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ABSTRACT

A wide variety of kindergarten teacher training programs existed in America during the 50-year period between 1920 and 1970 after Froebel's system was introduced. The most significant reasons for this variety were the sources of knowledge about the system, the ability of its advocates to read idiomatic German, and the basic personality characteristics of persons who gained leadership. The development from an apprenticeship method to kindergarten training schools and then to incorporation of kindergarten into normal schools designed for the preparation of teachers for all grade levels had its parallel in the rise of compulsory public education. Socioeconomic conditions and changed attitudes toward women were also reflected in the training of kindergarten teachers. Carrying the momentum forward was the exponential increase in the numbers of kindergarten classes and in the popularity that they attained during the half century. Discussion provides a broad overview of American teacher training during the period and descriptions of kindergarten apprenticeship training, kindergarten training schools, and kindergarten in normal schools. (RH)

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1870 TO 1920

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A wide variety of kindergarten training programs existed in America during the fifty-year period after Froebel's system was introduced. The most significant reasons for this variety were the sources of knowledge about the system, the ability of its advocates to read idiomatic German, and the basic personality characteristics of persons who gained leadership. The development from an apprenticeship method to kindergarten training schools and then to incorporation of kindergarten into normal schools designed for the preparation of teachers for all grade levels had its parallel in the rise of compulsory public education. Socio-economic conditions and changed attitudes toward women were also reflected in the training of kindergarten teachers. Carrying the momentum forward was the exponential increase in the numbers of kindergarten classes and in the popularity that they attained during this half century.

Overview of American Teacher Training

Before we focus on kindergarten teachers, it is essential that we briefly survey the training of other teachers before and during the years under consideration. From the 1620s onward, instruction in reading had been important to colonists in the Boston area because of their Calvinist belief that ability to read the Bible would frustrate the wiles of Satan and permit

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entry into the gates of heaven. In New England, children were taught as early as age three or four, either at home, by itinerate schoolmasters, or in dame schools conducted by literate women. The southern colonies, with close ties to the Church of England, relied upon tutors for the prosperous and work training for the poor. In the middle colonies, education was determined by the dominant country of origin, with the Dutch of New York believing that government should not interfere with schooling and the Quakers of Philadelphia encouraging parochial schools with freedom of choice. The common elements were an absence of teacher training and a lack of awareness of early childhood as a period with special learning needs.

Following the founding of the Republic in 1776, there was no mention of education in the constitution of the newly formed United States. As an English observer reported to Parliament in 1889, "Those who would understand the educational institutions of America must first give heed to the exceptional conditions under which these institutions originated and still continue to work. The American Republic is a unique institution . . . each state has its own educational laws, and raises, appropriates and distributes school funds in its own way.[1]

During the colonial period, although Harvard and other colleges had been established for the education of lawyers and clergymen, no specific training had been developed for those who wanted to become teachers. No female students were enrolled, and no provision was made for the higher education of women. With independence from England established, however, private academies became popular for secondary education of both sexes. There were about 50 in 1800 and at least 6,000 by mid-century. In the beginning they did not offer teacher training, nor did the public high schools that became popular in the mid-1800s, but their graduates, both men and women, often became teachers.

Three normal schools modeled on the Prussian system were established in 1839. An 1850 report by Henry Barnard commented upon these and six additional teacher training schools. He felt they were "doing much good" but didn't compare with similar training schools in Europe.[2] At about this time, some of the private academies began to change their emphasis to provide teacher preparation classes and many evolved into normal schools. To give but one example, St. Lawrence Academy in New York began with one room and one teacher in 1816. Ten years later, it added a substantial stone structure and started teacher education. Another building was required by 1836, and then all were demolished in 1867 to make room for the state-funded Potsdam Normal School.[3] Like many other normal schools, it is now a state university.

Little methodology was taught in these early schools. Not until Page's Theory of Teaching was published in 1847 was there a specific text on pedagogy. There was some knowledge of Pestallozi's philosophy after Dr. E. A. Sheldon brought Herman Krusi from Verdun and in 1861 opened the Oswego Training School in New York State with their own version of object lessons. Within a few years, students flocked to Oswego. Many were in positions of prominence by the time Froebel kindergartens were introduced; they were more receptive to its innovations than traditionally trained administrators.[4]

Normal schools became increasingly popular from the 1870s onward through the 1920s. The nine reported by Barnard in 1850 increased to 20 by 1860 and to 100 by 1870. A survey by Hollis in 1895 revealed 356 with about 12,000 students. An additional 6,000 students were enrolled in colleges with teacher training departments, but by that time there was virtually no teacher training done in private academies or in the public high schools that had replaced them.[5]

Kindergarten Apprenticeship Training

When kindergartens began to attract attention in the 1870s, there still was no precedent for college level training for either women or teachers. Privately operated kindergartens showed little concern for academic credentials for their teachers since they usually provided apprenticeship training for those seeking to enter the field. In 1900, Nora Smith described how "Miss A trains a class including Miss B, who is not a thinker but repeats and imitates. She trains Miss C, who begins to teach long before she has digested her experience as a student. With lightening rapidity, Miss D arrives on the scene," sees the work as agreeable, and "immediately seeks for others around whom she can wreathe her octopus arms and to whom she can impart the tricks of the trade. This continues with Misses F, G, H, I, J, and K.[6]

Despite their limitations, many of these kindergartens provided excellent training. Many kindergartners, as their teachers preferred to be called, developed life-long support networks through the system. Anna Louise Jenkins recounted her conversation in 1912 with Ruth Burritt, who had taught the demonstration class at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 and was by then an elderly lady. However, Burritt immediately asked, "Who trained you?" and when she heard that it had been Eliza Blaker exclaimed, "Why, you are my granddaughter then. Eliza is one of my girls."[7] Autobiographical writings and other papers confirm that this relationship was common in the early kindergartens.

Unification and promotion of the Froebel kindergartens in the United States between 1860 and the late 1870s was largely the work of Elizabeth Peabody. In 1860 she opened the first one to use English as its primary language, and she travelled to Europe for 15 months in 1867 and 1868 to learn more about the system. Because her German was self-taught and her background

was New England Calvinistic, her interpretation seems to have been based upon the materials and activities rather than the underlying philosophy. Peabody authored and translated books, published an irregularly published Kindergarten Messenger, arranged for Gifts and Occupations to be manufactured and sold, lectured, and wrote innumerable letters. Her lectures in the Training Schools for Kindergartners, published in 1886 as a compilation of talks she had given over two decades, indicates her interpretation of Froebel. She said, "Froebel's method is a radical change of direction. . . . Instead of looking down upon the child, the kindergartner must clear her mind of all foregone arbitrary conclusions and humbly look up to the innocent soul, which in turn sees nothing but the face of the Father in Heaven. . . . God is with us to will and to do, if we will only have the courage to take for granted that if we are willing, he will make us divine guides for others."[8] This charismatic approach, combined with a renewal of religious interest in the nation and with Victorian sentimentality about children, led to what is often referred to as the kindergarten crusade. In 1870, the Boston kindergarten was still the only one for English speaking children. By 1880, there were about 400 in 30 states, most of them strongly influenced by Peabody and her followers.

Kindergarten Training Schools

Although they retained much of the personal element that characterized the apprenticeship system, kindergarten training schools were organized primarily to educate teachers for both private kindergartens and those that were being started in public schools. The first, actually Peabody's school, was taught by two women she met in Germany in 1872, unsuccessful in part because they were unable to communicate in English. In New York, the Krause Seminary for Kindergartners was established by Froebel-trained John Krause and Maria

Krause-Boelte in 1873. They promoted the kindergarten as a play school to develop individuality, and graduated 1200 teachers before closing in 1914.[10] One in conjunction with New York University, also opened in 1873, was taught by Adolph Douai. A former German school administrator with minimal Froebelian background at that time, he wrote a manual describing rote methods, strict discipline, and "toys and games" distributed as necessary to keep children from becoming unruly.[11] Douai was soon replaced by a pupil of Krause-Boelte.

Other training programs during this initial period included correspondence courses and those in which sponsoring organizations incorporated teacher training into their plans for children's classes. For example, when the nation's first public school kindergarten was opened in 1873, St. Louis School Superintendent William T. Harris proposed one supervising teacher with 10 students, each of whom would supervise 10 children at a long table and pay for the privilege. And Emily Coe "improved upon" Froebel by emphasizing colors before form, and by constructing Biblical structures in attempts to recruit students to her Model American Kindergarten.

Kindergarten leaders of the 1880s were William and Eudora Hailmann. He was a German-Swiss immigrant, educated in a Pestolozzian school and the Cantonal College in Zurich, who had been teacher and administrator of German-American schools since 1857. A trip to Zurich in 1860 introduced him to what he called the marvels of Froebel's message. He hired a German kindergartner for a newly built school in Louisville in 1864. Eudora Hailmann got her initial training in that classroom, then went to Europe in 1866 and again for a year in 1871. They, and their three children when they were older, worked together through the next 20 years to promote a system of self-realization and self-discipline as the Froebelian method. William Hailmann wrote "As if the true kindergarten methods were tied to the gifts and

occupations of Froebel! Kindergarten methods may apply to any subject and to any material of instruction. . . . Indeed, I have frequently seen more true kindergarten methods in schools wholly destitute of kindergarten material than in some thoroughly stocked with Bradley's best."[12] Translator of Froebel, author of a dozen books, co-editor with his wife of The New Education from 1876 until 1893, prolific writer and speaker, organizer of the Froebel Institute as the first organization of kindergartners in 1882 and instigator of its merger with the National Educational Association of 1885, William Hailmann was a tireless worker for his version of the kindergarten crusade until his death in 1920. As he moved from city to city, becoming administrator of increasingly larger school systems, Eudora Hailmann developed kindergarten associations, opened bi-lingual English-German training schools, became president of the Kindergarten Department of the National Educational Association, invented the wooden beads and paper weaving mats that are still used in American kindergartens, co-authored with daughter Elizabeth a popular school songbook, wrote pamphlets, lectured in colleges, designed exhibits in World's Fairs, and engaged in other activities to promote kindergartens and the training of their teachers. One of her students wrote in 1935 that "Some students of Froebel's doctrine were attracted by his mysticism and believed that kindergarten essentials were grounded in symbolism. . . . Those of us who were fortunate enough to come under the tutelage of Mrs. Hailmann (who soundly denounced all such worship of gifts and occupations) became saturated with her sane ideas. . . . The seeds of spontaneous child initiative sown by Mrs. Hailmann began to take root, kindergarten ideals were . . . more fitting for little children and although there were still some gross errors committed under the name of kindergarten principles, time has eliminated many of them.[13]

The distinction between Elizabeth Peabody's need to maintain God-given adult domination and the Hailmanns' faith that each child would develop remains difficult to explain, but it appears to be a major criterion for categorizing the kindergarten training schools. Matilda and Alma Kriege, with limited English and little public support, were unable to transmit the method. John Krause and Maria Krause-Bolte were psychologically and socially prepared to accept children's autonomy. They not only had the ability to read and understand the German literature in the field, but were able to pass it on to teachers in training. Adolph Douai appears to have been ill-prepared both through his personality and his background in Froebel's system. The Hailmanns were oriented toward such liberal causes as the women's suffrage and anti-slavery movements, had no limiting religious orientation, and were able to assimilate from their observations and readings a developmental perspective that they applied to persons of all ages or backgrounds. By the 1890s, these widely diverse versions of Froebel left the system disorganized and open to criticism.

Kindergarten in Normal Schools

The training of all teachers began to change in the mid-1880s. Elementary school had become compulsory and the nation's population of children was increasing each year. Some of the developmental approach of the Froebelians, and curriculum additions in nature study, art and music adapted from the kindergartens, were being incorporated into the primary grades. School administrators were also being introduc d to the philosophy of another German, John Frederick Herbart. As adapted by the faculty at Illinois State Normal Schools, this meant that teachers must plan classwork to follow the five formal steps of Preparation, Presentation, Association, Generalization, and

Application.[14] Within a few years, all normal schools followed the Herbartian system. This meant that the role of the teacher was in direct contrast to that taught by the Hailmanns and other Froebelians. Selleck neatly summarized the distinction, writing that "Herbart's five formal steps became the marching song for a vast array of American teachers who had been reluctant to step out to the tune of Froebel's games and songs. Perhaps it is easier for a system to gain acceptance when the teacher--like a drillmaster--can call the cadence for her class. The Froebelians, playing with children, lost that authority."[15] There was also a trend toward formal child study based upon measurable aspects of performance, which added impetus toward requiring more formal theoretical study and less supervised experience in working directly with children.

The transition of kindergarten teacher training into the normal schools was gradual. During the 1880-1890 decade, observation classes were opened in eight normal schools to familiarize primary teachers with the kindergarten methodology. By the next decade, an additional 25 included kindergarten training departments. By 1913, 147 institutions gave kindergarten training, about half of them public and half private. A detailed federal report published in 1915 gave detailed listing of 126 programs, with 24 identifiable as freestanding kindergarten training schools. All others were in normal schools or colleges. This report indicates that there was no uniformity of admissions requirements, curriculum, length of course of study, or certification. Although about half of them stated that a two-year program led to a credential, evidence from other sources indicates that this was often spread out over several summer vacations for employed teachers. The report, prepared by a committee of kindergarten leaders, recommended that a two-year program following high school graduation should be the minimum required. Not

more than one year would include supervised teaching, since this would take away from the theory coursework. Applicants should be of good health, and should possess general culture, fine character, a sympathetic attitude toward young children, and musical ability.[16] In general, these were the standards adopted by the 1920s, when kindergarten teachers were indistinguishable from those of the primary grades. For example, a survey of approxi- mately 10,000 teachers who had graduated between 1915 and 1921 from 22 training programs indicated that the only differences between kindergarten teachers and those at other levels was that a higher proportion of those in kindergarten had taken specific preparation for their level.[17] A slightly later study noted that "the similarity of traits ascribed to the different types of teachers is remarkable" after failing to distinguish those at the kindergarten level from teachers of higher grades.[18]

As would be expected, the incorporation of Froebelian philosophy and methodology was inconsistent as teacher preparation passed on into the normal schools. Eudora Hailmann was instrumental in setting up the first kindergarten department in a state normal school, the Wisconsin State Normal in Oshkosh in 1880, and a second in Winona, Minnesota, in 1881. These departments not only taught Froebelian ideas but it was expected that the students would themselves learn through creative self-activity and would follow Froebel's dictum of "Come, let us live with our children." In other cases, small kindergarten training schools transformed themselves into colleges with their Froebelian origins intact. An example of this would be Wheelock College in Boston, celebrating its centennial in 1988. In general, the normal schools appear to have provided kindergarten training that incorporated some reading of translations or adaptations of Froebel, some practice in the Gifts and Occupations, but an overall structure of Herbartian formal planning.

It must be pointed out that the increased need for kindergarten teachers in public schools contributed to a lowering of standards. A 1913 report by the federal Commissioner of Education said that "Within the decade from 1902 to 1912 the number of kindergartens in the United States increased from 3,244 to 7,557, and the number of children enrolled . . . increased from 205,432 to 353,546, a gain of 133 percent in the number of kindergartens and of 72 percent in the number of enrolled children reported. The total number of kindergarten teachers in 1912 was 8,856."[19] Most teachers left their jobs when they married, and the marriage rate for kindergartners was high, which further increased the demand for more graduates. Unlike the 1870s, when women entering the ranks tended to be well educated despite the lack of formal academics, the normal school students of the 1890s and beyond were more likely to be upwardly mobile daughters of working class families. Additionally, new alternatives were becoming available in office work and in professions that had formerly been masculine. Publications and conference proceedings indicate that the established kindergartners felt concern, but they were in disagreement themselves as to what to teach and how to teach it. Both Peabody and Douai had expressed common opinion of the 1870s when they asserted that the female nature was all that would be required of a kindergartner. The normal schools expected more, and by 1920 the teacher of kindergarten classes was just one of the staff of urban public schools. Her unique Froebelian role no longer existed.

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