

An Overture

SURVEY RESULTS: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

In early June a total of 100 responses had been received from the questionnaire published with the May editorial. This preliminary analysis will be followed by a more detailed report in a future issue of the journal if sufficient additional responses are received.

Two-thirds of our first respondents are high school teachers, slightly less than one-third are college teachers, and the remainder junior high teachers, counselors, and administrators. About one-sixth are under 30, slightly more than one-third in their thirties, slightly less than one-third in their forties, and about one-sixth fifty or over. Ninety percent of the respondents are members of NABT and twenty-five percent are women. Twenty-seven different states are represented among the ninety percent of respondents who indicated state of residence.

In analyzing the data, a tally was made of the number of responses at each priority level for each item on the questionnaire and each response was multiplied by a weight—5 for first priority, 4 for second, etc. Thus (20-69) means that 20 of the 100 respondents ranked the item on the 1- to -5 priority scale and the weighted sum of the ranks was 69.

The highest priority was given to improving student motivation (69-255). Other items of importance in improving teaching situations were as follows: improving student behavior (34-114); making better use of community resources (41-113); and improving interdisciplinary activities (35-104). Only a few respondents felt the need for more leave time (10-24); and more travel funds (15-37); or fewer and more meaningful extracurricular responsibilities (15-37).

The fact that improvement of student motivation received about twice as high a priority rating as any other single improvement needed in teaching situations leads me to issue here and now a call for papers dealing with student motivation. If you have been successful in improving the motivation of your students, tell us how you do it. If you are doing research on factors that affect student motivation, consider publishing your conclusions in *ABT*.

Among the various kinds of materials published in our journal, highest priority was given to how-to-do-it activities (72-244). As evidence of our responsiveness to your expressed priorities, this issue of the journal includes a new feature, "How-To-Do-It," under which heading you will find several short articles describing

simple activities. This feature will appear as often as we have suitable material.

Other subjects assigned relatively high priority were as follows: investigative or field activities (60-212); recent advances in the life sciences (53-190); new teaching methods (52-168); and research on the effectiveness of teaching methods (41-129). Relatively fewer respondents felt that priority should be given to new product reviews (17-35); future-oriented articles (20-52); and interdisciplinary instructional programs (27-63). It was surprising to me to discover that improving interdisciplinary activity received relatively high priority as a factor in improving teaching situations and a relatively low priority as a component of the journal. One possible explanation is that improving interdisciplinary activities is a *people* problem involving logistics of planning, scheduling, and offering activities that cut across organizational boundaries in a given teaching situation. If so, perhaps articles describing one particular situation are not very helpful in another particular situation. What do you think?

Another surprise pertaining to the journal was that book reviews (22-53) and audiovisual reviews (26-70) were assigned lower priorities than I would have expected from talking to people about the journal. A partial explanation for this was offered by the three respondents who indicated they simply could not pick and rank five items on the list because all of the items were important.

Functions of NABT

Among the functions of NABT, the highest priority was given to publication of this journal (93-393). Ratings of other functions that are or should be performed by our organization included workshops and institutes (63-215); defense of freedom in science teaching (55-167); and lobbying on behalf of biology teachers (51-145). A relatively small number of respondents gave priority to availability of insurance (8-18); travel opportunities (13-30); and award programs for teachers (14-39). It came as a real surprise to me that the national convention (30-84) received as low a rating as it did. The high priority given to both lobbying and to workshops and institutes suggests that NABT should be looking for ways to better fulfill these functions. I am sure that I speak for the officers and staff of NABT when I say that your suggestions for implementing these priorities are desired and will be given serious consideration.

Joan G. Creager, editor