

the administration and "no particular friends of theirs."

Modern supervision calls for the supervisor to be a helping person, a change-agent, working toward the improvement of teaching and learning. The author believes, "All the helping functions . . . go for naught and will not increase trust or confidence when supervisors are called upon to judge professional competence and to recommend reward, demotion, remediation, or dismissal for teachers." Today's supervisor is playing roles that are contradictory and possibly mutually exclusive.

The first step toward dealing with the supervisory mess, asserts Christenbury, would be to abolish the present role of the supervisor as we know it. "Even the name supervisor should be deleted." She would separate the function of evaluating teachers for rating from the function of evaluating teachers for improvement. Summative assessment of teachers would be done by a group of teachers and administrators in accordance with a set of criteria and a procedure developed by the professional staff. The need for instructional improvement would be approached by a "methodology person" who is trained in the purely clinical aspects of supervision. This person would help teachers who request assistance, aid teachers whose evaluations were poor, and coordinate and direct the inservice activities of the school. Christenbury believes, "It would be wise to disassociate this position from the administration and from the teachers alike, making it an intermediary one between the two and not tied to one faction or the other."

Christenbury concludes, "Through a competent administrator fulfilling bureaucratic functions, a board of teachers and administrators evaluating, and a neutral party helping instruction, it would seem that the traditional business of supervising in school systems would be vastly improved, if not mildly revolutionized."

#### ■ CHECK POINTS FOR IMPROVED INSERVICE

Inservice education is mismanaged. Eugene V. Gallelli, writing in the New York State ASCD publication *Impact*, analyzed his experience as participant, observer, and trainer to come up with the "fruitless five" characteristics of inadequate, "go nowhere" inservice:

1. The "nobody-can-tell-anybody-

why-the-training-is-being-held-in-the-first-place," syndrome

2. Participants treated like recorders with no play-back capabilities for sharing impressions and/or reactions

3. The "Hi-I'm-the-instructor-let's-sign-up-for-presentations-so-you-can-teach-the-rest-of-the-course" model

4. Lack of a clear delineation of the skills and knowledge participants are expected to acquire as a result of the training sessions

5. Lack of a realistic opportunity to utilize those skills to be acquired in a productive and beneficial experience.

The author, presently a coordinator of instruction and elementary school principal, offers key check points for improved inservice education as follows:

1. Communicate a "reason for being"

2. Describe, discuss, and distribute the desired outcomes (objectives) of the training

3. Promote an atmosphere of success

4. Reinforce each participant's commitment to the training or its applications in subsequent programs by differentiating some of the activities to satisfy individual needs

5. Make available the information and resources necessary for achieving success

6. Be constantly aware of the variety of preferred learning styles that exist in individuals and vary the workshop activities accordingly

7. If the training is directed, wholly or in part, at developing new or innovative programs and/or educational changes, spend time predicting the "road blocks" that might arise or already exist

8. Leave the participants a little "hungry"

9. Encourage participants to spread the word

10. Strive for an atmosphere that encourages open, honest interaction

11. Follow up and assist teachers in implementing their newly developed skills and competencies in the classroom.

Gallelli concludes, "Carefully thought out inservice education, with all its headaches, hard work, and frustrations, remains one undeniable key to program success. More often than not, the talent for planning and conducting

successful inservice workshops exists, often in large numbers, within the confines of the school itself."

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## Research on Teaching

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JANET FLEGG EATON

#### ■ WHAT DO STUDENTS LEARN FROM SEATWORK?

First-graders think they do seatwork primarily to get it done. "This is just our work," most say when asked to explain why they're doing a particular assignment.

A recent study reporting that elementary students spend up to 70 percent of their instructional time doing seatwork led IRT researchers Linda Anderson, Gerald Duffy, Nancy Brubaker, and Jan Alleman-Brooks to observe eight first-grade classrooms in four Title I schools. While data collection and analysis are not complete, some preliminary findings have emerged.

Students seem oriented to "content coverage" rather than "content mastery." Whether this is desirable is not known.

The researchers noted that few teachers' instructions "included specific statements about the content-related purposes of assignments." Instead, teachers focused on telling the children exactly what to do. "In addition," said Anderson, "teacher feedback following completion of work often consisted of statements about the correctness of answers and directions for what to do next, but not reminders about the purpose. . . ." It is not yet known whether a change in teacher behavior would change student perceptions of seatwork purposes.

Although students often don't understand their seatwork, some (although not all) low achievers develop strategies for finishing. For example, they learn to copy the right words off the board or to ask their neighbors the right questions. The researchers suspect that some low achievers are used to not understanding seatwork, and thus don't think a lack of understanding on any particular assignment unusual enough to warrant action. Anderson and her colleagues will study

this phenomenon in detail as they continue data analysis.

For more information, send for IRT Research Series No. 102, *Student Responses to Seatwork: Implications for the Study of Students' Cognitive Processing*, by Linda M. Anderson, \$2.50. Ordering information follows.

#### ■ READING DIAGNOSIS DOESN'T

"There seems to be no connection between diagnosis and remediation of reading difficulties," says IRT teacher investigator Annette Weinshank.

Weinshank asked eight experienced, credentialed, practicing reading specialists, four from Michigan and four from Illinois, to examine three simulated reading-difficulty cases to "(1) make diagnostic judgments, (2) prepare initial remediation plans, and (3) associate given remediations with diagnostic statements."

Each simulated case, developed by the IRT Clinical Studies Project, was a collection of information (cues) containing achievement test scores, information about the child's family and academic background, cognitive ability data, group and individual reading diagnostic measures, information about the child's classroom, and so on.

"The likelihood of any two clinicians agreeing on statements characterizing a given case ranged from small to nonexistent," Weinshank said. The likelihood of clinicians agreeing with themselves about a case and its replicate wasn't much better. "Even at its best, clinician reliability was markedly inadequate," she said.

Her data unambiguously demonstrate that the clinicians studied were not reliable diagnosticians. They believed they were acting consistently, but in fact they collected a great deal of information in an unpredictable fashion and interpreted most of it idiosyncratically.

Across the four cases only 31 specific remedial/diagnostic associations out of the 654 made were repeated across two or more sessions.

Weinshank speculates that perhaps reading specialists feel they must mystify what they do to merit respect. She said, "Perhaps the painful reality is that most diagnoses are embarrassingly inflated and clinicians know that such diagnoses ought not to be taken seriously when it comes to remediation. Similarly, clinicians may understand all too well the limited range of action alternatives open to them, but may feel that

professional mystique compels them to engage in clinical overkill."

Perhaps, speculated Weinshank, clinicians' behavior is inconsistent because they often don't see the results of their diagnoses and remediations. They don't know what works and what doesn't.

Neither these nor Weinshank's other speculations flatter remedial reading specialists. But the results of this study are clear and demand attention. Said Weinshank: "The near-chaotic state of diagnosis and remediation cannot go unchallenged."

For more information, send for IRT Research Series No. 72, *An Observational Study of the Relationship Between Diagnosis and Remediation in Reading*, by Annette Weinshank, \$2.75. Ordering information follows.

#### ■ TEACHERS' CONTENT COMMITMENTS

Teachers allocate more time to subjects they consider important. For example, teachers who feel mathematics should be emphasized allocate over 50 percent more time to math than other teachers, IRT researchers Margret Buchmann and Bill Schmidt discovered.

Members of the Language Arts Project staff observed in six elementary school classrooms and asked teachers to fill out questionnaires, thus obtaining data on actual time allocation and on teachers' content commitments.

And, if more time is allocated to mathematics, less time is allocated to social studies and vice versa. One teacher who felt social studies should receive below average emphasis spent no time teaching social studies and 60 minutes each day teaching math. None of the teachers studied thought both subjects worthy of extra emphasis.

Whether a teacher enjoyed teaching a subject was also looked at by the two researchers. All the teachers reported enjoying teaching reading and language arts to varying degrees. The more they enjoyed teaching reading and language arts, the more time they allocate to those subjects. Regarding math and social studies, teacher response ranged from thorough enjoyment to "no particular enjoyment," reported Buchmann and Schmidt. Science was the only curricular area teachers reported they didn't enjoy teaching at all.

Buchmann and Schmidt conclude that teachers' content-emphasis judgments reflect, among other things and to varying degrees, "the commitment that

teachers have to content, their attitudes toward teaching certain areas of the curriculum, and teachers' sense of their own competence in teaching these areas."

For more information, send for IRT Research Series No. 83, *The School Day and Content Commitments*, by Margret Buchmann and William H. Schmidt, \$2.75. Ordering information follows.

#### ■ TEACH WHAT YOU TEST

Does your mathematics textbook include all the material your standardized test covers? Probably not, say researchers working on the Institute for Research on Teaching's Content Determinants Project. Focusing on the fourth-grade mathematics curriculum, researchers analyzed textbooks published by Addison Wesley, Houghton-Mifflin, and Scott Foresman.

"All three books reflect the current back-to-basics and minimal competency trends in their common emphasis on computational skills," says project coordinator Andrew Porter. As a result, 50 to 60 percent of the problems in each book are consistent with this focus. "However, there is less agreement in other areas of the curriculum, so that more than half of the specific topics covered across the three books are unique to the book in which they appear."

None of the three books provide a close content match with the four standardized tests the group analyzed: Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT), Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (IOWA).

The closest match is between the Scott-Foresman textbook and the MAT; 74 percent of the tested topics are covered in the textbook. At the other extreme, only 53 percent of the SAT tested topics are covered in the Addison-Wesley text.

Researchers conclude that school districts need to consider content analyses such as these when interpreting standardized test scores and selecting textbooks and tests.

For more details, send for IRT Research Series No. 82, *The Fourth-Grade Mathematics Curriculum as Inferred From Textbooks and Tests* by D.J. Freeman and others, \$2.50. Ordering information follows.

## ■ DOES THEORY TRANSFER TO PRACTICE?

Reading theory governs a teacher's instructional decisions about reading, right? Wrong. At least that's what recent research on teaching indicates. Most teachers work under conditions and pressures that make it difficult, if not impossible, to put abstract theories and conceptions into practice.

Researcher Gerald Duffy found that most teachers base their instructional decisions on their students' abilities, commercial reading materials, and the need for maintaining activity flow. "In real classrooms," says Duffy, "teachers focus on activities rather than objectives."

This may be because prospective teachers are not taught enough about instruction to implement their theories of reading. Not having a way to implement their theories, teachers depend on basal texts for instructional ideas.

What can be done? Reading educators must give prospective teachers more instructional help if teachers are to effectively apply reading theories to classroom instruction. Duffy says that they must educate teachers to deal with theory within the instructional realities of the classroom. Failure to do so may give rise to explicit teaching scripts within which theory is embedded.

For more details, send for IRT Research Series No. 98, *Theory to Practice: How Does it Work in Real Classrooms?* by G.G. Duffy, \$2.50.

To order, write to: IRT Publications, 252 Erickson, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824. Michigan residents should add 4 percent sales tax.

# Learning Styles

RITA DUNN AND  
NANCY RECKINGER

## ■ SCHOOLING STYLES

Robert Fizzell's Schooling Styles Inventory assesses variables in cognitive style, time structure, and social environment needs associated with success or failure in school programs.

According to Fizzell, individualizing through alternative programs avoids the

conflicts and demands on the teacher that occur when many students with different learning styles are grouped in one setting.

Fizzell claims that success in school depends on the right match of learning and school styles, plus an adequate academic self-concept. He suggests that students choose from as many as 20 schooling structures varied in terms of their organization of time, social structure, and instructional methods designed to meet combinations of learning style variables.

Because of the multidimensional and dynamic nature of learning style, he stresses that students have a "predominant mode" but should be allowed flexibility to participate in more than one form of schooling.

Group Instructional programs needed are:

1. Large traditional, regular schedule
2. Large traditional, flexible schedule
3. Small traditional, regular schedule
4. Small traditional, flexible schedule
5. Self-contained classroom
6. Open classroom.

Peer Study programs needed include:

7. Liberal arts, segmented time (bells ring, classes change)
8. Liberal arts, concentrated time
9. General studies, segmented time
10. General studies, concentrated time
11. Special studies.

Fizzell suggests self-instructional programs institutionalizing traditionally non-institutionalized activities:

12. Personalized self-instruction
13. Self-Instruction—strong peer interaction
14. Self-Instruction—impersonal
15. Teacher-directed programmed instruction
16. Machine instruction.

And, Tutorial programs differentiated by social environment preferences:

17. Personalized
18. Strong peer interaction
19. Impersonal
20. Peer tutoring.

Fizzell is currently conducting a major research study continuing his work of ten years.

For further information contact Robert L. Fizzell, Department of Educa-

tional Foundations, Western Illinois University, Stipes Hall 456, Macomb, IL 61455.

## ■ MATH MAP MODIFIED

The Cognitive Style Map has been modified for mathematics in grades four to six. This elementary math map has 56 items, which are simply and easily scored, covering theoretical symbols and their use, qualitative symbols, cultural determinants, and modalities of inference. For more information contact Iris M. Carl, Mathematics Specialist, Houston ISD, Houston, TX or Howard L. Jones, Curriculum and Instruction, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77004.

## ■ SCHOOLING STYLES MATCHED

Conceptual matching was the basis for developing four learning environments at Yucaipa High School in California under the auspices of an ESEA Title IV-C grant.

Director John Porter narrowed the school styles to Lecture-large group instruction; Traditional teacher-directed instruction; Student-directed independent study; and an Audio-Tutorial instructional environment. Subsequently the first and second merged leaving three distinct schooling styles.

As the program developed the conceptual matching test was supplemented by parent-teacher-student input which was found to be at least as reliable as the test results.

A great deal was learned during the course of the project involving materials development, staff support, and teacher selection procedures that supports efforts to diversify learning environments. Beyond the basic teacher characteristics of liking students, having high energy, and knowledge of subject areas common to all good teaching, the need for identifying teachers who are inclined toward doing the things that are needed in a given school style is important.

For more information contact Lynn Pletcher, Principal, Yucaipa High School, 33000 Yucaipa Blvd., Yucaipa, CA 92399; or the Project Director, John Porter who is now Principal at Chino High School, 5572 Park Pl., Chino, CA 91710.

## ■ PRIMARY CHILDREN'S STYLES EXPLORED

*Early Years*, a national early childhood journal, devoted its January and Febru-

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