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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION FOLLIES

When Title IX, to abolish sex discrimination in all educational institutions that receive Federal funding, was debated and passed by Congress in 1972, it was clear from the statute, and from the hearings and debate, that Congressmen believed it is improper for the Federal Government to assume any responsibility or control in the matter of writing textbooks or curriculum. The consensus was that Federal interference in the content of school materials should be verboten because that would pose a First Amendment issue.

It now appears that those who want to use the power of the Federal Government to change attitudes and behavior through the public schools found a solution to their dilemma. Instead of calling their work revision of textbooks or rewriting of curricula, they call it research; and that makes them eligible for Federal funding through the National Institute of Education (NIE).

NIE gave a $260,000 grant to the University of Wisconsin at Madison to study "What People Will Need to Know in the '80s and Beyond." This involved teaching "responsible decision making" through techniques of "cost-benefit analysis."

This is a process of ignoring eternal moral standards, teaching students to "learn about all the options available to them," and then using personal or situation ethics to guide moral decisions. The process involved "values clarification," behavior modification, and bringing the child "to a new self-conception based on the collective good."

Examples of decision making developed under this grant include "should I or shouldn't I engage in premarital intercourse?" and whether or not to care for aged parents because "parent-caring is becoming a major source of stress in family life."

NIE gave a grant of $860,000 to the Vanderbilt University Center for Education and Human Development Policy, supposedly for an "assessment" of knowledge about desegregation. The fourth volume of the study, called "A Practical Guide to Desegregation: Sources, Materials and Contacts," is really a handbook to help pro-busing advocates to locate their leftwing colleagues.

NIE made 125 separate grants in 1980 designed to promote feminist goals; that was 20 percent of the total NIE grants. For example, NIE gave $982,000 in 1979 to "Social Processes/Women's Research Team" to promote "Sex Equity in Classroom Interactions."

Another example was an NIE grant of $27,500 for "Superwoman, Ms or Myth: A Study of Role Overload." This research was to find out whether "women can have 'it' all. ... The 'it' includes the pain, pleasure and power of the executive suite, the boudoir, and the children's room." The study reported how "super-career-women-wives-and-mothers" cope with stress; they "smoke a joint," join "women's groups and be with women," "get angry at meetings," and "divorce (your) husband."

NIE gave $4.1 million to shape children's attitudes about "sexual stereotypes" through a 13-week television series called "Freestyle." The project started in 1975 and lasted four years.

Among the methods devised by these Federal researchers were to instruct boys to "work with flowers and maybe some roses, or be a nurse who works with kids." Girls were supposed to be sailors, locomotive engineers, and "to wear a sword -- and use it."

"Freestyle" attempted to change behavior by giving children the experience of "situations that counteract the prevailing myth that females will be taken care of by males and will not need to be employed." NIE claimed that 1.5 million children saw the first showing of this series.

Many state educational television systems declined to broadcast "Freestyle." In the areas where it was broadcast, many parents complained about such scenes as the one where a teenaged female mechanic and a middle-aged male mechanic spent several "suggestive" minutes under the hood of a disabled automobile.

NIE gave a $950,000 grant to the Institute for Responsive Education for a study on "Citizen Participation in Educational Decision Making." This Federal funding developed "A Grassroots Primer" to enable people "to act together more effectively in advocating change." That sounds like training people to lobby for more Federal money.

When the liberals orchestrate a chorus of attack against President Reagan for cutting Federal funds for education, they are really just trying to protect their flow of tax funds to their leftwing friends who are working to radicalize our society. We are indebted to a private organization called "Public Advocate" for digging out the facts about the follies of the National Institute of Education.