Students could take one of four majors in high school; within each major, each of the four year's coursework was proscribed. This was schooling for schooling, not schooling for life: these were academic courses, lacking vocational arts, visual/performing arts, or life courses such as health/physical education. Soon after Harvard adopted this standard, so too did most other major universities; once the universities were on board, the high schools followed suit. Once the high schools were on board, the elementary schools began preparing students accordingly.

The common schools were called upon to socialize all the youth of the country—to bring them all together and make good citizens out of them. The definition of what was a good citizen was someone who, of course, fit the WASP mold in beliefs, language, and actions, if not in looks. To this end there developed a public school creed that fostered a **civic religion**. Schools began tapping into the same feelings of profound reverence the population held toward their respective places of faith and turned those toward the government in an attempt at building a national character to be shared by all. Schoolchildren were taught to revere aspects of the nation in which they lived with the same reverence and devotion experienced Sunday mornings (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1 The civic religion in the United States

Faith-based religion has…	Which became in the secular, civic religion…
Holy book • Torah, Koran, Bible, etc.	Sacred documents • Constitution, Declaration of Independence, etc.
Saints/revered figures	Founding fathers
Formalized hierarchy/clerics	System of federal, state, local political leaders
Global headquarters for the faith • Vatican, Canterbury, Mecca, Bodh Gaya, Puri, etc.	Washington, DC • Smithsonian Institutes, etc.
Houses of worship • Temple, mosque, church, synagogue, cathedral, etc.	Governmental buildings • Courthouses, state legislatures, Congress, White House, etc.
Tithing	Taxation
Holy War • Jihad, Crusades, etc.	"Spreading democracy" • Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War I
Holy days	Holidays
Formal prayers and hymns	Pledge of allegiance, national anthem
Pilgrimage, formal or informal • Mecca, Jerusalem, etc.	Pilgrimage • Washington, DC; field trips to state government, etc.
Shrines	Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson Monuments, etc.

To get this common curriculum across to students, common school teachers must be trained into common **pedagogy** and **classroom management** techniques. Pedagogy is how teachers choose to get information across to their students; previously, students were given books, memorized material, and performed recitations which the teacher, more disciplinarian than educator, listened to and corrected as need be. Now, however, teachers were being taught using skills applied from the newly emerging science of psychology to get information across to students in ways that would do the most good. Discipline became classroom management, one part of pedagogy rather than the end in and of itself. Today, classroom management has expanded to not only include handling discipline but all the day-to-day operations within a classroom including taking attendance, dispersing and collecting materials, transitioning between lessons, handling parents, and juggling the behemoth of often meaningless paperwork demanded to hold a public school teaching position.

In order to achieve this common pedagogy and management, **normal schools** were developed. At first, these institutions exclusively devoted to training teachers were one-year add-on programs that students, increasingly women, elected to take after high school graduation. However, by the period's end, normal schools became two-year independent institutions,

the forebears to many small, liberal arts colleges that still exist across the country today.

The emerging normal schools began to make teaching recognized as a career in and of itself. However, due to pay differentials between men and women, the idea that teachers should be nurturers instead of disciplinarians, and socially accepted definitions of what was "women's work" versus what was "men's work," teaching was rapidly becoming a feminized career.

Sex wasn't the only line of segregation affecting teacher training: as normal schools developed, the white power structure was even able to differentiate along racial lines. Teachers at white normal schools were trained to cover a wide variety of academic material, while teachers at Black normal schools were trained to cover a wide variety of vocational and occupational tasks.

How Common Was Common?

- **Key terms**: Gradualism, talented tenth, American Dream
- **Key figures**: Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois

Interestingly enough, while Mann and those who followed his beliefs were trying to create one system of schooling to unite a nation growing in diversity both visible and invisible, the nation was also taking significant steps backward when educating those who were visibly "other." For example, it was very common up until the mid-1800s for southern plantations to have schools set aside for the children of slaves. Many plantation owners felt the same missionary zeal as the Jesuit forebears in the field in terms of educating the children of "heathen" peoples to become good Christians. Children of slaves were taught to read and write in the Puritan traditions of hard work and devotion to God. However, after slave revolts began occurring, schooling stopped across the south; as northern protestant missionaries continued their southern migrations to open clandestine schools, white southern politicians quickly passed laws in most states that would become the Confederacy prohibiting the education of Blacks. This became particularly problematic as the definition of "Black" quickly expanded to include "anyone who is not white" regardless of their racial or ethnic background.

When, after Southern Reconstruction, all students were allowed back into public schools, the damage had been done. The segregated schooling that emerged by decade's end was extraordinarily caustic to nonwhite

students. Unfortunately, this was often perpetuated within marginalized communities themselves. For example, **Booker T. Washington**, an African-American who was a staunch educational advocate and founder of Tuskegee University, believed in the notion of **gradualism**—that racial equality was to be a long, slow process over generations, not years. He announced his vision, what would become known as the Atlanta Compromise, at the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition. In Washington's view, Blacks must know what their proper role in society of the time was: "Better to earn a dollar in the field than spend a dollar in the opera house."

Washington was bitterly opposed by African-American philosopher and co-founder of the NAACP, **W.E.B. DuBois**. Educated at Harvard University, not the vocational-preparation Hampton University as was Washington, DuBois shared the Jeffersonian, idealist's belief that all people had the right to a free academic education. DuBois argued that the best way to achieve racial uplift was a notion he called the **talented tenth**—something almost identical to Jefferson's *Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge*. DuBois argued all children should have the right to attend school—during which they should be assessed, with the most talented moving on at taxpayer expense. The top 10% should receive university educations, then return to their neighborhoods to serve as teachers, role models, and good businesspersons, inspiring more from the following generation to succeed.

Another example of the common schools not being common was the treatment of students with disabilities—or rather the lack thereof. At this time, the dominant way of thinking about people with disabilities fell under what some call the "moral model"—people were disabled due to some flaw in themselves, or their parents. As such, people with disabilities were seen as a menace, subhuman, or object of dread. Public schools were entirely allowed to exclude students with disabilities in favor of those who were abled. In some cases, states built residential institutions that served as schools to cater to certain groups of disabilities—blind and deaf institutes, for example—though the education received in these was often subpar and focused on life skills exclusively.

As the above debate exemplifies, the answer to the question "how common was common?" ultimately depended on who you were. If you were white, protestant, at least second generation, and upper working to middle class, the common schools were quite common. They were very

effective at creating and perpetuating the notion of the "American Dream"—work hard, follow the rules, and you can rise as high as you want.

There is some debate about the efficacy of the common schools over those who deviated from this WASP-y norm. One school of thought is that, as historian Carl Kaestle described, the common schools were the very "pillars of the republic" without which we would have never coalesced as a nation, let alone become the superpower we were. There is middle ground that argues that too many populations were in fact marginalized, not lifted, by the public schools for them to truly be called common and that the public schools were not successful at socializing all the diverse European groups, let alone the various racial groups, as evidenced by the rise in private schools. A more extreme critique is that the common schools were just the latest chain of deculturalization agents; the price of assimilation was far too high for most groups to pay.

What Were the Sources and Purposes of Schooling?

- **Key terms**: McGuffey Readers, messianic

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Horace Mann and his ilk, it was during this period that we truly began to see a unified system of common schools that crafted, for better or for worse, a marked separation between public and private schools. First, due to an 1874 Michigan State Supreme Court case that centered in Kalamazoo, Michigan, school districts across the country could now use their tax dollars devoted to the public schools specifically to address public secondary schools. In the case, a group of local taxpayers sued the state, saying state taxes could not be used to support high schools. The Michigan Supreme Court disagreed, and the precedent to divert tax money into secondary and postsecondary education was established. Accordingly, the popularity of public high schools grew immeasurably, and private academies declined. Schools became truly public—fully taxpayer supported and publicly owned and funded facilities that were administered by county and/or district officials at public expense. Compulsory attendance laws spread across the nation.

The more publicly supported and compulsory the common schools became, the more that the private schools that continued to exist did so in resistance to the common schools, rather than as another aspect of them. Catholics, tired of the fundamental religious differences that played out in

the public schools, began opening their own—and winning cases that earned them public financial support.

The previously established purposes of schooling continued, if not expanded, during this period. Politically, widespread public education became ever more important as the need for an educated populace increased: universal suffrage passed in 1830 (and, by universal, it meant literate white male citizens). Economically, there was a greater need to make happy, docile workers out of the undereducated immigrants arriving on US soil, north and south. Morally, WASPs in the United States were terrified of what they perceived to be a "Catholic threat" and were still striving to create the perfect, Protestant "kingdom of God" on American soil.

One new purpose of schooling came again in resistance to the increasing tide of immigrants sweeping into the country: a social purpose of schooling. The common schools were now expected to form and perpetuate American society and culture. The notion of a great, happy assimilationist melting pot was spread through the schools (and would last through the 1980s, when displaced by another food metaphor, America as tossed salad). The idea was that émigrés would give a little (surrender their language, many customs, etc.) to get a lot (citizenship in the United States). A fundamental aspect of this assimilation was along character lines: all faiths were welcome, so long as they were Protestant.

Perpetuating this pan-Protestant system of schooling was the dominant text used by the public schools: the ***McGuffey Readers***. Started in Cincinnati, Ohio, by William Holmes McGuffey, the readers focused on simplicity of structure. One series could now move a child from almost infancy through almost secondary levels. The readers used a series of parable-like passages, which increased in length and difficulty, for students to read. Rather than memorize and recite, students were provided a series of questions at the end of each passage directing their thinking. Dominant republican, Protestant themes included patriotism, self-sacrifice, intelligence, the importance of liberty, and the need for a balanced government. The same messages echoed from the *New England Primer* through Webster's *Bluebacks*; now, instead of memorizing "the idle fool is whipped at school," students read passages about "The Little Idle Boy"[2] and were questioned about the foolishness of his ways.

What Are the Educational Legacies of This Period?

If the blueprint of the public school system as we know it today was provided in the Early National Period by thinkers such as Jefferson, Mann's vision of common schools provided the foundation. During this period, schooling moved much closer to the public school system as we know it today. Buildings were standardized, the curriculum was formalized, and pedagogy was detailed. The normal school movement began the idea of a formal teacher training process, which eventually gave rise to colleges of education. The pedagogy was softened, appearing much more similar to what is still used in elementary schools across the United States today rather than the "spare the rod, spoil the child" mentality of previous generations.

With the rise of normal schools and the formalization of teacher preparation, so too came the origins of making teaching a legitimate profession—something that's still debatable today. In 1857, the National Teacher's Association formed (which eventually morphed into the National Education Association, or NEA). However, with men lost on the battlefield and those remaining filling other jobs, teaching became a highly feminized field. The legacy of this feminization lives on as male teachers are still critically underrepresented in many fields and, due to the discriminatory notion of "women's work," teachers are underpaid for the amount of education and post-graduation training expected.

Thanks directly to Horace Mann's rhetoric, schools formalized a **messianic** purpose. Continuing the political purpose of schooling, the United States wanted to create a national unity, so the schools were put squarely in charge of doing so. Leaders—politicians and educators—wanted to establish faith in our government, so the civil religion in the classroom came about via the public school creed. We added a social purpose to schooling; there was an increasingly diverse group of people flooding into the United States, so the schools became the primary instrument of social control. We wanted to reduce strife between these peoples, many of whom were mixing for the first time, so the schools were called upon to create one culture. Of course, this one culture was based almost exclusively in pan-protestant notions, perpetuating the religious purpose of schooling. This messianic legacy would increase exponentially with the passage of time—particularly when the group of progressive reformers swept into political, social, and educational power.

"Going Old School": For Further Reading

There are a great number of works that helped shape the information shared in this chapter that came together over years of teaching and reading. Many of these works are worth reading in their own right. What follows is a list of recommended works that both shaped the content of this chapter and extended it.

James Carper is one of the preeminent voices in exploring the role religion has played in support and defiance of the public schools in the United States. *The Dissenting Tradition in American Education*,[3] co-authored with Thomas C. Hunt, focuses most heavily on the dissent during the so-called Common School period. The authors argue that the schools have become the nation's established church complete with its own orthodoxy; however, there have always been dissenters to this orthodoxy for reasons ranging from freedom of conscience, parental liberty, and educational justice.

Not just because no chapter in the history of education is complete without a Lawrence Cremin reference, *Republic and the School: Horace Mann on the Education of Free Man*[4] is Cremin's editing of excerpts from Mann's writings that pertain to a variety of educational issues. Selected to become the first volume in the *Classics in Education* series, reading the volume shows readers how focused on reform was Mann and how instrumental he and the public schools were in establishing an "American dream."

Counterpoint to Booker T. Washington, DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*[5] has long been cited as one of the preeminent first-person accounts of the racism inherent in American life in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Each chapter in the book is an essay in and of itself taking on a wide variety of topics. In one chapter, DuBois thoroughly critiques Washington, and his educational ideas; in another, he levies his criticisms on many of the schools serving the African-American population, particularly in the South, calling for instead an education of the Classics.

A counternarrative to much of what has been written about schooling during the Common School Era, Charles Glenn's *The Myth of the Common School*[6] argues that contrary to popular opinion and their name, the common schools weren't in fact, as common as we like to think. Glenn takes a deeper look at the diversity that existed in this nation and presents analyses of resistors as well as a critical examination of Horace Mann and common school reformers of his ilk. Like Carper and Hunt, Glenn argues that the

common schools have formed a kind of religion in this nation; the book includes chapters devoted to both opposition and alternatives to the common schools, and concludes by calling the very notion of common schools into question.

An example of the radical revisionist school of educational history, Colin Greer's *The Great School Legend: A Revisionist Interpretation of American Public Education*[7] makes the argument that not only were the common schools never common, they were designed to fail certain groups in society (specifically the urban, African-American poor) to enforce a class-based system of control. Greer argues that throughout history, those who succeeded in the United States did so despite, not because of, the schools, often returning to their traditional ways of life.

Another article dating back to the early days of the history of education field, Floyd P. Jorgenson encapsulates the origins of the messianic purpose that public schooling developed in the minds of many Americans in his brief article "The American Faith in Education."[8] It lays out a case for the religious evangelism that marked the early days of the Common School Movement, referring to "the missionary concept of teaching" (p. 17). The article notes the unfortunate side effect of this spiritualism: low pay for teachers, quoting that "One who teaches merely for money does not deserve the name of teacher," for example (p. 16).

Making a case for the common schools, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society 1780–1860*[9] is Carl Kaestle's argument that the common schools were indeed common enough to become the pillars upon which America has been built. Kaestle examines both urban and rural schools in some detail throughout the work to present his case. Kaestle does describe the regional differences in the common schools and resistance to the model; however, the legacies of this period on the public schools of the nation cannot be dismissed.

For those interested in the history of teacher education, Christine Ogren's *The American State Normal School: "An Instrument of Great Good"*[10] presents an excellent overview of the development of normal schools in the United States. Beginning in the 1840s, the work examines normal schools through the 1900s and their legacy today. Ogren uses a variety of lenses (race, class, gender) to examine who became teachers and how they were prepared. The work ends with a discussion of the evolution many normal schools made into liberal arts colleges.

Sometimes, something widely accepted as fact in society isn't always true. This is demonstrated in David Roediger's *Working Toward Whiteness:*

How America's Immigrants Became White, The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs,[11] which demonstrates that many of the same arguments regarding immigration in which we're currently engaged as a nation were also used against most European immigrants as well throughout history. Roediger's account provides an interesting counterpoint to much of the common school discussions found in this work and many of the others cited here; it provides an exploration of what was taking place in the greater society outside of school to the nation's working poor. Ultimately, the treatment of these newly emigrated working poor mirrored that of the discrimination facing other groups who were emigrated forcefully to the nation in the past.

Counterpoint to DuBois, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*[12]—part autobiography, part social critique—sheds light on the reality of American life of African-American citizens during Washington's time. Collected from a series of articles published in the *Outlook* magazine, Washington presents his life story including the text of his Atlanta Exposition address in which he explained his belief system regarding education of African-Americans, later described as "gradualism."

Notes

1. Horace Mann, "Introduction", *Common School Journal* 3, no. 1 (January 1841), 15.
2. William H. McGuffey, *The Eclectic Second Reader* (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1836), 4–5.
3. James Carper and Thomas C. Hunt, *The Dissenting Tradition in American Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).
4. Lawrence Cremin, *Republic and the School: Horace Mann on the Education of Free Man* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1957).
5. W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (New York: Dover Books, 1994).
6. Charles Glenn, *The Myth of the Common School* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).
7. Colin Greer, *The Great School Legend: A Revisionist Interpretation of American Public Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1972).
8. Floyd P. Jorgenson, "The American Faith in Education." *History of Education Journal* 4, no. 1 (1952), 11–17.
9. Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society 1780–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

10. Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School: "An Instrument of Great Good"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
11. David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).
12. Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York: Dover Books, 1995).

CHAPTER 4

Education in the Progressive Period (ca. 1890s–1920s)

Abstract This chapter explores education in the early twentieth century by using pragmatism to present progressivism and its offshoot, social reconstructionism. Not content to examine the father of progressive education (John Dewey) this chapter also looks at the grandfathers of progressive education (G. Stanley Hall and Francis Parker). It separates out progressive education into three areas: child-centered progressivism, administrative progressivism, and social reconstructionism. It concludes with a discussion on the educational legacies of this period and recommendations for further reading.

Keywords Pragmatism • Progressivism • John Locke • Charles Darwin • William James • John Dewey • Jean-Jacques Rousseau • G. Stanley Hall • Francis W. Parker • Child-centered progressives • John Dewey • Jane Addams • Laboratory school • Progressive Education Association • Project method • Critical pedagogy • *Cardinal Principles Report* • William Heard Kilpatrick • Hilda Taba • Eight-Year Study • Ella Flagg Young • Administrative progressives • Theodore Brameld • George Counts • Social reconstructionists • Extracurriculum • Smith-Hughes Act

Unsanitary food production facilities. Overcrowded, crime-ridden slums. Political corruption. Economic instability. Class stratification. Alcoholism. War. Racism. Anti-immigrant bias. Farm outmigration. Industrial abuse of

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5_4

workers. Corporations dictating society. Business leaders out-earning their actual worth. Technology taking over factories. Jobs being lost or moving overseas.

While this sounds like a laundry list of the challenges that face our society today, these were in fact but some of the challenges taken on chiefly between 1890 and 1930, the period known as the Progressive Era. While representing a relatively brief period of time, due to the laundry list of sociopolitical reforms that came out, this is one of the most revolutionary in the US history and included the following:

- Pure food and drug laws, including the Food and Drug Administration
- Direct election of senators and women's suffrage
- Prohibition (and its eventual repeal)
- City manager government, civil service reform, social bonds, and the citizen's initiative
- Sanitation reform and tenement regulation
- Trust busting, child labor laws, and unionization
- The cult of efficiency

Just as there was tremendous social upheaval that caused thinkers such as Horace Mann to take on the purpose of schooling, the political and social challenges facing reformers in this period caused a significant overhaul of the public schools. Reforms came on every level of schooling, from the frazzled teacher in the one-room schoolhouse on the prairie to the equally frazzled teacher of English in the large urban school that was running more and more like a factory. Prior to this period, both teachers feared for their jobs politically; both had to "do more with less"; and by the period's end, both had to turn their schools into community centers.

Progressive education is one of the better known, and more popular, periods; if you ask most classroom teachers today what they are, they will (often incorrectly) label themselves "progressive." It is popular and makes one feel good about oneself to be progressive; why, the opposite is regressive, and who wants to be that? To truly be a progressive, though, one must be well schooled in the politics and philosophy behind the movement.

What Are the Philosophical Roots of Progressivism?

- **Key terms**: pragmatism, progressivism
- **Key figures**: John Locke, Charles Darwin, William James, John Dewey, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The roots of progressivism actually lie in the philosophy of **pragmatism**, which encourages the quest for things that work well, are useful, and, by proxy, encourages all humans to do our best in everything. Pragmatists believe that knowledge is culturally and socially based and comes from problems which must be solved. Humans are social beings, and the main goal of humanity is to discover each individual's role in society. Pragmatists believe the environment is the most important factor in shaping humanity; many pragmatists take that notion a step further and argue that, by extension, too much civilization is harmful to a person's development. However, pragmatists believe that the primary means of coming to know is through discovery and the scientific method, whether individually or societally. Pragmatists argue that ideas cannot be separated from conduct—to have ideas is to know effects and consequences, a notion that would give rise to the behaviorist movement (explored in more detail in Chap. 5).

One of the more significant figures was **John Locke**, who took the realist notion of tabula rasa and came up with a practical application for it. Locke argued that ideas must have proof in the real world—the world of experience. Alongside Locke was **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**, who wrote the novel *Emile* to discuss the role of education. To Rousseau, a "natural education" that is highly individualized is the best way to train good citizens. Another was **Charles Darwin**, most famous for his concept of natural selection—"descent with modification." Darwin argued that species adapt to their environments; those who don't adapt die off. Similarly, only the strongest within each species win out—"survival of the fittest"—that ensures the perpetuation of a species.

Darwin's theories have been applied on a social level by many pragmatists. Social Darwinism is when "survival of the fittest" becomes applied to society, for good or for ill. Why are some rich and some poor? Darwinist pragmatists would (albeit incorrectly) argue that it's because they most deserve it—they are the most fit in that society. The American dream is another aspect of Darwinian sociology—work hard, and you will succeed. If you don't succeed, you don't deserve to make it after all. Many misguided people in history have misapplied Darwin's thinking to justify poor treatment of people of marginalized cultures, who spoke English as a second language, and/or who had disabilities.

In the United States, the philosopher **William James** greatly expanded on pragmatic notions. James argued that there is no absolute truth—made in actual, real-life events. Rather, the truth was not found in ideas, but in

the acting out of those ideas. To further muddle the matter, James argued in the difference between Truth (with a capital "T") and truth (with a lowercase "t"). Truth (Capital "T") is objective, verifiable, and universal; truth (lowercase "t") is individual experiences of this Truth. James further defined truth both as the process of experiencing—actually living, undergoing something—and the experience itself.

Pragmatism played out as an educational philosophy by becoming **progressivism**. Progressives ultimately believe that learning how to learn is more important than knowing a set of specific facts. For example, **John Dewey**, a philosopher who applied his thinking to schooling, rejected many of Locke's notions. Dewey argued that there was a transactional relationship between man and environment—it was not one way. He argued that how humanity experiences the world is subjective; further, we cannot act entirely in conjunction with environment—we tend to do what is best for us as individuals. Progressive thinkers believe experience and nature are completely interrelated and that we must take time to return to a natural state/world.

As it impacted education, progressives believed it was the goal to develop the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic dimensions of students—educating the whole child is common parlance. They believed that educating the cognitive, social, and moral aspects of a student is more important than pure academic preparation—that producing good, active citizens is more important than producing intellectuals. Progressives believe that it is more important for students to learn how to learn than is what they learn. In addition, progressives believe children are born basically good, curious creatures, and must be provided an environment to work on that learning. If a child misbehaves, it is often the teacher's fault for not properly tapping into the child's intellect or curiosity.

Progressives use an entirely student-centered pedagogy and curricula. They focus on fostering the scientific method within children, at the very least, relying heavily upon the problem-solving method. They integrate children's needs with resources to provide that learning. Since humans are social beings, progressives believe in cooperative learning and teamwork. Since the ultimate goal is to teach students their proper role in society, progressive educators use field trips, community leaders, real-world neighborhood projects, and hands-on resources; books are just one material amongst many to provide learning experiences.

On the surface, it appears that progressives don't have rigidly constructed roles; however, it is a false assumption. The roles are more fluid and a bit reversed, but are structured. The teacher is a leader, modeler, and guide; they help arbitrate learning, but do not necessarily dictate learning. The students take the most active role in the classroom on all levels. They determine the curriculum and help decide how they want to learn it. The students come up with classroom rules and the consequences for breaking those rules; they also are the ones charged with enforcing the rules. A truly progressive teacher will begin the year with few, if any, notions of what they will teach and how they will teach it; the first few days will be spent establishing the classroom, forming teams, performing team building activities, and such similar tasks. Most teachers—even those who call themselves progressive—aren't comfortable relinquishing this much control.

Another difference between many teachers who consider themselves progressive and actual progressivism is the ultimate purpose of schooling: to produce active citizens in the democratic republic that is the United States. All progressive teachers have an idea of how to improve this country, if not a clear vision of society as it should be. This vision shapes everything they do in their classroom; progressive teachers recognize that everything in education is political, and they are churning out students to step up and become social activists, regardless of stance or issue. While in the past teachers simply believed that an educated citizen was a good citizen, progressives believed that children needed to practice qualities of being a good citizen before they could actually do them in later life.

It is difficult in today's educational world to be a "true" progressive. The top-down, standards-driven accountability climate doesn't leave much room for teachers who want to turn over matters to their students and remain flexible. Progressivism is a bit naive—students don't learn just because they are given a voice. In addition, it is difficult to assess a progressive program—the aesthetic and moral dimensions are not covered on standardized tests. Due to the financial cuts in many school budgets, most teachers are having to fill too large a variety of roles beyond teacher in their classrooms to really engage in progressive teaching effectively (even though progressive schooling can help with the whole child). Finally, really doing progressivism is difficult and exhausting for the teacher, often leading to rapid burnout or at the very least a rapid regression to more traditional teaching methods.

Who Were the Grandfathers of Progressive Education?

- **Key figures**: G. Stanley Hall, Francis W. Parker

Most works of educational history and philosophy refer to John Dewey as the father of progressive education in the United States. This is true, but to extend the metaphor, Dewey was no virgin birth; there were those who preceded, from whom Dewey derived inspiration. There were two men in particular from whom Dewey drew educational inspiration.

During this period there was an emerging field of science known as psychology, and one of the first to link it expressly to education was **G. Stanley Hall**. In his seminal book *The Contents of Children's Minds*, he conducted a detailed study of German schoolchildren in which he measured how they learned. Hall quickly explained what was at the time revolutionary concepts that today are considered standard. He argued that children learn more effectively when new knowledge is linked to prior knowledge, so teachers should measure what their students know and then base lessons from this. Hall also argued that since children have a wider, deeper knowledge base as they get older, students should be taught differently at different ages.

In the year 1875, in Quincy, Massachusetts, Col. **Francis W. Parker** was hired as superintendent of schools. Tapping into his experience and skills gleaned from careers in the military and then running a factory, Parker set out to streamline the school system while still focusing on the individuality of the student; little did he know that he was about to provide the framework for an educational revolution. New concepts he introduced were multitudinous. He allowed student participation in curriculum building, added kindergarten, and had the schools include real-life problem-solving challenges and community-based field trips. Using the skills in efficiency management sweeping factories of the time (such as the assembly line), Parker established a system of teacher specialization and age-based grouping of students. Any teacher who's been up into the wee hours on a Sunday night finishing their lesson plans for the week now have a name to curse for this practice: Parker was the one who insisted teachers design and submit lesson plans in advance.

Who Was the Father of Progressive Education?

- **Key figures**: John Dewey, Jane Addams
- **Key terms**: Laboratory school

If Hall and Parker are the grandfathers, **John Dewey** is the father of progressive education in the United States. A philosopher by training, Dewey became influenced by G. Stanley Hall's work in adolescence and child psychology. Dewey was deeply influenced by social reformers outside education such as **Jane Addams**, the Chicago settlement activist and reformer seen as the mother of social work and a leading voice in women's suffrage. Just as activists such as Addams were advocating for large-scale reforms in society, so too did Dewey decide to start schooling over and work from ground up. To this end, he founded the University of Chicago **Laboratory School**—the first of its kind and the model for all those that came after. The Lab School discarded traditional curriculum and moved to whole child education; teachers started with concrete/familiar concepts, then worked outward to new, abstract thoughts. They included conversations, constructive work, stories, songs, and games. True to his political roots, Dewey and the teachers he trained created miniature societies within their classrooms, getting students to realize their power as citizens.

Rather than focus on strictly academic concepts, the Lab School as often as possible came up with practical learning situations. For example, students didn't just learn the parts of a plant and photosynthesis, but instead designed, planted, and harvested their own crops. Much of the produce was sold at student-designed and managed grocery stores that catered to the local community. The school was such a success that, in 1904, the University wrested it away from Dewey; rather than continue on in a more minor role, Dewey left and returned to the life of an academic for almost 50 years following.

While at the Lab School, Dewey trained as many teachers and graduate students as he could; many went on to spread their vision of what Dewey intended across the nation. As anyone who remembers playing the telephone game as a child can attest, though, the more ears and mouths a message moves through, the more altered it becomes. Bits and pieces of what Dewey truly intended got altered or outright lost in translation; the most substantive loss was the politically motivated decision making in which Dewey argued all teachers should engage. Again, Dewey was a philosopher at heart; as such, he believed the core of education was in

producing good citizens that would go on to shape a better society. To Dewey, who wrote book with titles such as *Democracy and Education*, schooling *was* democracy—or at least the principal means of perpetuating it.

Who Were the Child-Centered Progressives?

- **Key terms**: Progressive Education Association, project method, critical pedagogy, Cardinal Principles Report
- **Key figures**: William Heard Kilpatrick, Hilda Taba

From Dewey in Chicago, progressive education spread like wildfire. Eventually, there were distinct camps within the progressive education movement. One group, the **child-centered progressives**, focused on overhauling the practices of teaching—the curricula, pedagogy, and management. A group of progressive scholars came together in 1919 to form the **Progressive Education Association (PEA)**, a group whose mission was "reforming the entire school system of America." Beyond Dewey, progressive thinkers included **William Heard Kilpatrick**, who in 1913 invented the **project method**. Kilpatrick defined the project as a purposeful act that demonstrates a worthy life in a democratic society. He presented four types of projects in which students could engage: they could embody some idea or plan (make something), enjoy some aesthetic experience (appreciate something), solve some problem (fix something), or obtain some degree of skill (learn to do something).

Another example was **Hilda Taba**, a student of John Dewey, who focused on development of curriculum. Taba encouraged teachers to become mediators rather than lecturers, to lead the discussion rather than predetermine the curriculum. Today, Taba's focus on collaboration is alive and well within the classroom, reflected through educators who employ **critical pedagogy** to account for dynamics of power and privilege that have traditionally placed instructors in positions of power over students.

In a successful attempt at proving that their ideas were solid, the PEA launched the **Eight-Year Study**, in which students in 30 high schools across the United States were taught using completely progressive techniques. There was no set curriculum, no set courses, no set texts, and so on. The study mapped university progress of students from this system compared with their peers from more traditional schools. The results were that students from the progressive school were advanced socially and on par academically. When grades were compared between progressive

schools and traditional schools, the students performed equally on every measure. When looking at non-academic measures (such as community engagement and civic responsibility) progressive students did far better than their peers. The more progressive the curriculum, the better the overall record of its graduates.

The child-centered progressives also tried their hands at curriculum reform, producing in 1917 what would be called the ***Cardinal Principles*** Report. Led by committees including college professors, state superintendents of education, curriculum theorists, and teachers, the report reorganized the curriculum of the secondary schools to accommodate changing school population, make schools more effective in preparing students for life outside college. Education was now seen as preparation for life, not just preparation for more schooling. Authors of the report saw it as just the first step in evolutionary process; they intended it to be revisited periodically. The authors of the report listed seven objectives of education:

- Health—health instruction, healthy living, physical education classes, developing programs of home/community health awareness
- Command of fundamental processes—reading, writing, math, "elements of oral and written expression"
- Worthy home membership—music and art, wholesome relations between boys and girls, homemaking skills for girls
- Livelihood (Vocational)—social development with coworkers, right attitude about work, vocational preparation, and vocational guidance
- Civic education—understanding of international problems (something we should return to, considering the dearth of US schoolchildren who know where anything else is in the world), responsibilities as a citizen (particularly while women were supplementing men on the homefront due to World War I)
- Worthy use of leisure—avocational interests—music, art, literature, drama, social interactions—to "enrich and enlarge the body, mind, spirit, and personality"
- Ethical character—morals and values, personal responsibility and initiative, spirit of service

Overall, the child-centered progressives attempted to use scientific research to improve teaching. Tapping into new studies on child psychology and adolescence, pedagogy and management improved greatly. Another field

was used to improve the schools: the science of increasing industrial efficiency.

One critical area the child-centered progressives left untouched was that of the endemic racism that was increasing throughout the nation. Indeed, it is paradoxical that the country was making such significant gains in reform—thanks to Theodore Roosevelt's uber-masculinity, progressivism was even seen to be "manly"—while at the same time becoming so regressive in its approach to race. *De facto* (by fact; societal) and *de jure* (by law; legal) racism became the norm as Jim Crow laws displaced Black Codes throughout the states.

While many believe racism was mainly rooted in Southern Whites, it was not just a Southern thing: the Supreme Court led the way in two major decisions. First (many would say obviously) was the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision in which the court ruled that "separate but equal is constitutional." Of more particular concern was the case of *Gong Lum v. Rice* (1927), in which the court ruled in favor of a Mississippi school district excluding a student of Chinese ancestry from its white schools. The dichotomous precedent was now set: if you weren't white, you were "colored" and were kept from the public schools.

However, all was not a lost cause in terms of court cases going for segregation. On January 5, 1931, a principal in the town of Lemon Grove, California, began enforcing segregation against the children of Mexican families in town. Seventy-five students who had previously attended the school were greeted one morning with the news that they had to attend the "new" school: a hastily built wooden structure that came to be called "La Caballeriza," which translates into "the barn." The school believed this new facility could provide the "Americanized" education the children needed; however, the children disagreed, refused to go, and the parents sued. In February 1932, Judge Claude Chambers heard the case and ruled in favor of the families. Fortunately, *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove* was the first case to desegregate the schools on behalf of a historically marginalized population. Unfortunately, his verdict was worded to apply only to the Mexican families in the community—allowing California's, and thus the nation's, policies of segregation of African-American, Asian-American, American Indian, and other groups intact. While it was one step forward (as are the issues of equality explored in Chap. 5), it is sad that students need to remember public schooling in the United States today remains as segregated, if not more so, than during this time.

Who Were the Administrative Progressives?

- **Key figures**: Ella Flagg Young

While the child-centered progressives were focusing on reforming American classrooms, another group of progressive educators set their sights on the district offices. Based on improving business models, principles of scientific management, and a membership in the "cult of efficiency," the **administrative progressives** believed that the same principles that were correcting and improving productivity in the factories could be applied to school districts. A big part of this was in a true spirit of reform: the efforts were trying to take politics out of schooling by doing such things as abolishing ward boards and redrawing district lines across ethnic barriers.

Just as new levels of management were created in factories, so too did school administration. The principal used to be the "principal member of the faculty"—the teacher with the longest tenure and/or most respect (many other countries still maintain this practice; the lead administrator in a school is known as the "headteacher"). Now, thanks to the expanding college of education, there was a formal training required in educational administration—separating the principal from the teachers.

Some child-centered progressives were able to make their way into positions of authority. One example was **Ella Flagg Young**, another student of Dewey (though many would argue she taught Dewey as much as he taught her) who was superintendent of Chicago Public Schools from 1909 through 1915, and served on the Illinois State Board of Education from 1888 to 1913. While women such as Young in Chicago and Annie Webb Blanton (State Superintendent of Instruction) in Texas began to make inroads for women in administrative positions, in spite of their dominant numbers among the teaching force women remain significant minorities in school leadership roles, a trend that continues today.

In a sweeping reform, school boards were presented with a system of checks and balances by the addition of school superintendents, who in turn expanded district offices in their efforts to bureaucratize and centralize. Ultimately, governance of school districts came to adopt a familiar pattern: a system with multiple levels and inherent checks and balances. Representing the executive branch were the superintendents; representing the legislative were school boards; representing the judicial were the prin-

cipals, department heads, and other administrators who designed and implemented policy both in-house and throughout the district.

A top-down management style emerged in the districts. Financially, they urged financial soundness—expanding district boundaries and consolidating schools. Schools began to manage things in-house rather than tapping the community. It wasn't exclusively at the district level that administrative progressive reforms swept through; most states got in on the action as well. States began formalizing teacher certification standards and ran standardized teacher training institutes. There was a movement toward accountability and control at the state level and regional levels: school accreditation programs sprung up state by state, consolidating into regional systems that are still in effect today.

Who Were the Social Reconstructionists?

- **Key figures**: Theodore Brameld, George Counts

As time went by, a third group of progressive educators emerged. Growing impatient with the growing focus on fixing practice or governance, the **social reconstructionists** lamented the fact that educators lost their long-term vision in favor of short-term goals. Reconstructionist philosopher **Theodore Brameld**, for example, wrote that educators forgot that time had three dimensions—while they did a good job teaching the past and paid close attention to the present, they abandoned the future. While many contemporary readers think about social reconstructionism as a method of schooling and social reform, there are strong philosophical roots and implications as a mode of thought.

Social reconstructionists understood that everyone involved in education must presuppose a vision of the future and actively work to make their students form that new world. **George Counts**, a student of Dewey who openly fought for a return to Dewey's political motivations, stood before a meeting of the Progressive Education Association and delivered a speech titled "Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?" which was later published under the title *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* Counts argued that if a movement was to call itself progressive "it must have orientation; it must possess direction." Dancing on the razor's edge between criticism and insult, Counts argued "[l]ike a baby shaking a rattle, we seem to be utterly content with action, provided it is sufficiently vigorous and noisy"[1] even if it wasn't actually accomplishing anything. As Counts

paraphrased Shakespeare, "a very large part of American educational thought, enquiry, and experimentation is much ado about nothing."[2]

The reconstructionists had the means and motivation to truly revolutionize schooling in America until the Joseph McCarthy and the Red Scare. In the 1950s, US Senator Joseph McCarthy led a series of hearings to find communists among American citizens. These generated a national paranoia about the topic that impacted all vocations; if you were accused of being communist, you were blacklisted from all work. Education was not exempt; many educational leaders had to defend their positions in front of governmental panels. This is ironic as the progressive educators wanted nothing more than to make America as great as it could be.

What Were the Sources and Purposes of Education?

- **Key terms**: Extracurriculum, Smith-Hughes Act

Thanks in part to the efforts of the common school propagandists, by the progressive era the public schools had become widespread institutions. One of the changes was in the role schools played in their communities with the addition of the **extracurriculum**—activities set forth outside the normal school day whose purpose was to reinforce or supplement classroom instruction. From the outset, the extracurriculars that generated the most attention were the academic competitions. Literary and clariosophic societies met to hold formal debates, host poetry readings, and perform dramatic productions; soon, these competitions were supplemented by choral and orchestral performances.

Athletic competitions soon became entertainment as well. It started with rowing and rugby competitions; however, around the turn of the century, some schools began hosting competitions that were perceived by many as comedic displays of barbarianism: football games. However, these events soon turned deadly, with players getting killed on the football fields. As a result, Theodore Roosevelt convened conferences to reform the sport and establish rules for all interscholastic competition; as a result, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States formed in 1906, but changed its name to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1910.

As extracurriculars grew in importance, the schools became more and more deeply ingrained in the very fabric of their communities. By the end of the progressive era, many educators saw the schools as community centers. In addition to the entertainment of academic, artistic, and athletic exhibitions, schools offered adult education classes for adults, health education centers for new families, and job training centers for local businesses.

Wartime meant added purposes to the schools as well. Heading into World War I, many Americans were against our intervention in what was perceived to be someone else's problem. At the time, the United States didn't have a large standing military force so, when President Wilson broke his re-election campaign promise to keep us out of the war, there was a critical shortage of soldiers. The schools were called upon to provide assistance: recruiters had free rein in the secondary schools of the United States, and schools agreed to administrate intelligence quotient testing to all male students as a means of helping the military with their recruitment and post-induction sorting. With the outbreak of World War II at the end of this period, schools led war relief efforts such as newspaper and scrap metal drives, planting victory gardens, and distributing ration coupons. Schools became sources of information in the communities, hosting seminars in making the most of rationing, successful planting of victory gardens, and the like.

With the addition of the practical purposes of schooling came a formalization of the economic purpose. Particularly with economic depression of 1893–1897, schools were tapped to help the nation's economy by keeping students out of the workplace (to encourage adult employment) and develop commercial and industrial training courses. These would evolve into vocational education or, as it is known today, Career-Technical Education (CTE). As in the common school era, there was a rise of compulsory education laws coupled with tremendous growth in vocational education. The federal government provided a "stimulus package" of sorts to the schools to help—the 1917 **Smith-Hughes Act**. This act provided federal funds for the development of vocational education in American secondary schools, including funds to American colleges to help train teachers and oversee the programs. This was a double-edged sword; while it increased tremendously the amount of vocational education that occurred, because this funding came separate from other sources of school funding, there emerged a separation between the vocational teachers and their academic counterparts that still exists in many schools today.

As progressive reforms swept the nation, some states began passing laws protecting students with disabilities during this time. New Jersey (1911), New York (1917), and Massachusetts (1920) led the way. However, even as more states began passing similar laws, enforcement was spotty at best; most states continued to build separate institutions or asylums. Due to the efforts of reformers such place transitioned from asylums to true schools; in many cases, they were day schools rather than residential. However, many groups were excluded from these schools including those with severe physical disabilities such as students in wheelchairs and those deemed unteachable. These students were far too often placed in facilities that offered no education whatsoever. The rise of intelligence testing (thanks to the Army intelligence tests) reinforced the need for special schools for many students, often mistakenly. For example, students who did not speak English as their primary language were not tested in their native tongue and, as such, failed their tests; as a result they were wholly incorrectly branded as disabled and uneducable.

Of course, the religious, political, and social purposes persisted during the Progressive Era. Particularly with the ever-increasing immigration and newly freed former slaves, there was a huge need to "Americanize" a wide variety of students; the burden of this was, of course, placed heavily on the schools. Unfortunately, the schools were still heavily segregated, in particular in rural areas. Entrenched privileged members of society wanting to maintain status quo, and used schools to that end. Schools that served students of color were particularly hard hit; in North Carolina, finances were so unequally distributed that many African-Americans volunteered a second school tax to be specifically used for their children in addition to that collected for the white schools. However, in addition to the racial segregation, there was an economic segregation as well; children of means either lived in exclusive neighborhoods with exclusive "public" schools, or pulled themselves out to attend elite private institutions. In the South, it continued to be a symbol of success to send one's children back to Europe for their secondary education.

What Are the Educational Legacies of the Period?

- **Key terms**: noncurricular

There are a tremendous amount of legacies of the era on all levels of schooling. From the early childhood years, kindergarten was brought to the United States; enrollments in kindergartens and high schools grew

sharply. Schools took to expanding their curricula to meet all students' needs; the schools were perceived as the primary means of educating children in all facets of their lives. Schools engaged in "new" techniques in education such as curriculum tracking, ability grouping, vocational schools, and providing assistance to students with special needs.

Schools expanded their missions greatly. The period marked the beginnings of extracurricular activities (sports, social clubs) to another level of effort to develop the "whole child." In addition, schools got into **noncurricular** activities such as vaccinations, supporting the war effort, school breakfasts, hygiene and medical screenings. Schools increased in complexity—there emerged separate elementary, middle, secondary schools at the public school level, while postsecondary education formed junior/community colleges in addition to the established university system. Overall, there was a changing notion of common schools. There was less sameness in the treatment of students; schools offered a broader curriculum, including vocational education. However, this was still often limited to students who were white, middle to upper class, abled, and often male.

The economic purpose to education codified the school as sorting machine—rather than in or out, now students were in an academic track or vocational track. Almost as soon as this process emerged, the social reconstructionists began their vocal opposition, citing the unnaturally high percentage of students tracked not by ability (as the Jeffersonian idealists desired) but by their social role and/or the occupations of their parents. School curricula were not the only thing becoming stratified: under the guise of efficiency, states implemented teacher certification and state accreditation programs.

The Common School Movement cemented the messianic purpose to schooling. This legacy would increase exponentially with the passage of time. Apparently, any time there is a sociopolitical crisis of any sort in the United States, rather than address the crisis via legislation or social measures, we place the burden on our schools to fix things (Table 4.1).

The most profound example of this messianic notion came in our approach to race in this country. In 1954, in an effort to "fix" the race problem in the United States, the nation's schools were desegregated—once again demanding our educational institutions accomplish something neither requested, nor expected, in any other facet of our society. A decade later, a shift from the medical model to the social model of disability would also legislate that schools address treatment of those with disabilities. In these instances, the US Supreme Court and even the President would get involved.

Table 4.1 Messianic schooling in the United States

Social ill	*School-based solution*
Economic downturn	Compulsory attendance laws Vocational education
Rise in teenage driving	Driver's education
More free, unchaperoned time	Character education/sex education After-school activities
High poverty/hunger	School lunch and breakfast; home economics (including gardening, canning, and cooking)
Nation at war	Army intelligence testing; JROTC units Relief drives (metal, paper, rubber, blood, etc.)
Communist threat	Patriotic assemblies
Perceived rise in juvenile delinquency	Drug and alcohol prevention programs
Space race	New science, new math curricula

"Going Old School": For Further Reading

There are a great number of works that helped shape the information shared in this chapter that came together over years of teaching and reading. Many of these works are worth reading in their own right. What follows is a list of recommended works that both shaped the content of this chapter and extend it.

"The" work in the field, considered a seminal piece in the history of education, any discussion of African-American education in the United States must reference James Anderson's *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935.*[3] Exhaustively researched yet very readable, Anderson's work begins with the premise that the public schools of the nation have always been two tiered: education for democratic citizenship and schooling for second class citizenship. The touches on a multiplicity of topics—community control, both K-12 and higher education, public support and taxation among others—and should be considered mandatory reading in the field.

As the full title suggests, Harold Benjamin's *The Saber-Tooth Curriculum, Including Other Lectures in the History of Paleolithic Education, by J. Abner Peddiwell, PH.D. and Several Tequila Daisies, as told to Raymond Wayne*[4] is a work of satire. However, the fictional conversation that took place in the fictional longest bar in the world still represents the most scathing indictment of public schooling written. The narrative, set in Paleolithic times, explores the development of education

among early humanity, but many teachers will notice elements of their current schools. While meant to be an attack on perennialist models and the value of learning for learning's sake, it is equally valuable today.

A summary of his work in the schools in Floodwood, Minnesota, *Design for America: An Educational Exploration of the Future of Democracy for Senior High Schools and Junior Colleges*,[5] a little-known and long out of print work by Theodore Brameld, is a clear reminder of two major premises. The first premise is social reconstruction can work in the public schools; the second is contrary to much McCarthy-era rhetoric, social reconstruction can help improve the United States, not destroy it. Interestingly, included are the voices of teachers and students that participated in the project.

One of the least-recalled legacies of the progressive period was the reforms in place by the administrative progressives. Raymond Callahan takes on this legacy head-on in *Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces That Have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools*,[6] explaining how the expanded bureaucratization horribly led to mass production mentality in education. This linkage between the corporate, business model and the schools is coming to fruition in many of today's arguments arguing for the expansion of charter schools and vouchers—programs that the arguments in Callahan's book effectively disproved half a century ago.

The one that started it all in terms of social reconstruction in the United States, that anyone who purports to call themselves a social reconstructionist must read, is George Counts' *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order? A Challenge to Teachers and the New Social Order*.[7] The book is call to arms not just for liberal educators but people who purport to be liberal in all aspects. Throughout the text, the majority of which was an address delivered before the Progressive Education Association, Counts alternates between blistering attacks and hope for the potential of the nation.

Instead of going with the third volume of Lawrence Cremin's trilogy in the history of education, instead readers should consider the somewhat celebratory *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876–1957*.[8] The book shines a light upon the Progressive Period arguing that it impacted American education through two World Wars. Broken into two sections, Cremin argues that the concept of progressivism actually predates Dewey and the like, while it was thoroughly implemented after 1917.

It is not John Dewey's best-known work, but the closest we have to him summarizing his entire philosophical position is *Democracy and Education*.[9] Dewey was a writer thick with theory, a style that turns many contemporary readers off; however, the incredible insights shared must be read in his original words, as many have misinterpreted him over the years. Reflecting the broad reach of progressive thought on education, Dewey approaches education from theoretical frames (looking at education as a social function and requirement for direction and growth) and somewhat more practical frames (subject studies, vocational education).

Future and current secondary teachers take note: this book is for you and about you. Edward Krug's *The Shaping of the American High School 1880–1920*[10] presents a detailed overview of the origins of American high schools; it is remarkable how little has actually changed since then. This work is considered "the" starting point for conversations regarding secondary education in the United States. Krug explores the shift in the high schools of the nation from scholarly enterprises to social efficiency machines, often at the expense of academic rigor.

George I. Sanchez is arguably the father of Chicana/o in the United States. *Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans*[11] is Sanchez' powerful study of the Spanish-speaking people of New Mexico. This book lays the foundation for a number of works to come. Based on a tremendous amount of field work conducted primarily in New Mexico and Texas, the book analyzes how social and economic conditions impact schooling and learning, analyzing the cultural defeatism that would shape future generations.

Many forget that the Progressive Era also marked the rise of US imperialism around the world; very few consider the role that schools play in imperialism. Luckily, Clif Stratton takes on this topic directly in *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship*.[12] The book examines the link between imperialist schooling and building good citizens in California, Hawaii, Georgia, New York, and Puerto Rico. Stratton argues that the path to citizenship was as much about exclusion and subordination of some groups as including and reshaping others. Schools in and of themselves are "domestic colonial institutions" (p. 3) that promoted American exceptionalism at home and abroad.

Vivian Thayer et al.'s *Reorganizing Secondary Education*[13] best encapsulates the work of the Progressive Education Association's Eight-Year Study and the implication for high school teachers. Thayer and her colleagues argue for the reformation and reevaluation of secondary education

in the United States. The first part of the book deals with the issue of adolescence and the role of the school in working with adolescents. The second part looks at the problems of adolescents in a democracy around four main areas: close social relationships, wide social relationships, economic relationships, and personal living. The third part looks at how the program laid out in the Eight-Year study met these needs/addressed these areas.

David Tyack's *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*[14] created the term "administrative progressives" while presenting this encyclopedic look at aspects of progressive education often overlooked. While detailing education in urban settings, the reader is reminded how often those principles were workshopped in the cities before migrating out to more rural areas. Tyack argues that no one system can serve the pluralistic nature of the United States; that bureaucracy in schooling leads to a lack of reform; that schools have failed the poor; that politics still greatly impacts schooling; and that the United States has a long history of victim blaming when it comes to social justice issues in education.

Still regarded as one of "the" essential readings in curriculum construction, Ralph Tyler crafted what would become known as the "Tyler Rationale" in *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*.[15] Essentially the publication of his Education 360 syllabus, Tyler's work is the primer on continuity, sequence, and integration in curriculum development. Even though backward design is the current most popular model, those engaged in curriculum development and reform (teachers and administrators) can learn much from Tyler's model and discussion.

Notes

1. George Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 4.
2. Ibid.
3. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
4. Harold Benjamin, *The Saber-Tooth Curriculum, Including Other Lectures in the History of Paleolithic Education, by J. Abner Peddiwell, PH.D. and Several Tequila Daisies, as told to Raymond Wayne* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939).
5. Theodore Brameld, *Design for America: An Educational Exploration of the Future of Democracy for Senior High Schools and Junior Colleges* (New York: Hinds, Hayden & Eldredge, Inc., 1945).

6. Raymond Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces That Have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
7. George Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order? A Challenge to Teachers and the New Social Order* (New York: The John Day Company, 1932).
8. Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876–1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).
9. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916).
10. Edward Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School 1880–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964).
11. George Sanchez, *Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans* (Albuquerque: C. Horn Publishing, 1940).
12. Clif Stratton, *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).
13. Vivian T. Thayer, et al. *Reorganizing Secondary Education* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, Co., 1939).
14. David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).
15. Ralph Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

CHAPTER 5

Education in the Five E's Period (1954–1983)

Abstract This chapter explores how the latter half of the twentieth century afforded opportunities to expand the public schools in a variety of means. It begins with a discussion on equality (presaging the civil rights movements), excellence (specifically in science and math), expansion (accommodating the Baby Boomers and the unintended consequences), expertise (certifying experts and opening the field to more diversity), and emancipation (removing public schools from local control). It concludes with a discussion on the educational legacies of this period and recommendations for further reading.

Keywords Sputnik • Behaviorism • Classical conditioning • Positive reinforcement • Negative reinforcement • Perennialism • Essentialism • Core Knowledge Foundation • Coalition of Essential Schools • Ivan Pavlov • B.F. Skinner • E.L. Thorndike • E.D. Hirsch • William Bagley • Theodore Sizer • Desegregation • Integration • Thurgood Marshall • *Brown v. Board of Education* • *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* • Stonewall Riots • Accountability • Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 • Head Start • Alliterates • *Tinker v. Des Moines* • White flight

The nation was rocked to its core on October 4, 1957. Public events were canceled; theater managers interrupted live performances; Americans walked, blank-faced and disbelieving, to find their closest radios (or, for

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5_5

the handful of those who could afford them at the time, televisions) to follow the news that was nothing short of a national trauma: the Soviet Union launched Sputnik. Millions of Americans were wondering what was in that satellite and how did they beat us up there anyway?

Fallout from Sputnik was swift. The entire zeitgeist of the nation altered, best captured in the pop culture movements of science fiction: television shows, films, and fiction all reflected the national obsession with things coming from outer space. In the burgeoning American way, many looked to lay blame. Rather than point fingers at the lack of funding for a solid space program, lack of dedicated research from the commercial sector, or lack of facility/faculty dedication from the universities, politicians lay blame squarely on the shoulders of American K-12 schools.

With this newfound push, as well as even more emphasis on the messianic notion of schooling, the period became known for five trends: excellence (specifically in math and science), equality (in race, sex, language, and ability), expansion (schools becoming growth industries), expertise (with growing diversity in administration), and emancipation (from local control).

What Were the Philosophical Roots of the Five E's?

- **Key terms**: behaviorism, classical conditioning, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, perennialism, essentialism, Core Knowledge Foundation, Coalition of Essential Schools
- **Key figures**: Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, E.L. Thorndike, E.D. Hirsch, William Bagley, Theodore Sizer

The push for excellence coupled with the progressive push for tapping into scientifically based methods was reflected in the philosophical bent toward **behaviorism**—the belief that human behavior is guided by a series of stimuli and responses. Behaviorists believe that to change human behavior, we must change the stimulus to either positive or negative. **Ivan Pavlov**, the grandfather of the movement, gave the world the concept of **classical** (or operant) **conditioning**. Once a stimulus is applied, the response is measured; desired behavior is given **positive reinforcement** (reward), while undesirable behavior receives **negative reinforcement** (punishment).

Most students of education consider behaviorism strictly through its psychological roots; however, the philosophical implications of behaviorism are profound. Rooted in realism and pragmatism, behaviorists believe that humanity is programmable and explainable—that we are defined by our actions and reactions. Philosophically, if humanity is nothing but a product of stimulus-response, then the concepts of freedom and free will are illusions. On the upside, behaviorists answer the whole nature versus nurture debate with an emphatic "nurture," arguing that we are just products of our environments. The ultimate metaphysical question—what is real?—is equally challenging. Behaviorists would argue that only things with consequences are real; anything that exists can be measured.

Behaviorism was Americanized and made somewhat more applicable to education due to two psychologists in the field: **B.F. Skinner** and **E.L. Thorndike**. Skinner began with a somewhat more philosophical notion, that the self is a scientifically meaningless term. Therefore, he argued that we should reject the concept of "self" and its notions. In a very practical aspect, Skinner took Pavlov's work to another level, reminding us that if reinforcement used, the strength of the recurrence grows. Thorndike argued that there were different types of intelligence—abstract, social, and mechanical—that teachers should focus upon (providing the foundation for Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory of the 1980s). To Thorndike, the focus of the teacher should be on creating bonds with students. These bonds will provide learning motivation—the teacher becomes the stimulus. Thorndike also argued for the law of effect—rewarding a connection always strengthens it substantially, but punishing it weakens it little or not at all.

Behaviorism plays a role in almost every classroom in the United States today; to what extent a teacher allows it to dictate their classroom is a fundamental question. In terms of classroom management, almost every teacher is behaviorist to some extent—we reward students for being "good" and punish them for being "bad." A behaviorist teacher is very teacher-centered, with classroom management techniques infusing their entire curriculum. Such trends as outcome-based education and assertive discipline models are common. The teacher is a disciplinarian and behavior manager above all; students are passive, programmable, and trainable vessels into which a teacher imparts knowledge.

There are several reasons to be critical of behaviorism. Doesn't it focus a bit too much on control and being controlled? Doesn't it negate concepts such as free will? Isn't it a bit too simplistic a view of humanity?

Doesn't it ignore, or at the very least negate, the richness of human life and experience? On a deeper level, the case can be made that behaviorism is anti-American. After all, isn't the very foundation of the American dream built using the concepts of free will and self-determination? How can we produce good citizen-activists when we're teaching students to passively accept whatever they are being told by authority figures? As a result of this Thorndike-inspired urge to be motivated by bonding with authority figures, is it any surprise that Americans tend to vote for candidates they "want to have a beer with" rather than the Jeffersonian philosopher kings?

Behaviorism wasn't the only educational philosophy to emerge take prominence during this period. Just as when a gardener plants perennial flowers they return every year, **perennialist** educators believe that there is a core set of knowledge that has been handed down year to year, generation to generation. Perennialists believe in prescriptive education—you learn things because they are good for you, not necessarily because they have any practical value. The notion is that once students learn this core set of materials, they will be able to draw and apply lessons as appropriate in their own lives—that knowledge transfers. For example, perennialist teachers believe that if students can read and understand Shakespeare, then they will be able to read and understand a job training manual or set of computer instructions.

Perennialists take a conservative, traditional approach to teaching. They believe that students should read a set of classic, primarily Eurocentric works (in history, biography, etc.) as the core of their knowledge which is the basis and foundation of our American culture. Perennialist teachers also believe in (as George Counts would critique) the concept that schools are "sorting machines." It is not the job of perennialist teachers to ensure that every student masters the provided material; in fact, part of the challenge in the material is to differentiate those who can from those who can't. In both cases, students learn character as well as content via their readings; once reading the biography of a great statesman, for example, the students will want to mimic the best traits of that statesman in their own lives. One of the more well-known examples is the work of Robert Maynard Hutchens at the University of Chicago. Beginning in 1930, Hutchens fought to move the university toward a "great books" curriculum—a move the university faculty defeated three times, but was adopted by institutions such as St. John's College.

Of course, there are opponents of the perennialist philosophies in the classroom. Many teachers believe that knowledge, in fact, does not transfer; if you want a student to read occupational material, you should train them to read that material; if you want to improve the morals and character of a student, you should teach them lessons in morality and character, accordingly. One of the most prevalent arguments against perennialism is its cultural exclusivity; rather than expand core curricular materials to reflect the amazingly diverse history and contemporary culture that is the social tapestry of the United States, a perennialist curriculum wrongly favors exclusively old, dead white men. Finally, the question must be asked whether or not there exists a uniquely American culture that must be handed down. If so, what is it? What traits does it share? What is its literature, its music? What are its traditions? And, most importantly, who determines what's in and what's out—and how can we get past the Eurocentric male bias that so pervades such decisions? In essence, if you will pardon the pun, how can we discharge the canon?

Similar in belief to perennialism is the philosophy of **essentialism**. Rooted in idealism and realism, essentialists believe that there is a core of common knowledge students need to know and that this knowledge needs to be transmitted in an orderly, methodical pattern. Essentialist teachers believe that this essential learning is rooted in our American culture—and that this cultural transmission is essential to good citizenship. While the approaches are very similar, essentialists and perennialists differ in two very major ways: first, as information changes, so too does knowledge—this core of essential knowledge is fluid, not static. If you want students to learn to read a technical manual, teach them to read the manual—don't teach them the works of Shakespeare. Second, essentialists believe that since this knowledge is essential to human development, all students are entitled to solid education and opportunities—and therefore it is a teacher's job to get all students to learn. While essentialists still rely upon a teacher-centered classroom, particularly in terms of curriculum, they are open to a variety of pedagogical techniques.

Overall, essentialists believe they should develop good study habits, mental discipline, and respect for authority in their students. They favor a curricular back-to-basics approach with contemporary application, taken to its extreme by **E.D. Hirsch** and the **Core Knowledge Foundation**. Hirsch actually developed a list of terms, dates, concepts, and so on—what he calls core knowledge—that every American should know. This, in turn, has been broken down into grade-level curriculum guides.

Horace Mann can be seen as the first essentialist (though the term came about long after his time in office), arguing that schools should teach the set of knowledge and skills necessary to produce good Americans. However, it was **William Bagley** who coined phrase "essentialism" and applied it to education. Most recently, **Theodore Sizer** participated in the formation of the **Coalition of Essential Schools**—a nationwide group of schools that was devoted to perpetuating what they perceive to be intellectually challenging schools. While the group ceased operations in 2017, their website remains live for teachers to freely download classroom guides.

Many of the same critiques of both perennialism and behaviorism hold true for essentialism as well. The students are too passive in learning and the teacher too authoritarian for many. The fundamental question of who defines core knowledge is not answered satisfactorily. Essentialist curricula are often too Eurocentric and elitist—there are not enough voices from marginalized populations. Finally, while more open to changing pedagogy, essentialism still relies somewhat on the inaccurate notion that knowledge transfers.

What Was Equality in Schooling?

- **Key terms**: desegregation, integration
- **Key figures**: Thurgood Marshall

The first "E" of the period was equality in schooling. The most obvious advance in this realm was the racial desegregation that the nation began during this period (in spite of the fact that we haven't achieved desegregated schools yet). In 1954, the US Supreme Court issued a (unanimous) verdict in the case of *Brown et al. v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas.* The case was argued by **Thurgood Marshall**, the man who would become the first African-American supreme court justice in the United States. An aggregate of four cases (from the original case in South Carolina as well as Delaware, Kansas, and Virginia) that a case from Washington, DC, was added to, the courts ruled that the concept of "separate but equal" (as dictated by the previous Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*) was inherently unequal. In its follow-up decision of 1955, schools were ordered to desegregate with "all deliberate speed." Of course, nobody has been able to fully define deliberate, and school districts were challenging the boundaries of the desegregation order into the early years of the twenty-first century.

It must be noted that semantics mean a lot when discussing this issue. First, schools were ordered to desegregate, NOT to integrate. The difference is not minor: **desegregation** means schools cannot discriminate against any student living within district bounds—a passive response. **Integration**, on the other hand, is forcing schools to mix students to reflect overall demographics—an active response. This wasn't required until *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*'s decision in 1971, in which the court ruled that schools have duty to integrate—and forced busing to achieve racial equality is constitutional. This decision was highly controversial, and the practice faded out by the 1990s.

Although unpopular to say, the legacy of the Brown decision is mixed. It was an example of "activist judges" crafting legislation from the bench—however, if they didn't, who knows when desegregation would have begun. It was government forcing social policy—at a time when it was desperately needed. It provided a precedent that has been cited more often than any other case, for ill and for good. The *Brown* decision was cited when legislators began debating funding for compensatory education for students with special needs and/or mainstreaming efforts. It was again cited in the passage of the 1975 Public Law 94-142—Education for All Handicapped Children Act providing "free appropriate public education" for all. This act was most recently reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which includes free appropriate public education (FAPE) that often culminates in formalized individual education plans (IEPs), providing accommodations developed with the involvement of parents, teachers, and district representatives.

Brown was also cited in the fight for sex equity and the elimination of sex bias in athletics and vocationalism. In 1972, part of the Higher Education Act—a section today simply referred to as **Title IX**—stipulated that any institution receiving federal financial assistance must mandate that no person can be prohibited from doing something based on their sex, and schools must meet one of three criteria to fulfill sex equity: providing athletic participation opportunities that are substantially proportionate to the student enrollment, demonstrating a continual expansion of athletic opportunities for the underrepresented sex or fully and effectively accommodating of the interest and ability of underrepresented sex. The only exceptions were single-sex undergraduate institutes, religious institutes, and military academies. Beyond race, ability, and sex, *Brown* was cited in legislative fights over money and school finance equalization, as well as language in the origination of bilingual education acts (all of which

tragically expired with No Child Left Behind). The *Brown* decision gave legal impetus to the civil rights movements that exploded in the 1960s.

This period also saw the emergence of what we refer to today as the LGBTQ+ movement. There has been huge resistance to teachers and students who were openly gay in the schools since the 1920s; however, in the aftermath of the Stonewall Riots in New York City in the summer of 1969 in which police raided a gay club and triggered several days of demonstrations, there came a rise of societies on universities (first started in the 1920s) as well as gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in the public schools. This was not without backlash; in 1977, for example, Anita Bryant led the "Save Our Children" movement which defeated a gay rights ordinance in Florida and paved the way for future clashes between the LGBTQ+ community and Christian fundamentalists. This is ironic because many of the laws and court cases that were determined to provide protections for Christian student groups on campuses and in public schools have been used as precedent cases for allowing GSAs.

However, to this day teachers who are LGBTQ+ in 23 states still lack any protections and can be fired simply for being who they are, while only 8 states offer protection for transgendered public employees. Only 13 states and Washington, DC, include LGBTQ+ status in their nondiscrimination laws. Worse, seven states currently have laws on the books which prohibit any teaching of LGBTQ+ issues under the guise of banning the promotion of homosexuality, otherwise known as "no promo homo" laws: Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas.

What Was Excellence in Schooling?

- **Key terms**: Accountability

The next of the Five E's was excellence. After the United States lost the space race, the country quite literally wanted to produce a generation of rocket scientists. To this end, the nation's schools began experimenting with a variety of new curricula in math and science. This move was best exemplified by the teaching of what became called "new math." The theory behind the move was to teach students a more abstract curricula using more hands-on pedagogy over a set of combined courses (i.e. Math I, II, III, and IV) rather than discrete fields (i.e. algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus).

In addition, many states began implementing **accountability** measures to meet the demands of the public; these typically were mandatory statewide assessments completed at varying grade levels in order to ensure students were mastering content. Unfortunately, this led to the public mistakenly interpreting the results of these standardized tests to mean satisfactory performance of teachers. Where in the past schools were able to determine their own accountability measures at most levels, with some states culminating in one intensive set of examinations, starting in the late 1950s the public began demanding accountability, and state politicians answered. Most states implemented—or formalized—graduation exams or course exams.

The principle of equality was not completely lost in the attempts at fulfilling this second "E." As part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty/Great Society rhetoric, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Signed into law on April 11, 1965, less than three months after it was introduced, the bill began wholesale federal intervention by way of significant federal aid to public education, initially allotting more than $1 billion to help schools purchase materials, develop special education programs, and establish Head Start programs on a permanent level. It was the reauthorization of ESEA that became No Child Left Behind Act in 2001.

What Was Expansion in Schooling?

- **Key terms**: alliterates

When soldiers returned from World War II, they married in great numbers and in turn had children—which led to the "baby boomers." The greatly increased numbers of children in the United States, of course, would need to be educated—and thus there was a critical need for expanding schools. A "growth industry" emerged, with businesses necessary to this expansion becoming financial windfalls. Construction companies, desk manufacturers, and school supply factories all became healthy industries in which to invest.

There was a downside to this growth industry as well; textbook companies formalized during this period. With this tremendous expansion came a critical need for teachers; eventually, almost anyone with any degree, a pulse, and a completed application were pushed through the doors of the overcrowded classrooms. Due to their lack of training, textbook companies

began producing what became known as "teacher-proof" curricula packs. Every handout was premade, every reading passage selected, every science experiment preselected. Teacher's editions became the norm which even included lesson scripts for the novices in the classrooms, providing discussion questions and likely student responses.

As Diane Ravitch later argued, the long-term effects of this were terrible.[1] Textbook companies consolidated until there are only a handful of publishers that attempt to serve all the needs of all American schools. The two states with the largest student populations—California and Texas—drive the contents. Textbook companies include content that is completely uncontroversial to fundamental Christians written in language inoffensive to the extreme liberal left. What remains—what makes it in textbooks today—is so bland it has produced a generation of **alliterates**—students who can read, but choose not to—because they see no value, excitement, or connections in their schoolbooks.

What Was Expertise in Schooling?

With the tremendous expansion in schooling came an expansion in administration. Another example of an educational double-edged sword, this expanded administration led to fragmented centralization: larger, more fragmented, more expensive, bureaucracies that were even further removed from the realities of classroom teaching. However, there was a positive that came about: as administrations expanded there emerged a "new politics of education" in which marginalized populations strongly advocated for themselves and earned roles in decision making. Teachers of historically marginalized cultures and women were moving into administrative roles and being elected to school board positions with increasing regularity, though not enough to reflect the greater demographics of the student population.

This expansion of expertise was mirrored in the federal government. As early as 1923, President Warren Harding proposed a cabinet-level department overseeing education and welfare. However, it was President Dwight D. Eisenhower that formally created, in 1953, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (the only position created under Eisenhower's Reorganization Plan of 1953, which was revoked in 1962). In 1979, President Jimmy Carter established the Department of Education as a separate entity with its own cabinet position; the first person to hold the position was Shirley Hufstedler. In spite of many (particularly Republican)

politicians' efforts to abolish the position, such as campaign promises from Ronald Reagan in 1980 and Bob Dole in 1996, there have been nine position holders.

What Was Emancipation in Schooling?

Thanks to the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision setting the precedent, the last of the "E"s was emancipation. In this case, it was emancipation from local control as the period was marked by unprecedented litigiousness, particularly around the First and Fourteenth Amendment issues. As time went by, there were tremendous declines in local control with increases in state and federal control. State legislatures and Congress took the public's fear that the Soviet Union had left us behind and turned their efforts to passing act after act of educational legislation—a pattern sadly still in existence today.

In addition, there were more Supreme Court decisions than any other period, many of which set precedents still in American classrooms:

- 1962—*Engel v. Vitale*—state mandated prayers/Bible Readings are unconstitutional (over the New York State Board of Regents' mandated daily prayer);
- 1963—*Abington v. Schempp*—mandated devotional reading is unconstitutional;
- 1969—*Tinker v. Des Moines*—students have right to freedom of expression so long as if doesn't interfere with the school's overall learning environment (a clause that would become a litmus test in areas as disparate as freedom of the press and the formation of LGBTQ+ student groups); and
- 1975—*Goss v. Lopez*—students have due process rights before being suspended or expelled (teachers do not have the authority to suspend or expel, only to make recommendations to administrators).

Beyond Supreme Court decisions, Congress was passing more and more pieces of legislation impacting the public schools. These ranged from the 1958 National Defense Education Act (passed in the aftermath of Sputnik) which provided federal support for teaching in science, math, and foreign language; the vocational Education Act of 1963, which provided federal funds for vocational education; the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which provided assistance with schools implementing desegregation plans;

and the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which called for increased participation of Native Americans in schooling. Of course, one of the most landmark laws was the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was later reauthorized as No Child Left Behind and more recently as Every Student Succeeds Act.

What Were the Sources and Purposes of Schooling?

- **Key terms**: white flight

By the 1950s, the public school system in the United States had become well established in the American consciousness. Citizens felt no qualms about paying taxes and supporting bonds in order to improve the schools in their neighborhoods, fully realizing that as go the schools, so goes society. The move to desegregate, however, caused a profound social and educational shift.

As urban schools desegregated, there merged a "**white flight**"—white citizens refused to allow their children to be educated alongside students of color and so flocked to the suburbs. It is not a coincidence that the biggest period of suburban growth came about in the aftermath of *Brown*. Whites moved into suburban neighborhoods and opened up "public" schools that catered to their middle class, almost exclusively white, student population. After the white flight came a class flight of sorts—all those who could afford it, nonwhite and white alike, continued the exodus. In response, many suburbs established "white flight academies"—private schools in which elites were able to set stringent—that is racially exclusive—admission policies.

What Are the Educational Legacies of the Period?

The biggest legacy of the period was the kaleidoscopic educational reform—some good, some bad—that took over. Movements included desegregation, integration, community control, new math and science curricula, bilingual education, Title IX/sex equity, mainstreaming of students with special needs, open classrooms, and ungraded schools. Another legacy was increased federal involvement in schools from both the legislative and judicial branches. Locally, districts moved to fragmented centralization and site-based management. Economically, schools became recognized as growth industries—with larger budgets, buildings, and

administrations, as well as school supply and textbook companies becoming profitable.

After years of trying to get politics out of education, during this time schooling became extremely political and "ground zero" for the emerging culture wars. Due to declining requirements and standards there was a back-to-basics movement; when schools were perceived as being too elitist, there was course proliferation and a migration to the general track. Most remarkably, the public began to have questions about the validity of public schools as an entity—research set out to prove that schooling makes little difference in achievement of life chances, if not oppressing children. This led to much criticism of schools along almost all lines: the schools were critiqued for being sorting machines—from George Counts to Jonathan Kozol. Many argued there was too much choice in curriculum.

All these ongoing, rapid-fire reforms led to harsh critiques of the "new education." These critiques came from three societal misconceptions: that schools can solve any social and political problem; that only a portion of youth can benefit from higher education; and that imparting knowledge is not as important as engaging students in activities and experiences. These misconceptions led to significant problems in American schools, many of which we still face: there is restricted educational opportunity along class, ethnicity, and sex lines; there are dumbed-down schools operating on a bloated, diluted curriculum; and the enlarged, consolidated schools are too big, too anonymous, and lack intellectual coherence. If anyone asks if there's an "ideal" school size, most research shows it's between 800 and 1000 students: more and it is easy for students to be totally anonymous; less and it becomes financially unreasonable to offer the full range of curricular and extracurricular opportunities.

As the period moved on, the Progressive Era notion of applying scientific methods to classroom practice was in full swing. However, American classrooms also became seen as laboratories, places of experimentation, to try out new methods in attempts at improvement. Open schools (literally, schools with no walls separating classrooms), flexible attendance policies, tremendously expanded curricula, ungraded schooling, and other so-called progressive innovations came and went, each trend being displaced by another at an alarmingly fast rate. Fortunately, the best elements tended to catch on nationwide while the worst tended to fade quickly; unfortunately, it created an expectation that if reform doesn't work within a year or two then it's time to move on to the next. This is particularly unfortunate because the true measure of systemic reform must begin with children

in early childhood and follow them through graduation—true school reform is a twelve-year, not a one-year, process, no matter what the members of Congress might decree.

The culmination of these critiques was in 1983s report titled *A Nation At Risk*. The opening paragraph of the report was clear in its harshness, once again conflating nationalism, patriotism, and education: "if a foreign power was to force the existing school system on the United States, it would be perceived as an act of war … we have engaged in unilateral educational disarmament." Like children throwing tantrums when they discover there is no Santa Claus, the lost faith in the nation's schools drove the public to demand educational intervention of almost unprecedented amounts.

"Going Old School": For Further Reading

There are a great number of works that helped shape the information shared in this chapter that came together over years of teaching and reading. Many of these works are worth reading in their own right. What follows is a list of recommended works that both shaped the content of this chapter and extend it.

Mortimer Adler's *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto*[2] is the codification of essentialism in less than 100 pages. Grounding himself in thinkers from Horace Mann to John Dewey to Robert Hutchins, Adler presents a model to improve American schools—and in part move us back to what he debatably argues is the schools being the great equalizers of the past. Part One lays out the linkage between democracy and education; Part Two explains the essentials of basic schooling (with the same objectives and course of study for all students); Part Three details the education of current and new teachers, and that of building administrators, essential for this approach to work.

Brett Beemyn's article "The Silence is Broken: A History of the First Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual College Student Groups"[3] is a solid exploration of the development of LGBTQ+ groups on college campuses and how they intersected throughout history with other student activist groups. While much of what has been written on LGBTQ+ history tends to begin with the Stonewall Riots of 1969 and move forward, Beemyn goes back to the 1950s to trace the origin of many campus groups. He also details the divisions that split the community in the late 1960s regarding the level of militancy that student activists should aim to use.

A seminal voice in the field, Jackie Blount's *Fit to Teach: Same-Sex Desire, Gender, and School Work in the Twentieth Century*[4] is one of the first works to tackle the issue of sexuality in teaching. Blount's work tackles the history of LGBTQ+ teachers throughout the twentieth century, providing valuable context for many of the conversations regarding these issues in schools today. It looks over 100 years to examine the experiences of teachers who were in same-sex relationships or crossed traditional gender norms, how these experiences shift over time, and how educators writ large have been forced to regulate sexuality and gender roles among their students.

In the aftermath of the Common School period, the public schools of the United States were seen as serving as the great equalizer. The "American Dream" was thoroughly linked to education, and the majority of the nation firmly believed that the schools enabled our meritocracy. However, Samuel Bowles and Hebert Gintis blow this belief out of the water in *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*.[5] They view schools through an extremely critical lens, coining the terms "reproduction" and "correspondence theory" in their case that the public schools perpetuate social and class differences, not take them away. Unfortunately, their arguments against this notion sadly still hold true in our present schools.

Building on Blount's work, Karen Graves picks up the issue of LGBTQ+ teachers in her article "A Matter of Public Concern: The First Amendment and Equal Employment for LGBT Educators."[6] Graves presents a wonderful, concise history of the topic but focuses the conversation on two US Supreme Court cases. In these cases, a person's orientation (a private function) became a First Amendment issue when they became public discussion and reason for dismissal. As Graves explains, First Amendment issues are particularly bothersome when they happen in schools which are purportedly dedicated to free thought and inquiry.

While *Teacher as Stranger: Educational Philosophy for the Modern Age*[7] is not one of Maxine Greene's better-known works, in terms of being useful for teachers it is one of the most immediately relevant. Written as a textbook, Greene clearly argues for teachers to develop their own philosophies of teaching, grounding them in the fields of history, sociology, anthropology, and economics. Rather than focus on rote presentations of philosophical schools of thought, Greene pushes teachers to consider topics such as being and learning and approaches to truth and belief while

encouraging them to grapple with moral dilemmas and choose the morally right path.

It is not often a work in education launches a pop culture phenomenon and its own cottage industry; E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*[8] accomplished both. Throughout its first six chapters, Hirsch makes his case for the existence of a uniquely American culture and the role of the schools in perpetuating it. The Appendix is 63 pages (single spaced, small font, two columns on each page) of what Hirsch and his colleagues determined was the set of information that to be a good citizen every American should possess; of course it is a list that begs for critical response from readers for what is lacking as much as what is included.

Far longer than most would pick up for a fun read but still compelling, Richard Kluger's *Simple Justice: The History of* Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's Struggle for Equality*[9] is nonetheless "the" work ever written on the Brown decision. In it, Kluger presents the most contextual, detailed, historical examination of what is the most precedented US Supreme Court case in the nation's history. Kluger explores the human side of the story—detailing the lives of the appellants, their attorneys, and even the judges and justices that heard the case through the judicial ranks.

A historiography is, in brief, an essay that examines the historical approaches to a topic. While the author has avoided historiographical works in these recommended readings, Victoria-Maria MacDonald's "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or 'Other'?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History"[10] is one of the few exceptions. Looking at how Chicana/o population has been covered historically, MacDonald notes that there is an undercurrent of "Hispanophobia"—neglect and bias against "the history of the largely Roman Catholic Spanish peoples and institutions" (p. 367). Of course, this undercurrent is arguably an extension of the same neglectful, biased beliefs in mainstream society and journalism; this is particularly true in the contemporary political climate.

Diane Ravitch details a 35-year long "crusade against ignorance" (p. xi) in *The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945–1980*.[11] In the text Ravitch examines how the public schools tried to improve access for more students, but also lost local control and became more heavily influenced by the federal and state governments. Rather than focus on the criticisms of the public schools that became more and more popular during the time, Ravitch tends to examine the successes experienced by the schools, particularly rising educational attainment and expansion of higher

education. Ravitch is not an apologist, though, and details the flaws in the system as well as the gains.

Charles Silberman was a journalist, not an educator. *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education*[12] was the second of two books he produced examining schooling in the United States; it took him four years of travel and research to lay the groundwork. While leveling a sound critique of schooling, Silberman did not launch into extremist or invective-filled discourse (as was coming a decade later). Instead, he presented a detailed analysis of educational practices that worked, and those that did not, written in straightforward, readable language.

While many may consider it sacrilege to reference B.F. Skinner and not list any of his psychological works, it is in the work of fiction *Walden Two*[13] that the reader best begins to grasp the philosophical implications of behaviorism. Contemporary readers will likely find it is not entirely clear whether Skinner is presenting a utopia or dystopia. In the novel a skeptical professor accompanies two students, veterans of World War II, to a former colleague's attempt at building utopia in which all problems are solved through science and technology—including human problems, such as behavior. The novel explores the skeptics' arguments against the workings of the society and how they are countered.

While the original came in over one thousand pages, many reviewers rightly believe E.L. Thorndike's *Human Nature and the Social Order*[14] far outstrips the attention and ability of all but the most dogged of readers; however, this reprint made the work more abridged and readable. This work presents the nature versus nurture argument in a variety of means—and ultimately argues for both. Thorndike argues that those born with the best genes, educated so that their intellectual abilities are maximized, would become the best leaders of society.

While it's easy to characterize this period as conservative and back-to-basics, *Spurs to Creative Teaching*[15] by Laura Zirbes serves to remind contemporary readers that all was not so. Not considered a prolific writer, this work provides a capstone of sorts to her career in education. Zirbes' book is intentionally vague, providing guiding tips and thoughts rather than specific suggestions, in order to avoid sending the message that there is one correct path to creative teaching. Zirbes presents a series of classroom vignettes that demonstrate her ideas of what is creativity rather than a concrete methodology. Many chapters focus on content specific areas (such as social studies, language arts, math, science, music, and art); she even includes on developing creative in-service activities for teachers and administrators.

Notes

1. Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2003).
2. Mortimer Adler, *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982).
3. Brett Beemyn, "The Silence is Broken: A History of the First Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual College Student Groups," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, no. 2 (2003): 205–223.
4. Jackie M. Blount, *Fit to Teach: Same-Sex Desire, Gender, and School Work in the Twentieth Century* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005).
5. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
6. Karen Graves, "A Matter of Public Concern: The First Amendment and Equal Employment for LGBT Educators," *History of Education Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2018): 453–460.
7. Maxine Greene, *Teacher as Stranger: Educational Philosophy for the Modern Age* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1973).
8. E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).
9. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of* Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vantage Books, 2004).
10. Victoria-Maria MacDonald, "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or 'Other'?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2001); 365–413.
11. Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).
12. Charles Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education* (New York: Random House, 1970).
13. B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (Norwalk, CN: Easton Press, 1995).
14. E. L. Thorndike, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974).
15. Laura Zirbes, *Spurs to Creative Teaching* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1959).

CHAPTER 6

Education in the Neoliberal Period (1983–Present)

Abstract This chapter details simplified versions of neoliberalism, existentialism, and postmodernism as a means of grounding the late twentieth century philosophically. It examines major shifts in public schools, including increasing security in post-Columbine schools, the increase in federal intervention with the No Child Left Behind and Every Student Succeeds Acts, and the Common Core movement. It concludes with a discussion on the educational legacies of this period and recommendations for further reading.

Keywords No Child Left Behind Act • Neoliberalism • Existentialism • Postmodernism • Hermeneutics • Logocentric • Liberation pedagogy • Praxis • Jean-Paul Sartre • Soren Kierkegaard • Martin Buber • Maxine Greene • Nel Noddings • Henry Giroux • Paulo Freire • Wide awakeness • Neoliberalism • Post-Columbine schools • Zero-tolerance policies • School-to-prison-pipeline • *A Nation At Risk* • America 2000 • Goals 2000 • Vouchers • Common Core State Standards • Next Generation Science Standards • *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* • Denominational schools • Charter schools • Home schooling • Districts of choice • At-risk youth • Alternative schools

Imagine that a consortium of jazz bands forms in the United States. In order to perform in any club or concert hall anywhere, a band must become a member of the consortium. Now imagine that one day the

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5_6

consortium decides to accomplish something unprecedented: every member band across the nation is going to play the same song at the same time. The consortium picks a jazz standard—say, for the sake of argument, "Birdland." In order to remain a member of the consortium, your band has to play that song on that given time at that given hour (adjusted for time zone differences, of course).

Your band gets excited and rehearses the piece until you have it down. You network with other bands and get excited about all the variations that groups are coming up with. Bands with vocalists are doing distinctly different versions than all-instrumental combos; trios are having their way with it compared to quintets who are doing radically different interpretations than the big bands. Every band in the consortium knows its strengths and weaknesses, as well as its audience preferences, and works up its own unique versions of the song that play to its strengths as an ensemble.

Now imagine that the day you are to perform the song, an email and letter arrives from the consortium containing the sheet music that every band across the country is to follow by rote. The letter informs you that since the majority of jazz musicians in the nation have proved their incompetence and have brought this on themselves.

Imagine the outcry that would arise, about the ignorance of differences in band size, in ability, in regionalisms, in audience desires. Imagine if you tried to refuse to play the sheet music as it was intended but were told that if you didn't, you would never be able to receive money for playing out ever again. If you are angered by this concept, and imagine that as a musician you'd find a way to rebel, then you can imagine the frustration felt by many public school teachers at the federal intervention in the **No Child Left Behind Act**.

Just as the Watergate scandal of the previous decade eroded American faith in their political system, the publication of *A Nation At Risk* report in 1983 triggered a national backlash against American schools. Report after report, book after book—*Why Can't Johnny Read?*, *The Shopping-Mall High School*, and the like—blasted American schools as wasteful, lackluster institutions. Worse, an unintended consequence of the teachers in the public schools unionizing and striking for a living wage and improved classroom conditions was an unfounded mistrust of teachers among many parts of the general population. Americans turned their eyes to the government to help resolve this "crisis." Piece after piece of federal legislation was rolled out and implemented. Each marked a higher level of federal intervention in the public schools.

What Are the Philosophical Roots of the Neoliberal Period?

- **Key terms**: neoliberalism, existentialism, postmodernism, hermeneutics, logocentric, liberation pedagogy, praxis
- **Key figures**: Jean-Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber, Maxine Greene, Nel Noddings, Henry Giroux, Paulo Freire

Neoliberalism is a reaction to the philosophical shifts of the period. While the period of the Five E's led to somewhat more concrete educational philosophies, the Neoliberal Period was greatly influenced by the more abstract thinking of the century: **existentialism** and **postmodernism**.

The existentialist credo is that the lonely, estranged, and alienated individual is caught up in a meaningless and absurd world. There is no meaning in the world, just the individual's perceptions of reality. Therefore, our perceptions define us and define our world. For example, if there are 26 people sitting in a room, there are 26 simultaneous realities coexisting at the same time. The Pledge of Allegiance is a good example of this concept. While the pledge means positive concepts such as freedom, independence, and pride in many individuals, to those who live in poverty or are of a marginalized culture, the phrase "one nation, indivisible" becomes stuck in their craw. To those who are orthodox in their religious beliefs, having to say or hear the phrase "under God" is tantamount to sinful behavior.

Since there is no one reality, language becomes the most critical skill—we must be able to define and express our perceptions in order to successfully interact within it. However, existentialists remind us that how we interpret what happens makes a difference in what happens—a concept known as **hermeneutics**. Since all reality is personal, existentialists are very concerned with individual responsibility—we are responsible for who and what we are and how we express those concepts.

Many say that the father of the existential movement was the novelist and playwright **Jean-Paul Sartre**, founder of theater of the absurd. To Sartre, consciousness created a being for itself, not interactively. All people are both a reflection and negation of outside world. Dismissing the idealists, Sartre argued that trying to be perfection always leads to failure. Believing that existence precedes essence, Sartre posited that the world is what we make of it.

Soren Kierkegaard was an existentialist who focused on the individual versus the scientific world. We need to both become and, particularly as teachers, develop subjective individuals. Our personal choices make us

who we are. However, to Kierkegaard the scientific method is not the be-all, end-all of knowing, either; he eschewed scientific demand for objective proof. There are three stages of development: the aesthetic (lives in sensuous enjoyment in which emotions are dominant); the ethical (in which we strive to understand the universality of humanity and coming to understand our place in life); and the religious (how one stands alone before God).

Martin Buber was a theological existentialist whose ideas about coming to know God can be applied to our interactions with anyone who is different (i.e. ethnicity, religion, sex, affectional orientation, geography) than us. Since, applying hermeneutics, how we interact with things also influences those things, we must be aware of the level of interactions in which we engage—especially with people. Buber argued that we have two levels of relationships: **I-it** relationships, which are objective (seeing the other as an object, condition, or trait) and **I-thou** relationships, which are subjective (genuinely having a true relationship). We should have I-it relationships with objects and I-thou relationships with people. To do so, we must recognize that everyone is an individual, not just a "sum of parts."

True I-thou relationships are much more difficult to have than what it seems. Any time we see someone for what they are, not who they are, we objectify them. Any time someone has used a phrase such as "I'm not a homophobe, I have a gay friend" or "I'm not racist, I have a _____ friend" they are engaging in an I-it, not an I-thou relationship. It's a very fine line to dance upon: people's cultures define who they are and we cannot be ignorant of this; however, it is not our place to see them for their culture instead of for their humanity. Today's public schools make true I-thou relationships with our students almost impossible; before a teacher lays eyes on a class, they have been provided sex, age, and ability levels, as well as in many cases discipline histories, test scores, and a wealth of other information that perpetuates the objectification of our students.

Applying existential concepts directly to education, the American philosopher **Maxine Greene** came up with the concept of "wide awakeness." Greene was concerned for the quality of existence; therefore the best education is humanistic education, which teaches people to choose their freedom. There are some fundamental purposes of education: to find alertness about ourselves and others; to discover the possibilities within and without us; to grow cognitive perspectives (expanding our perspectives) and perceptual ground (expanding how we come to know); and to counter cynicism and privatism. Greene argues that we must fight the technological, cold, impersonal world we are creating; we must be aware of our biases,

attitudes, and actions; we should strive to be community aware, not just self-aware; and we must understand the forces that manipulate, oppress, and deform us as individuals and as a society.

Another thinker applying existential beliefs to education is **Nel Noddings**, who argued that we are free to choose what we become, so we need to find our own existence. We come to know through dialogue and the power of the narrative; the key to effective dialogue is not giving up our own principles, but using it as a means of discovering what we know, how we know, what we care about, and whom we care about. Noddings argued that humans by nature are storytellers, and that the narrative is the natural way of knowing. We all are capable of having caring relations—the self is given meaning and formed in the context of its relations with others. We should have engrossment—sympathy—we feel their feelings, and measure and interpret reactions, which are different in each situation. Noddings argues that in life, the ends are fixed but the means are always changing—therefore critical thinking is essential. Since the means are changing, we should not fear failure—it is healthier than the denial of failure.

In general, existential educators believe we should focus on human reality—the being, not the becoming. We should teach students to "be their own people"—make their own realities. Since existentialists value all points of view and recognize there are no absolutes, existentialist teachers use multiple resources to present multiple perspectives on all issues covered. Of primary importance are developing analytic and linguistic skills in order to understand, interpret, and clearly express their own realities. Rather than combating or denying, existentialist teachers foster understanding of anxiety and frustration. Teachers and students are all learners in the classrooms which primarily focus on language and creative arts as means of self-expression.

There are two primary, relatively obvious, critiques of existentialism in the classroom. First of all, isn't there a definable reality outside individual perceptions? Isn't there a time when hard facts must be taught rather than expressions of perceptions? Second, what of the more practical concerns? Isn't there room for both individual identification of reality and the vocational arts, for example?

Influenced by the existentialists were the **postmodernists** who argued in a **logocentric** society—western civilization centers on rationality and word usage, but this center has not led to accurate representations of anything. Instead, western society has generated multiple discourses, writings, or texts, all of which reflect the power dynamics between the

dominant culture that shapes the definitions and subjugated cultures which exists within them. There is no one absolute truth, but rather regimes of truth—all knowledge is defined by the society that produces it, and is man-made constructs within specific historical contexts. We discover individual truths through negotiation with others.

Since truth and knowledge are social constructs, language defines reality—and, therefore, to redefine language is to redefine reality. The truth is unstable—we only know what we don't know. There exists a politics of difference—we all have our own texts; in order to be a genuine community, we need to hear and value all texts, not silence them. Accordingly, we should base politics (relationships, interactions, all levels of social discourse) on divergence, not commonalities.

The postmodern aims of education are suitably abstract. **Henry Giroux** argued that teachers are transformative individuals and intellectuals—we can make everything different, primarily by promoting marginal knowledge and discourses of difference. Teaching should be rethought as a conjunction between modernism's universalistic tendencies with a refined sense of critical analysis. Ultimately, we should teach students to express themselves—language sensitivity helps shape the way students think and conceptualize.

Postmodern curriculum involved studies of power, history, cultural politics, and social criticism, including narratives from the margins of culture, rather than simple discrete content transmission. Though not expressly postmodern, the most influential thinker in this realm was **Paulo Freire** who taught a **liberation pedagogy**. Friere encourages teachers and students alike to question their own power and privilege in a society and challenge the dominant culture's beliefs and practices which often subordinate others. Freire argued that teachers should strive for **praxis**—merging theory and practice in the belief that if something is to truly be learned, people must act upon it. It's ironic that a standardized test used to assess teacher preparation is so named.

Freire reminds teachers that education is *knowing*—based on shared experiences, critical reflection—and is not *schooling*, as posited in the first chapter of this work. While education and schooling can work together, more often they work separately. True liberation pedagogy rests on the following assumptions: that education has historically been used to exploit the poor; that teachers must befriend those we teach; teachers should make our students aware of the forces that exploit them; and that teachers

must teach students how they can use education and knowledge as a means to improve their lives.

As abstract and grandiose as it is, postmodernism leads to some significant critiques and sets itself up for mockery (such as websites devoted to "how to speak postmodern"). Many teachers believe postmodern fascination with redefining language is a bit too petty and ignores the reality of world. Others ask if there aren't some universal truths—every now and then isn't it okay to teach that 2 + 2 = 4 just as fact? Many others complain that in our fascination to deconstruct language we have forgotten to teach the basic skills necessary to our youth and, in fact, tend to miss some substantive problems.

What Is Neoliberalism?

While many educators were becoming more attuned to postmodern thinking, society began to push back against many of its tenets—particularly as they impacted the nation's public schools. Initially developed by economists but quickly adopted by politicians, soon the concept of **neoliberalism** impacted many facets of public life. At their core, neoliberals believe that the free markets should be favored; that consumer choice and entrepreneurial initiative can help move the country forward; and that any governmental intervention that might possibly hold back entrepreneurship is a problem that needs to be removed.

To get to those beliefs, neoliberalism rests on a set of core assumptions. First, it assumes that individuals are guided by self-interest, and that this self-interest will make them rational thinkers. To be otherwise would hurt themselves. Second, it assumes that given complete and accurate information, people will make decisions that are in their own best interest. Third, it assumes that people need to be given a variety of options in all transactions in order to be able to make the best choice—including in areas of social service such as education and health care. Ultimately, neoliberals believe in the elimination of values such as "public good" and "community," to be replaced with values of "individual responsibility," "individual liberty," and "entrepreneurship." To achieve this end, neoliberals argue that there must be absolute rule of free markets—that there should be total freedom of the movement of capital, goods, and services. Society should eliminate public support of all social services in favor of privatized versions thereof. Neoliberals believe in deregulation—eliminating government regulations that inhibit profit.

As the neoliberal agenda has taken political control in the United States, there have been two significant, if unintended, consequences. First, a handful of private interests have come to control much political and social life in order to maximize their own personal profit. Second, a handful of wealthy investors and large corporations have become hugely influential in defining social, political, and economic policy for the nation. The nation's public schools are not immune from this influence.

The neoliberal agenda has impacted the nations' schools financially in terms of programs such as vouchers and charter schools. Schooling is a $1 trillion per year enterprise, and corporate America is eager to be able to reap profit. Other neoliberal reforms include reducing the financial footprint of schools (reduced funding for public universities, consolidation of public schools) and raising curriculum standards coupled with accountability. These foci result in an increasing demand on teachers to expand their roles with minimal increases in pay.

What Is Meant by Post-Columbine Schools?

The neoliberal agenda is not the only thing that has shaped US schools since 1983. On April 20, 1999, what was at the time one of the worst tragedies in the history of American schooling took place at Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado, a suburb of Denver. Two middle class white students brought heavy armaments to school and opened fire. While many groups claim members of their own were singled out—athletes, bullies, Christians, and students of color—the shooters were fairly indiscriminate in their slaughter. Because of its close proximity to a major media outlet (Denver), the media savvy of the students involved (some of whom were on the phone with news networks while the shooters were still in the midst of their rampage), and the demographics of the school (suburban middle/upper class, almost all white), it captured the attention of the nation—and became a new rallying cry for school reform. This time, it was not pedagogical or curricular reform but security measures society as a whole demanded.

The public schools tend to be reactive rather than proactive, and the Columbine Massacre gave fodder for schools across the nation to ramp up their security to (some would argue unreasonably) unprecedented high levels. Suddenly, parents demanded that their schools have more thorough security than many American prisons, and the daily lives of students changed dramatically. In the post-Columbine schools, students had to be driven through chain-link fencing topped with barbed wire to arrive at

their building; these gates would be locked after homeroom and remain secure until the end of the school day. Upon arrival, students had to carry their mesh or clear plastic backpacks through metal detectors past security guards or resource officers, members of local law enforcement stationed in the schools. Students and faculty alike wear name tags; visitors who enter the only door unlocked during the school day (or the one monitored by a school employee to "buzz" visitors in) receive a tag and are escorted through the building.

Young children receive lessons in "stranger danger" or other similar curricula, taught to make everyone aware if they see someone without proper identification. Students today participate in fire drills, bad weather drills (depending on where they're located in the nation), lockdown drills (for when an unidentified stranger is spotted in the building), and active shooter drills/ALICE training where students are taught to hide, but if discovered run around screaming confusedly to avoid providing an easy target to shooters. Preservice teachers have to grapple with the question of whether they will take a bullet for their students, and how to best provide psychological first-aid in the aftermath of a shooting. Most recently and perhaps most extreme, corporations have innovated to meet this unfortunate "need," developing and marketing items such as bullet-proof backpacks for students.

Most districts implemented anti-bullying, anti-teasing curricula in the classrooms while most school boards implemented **zero-tolerance** policies—any example of harassment, violence, weapons, or similar actions result in immediate suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion. While such policies do help schools deal with students prone to violence, sadly zero-tolerance policies have taken any discretion away from the schools, just as the teacher-proof curricula did a generation ago. Zero-tolerance policies have contributed to issues of race, as urban schools with staffed corrections officers enforce strict standards of behavior which contribute to the **school-to-prison-pipeline** phenomena that reflects larger issues of mass incarceration for people of color. Incidents of a kindergarten student being suspended for kissing a classmate or an elementary student being suspended over bringing silverware from home to eat lunch are becoming more common. The latest irony occurred in Colorado, a state in which students in many rural districts are encouraged to bring rifles to school to take part in National Rifle Association supported shooting and safety lessons, in which a member of the drill team was suspended for carrying her team's wooden rifles—which are unfireable and never left her car's back seat.

How Did Federal Intervention Increase?

With the 1983 exposé *A Nation At Risk*, many Americans stopped believing in their local schools—more specifically, they stopped believing that education should be left to local initiative. Since that report, the public has supported more and more federal intervention, no matter the provisions. One of the more substantive, if short-lived, was the 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act which developed vocational education in a way not seen since Smith-Hughes. This act demanded local schools create school-business partnerships and internship opportunities, reinforced funding from the Smith-Hughes Act, provided more federal funding for vocational curriculum (particularly high-level science and math-based projects), and fostered the integration of academics and vocational coursework.

In an attempt at eliminating the general track from schools, School-to-Work set minimal graduation standards for vocational completers and encouraged schools to move from a multi-track system to a dual-path system. In other words, students in high schools selected one of two levels of coursework, technical preparation or collegiate preparation, rather than the multitude of levels previously offered (basic, general, technical, collegiate, advanced, honors, etc.). Leading the charge in this area was the grassroots organization the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) who had, at their apex, member schools in 28 states.

As time went on, education became a political talking point; Congress passed the **America 2000** initiative. Originally drafted under first President George H.W. Bush, the act established federal guidelines and standards for schools; however, after meeting Congressional resistance (mainly from liberals who believed it relied too much on religion, not enough support for race and poverty equity issues), most of the provisions became voluntary.

The Clinton administration sought their own stamp on educational legislation, leading to a bill known as **Goals 2000**. This bill set forth some noble, if arguable, goals, saying that by the year 2000: all students in America would start school ready to learn; the high school graduation rate would increase to at least 90%; American students would leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, arts, history, and geography (as measured by national assessments); America would be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement; every adult American would be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global society; and every school in America would be free of drugs and

violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. Enacted in his first term, this bill met a Congressional buzzsaw as well, with liberals dragging out the same arguments as against America 2000 and conservatives arguing it resulted in too much federal intervention. Eventually, Congress added bills that made the testing "voluntary" (even calling them voluntary national tests, or VNTs); the bill frittered away to nothing.

With the swearing in of the second President Bush, it was time to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act first passed under President Lyndon Johnson as part of his War on Poverty. Learning their lessons from past failures, members of Congress from both sides of the aisle got involved. The tragedy of 9/11 renewed American faith in their nation, lost since Watergate, and this was one of the first bills considered by Congress in the aftermath. Re-titled **No Child Left Behind** (NCLB) and enacted in 2002, it set the stage for neoliberal education in the United States. It contains much more expansive funding, but with that funding comes much more mandated assessment for accountability purposes. In addition, NCLB examines more diverse areas such as teacher certification for the first time. Also, there were several riders to the bill that many argue have no place in a piece of educational legislation.

There were four fundamental premises to NCLB. The first was accountability—holding schools accountable for student performance along racial and sex lines rather than as an aggregate. The second was more local freedom—NCLB allows schools to use federal dollars in a wider variety of ways than previous. The third was proven methods—curricula recommended have scientific research backing them up. The fourth was choices for parents—tutoring for students and vouchers to go to high-achieving schools.

NCLB brought about several good things. First, districts were no longer allowed to hide behind numbers when reporting performance. While a school with a solid cadre of highly advanced students used to be able to use those high scores on standardized tests to make themselves look good, NCLB demanded disaggregated data. Another positive was the change in teacher certification at the middle grades. Whereas elementary-certified teachers used to be able to teach middle grades, now those teachers must have secondary certification (highly qualified in their content area). This means elementary teachers can return to what they have been trained to do best that their secondary counterparts would find impossible: teaching young children. More generally, NCLB greatly increased federal funding

in the public schools to their highest dollar amount ever. However, many of these dollars circumvented our public schools, as federal dollars could be used for students to attend private schools thanks to the mandated vouchers.

Strengths duly noted, there were some strong criticisms of NCLB, the bulk surrounding the accountability plank. Why is it that schools were being measured using standardized testing, which every source imaginable will tell you is the most unreliable? Why were states mandated to assess in one set of grade levels when they historically used another? Language in the bill specifically addressed that one cultural group NCLB was meant to help, American Indians; however, the National Intertribal Council spoke out against the act as culturally exclusive and detrimental to Indigenous populations. The National Education Association (NEA) spearheaded a lawsuit not over whether it is an unfunded mandate, but whether an underfunded mandate—the federal government did not provide enough funding for states with large student populations to properly assess.

Beyond accountability, there were some substantive questions about other provisions in the act. NCLB called for the implementation of "scientifically proven" methods, a throwback to progressivism. However, there was some question about whether the methods recommended in the act were best practice or those with the best lobbyists. Also, as any teacher will tell you, what works for one population is not going to work for another; no one piece of legislation should mandate one method across the nation. The idea of **vouchers**—requirements that school districts pay other schools (i.e. parochial, private) their share of government money received for a pupil to defray that pupil's tuition at another school—run counter to our public schools truly being public as well. When the vouchers go to a parochial school, there are some church-state questions brought up as well.

In 2015, NCLB was re-authorized and re-titled the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA). It essentially kept the main neoliberal planks of NCLB; however, it did allow states more flexibility in demonstrating student success, as opposed to mandated testing in certain grade levels. It also put more emphasis on high curricular standards.

What Are the Common Core Standards?

By emphasizing curriculum, ESSA was simply building on momentum surrounding standards-based education. Throughout the 1980s, states and professional organizations began developing benchmarks, frame-

works, and standards to govern student learning; however, these were highly individualistic efforts. Beginning in 2007 the National Governor's Association, in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers, announced a new initiative: the **Common Core** State Standards. These were a nationwide set of K-12 standards for education currently adopted by 41 states, 4 territories, Washington, DC, and the Department of Defense Schools. During the draft process, the standards were vetted by groups ranging from the NEA, to the National Council of Teachers of English and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, to the American Federation of Teachers. Classroom teachers and faculty in colleges of education were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft standards.

The Common Core standards are set in two areas: mathematics and English language arts/literacy. The math standards are broken out into grades K-8, then high school is broken out into disciplines (number and quantity, algebra, functions, modeling, geometry, and statistics and probability). The English-Language Arts standards include reading literature, informational texts, and foundational skills; writing; speaking and listening; and language. They also include standards in "Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects" which encourage subject-area reading skills.

In reaction to science being excluded from the Common Core as a stand-alone discipline, the National Science Teachers Association partnered with many other agencies to write the **Next Generation Science Standards** (NGSS). These revolve around three dimensions of learning science: crosscutting concepts (connecting the four domains physical science, life science, earth and space science, and engineering); science and engineering concepts (teaching the scientific method through inquiry learning and hands-on practice); and disciplinary core ideas (key ideas that cut across the four domains). These standards include all grades K-12.

What Were the Sources and Purposes of Schooling?

Vouchers are one reason among many that we are returning to an expanded system of schooling unlike any since the common school era. The 2002 Supreme Court case *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* ruled that vouchers are constitutional, paving the way for an explosion in the so-called alternative schooling.

Denominational schools are making a comeback in a big way. While they have been around since Colonial times, they have been the primary

alternate to the public schools since the 1840s. The government has given them the necessary assistance: the 1925 Supreme Court case *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* ruled that states cannot mandate children attend public schools instead of parochial schools. As the nation has escalated their culture wars since the 1980s, the schools have been the primary battlegrounds; in fact, Protestant parochial schools have emerged alongside Catholic schools as the primary alternative education.

Charter schools have grown, although to what extent greatly relies upon in what state for each state has crafted fairly unique laws of establishment and governance. In 1991, Minnesota passed the first charter school legislation in the nation, but it was quickly followed by almost all others, each with different regulations to follow. Charter schools are public schools in the sense that they must meet all of the same standards of learning for their students and are open to all students, tuition free; however, they are exempt from much of the bureaucracy and governmental oversight to which public schools are subject. At their best, charter schools provide a variety of alternative environments for students ranging from electronic schools (a variation on homeschooling, see next) to dropout recovery programs to schools geared around an interest such as environmental education or the arts.

At their inception, there was much criticism rightly levied against charter schools for, among other things, being too exclusive and selective in their student populations. For example, many charters opted to not provide services to students with disabilities and had parents sign waivers. Others discriminated against students based on socioeconomic status. However, as more states have cracked down on charter schools, many of these criticisms are no longer valid; nationally, charter schools now serve majority-minority populations and offer the same, if not more, opportunities for students with disabilities as their traditional public school counterparts.

Thanks to a combination of culture wars, judicial support, concerns over school violence, and the internet, **home schooling** has taken off in recent years as a primary means of alternative education. While every state has different regulations on this, essentially parents keep their children home and educate them as they best see fit; however, students are still subject to the same accountability assessments as their public school peers. Parents, fed up by either what they perceived to be dumbed-down statistics or removal of parochialism, fled the schools. In this period, homeschool associations have sprung up more rapidly than Parent-Teacher Associations, and the internet has allowed an accredited, reliable curricu-

lum to be piped directly into anyone's home. Public schools by law have to allow homeschool students to participate in extracurriculars, removing much of the socialization question.

The public schools are not exempt from this trend either; in order to try and remain relevant (though whether this is an issue is debatable), many public school districts are adopting a variety of approaches, if not school types. NCLB mandated all school districts be **districts of choice**—meaning students have the choice to attend from any elementary, middle, or secondary school within district boundaries. Beyond that, many districts have implemented a system of magnet schools, particularly at the middle and secondary levels—meaning schools focus on one area of strength (i.e. Performing Arts Academies, Technical/Vocational Centers, Science and Math Schools) and recruit students from across the district. While this has been effective in some school districts, in others it serves as a tool to further segregate schools along class and racial lines.

Public schools are not only mandated to provide accommodations to students with special needs but now also to identify and assist **at-risk youth**—children who have any of a wide variety of personal, economic, or social characteristics that research says leads to low performance or dropping out. One means of reaching such youth, as well as a means to handle students that don't quite fit within a traditional school (due to learning style, behavior issues, et cetera) many districts have opened **alternative schools**—small public schools that use a variety of nontraditional means to reach these students. Unfortunately, boys and students of marginalized cultures are disproportionately represented in these schools.

What Will Be the Legacies of the Period?

Since we're in the midst of this period, it is difficult yet to determine which policies will stick and which will fall to the wayside. Particularly since the trend in schooling since the Five E's has been rapid and large swings on the pendulum from extremely liberal movements (i.e. open schools) to extremely conservative movements (i.e. Coalition of Essential Schools) and back again, it will be curious to read in 20 years which of the extremes this period will be remembered—or if it will be remembered as a whiplash/boomerang period instead.

It is a safe assumption that the added security measures in the post-Columbine schools will remain as permanent features. Unfortunately, schools are no longer the community centers they once were, but holding

pens due to their increased security and zero-tolerance policies. Indeed, it is often easier to get into a government building or prison than into a public school today. The growth of alternative education models—charter schools and homeschooling in particular—are also likely to become permanent fixtures on the public school front.

It is an interesting debate in which to engage as to what the public schools will look like 30, 40, or 50 years from now. Will they remain much the same as they are currently, with the subsequent upkeep in technology? Will they return to the dormitory facilities of the pre-common school era, providing lodging and meals to students in efforts to save them from their families? Which students will be attending—will the public schools exclusively serve students with profound special needs and vocational qualifiers while collegiate-bound students attend private and charter schools? Or will we return to the Colonial era model of homeschooling, where it becomes the duty of each head of household to tutor their youth in certain curricula, where students simply sit down at their computers, spend an hour or two engaged in interactive, individualized "teaching" from online resources, then go about their days in relative leisure?

Beyond the debate between "brick and mortar" versus virtual schooling in terms of physical plant and technology, another great debate will take place of the curricula taught. Will there be a nationalized curriculum all schools follow, as is the case in many European and Asian nations, or will local control still rule the day? Will the National Governor's Council manage to continue to have their core curriculum approved and adopted (if not expanded into all 50 states), or will the teacher's groups stand up against it?

Educators are learning that nothing is sacred in education—and depending on how you spin an issue depends on whether this is a good thing or a bad thing. Even the *Brown* decision moved to the forefront of conversation when, in 2007, the US Supreme Court ruled in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* that public schools could not use race as a primary means of determining student attendance. Depending on who you read after, this decision either affirmed *Brown* by proving that *de jure* policies that use race are unconstitutional, or was the first step in dismantling *Brown* by no longer giving school districts much leeway to integrate. As in all issues, time will tell.

"Going Old School": For Further Reading

There are a great number of works that helped shape the information shared in this chapter that came together over years of teaching and reading. Many of these works are worth reading in their own right. What follows is a list of recommended works that both shaped the content of this chapter and extend it.

In light of the many debates taking place about the rights of people who are transgender in today's schools, Amara Chaudhry's "Lessons from Jim Crow: What Those Seeking Self-Determination for Transgender Individuals Can Learn from America's History with Racial Classification Categories"[1] provides an excellent reminder that we have been here before historically and legally. Chaudhry looks at the legal history of the dismantling of Jim Crow laws in the United States to draw lessons for the trans-community and its supporters. Ultimately the author argues that a key difference is the role of self-identification; while race was externally classified, gender should be an internal classification and legally recognized as such.

Among the latest in social reconstructive writings, Paulo Freire argues in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*[2] that schools are the primary means through which a society can improve itself. However, Freire also takes a more post-modern approach to the topic, examining power relationships and explaining how schools support—and can subvert—them. Friere talked about schools as potential sites of oppression or emancipation and created the banking concept of education. To Friere, dialogue in education could give rise to liberatory pedagogy.

A psychologist, Howard Gardner didn't intend on *Frames of Mind*[3] being so explicitly linked to education until the theory had been extensively tested—yet it is in education that his work has proved most fruitful. Essentially Gardner reframed the penultimate educational question from "how smart are you?" to "how are you smart?" Gardner's book laid out the theory of seven multiple intelligences—linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal—that dominated pedagogical approaches for decades. Gardner's work was later expanded to include a naturalistic intelligence, and some include existential and/or moral intelligence as well.

Karen Graves provides another historiographical article, "'So You Think You Have a History?': Taking a Q from Lesbian and Gay Studies in Writing Education History,"[4] which explores the literature on the history

of the LGBTQ+ community. Beyond a great survey of the field up to its publication, Graves concludes the article with four lessons that historians—particularly lesbian and gay historians—can take from queer theory. First, they should seek that is unspoken, silenced, or fractured; second, they should have a critical focus on identity, particularly sex and gender; third, they should focus on the resistance, not just the oppression; and fourth, there is a strong connection between what we think of as private and our social institutions.

Existentially concerned about the role of creativity and the arts in education, Maxine Greene's collection of essays *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*[5] pursues these, among many other topics. Greene's essays span topics ranging from curriculum to pedagogy, pursuing a social vision to incorporating multiple voices and realities. Throughout her career, Maxine Greene has been focused on using creativity to bring about wide awakeness in the population; this collection updates and expands on this theme.

Building on the work of Freire, bell hooks argues for schooling as a practice of freedom in *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*.[6] An active teacher and scholar, hooks' notion of transgression is teaching students to transcend their racial, gender, and class boundaries set out by society. Bringing in elements of liberatory pedagogy, feminist thought, and critical race theory, this work is a great example of praxis—the merging of theory and practice—as hooks calls on people to develop and foster their critical thinking skills in today's anti-intellectual age in a fully engaged pedagogy.

Another work written by a non-educator, Kevin Kosar is a policy analyst who turned his attention to educational policy in *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards*.[7] Interestingly, Kosar's primary argument is that federal intervention in education has been unsuccessful not because it attempts too much—but that it attempts too little. Kosar presents a solid history of recent federal interventions in schooling through No Child Left Behind in a work that is relatively brief and very readable. Kosar's work tries to make the case for three arguments: that federally raising educational standards is a good thing; that politics has kept this from happening; and there are concrete strategies to accomplish this in the future.

While almost any of Jonathan Kozol's works could have made the list in various periods, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*[8] is the most relevant to today's teachers. In it, Kozol

encapsulates all of the themes of his previous works—the detailed sociopolitical critiques and clear explanations of how society impacts education—while looking at how schools have become re-segregated. The use of the phrase "apartheid schooling" is deliberate, as Kozol is comparing what the public schools in the United States do today in terms of curriculum and pedagogy to that of South Africa under its apartheid regime.

In 1995 David Berliner wrote *The Manufactured Crisis*, which explains why much of the negative press about and public attacks on public schools was wrong and false (worth a read in its own right). Over a decade later, Sharon Nichols partnered with Berliner in *Collateral Damage: How High-Stakes Testing Corrupts America's Schools*[9] which builds on these themes but focuses on the nature of high-stakes testing. Throughout, Nichols and Berliner present reason after reason why high-stakes testing has gotten out of control; most are rooted in Campbell's Law which states that the more any indicator is used for social decision making, the more the likelihood of corruption and distortion in the processes that the indicator was supposed to be monitoring. This book looks at the prevalence of cheating on tests/data reporting, the exclusion and removal of students, and the negative impact of testing and the narrative around it on both student and teacher morale.

Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education[10] is a seminal book by Peter McLaren that uses two voices—that of an early career teacher and a critical theorist—to explore new ways to understand the political, social, and economic issues impacting classrooms in the United States. McLaren presents a postmodern takedown of the current structures governing schooling in the United States. Any edition of this book works, though more recent editions continue his arguments in light of movements such as NCLB and Common Core.

Far too often, people levy harsh criticism against the Common Core standards without knowing the history of the movement or reading the content of the standards. The *Common Core State Standards Initiative*[11] website sets forth the explanation of the National Governors Association's process of developing and implement national K-12 standards. It includes links to an explanation of how the Common Core was created and to the math and language arts standards.

With all the negatively surrounding the entire educational enterprise during this period, some respite is needed. Nel Noddings provides a gentle reminder of the better purposes of education in *Happiness and Education*.[12] Noddings argues that the ultimate purpose of education is to

produce happy people—that part and parcel of being a good citizen is being happy with one's life. In something of a throwback to the progressive period, Noddings makes a case for educating for both personal life (home, nature, character, spirituality, interpersonal growth) as well as public life (work, community, democracy, public service).

It is rare when a scholar admits to an error in their work; it is even rarer for them to publish an entire volume that serves as apologetica and clarification. However, this is exactly what Diane Ravitch took up in *The Death and Life of the American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*.[13] Ravitch served as Assistant Secretary of Education of the United States and in this role was one of the biggest supporters of NCLB and its high-stakes assessment demands. However, after spending years researching its implementation, Ravitch came to realize how harmful are such measures; this book is evidence against NCLB and apology for her role in making it happen.

The first of the Horace trilogy (also including *Horace's School* and *Horace's Hope*), Theodore Sizer's *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School*[14] introduces the reader to the fictional Horace Smith, a composite character of various high school English teachers. This book served as the catalyst for what would become the Coalition of Essential Schools. Through a series of anecdotes, Sizer details many of the ills facing the public schools of the time, and then presents a solution to these ills. It is a fairly realistic depiction of schooling in the 1980s (much of which is still sadly relevant) and makes a good case against bureaucracy in education in favor of localized reform efforts.

Notes

1. Amara S. Chaudhry, "Lessons from Jim Crow: What Those Seeking Self-Determination for Transgender Individuals Can Learn from America's History with Racial Classification Categories," *Temple Political and Civil Rights Law Review* 18, no. 2 (2009): 505–514.
2. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Books, 1993).
3. Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).
4. Karen Graves, "'So You Think You Have a History?': Taking a Q from Lesbian and Gay Studies in Writing Education History," *History of Education Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2012): 465–487.
5. Maxine Greene, *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995).

6. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge Books, 1994).
7. Kevin Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).
8. Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005).
9. Sharon Nichols and David C. Berliner, *Collateral Damage: How High-Stakes Testing Corrupts America's Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).
10. Peter McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (New York: Longman Books, 1989).
11. National Governor's Association, *Common Core State Standards Initiative* (Accessed at http://www.corestandards.org/).
12. Nel Noddings, *Happiness and Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
13. Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
14. Theodore Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1984).

Index

E. Janak, *A Brief History of Schooling in the United States*,
The Cultural and Social Foundations of Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-24397-5