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DO HIGH school graduates of relatively recent "vintage" who are working tend to credit their high school courses for the knowledge and training required for their current jobs? Of the employed Kansas City respondents to Missouri's statewide survey of 1965 graduates, only 37 percent of the men and 66 percent of the women said that courses taken in high school had prepared them for their present positions.

Sixty percent of the men and 52 percent of the women were not employed in their high school fields of choice. Among the reasons they gave were: (a) preferring other work, (b) learning new jobs by continuing in school, and (c) needing additional job skills.

Who helped them most in getting their first full-time position? About half the graduates indicated that the job was obtained through their own efforts. Parents, friends, and advertisements in newspapers were also identified as sources of assistance. The survey was conducted for the purpose of aiding local school personnel in

improving vocational education programs.

Improving Reading Instruction

An innovation to help teachers individualize instruction has been put into practice in Pomona, California, elementary schools. Classes are divided into levels based on reading ability. One group arrives at school one-half hour or more ahead of the others for reading instruction and another group remains for a reading period at the end of the school day. Methods being tried in Pomona to improve the teaching of reading include cross-age tutoring (older children tutor younger ones), junior first grades for children not ready to make the transition to first grade from kindergarten, and a visual multimedia approach. The tutoring program has benefited both the older and the younger pupils.

Bilingual Education

In Pomona this year selected Fremont Junior High School pupils of Mexican descent are participating in a spe-

cial program designed to strengthen leadership abilities and communication skills of Spanish-speaking students. This project is one of 76 selected to initiate a new national program of bilingual education this fall.

Participating students are being taught the regular school curriculum in their native language. The objective is to enable children with poor English language ability to learn in school via their mother tongue while becoming bilingual by learning English. The U.S. Office of Education announces that almost 25,000 children are now involved. The Bilingual Education Program is authorized by Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Equalizing Educational Opportunities

In September 1966, almost 1,100 pupils in five Sacramento elementary schools that were de facto segregated were permanently assigned to 19 receiving schools. According to the Sacramento City Unified

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School District, minority children involved in the desegregation project have increased their academic performance, as measured by tests, while the tests of Caucasian students show that they perform at their same level or better.

Better Home-School Communication

Escondido High School District's Counselor Aide Project under Title III was considered so successful by students and parents that it has been funded by the district for the 1969-70 school year. Last year, in an effort to improve the flow of communication about school programs and policy in this California district, more than 300 homes were visited, through referrals made by teachers, counselors, and community agencies.

Teaching Fellows

Thirteen Atlanta elementary school teachers are on leaves of absence this year for a program of graduate study at Emory University. The emphasis of the cooperative program involving Emory University, the Atlanta Public Schools, and Atlanta University is upon mathematics for inner-city elementary schools.

Four-Quarter School Year

The new four-quarter plan in Atlanta has made it possible for all elementary and high school students to attend school on a year-round basis. A high school student who attends four quarters can select which three of the four quarters he wishes to attend during the next academic year, as long as he attends three quarters between

the months of September and August. Atlanta is the only large school system in the country that is financing a year-round program for students.

An improved high school curriculum is being developed that will make the most of year-round educational opportunities. John S. Martin, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, describes the goals.

We want to provide more alternatives for students in their high school program. We are attempting to expand the educational opportunities offered, teach the courses in a manner which is relevant to students, and provide additional assistance to them in making correct choices in terms of their goals and interests. We also want to provide flexibility in the program that will make it unnecessary for education to compete with jobs and other constructive activities in which students may desire to be involved.

School Desegregation

According to the University of Georgia's School Desegregation Educational Center, about one-third of Georgia's 195 school districts either have eliminated racial segregation in their schools or have submitted plans to do so. A spokesman for the Southeastern Regional Office for Civil Rights in Atlanta said that 20 districts have "441 status" (denoting full compliance) and that four others are "on the verge." Also, 42 districts have had their desegregation plans approved.

The Federal spokesman indicated that an important factor enabling superintendents to contend successfully with community opposition has been the cost of building new schools when usable space is already on hand. He said that

the chief means for accomplishing desegregation were zoning in districts where Negroes and whites both reside and pairing of schools in districts where there is residential segregation.

More Integrated School Faculties in Louisville

In 1959 there were 13 Negro teachers assigned to white faculties in the Louisville school system. Seven hundred and seventy-six Negro teachers and staff members worked in integrated situations in the 1968-69 school year.

School Study Committees

Believing that no one segment of the community should draw up plans for a new school or for renovating an old one, the Wilmington Public Schools in Delaware have established School Study Committees in neighborhoods where schools are to be built or renovated. Students, citizens, and professionals serving on these committees explore potential curriculum developments as well as physical changes in the planning of schools.

Middle School Encourages Innovation

January 1972 is the goal for occupancy of Wilmington's Burnett Middle School, now under construction. Students will be sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Plans call for a school-within-a-school on levels 4, 5, 7, and 8 of the high-rise building. Major subject matter fields—science and its equipment, mathematics, social studies, and communication arts—will be located in

the four corners of each "school."

Groups of six students will lunch at round tables and will be served family-style in carpeted dining areas on the various levels. They will assist with the planning and serving.

New Team Teaching Program

Locust School of Wilmette, Illinois, has a new team teaching program for junior high school students. Four teachers are on the seventh-grade team. The program for seventh graders provides for two double periods, one for language arts and social studies and the other for mathematics and science. These subjects are given in the morning. In the afternoon, students have a period of individual study when they can consult teachers

for help, enrichment, or guidance. Music, art, physical education, and foreign language complete the schedule for the afternoon.

Independent Study

A new policy of the Niles Township High Schools in Skokie, Illinois, provides students with the opportunity to do independent study for credit. Students can apply two credits earned for independent study projects toward graduation. No more than one credit, however, can be earned in a single semester.

Cultural Resources Center

A number of the professional staff and school board members of the Niles Township High Schools have made

themselves available to interested community groups as speakers on a wide range of educational and cultural topics. Known as the Cultural Resources Center, this program not only involves the faculties in community activities but is a factor in obtaining community support for quality education.

Protection of Students' Freedom of Expression

Students attending Niles Township High Schools may express opinions and support causes. To this end, there is at least one bulletin board designated for student use in each school. Students are also free to distribute leaflets and handbills and to circulate petitions concerning in-school or out-of-school issues.

THE CLASSROOM DISASTER

Leslie A. Hart

An incisive and challenging investigation into the condition of American public education. Written from a lay point of view, the book steps back to examine our system of education and question some of our basic assumptions and habits of thought. The author analyzes the self-created difficulties the ob-

solete system struggles with in the Space Age but he goes beyond mere criticism to offer a solution—one synthesized from both new and long-standing practices.

Recommended to all those who are concerned with and interested in the critical issues germane to the present-day structure of education and its need for effective change.

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Television on 48-Hour Notice

In the first year of programming, the four-channel instructional television system in New Trier Township, Illinois, offered pupils and teachers in the township's six elementary school districts and the high school the opportunity of viewing more than 300 locally produced programs plus many others from videotape libraries. The concept of "planned insertion" is followed in programming, permitting the use of television where and when it is needed. Programs are repeated as requested. All that is required is advance notice of 48 hours.

Learning Aptitude Test for Blind Children

After 16 years of research and testing, a University of Illinois professor has developed a

test which he believes may reveal the learning potential and abilities of blind children more accurately than verbal intelligence tests.

The Blind Learning Aptitude Test (BLAT), designed by T. Ernest Newland, a professor of educational psychology at Urbana-Champaign, is still a preliminary device. It consists of 49 nonverbal test items and 12 training items which are embossed on paper in the same way that brailled reading material is produced.

Newland has long held the conviction that "the learning aptitudes of blind children should be sampled in a manner different from that generally in use with respect to sighted, non-disabled children." The fact that blind children do not, as a rule, come into contact with as many aspects of the environment as do sighted chil-

dren was a key consideration in his research.

Among the objectives sought by Newland in developing BLAT were that it should be administered through the sense of touch, draw from conventional experiential background as little as possible, avoid requiring sensory discrimination as fine as that called for in reading braille, and avoid evoking responses that depend upon verbal proficiency.

About 1,000 educationally blind children ages 5 to 19 have been tested. Although it is not yet possible to make a final conclusion on its effectiveness, Newland believes that "BLAT can be found by subsequent research to be a more valuable instrument to use on young blind children entering educational programs than either the Hayes-Binet or the WISC Verbal." □

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