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Teacher Educators

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to refer to them.

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Newsletter For Teacher Educators

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PROPPING UP A LEANING IVORY TOWER . . . Looking like the salesman who just happens to have the right bottle of spring tonic, HEW Secretary Elliot L. Richardson, who measures his words carefully, gave high praise to a new higher education study. At a March 8 press briefing, he called the findings of the Ford Foundation-financed task force, headed by Frank Newman, associate director of university relations at Stanford University, "*a highly significant statement on higher education.*" The nine-man panel is recommending *major reforms for American higher education*: different types of colleges, new resources for off-campus education, and redefinitions of student categories. Rather than making specific recommendations, the panel is offering broad directions for reform.

Although emphasizing the "independent" quality of the Newman panel, the HEW secretary admitted that its findings were more acceptable to the Administration than similar ones because the report makes few direct recommendations and does not specify government expenditures. Nor did Richardson deny that the study could be useful in selling legislators on the Administration's proposed National Foundation for Higher Education, designed to finance reform projects.

Despite such endorsement, Richardson said, "it should stand on its own merits."

The Newman panel's hard-nosed critique of the higher education system joins a growing pile of substantial diagnoses of college and university ills. The most *comprehensive*, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education series, has touched upon most of the areas scored in the Newman report; the latest in the series call for *aid to black colleges and guidelines for campus dissent*. The controversial President's Commission on Campus Unrest called for *national leadership*. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) report advocated a *pooling of resources for higher education*. The Association of American Colleges (AAC) survey warned of *the substantial aid that private colleges need to offset deficits*.

Of small comfort was the President's Feb. 22 message to Congress, asking, for a second year, that the legislators make larger funds available for federally guaranteed loans to college students and citing students from poor families for special consideration. *The New York Times* noted on its Feb. 24 editorial page: "the most serious flaw in Mr. Nixon's approach is the apparent assumption that by helping students he will automatically aid the colleges. The opposite is true. Increased enrollment merely deepens the institutions' fiscal crisis."

Nor does Congress appear inclined toward immediate action. A lot of free rhetoric flew around the March 2 House Education Subcommittee hearing room, in criticism of the



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A LEANING IVORY TOWER (Cont'd) . . . President's higher education proposals. Appearing in defense, Richardson said that the Administration was concerned about the colleges' financial plight, but felt the question of general federal aid needed more thought. *Any general aid, he contended, would tend to perpetuate the status quo when colleges need to put their own houses in order.*

A couple of bills have been put into the hopper. House Republican Albert H. Quie (Minn.) reintroduced his bill March 1 to give federal grants to public and private colleges. A second bill, introduced last month by Democratic Senator Claiborne Pell (R.I.), calls for generous tuition grants to needy students and direct grants to low-tuition colleges enrolling these students.

Meanwhile, back on the campuses, *the troubled waters continue to churn.* The academic leadership must feel, to borrow from the Feb. 24 *Times* editorial, "like a drowning man who is promised research on improved swimming techniques."

SWITCH AND LEARN: TWO SCHOOLS TRY IT . . . Exchange 28 affluent and 28 inner-city high school students for a week, and then ask them about *the experience.* *Washington Post* education writer, Lawrence Feinberg, wrote down some results in the Feb. 16 issue after listening to comments from Anacostia Senior High and Walt Whitman High School students who took part in an exchange experiment.

Some of their observations were not surprising. Anacostia has 1,527 Negro and 18 white students. As recently as 1966, there were 407 whites; three years before that, the majority of students were white. The school's 33-year-old building is less than 300 yards from a polluted river and closer still to a busy freeway. It has, Walt Whitman students found, its share of inexperienced teachers, absenteeism, and vandalism.

Walt Whitman has 2,244 white, 25 Oriental, 14 Negro, and two American Indian students. Its nine-year-old campus-like setting is nestled among a cluster of \$50,000 homes, and it boasts up-to-date equipment, tough coursework, and a full parking lot of 277 student cars.

But there were a few surprise discoveries on both sides:

•Despite the inner-city school's lesser facilities and academic shortcomings, the students express more open pride in their school, whereas Whitman students criticize the grading system, pressures and competitiveness, traditional courses, and overexperimentation in the curricula.

•Dress--blue jeans, sweaters, and beads--was shabbier at Walt Whitman, whereas Anacostia students wore \$50 shoes, \$24 shirts, and \$30 pants.

•While Walt Whitman students were more individualized and their school depersonalized, Anacostia students spoke of the school as a family, even including the teachers.

•Sports are taken more seriously at Anacostia than at Whitman, where "if you play football it's considered kind of weird."

•Anacostia students, tending to be *apolitical and conservative*, want to make money and get out of the inner-city; the students at Whitman, who have money, are in vocal revolt against conventional middle-class norms.

•A semi-annual discipline assembly at Anacostia on noise, class-cutting, absenteeism was quietly accepted by the student body; Whitman students attending the session called it "ridiculous" and "like kindergarten." An Anacostia student countered "if they didn't have rules they couldn't run the school."

Although the experiment had a built-in bias because the poorest Anacostia students did not take part, one Whitman boy was surprised to find such a *large black middle class.* "When I started," he explained to Feinberg, "I sort of thought that if you were black you lived in a welfare home with no father and crime all around."

TWO INSEPARABLE LINKS IN THE EDUCATION CHAIN . . . Dr. Harvey B. Scribner, controversial chancellor of the New York City public schools and a man who doesn't mince words, links the reform of the schools with reform of teacher education, calling the two "inseparable and interlocked." Keynoting the annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), Scribner contended that "reforming the schools but not the programs of teacher education would create schools without proper staffing." The New York City education chief urged *redefining the teacher as "an enabler in the learning process"* rather than as a lecturer, classroom dominator, keeper of order.

He warned against mere "*tinkering*"--adding a humanities course here and discontinuing a methods course there, lengthening the student teaching period by a month or slipping in a few pilot programs in the public schools. Needed, according to Scribner, is a *new kind of teacher education, having "its center of gravity in the schools rather than in the colleges"* and constructed along these guidelines:

- Viewing teacher education as a joint school-college responsibility;
- Blending preservice and in-service into a unified, on-going program;
- Using actual classroom settings in preparing teachers;
- Having the college faculty teach regularly in public schools; and
- Reshaping programs to blend educational theory and classroom practice.

ROUGH SEAS FOR NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS . . . Thousands of private and nonprofit institutions--among them, an estimated 1,450 colleges and universities and 4,600 secondary schools--are probably headed for the "first stage of decline that could affect the basic fabric of American society." The warning, given by Carnegie Corporation President Alan Pifer in the foundation's annual report released Feb. 25, pinpoints a problem that is more than financial. The crux, according to Pifer, is "*whether the majority of citizens still see special merit in retaining a combined public/private system, or conversely, whether substantial numbers would now, for varying reasons, be content to see private institutions handed over to public control.*"

He named four types of groups which might allow public control: poor and other alienated citizens who see private institutions as part of the "rotten system," conservatives who find colleges and universities too liberal for their taste, those in the country's heartlands who still harbor "a kind of populist distrust," and other citizens and public officials who are frankly indifferent. He cited signs such as the congressional enactment of the four percent excise tax on foundation income in the 1969 Tax Reform Act as *dramatic evidence of these attitudes*. Needed, he said, was a new look at tax laws as a way to encourage national giving.

SHORTCHANGING THE URBAN SCHOOL . . . Big-city schools, *overcrowded and problem-ridden*, receive the smaller share of federal funding, according to a Syracuse University Research Corporation study financed by Ford Foundation, which reviewed the government's patterns in fund distribution. *On the state level, urban schools fared even worse.* The findings, released during the February American Educational Research Association meeting in New York, etched in the one-sided picture:

- Rural areas get more federal aid per pupil than do metropolitan areas;
- While cities receive more total federal aid than suburbs, the latter receive advantages in local and state revenues;
- States tend to give more money to the suburbs than to the inner city;
- Extra funds going to areas of lower incomes (both urban and rural) do not offset the added costs in educating the disadvantaged.

THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION: A HOMOGENEOUS MIX . . . Legally, state boards of education are charged with determining the education policies of their states. But an educator who queried 45 state boards and their members has found that, *in practice, they exert little influence.*

The study, a dissertation by Gerald E. Sroufe for the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, looked at state school boards in terms of their *effectiveness*. He found their image, at best, pale. Boards tend to view the chief state school officer, not the lay public, as their best source for information. Equally disturbing, argues Sroufe, who is director of the National Committee for Support of the Public Schools, are these characteristics shared by the state boards:

- Homogeneity*: Protestant, professional, college-educated, civic-minded, middle-aged or older, small town or suburban resident;

- Apolitical*: little influence in forming or implementing state education policy; and

- Anonymity*: little awareness on the part of the public that they exist and function.

Sroufe's recommendations for more vigorous boards to fulfill their legal obligations: they must sense *the public's educational needs* and successfully participate in *advocating state policies* responsive to these needs.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PARAPROFESSIONAL . . . Teachers aides who put in 27 1/2 hours a week in New York City schools instructing slow learners, keeping attendance records, working with bilingual youngsters, and preparing audiovisual equipment *can now attend college and become teachers themselves*. In a plan worked out last summer and made public early in February, the Board of Education and City University, in agreement with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), offer paraprofessionals with high school diplomas a chance to attend one of the university's community colleges six hours a week and be paid for three of them. *Most of the teachers aides are blacks or Puerto Ricans from poverty areas*. Noted UFT President Albert Shanker, pleased by the arrangement: "This shows that paraprofessionals are not in a dead end."

NEW TWIST IN STUDENT RECRUITMENT . . . At a time when small liberal arts colleges are experiencing an *uncomfortable decline in student applications*, Marist College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., has been *enjoying an excess*. College officials attribute the excess to an experiment in which the small liberal arts college has sent six students into hundreds of high schools...*as recruiters*.

Sponsored by the teacher education department, the idea underwent a three-year trial run, sending seniors and juniors into New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland high schools. The students seemed logical choices for recruiting, said David M. Flynn, director of admissions, because they could establish rapport with the high school students. What may sound like a novel venture, he added, is really "*an extension of the learning experience outside the classroom and part of the college's philosophy of education.*"

When the three-year trial run convinced the college's academic policy committee that the idea worked, student recruiters were voted salaries and academic credit for their hard work. In this year's program, students hit the road for two weeks of each month from September through December. One recruiter, who averaged four high schools a day, explained, "The high school students could relate more easily to another student. They felt I was being honest about the college."

Newsletter For Teacher Educators

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I

"...we have seen disturbing trends toward uniformity in our institutions, growing bureaucracy, overemphasized academic credentials, student and faculty isolation from the world--a growing rigidity and uniformity of structure that makes higher education reflect less and less the interests of society....means must be found to create a diverse, responsive system."

"The modern academic university has, like a magnet, drawn all institutions toward its organizational form, until the same teaching method, the same organization by disciplines, and the same professional academic training for faculty are nearly universal."

"While the population seeking higher education is becoming ever more diverse--in class and social background, age, academic experience, and ability--our colleges and universities...assume...only one mode of teaching and learning--the academic mode."

"Faculties...view themselves as independent professionals responsible to their guilds rather than to the institutions which pay their salaries."

"This organization of college curricula into the mold of the academic specialities has been accompanied by a strong faculty bias toward the acquisition of theoretical knowledge."

"Numbers of students are refusing to submit to answers prepackaged...by one of the conventional disciplines."

"We believe our colleges and universities must be less concerned with academic prestige and more concerned with becoming centers of effective learning."

^oFrom findings by the Newman Panel's soon-to-be-published Report on Higher Education, publicly endorsed by HEW.

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"Higher education is too high for the average intelligence, much too high for the average interest, and vastly too high for the average patience and perseverance of the people, here and anywhere. Attempts to expose from 30 to 50 percent of the people to higher education are completely useless."

"Longer education (beyond high school) has become the marching order of our society, but since it cannot aspire to provide higher learning, longer education can only be thinner or broader."

"There is nothing new about the fact that colleges and universities include elementary and secondary education in their programs; the question is merely whether the share of higher education has been diminishing."

"I define higher education as the level of scholarly teaching, learning, and researching that is accessible to only a small fraction of the people."

"I firmly believe that higher education should be open to all who want it and can take it....But we cannot change the fact that perhaps 80 percent of the people find it 'not relevant' to their interests and capacities."

"Broader, continuing education also should be open to all who want it, and many more will be qualified for it."

"What I deplore is that virtually all colleges and universities are reducing academic requirements and the level of their offerings in the name of social justice and equality of opportunity--that is, in order to accommodate more of those who are not prepared to take higher education."

^oFrom a speech by Dr. Fritz Machlup, Princeton economics professor, printed in the Feb. 28 Washington Post.

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KEEPING UP ON THE LATEST JARGON . . . That communication failure between youth and adults--the "generation gap"--is really an "education gap," authorities now inform us. In plowing through miles of census statistics, they have discovered *the unprecedented growth in education for young Americans* over the past 30 years. Figures in the Census Bureau study, released Feb. 3, show that the number of young adults holding college degrees has *tripled* since 1940. Those with one or more years of college and those holding high school diplomas have both *doubled*. Such dramatic changes, according to expert interpretation of the figures, *explain "present social and political conflicts."*

BACK INTO THE FRONTLINES OF BATTLE . . . Five Maryland county school administrators courageously volunteered to spend a year back in the classroom so they might understand *anew the problems of teaching*. According to a March 10 *Washington Post* article, the experiences which they related to the county school board illustrated that *the going was rough*. One volunteer, an elementary school principal, found the children in his classes "defiant" and "brash." He added, "I'm not passing judgment, but it wears teachers out." Another gave up trying to practice all those ideas he'd entertained as principal. Still another confessed that, at first, *the classroom frightened him*. "You are all alone. There is no one to help you." A fourth came out of the experiment convinced that "all persons who perform administrative duties should have a change of pace."

One volunteer summed up the year's labor: "It's still *the toughest job* in the school system."

OH NO, NOT AGAIN??? . . . Parents in the Michigan L'Anse Crouse School District were a little nervous when they answered their phones and the voice on the other end began, "This is your child's principal." *Then they received a second shock: good news about their child*. One parent learned that her child's lettering had improved; another got the word that her son had cleaned the snow off his fifth grade teacher's car windows. The principals were acting on the suggestion of Fred V. Pankow, district superintendent. Reactions vary, said Pankow, but the program seems to be making its point that *misdeeds are not the only grounds for principal-parent communication*.

OF CONCERN . . . With this issue, *Concern* takes a giant step from a limited circulation of 3,800 to a bulk circulation of 37,000 teacher educators. When the newsletter began on an experimental basis in September 1970, we weren't sure what the membership wanted and needed. One thought, however, was bell clear: *the publication would not be just another newsletter to cross a reader's desk, coming to rest in the wastebasket*.

Several conjectures were made. First, that teacher educators are busy professionals who might welcome a succinct and hopefully comprehensive newsletter on the general field of education--written in light of their own needs for information. Second, that the here-and-now aspect of education is frankly hectic, with studies, criticisms, and innovations crowding the scene. Third, that teacher educators feel "concern" for keeping an overview.

We particularly thank those who wrote letters in support of *Concern*. These letters reinforced the original conviction of the AACTE Board of Directors that the experiment was worth pursuing.