

## Programs and Practices

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### Urban Teachers Absent More

Teachers absent most often are those in large urban districts in the Northeast who make more than \$17,000 a year and who report their absences to a telephone answering service.

Northeast teachers averaged more than nine days absent each while those in the middle states were low with 7.4 days. Urban teachers were out two days more (8.8) than non-urban teachers. Teachers making more than \$17,000 a year were out about two days more than teachers making less than \$13,000.

Absences of teachers who called in to an answering service averaged more than nine days while those who spoke to a specific person averaged 7.6 days.

Teacher absences were of high management concern in 65 percent of the school systems with more than 25,000 students, and in only 33 percent of those systems with less than 2,500 students. While 58.7 percent of the school systems required teachers to notify their principal, less than 15 percent allowed them to call an answering service.

Leave without pay was taken by teachers in 98 percent of the large systems, but in only 67 percent of the small ones. Absences because of job-related injuries or accidents occurred in 97.5 percent of the large systems, but in only 17.4 percent of the small ones.

The reports, "Teacher Absenteeism: Experiences and Practices of School Systems" and "Support Staff Absenteeism: Experiences and Practices of School Systems," are available for \$24 and \$22 from Educational Research Service, 1800 N. Kent St., Arlington, VA 22209.

### "Ears Up" to Listen

Ezzie Elf, a full-size puppet, sits on a special shelf in each kindergarten class in the Evansville-Vanderburgh (Indiana) School Corporation to remind children to trade poor listening habits

for good ones. Empty Ears, a donkey whose ears hang down, never learned to listen because he was too busy talking. Echo Rabbit repeats everything she hears; Rudie Rat interrupts others when they're talking.

These motivational characters are part of Project ELF (Effective Listening Fundamentals), a year-long program consisting of two 20-minute lessons a week developed by kindergarten teachers and speech and language clinicians.

As children progress through the listening program, Empty Ears begins to listen and his ears start to rise. Other characters also improve their listening habits. Program materials include bulletin board ideas and stories, a set of Listening Land cassette tapes, an illustrated lap story to introduce the program, and Ezzie Elf Good Work and Good Listener awards.

More information is available from Mary Chandler or Jack Humphrey at Evansville-Vanderburgh, c/o Division of Reading Effectiveness, Indiana Department of Public Instruction, 229 State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

### Tucson's Special Projects High School

Conceived several years ago as a way to provide educational opportunities not commonly found at the other nine high schools in Tucson, Special Projects High School now serves many students and provides a program for the gifted and talented. Most of the curriculum offerings are in advanced academic areas; however, vocational classes are also included for career exploration and self-contained study programs for the gifted.

The major emphasis of the academic program is the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board. College-level courses prepare students for the Advanced Placement examinations which they take to earn college credit in a variety of areas. Independent study and/or enrollment at the University of Arizona help broaden the scope of advanced academic study.

Vocational education classes meet daily for two or three hours. Students work in such areas as horticulture, photography, nursing, welding, woodworking, auto mechanics, printing, and electronics.

Some juniors and seniors qualify to participate in the professional internship program. They attend one class meeting per week and spend a minimum of five hours per week on location in the Tucson area where they observe and participate on site in professional or career areas of their choice.

While some students spend the entire day at Special Projects High School, others take one or more courses to supplement their attendance-area school classes. The school provides a variety of options for students looking for a special program.

### Handicapped Students Face Problems in Teacher Education

According to *Educators with Disabilities*, teacher educators sometimes fail to adapt their instruction to accommodate disabled students. The publication discusses barriers faced by the handicapped in career counseling, teacher education and certification, finding a job, and problems on the job.

Career counselors often guide disabled students either into or out of careers in education for the wrong reasons. Students wanting to be doctors or lawyers are advised that their choices are impossible and that teaching would be better. Some who wish to be teachers are funneled into special education even if they are interested in other areas. Some are advised that their handicap would prevent them from teaching.

The publication recommends that regional vocational rehabilitation centers be developed to offer special sessions to introduce the disabled to the teaching profession. In addition to participating in planning these sessions, handicapped people should serve as counselors.

It was found that some colleges of education refuse admission to disabled students because of inadequate programs or facilities. A study needs to be conducted to determine if states discriminate against certification candidates who are disabled. Inservice education could help overcome the "charity" stereotype for the handicapped by raising performance standards so that these students compete on a level with their peers.

Specific recommendations to help handicapped teachers included the following:

1. Launch a public relations campaign highlighting successful disabled educators
2. Promote more research on the capabilities of educators with disabilities
3. Make all new construction accessible to handicapped persons
4. Institute flexible hiring policies, offering part-time jobs or job-sharing to those who cannot work full-time.

Copies of *Educators with Disabilities* may be purchased under stock number 065-00-00104-7 for \$5.50 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

### Days of Religious Observance

The New York State Education Department has used the recommendations of representatives from various religious faiths to compile the following list of days of religious observance. This list, published in the newsletter *Inside Education* by the New York State Education Department, "while not all-inclusive, . . . contains the most important liturgical dates of the major religious faiths." With the exception of December 25 and January 1, these days are not legal holidays. Educators may find this list helpful in scheduling instructional programs throughout the year.

### 1982-83 Dates

September 14

### Days of Religious Observance

Feast of the Elevation of the Cross\*

September 18-19

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)

September 27

Feast of the Elevation of the Cross\*\*

September 27

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

October 2-3

First Days of Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles)

October 9-10

Last Days of Succoth

November 1

Feast of All Saints

November 5

World Community Day

December 8

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 25

Christmas

January 1

Feast of the Circumcision and New Year\*

January 1

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

January 6

Feast of the Epiphany\*

January 7

Christmas\*\*

January 14

Feast of the Circumcision and New Year\*\*

January 19

Feast of the Epiphany\*\*

February 16

Ash Wednesday

March 4

World Day of Prayer

March 25

Annunciation\*

March 29-30

First Days of Passover

March 31

Holy Thursday

April 1

Good Friday

April 3

Easter

April 4-5

Last Days of Passover

April 7

Annunciation\*\*

May 5

Holy

May 6

Thursday\*/\*\*

May 6

Fellowship Day

May 6

Good Friday\*/\*\*

May 8

Easter\*/\*\*

May 9

Easter

May 12

Monday\*/\*\*

May 12

Feast of the Ascension

May 18-19

Shavuoth (Feast of Weeks)

June 16

Feast of the Ascension\*/\*\*

\*New Calendar Eastern Orthodox Churches and New Calendar Eastern Rite Roman Catholic Churches

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## Curriculum Clearinghouse

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### TV Project Improves Reading

Reversing popular notions about television's ill effects on children, a New York State program improves reading skills via TV. Called GERIS (Graphic Expression Reading Improvement System), the 70 programs around the state focus on improving reading, research, organization, planning, teamwork, writing, and speaking in underprivileged and underachieving learners.

Students far below the reading level of their classmates are selected for the program and follow an eight-step sequence for television production. They (1) pick a topic, (2) do research, (3) prepare graphics, (4) write a script, (5) practice reading the script, (6) record a run-through, (7) evaluate the tape, and (8) record a final tape.

Teachers help students learn the steps and provide other information, while students evaluate themselves and continue taping. Parents have endorsed the program due to its effectiveness in raising skills of participants. Over 3,000 students, who averaged a four-month improvement in reading scores over a ten-month period, after GERIS showed from 1.27 to 1.7 years improvement over a ten-month period. Some students improved as much as four years over the ten-month period. Organizers of the

project feel that this is a notable instance where television is being used successfully to assist teachers, not to replace them.

K. Coralee Michelucci, "Getting It Right for TV," *American Education*, July 1981, pp. 17-20.

### Effective Living Program for Adolescents

Quest—a character education program—has helped more than 150,000 secondary students develop the skills helpful to effective living. Organized in a "Skills for Living" curriculum guide and teacher's manual, the program is composed of 11 units: (1) introduction, (2) friendship, (3) attitudes, (4) liking and accepting oneself, (5) dealing with emotions and feelings, (6) family relationships, (7) financial management, (8)

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