

# News Notes

by Robert C. McKean and Bob L. Taylor

## Individualization Unmasked

"Individualized instruction has begun to reveal itself as an educational wolf in sheep's clothing, producing consequences quite ironically opposed to the intentions of its original advocates," says Thomas R. Berg in the *Curriculum Bulletin* of the Iowa ASCD. The movement, of course, emerged out of some long standing concerns of educators and theorists. However, many of these still persist or are reinforced in new ways by the systems of individualized instruction so widely used in contemporary schools today.

"We now witness the proliferation of *standardized* 'individualized' instruction programs, mass-produced learning packets, and assorted educational packages which seem to suggest that there are indeed new suckers born every minute, ready to believe that calling standardization 'individualization' truly makes it so." The success aim of students is now to fulfill the terms of their performance contract or turn in the completed packet. Teachers do not bring their views of what is educationally important to the teaching-learning context; the corporation that produces the learning package does. Learning style is related to willingness to work alone, interacting with the packet rather than the teacher and the class. As a result, "students in schools do not appear to be more unique or more individualized, but they do seem more confused about what is humanly important, about what adults stand for, and about how to value anything when all options are presented as equally valid."

Berg asserts that, "The teacher becomes a personal prob-

lem-solver, checker of worksheets, a behavior manager, and less of a central and essential figure in conveying the cultural essence and interpreting the problems of contemporary life in such a way as to demonstrate to the young their relationship to an enduring human struggle. . . . It will be dismaying and ironic if 'individualization' in education leads to the marginality of the teacher and the obsolescence of the creative teaching act."

## Citizenship Education Again

This year's /I/D/E/A/ Fellows Program presented ideas on effective citizenship education to nearly 600 school superintendents, principals, and central office personnel. Because of changes occurring in the home, church, and community, schools have an increased responsibility to help young people come to grips with their roles as individuals and members of families, communities, the nation, and the world.

The following issues were considered in the week-long meetings:

1. How a school district gears up for civic education;
2. Self-control and obedience to law;
3. What the National Assessment Program found out about civic education;
4. Adolescent prejudice and what to do about it;
5. Juvenile delinquency and school crime, implications for school administrators and law enforcement personnel;
6. Citizenship education for global interdependence;
7. The importance of citizen involvement.

Because of the current disenchantment of youth with the political process and our society, B. Frank Brown, director of /I/D/E/A/'s information and services program, summarized the conference by several Task Force recommendations for making citizenship education more effective:

1. Include a 90-day community service internship as part of high school graduation requirements;
2. Develop and field test civic education curricula for both elementary and secondary schools;
3. Enact legislation to provide Federal support to stimulate local efforts in civic education;
4. Place student responsibilities in the same positive context as student rights.

For additional information about this Fellows meeting, write /I/D/E/A/Fellows '76, P. O. Box 446, Melbourne, Florida 32901.

## How To Avoid a Lawsuit in Alternative Programs

Directors of alternative programs have come to expect the question, "But aren't you afraid of a lawsuit?" Gary Phillips, writing in *Walkabout: Exploring New Paths to Adulthood*, published by Phi Delta Kappa, asserts that he indeed is concerned about the liability issue facing his staff and for the safety of the students involved as well. He offers a set of *guide questions* cast into four R's: reason, rules, responsibility, and relationship.

1. *Reason*. Has the staff member taken reasonable precautions to make the activity as safe

as possible? This requires predicting obvious hazards and designing precautionary measures. For example, a reasonable person would not permit a parent, who had obviously been drinking, to drive students to a community-based field experience.

2. *Rules.* Are there laws, board policies, or school rules involved in the activity? Guiding policy statements or even legal precedents must be respected. For example, all paid employees—whether teachers or paraprofessionals—who regularly transport students as a major part of their job description are required to have a chauffeur's license.

3. *Responsibility.* Has the staff member exhibited responsible action in designing and implementing an activity? This includes informing students and parents of foreseeable hazards, formulating rules, and enforcing penalties for rule infractions. For example, any activity carried on near a body of water should include a briefing on hazards, rules regarding swimming, and an explicit statement of the teacher's responsibility for enforcing the rules.

4. *Relationship.* Has the staff member established a relationship with the students and parents so that student behavior in a situation can be predicted and parent reaction to an unforeseen event anticipated? For example, written permission should be obtained from parents for each activity mainly to establish that parents were informed of the activity, and they have granted consent.

## Career Education Clarified

Career education has emerged as an ideal that has been embraced by many educators but, at the same time, "it has infrequently been translated into the form of an operating program." Joseph R. Sproule, writing in *Impact* published by the New York State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, says, "In an attempt toward clarifying what

career education is, it is first useful to dispense with what career education is not."

Career education is clearly not vocational education. Vocational education has a more limited mission while career education is all-inclusive, encompassing vocational education, academic education, and managerial/professional education along with career exploration and career selection.

Career education is not a rush toward decision-making. Rather, it is a long-range process that moves from understanding work as a concept to an understanding of work options.

Career education is not anti-academic. With focus on the world of work, students can come to see the relationship of their studies and, therefore, gain added motivation to improve academic performance.

Career education is not a discrete subject matter—a separate course. Instead, it is a series of career-related activities that take place K-12. These activities are integrated into existing programs of study.

Career education is not just information. Information is only one component in the program and serves in combination with such concepts as the dignity of work and self-awareness; an understanding of various broad career options; on-hand experiences; feelings people have toward their jobs; and the values one has toward security, wealth, and similar matters.

Career education is not just a high school program. It builds from the earliest awareness type of activities at the elementary level, to a study of aptitudes and interests and the introduction to general career clusters at the middle school level, to further personal analysis and firsthand career-related experiences at the high school level.

Career education is not for just the noncollege-bound students. It is for all students, whereby all work toward the alignment of their interests, aptitudes, and other credentials with career options.

Career education is not solely

a guidance function. It will become successful only if its responsibility is shared by all—teachers, counselors, and administrative/supervisory staff.

Career education is not just an effort to be undertaken by the schools. Parents need to understand and assist with the long-term complexity of career choice. The business-industry-labor-professional communities must provide learning experiences not available to students in the conventional classroom environment.

"It is time that we reach beyond career education as a concept and goal, and move into implementation. All it offers is promise for a more effective instruction and improved service to students."

## Reading in the Social Studies

A recent survey of Fairfax County (Virginia) social studies teachers found the need for sessions on "reading in the content areas" and "writing in the content areas" ranking high in the teachers' requests for in-service education. Research and experience indicate that general reading ability and the ability to read materials in a specific content area require quite different reading skills. Students who seem able to read acceptably using their reading materials do not always perform as well in utilizing and comprehending their social studies and other content subjects. Content texts frequently provide too much and suffer from concept overload. The resulting reading level is usually higher than that advertised for the textbook. Content materials contain vocabulary, concepts, and structure that are specialized and unique to the subject area; hence, teachers, who are the best informed in that subject, should teach students the skills needed to understand the subject matter.

Reading in the content areas is becoming a special concern of subject matter teachers, and special materials are being developed to assist them. Different reading skills

are needed for different content areas because of different vocabulary sets, reasoning processes, and so on; therefore, reading should be taught as an integrated part of content teaching. While this certainly is not a new idea in education, more attention is now being paid to implementing it.

### Los Angeles Doves

In Los Angeles City Schools, elderly and retired citizens of the community are helping in the education program. The DOVES (Dedicated Older Volunteers in Education Service) have had more than 2,000 volunteers assisting in 300 elementary and secondary schools of the district since the program was established in 1974-75. The DOVES program was started with a \$40,000 grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to recruit, train, and place older citizens and retired persons in volunteer educational service in the district. The school district is to continue the program through October 1977.

A DOVES community representative works in each of the 12 administrative areas of the district. Other representatives help to recruit and train the DOVES. The DOVES are under the general supervision of Sarah A. Davis, director of the district's Volunteer and Tutoring Program, which is the largest program of its kind in the nation. The program provides students with the opportunity to meet, relate to, and learn respect for older members of the community.

### Multicultural Learning

El Paso disadvantaged youngsters experienced worlds and cultures far beyond Texas as educators set up a World of Villages. Three social studies consultants—Clinton Hartmann, Yolanda Rey, and Shelby Martin—planned a summer program that transformed five rooms at Roosevelt School into Galibpur Village, India; Balama

Village, Africa; Patzcuaro Village, Mexico; a Bedouin Camp in Arabia; and Yamaguchi Village, Japan. According to the article in *InterCulture News*, the InterCulture's Village Study Kits were used for the Indian and African villages while the teachers and community helpers supplied artifacts and resources for the other villages.

The aim of the program was to encourage children to learn language and communication skills through activities associated with an exciting learning experience. The consultants decided to focus in single villages rather than whole countries to avoid the possibility of stereotyping and to emphasize the infinite variety and diversity of peoples and cultures in the world. Learning activities in the villages included vocabulary development, role-playing, observation and analysis of data and realia, coordination of data, reproduction of artifacts, oral-aural activities, silent reading and reading aloud, and language experience stories. After the four-hour visits, the pupils shared experiences verbally, extended reading about the cultures, and wrote reports and stories. Thus, the Language Arts program was directly tied to vivid experiences that students enjoyed in the World of Villages.

### Decline in New York Higher Education Enrollments

For the first time in more than a decade, enrollments in the higher education institutions of New York State have declined. Total enrollment, undergraduate and graduate, fulltime and parttime, has declined by 6.1 percent. Fulltime enrollment declined by less than 1 percent, while parttime enrollment declined by 14.5 percent. Most of the decline was at the City University where enrollments were off more than 20 percent as a result of the new tuition, admissions policies, and fiscal constraints. Parttime enrollment there declined by over 30 percent. The State University enrollment dropped 4 percent. These reduc-

tions were planned to bring enrollment levels into line with targets set by the SUNY administration.

The private colleges and universities of the state experienced a slight increase in total enrollments of just over 1 percent. While the fulltime enrollment increased by 6 percent, parttime graduate enrollment declined 14 percent. The increase in the private schools along with the decline in public school enrollments resulted in an increase in the private school share of enrollment by nearly 3 percent. Private schools now have just under 42 percent of the New York enrollment in higher education.

The unexpected decline in parttime graduate enrollments by nearly 20 percent is attributed, to a large extent, to declining participation of elementary and secondary teachers in programs leading to permanent certification.

### More Competency Testing

After July 1, 1978, Missouri public school students will be required to take a competency test in the basic essential skills. Until the above date, the test will be administered by individual schools on a voluntary basis. The State Board of Education ruled at its November meeting that the Basic Essential Skills Tests shall be given at the end of the eighth grade. Students who do not pass the test or parts of it shall take the test or parts annually in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades until they pass it. Local school boards have the responsibility of maintaining appropriate records of the test results, and passage or failure to pass the test will be recorded on each student's transcript.

The State Board deferred action on the question of making passage of the examination a requirement for high school graduation until after field tests and pilot programs of the plan have been completed, but the Board is seriously considering making the reading, writing, and arithmetic parts of the examination requirements for grad-

uation from high school. In a series of 11 statewide education conferences held in October and November, it was found that approximately 83 percent of those attending the conferences favored requiring all schools to give the basic skills test; however, 56 percent of the participants opposed making a passing grade on the examination a requirement for high school graduation.

### Tornado Drills in the Curriculum

Ohio law now requires tornado drills to be conducted at least once a month with school personnel responsible for instructing pupils in safety precautions to be taken when a tornado alert or tornado warning sounds and for assuring that doors and exits of school buildings are kept unlocked during school hours. According to *School Slate*, published by the State of Ohio Department of Education, a new publication entitled *Emergency* has been developed to help educators. This booklet offers suggestions for designing an emergency disaster plan to assure that loss of life and property will be minimized. Also described are administrative procedures for enlisting help, reopening school, pro-

viding transportation, and taking inventory in order to facilitate the rehabilitation of a school system following a major disaster.

Information about the publication is available from Roger J. Lulow, Director, Division of Planning and Evaluation, Room 804, 65 S. Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

### Are We Failing Our Children?

According to Urie Bronfenbrenner, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Cornell University, we are! Rates of homicide, suicide, drug abuse, and juvenile delinquency among young people are up, while overall academic achievement is down. Bronfenbrenner claims that these changes in the well-being of children in our society parallel other dramatic changes in the status of the American family over the past 30 years. Based on an analysis of data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau since the end of the Second World War, he concludes that there is indeed a progressive fragmentation and isolation of the family in its child-rearing role. This is evidenced by the decreasing number of adults stay-

ing in the home to care for children, a phenomenon related to increase in divorce, increase in the number of working parents, and general reduction in the number of extended families.

Bronfenbrenner presents two hypotheses with respect to this problem:

1. The development of a child's ability to function effectively outside the home depends heavily on the extent and manner of adult participation with the child in joint, complicated activities requiring initiative, cooperation, and sustained effort in pursuit of a goal.

2. The capacity of parents and other adults to engage in such joint behavior with children depends on the extent to which there are opportunities, examples, status, and channels of communication which support such activities.

He believes that the educational system, acting alone, cannot meet the second requirement. The world of work must also become involved. Other possible areas of such support include health and welfare services, the legal system, mass media, and informal social networks in the neighborhood. [57]

## Index to Advertisers

Bank Street College .....	443
CTB/McGraw-Hill .....	442, C-2
The C. V. Mosby Company .....	C-4
Holt, Rinehart and Winston .....	448
Hoyle Engineering Co. ....	428
Little, Brown and Company .....	472
Monroe. The Calculator Company .....	466
The TIME Education Program .....	454

Copyright © 1977 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.