

# News Notes

by Robert C. McKean and  
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## Interdisciplinary Oral History

Two teachers at Waldo Junior High School in Salem, Oregon, completed an oral history project. According to an article in *The Core Teacher*, Lorita Clement and Louise Brantley worked out a nine-week elective course that combined Oregon history and English composition for this ninth grade.

Students using tape recorders, cameras pencils and pads—combined with enthusiasm—discovered local residents who had a story to tell. As a culmination to the project, a publication emerged entitled *The Hour Glass*. Among the chapters in the resulting 101-page book are: "How Waldo Junior High School Got Its Name," "Grandpa's Interview," "Fifty Years in the Woods," "A Commune in Early Oregon," "Aunt Francie and Her Farm," and "Salem's Roaring Twenties." Student maps, drawings, and photographs enhanced the publication.

For further information on the Hour Glass Project, write to Lorita Clement, Waldo Junior High School, Salem, Oregon 97305.

## Equipment Repair a Major Problem

Recently a science coordinator for a large district stated that the maintenance and repair of science equipment is a giant headache. Individual teachers are doing their share, but it is more than they can handle on an individual basis. In that district, it would cost \$73,000 to make the needed repairs or to replace the science equipment needed, but there is only about

\$10,000 allocated in the budget each year. Each year the problem gets larger.

School systems are losing the gains that they made during the post-Sputnik era. New equipment was purchased with federal money, but now it is becoming unusable through normal wear and tear as well as vandalism and theft losses. Furthermore, inflation is making equipment more expensive to replace. The continuing deterioration of the available inventory of equipment means that teachers are demonstrating more or using films rather than having students become involved in laboratory experiences. Police and school officials believe that the thefts of balances are part of the drug problem. Balances cost between \$30 and \$50 each, and sophisticated analytic balances cost \$300 to \$400.

Many of the more innovative programs in science require expensive equipment, and there are no service contracts for science equipment as there are for piano tuners and business machine repairs. There are many kinds of equipment competing for the maintenance dollar including physical education gymnastics equipment; art kilns; typewriters and computers for business education; appliances for home economics; pianos and other music instruments; and industrial arts tools and machines. Even playground equipment for the elementary schools is costly. The only time schools really get what is needed is when they have a renovation or addition. Schools then get the equipment out of capital money. Under tight equipment budgets, school systems are losing ground

on equipment repair and replacement.

## American Indian Education Funded

The Indian Education Act passed by Congress in 1972 has resulted in the funding of nearly 4,000 projects, according to the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The funding, as of 1976-77, has amounted to over \$150 million. The grants have been made to Indian tribes, institutions, and organizations.

The grants were awarded for such projects as bilingual-bicultural education, curriculum development, reading, tutoring, counseling, and educational personnel training.

Here are two examples: (a) The Lac Courte Orielle Chippewa Tribe in Stone Lake, Wisconsin has developed a program that offers native language study, crafts, and folklore, along with the more standard school curriculum; and (b) The Quileute Tribe in Washington has a program to revive its native language on the reservation and will publish a Quileute dictionary as well as other classroom materials.

## How Big a Health Hazard Is Asbestos?

Just because you have asbestos as a building material does not mean you have a health hazard. Replacing asbestos panels in walls or ceiling is not only costly, it can create a more serious health hazard than already exists, even when it is

coming off in chunks. John Wehrung, executive vice president of EMV Associates, Inc., stated that ripping out ceilings and drywall panels can loosen enough asbestos into the air to create a health hazard for six months.

Asbestos can be contained, and sometimes all that is needed is a coat or two of epoxy. Where asbestos is used as a part of floor and roofing tiles, the other components of the product act as a sealant. Even if asbestos is a primary part of a ceiling or wall tile, it is not necessarily causing pollution. The greatest likelihood of pollution exists in buildings where asbestos was sprayed onto steel or concrete as fireproofing or insulation. Some contractors used only water to mix with asbestos fibers, and this coating eventually will fall off and pollute the atmosphere.

How do you detect the presence of asbestos pollution? Air sampling is one method, but it's expensive. Another helpful procedure is to identify suspected asbestos materials. In ceilings, it usually is gray, buff, or off-white. Pinch off a piece from an inconspicuous place. Pulverize it, and put it under an ordinary optic microscope. If it looks granular like sand, it isn't asbestos. If it looks fibrous, it could be either glass or asbestos. At this point, consult an expert to determine which one it is. An expert may be found in the local building inspection department or in the science department of a college that has an electron microscope.

A two-page guide on asbestos, what it is, and where it is used may be secured from: EMV Asso-

ciates, Inc., Microanalysis Laboratory, 15825 Shady Grove Road, Rockville, Maryland 20850.

### Supervision Today

"Possibly the concept of supervision is dead and life signs are being maintained only through colleges, universities, and state departments of public instruction by still demanding course work in supervision to meet certification requirements or for advanced degrees in education," assert A. Gray Thompson and Russel H. Ziemer, writing in *Forward*, a publication of the Wisconsin Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development. As a result of their concern, they surveyed teachers, professors of supervision, and state departments of education in order to secure a picture of the status of educational supervision today.

*State Departments of Public Instruction.* Replies from twenty-four state departments indicate that little has changed in the past twenty-five years in supervision except for the negotiation of contracts in the schools. Special training and certification requirements are demanded of persons functioning in the supervision process. More than half of the reporting states require districts to evaluate teachers in a periodic pattern, but they do not provide specific means for doing so.

The survey indicated that a vast majority of state departments feel that the emergence of collective bargaining has serious negative implications for supervision.

Specifically, they believe that negotiations have a direct effect on who can supervise, frequency of supervision, evaluation instruments, and the use of supervisory evidence for continued employment.

*Professors of Supervision.* Seventy-six professors of supervision, representing sixty colleges and universities, replied to the survey. More than 90 percent believe that supervision, as it is practiced in the schools, is less than adequate. A majority of the professors indicated that they think that less than half of what they teach is carried through in the school setting. The model of supervision that is actually utilized in elementary and secondary schools in terms of ideas and concepts of another era is blamed. A strong consensus among professors is that providing assistance to teachers is essential to the improvement of educational programs.

*Classroom Teachers.* Responses from 140 teachers from three midwestern states bear out the conflict between the ideal as stated by the professors and the reality as carried out in the schools. The teachers agree that supervision should imply assistance, but in their districts supervision means evaluation. The majority of the teachers who responded identified fellow teachers as the major source of help. Only 20 percent of the classroom teachers identified the principal or assistant principal as a source of assistance. Sixty-one percent believe that supervision in their school or district is of little value to them. Moreover, 63 percent of

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### Future ASCD Annual Conferences

1978	March 4-8	San Francisco	Civic Center
1979	March 3-7	Detroit	Cobo Hall
1980	March 29-April 2	Atlanta	Georgia World Congress Center
1981	March 7-11	St. Louis	Congress Center

the classroom teachers indicated that where forms or instruments are used in supervision, they were created without teacher input.

Thompson and Ziemer identify three major barriers to effective supervision: (a) negotiated contracts; (b) lack of leadership; and (c) teachers' lack of understanding of the purposes and functions of supervision. They conclude that, if these barriers cannot be overcome, educational supervision should be allowed to die.

### Checkout Zoo

An animal checkout zoo? Yes! The Pima Elementary School, Scottsdale, Arizona, has a checkout zoo. This is the idea of Eleanor Zoellner, the librarian. Included in the checkout animals are gerbils, white rats, fish, guinea pigs, a turtle, a Chinese Nightingale, and a canary. She started the project to make the library a warm place and to encourage students to come in.

With the full cooperation of administration, teachers, and parents, the zoo provides for children who have no pets, animal playmates they can check out during weekends and holidays for as long as a two-week period. Children may check out animals only after

first giving Zoellner written permission from their parents. Zoellner visits each home, prior to the first time a child is loaned an animal, to meet the parents and explain how the animal should be cared for. She packages food for the pets and shuttles the animals by car from one "foster home" to another. The checkout waiting list is long. Children get to know each animal by name and take part in feeding them and giving them care at school.

Zoellner prefers rodents, especially as checkout pets, because they tend to be healthy and good-natured about being handled. She avoids keeping predators such as snakes that might feed on other animals in the zoo. She requests that children properly handle animals and that they help to see that they are properly fed, kept clean, and are not crowded.

### Connecticut Teachers Study State Science Assessment

Following a state assessment of student achievement in science, science teachers in Connecticut are reviewing the results. The study was an adaptation of National Assessment in its goals, design, and instrumentation. By com-

paring survey results with both regional and national findings of NAEP state educators hope to determine the status of science education in Connecticut.

In order to make the comparative study reflect state concerns at the classroom level, science teachers joined state department of education personnel in selecting the NAEP objectives and exercises to be used in the state study. The assessment findings showed that in Connecticut:

1. Nine-year-olds were ahead of both their national and Northeast regional counterparts.

2. Thirteen-year-olds performed better than did 13-year-olds nationally and at about the same level as Northeastern 13-year-olds.

3. The 17-year-olds were about on a par with 17-year-olds nationally, but they were below performances of other 17-year-olds in the Northeast. Groups of science teachers are analyzing the data. These teachers have voiced concern at the results pointing to a leveling off of science interest and ability among Connecticut 17-year-olds. This will be one of the primary areas of their investigation of the results and recommendations for program change and improvement.  $\overline{7}$

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