PROFILES OF FAMOUS EDUCATORS

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
The legend

The popular perception of Florence Nightingale as a romantic heroine ignores her achievements as an educationist. The Nightingale legend nevertheless had an educational impact. It popularized nurse training, which led to the establishment of a new profession for women. While the legend has remained an important part of nursing culture worldwide, it has served to hinder a deeper understanding of Florence Nightingale.

Florence Nightingale rose to fame for nursing the sick and wounded during the Crimean War (1854–56). After the war, she might have taken a high-profile post as a hospital matron and superintendent of nurse training. Instead, she retired from public life to use her influence to campaign and promote educational schemes. Her impact was probably greater for choosing to influence policy rather than exercising power. Florence Nightingale wrote 200 books, reports and pamphlets after the Crimean War, which had a profound effect on army health, welfare in India, civil hospitals, medical statistics and nursing. Her greatest educational contributions were in the establishment of new institutions for the training of army doctors and hospital nurses, but some of her lesser-known educational schemes are illuminating.

Florence Nightingale has been studied as a reformer, statistician, administrator

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