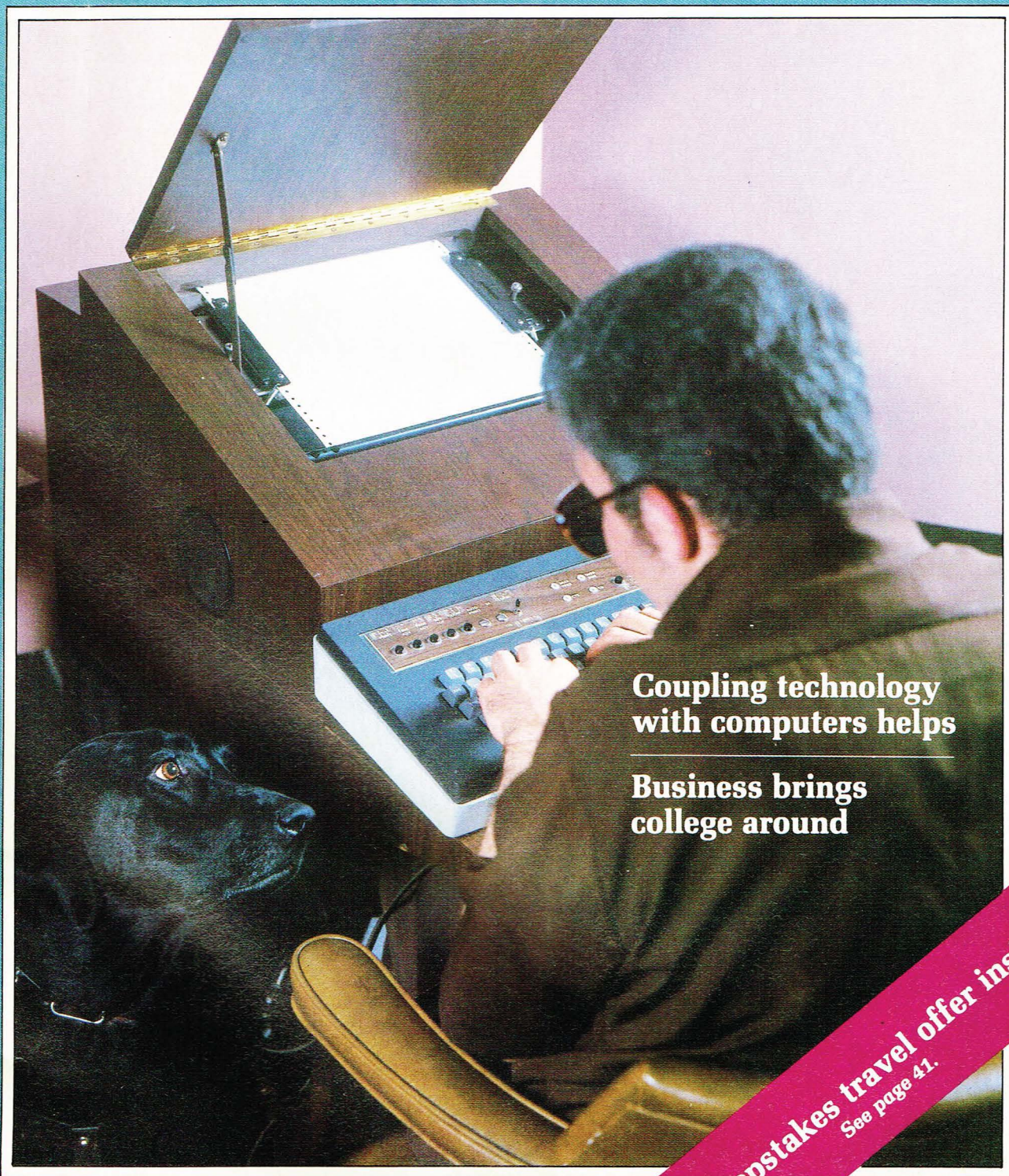


ELECTRONIC

education



**Coupling technology
with computers helps**

**Business brings
college around**

Sweepstakes travel offer inside!
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10 CAST: Using computers to compensate

Coupling these high-tech machines with learning-disabled children and adults helps them compensate as the patients enrolled in Salem, Ma.'s North Shore Children's Hospital "Computers for Mastery" program can attest. **By Anne Meyer**

15 Putting "business" back into education

Led by Edward Mattar, a no-nonsense and pragmatic businessman, Central New England College in Worcester, Ma. managed to pull itself up from certain doom to the front ranks of computer education. **By Carl Gabriel**

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Adding spoken language to the ways in which students can communicate with computers can be a boon to students who are aurally-oriented. **By Mike Nelson**

26 Sober deliberation is his cornerstone

Maurice Mitchell, one of this country's foremost communications experts, believes that computer purchases and use should be guided by sober deliberation, not infatuation with gadgetry. **By Jim Bleyer**

37 Computer labs can be school models

The sharing of knowledge that exists in computer labs could become the model after which the entire school patterns itself. **By Irwin Hoffman**

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On the cover

Brent Reynolds and his guide dog, Glory, a Labrador Retriever, are regular visitors at the Study Lab for Disabled Students on the campus of Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fl. Campuses throughout the country are able to provide greater assistance to their disabled students through the use of high-tech computer equipment such as the Braille Computer Printer (the LED 120) pictured.

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Computer labs can be school models

by Irwin Hoffman

In a new book to be published this year, John Naisbitt, the author of *Megatrends*, describes changes affecting corporations in America. His theme, that the hierarchical structures of our corporate institutions are giving way to networking structures, is stronger than ever. This trend, along with another of his observations regarding the inevitability of a shrinking workforce within this decade and the subsequent "seller's" market of talent, will impact adversely on our educational institutions.

Many chroniclers of our changing society have noted the strong grass roots innovations that are reshaping societal institutions. Some futurists are predicting that institutions that don't recognize the efficacy of networking and the commitment of workers to their tasks that networking encourages will have problems in this new society. In fact, Naisbitt postulates that institutions must provide opportunities for employees to feel an "ownership" about their work or these institutions will not be able to hire personnel in the coming "seller's" market. One corporation that he describes turned its bleak financial picture around by turning its corporate structure upside down. The top end executives became the facilitators for the low end, the people who dealt with the public. This dramatic reversal could and should be replicated within our schools.

Networking theorists indicate that in a network each person feels an important contribution, so that at a point in time the energy and

The administrative staff of a school district, like corporation executives, should become facilitators for the educational delivery system.

effort of the tasks at hand revolve around that individual. The individual is always important on a continuing basis and on occasion is the center of activity. Each person thus feels an "ownership" toward the activity and a personal commitment to the task.

It's a rare hierarchical system that produces these feelings in employees. There's a growing consensus that the administrative staff of a school district, like corporation executives, should become facilitators for the educational delivery system; but, in fact, the individuals who hold these posts have generally viewed themselves as the omniscient, perhaps benevolent, dispensers of educational pabulum. More often than not these individuals impede the delivery system, lower morale, stifle creativity and are only the facilitators of ennui, paperwork and misguided concepts of equity. Of course, there are those exceptional administrators who can encourage the individual to feel important in a hierarchical system. These are the insightful leaders who should be asked to restructure the school system to reflect the changes reshaping our society.

The computer laboratory can be the model for change in our educational delivery system. In these laboratories, the students and teachers are partners in learning. It's very rare to find a successful computer teacher who doesn't admit to learning from his/her students, networking with them in such a way that each of these individuals feels important and committed.

Now is the time to creatively redesign and retool the education enterprise; to invert the structure and re-examine accepted-tasks. Staffs should network in intra-school and inter-school arrangements. Teachers and lower level administrators should be encouraged to develop personal commitments to what they teach and oversee. The dispassionate fiats of the "old" model administrators should be of historical interest only; education must proceed as a cooperative venture between students, teachers and "facilitators" - formerly administrators.

If Naisbitt is correct and societal institutions are only going to survive if they change their attitudes toward the value of the human being, then the educational system will have to do more than offer larger salaries.

Entrepreneurial enterprises in our society are gradually embracing Naisbitt's new model and so must society's entrenched educational institutions. **EE**

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