Editorial

Donald Brand
EDITORIAL

With all the self-questioning and reappraisal that is now rife among the educators of America, it seems indicated that academic anthropologists might well examine the nature and efficacy of their departmental organization, curriculum, and procedure. Disregarding the question of the validity and circumference of the field of knowledge termed “Anthropology,” the following questions present themselves for consideration:

1. For what professional or occupational positions are anthropologists being trained?

2. What constitutes the minimum of “general” anthropological training requisite for the would-be ethnologist, archaeologist, physical anthropologist, human geographer, philologist, et al?

3. What should be required in terms of theses, comprehensive examinations, foreign languages, reading, and fieldwork from candidates for the A.B., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees?

4. Which are the undergraduate and which are the graduate departments of anthropology in the United States best qualified (in faculty, library, museum, field work, laboratories, etc.) in various specific subject and regional fields, such as American Indian, ethnology, linguistics, Mexican archaeology, acculturation, etc.?

5. What are the supplementary courses and minors in other departments that should be most helpful to anthropologists?

After raising the above questions, space remains to consider here only one point under the first item. Apparently most anthropologists with higher degrees continue in the academic field. We are teaching anthropologists in order that they may be able to teach. But does teaching subject material insure that the teachers of the future know how to teach as well as what to teach? I sincerely doubt it. Since Colleges of Education lack both instructors and courses in “Teaching Methods in Anthropology,” does it not behoove some of our departments of anthropology to initiate such instruction? There is scarcely a more pitiable spectacle than that of a young instructor meeting his first classes. This young instructor seldom knows how much to give in a lecture period, voice control, vocabulary adjusted to class-age, valid methods of examining and grading, etc. There also arises the moot point—should an instructor use class notes? The writer believes that no instructor should use class notes of any description, since the instructor (at examination time) expects his students to remember what he himself could not recall without written aid.

D. D. B.