

Self-Directed Learning

Delmo Della-Dora, Gaye McGovern, James D. Wells

In June, comprehensive members of ASCD received a copy of the booklet, **Moving Toward Self-Directed Learning: Highlights of Relevant Research and of Promising Practices**. More than 300 persons filled out a response sheet indicating an interest in doing something more to foster self-directed learning programs. There will be follow-up on these replies. Those who did not receive the booklet (\$4.75) may order it from ASCD, 225 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

The Far West Regional Laboratory has completed a one-year pilot study of a set of materials for community-based, experiential education. The materials (to be available around December 1) include a teacher's handbook (exercises and readings), a film, and a manual for use in staff development. The materials designed for secondary and postsecondary grades provide skills and knowledge for teachers interested in fostering self-direction in students, particularly in using community experiences. Contact Lynn Jenks, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

A **mini-course** built around a self-directed simulation has been developed at Rutgers University for high school grades. Included are maps and data, slide presentations, "social dilemmas" for role-playing, readings, and planned field trips. Developed by the Division of Science and Society at the Center for Coastal and Environmental Studies at Rutgers, the course deals with the impact of offshore oil developments on coastal environments. It is available at no cost. Contact June Paradise Maul, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903.

Citizen Education is a new component of Research for Better Schools

(RBS). These efforts are to "... advocate and promote quality citizen education efforts in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania." Plans include conferences, a search of the literature, and development of prototype citizen education programs. School improvement teams of principals, teachers, students, and other community members are being formed. In 1979-1980, research and evaluation techniques used in citizen education will be initiated. For additional information, contact Barbara Z. Presseisen, Citizen Education Development Division, Research for Better Schools, Suite 1700, 1700 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103.

A **helpful new book**, *Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers* by Malcolm F. Knowles (Chicago: Associated Press, 1975), can be used as a resource for developing skills in self-directed learning. In a step-by-step manner, the author explores the process in which individuals take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. Charts, forms, and check lists that can be reproduced are included for personal and classroom use.

The Responsibility Education Network will begin its third year of operation in Illinois this fall. In all there are 82 elementary and secondary schools involved throughout the state. In the Olympia School District, last year was devoted to defining the characteristics of an "ideal" self-responsible, self-directed learner at all grade levels (K-12). An instrument for assessing these qualities was developed, and a group of teachers and administrators were involved in planning for curriculum and for staff development.

For additional information concerning previous work and plans for 1979-1980, contact Mike Radz, Assistant Superintendent, Olympia Community Unit No. 16, RR 1, Stanford, Illinois 61774.

Maurice Gibbons and Gary Phillips are engaged in a **series of activities** intended to help secondary students, postsecondary students, and other adults become more successful in self-directed learning and personal growth. Both are at Simon Fraser University (British Columbia, Canada) where they are field testing programs and materials based on their previous work.¹ The thrust of their program is to "... seek a form of education that cultivates initiative, independence, responsibility, and the voluntary pursuit of excellence." Their publications include "A Challenge Program in Curriculum Development," aimed at university students; "The Challenge Education Handbook" for teachers; and "Self-Education," a book about the theory and practice of self-education. They also have "Professional Day Multi-Media Package on Self-Education" consisting of handouts; overhead visuals; tapes and films for use in staff development; and videotapes on new roles for students, teachers and parents in self-education. Contact Maurice Gibbons and Gary Phillips, Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Education, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6.

*This column will appear in two issues of *Educational Leadership* this year. It is being prepared by members of ASCD's Project on Self-Directed Learning. If you know of promising programs or helpful publications in this field, please send the information to Delmo Della-Dora, Department of Teacher Education; California State University; Hayward, California 94542.

¹ Maurice Gibbons. "Walkabout: Searching for the Right Passage from Childhood and School." *Kappan* 55; May 1974.

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