

Advice to Young Teacher Educators

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What is your advice to today's younger generation of teacher educators?" asks an editor of this brave new journal, *Teaching Education*. That's a tall order, especially in 250 to 500 words.

By now I certainly should have enough teacher education experience to call upon. I began teaching teachers more than half a century ago as observers filed into my classrooms already full of junior or senior high school students in the memorable University School at Ohio State University. There followed teaching in several universities as well as workshops away during summer sessions, teaching through organizations, consultation and publications, and an attempt to pull it all together in an autobiography.

Givers of advice risk sounding excessively authoritative and much wiser than fallible humans can possibly be. But it's a chance the writer and reader must take. So here goes.

Acquire somehow a broad liberal education, Venture into both worlds, the humanistic world of literature, the arts, the social sciences, history, philosophy, et. al., and the scientific world of mathematics and the several physical and natural sciences. Wrestle with the tough interdisciplinary problems of human-kind that cut across the arbitrary boundaries of the separate subjects. Experience widely. Travel. Grow.

Obtain a solid professional education. Know your specialty but don't let it imprison you. Stress the foundations of education--philosophical, psychological, historical and social. Master needed technical skills--such as the uses of the computer, statistics, language. Explore and recognize the realities of school and society, yet keep your faith in your hopes and goals.

As early as possible, learn who you are. A teacher? A researcher? A generalist or a specialist? Are you a writer? A counselor? A community activist? An administrative facilitator? A leader of organizations? Some combination of several such elements? Do what you do best, most naturally, most joyously, whatever is most you. Welcome the rewards and avoid complaints about whatever penalties accompany being yourself. And if in midstream you decide to change roles, since that now feels right to you, do so wholeheartedly, without trepidation or reservation.

Avoid oversimplification. Two quips are helpful reminders. "Things are more complicated than most people think." "Educators have difficulty bearing more than one thing in mind simultaneously." People often pounce on aspects of the

elusive truth and proclaim them to be the whole truth. In education we have been known to hop on bandwagons, adopt panaceas, obey ephemeral national reports, rediscover the wheel. Avoid oversimplifications--among them my own. Try to make a difference. A quotation from Edmund Burke says it well: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." (Women too.) I closed *My Way of Looking At It* with "I refuse to believe that the individual doesn't count and can play no role in making a better world." Try to make a difference through having lived. That's all? Yes, for now.

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