

News Notes

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Classroom-on-the-Mall

The Fairfax (Virginia) Public Schools have a unique arrangement with the management and merchants of the Springfield Mall. The teacher-coordinator conducts classes daily from a base office and classroom donated by the mall management. An instructional program in marketing/merchandising is carried out using the Fairfax County-approved curriculum materials; however, the unusual location in a shopping center demands a new attitude and approach to the curriculum on the part of the teacher.

The program can handle up to 50 students from six nearby high schools. Students who participate attend their base school for required and elective subjects, and they travel to the mall to attend the 11 a.m., 2:30 or 3:30 p.m. classes in marketing and distribution. In addition, students are placed in training stations related to their career interests in one of the 180 businesses located at the mall. The course requires 15 hours of on-the-job training a week.

Potential students from each high school are interviewed to determine how the program might best serve their needs. Once they have been accepted into the program, the hour for their class attendance and on-the-job training schedules are coordinated with the student's high school schedule. The student's progress is reported each nine weeks to the home high school. Students are exposed to professionals in the field who are eager to help them. The students must be more aggressive and independent in their learning than in the regular high school course.

The businesses in the mall provide a classroom laboratory. Projects include constant observation in specific areas of study, such as analyzing store layouts, observing successful display techniques, rating the sales abilities of employees, and doing com-

parison shopping. Students do not need to watch the slide presentations on how to construct an effective ad layout, for they work with the advertising staff doing a real one. Students have worked on total mall projects such as developing facts from research to determine future trends and needs.

Advantages to the plan are that travel time and expense are cut for field trips, scheduling is much more flexible, students are getting an in-depth experience with the real thing.

Inservice: Best Practice

Inservice education programs have been a key topic in the enormous body of professional literature in educational supervision. According to Harry Hutson, writing in the Phi Delta Kappa publication *Practical Applications of Research*, "There is near unanimous agreement that a) the current status of inservice practice is deplorable, b) hard research in inservice is meager, c) broad-based conceptualizations are lacking, and d) the very meaning of the word 'inservice' is problematic."

Somehow in all of this there has emerged considerable agreement as to what constitutes "best practices" in inservice education. Hutson reports four statements that could operate as guidelines for improved inservice efforts. These include the following:

1. It is important to involve inservice clients in planning their own programs. This means that data on teacher interests, needs, concerns, and problems ought to be sought and made central to the planning of inservice activities.

2. Incentives for participation in inservice programs should emphasize intrinsic professional rewards. "The corollary to this is that there should not be disincentives, inconvenient

times or locations, or other factors that would penalize participation. The research literature does not support the notion that extrinsic rewards such as extra salary credit, extra pay, and so on will induce teachers to work hard planning or participating in inservice programs if professional motivation is absent."

3. The school site ought to be the locus of inservice activities. "Of course, the exact nature of planned activities should be the determinant of location, but for most purposes the school site has the distinct advantage of being 'job-embedded.'"

4. Inservice education should follow the developmental, not a deficit model. "Teachers are not seen as needing inservice training because they lack the necessary skills to do an effective job. The developmental assumption is that teachers need not be weak in order to become stronger."

Anyone interested in a longer, more complete discussion should send for the booklet, "Inservice Best Practices: The Learnings of General Education," National Inservice Network, Indiana University, 2853 E. Tenth Street, Cottage L, Bloomington, Indiana 47405.

Class Size Again

The National Center for Education Statistics has reported the pupil-teacher ratio down to 20.9 in public elementary schools and 18.1 in high schools. The comparable ratios in 1958 were 28.7 in elementary and 21.7 in high school. Using a somewhat different formula, the NEA recently claimed that average class size was running about 25, and that it would take another 398,000 teachers to reduce all classes to 24 or less. The NEA approach went beyond just dividing the total number of teachers by the total number of students in

calculating load factor for teachers.

In addition, the NCES report, "The Condition of Education—1979," gave several other meaningful statistics:

1. In 1977, 49.5 percent of the children aged three to five were in a pre-school program, while in 1967, 31.6 percent of these children were.

2. The percentage of 18-year-olds graduating from secondary school has leveled off. In 1966, 74.9 percent graduated from high school, and in 1977, 74.7 percent graduated.

3. The percentage of educational costs met by local governments has been declining while the state and federal share has increased. In 1942, local government paid 67.1 percent of educational costs vs. 47.8 percent in 1978; states paid 31.5 percent (1942) vs. 44.1 percent (1978); federal share was 1.4 percent (1942) vs. 8.1 percent in 1978.

4. For 1977, men with a four-year degree earned an average of \$20,625 as compared to \$15,434 for high school graduates. In 1977, female college graduates averaged \$12,656 as opposed to \$8,894 for high school graduates.

5. When adjusted for inflation, teacher salaries have changed very little from 1972 (\$14,750) to 1977 (\$14,995).

A complimentary copy of the 284-page report is available from NCES, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Room 3955, Washington, D.C. 20202.

Teacher Corps vs. Teacher Centers

At recent hearings on Teacher Corps and Teacher Centers, there appeared to be areas of conflict among educators. At a Title V hearing of the Higher Education Act in Wayne, Michigan, the National Education Association made an official statement that "Teacher Corps dollars could better be used for Teacher Centers."

NEA Vice-president Willard McGuire stated that "Teacher Corps

should be abolished and that those federal resources should be redirected toward Teacher Centers." The argument was that Teacher Corps has not accomplished its original goals and is shifting its direction away from teacher training. Also, Teacher Centers had an overlapping purpose—teacher training. Thus in the competition for dollars, the funds should be spent on Teacher Centers, which have greater potential.

At the same hearing, Patricia Weiler, director of AFT's Teacher Center Resource Exchange, recommended full funding for both programs. She stated that AFT supported Teacher Corps' "contribution to the improvement of teacher preservice and inservice education" and its efforts to disseminate information on "successful projects, instructional techniques and strategies that have been generated by Teacher Corps specialists." In addition, AFT proposed a Teacher Corps internship program to assist the beginning teacher in both Title I and other schools.

Entry Room is a Successful Innovation

Lake Stevens, South Dakota, recently experienced a high student mobility rate because of the Boeing influx in Snohomish County. Entry rooms were established in Sunnycrest Elementary School and Lake Stevens Junior High School. The entry room is to deal with new students' attendance problems, self-image problems, and basic skill deficits in reading, math, and spelling. It is aimed at helping the new student feel good about himself and his new school. These students spend three to five days in the entry room before being scheduled and placed in the mainstream. This helps in the adjustment to the new school.

While in the entry room, students receive a battery of self-image indicators, which help determine the student's need for counseling and/or other services. Also, they receive a series of diagnostic tests to determine

academic strengths and weaknesses. Referrals to special education or Title I reading programs may result from these tests. A summary of the student's academic skills is forwarded to the classroom teacher when he/she is assigned. Those who experience adjustment problems or academic difficulties are scheduled for special help, tutoring, or counseling. Student attendance is closely followed.

Under this plan, the entry room staff handles many of the routine activities that normally fall to the classroom teacher, psychologist, counselor, speech therapist, nurse, secretary, and/or principal. Communication with the parents and various specialists within the school system is facilitated this way. The plan has proven to be successful with new students.

Biology Class Analyzes School Lunches

Al Loterbour, West Union (Iowa) biology teacher, has the students of his senior biology class analyze the school lunch as the culminating activity of his nutrition unit. Students, to their surprise, learn that school lunches are balanced and nutritious, and that they provide about a third of all the calories that they need daily.

Students arrive in senior high school with only a minimal understanding of nutrition. If left to their own selection, they frequently do not pick nutritious meals. The school lunch may be the most nutritious meal of the day for many students. Class surveys showed that students received enough calories, but that they filled up on high-calorie "junk foods" rather than eating a well-balanced meal. Also, the survey showed that almost a third of the students did not eat breakfast.

Loterbour believes that homes are not teaching good eating habits, and that parents tend to cater to children's tastes rather than providing them with a well-balanced meal. Convenience foods have enlarged the problem, and as a nation, we buy a lot of fast

foods, carbohydrates, and sugars. Through the experience of analyzing the school lunches, students gain an appreciation of school lunches and their own nutritional needs.

Consumerism

Consumerism among Indiana K-12 and adult students is bound to improve as the recently developed Consumer and Economic Education Guidelines begin to affect the curriculum. The major goals of the project, according to an article in the *Educator's Edition* published by the Indiana Department of Public Instruction, are to teach citizens to:

1. Understand the functioning of the economic, political, and social systems and the ways these systems affect, and are affected by, the individual, family, and other groups.
2. Acquire and use as a consumer sound management and decision-making concepts and tools.
3. Understand the responsibilities and rights of individuals as consumers, producers, and citizens.
4. Use effective communication processes with consumer, producer, government, and other information sources.

The Indiana guidelines are unique since they include a decision-making model, list those consumer and economic education concepts that are said to be necessary for effective and responsible citizenship, include teaching activities, and provide a complete bibliography of supplementary materials.

Teachers, Parents, and Students Agree on Discipline

At a recent series of educational conferences held in Missouri on school discipline, it was determined that educators, citizens, and students were in agreement concerning the major discipline problems in schools. The participants completed opinionnaires in which they selected from a list of

nine possibilities the four most serious discipline problems in schools today. The most frequently selected responses were:

1. Disruptive classroom behavior (80 percent);
2. Students' disrespect for authority (78 percent);
3. Students' apathy for learning (77 percent);
4. Absenteeism (46 percent).

Teachers, administrators, school board members, and parents all selected these in the same order, but students selected "cutting class" for their fourth choice rather than "absenteeism."

Likewise, participants were requested to identify four major causes of discipline problems. The most frequent responses were:

1. Lack of parental knowledge and concern (81 percent);
2. Lack of student motivation (75 percent);
3. General permissiveness of society (74 percent);
4. Lack of teacher ability to manage the classroom (49 percent).

There was complete agreement among the various groups on these responses. Also, there was little difference in the responses based on the size of the respondents' school district.

Firesafe Living Curriculum

"Each year there are nearly three million separate fires and explosions in the United States. They kill more than 12,000 people and cause serious injury to another 300,000. Estimated property damage from fire and explosions is nearly \$4 billion a year." These and other data have persuaded the New York Department of State, in cooperation with the State Education Department and the State Fire Advisory Board, to encourage the use of a "Learn Not To Burn" curriculum for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade.

The "Learn Not To Burn" program, a project of the National Fire Protection Association, includes 25 lessons with objectives, content, and activities in a format that may be used to augment normal classroom activities. Lessons focus on three separate levels: kindergarten through grade two, grades three through six, and grades six through eight.

Topics include the following: "Stop, Drop and Roll"; "Crawl Low"; "Babysitter's Plan"; "Use of Matches"; "Electrical Hazards"; "Installing Smoke Detectors"; "Care With Gasoline"; "Juvenile Firesetting."

For more information, contact the Division of Fire Prevention and Control, Department of State, 162 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12231.

"Hearing Glasses." Essential to Listening Curriculum

"Several years ago, as I reflected upon the progress of my class of first graders and as I assessed their needs, I determined that most of their weaknesses stemmed from an inadequate ability to listen," states Martie Miller in an article in the *NMASC Newsletter* published by the New Mexico Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. "To hear," it should be noted, is the physical ability to be aware of sound, but "to listen" is the mental ability to derive meaning from sounds. Accordingly, Miller began to develop a curriculum that would attempt to teach children to listen with purpose and meaning.

The basic equipment is a pair of Hearing Glasses.* These are blindfolds made for each individual child. "These 'glasses' are always worn during a listening session so that only the auditory modality is stimulated without visual interference."

A typical listening lesson is described as follows:

"I begin with some material for comprehension. Depending upon the

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group's level of achievement, I would read a sentence, a paragraph, a short story, or informational selection or a poem. I read this only once. Then to meet a phonetic or structural skill need of the group I proceed by repeating a series of three words. This series a child repeats and through questioning identifies a given word by placement. A typical lesson includes the presentation of ten to 12 series. At this point, depending on the lesson's objective, the children raise their 'glasses,' and the visual representation or the words heard are presented. The lesson's conclusion is the recall of the initial material read. Here I emphasize and include all elements of comprehension, such as vocabulary, factual recall, literal interpretation, and prediction."

Miller believes that the ability to listen can be taught and should be. She concludes, "My program is built on the premise that the ability 'to hear' does not warrant our assuming they have the ability 'to listen.'"

Ideas for Teaching Outlining

Many teachers report problems in teaching the skills of outlining.

They find that curricula specify outlining, but effective ideas for teaching it are hard to come by. Outlining, of course, is organizing ideas for more comprehensive reading and writing.

According to Phyllis Perry, editor of *The Interchange* (a newsletter published by the Boulder, Colorado, Public Schools), "Too often it seems that students get wrapped up in the structure of the outline itself, rather than in the relationships of the key concepts in the material. Students think 'Roman Numeral One and Capital A' and get blocked by the technique to the point that the system controls them rather than allowing them to control the content."

Students who find it hard to think linearly need a visualization step. Some ideas suggested for this purpose include the following:

Advanced Organizers

1. Choose key words/concepts from a unit that you want your students to know, and list them.

2. Analyze them for relationships. Develop a flow chart to show these relationships.

3. Transfer your framework or concept flow chart to a ditto. List the key words at the bottom of the page.

4. See if your students can put the words in the proper place in the flow chart. Done prior to a unit, this becomes a preview test. Kept on a bulletin board and added to during the unit, it becomes a learning tool. Done following a unit, it becomes a review activity.

Word Webs

1. Have students think of a word or choose a word from a unit you are doing. Write it on paper, and put a box around it.

2. What does that word make the student think of? Connect it to the original. Limits can be set or not as you wish. Some words will be major categories that will have spin-offs of their own. Look for other relationships, and connect the words.

3. Select one "thread," and use those connected words for an essay, poem, report, or other writing activity. This activity is fun for students to do with a partner.

Anyone who would like further information or would like to share ideas on this topic should write Phyllis Perry *The Interchange*, Boulder Valley District RE2, Education Center, 6500 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301.

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