

LAUREL N. TANNER*
DANIEL TANNER

Schools Do Make a Difference

SINCE the time when the Coleman report was released (1966), many school critics have interpreted Coleman's data as showing that the home background of youngsters has a more powerful influence on their achievement than anything the schools can do. A 1972 report to the President's Commission on School Finance, prepared by the Rand Corporation, recommended that federal educational policy be redirected in light of the fact that educational expenditures could be reduced without any deterioration in the products of our schools.

That same year, the Jencks report announced that "the character of a school's output depends largely on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children." And, according to Jencks, "everything else is either secondary or completely irrelevant." Referring to the Jencks study, Seymour M. Lipset of Harvard's government department declared that "schools make no difference; families make the difference."

However, at a conference

at Harvard earlier this winter, the findings of a massive study by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) were released—showing that while home background has an important influence on achievement in reading and literature, variations in school conditions and resources have a more significant effect than the home on achievement in other subjects. One of the researchers involved in the IEA study, Alan C. Purves of the University of Illinois, noted that "What we call home background may be the cumulative effect of home and school that is very difficult to disentangle. . . . You simply cannot say it is either home or school."

The IEA study involved 250,000 students and 50,000 teachers in 22 nations. Children were tested in six subject fields and their scores were analyzed according to variables in the home and in the school. Although the study revealed that variations in home and school conditions exerted approximately an equal influence on achievement, over 60 percent of the variance in achieve-

ment remained unexplained as a result of the limitations of statistics in treating such complex phenomena. Nevertheless, the study tends to refute the notion advanced by a number of school critics, such as Daniel P. Moynihan, that we should not adopt a social policy of investing more in schooling since such investments do not improve educational achievement. James S. Coleman told the conferees that "the new results (of the IEA study) suggest to me somewhat more hopefulness about schooling than we had in the past."

The findings of the IEA study have been published in three volumes by John Wiley & Sons.

Guardians for Traditional Education

A parent group calling itself "Guardians for Traditional Education" has demanded the removal of "inappropriate books" from the Prince George's County, Maryland, schools. The Guardians have objected to the "shocking language" in such books as *Catcher in the Rye* and *A Boy Today—A Man To-*

* Laurel N. Tanner, Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Daniel Tanner, Professor of Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

morrow. Earlier parental objections led to the banning of *Go Ask Alice*.

Freedom To Learn

Censorship of reading materials in schools is so common that it rarely makes national news. However, when 32 copies of the novel *Slaughterhouse Five* were burned last November by unanimous order of the Drake, North Dakota, Board of Education, the incident was widely reported in the press and TV media. The book burning followed a special meeting of the school board at which several local ministers described the novel as a "tool of the devil." Student lockers were searched to ensure that no students had defied the board's order to relinquish all copies of the book which was being used in a sophomore English class. The board called the novel "profane." They also raised objections to the use of an anthology of stories by Faulkner, Hemingway, and Steinbeck, along with James Dickey's novel, *Deliverance*, in the sophomore class.

Bruce Severy, a second-year teacher who used these books in one of his classes, pointed out that the board members had not read any of the books in their entirety. More than two-thirds of the students in the sophomore class signed a petition opposing the board's action. "I think kids should be taught how to think, not what to think," stated Mr. Severy. "I felt the books dealt with current problems," he commented, "problems we all have to face in our age, in a straightforward way. These kids are going to go out and live in that world."

To Grade or Not To Grade?

In recent years, an increasing number of colleges have adopted "pass/fail" or a "credit/no credit" system in place of the traditional "A, B, C, D, or F" system of grading. A national survey by Edward L. Stevens, Dean of Academic Affairs at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, published in the fall issue of the *Educational Record*, reveals that students who do not receive traditional grades are at a disadvantage when they apply to graduate or professional schools. Although the survey revealed that students from the most prestigious colleges are least likely to be penalized for not having been evaluated through a traditional grading system, those from other colleges are encountering problems. According to one admissions director, "When institutions of lesser pith and moment (and most of them are) decide that what is good for Harvard is good for them, they are living in a dream world."

The elimination of the traditional grading system also has resulted in shifting the emphasis from grades to scores on standardized examinations as a key criterion for admission to graduate and professional schools, although grades are a far more valid predictor of success in advanced studies.

A survey of high school grading practices, conducted by Educational Testing Service, reveals that letter grades are still used by 68 percent of the schools, while 16 percent use only percentages, and 2 percent employ numerical grades, such as a score of four to zero. An author of the report offers this observation:

While a movement to pass/fail grading took place in the 1930's, it didn't last. In the mid-1960's, a second movement toward less strict grading began. Apparently, though, this concept hasn't taken hold yet, at least not in a widespread way. On the other hand, since most innovations begin in the colleges and gradually shift down the educational levels, it is possible that we might be seeing the beginning of a nongrading trend in secondary schools.

The report, *Grading Practices in American High Schools*, is based upon a survey of 1,000 schools. For further information, write to: John Smith, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

NSF Education Programs

Now available are details concerning the National Science Foundation's educational programs. A booklet entitled *Announcement of Education Programs* (E-74-1) and a schedule of program deadlines (E-74-2) may be requested from the Forms and Publications Unit, ASO, National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C. 20550.

Student Activists

When the Thornhaven School (for the trainable retarded) in York County, Canada, began the new school year last fall, it had a gift of \$4,500 from the students of the district's Markham High School. Impetus for the gift, which was used to purchase educational equipment, was attributed to the involvement on the part of Markham High School students in working with the retarded Thornhaven youngsters during the past two years, according to Miss Jinnie Jory, a Markham teacher.

The students' involvement was related to a new course, "Man in Society," which involves students in community service. Markham students also worked at the Hope Haven nursery school where their efforts made it possible for the school to be open five days per week instead of four. The Markham students also donated \$1,000 to the Hope Haven School, and designated an additional \$2,000 for the transportation of Markham students to Thornhaven and Hope Haven during the current school year. The funds were raised through a Markham student "bikathon."

School Blamers

A Rutgers University doctoral dissertation by William H. Engler, who is on the faculty of Mercer County College, New Jersey, examines the literature and influence of such radical "school blamers" as John Holt, Jonathan Kozol, James Herndon, Herbert Kohl, Paul Goodman, Edgar Friedenberg, George Dennison, and Ivan Illich. In a concluding statement, Engler writes:

As for the radical reformers, they have asked the public to accommodate itself to sweeping utopian measures for a world which does not yet exist. Fortunately, the public desires better, not less, education. The relative lack of response of the system to their ideological umbrella has already left the radical school reformers talking to themselves, which they do with diminished authority as the seventies move on.

School Phobia

"Nobody likes me at school," he whined. "The teachers don't and the kids

don't. The superintendent wants to transfer me, the bus drivers hate me, and the custodians have it in for me. I don't want to go."

"You have to go," she insisted. "You're healthy. You have a lot to learn. You've got something to offer others. You are a leader. Besides . . . you are 49 years old. You're the principal, and you have to go to school." (Reprinted from *The Superintendent's Bulletin*, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland.)

Core Curriculum

Three motion pictures (kinescopes) and a set of four sound filmstrips on "Teaching a Block-of-Time Class" may be borrowed from the National Association for Core Curriculum (NACC). The only charge is for postage both ways. The materials were prepared by Rossalind Zapf Pickard for the Detroit Public Schools and center on an eighth grade class of inner city youngsters. The films deal with such topics as (a) beginning a core class, (b) selecting a unit for study, (c) planning the unit, (d) small group work, (e) presenting results, and (f) evaluation.

A kit consisting of a tape recording and 24 color slides portraying the Combined Studies Program at Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois, is available on loan from NACC without charge except for postage. The Evanston program is one of the oldest core-type programs in continuous existence, having begun in 1938 in connection with the Eight-Year Study. Today, the Combined Studies Program at Evanston has a staff of 20 teachers and an enrollment of

over 1,300 students in grades 9 through 12.

Write to: National Association for Core Curriculum, Education Building, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242.

Guide to Curriculum Projects

EDC: A Guide to Project Activities and Materials may be obtained from Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02160. The Center, which originated in 1956 with the formation of the Physical Science Study Committee, is a private nonprofit corporation engaged in curriculum research and development.

What People Think of TV

A recently published report by The Roper Organization reveals some noted changes in attitude toward television. Whereas in 1971 only 18 percent of the adults surveyed felt that there should be no commercials on children's TV programs, the most recent survey reveals that 32 percent are opposed to such commercials.

When presented with a list of possible causes of the drug problem in our society, almost one out of five adults surveyed reported that the problem resulted from "TV commercials showing people taking pills and remedies for various kinds of common ailments." Half the respondents attributed the problem to "not enough parental discipline," whereas 38 percent attributed the problem to "the courts being too lenient," while 33 percent indicated that "drug laws are too lenient."

Adults in the survey re-

ported that they spend an average of two hours and fifty minutes watching TV each day. This compares with two hours and seventeen minutes reported in a similar survey ten years ago. College-educated adults reported an average daily viewing time of two hours and twelve minutes in the latest survey.

World Education

According to a report by UNESCO's International Commission on the Development of Education, there are now more children out of school than there were twenty years ago and the number of illiterate adults has increased in the nations of the world. While the report notes that unprecedented efforts have been made since the end of World War II to extend educational opportunity for children and youth and to combat adult illiteracy, much more needs to be done. The report advocates a massive program of lifelong education or "education permanente" for the peoples of the world.

The report, *Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*, may be purchased for \$6.00 from The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Canada M5S 1V6. A free list of Institute publications may be obtained by writing to the above address. A new international journal on education, *Orbit*, also is published by the Institute at an annual subscription of \$3.00 (5 issues).

Decline of Liberal Arts

Reviewing the problems and trends in post-secondary education, Lyman A. Glenny, Director of the Center for Re-

search and Development in Higher Education (University of California, Berkeley), concludes that young people, "rather than being stitched and laced with liberal arts, are turning to institutions whose programs are more responsive to their needs." He notes that "state colleges are beginning to offer more two-year and career programs, junior colleges are revising curriculums to delete some of the liberal arts courses and to offer more short, updated, and retraining courses in technical and business fields, (and) universities are extending themselves out into communities to meet the needs of adults for continuing education and refresher courses in professional fields."

Glenny's remarks appeared in a recent issue of *The Research Reporter*, a publication of the Center.

Tuition Burden

In recent months, reports by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, the College Entrance Examination Board, and the Committee for Economic Development have recommended that public colleges and universities raise their tuition charges to approximately double their present levels. These groups have advocated tuition increases on the grounds that the middle class should carry a higher proportion of the actual costs of higher education and that the additional receipts from higher tuitions at public institutions should be turned toward grants-in-aid for needy students. Such grants, to be used by students at private as well as public institutions, would serve indirectly to aid the financially hard-pressed private colleges.

However, these proposals have met sharp opposition. Ralph K. Huitt, Executive Director of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, attacked the Carnegie Commission for its ignorance of the financial burdens of middle-class families who have youngsters in college. At a meeting of the Association last November, Richard J. Kibbee, Chancellor of the City University of New York, criticized the proposals for tuition increases and called for tuition-free undergraduate education at all public colleges and universities. Dr. Kibbee termed college tuition a "thinly disguised user-tax." He pointed out that our federal, state, and local tax systems are supposedly based upon the "ability to pay" and that to raise tuitions at public institutions would be imposing an increased user-tax on populations that are less affluent.

In a letter to state labor federations, George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, called the proposals for increased tuition "extremely dangerous" and urged the federations to "bend every effort to keep the cost of higher education within the means of workers' families."

Worker Education

At a recent conference on Industry-Worker Concerns in Recurrent Education, held at Georgetown University, Herbert A. Levine, Director of the Labor Education Center at Rutgers University, noted that some American trade unions have negotiated successfully to have management provide tuition refunds for educational upgrading on the part of workers. However, Levine noted

that although some collective bargaining agreements for tuition benefits are highly attractive, only a small proportion of workers are taking advantage of the educational subsidies available.

For example, an agreement between General Electric and the electrical workers union provides up to \$400 per worker per year in tuition benefits for a potential annual total of some \$57 million. Yet the actual allocation made during the first six months of the newly negotiated plan totaled less than \$155,000. A similar agreement between the UAW and the automobile industry provides tuition refunds which could amount to over \$200 million per year. However, only about \$1 million of this fund has been utilized in the latest year reported.

"Why are not these funds linked into some integrated adult education effort in cooperation with the enormous sums spent by the federal government and by the foundations?" asked Levine. "Who is to blame for this sorry state of affairs—the union, the company, the school system, or the worker?"

Federal Aid Misunderstood

A recent survey indicates that the public has a "gross misunderstanding of the federal role in support of public education," according to Helen Wise, president of the National Education Association. Conducted for NEA by Opinion Research Corporation, the study found that most people believe the federal government pays 30 percent of the cost of education. In fact, however, the federal share has never gone above 8.8 percent

in 1967-68. Asked what the federal government's fair share should be, the public called for a 50 percent contribution.

Dropout Posters Pay Off

The Richmond, Virginia, Public Schools dropout program received 68 calls the first six weeks from youth who wanted to try school again. Most of these calls were from 14- to 21-year-olds. They had obtained the phone number from a sign on Virginia Transit buses:

Are You a Dropout?
Give us both another
chance . . .
Call us and let's get
it together!

Richmond
Public Schools

The telephone call is the first step, followed by an interview in which students select the program for which they are best suited. Some of the students return to regular classrooms. Those who are 17 to 21 years old usually prefer to enter the Richmond Career Education Center. In this case they are referred to a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Dropouts give varied reasons for their having left school. Some were suspended from school and never returned. Others were disenchanted with the school they attended. And many had no interest in the curricular offerings. But whatever the reason, they are interested enough to explore the possibility of returning to school.

Speech Correction Technique

It's "camera . . . action" in a number of Seattle class-

rooms as video-taping equipment helps handicapped students identify speech defects and practice correcting them.

"Listening to and watching a speech problem has much greater impact than when a student just listens to a tape or watches himself in a mirror," says Kathleen Pendergast, supervisor of speech and hearing services.

Reactions to watching themselves on the screen may vary from laughter to surprise. One child complained, "I sound like a baby." Children easily identify mannerisms in themselves that are different from other speakers and this adds motivation for change. Later, improvement can be pointed out by comparing current speech with some of the earlier tapes.

Desegregation

A 78-page monograph, *Public School Desegregation: Legal Issues and Judicial Decisions*, issued by the National Organization of Legal Problems of Education in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, traces the flood of litigation from the time of the 1954 Supreme Court decision to 1973.

The monograph analyzes the legal problems and issues of school desegregation along with court decisions, on such implementation procedures as neighborhood schools, zoning, freedom of choice, pairing of schools, pupil assignment within a school, school construction, and faculty desegregation.

The author of the report is H. C. Hudgins, Jr., Professor of Education at Temple University. Some of the conclusions reached by Hudgins are:

The next decade of school desegregation will be concentrated more in northern areas and less in the South. The focal point will be on the large cities where *de facto* segregation has been practiced for decades. . . .

Courts hearing desegregation cases will not place the burden of proof on complaining students to show that they have been discriminated against. The burden will, instead, be shifted to the board of education to demonstrate that it did not act discriminatorily.

The report is available at \$3.50 from NOLPE, 825 Western Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66606.

Absence Does Not Make the Heart Grow Fonder

A campaign to improve school attendance is under way in the Metropolitan Nashville (Tennessee) Public Schools. (Last year attendance was down .6 percent.) Supported by parent organizations, civic clubs, the media, and the courts, the thrust of the campaign is the great cost of poor school attendance both to the student and the school system.

Bicycles, tape recorders, coke parties, and gift certificates are being offered as in-

centives by various PTA's in the areas. The school district is also attempting to find out *why* pupils do not come to school.

Says Bill Hollingsworth, head of the attendance division, "Each day a child is absent it costs us about \$2.00 per child in state money. If we could raise ADA one percent, it would mean \$250,000. Figuring an average teacher salary at \$10,000, this means we could pay 25 more teachers."

Identifying the Gifted

Three years ago at Drew Junior High School in Los Angeles, only two pupils had been identified as gifted. The staff found this inconceivable and with the help of school district personnel developed means of identification. The search for able pupils revealed that some who are identified as discipline problems have unusual leadership potential. Many show intellectual independence characterized by divergent behavior patterns. Some of these gifted pupils need remediation in basic skills but the ability is there. Today there are 40 pupils at Drew identified as gifted.

The youngsters in the program carry out research proj-

ects that demonstrate creativity and intellectual involvement. Teachers are advised not to penalize the child for being gifted by assigning him long and often meaningless homework. (The difference in the program is qualitative rather than quantitative.)

High Schoolers Operate Preschool

The Family Living and Child Development class at Basic High School in Las Vegas, Nevada, operates a nursery school for children ages three to five. Students spend ten weeks studying the growth and guidance of children in preparation for the nursery school. Each class has an opportunity to observe, plan, prepare, and conduct the nursery school. Basic is fortunate to have an observation room with a one-way mirror.

Both the young child and the student gain greatly from this experience. The student can observe the shy child become more sociable and secure, the problem child discover accepted means for gaining attention. Moreover, students discover and refine their skills in organizing, managing, and communicating. □

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