

Education for Pluralism

Max Rosenberg

Minorities and the Gifted

The Gifted and the Talented: Their Education and Development is the title of one of the 1979 Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education. This volume, which deals with many practices and programs and problems affecting the nature and nurture of giftedness, reports the results of numerous studies.

One of the questions raised is: How do the schools implement sound programs for gifted females and minorities? It seems abundantly clear that programs for these children must be planned with great care to meet their psychological, linguistic, and cultural needs. A particularly important consideration is the process by which these groups of students can be identified.

Ernest M. Bernal, Jr., author of the chapter, "The Education of the Culturally Different Gifted," points out that a successful program should "build on their assets, foster inter-ethnic understanding, and widen the style-of-life options for all students, including, of course, students from the dominant ethnic groups."

Carolyn M. Callahan, author of the chapter, "The Gifted and Talented Woman," recommends that, "Test biases should be identified, occupational counseling needs to be broadened, and counselors need to be sensitized to the needs of gifted females."

Gwendolyn J. Cooke and Alexina Y. Baldwin, authors of the chapter, "Unique Needs of a Special Population," emphasize that "there is a dearth of research and writing on the gifted of the black population"; our task is "to identify these talented persons and give them the best education available."

The Bakke Case Analyzed

One of the most talked-about cases to come before the U.S. Su-

preme Court in recent years was the *Regents of California v. Bakke*.

The basic question posed to the Court was this: Is it permissible for a university to use race as a criterion in admissions to favor members of disadvantaged minority groups? Specifically, Allan Bakke challenged the practice at the medical school of the University of California at Davis of setting aside a fixed number of places (16 out of 100) for disadvantaged applicants of minority groups (blacks, American Indians, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans).

The finding of the U.S. Supreme Court was this: It is impermissible for a university to set aside a fixed number of places for minority group members. However, race may be treated as a relevant factor in admission decisions.

A studied analysis of this highly significant case appears in the February 1979 issue of *Equal Opportunity Review*, which is published by the Institute for Urban and Minority Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027. Kent Greenawald is the author of the analysis.

The Record: The Black Experience in America

Three organizations—the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Council for the Social Studies—joined together earlier this year on a special project, the production of a 16-page tabloid, *The Record: The Black Experience in America*.

The purpose of the tabloid was to create a background for understanding the experience of black people in America from the time of slavery to the present. The tabloid was issued when the American Broadcasting Company televised the sequel to *Roots*, the award-winning, record-breaking TV drama.

Through the use of documents, letters, news reports, and first-hand accounts, the *Record* tells the story of the black struggle for civil and human rights. The publication features a chronology of events, a viewer's guide with questions for discussion, and a bibliography for further study. This unique teaching aid can be used in a number of courses in the school curriculum.

The address of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith is 315 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

Desegregation Strategies: A Report

Progress: A Report of Desegregation Trends in the States, a quarterly publication of the National Project and Task Force on Desegregation Strategies, highlights a speech given by Ohio State Senator M. Morris Jackson, who serves as Chairman of the Ohio Joint Select Committee on School Desegregation.

After a year-long study by the Select Committee, Jackson reported on the conclusions reached:

1. It is important to make the study "responsive to legislators' concerns."
2. We must "educate ourselves on all aspects of the desegregation issue."
3. It is important "to broaden the desegregation issue to attract all potential allies."
4. We must "deal realistically and rationally with the transportation issue."
5. To put an end to school segregation, we "must also put an end to residential segregation."
6. We must "not be afraid to confront the desegregation issue."

There are basically two choices, according to Jackson. "Either state officials can proceed in a piecemeal fashion allowing others to determine

the fate of the schools, through court orders or by cutting off federal funds, or we can initiate desegregation policies in a rational, comprehensive way"

The National Project and Task Force on Desegregation Strategies is jointly sponsored by the Education Commission of the States, The National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Copies of *Progress* are available upon request. The address is Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80295.

Multicultural Canada

Canada, like the United States, is a multicultural nation with all that this suggests for Canadian society and for the education of Canadian children and youth. In this area of ethnic pluralism, there could be a greater sharing of experiences and ideas, and strategies and programs between the educators of both nations. One example of this is a new publication titled *Multicultural Canada: A Teachers' Guide to Ethnic Studies*.

The author, Dean D. Wood, points out what he believes ethnic studies instruction should accomplish. He states that this instruction should guide students to "understand and appreciate the interesting and complex features of Canada's ethnic diversity, past and present; respect their fellow Canadians, regardless of ethnic origin; and value the cultural riches inherent in our ethnic diversity."

Wood describes four models that could be applied to the development of Canadian society: (1) The melting pot, where all ethnic groups would blend to form "a new man"; (2) Anglo-conformity, where all would be assimilated into the British culture; (3) Anglo- and Franco-conformity, where there would be two cultures and languages; and (4) Multicultural-

ism, where each ethnic group would have the opportunity to develop and preserve its culture.

This publication was written to provide answers to some of the questions most commonly raised by Canadian educators regarding ethnic studies, such as: What exactly is ethnic studies? Who should be studied—immigrants, minority groups, or all ethnic groups in Canada? How does ethnic studies relate to Canada studies, social studies, and the total school program? What student goals should be established for ethnic studies units or curricula? Should ethnic studies be interdisciplinary? How should ethnic studies units and curricula be organized? What kinds of instructional materials should be used? Do these materials exist?

This guide to ethnic studies was published by The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6.

Report of U.S. Community Relations Service

In its most recent annual report, the Community Relations Service (CRS) of the U.S. Department of Justice reviews its conciliation and mediation activities for 1978.

The CRS cites its efforts to facilitate peaceful school integration in Los Angeles, New Castle County, Delaware, and several other areas. Indeed, in 1978, school integration was a top priority of this agency.

In addition, the CRS report details efforts to resolve disputes over a number of other matters—affirmative action, community development, and Indian hunting and fishing rights.

Perhaps the major issue of the year, suggests the CRS, is this: Do police routinely and unnecessarily use excessive force against minority groups? "No," say representatives of the police. "Yes," say minority group representatives.

The CRS report also suggests two areas of potentially greater conflict in 1979: (1) Reaction to social service cutbacks because of governmental austerity measures; and (2) Reports of increased activity by the Ku Klux Klan.

In the past year the CRS responded to more than 1,350 potentially serious racial incidents.

State Evaluation and Ethnic Materials

The May-June 1978 issue of *Integration Education* contains an article on textbooks used in American public school social studies classes. It is a summary of a survey assessing the role of state departments of education in evaluating ethnic content.

The majority of states do have textbook evaluation procedures that involve criteria directed to ethnic-oriented content. However, these states utilize a variety of approaches.

The survey makes clear that 14 states have no evaluation procedures. Some of the states are Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and New York.

Jesus Garcia, author of this textbook report, feels that significantly more research and dissemination are needed by and for—"the catalysts in this endeavor"—the state departments of education. "Building on the principles that support a cultural democracy, departments of education must direct their resources, personnel, and influence to redefining the parameters of ethnic content."

The article is titled "State Evaluation of Ethnic Materials."

Reminder to Readers

Readers are invited to submit appropriate items for this column to Max Rosenberg, c/o ASCD, 225 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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