

News Notes

Journalism Enrollments Level Off

Last year, the number of journalism/communications majors in four-year institutions of higher education slowed markedly from the previous three years. According to a study conducted by Paul Peterson of Ohio State University for the Association for Education in Journalism, enrollments grew only .55 percent in 1976 compared to 16.5 percent in 1975, 13.8 percent in 1974, and 15.6 percent in 1973. There were 64,502 declared journalism/communication majors in 1976 from 190 schools.

Peterson commented that despite the lack of growth last year, journalism as a major is at record levels. This situation continues in the face of extensive adverse publicity concerning the job market in journalism. In making comparison with respect to how many degrees were awarded in journalism, in 1975-76 there were 14,082 degrees awarded compared to 13,172 in 1974-75. This was an increase of nearly 7 percent.

On the other hand, graduate enrollments dropped from 5,593 in 1975 to 4,938 in 1976—a drop of 11.7 percent. This decrease compares with a 17 percent increase in 1975, 6.1 percent in 1974, and 14 percent in 1973. The largest enrollments in the country are: University of Texas/Austin (2,645), Syracuse University (2,015), Boston (1,566), California State-Fullerton (1,123), and University of Florida (1,121).

Schools reporting black students in journalism/communications stated that they had 2,540 blacks enrolled which is 3.9 percent of the total national enrollment. Peterson pointed out that while this is a slight increase from pre-

vious years, it is only an indication since a large number of schools do not report enrollments broken down by race. On the other hand, the proportion of males to females at all levels has remained nearly static over the past eight years with 40.8 percent females in 1969 and 43.3 percent in 1976.

Volunteers: An Educational Plus

A recent statement by State Superintendent Barbara Thompson of Wisconsin points out the importance of volunteerism to the overall educational effort of the nation. The use of volunteers as assistants to professionals in guiding students in learning situations has been increasing rapidly in recent years. These volunteer programs have given support and reinforcement to the efforts of the professional educators and have become one of the largest citizen participation efforts in the nation. Estimates are that there are 2.5 million volunteers in educational related programs in the nation. It is estimated that school volunteers have contributed an estimated minimum of \$640 million worth of time to our schools over the past decade. As this program continues to grow, there has been an increase in the positive attitudes and cooperative efforts characterizing the working relationship of the professional educators and volunteers.

The program has brought expertise, freshness, and enthusiasm to educational programs. A wide spectrum of society is participating including parents, senior citizens, business personnel, community residents, and college and secondary school students. The many challenges within the schools provide an excellent outlet for this

talent. The needs in the broad areas of special learning disabilities and for individualized tutoring have called on volunteer programs for assistance. Volunteers with the time and willingness to work on a one-to-one basis fill a large role in providing support to educators seeking to individualize instruction.

Certainly the continued success of these programs depends on the wise professional guidance of the use of these many talents. It is a resource of great power when appropriately employed by school personnel.

Students Discuss Role of Counselor

At the meeting of the Massachusetts Student Advisory Council, the role of high school guidance counselors was discussed. The panel of five included two high school students, two counselors, and a school superintendent. A number of areas of concern were identified by the panel. The availability of counselors for individual conferences with students was rated as a major problem. One student commented, "Many students see their counselors once a year, to discuss scheduling, or, as seniors, to seek advice on college or careers." The opinion was expressed that counselors should have more contact with students prior to their senior year.

The need for a more personal approach to counseling was discussed. Family problems and financial situation enter into many decisions that students must make, and counselors need to be sensitive to these and other personal problems of students. The counselors on the panel believed that they could do the job with a counselor-student

ratio of one to 200, but frequently this ratio was 300-500 students per counselor. There can be no individual attention when working with those kinds of numbers.

One solution to heavy counselor caseloads that was mentioned was "peer counseling." Here students advise other students. This is an approach that is being used in some schools, and it has the potential of reducing some of the pressure on the counselor. Other ideas discussed were group information sessions and the use of para-professionals such as graduate students or university interns to screen students with the most need for professional counseling assistance.

One student pointed out that youngsters should be greater advocates of their own needs. Students should be members of the state school counselors association. Also, they should participate by seeking representation on student advisory councils, attending school committee meetings, and inviting counselors to meet with student groups.

Formidable Barriers to Minority Access to Education

At a recent seminar held by the College Board in Los Angeles, James E. Blackwell, chairman of the Sociology Department, University of Massachusetts, stated that there are extensive barriers to equal educational opportunity throughout the nation. He related that minority dropout rates at secondary and postsecondary levels "are symptomatic of something wrong in the school environment."

Data indicate that the aspiration and motivation levels of minority children are high, frequently higher than those of majority students, but the consequences of economic deprivation, negative school environments, and of discrimination in occupational roles conspire to prevent achievement commensurate with those aspiration levels.

The segregation on reservations, in urban ghettos, and in barrios continues to affect the quality of education for minorities,

including the form of curricula, instruction and pedagogical techniques, and, inevitably, the attitudes of teachers regarding the educability of minority children.

Also, the push for increasing enrollments of minority students in graduate and professional schools that occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's has leveled off. The number of minority students in these programs is being eroded. Socioeconomic data illustrate the critical need for counseling and guidance in homes and schools to help minority students become aware of the variety of fields of study at the graduate level in order to combat this trend.

Schools should examine conditions that contribute to dropouts and pushouts, and they should improve their guidance and counseling programs. Schools should develop outreach programs to bring schools into the home and use low-income parents as assistants on field trips and other school activities. The curricula should be examined to determine the impact of

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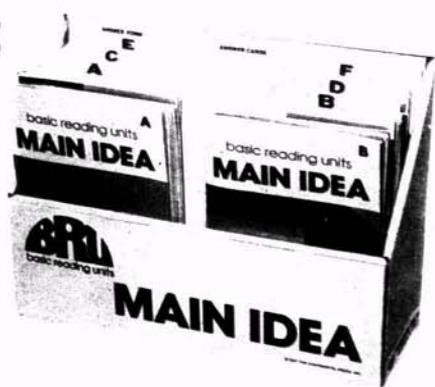
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tracking on school performance and the need for innovative programs such as bilingual/bicultural projects.

At the same conference, it was pointed out that bilingual/bicultural students experience alienation in a strange new school environment and are further disadvantaged by their lack of basic skills and inexperience with written forms of communication. Also, the low-income status of the bilingual/bicultural students influences their career aspirations and academic rewards. Often these students are forced by financial circumstances to go to work; therefore, they are so busy "surviving" that they do not have the luxury to get involved in the activities of the schools.

The Impact of Negotiations on Curriculum

One of the continuing debates in education today concerns the effect of professional negotiations on the curriculum. Robert D. Ramsey, writing in the *Iowa Curriculum Bulletin*, identifies some potential pluses and minuses.

1. The more dollars that are negotiated for salaries and benefits (welfare issues), the less that may be available for program, curriculum development, in-service training, materials, professional leave, and so on.

2. Negotiated class-size or teacher-pupil ratio limitations may preclude or exclude experimentation with team-teaching, differentiated staffing, or other innovations.

3. Some local autonomy may be lost because of the pervading influence of the state teachers' organizations' "proposed model contract." (The State School Board Association usually has such a model also.)

4. Negotiated unrequested leave policies (seniority lists, termination procedures, and so on) may have profound bearing on instruction. (For example, can someone who has never taught physical edu-

cation but who is certified "bump" a teacher with lesser seniority who has successfully taught physical education for several years?)

5. The bargaining process may breed unfavorable public relations, loss of public confidence, the demise of credibility, and, perhaps, even disgust on the part of the community.

6. Emotions may spill over into the instructional program and confuse, as well as hurt, youngsters.

7. There is no doubt, however, that powerful teacher bargaining units can exert considerable pressure and influence and can become significant agents for change and improvement (both within the local district, as well as in the State legislature).

"The primary impact of negotiations on curriculum continues to be more indirect than direct. The ultimate question is, 'Will negotiations nullify cooperative curriculum development efforts and limit the quality of educational experiences for children and youth?' The answer to this question does not lie in the statutes, but solely depends on the *climate* within which the negotiating process is conducted . . . and the *quality of leadership* on both sides of the table."

Educational Problems Spotlight Supervisory Need

Several important problems facing teachers, supervisors, and other educational leaders pose challenges for the supervisory effort in the schools. Jerry J. Bellon, writing in the *TASCD Journal* published by the Tennessee Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, points out the following three key problems:

1. *Declining Enrollment.* Throughout the country, enrollments have leveled off or are declining. The professional staff is tending to become older and less likely to be mobile. This has serious implications for staff development and renewal. The supervisory program ought to be a key process

for identifying individual teacher and supervisor needs which should receive attention and support.

2. *Evaluation Mandates.* There are a number of states which now mandate some general approach to teacher evaluation. Many districts simply do not have instructional leaders who have the skills, knowledge, and understanding to help teachers improve. The net effect is that we find districts changing their evaluation forms and sometimes their policy manuals without dealing with the central problems and procedures associated with improving instruction.

3. *The Power Balance.* This may be the key problem or issue facing educators. The fact that teachers have more power than ever before is not the problem. Appropriate processes must be developed by teachers and administrators to use their power to improve instruction. The shifting of power requires that teachers, supervisors, and administrators cooperate to develop sound procedures. It is unforgivable when the struggle for power stands in the way of improving programs and opportunities for students.

"Certainly there are a number of other important educational problems which are closely related to the supervision problem. The three presented in this paper support the need to have teachers and supervisors *working together* to plan, observe, analyze, and improve instruction."

The Courts and the Curriculum

When the courts view course material and content, there seem to be several recurring items that they consider in upholding or rejecting curriculum matters. Jay Swearingen, CASB legal counsel, writing in the *Colorado School Board Bulletin*, itemized the following:

1. Are the courses required or optional? (Elective sex education has been uniformly upheld.)

2. Do the courses constitute

ensorship? (Is only Bible reading permitted in a science class concerning creation?)

3. What is the source of their inclusion? (Is the material required by state statute, state board of education, or the local board of education?)

"The conduct or procedure which a board of education utilizes prescribing a course and the manner in which it is presented has also been found by the courts to be important in determining whether a course will be upheld." In this, the courts consider the following:

1. Has there been careful selection of materials for use in the course? (Are professional educators involved, and are the materials recognized as valid by experts in the field?)

2. Has the instructor been carefully selected? (Is there a separate endorsement area for the subject, and what are the professional qualifications of the instructor?)

3. Has there been parental involvement in the process? (Has the material been reviewed by parents, recommended by parents, and has the instructor been approved by the parents or a parental committee?)

"If a district can answer the above questions affirmatively, the courts have generally upheld the decision of the local board. Those questions really are commonsense requirements for all courses."

Vocational Education Evaluated

Recently a study was conducted in the Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland) to evaluate the vocational education program. A survey of 15 percent of tenth- and twelfth-grade students and parents of students in the school system's 22 high schools included 1,163 tenth graders, 1,403 twelfth graders, and 4,449 secondary school parents. Some of the more important findings of the study were:

1. While only 13 percent of Montgomery County high school seniors plan to go to work to earn a living upon graduation, about one-fourth actually will be working fulltime within a year of high school graduation.

2. About one-fourth of the seniors believe they had sufficient job-related skills to enable them to earn a living. Students in the more comprehensive high schools were more

likely to choose an elective vocational course.

3. Both parents and students know more about the academic courses offered in their school than about the vocational course offerings in the county. Few knew much about programs offered in other schools.

4. About one-fourth of the students were enrolled in vocational programs. Students in the most comprehensive high schools were about twice as likely to be in a vocational course as those in less comprehensive schools.

5. Most students believed that the primary purpose of high school was preparation for college. However, parents saw a need for high schools to provide vocational education even if their children planned to go to college. Both approved of learning job-related skills in high schools.

6. Both students and parents favored a comprehensive high school emphasizing an academic program but offering a variety of vocational courses. ^{FL}

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