

# News Notes

BOB L. TAYLOR AND ROBERT C. MCKEAN

## ■ BEING GOOD

Brings a tangible reward to students at Lafayette Middle School in Boulder, Colorado. Lafayette's principal, Max McMillan, encourages the school's staff and students to turn in the names of students whose good deeds contribute to school unity, pride, and mutual respect. Good deeds include turning in money they find, breaking up a fight, helping a new student, encouraging a class to work with a substitute teacher, cleaning up litter in the schoolyard, and so forth.

Students who are "caught" are awarded a maroon and white T-shirt inscribed, "I was caught being good at Lafayette Middle School." According to the staff, the T-shirt program is a good way to promote school spirit and a positive climate — and it's fun.

For information, contact Phyllis Perry, Editor, *The Interchange*, Boulder Valley Public Schools, P.O. Box 9011, Boulder, CO 80301.

## ■ CORE CURRICULUM

Philosophy is presented in a recently revised edition of *Core Today: Rationale and Implications*. The position paper, out of print for some time, was developed by the National Association for Core Curriculum for core teachers and others involved in core programs. Also available is a self-evaluation guide for core teachers to rate themselves on the implications.

The paper is available for 50¢ a copy, with discounts for quantity orders. Single copies of the "Self-evaluation Guide" are free (send a stamped, self-addressed envelope). Contact the National Association for Core Curriculum, 407d White Hall, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242.

## ■ STUDENT EATING

Habits have improved at Fairmont Elementary School in New Albany, Indiana, since the school spruced up its cafeteria to make it look like a real dining room with draperies, brightly painted doors, flowering plants, and round wooden tables with

colored plastic chairs. Students serve themselves from bowls and plates on the table. Older students, serving as "hosts" and "hostesses," see that everyone takes a little of everything, as required by federal school lunch regulations.

According to the Director of the Indiana Division of School Food and Nutrition Programs, John J. Harter, "Round tables provide the best seating arrangement at mealtime. In restaurants, adults often choose round tables because they are roomier and each diner can see the faces of the others." The noise level in Fairmont's cafeteria was lower within two weeks after the program began; younger children were watching the older students and starting to taste some new foods. Lunchtime experiences are reinforced by classroom nutrition lessons.

For more information about this program and others contact John J. Harter, Director, School Food and Nutrition Programs, Indiana Department of Public Instruction, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

## ■ STUDENT PUBLICATION

Advisors sometimes find themselves walking a thin line between pressures from eager student journalists who want to provide coverage of items controversial in their communities and school administrators who may be more concerned about public relations than students' First Amendment rights. According to *Newspaper Fund Newsletter*, this conflict has caused several teacher-advisors to lose their jobs or be reassigned.

Michael Simpson, Director of the Student Press Law Center, offers the following suggestions to teachers faced with administrative pressure to compromise students' constitutional rights.

—Keep your nose clean. The courts have indicated a teacher can't be fired for exercising First Amendment rights or for refusing to do an illegal act (censoring a student publication), but if "legitimate grounds"

for firing are found, the dismissal will be upheld in court.

—Adopt student publication guidelines clearly defining your role and responsibility as the faculty sponsor. Make sure they specify your duty is that of teacher and advisor, not censor.

—Educate your administrators about the free press rights of student journalists: give them copies of the Student Press Law Center Manual for Student Expression and the *Tinker* and *Gambino* cases.

—Instill a sense of responsibility in your student writers. Discourage them from writing outrageous articles just to see if they can get away with it.

—Don't fight with the administration over trivial matters, such as the use of four-letter words, articles of questionable taste, or vicious attacks on other students. If you're going to make a sacrifice for freedom of the press, it should be over a substantive issue, such as drug abuse or teenage pregnancy.

—Unionize. A strong union can help avoid harassment and punishment for teacher-advisors who stand up for the rights of student journalists.

For more information or guidance, contact Michael Simpson, Student Press Law Center, 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 Phone: (202) 347-6888.

## ■ NAEP TAPES AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC

Now you may analyze National Assessment data on your own computer. The public-use tapes include documentation of assessment procedures, tape specifications, and information needed to use the tapes with SPSS and OSIRIS-IV, both standard packages of statistical programs. In the past the tapes were designed for NAEP's computer system only and were often difficult to use on other computers.

The data tapes cost \$125 each and are available for: mathematics (1977-78), supplemental mathe-

matics assessment (1975-76), mathematics to assess change (1972-73), science (1976-77), social studies/citizenship (1975-76), and young adult assessment in reading, health, energy, and science (1977).

Other tapes on reading will be available soon. For additional information contact National Assessment, Department of User Services, Suite 700, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, CO 80295. Phone: (303) 830-3745. A brochure describing the tapes may be ordered free from National Assessment.

#### ■ INDIANA'S ENERGY EDUCATION

The Indiana Department of Public Instruction and the Indiana Department of Commerce Energy Group have developed an Energy Education Curriculum Project to help teachers and students understand energy issues.

The Project will:

—Develop and circulate curriculum materials and inservice programs for teachers;

—Select an energy education cadre made up of ten elementary and middle school teachers. Along with two energy education consultants from the Department of Public Instruction, the cadre is available to make presentations at schools and assist local staffs to develop education units, plan field trips, and locate community, state, and national resources;

—Develop Project 2000, a program in which teachers help students develop workable projects and models in the energy field.

For more information contact the Division of Curriculum, Indiana Department of Public Instruction, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

#### ■ HELPING NONSPEAKERS COMMUNICATE

Employees of the Los Angeles Unified School District have developed a piece of equipment that makes it easier for students who cannot use their arms and legs and who cannot speak to activate a switching mechanism that allows them to spell words on an electronic screen.

The device was designed to be mounted on a wheel chair and ad-

justed to individual students so that the switch may be manipulated with a functioning muscle such as a toe or neck muscle. The switch is electronically connected to a Zyglo 100 apparatus on which a light scans letters of the alphabet and numbers on a screen. When the light reaches the desired letter or number, the student trips the switch and the letter or number is printed on a Zyglo subscreen. In this manner, the student spells out words and sentences.

The system was developed through the cooperation of Joe Abel of Widney High School; Hollis Killen, a vocational education adviser; and Richard Becker of North Valley Occupations Center.

#### ■ SOUTH CAROLINA'S TEACHER ASSESSMENT

The assessment tools mandated by the South Carolina Improvement Act 187 are in these various developmental stages:

—The Basic Skills Test must be successfully completed before admission to a teacher preparation program. Domains and skills were established by the Technical Advisory Committee and all pilot study forms are ready for use by selected institutions of higher learning.

—Teaching area examinations are being developed for the ten subject areas not included in the National Teacher Exam. The NTE subject area exams previously taken by college graduates will still be used as one requirement for teacher certification.

—A teacher performance observation instrument will be pilot tested in selected school districts. A consensus of South Carolina educators determined the performance dimensions described in the instrument. Observers have participated in training workshops; all persons involved with evaluation of student teachers and first-year teachers must be trained observers.

After the pilot studies have been concluded, all instruments will be reviewed and revised.

For more information and specific South Carolina contacts, write Ed White, Editor, *Curriculum Network Report*, South Carolina ASCD, 3039 Martindale Road, Columbia, SC 29206.

#### ■ PRE-STUDENT TEACHING FIELD EXPERIENCES SURVEY

Although most teacher education programs provide prospective teachers with some field experiences prior to student teaching, the experiences provided vary considerably. This was one conclusion reached in a national survey of state-supported colleges and universities.

During the winter of 1980-81, Jerry Burns, J. M. Johnson, and Tom Warner of the University of Northern Colorado collected data from over 160 institutions concerning provisions for pre-student teaching field experiences in their teacher education programs. Among their major findings were:

—Early field experiences are interpreted quite differently; some institutions involve students starting their first year; others wait until just prior to student teaching.

—Most institutions rely heavily on nearby public and private elementary and secondary schools, but some in smaller communities arrange for transportation to schools some distance from their campuses.

—Early field experience programs have a dual purpose: career exploration/selection into teacher education and practical learning experiences prior to student teaching. Also, institutions differ on how such experiences relate to admission into teacher education. Some institutions require field experience prior to admission; others schedule it after a student is in teacher education.

#### ■ STARLAB—A PERIPATETIC PLANETARIUM

In answer to tight field trip budgets, Allegany County, New York, schools now have Starlab, a portable planetarium that travels from school to school.

This portable science resource is a fully inflatable polymer dome capable of holding a classroom-size group of students. An ordinary fan can inflate the dome in three minutes. Three thousand stars and 48 constellations are projected on the interior of the completely darkened hemisphere-shaped surface. When deflated, the dome can be rolled up and stored in an oversize duffle bag.

Materials include an extensive teacher's guide and cassette tapes

narrated by an astronomer who takes the audience on 25-minute tours of the night sky. Each tape presents the night sky at the height of one of the four seasons.

Joseph R. Hill, director of Educational Communications, explains the planetarium's value, "If we amortize the cost over a five-year period, it means we're making this resource available to schools at an average cost of \$64 per school per year."

For more information contact Joseph R. Hill, Allegany BOCES, 6 South Street, Belmont, NY 14813.

## Research on Teaching

JANET FLEGG

### ■ OBSERVATION CAN IMPROVE TEACHING

Feedback. Without it, people sometimes can't tell if what they're doing is right or wrong. If time is ample, people can provide their own feedback by observing the consequences of their actions, but most teachers have neither a critical adult to give them feedback nor time to do it themselves.

Sometimes, simple but invisible problems can be quickly spotted by other teachers. For example, when working with a reading group, many teachers sit with their back to the rest of the class, making it difficult to monitor the class. An observant colleague can spot such things and help the teacher become aware of them.

Jere Brophy and Tom Good suggest the following classroom-observation guidelines:

—Collect behavioral data from the classroom.

—Identify problems or possible focal areas for teacher development suggested by data.

—If possible, identify how the teacher is more effective in one area than another, so changes involve extending existing behavior to new situations (or being more consistent)

rather than switching to entirely new behaviors.

—Describe the problem as you see it, but allow teachers to give explanations before suggesting changes (maybe there's a good reason for behavior that seems ineffective).

—Pinpoint specific differences in teacher behavior and suggest specific changes.

—If the teacher agrees, engage in mutual problem solving until explicit changes are agreed on.

—Specify exactly what the changes will be.

—Arrange to get additional data to evaluate the degree to which the teacher has changed and to identify any possible effects, direct or indirect.

—Hold a debriefing session to review study results and reevaluate suggested behavior.

For further information, send for IRT Occasional Paper No. 21, *Using Observation to Improve Your Teaching*, by Jere E. Brophy, \$1.50. To order, send check, money order, or *prepaid* purchase order (payable to Michigan State University) to IRT Publications, 252 Erickson, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. (Michigan residents should add 4 percent state sales tax.)

### ■ PLANNING CALLED "CORE OF TEACHING"

Most work on making schools more effective focuses on improving teaching techniques and strategies, curriculums, and materials. Little or no effort goes into improving teacher planning, but, according to Christopher M. Clark and Robert J. Yinger, effort devoted to teacher planning pays off. After doing a number of studies on teacher planning, Clark and Yinger report the following findings and suggestions:

—Elementary teachers spend an average of 12 hours per week planning, but that planning time is hard to come by. Clark and Yinger suggest administrators set aside some inservice days for individual and group teacher planning.

—Extra planning time is important during the first few weeks of school because it is then that rules, routines, schedules, grouping, and expectations are pilot tested and set for the entire school year.

—Teacher planning transforms curriculum into instruction. New curriculums should be comprehensively introduced and analyzed by teachers during the previous spring for most effective teacher planning the next year.

—Clark and Yinger suggest that teachers keep journals, detailed records of their planning and the results, and perhaps share these with each other in inservice meetings. This way teachers become researchers of their own teaching.

For further information, send for IRT Research Series No. 77, *The Hidden World of Teaching: Implications of Research on Teacher Planning*, by Christopher M. Clark and Robert J. Yinger, \$2. Send check, money order, or *prepaid* purchase order (payable to Michigan State University) to IRT Publications, 252 Erickson, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. (Michigan residents should add 4 percent state sales tax.)

### ■ STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS AFFECT TEACHING

"That kid has caused trouble since the day she was born, and I know she's going to be a real troublemaker in my class." What student characteristics would cause a teacher to make such an accusation? What effect on a student would such an expectation have? Researchers Jere Brophy and Carolyn Evertson (with Linda Anderson, Michael Baum, and John Crawford) addressed these questions and more in the Student Attribute Study, a research project designed to "study individual differences in students by identifying student attributes associated with contrasting teacher expectations, attitudes, and behavior."

In 27 classes in six urban elementary schools, the researchers collected teacher self-report data and made classroom observations. Several times during the school year, the teachers ranked each of their students on 13 seven-point scales.

The scales measured student attributes that previous research had suggested as correlates of teacher expectations, attitudes, and behavior. A few of the scales were, for example, careful vs. careless, mature vs. immature, happy vs. unhappy, attrac-

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