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High School Performance Unrelated to Job Success

An Institute for Social Research study shows that an individual's performance in high school is not as much of a help in landing a high status, well paying job as are general academic ability, family socioeconomic status, or the prevailing local job climate. A report on the long-term Youth in Transition Project noted that the implications of the findings were somewhat discouraging since the measured factors which govern success in the job market are outside an individual's control.

The report examined the work attitudes and early occupational experiences of a nationwide sample of young men who were interviewed annually, from the start of 9th grade until one year after most of them had graduated from high school. About a third of the sample (1,566) had entered the labor force at the end of high school, while most of the others had gone to college or vocational schools or had joined a military service.

For those who entered the work force after high school, academic ability and family background were related to job attainment. The highest levels of unemployment were found among those who had the lowest verbal intelligence scores

and among those who belonged to families with low socioeconomic status. In addition, city size and, consequently, the types of available jobs were important in getting a high status job. Young men living in large metropolitan areas were employed in the highest status jobs, while those from rural communities were in the lowest status jobs.

Data are being analyzed which were collected from these same youths five years after the end of high school. Most of them, including those who took post-high school education, have entered the labor force. Preliminary analyses indicated that the amount of education attained beyond high school does play a part in determining job status and at least some of this effect is independent of the impact of family socioeconomic status and individual academic ability.

St. John Valley French/ English Bilingual Project

In the northernmost part of Maine lies a bilingual region which has existed for centuries. In a special project, bilingual children of the St. John River Valley now learn to read and write in French and to be proud of their bilingual heritage. Teachers use both French and English in their instruc-

tion in the Frenchville, St. Agatha, Madawaska, and Van Buren school systems.

The St. John Valley Bilingual Project was a five-year program funded by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title VII, aimed at promoting bilingualism and the utilization of the children's native ability to speak both French and English. In the fifth year, there were 40 classes involving nearly 1,000 children in kindergarten to 5th grade inclusively.

The project had as its primary goal the improvement of both French and English language attitudes in order to help the children of the largest minority group in Maine find and attain their rightful place in American society.

In the project, both French and English were used for instruction for the same pupil population in a well-planned and organized instructional program affecting these areas of the curriculum: English language arts, mathematics, French language arts, drama, music, art, and social science which emphasized the cultural and historical characteristics of the region.

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An important feature of the project was staff development. The aim was to give teachers the help which they needed to conduct a bilingual program in their classrooms. This included preservice as well as in-service programs, on teaching English as a second language, French as a second language, or the teaching of French or English as a first language. Also, instruction was conducted on the Canadian-Acadian cultures. At the conclusion of the five-year project, there had been a total of 40 teachers prepared in bilingual education, a K-5 curriculum had been developed, and materials had been developed in the areas of social science and French language arts.

Student Achievement Test Scores Drop

Results from the 1975 Scholastic Aptitude Tests, given to more than one million high school seniors, revealed an increased decline in the 12-year downward trend of scores. Observers do not question the fact that many achievement test scores are declining, but a debate is raging over what the decline means. One group claims that the drop is the result of increasingly inferior public education while another group questions the appropriateness of the tests. Regardless of the explanation, the declining achievement test scores are the subject of intense public concern.

Recently, the Kettering Foundation co-sponsored a conference, "The Decline in Achievement," to explore this controversy. Following the day-long, round-table presentations and discussions, the participants identified the following as some of the causes for declining scores:

1. Changing views of parents and youth on what is worth learning
2. An increasing variety of activities that compete with

the school for the attention of children and youth

3. A proliferation of new learning programs and a growing problem of matching tests with new program objectives

4. Social permissiveness

5. High absenteeism in some schools

6. Increased demands on schools for administrative services and reduced time for academic services.

/I/D/E/A/ published the full conference report as an occasional paper which was available in December 1975 from the Kettering Foundation.

Teach the Truth About the American Revolution?

"Dare we teach our children the truth about the American Revolution? Dare we teach them that the founders of our country were radicals, activists, dissenters, demonstrators for a cause which was at first an unpopular one?" This challenge is posed by Shirley H. Engle in the *Hoosier Schoolmaster of the Seventies*. "Much that is being done today, inside schools and out, to celebrate the bicentennial is trivial, evading and distorting the real issues which the Revolution raised, oversimplifying the events of that day, avoiding any serious consideration of the meaning of the Revolution for our lives in America today."

Intelligent citizens are divided in good conscience over the right to dissent. It was not an easy question in Revolutionary days and it is not an easy question today. This, of course, is the best reason for us to discuss it candidly with our students. It is possible that recent presidents of the United States, beset and bedeviled by peace demonstrators, freedom marchers, and war resisters, would not have liked Samuel Adams or Thomas Paine or the affable Ben Franklin or Patrick Henry. "But what a

loss to freedom in America would have been our lot if these firebrands of the Revolution had been silenced then! If the American Revolution is alive and well, we will not hesitate to tell the truth about [our founders] nor will we avoid candid discussion of the modern problem of dissent in the light of our past."

Students' Thoughts on Learning Environment

A study by William Toomey and Daniel Rowan, reported in *Focus* (published by the New Jersey Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), sought to reveal the perceptions of the school learning climate held by 443 11th grade students and 322 12th graders in a northeastern suburban high school. General conclusions include the following:

1. Students who fail in their subjects need more frequent counseling and more help from teachers.
2. Learning activities need to be made more meaningful.
3. Students need to feel that the professional staff is more encouraging to them.
4. Students need to be made fully aware of the school rules and regulations.
5. More students need to be convinced that grades are equitable and fair.
6. There is need for greater variety in course offerings and co-curricular opportunities.
7. Students who are delinquent prone need to be involved in the formulation of school rules and regulations.
8. There is a need to involve students on a much broader base in planning learning activities.
9. Nearly half of the student respondents in the study cut class at some time; many cut for reasons of lack of meaningfulness of their subjects.
10. Students need to be

convinced that their counselors are more helpful in solving problems; counselors need to find ways to be more efficient and effective.

Information about the complete study is available through Daniel Rowan, Principal, Cherry Hill High School West, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Rights of the Junior High Department Head

"The department head (in the junior high school) has the right to expect certain things in return for his/her commitment to the tasks assigned." This statement is part of a recent report published by the Colorado State North Central Association Committee entitled *Model Position Description for the Junior High School Department Head*. These rights include:

1. The right to have the top building administrator's support
2. The right to the cooperation of the personnel in the department in implementing school aims
3. The right to consult with the administration regarding departmental problems and needs
4. The right to participate in selecting new building administrators
5. The right to participate in decisions related to supporting services
6. The right to receive consideration from the administration concerning departmental schedules, loads, room assignments, and other matters of staff welfare
7. The right to participate in the study of all-school problems, development of alternative solutions, and in the decisions themselves.

For further information related to the NCA report, write co-author Myrle Hemenway, School of Education, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309.

Grandparents Volunteer Time to Schools

"In Tucson, three retirees living in a nearby townhouse complex spend many hours each week as volunteers at Hudlow Elementary School. One is an artist who gives the children art lessons. Two spend every Tuesday and Thursday working with the children in spelling, reading, and math on a one-to-one basis."

"In Phoenix's Washington Elementary District, a grandfather who had achieved national distinction in astronomy lectured on the subject at various schools until advancing age took him out of action a couple of years ago."

According to Joseph Stocker, writing in *ALERT* published by the Arizona Department of Education, these are examples of a growing trend in Arizona—the involvement of grandparents as volunteers in the public schools. A theme or motto for grandparent volunteers in the schools might be "When they're helping children, they're helping themselves."

Students Preserve Cultures and History

Students in Kauai and Kapaa High Schools have begun a joint venture to record and preserve the cultures and history of the Garden Island in a student publication entitled "Mo'olelo." The title, according to an article in *Na Lono Kula*, a publication of the Hawaiian Department of Education, means "story, tradition, history, legend, or record."

"Mo'olelo" follows in the tradition of such student-produced publications as *Foxfire Magazine of Rabun Gap, Georgia*. Students document the life of the community through interviews with its people and use photography to capture the flavor of the past and present.

The most important benefit is said to be the students' growing cultural awareness reinforced by a sense of self-worth in seeing their work published, tangible proof of their capabilities. Magazines are available for \$2 per single copy. Orders may be addressed to Mo'olelo c/o Kauai High School, RR 1, Box 215, Lihue, Hawaii 96766.

Parents Attend Workshop on Adolescence

Workshops aimed at helping parents understand normal adolescent behavior and their own reactions to it were conducted for parents in the Newton, Massachusetts, public schools. The parent group met on eight consecutive Wednesday mornings. Through discussions, case studies, value explorations, readings, and communication exercises, parents explored their common concerns about adolescence. The goal was to provide a balance between a structured learning experience and an opportunity for informal sharing.

First, parents identified areas of common concern. Communication was a major source of worry so communication strategies that parents could try at home were introduced. Such topics as values, limit setting, alcohol, party crashing, hanging out, independence, separation, and community facilities and programs for teenagers were discussed. With the lack of the extended family in our society, people are looking for other kinds of support groups, and the workshop provides this kind of assistance.

The response of the participants has been very positive, and there are plans to expand the program.

Ohio Assigns Districts to Vocational Centers

Of the 46 Ohio school districts which did not provide high school students access to

basic vocational education programs as required by law, 38 were assigned to six vocational centers by the State Board of Education. Minimum vocational education standards require 12 different job training opportunities through 20 course offerings.

Students from assigned school districts may attend the vocational centers starting in the fall of 1976. Districts assigned will be subject to the same rights and responsibilities as other member districts including financial support and representation on the joint vocational board of education.

Volunteers Assist Vietnamese Students

In Springfield Public Schools (Missouri) volunteers are helping classroom teachers with the special problems of the Vietnamese refugee students. These children have been thrust into the American

school situation without advance preparation; hence, they need more help than it is possible for the classroom teacher to give.

There is no set routine for the volunteers' work with the children, but most time is spent with language experiences and reading. The volunteers work both with small groups of children and with individuals. The volunteers are finding that one of their most important roles is just being a friend to a child who has been transplanted into a strange new environment.

Other activities in which the volunteers will become involved are orienting the children to features of their new homeland such as the types of trees and animals in the community, street signs, foods, and music. Becoming familiar with those things making up the American culture is one of the children's biggest prob-

lems. Such knowledge is necessary not only to feeling more at home in the culture but to building a good language base.

Students Have Constitutional Rights

Once again, the Supreme Court has handed down a decision in *Goss v. Lopez*, January 22, 1975, stressing that students have constitutional rights. The issue the Court sought to resolve was whether or not students, suspended from school for a period of up to ten days, had the right to 14th Amendment protections under the Due Process Clause. These due process rights include a fair warning and a fair hearing. The Court ruled in favor of the students.

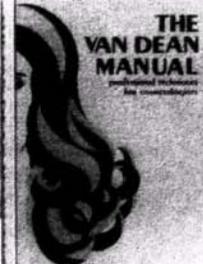
The Court ruled that students do have a property interest in an education. There were two bases for this ruling. First, a law of the state of Ohio, where the student in

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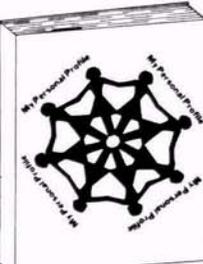
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question lived, provided for free education for all residents between the ages of 6 and 21 years of age. Under this statute, all people within the stated age group had a right to, or property interest in, a free education. Second, the 14th Amendment of the Constitution prohibits a state from depriving "any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. . . ."

In this case, other grounds for the decision were the determination that the right to liberty as well as the right to property was involved. The Court reasoned that a suspension would have a detrimental effect upon the reputation of the suspended student with respect to his or her relationship with classmates and teachers. Likewise, colleges sometimes demand to know if a student has ever been suspended and employers also ask for the same information. In brief, a tarnished reputation lessens one's ability to engage in activities available to others.

The Court ruling does not mean that school officials cannot suspend a student. The Court is insisting that before a suspension may occur, the school officials must follow certain minimum procedures. These are:

1. That the student be given oral or written notice

of the charges against him or her

2. That if the student denies these charges he or she has the right to hear the evidence the authorities have

3. That the student be afforded the opportunity to present his or her side of the story.

Biology Students Are Self-paced

The sophomore biology program at Henderson County High School (Kentucky) has converted to a program stressing individualized instruction, self-pacing, and hands-on experiences. The audio-tutorial program provides current ideas, concepts, and principles of biology, packaged in modular units to allow the instructors flexibility in scheduling and students the opportunity of self-pacing. Students must listen to taped lessons and perform assigned tasks in order to master each biology concept covered in the course.

Students progress through the course at their own speed. They cannot fail. If they do fail a unit test, they are assigned tutors (students who have passed the same test and mastered the concepts in the unit) who work with them until they can pass the test.

Live Well on Practically Nothing

"We cover jobs and money management; how to get consumer information; clothing costs, repair, and cleaning; finding apartments and the legal rights of tenants; how to 'scrounge' furnishings; and even get into some of the social aspects of living on your own," says Joan Northfield, instructor of Nathan Hale High School's (Seattle) home-making class "Economic Survival" open to both sexes. Today with more and more young people planning to live on their own—some even before graduation from high school—the techniques of economic survival are especially important.

Learning to attach a realistic "price tag" to the value of a dollar is especially difficult for many students who have never lived in anything but an inflated economy. Kevin Gill, a recent student in the class, comments in *Seattle Schools*, "I found out what percentage of my salary should go for certain things. There are a lot of things kids don't think about. I know some who thought living alone was going to be a big party, but they started to wake up and some even changed their minds after they took the class. I guess it helps you grow up a bit." □

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