

The Effect of World War II on Geography in the Secondary Schools of Indiana

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It is a recognized fact that geography has been seriously neglected in our schools. This fact has resulted in a serious lack of geographical knowledge which was quite evident prior to World War II and was brought out quite vividly during the war.

The results of a study to determine the effects of the war on geography in the schools of Indiana, made in preparing a master's thesis, are herein presented.¹

Data for the study were obtained from the Annual School Report Forms 35-B on file in the state superintendent's office. Data were first gathered for the year 1945-46 then for the year 1940-41.

Of the ninety-two counties in the state seventy-six offered geography in 1945-46, compared to fifty-eight in 1940-41.

In 1945-46 two hundred forty-seven schools offered geography while only one hundred eleven schools offered it in 1940-41.

The number of courses offered increased from one hundred nineteen in 1940-41 to 281 in 1945-46.

The size of schools offering geography ranged from fifty-five to 5,070 pupils.

The mean number of schools per county offering geography increased from 1.91 in 1940-41 to 3.28 in 1945-46.

Geography in the Schools

It was found that a total of seventeen different courses were being offered in the schools in 1945-46, while only seven courses were offered in 1940-41. Of the ten courses added during the war, three were new versions of geography. These were: war geography, global geography, and air-age geography.

Commercial geography is losing some of its popularity, and physical geography is continuing its decline in the schools. Global geography is the most popular of the new courses.

There appears to be a definite tendency to depart from the traditional courses and to delve into the more unfamiliar and more exciting aspects of man's relationship to the world and its environment.

The frequency of schools offering more than one course increased as shown in Table I. In 1940-41 one hundred three schools, or 92.79 per cent, offered one course and eight schools, or 07.21 per cent, offered

¹ Edward J. Eames. *A Study of the Effects of World War II on the Position of Geography in the Curriculum of the Junior and Senior High Schools of Indiana*. Indiana State Teachers College (1946), No. 544.

two courses. In 1945-46 two hundred eighteen schools, or 88.26 per cent, offered one course; twenty-eight schools, or 11.34 per cent, offered two courses; and one school, or 00.41 per cent, offered seven courses.

TABLE I. Number of Geography courses offered per school.

Number of courses	1940-41		1945-46	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
1	103	92.79	218	88.26
2	8	07.21	28	11.34
7	—	—	1	00.41
Total	111	100.00	247	100.00

TABLE II. High school curriculums requiring Geography 1945-46.

Curriculum	Frequency
All	7
Commercial*	17
General*†	6
Industrial arts†	1
Total	31

* One each in same school.

† One each in same school.

There was an increase in the number of schools offering geography in both the senior high school and in the junior high school.

The various curriculums requiring geography are shown in Table II. The commercial curriculum heads the list. In one school geography was required on the industrial arts curriculum.

Geography offered under the title "High School Geography" is most frequently offered. World geography increased considerably in popularity.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the geography being taught in the schools is taught by social-studies teachers, most of whom probably have little or no training or background in the field. Therefore, it has been taught from the social-studies aspect, and the true geographical view-point has been neglected.

The war has done much to aid the cause of geography. Now the responsibility for continuing this good work is with the colleges, the universities, and with educators in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Greater stress must be placed on the inclusion of geography in the curriculum of the schools of Indiana.

Certain specifications should be set up regarding the professional training standards for teachers teaching geography.