

# Problem-solving students suggest early energy education

By Gordon Johnson

See Jack run.  
Run Jack run.  
Run run.  
See Jack run to turn out the light.

Energy conservation taught starting at a young age was one solution a group of high school students gave to the problem of how to cope with dwindling energy supplies.

Students from fifteen states and Omaha participated in the Future Problem Solving Bowl in Lincoln April 18 to April 21.

The problem solving bowl is an extension of a curriculum which is offered many gifted and talented children throughout the United States and some half-dozen foreign countries, said Paul Torrance of the University of Georgia, founder of the program.

Cecil Reynolds, assistant professor of educational psychology at UNL said the program was founded as a curriculum for gifted children.

### Three groups

"The idea here is to teach children how

to be creative problem solvers," Reynolds said. The children's ages range from grade school age to high school and are divided up into three groups: senior, intermediate and junior.

Each age group is given a different problem to work on, which is geared toward their educational level. The students know before the contest that their problem will cover energy (senior problem), or the balance of trade, (intermediate problem), but not exactly what the problem will be and what specific area it will cover.

When the students get to the bowl, they are given an hour and a half to come up with a solution to the specific problem and present it in written form. The students are then given an hour to think of a convincing, creative way to present their idea on stage before the other contestants in five minutes.

Torrance said the competition is not the most important part of future problem solving, and that the program has a basic educational goal.

### Geared to future

"The basic educational goal is to help

young people develop and broaden their image of the future," Torrance explained.

The curriculum in the schools is geared to allow the students to study future problems and to learn problem-solving skills, Torrance said.

Research has shown through the years, he said, that gifted children have not developed problem-solving skills. Some of these skills include teamwork, he said.

Gifted or talented children do not work well with others, he said, so one thrust of the program is to teach gifted children to work with others.

Torrance divided the study of problem solving into five main areas. They are:

- Problem solving skills.
- Team work.
- Study of the future.

-Interdisciplinary thinking, or how to combine rules and concepts from all areas to help solve problems.

The culmination of the previous four. Students are taught to come up with a realistic alternative solution.

To get their point across to the audience, some students used puppets, others used songs and rhymes, and still others presented their answer in a speech-type format.

The judges of the competition looked for an original solution, a clever or unusual presentation, persuasiveness of the presentation, and the possibility of the idea's success.

The Bowl was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Association for the Gifted and the UNL Special Education Department.

## Activities planned for parents

Parents of UNL students will have a chance to see college life at its best this weekend when the parents will be guests on campus.

Parent's Weekend, according to UNL Chancellor Roy Young, is designed to show parents UNL programs, facilities, faculty and activities which comprise their son's or daughter's academic environment.

Each college is planning special programs and activities of interest for the parents according to the chairman of the Parent's Weekend and the Director of Admissions, Al Papik.

Papik said parents will be allowed to tour each college that interests them, and can attend several special programs planned by students and the student government.

ASUN, Papik said, will sponsor panel discussions on both days of parents weekend at which students will present their

views of the university.

Earlier in the semester, ASUN voiced a concern that Parents Weekend will only show the good things about the university. They also criticized Parent's Weekend because of a lack of student input into the selection and planning of the weekend.

However, Papik assured ASUN that students were involved in planning Parent's Weekend. Representatives from each of the 10 colleges, students and various administrative units were involved, he said.

Other highlights of Parent's Weekend will be UNL's annual Honors Day Convocation on Friday, and the Ivy Day celebration on Saturday. There will also be numerous concerts, performances of a University Theatre play, athletic demonstrations, and a Cornhusker football scrimmage Saturday afternoon in Memorial Stadium.



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