

# News Notes

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## ■ PRESCHOOL PAYS OFF

Preschool not only prevents problems but increases the effectiveness and efficiency of later schooling, according to a study by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

Half of a group of 123 disadvantaged Black children attended Perry Preschool in Ypsilanti, Michigan, during the years 1962-1967, and half did not have any early training. Children selected for the study had IQs ranging from 70 to 85 and most of their parents had only an elementary school education.

Following student progress from preschool to the present revealed these major findings:

1. Children who attended preschool scored higher on reading, arithmetic, and language achievement tests at all grade levels. By age 15, children who attended preschool tested 8 percent higher.

2. By the end of high school, 19 percent of the subjects who attended preschool were placed in special education classes compared to 39 percent of those who did not attend preschool.

3. Children who attended preschool showed less tendency to display antisocial behavior. Of the 15-year-olds who attended preschool, 36 percent were chronic offenders, while 52 percent of those who did not attend were offenders.

4. Early indications are that subjects who attended preschool, now ages 19 to 22, show a higher high school completion rate, greater potential for college, less dependency on welfare, higher employment potential, and lower arrest rates.

A complete report of the study, *Young Children Grow Up: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 15*, is available for \$8 from Monograph Series, High/Scope Press, 600 N. River Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Phone: (313) 485-2000.

## ■ IMPROVING SOUTHERN SCHOOLS

A 25-step program for raising

the quality of education in the South's public schools and colleges was recommended at the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board. Recommendations to improve teacher quality, evaluate student achievement both in colleges and schools, and strengthen cooperation among all levels of education were developed by the Task Force. The report, *The Need for Quality*, emphasizes the urgency to make educational improvements and declares that "continued duplication of efforts, ineffective programs that do not meet their objectives, rigid institutional arrangements that do not fit today's reality cannot continue to prevail."

The report outlines 25 steps to increase the quality of teachers and other school personnel; raise curriculum standards in high schools, colleges, and vocational programs; and foster a stronger partnership between schools and colleges at state and local levels.

Copies of the report, *The Need for Quality*, \$3 from Southern Regional Education Board, 130 6th Street, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30313. Phone: (404) 875-9211.

## ■ TEEN NEWSPAPER COVERS HOT ISSUES

Student-written newspapers often concern principals, school board members, and teacher sponsors. But one Chicago newspaper offers an interesting alternative.

Published once a month during the school year, *New Expression* is the largest teen-run newspaper in the nation. Its circulation of 70,000 makes it the third largest newspaper in Chicago.

Articles are written by teens about teen issues considered important by staff members who are from public and private schools in the city. Teen reporters suggest story ideas and recent headlines have included: "Who Grades the Teacher? Students Want the Job," "Politicians Hunt Votes and Not Teens," and "Whatever Happened to Hang-outs?"

Articles are not tame; many deal

with personal issues such as drugs, sex, violence, family relationships, and gangs. Some are in-depth, carefully researched pieces about school problems.

Students receive no academic credit and none of the hours worked counts toward graduation. The attraction of this voluntary, after-school effort seems to be the chance to do more than voice adult opinions. At *New Expression* students write about problems and issues they feel are important while refining journalism skills in a realistic setting.

More information about the paper is available from Sister Ann Heintz, Director, *New Expression*, in care of *Changing Schools*, TC Annex 1, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306.

## ■ COMPUTERS SAVE TYPESETTING EXPENSES

Rising costs of typesetting school newspapers may be reduced by using word-processing systems found in many schools.

Students type stories on this equipment, review a preliminary printed version with advisers and student editors, make copy changes on the equipment, and end up with a paste-up quality printout on photo-master paper.

The micro-computer is also useful for creating inexpensive "type" on equipment existing in many schools. The printer needed to produce type for a school newspaper should be capable of "letter-quality" capital and lower case letters. This printer is probably the most expensive piece of equipment identified here but is vital to the production of paste-up ready materials.

A micro-computer set-up that would do the job costs from \$5,000 to \$7,000, depending on the manufacturer. The components needed are: a TV, disk drives, printer and communications device, and a word-processing program.

## ■ INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

An instrument specifying 25 practices basic to individualized instruction is

in use in Washington State to assess how well schools satisfy the individual needs of learners.

The instrument may be used by teachers for self-assessment or by outside observers and has also been used to compare classes and schools.

According to Frederick Gies, writing in *Context and Conflict* published by the Washington ASCD, research leading to the development of the Inventory of Individualized Instruction and Learning (IIIL) was grounded in the belief that observable behaviors or practices characterizing individualized instruction occur to varying degrees in instructional settings.

Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "almost never" to "almost always" observers identify and rank the following 25 items:

1. Measurable objectives for learning experience and instruction are in written form.

2. Objectives are communicated to students.

3. Students engage in learning activities as a result of measurable objectives.

4. Objectives differ among students.

5. Students are involved in the selection and/or specification of objectives.

6. Students are able to explain why they are engaged in their present activities.

7. Students are involved in the selection and/or specification of the materials to be used.

8. Assessment procedures are an integral part of the learning process.

9. Various assessment procedures are used (paper and pencil tests, work samples, demonstrations).

10. The same assessment technique is not used for an entire class simultaneously.

11. Assessment results are interpreted to students on an individual and/or small group basis.

12. A student changes learning activities as a result of assessment.

13. Students are encouraged to request that they be assessed.

14. Students are permitted to move around the classroom freely.

15. Different learning modes are used (large group, small group, independent study and one-to-one).

16. Student composition of the learning modes changes.

17. Cross-age and/or peer group teaching is employed in the instructional area supervised by the teacher.

18. During teacher-directed instruction, different teaching methods are employed.

19. A variety of learning materials are used simultaneously by students in the classroom area.

20. A variety of audiovisual equipment is available for use in the classroom.

21. A variety of audiovisual equipment is used in the classroom.

22. Learning materials encompass the range of achievement levels within the group.

23. Students use the school library or resource center.

24. A management system exists that shows objectives at the different levels or stages within a subject area for each student.

25. The management system affords easy access to information concerning student progress for the teacher, student, and parents.

Copies of the instrument are available from Frederick Gies, Dean, School of Education, Seattle University, Seattle, WA 98122.

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## Research on Teaching

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JANET FLEGG

### ■ POOR READERS DON'T READ MUCH

Poor readers get to read, on the average, less than half as many words in elementary school as good readers. And they have few opportunities to practice silent reading. "This deficit," says researcher Richard Allington, "may be a contributing factor to the underachievement of poor readers."

Allington reports that in comparison to good readers, poor readers spend less time reading, typically receive fewer opportunities to respond, are more likely to have their oral reading interrupted if they make an error, and are more likely to have their attention directed to phonics and punctuation than meaning and syntax.

The effect of frequent interruptions of oral reading and little time spent on silent reading is that poor readers have less opportunity to derive meaning from what they read than do good readers, less chance to enjoy reading.

Allington stresses the importance of increasing reading experiences for poor readers and suggests strategies for teachers to consider:

First, increase the amount of silent reading instruction and experience for poor readers. Second, consider assigning more independent reading to poor readers. Perhaps an aide could listen to retellings of material read independently by poor readers to help them concentrate on meaning.

"It is important that poor readers be given the opportunity to increase their reading experiences," says Allington. "How one chooses to accomplish this is of less concern."

For more information, send for IRT Occasional Paper No. 31, *Poor Readers Don't Get to Read Much*, by Richard Allington, \$1.75. 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 a 4 percent state sales tax.)

### ■ WHAT DO STUDENTS LIKE TO READ?

Are teachers accurate at predicting what their students like to read? Not very, say IRT researchers Joe Byers and Thomas Evans, but they can improve their accuracy. And if teachers are more accurate in their predictions, they can better select books that their students will enjoy.

Byers and Evans asked elementary-school students to select books from Scholastic Press brochures that they would like to read, then asked teachers to predict which books their students had chosen. Researchers then developed a list of 29 book cues, such as sports, poetry, or danger, that children and teachers might use in selecting one book over another.

Using statistical analysis, they found that students chose books in a predictable manner and not randomly. The researchers also reported that teachers found the task of predicting their students' book selections to be one "that they could respond to in a systematic fashion." In making their predictions, teachers used many of

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