

Defining Necessary Math Skills

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has defined the following ten basic skills areas that should be taught in today's schools: problem solving; applying mathematics to everyday life situations; alertness to reasonableness of results; estimation and approximation; appropriate computational skills; geometry; measurement; reading, interpreting and constructing tables, charts, and graphs; using mathematics to predict; and computer literacy.

Students Caught Invading School Computers

"As more students become skilled with microcomputers that can link up with school computers, the challenge of gaining access to school records and tampering with them increasingly tempts the expert—and so does the desire to possess better equipment, recent events suggest. . . .

"[In February,] a judge in Grants Pass, Ore., sentenced four of seven students caught in connection with a theft of \$100,000 worth of computer equipment.

"At Mills High School in Little Rock, [Arkansas,] an unidentified 10th-grade student was 'recommended for suspension' for gaining access to the school computer and changing his grades.

"The 15-year-old student had 'obtained the proper codes and passwords' and used his home microcomputer during the Christmas holiday to hook up with the school computer by telephone. . . .

"Meanwhile, electronic 'hackers' broke into the computer of a mathematics, science, and computer magnet school in San Diego and wiped out files, deleted grades, and tampered with homework. . . .

"Gregory K. Volger, head of [the] school's computer-science

department . . . said that Gompers Secondary School will now buy computer hardware to ensure that when an outside call comes into the modem, the computer will take the number, record it, and compare it with a list of numbers of authorized users.

"'When you have modems or dial-up lines and anybody can call in and gain access, you are very vulnerable to malicious actions,' he said."—*Education Week*, vol. III, No. 23 (February 29, 1984). Reprinted by permission.

Timely Films on Child Molestation

The issue of child molestation has received widespread attention in recent months, and Walt Disney Educational Media has announced two films dealing with this sensitive topic.

Child Molestation: Breaking the Silence offers adults guidelines on how to identify symptoms in a child who has been sexually abused, how to respond, and most importantly, how to teach children to protect themselves.

Now I Can Tell You My Secret helps young children (grades K-3) understand the difference between "good touch" and "bad touch," tells them that they have the right to say "No" to an adult, and encourages them to confide in a trusted adult if they have been abused or approached.

Each film includes a comprehensive teacher's guide with suggested discussion questions, role-playing activities, and an extensive bibliography for further research.

Both titles are available in 16 mm film and videocassette format (the 16 mm version is available for a free two-week preview). To order, write Walt Disney Educational Media Company, 500 South Buena Vista St., Burbank, California 91521.

Preschool Pays Off for the Disadvantaged, Study Asserts

"Disadvantaged children who participate in high-quality preschool programs significantly outperform those who have not participated in such programs, according to the results of the first major longitudinal study to measure the effects of preschool education on the lives of students. . . .

"'Preschool pays off for its participants and society because it reduces costs for special education, welfare, and the criminal-justice system,' [states] the report [conducted by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation of Ypsilanti, Michigan], which is titled *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youth Through Age 19*.

"The \$3.5-million study, which began in 1962, followed the lives of 123 black youths from families of low socioeconomic status. Half of the families in the study received welfare assistance, 47 percent were single-parent families, and fewer than one-quarter of the mothers and 11 percent of the fathers had graduated from high school. . . .

"The study, the first of its kind to suggest the economic impact of preschool programs on the larger community, found that those children who participated in the preschool program were more successful in high school, more likely to attend college and job-training classes, and more likely to be employed and self-supporting than the children who did not attend the preschool program.

"The study also found that the preschool children subsequently had lower rates of juvenile crime, welfare dependence, and teen-age pregnancy, according to the report. . . .

"A cost-benefit analysis of the program and its results indicated that investment in the preschool

program was a good investment, the report maintains. . . . 'The economic benefits obtained by the end of high school were sufficient to justify public investment in one year of preschool education for disadvantaged children.'—*Education Week*, vol. IV, No. 3, September 19, 1984. Reprinted by permission.

Children and Divorce— Staggering Statistics

One out of every three marriages in the United States will eventually end up in the divorce courts. Every year there are one million divorces. Since 65 percent of divorce cases involve families with children under the age of 18, about 1.2 million children will experience the divorce of their parents this year. In the average classroom of 25 students, three students will be going through a divorce at any one time.—From *Christian Home and School*, May/June, 1984.

Playgrounds Expose Children to Toxic Hazards, Report Says

"Playgrounds and parks often expose children to such toxins as lead and pesticides . . . stated a report entitled 'America's Poisoned Playground: Children and Toxic Chemicals.' . . . by the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies in Washington, D.C., and Youth News, a California-based news service and research organization.

"More than 70,000 chemicals are in current commercial use, an additional 2,000 are synthesized and introduced into the environment annually and 172 billion pounds of the 50 most-used chemicals are produced each year, said the report.

"It is not surprising that some of these chemicals have found their way into parks and playgrounds. Yet incredibly poor design errors

have exacerbated the problem. . . . There has also been little awareness that children are uniquely susceptible to these chemicals. Next to chemical workers who have direct contact with toxic substances, children are the sector of the population at greatest risk.' . . .

"Nor are health effects on children immediately obvious, said the report. 'Reactions to toxic chemicals are often mistaken for allergic responses, mysterious rashes, and stomach and headaches of unknown origin. The long term health effects are even more difficult to identify' and 'are not likely to manifest themselves for decades.' . . .

"State education departments should work with health agencies to develop educational materials for use in schools and by parent groups and community organizations, said the report."—Reprinted from *Report on Preschool Education*, May 31, 1983, with permission of Capitol Publications, 1300 N. 17th St., Arlington, VA 22209.

Independent Schools Report Decline in Total Donations

"Overall giving to independent elementary and secondary schools decreased by 5.2 percent in 1982-1983, according to a report from the Council for Financial Aid to Education.

"But all types of annual giving, donations made by alumni and others to annual solicitations and usually applied to schools' operating budgets, increased between 1981-82 and 1982-83, according to a review of the survey data by the National Association of Independent Schools. . . .

"A decrease in funds from 'capital' gifts, usually one-time contributions that are used to build endowments or buildings, accounted for the overall decline

in donations, according to the report."—*Education Week*, vol. IV, No. 6, October 10, 1984. Reprinted by permission.

Teachers View Industry, Earn Graduate Credits

"Concerned that teachers and administrators might have lost touch with what it's like to work in local industries, Spartanburg School District 3 in Glendale, S.C., joined with business leaders to create an Educators-in-Industry program. The educators and Supt. James A. Buie toured local industries to learn first-hand about the types of jobs available and the skills students need to get them and keep them. With the cooperation of the University of South Carolina, the program also gives the educators a chance to earn three graduate credits."—*It Starts in the Classroom*, March, 1984. Reprinted by permission from *It Starts in the Classroom*. Copyright 1984, National School Public Relations Association.

Slow Learners Prosper With Home Support

"America's future productivity could be increased by as much as one-third if schools improve how they deal with low- and middle-achievers, according to a 19-year study of slow learners.

"The study showed some of the students labeled with 'low readiness' in first-grade reading tests overcame learning problems through perseverance and home support, said Anabel Newman, assistant dean of the Indiana U. School of Education. Those students are now doing well in college or careers, she said.

"Newman advised schools to avoid labeling children as 'slow learners' before they have the opportunity to show what they are capable of doing. 'Many are capable of much more than we usually

ask of them and given supportive conditions, they can produce far beyond what might be expected,' she said."—*Education U.S.A.*, November 7, 1983. Reprinted by permission from *Education U.S.A.* Copyright 1983, National School Public Relations Association.

Good Ideas

• "Got a spare room in your school? . . . Here's an idea that became an instant success in Taft Elementary School in the Wyoming (Mich.) Public Schools. . . .

"It's called The Parent Room, and it was created with the knowledge that where parents become involved in a child's education, the child becomes more successful in school. It serves as a resource center for parents both of public and private school students who want:

Books and pamphlets about raising children.

Books to take home to read to their children.

Games they can make to play at home with their children.

Materials to take home for their children to practice skills not mastered in school.

Videotapes to view on topics such as death, divorce, cheating, lying, etc.

Recipes and information about nutritious food and treats.

A place to meet and talk with other parents.

"The Parent Room is open every day from 8:30 to 3:15—less 45 minutes for lunch—and evenings by appointment."—*It Starts in the Classroom*, December, 1981. Reprinted by permission.

• *Fingerprinting children.* "It's something people don't like to think about, but it happens. Children do disappear. And to help find missing children, the Quakertown (Pa.) School District sponsored a program of fingerprinting its elementary school pupils. The program, suggested by the teachers association, is voluntary. State police do the fingerprinting without charge, and the fingerprints become the parents' property."—*Ibid.*, May, 1983.

• *Courtesy cards.* "As a means of boosting pride, a 'Cougar Courtesy Card' system was launched at Cascade Elementary School, Kennewick, Wash. Every child is issued a card to take home with the instruction to do a favor for the family or for a friend. It has to be a job for which *they do not get paid*. The card is mailed back to the school by the recipient of the favor, and is placed in the Courtesy Card box. A primary and intermediate card is drawn once each month at the Citizen of the Week Assembly. The two students

are then treated to lunch by the principal."—*Ibid.* □

UNCLE SAM AND YOUR SCHOOL

By Gary M. Ross

The "Dids" and "Didn'ts" of the 98th U.S. Congress session on Capitol Hill may now be history, but they will have a significant effect on administrators, teachers, and students.

Congress approved:

- A budget for the Department of Education;
- One billion dollars over two years to improve mathematics and science education in public schools;
- Voluntary religious meetings in public schools under very narrowly drawn circumstances;
- Federal aid to vocational education, with incentives for providing improved access to groups poorly served in the past;
- A national summit meeting on school improvement;

The author is Associate Director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference of SDA, and serves as the church's liaison with the U.S. Congress.

Between the Book Ends

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shopping list and how-to instructions for making your own card sets. A fairly complete section follows on "Schools of Art in History" for those who feel shaky in this area, including drawings of typical paintings from various schools or periods.

Together with a list of suggested art books for children, the book concludes with a useful index of painters that includes a pronunciation guide, dates of birth and death, country or school. This aid will help alleviate any lingering feelings of insecurity teachers

might feel about starting an art appreciation course for children.

The ready-made postcards for each step cost \$6.00 for a set of 12; \$12.00 for 24. It is not necessary to buy all sets at once. It would be less expensive to make up your own, but this would limit you to those postcards you could obtain locally or as you visit art museums.

Mommy, It's a Renoir is an exciting book—the best I've seen yet on this topic.—Lucille Mathewson. □

The author teaches art at Sligo Adventist School, Takoma Park, Maryland.