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Distorted Image

Education USA - May 16, 1963

One way of appraising what people think of school teachers is to examine the roles they have in moving pictures and in popular fiction. George Gerbner of the U. of Illinois Institute of Communications Research has done this, with disturbing results.

In 81 moving pictures produced since 1950 where teachers had leading or supporting roles and the love angle was paramount the teachers had only a 50-50 chance of success. They fared better if they left the teaching profession, or picked a partner without a college education.

The Saturday Evening Post had 56 stories dealing with teachers or schools. Most teachers, Prof. Gerbner reports, were represented as aliens to the community in which they taught and often in conflict with the community. In none of the stories did the teacher get a salary increase. No student got a public scholarship. No community took the initiative to build or improve schools. There was no normal way of resolving financial problems of teachers, students, or schools. When a solution to such problems did appear it was likely to be something like the accidental hitting of a jackpot.

EDUCATION U.S.A.

A Special Weekly Report on Educational Affairs



Dateline: Washington, D.C.
May 16, 1963

NEW DIRECTIONS IN INSTRUCTION

A broad outline of recommendations to be expected next fall from the NEA Project on Instruction is beginning to emerge in advance of publication of the four volumes to be published by the project. Its directors, Ole Sand and Richard Miller, describe the seven major directions toward which the reports will be headed in an article written for the centennial (May) issue of the CTA Journal. To be expected are 32 specific suggestions representing a consensus of the national committee composed of classroom teachers, administrators, and university professors which directed the four-year study. These will represent the teaching profession's own response to the need for improvement in quality of the instruction program in the demanding years of the present and immediate future. Seven major "directions" have emerged from the study, Sand and Miller report. These are:

- Focus on rational thinking. Accepting the premise of the Educational Policies Commission that development of ability to think is the central purpose of education, the project will urge greater use of rational thinking with particular reference to decision-making about curriculum.
- Greater attention to knowing. The sheer bulk of information makes it impractical to teach a body of facts to be learned. Emphasis should be not on amount of knowledge acquired but on students understanding what they do know.
- Potentialities of the individual. The impersonal and mechanical nature of our society makes it more important than ever that the curriculum must be differentiated to provide for individual differences.
- Realistic approach to social responsibility. Controversy is inevitable as solutions are sought for evolving problems. There should be calm and objective discussion of controversial issues and the curriculum should provide adequate factual instruction concerning major social forces and trends.
- School and classroom organization. Careful consideration of alternatives to the graded classroom will be recommended. Whatever the form of organization, however, there should be adequate provision for a close counseling relationship between pupils and a teacher who knows them well.
- Use of time and instructional resources. Recommendations are being developed looking toward utilization of educational television, programed instruction, and audiovisual aids. A comprehensive study and action program to improve the quality of printed teaching materials will be offered.
- Research, experimentation, innovation. Only one tenth of 1% of total expenditures for public education goes for research, planning, and development. There is need for massive research on instructional issues. The project will recommend that each school system allocate at least 1% of its annual operating budget for research, planning, and development.

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