

Education: the challenge set before us

Preparing our children for the 21st century

REPORT CARD	
Basic Subject - The state of education in N.C. and America	
A - Unusually good	
B - Good	
C - Satisfactory	
D - Needs improvement	
E - Unsatisfactory	
Proper use of resources	C
Stimulating curriculums	C
Illiteracy rate	E
Community/business involvement	D
SAT scores in N.C.	E
Professional development for teachers	D
Discussion and action requested by society	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO

Fact: 23 million Americans are functionally illiterate.

Fact: Nearly 30 percent of American students fail to graduate.

Fact: Four-and-a-half million students are currently at risk of not becoming productive members of society.

These statistics, reported in a special segment of the magazine *Electronic Learning*, represent the casualties of education in America's public schools. We must then ask ourselves, "What is the legacy of our children?" "What will they leave behind?" So queries Bob Tyndall, assistant dean of UNCW's School of Education.

Resolving the problems of today's schools requires support from all segments of society. Business plays an important role. Take for example, RJR Nabisco Inc. and its pledge of \$30 million to promote innovative changes in schools throughout the country.

It is in the best interests of business to see

that students are better educated, said Louis V. Gerstner Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of RJR Nabisco. Investment in human capital is essential, he said.

"We must (also) reinvest parents with the primary responsibility of parenting and our students with the primary responsibility of learning," Tyndall said.

Roy Harkin, dean of UNCW's School of Education added, "Teachers must be provided sufficient levels of authority to define a path to excellence. That authority should extend to matters of curriculum, instructional practice, and control over resources such as time, personnel, space, and material. "The path to excellence must be defined by those who travel it," said Harkin.

Many of these "pathfinders" learn the meaning of excellence through programs at UNCW. "Obviously our principle mission is to provide excellent programs of teacher preparation, both at the undergraduate and graduate level," said Harkin. "We see that as our primary form of service to the region and the state."

From desks to disks

The demands placed on today's schools and schoolteachers require new programs and curriculum components. Teachers now must understand the concepts of technology and be able to apply them in sophisticated ways, said Hathia Hayes, chairperson of the department of curricular studies in UNCW's School of Education. The use of computers as instructional tools is a primary example.

Jim Dezell, general manager of IBM Educational Systems, was quoted in *Electronic Learning* as saying "computers will allow teachers to become managers of the educational process, creating an educational environment in which children are doing self-discovery and learning on their own . . ."

"I think the most powerful form of learning is discovery learning. If I discover it for myself, it is mine. If you tell me what it is, it is yours and I may or may not accept it - but it's never mine. . . . put the child in control of learning . . ."

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UNCW grad teaches Navajo Indian students

Without a doubt, America is becoming increasingly sophisticated in its methods of teaching. Challenging textbooks, more modern buildings, and the computer invasion dominate our educational airways. As a result of these "luxuries", our educational system is evolving and progressing.

Yet, a progressive educational system has yet to arrive in the Native American community.

But a UNCW graduate is trying to change all of that. Del Glasgow '80, is teaching at Tuba City Junior High School in Arizona. The school is located on a Navajo Indian reservation and is part of the Arizona public school system. Glasgow teaches 7th-grade physical and earth sciences and 8th-grade biology.

Distinctions

Glasgow believes an appreciation for discipline separates Indian students from other students. "The kids have a different attitude," said Glasgow. "They have a lot more respect for teachers."

Unlike overcrowding in many of our nation's schools, Glasgow said the average size of a reservation classroom is about 20 students. This makes for good student management, she said.

But the smaller class size has not produced good results as far as educating Native Americans are concerned. Indian children are, for the most part, poorly educated, said Glasgow. According to the Iowa City (Arizona) Test, a standard achievement test, American Indians score below the 50 percentile in math, reading, and

the language arts. Glasgow said that some 7th and 8th graders she has taught cannot even identify an inch on a ruler.

This sad commentary can be partially attributed to the cavalier attitude many instructors have toward the students. "Most of the teachers (on the reservation) are here on a transient basis," said Glasgow. "They come here because they have nowhere else to go." She added that some teachers come to the reservation with the mission of "saving the poor Indians," while

others, being in unfamiliar surroundings, experience culture shock.

The condescending attitudes expressed by some of these teachers become counterproductive and result in negative feelings the kids have toward school.

Glasgow added that the administrators of some schools are at fault too. Finger-pointing pervades the school system, she said. More knowledgeable people with practical exper-

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Del Glasgow, 2nd row, 2nd from left, graduated from UNCW in 1980. She's seen here with her students at Tuba City Junior High School, Arizona.

UNCW Chancellor announces retirement plans

William H. Wagoner, fourth president of Wilmington College and the only chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, has announced his plans to retire effective July 1, 1990 or when a successor is in place.

Wagoner, 62, told the UNCW Board of Trustees at their regular quarterly meeting January 10 that he had decided to retire early to make way for "physically vigorous and visionary" leadership to take this institution through this decade and into the 21st century.

Although he suffered a heart attack in April 1989, Wagoner said that he feels good and had not made this decision due to illness. However, it was after his illness last spring that he began thinking "more and more about the opportunities and challenges facing this university during the 1990s," Wagoner told the board.

"This last decade before the year 2000 will be critical to the long range future of this, the university that I love most of all," he said. "Leadership which is vigorous, with vision, patience, and tenacity is critical if the dreams that we dream are to come true.::"

C.D. Spangler Jr., president of the UNC system, will meet with the UNCW Board of Trustees February 1 to begin the search process for Wagoner's successor.