

children of different cultural backgrounds function poorly in conventional American schools because of the contrast between family influences and our educational system. However, 150 socio-economically low, Mexican American first graders were divided into two groups: one taught through the ethno-cultural Ramirez-Castaneda model which emphasizes identified cultural characteristics and advocates small-group instruction and the other through an individualized approach directed at mastering specific instructional objectives. A silent reading test determined both initial achievement and retention after 15 days.

In every aspect, the youngsters exposed to the Ramirez-Castaneda approach performed *less* well than those taught in the individualized, objectives-based program.

Reference: A. Alan Cohen and Samuel Rodriguez, "Experimental Results That Question the Ramirez-Castaneda Model for Teaching Reading to First Grade, Mexican Americans," *The Reading Teacher* (October 1980): 12-18.

## Education Resources

NANCY CARTER MODRAK

### ■ GRADING STUDENT WRITING

Grading student papers is a challenge for any teacher, regardless of subject area or grade level. A new booklet from the National Council of Teachers of English, *Measure for Measure: A Guidebook for Evaluating Students' Expository Writing*, offers clear procedures for making the evaluation of student papers a rational process, focused on the student's development as a writer.

The book was developed and tested in the field, prepared by a team of English teachers in the Berkshire County, Massachusetts, public schools. It covers evaluation techniques with emphasis on holistic scoring, and offers guidelines for helping students see expository writing as a step-by-step process. It enables

teachers faced with heavy paper loads to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Using examples of student writing, the authors show teachers how to avoid discouraging the writer and how to explain what the student can do to improve problem areas. It helps teachers of all subjects and grades to focus on the most significant features of student papers and to offer comments and criticism that directly respond to student needs.

A 32-page paperback, *Measure for Measure* is available for \$3 (\$2.50 for NCTE members) from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801. Phone: (217)328-3870; stock number 30976.

### ■ MATH IN THE REAL WORLD

The Agency for Instructional Television is distributing a new VideoKit on math for 9th and 10th graders to help them see the connection between math and life. *Math Wise* encourages general mathematics students to use their math skills at home, on the job, and in the marketplace. Using documentary and dramatic segments, the series helps students explore mathematics skills and concepts and their application to everyday problems.

The *Math Wise* VideoKit includes a teacher's guide and four videocassettes containing twelve 15-minute programs organized into four modules based on the mathematical processes of measuring, comparing, locating/interpreting, and predicting. Each program focuses on a general mathematics topic, such as formulas, proportion, probability, and statistical sampling, and illustrates problem-solving techniques such as drawing a diagram, looking for a pattern, checking assumptions, and using a resource.

The *Math Wise* series was developed by 25 state and provincial education agencies under the management of AIT (a nonprofit American-Canadian organization) with additional support from Exxon Corporation and Shell Companies Foundation Inc.

The VideoKit may be purchased for \$475 from AIT. For further information, contact Sylvia Straub or Randolph Pitzer, Agency for Instructional Television, Box A, Bloomington, IN 47402. Phone: (800)457-4509.

### ■ WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE GIFTED

Approximately three million American students are classified as gifted and talented. In a 1978 publication sponsored

by the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC), *On Being Gifted*, 20 gifted young people describe how "giftedness is a way of thinking, a style of thought, and an attitude." They present vignettes of their growing up years and offer suggestions for educational enrichment programs.

*On Being Gifted* is available at local book stores for \$7.95, or may be purchased for \$5.95 per copy from AAGC.

A companion piece to *On Being Gifted* is a hot-off-the-press resource book, *The Gifted Child, the Family, and the Community*, written by members and associates of AAGC. The book, addressed to parents, community leaders, librarians, artists, and others, includes articles on the needs of the gifted, the anxieties faced by their parents, gifted children and the public library, and more.

Copies of *The Gifted Child, the Family, and the Community* may be purchased from local book stores for \$17.50, or for \$14 each from AAGC, 15 Gramercy Park, New York, NY 10003.

### ■ DECLINING ENROLLMENT

While the number of high schools could continue dropping until the year 2000, K-8 enrollment may bottom out in 1984 and begin to rise again in 1986, according to a recent report by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). *Declining Enrollment—Closing Schools: Problems & Solutions* takes a close look at possible answers to the problems associated with declining enrollment in elementary and secondary schools, and emphasizes what school administrators have been learning over the past ten years in dealing with the decline.

The report explains why expenses do not rise and fall in proportion to enrollments, how schools can improve the services they provide to students who require individualized attention, and how some school districts have managed to improve their services by reorganizing. The four-year high school, the report states, is regaining popularity. In Seattle, for instance, two-year middle schools were created when junior highs were closed and ninth graders were moved to senior high schools. Most important, school administrators have learned the value of involving the community in planning a response to declining enrollment. When citizens can understand the problem and help seek

solutions, they're far more willing to accept the remedy.

*Declining Enrollment — Closing Schools* is available for \$10.95 per copy, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. Write to Critical Issues Report, AASA, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, VA 22209 (specify stock number 021-00850). For further information, contact Gary Marx, Associate Executive Director, phone: (703)528-0700.

#### ■ GETTING HELP FOR CUTTING BACK

*Retrenchment in Education: Selected ERIC Resources* includes more than 130 practical and theoretical resources related to retrenchment in elementary/secondary and higher education. The booklet is designed to help administrators and planners faced with declining enrollments and dwindling resources. It covers such topics as reduction in force, alternative uses of school buildings, school closings, and practical ways to save money. All citations are annotated and informative.

*Retrenchment in Education*, compiled by Michael J. Butler, is available for \$5 from Publication Sales, ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036. Contact Dean Schwanke, User Services Specialist, phone: (202)293-2450.

#### ■ BRIGHT IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

*Bright Idea* is a bright idea itself. Published by The Home and School Institute, this 112-page workbook in comic book format gives practical solutions to typical family conflicts and learning problems. HSI is a national nonprofit organization that urges the development of parents as children's most important teachers.

In vignettes of daily life, the book's "Hilty family" shows what happens in typical family conflicts, offers a bright idea to turn each problem around, and lets readers fill in their own bright ideas and new solutions. The Hilty family episodes deal with money, health, discipline, communication, and organizational skills—all areas parents can work on with their children at home.

*Bright Idea* is given as a thank-you gift to anyone making a \$16 minimum tax-deductible contribution in support of HSI's work. Send checks to The Home and School Institute, Inc., c/o Trinity College, Washington, DC

20017. For more information, call HSI's Special Projects Office at (202) 466-3633.

#### ■ GUIDE TO INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

Audiovisual and other media used in education are the topics of the new *Instructional Media Library*, consisting of 16 clothbound volumes. Fifteen volumes cover specific media; the 16th volume is an annotated bibliography of additional resources.

Released this autumn by Educational Technology Publications, the *Instructional Media Library* covers books, other print materials, community resources, display boards, filmstrips, instructional materials centers, microforms, motion pictures, multi-image media, overhead projection, photography, real objects and models, slides, still pictures, television production, and videodiscs.

Each volume is priced at \$13.95; the media bibliography is \$18.95. Individual volumes or the entire set may be purchased from Educational Technology Publications, 140 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

#### ■ GIVING TO THE GIFTED

*Parent Guide to Resources for the Gifted*, published by Resources for the Gifted, Inc., is a pocket-sized booklet that includes over 50 pages of recommended books, strategy games, and gift items selected especially for use with gifted children. It features a picture and

description of each item, appropriate age level, and price. The book also includes a state-by-state list of organizations of interest to parents, and two sections about gifted and talented children: "How Smart Are We About Our Gifted Kids?" and "Nonsense and Common Sense, A Realistic Look at the Needs of the Gifted Child."

The book is available for \$2 per copy (discounts for quantity orders) from Resources for the Gifted, Inc., 3421 N. 44th St., Phoenix, AZ 85018.

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**Note to Readers:** The authors of these columns welcome feedback and contributions. Address items to Editor, *Educational Leadership*, 225 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

#### Index to Advertisers

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| American Guidance Service.....        | 339                                       |
| Canter & Associates, Inc. ....        | 333                                       |
| DICEL Project .....                   | 361                                       |
| Holt, Rinehart and Winston .....      | 329, 338, 345, 350, 351,<br>377, 388, 393 |
| Humanics Media .....                  | 377                                       |
| Learning Unlimited Corporation .....  | 389                                       |
| Little Brown and Company .....        | 389                                       |
| Macmillan Publishers .....            | 368, 369                                  |
| Northwest Education Cooperative ..... | 367                                       |
| Scott, Foresman and Company.....      | Cover 4                                   |

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