News Notes

by Robert C. McKean and Bob L. Taylor

Are Youths Realistic About Jobs?

The assessment of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) regarding career and occupational development found that 44 percent of American 17-year-olds wanted a professional career while U.S. census figures indicated that only 20-25 percent of the population had professional or managerial jobs. The assessment was done with 100,000 respondents—nine-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds, and young adults 26-35 years of age. Career education should help youths make more realistic decisions about their own careers.

Other findings of the assessment were:

1. A third of the adults and more than half the 17-year-olds had difficulty writing a job application and figuring a finance charge.

2. Fewer than half the 17-year-olds had taken an aptitude test and only 16 percent had discussed the results of one with a counselor.

3. Those respondents with the poorest education and incomes were the ones most lacking the skills necessary to change their financial status.

4. Adults identified more things about their jobs that they liked than they disliked.

5. More than 80 percent of the 13- and 17-year-olds had had some paid work experience.

6. About three-fourths of the 17-year-olds and over half the 13-year-olds could name two places to get information about jobs.

7. Only about half the 17-year-olds could correctly answer five questions regarding the amount of preparation needed for a specific, commonplace job.

When the respondents were asked what were the factors that should be considered in selecting a career, working conditions and benefits were named the most often by 13- and 17-year-olds and young adults. The second most frequently mentioned factor was personal satisfaction, and opportunity for advancement was the third most important factor for adults, while personal qualifications were more important for 17-year-olds. While only 3 percent of the female 17-year-olds chose "housewife" as their first choice for a career, 37 percent of the female young adults identified themselves as housewives. These kinds of statistics will be interesting to review when NAEP reassesses career and occupational development again in 1979-80.

How To Reduce Discipline Problems

How did an inner-city middle school reduce trips to the principal's office for discipline by 77 percent? Under a grant from the U.S. Office of Education these problems were identified:

1. The school was too big and impersonal.

2. Attitudes and values had not been taught to the students.

3. Most of the misbehavior was caused by a few students.

4. The curriculum neither appealed to the students nor met their needs.

Under the project, several direct actions were taken. The student body was reorganized into clusters of 100 to 300 students. Each cluster, with its team of teachers, remained in one area of the building. Direct instruction in values was introduced utilizing ideas from transactional analysis, Individually Guided Education, reality therapy, and values clarification. The teachers stressed making lessons relevant for the student body, which was 99 percent black and 92 percent poor.

A special classroom for hard core discipline problems was set up. This was called the Crisis Intervention Center or CIC. It had its own teacher and teacher aide. Students in the center were to keep up with their assignments in their regular classes while the CIC teacher worked on attitudes. These students developed their own plan for their conduct, and if they stayed with their plan for behavior modification, they returned to their regular classes.

The project was called ORDER for Organization for Responsibility, Education, and Reality. A report of the project, "Project Order," may be ordered from Stanley G. Sanders, Department of Educational Administration, University of Houston, 4800 Calhoun, Houston, Texas 77044.

Why Girls Don't Take Math

A recent study found that there is no significant difference between girls and boys in either math achievement or grades. Yet there is a sharp drop in the number of girls taking math courses after the second year of high school. This study was conducted

under a National Science Foundation grant by Elizabeth Fennema and Julia Sherman of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They studied 589 girls and 644 boys in four Madison high schools.

They found that the girls could learn the math skills as well as boys, but they were not taking the mathematics courses needed to learn the skills. The investigators found that mathematics is considered a male domain and girls lack confidence to go on with it even when they are receiving good grades. Some of the reasons found for girls dropping out of math were a fear that it might hamper their relationships with boys, that it would make them appear masculine, and a belief that it was less useful to them than to boys. There seemed to be cultural factors that were inhibiting the girls with respect to continuing in mathematics.

The Madison high schools were requiring one year of mathematics for high school graduation, which is a common practice over the country. Girls have the same opportunities and abilities to go on in math as boys, but they were not going ahead in math with the intent of preparing for careers in science and mathematics.

Poor School Press Coverage of Student Politics

A study of school newspapers in 27 states has found universally poor reporting of student politics. The report was recently published in the *Montana Journalism Review*. In the investigation, there were 112 student newspapers published from March-June, 1975, representing 27 states. It was found that only 25 papers printed more than one story about student politics. Only one paper carried complete election returns. On the other hand, 17 included partial statistics, and one of these included a report that student officials deliberately had withheld individual voting returns.

It is pointed out that the student newspaper has the same type of responsibilities as all newspapers, and that student newspapers should cover student politics in regular news stories, features, and editorials.

The Colorado Trail: A Thousand Mile Classroom

The Colorado Trail, a network of hiking, skiing, and horseback trails running through some of Colorado's most scenic areas, is proposed as a thousand-mile classroom. In an article in *Walkabout*, published by Phi Delta Kappa (P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401), the Colorado Mountain Trails Foundation proposes to utilize this network of trails as a learning environment.

According to A. Donn Kesselheim, staff director of the Foundation, the Colorado Trail is a partially completed series of nonvehicular trails and is located mainly below timberline in the mountains of central and southern Colorado. The main trail artery winds 480 miles from Denver to Durango. When completed, there will be several hundred additional miles of access trails, trail heads, and loop trails suitable for one-day use. The Trail offers year-round access to persons of all ages for experiences ranging from beginning to intermediate in difficulty.

A major component in the proposal is the application of the Walkabout Learning Concept (inspired by the rites of passage developed by an aboriginal society in Australia that includes a six-month test called "walkabout") to the educational use of the Colorado Trail. Kesselheim suggests several examples of possible activities in a Colorado Trail-Walkabout program.

1. To meet the Adventure challenge, a student could (a) take a summer to walk the entire Colorado Trail, or (b) ski an extended segment of the trail in winter.

2. To meet the challenge of Creativity, a student could (a) design and produce displays interpreting the geology of a section of the trail, or (b) produce a photo essay on tundra insect life.

3. To meet the Service challenge, a student could (a) plan and coordinate a program to introduce mentally retarded students to backpacking, or (b) create a sensory awareness loop on the trail for blind persons with explanatory signs in Braille.

4. To meet the Practical Skills challenge, a student could (a) develop a set of blueprints for a trail hut and construct a scale model, or (b) learn how logs can be hand-hewn and apply this skill to the building of a trailhead corral.

5. To meet the Logical Inquiry challenge, one could investigate such questions as (a) What impact does fire have on a forest? or (b) To what extent will the Colorado Trail relieve the overburden of hikers, campers, and tourists in the nearby Rocky Mountain National Park?

The proposal provides for a three-year effort aimed at the design, field testing, and evaluation of Walkabout experiences related to the Colorado Trail. By the end of the period, the best programs will have been identified and phased into the curriculum of participating schools. Further information may be secured by writing Donn Kesselheim, Colorado Mountain Trails Foundation, P.O. Box 2238, Littleton, Colorado 80161.

Energy Conservation Packets

How can you teach high school students the importance of conserving gas? The National Science Teachers Association has developed a packet on this that they are making available to teachers who will field test it for them. The lesson, "The 55 MPH Speed Limit: How a Bill Becomes a Law," includes a simulation where students take the roles of senators, conservation experts, consumers, bus company owners, and reporters. In the mock hearing, the students participate in the kind of arguments that took place in the real senate committee. This should help the students understand the need for the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

This is just one of six packets

that NSTA is developing to teach energy conservation in the schools. All of the packets are meant to be infused into the existing curriculum. They can be introduced into social studies, math, composition, and other existing offerings. By grade level, the packets are: elementary—"The Energy We Use" and "Community Workers and the Energy They Use"; junior high school—"Energy Engines and the Industrial Revolution" and "Transportation and the City"; and senior high school—"The 55 MPH Speed Limit" and "Agriculture, Energy, and Society." If they agree to complete the evaluation sheets, teachers may obtain the packets from NSTA. Write Helen Carey, NSTA Energy Education, 1742 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009.

Bridge Programs: Pros and Cons

"Bridge programs which enable high school seniors to take all or part of the first year of college while still enrolled in high school have both advantages and disadvantages," observed Russell T. Lauper, Assistant Vice-President for Administration at C. W. Post Center of Long Island University. In an article appearing in *Inside Education*, published by the New York State Education Department, it was indicated that students may receive up to a year's credit from the participating college through these cooperative programs. College faculty members teach college courses or regular high school faculty teach courses approved by the college. Students may take all or part of their work in the high school or part in college.

As a result of the New York experience, several advantages are apparent according to Lauper: "Students are given challenging material and avoid repetition of subject matter; they remain with their peers in a familiar environment; student leadership isn't removed from the high school; students can become adjusted to the pace of college work; they may be able to make better choices of colleges and programs of study through exposure to a college setting; and they can make significant savings in time by crediting up to a year of college work while still in high school." In addition, the college receives tuition income for course work it validates while the high school receives regular state support for each student still enrolled in high school.

Disadvantages include the following: Questions arise about transferability of credit to other colleges; The ethics of spending public funds for collegiate programs designed for bright students is an issue; and There is union sensitivity in that high school teachers think college faculty may replace them and college faculty members may fear the loss of basic freshman course sections. "Some high school faculty think the college faculty view them as inferior. And college faculty sometimes feel they may have to compromise standards to attract students or that they have lost control over course content for which they are granting credit."

Vice-President Lauper offered several suggestions to administrators who would develop "bridge" programs. Know the basic academic concepts upon which the program is based, know your departments, work with each of the academic programs in the development of the program, check to see that the cooperating institution has also been careful in its planning, and bring the faculties of the two institutions together only after a general commitment to the project. Keep the academic considerations separate from the financial ones. Once the program is ready to be implemented, keep the channels of communication open, and know the commitments of each institution participating. A written contract is desirable.

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