

Reading Panel Backs Five-Year Teacher-Training Programs

"Extending teacher-education programs by one year—for a total of five—and increasing their 'quality and rigor' will help raise the level of reading literacy, says a new report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education.

"The report . . . was requested by the National Institute of Education because of the 'ominous signs of reading stagnation' found in the trends of test scores dating back to the 1950's.

"What was a satisfactory level of literacy in 1950 probably will be marginal in 2000," says the report, adding that 'increasing levels of literacy will be needed by all students to meet the demands of the 'coming age of technical-information.'

"California is the only state that now requires elementary-school teachers to complete a five-year education program to gain certification, but individual institutions in other states have adopted their own five-year programs, said Penelope M. Earley, director of federal and state relations for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

"The report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*, also notes that:

- "Four-year undergraduate education programs encourage teachers to become 'generalists,' who take only a 'smattering' of various subjects and 'end up not knowing anything in depth.'

- "Many prospective teachers regard basic education courses as too theoretical and not relevant to the 'real' classroom.

- "The quality of teacher education would be improved by ending the rift at major universities between 'research oriented' faculty members, whose courses may be

regarded as 'too theoretical,' and 'practice oriented' faculty members, who sometimes 'do not keep abreast of the best thinking and research.'

- "Student teaching is rated as the most valuable part of teacher training, because students receive 'frequent, and detailed feedback.'

- "Novice teachers perform better when their transition into the role of teacher is 'eased,' with the help of more experienced personnel to help reduce their workloads, or consultants are hired to monitor classes.

"Teacher requirements should be stiffened now, before stabilizing student enrollments and declining numbers of teachers place added pressure on administrators 'to allow less able, less qualified persons to teach,' the 147-page report concludes.

"The adoption of five-year programs in all states may cause the decrease in the number of teachers to continue, unless more scholarships and loans become available for prospective teachers, and salaries and working conditions improve for those already in the field, the report says. If 'substantial improvements in teacher

training are to be achieved, the expenditure per student in education programs will also have to increase,' it says. . . .

"Copies of the report are available for \$4.50 from the Center for the Study of Reading, Box 2774, Station A, Champaign, Ill. 61820. Payment or an institutional purchase order must accompany the order."—*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 8, 1985. Reprinted with permission. Copyright 1985 by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Students Spending More Time on Homework, Study Finds

"Secondary-school students who took part in the 1983-84 National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading and writing skills reported spending more time on homework than their counterparts in 1980.

"The percentage of 17-year-olds who said they averaged between one and two hours of homework daily rose from 22.4 percent in 1979-80 to 27.5 percent last year, while those who said they completed more than two hours of homework increased from 9.2 percent to 13.9 percent over the same

Continuing Education Study Materials Still Available

All of the continuing education materials offered in THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION between 1978 and 1984 are still available to teachers for recertification credit.

However, several changes have been made in the procedures for processing these tests. *Requests for test materials should be sent to Dr. James Scott, Associate Dean, School of Education, Loma Linda University, Riverside, CA 92515.* Home Study International no longer handles these materials.

The charge for each test has been reduced from \$22 to \$15. Checks should be made payable to the School of Education, Loma Linda University.

Teachers needing study materials or additional information should contact the JOURNAL office at 6840 Eastern Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20012.

four-year period. . . .

“The study cites similar increases in the amount of time 13-year-olds spend on homework, but it says that ‘significant numbers of students’—about 21 percent of both 13- and 17-year-olds—reported having no homework assignments on the day before they took the assessment. . . .

“The NAEP study also found that 11th graders who spend more time on homework read better than students who spend less. But the results are ‘unclear’ about the relationship between homework and reading abilities of students in grades 4 and 6, according to the report. . . .

“The new NAEP report, which examines ‘home-related factors’ that may be linked to cognitive development, also found that more than 40 percent of the 4th-grade students, 25 percent of the 8th graders, and 12 percent of the 11th graders watch five hours of television or more daily. . . .

“The report . . . is not ‘intended to describe cause-and-effect relationships’ between home characteristics and cognitive skills, but to identify possible relationships that may have implications for policy and further research, according to officials of the assessment program.

“Nonetheless, the report makes general statements supporting the thesis that too much television and too little homework inhibit the development of students’ reading skills.

“‘Five or six hours of television viewing has a clear negative impact on reading ability, but less than two hours appears to have no effect on reading,’ [Archie La-Pointe, the NAEP’s executive director, says]. . . .

“The study found that black students watch the most television and Hispanic students watch more

television than whites; that children of parents with less education tend to watch more television than those whose parents are well educated, and that, at the 4th-grade level, boys watch more television than girls do. . . .

“According to the report, some 57 percent of 4th graders, 64 percent of 8th graders, and 66 percent of 11th graders reported that their mothers work outside the home.

“In general, students with mothers working outside the home performed better in reading, according to NAEP officials. They attribute the higher scores to the fact that mothers who work outside the home typically have attained higher levels of education, and children of well-educated parents tend to read better.

“A nationally representative sample of 100,000 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds took the assessment.” —*Education Week*, vol. IV, No. 36, May 15, 1985. Used by permission.

Shortages of Substitute Teachers

“*School officials in . . . large school systems and in rural districts across the [U.S.] . . . report that their schools are experiencing shortages of substitutes this year.*

“And the current substitute shortage is just the ‘tip of the iceberg,’ according to educators and experts who predict dire consequences if the issue is not addressed by policymakers soon. . . .

“The problem, they report, is a complicated one, inextricably intertwined with the troubles school districts face in light of current and predicted shortages in the regular teaching force, teacher absenteeism, and the educational reform movement that is sweeping the country at the state level. . . .”

Thirty-four states currently have minimal standards or none at all for substitute teachers—22 states

have no minimum requirements, and an additional 12 states allow substitutes to teach without a college degree. Only eight states set the same standards for substitutes as for regular teachers.

In many areas, the shortage of regular teachers has prompted policymakers to suggest that standards be lowered for the substitute-teaching force. However, “any lowering of standards for the substitute-teaching force is ‘frightening,’ some educators say, because the standards are already low and the reputation of substitutes in the education community is already poor.

“A study designed to measure the quality of classroom instruction, conducted in 1971 by the Institute of Administrative Research at Teachers College, Columbia University, found that substitute teachers were ‘the least effective [instructors] observed, below even student teachers and teacher aides.’ . . .

“Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the educational cost of using a substitute teacher for an extended period is high.”

A recent issue of *Tips for Principals*, published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, makes the following recommendations for improving substitute programs:

- “Active recruitment of substitute teachers and interviews to ‘weed out incompetent teachers and sign up the cream of the crop.’

- “The use of retired persons.
- “The provision of a packet of information that includes the school’s floor plan; the school handbook explaining discipline policies, attendance policies, fire-drill procedures, and liability laws; and class schedules and lunch schedules.

- “At least 12-hours’ notice for substitutes.

• “Requiring regular teachers to leave an ‘easily administered’ lesson plan and a seating chart. In case of lengthy absences, teachers also should be required to maintain a number of lesson plans on file in the administrator’s office.

• “A thorough evaluation of a substitute by the administrator who oversees the program and the regular teacher.”—*Ibid.*, vol. IV, No. 28, April 3, 1985.

Good Ideas

Making New Students Feel Welcome

• “A special coupon book was put together and distributed to all new students at Fairmont School in St. Charles, Mo.—the brainstorm of counselor Bob Stumpf. Each page of the book entitles the child to something special during his or her first two weeks in the school—a friend at lunch, on the playground and in the bus every day, lunch with the counselor, a tour of the building, an elevator ride with the adult of his/her choice, a free donut and a free call home.”—*It Starts in the Classroom*, November, 1983. Reprinted with permission from *It Starts in the Classroom*. Copyright 1983, National School Public Relations Association.

Request for Materials

A small Christian college run by the Nigerian State has written to request books. This school educates teachers for primary and postprimary schools. Its students include experienced Christian leaders from a number of denominations, including Seventh-day Adventists.

The school requests new or second-hand books on theology and other areas of study. They state that they need books on all levels,

including good-quality fiction.

Books should be packed securely and sent by surface mail. Label packages “gifts” or “second-hand books” so that the school will not have to pay duty.

Send materials to:

The Principal
Library of The College of
Christian Studies
Shuwa
PMB 16, Mubi
Gongola State, Nigeria. □

Legal Update

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this would “unduly interfere with the maintenance of the swift and informal disciplinary procedures needed in the schools.”

Secondly, a search may be undertaken based upon the reasonableness of all circumstances of the search. In determining “reasonableness,” school officials must consider (1) whether the search was justified at its inception; and (2) whether the scope of the search was sufficiently related to the circumstances that justified the initial confrontation.

Such a search will be permissible when the conduct of the teacher or school official is reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction. The goal is not to unduly burden school authorities in maintaining order and yet prevent unrestrained intrusions upon the privacy of school children.

Familiarity with the guidelines set forth by the Supreme Court may assist Adventist educators in applying the new legal principles. A cursory reading of the case, *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, which can be found in volume 105 of the Supreme Court Reporter at page

733, will provide the basic knowledge needed to address a similar situation.

Despite the fact that the new guidelines are not required to be applied in private schools, we need to recognize that they do fit within a Christian perspective. The Golden Rule is not passé in Adventist education; respect for individual rights as well as elements of fair play should be adopted as policies to help guide educators as they administer schools.

Specifically, in addressing an area of concern, such as search of a pupil and/or the seizure of student property, Christian educators must remain sensitive to the fundamental rights of privacy to which all persons—including students—are entitled. The attention given those rights in a potentially hurtful search situation, coupled with a basic awareness of proper legal procedure, may help to maintain order without harming the trust relationship between educators and students. □

Weeks of Spiritual Emphasis

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the evening worship period. It may be possible to arrange an early morning prayer group in boarding schools, in addition to the two regularly scheduled programs.

The program should not be too long. Thirty to 35 minutes is adequate. A brief program will be more likely to retain student interest and enthusiasm.

Selecting the Theme

The theme of the week should be selected by the class. Suggestions may be offered by the staff advisor if requested by the students, but the young people should be allowed to make the final decision. Once the theme has been selected,