

Of Interest to Teachers

Good Grades for U.S. Schools

Contrary to public perception, American high school completion rates are among the best in the world—more than 85 percent, taking into consideration students who need more than four years to complete high school and those who earn graduation equivalency degrees.

Nearly 60 percent of U.S. youth attempt postsecondary studies at accredited institutions, and two-thirds of these, or 40 percent of all youth, enroll in four-year institutions. Eventually, nearly 30 percent of today's youth will obtain at least a bachelor's degree. These are the highest rates in the world, says Karen Famous, president, Oregon Education Association, drawing on results of a study by the Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico.

Multicultural Sensitivity Needed

According to reports from the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States is experiencing a major demographic transformation. It is projected that by the year 2020 whites will no longer be the majority racial group.

"This makes it imperative that educators make a definite commitment to provide increased opportunity for each individual to develop the attitudes and skills necessary to create and maintain a positive culturally-interactive campus. . . . A good beginning for building and maintaining campus climate would be to develop greater understanding and awareness of racial/ethnic diversity, principles found in Scripture and other religious literature."—Adeline Williams, "Multicultural Sensitivity," from the *NADOE Memo*, March 1992.

Value of After-School Programs

"After-school clubs, scout troops, youth groups, sports teams, and involvement in music are often thought of as fringe benefits for youth. When time or money gets tight, they're often the first thing trimmed from the budget. This problem is particularly severe in urban schools where there are few, if any, of these opportunities.

"Given the potential power of these opportunities, such cutbacks are misguided. If anything, these activities need increased support and commitment from communities so that young people won't be idle in front of the television set or hanging out in the shopping mall. These programs are as essential as more formal education and contribute to it.

"One of the characteristics of the healthiest communities is that young people have opportunities to be involved in constructive activities. In [a recent study by Search Institute] 55 percent of 9th through 12th grade youth in the healthiest communities are involved in sports, clubs, music, or other school- or community-sponsored activities. In the least healthy communities, only 39 percent of youth are involved."—Search Institute *Source VIII:2* (May 1992), reporting on a study by Search Institute entitled "Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth."

Handwriting Troubles

Poor handwriting costs business \$200 million a year, according to the Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association. Only 10 percent of executives say that their employees' handwriting is consistently legible. Forty-one percent say that handwriting is getting worse, according to a survey of 250 executives conducted by Modern Office Products.

Secretaries often spend more time trying to decipher the boss' handwriting than doing the assigned task, according to a handwriting instructor at Portland State University in Oregon. Until recently Eastman Kodak dealt with 400,000 rolls of film a year that it couldn't return because the address was illegible. The U.S. Postal Service routes 38 million pieces of illegible mail to its dead-letter office every year, at a cost of \$4 million. At the Los Angeles post office, 12 skilled handwriting specialists try to decipher 500 letters a day.

Poor handwriting can be dangerous, as when five people were killed in the crash of a small airplane because of an illegible handwritten barometer reading, or when pharmacists can't decipher a doctor's handwriting on a prescription.

A new writing style called "italic" has gained popularity among doctors, lawyers, teachers, policemen, and others who share a need for accurate note taking. The style was developed in the 16th century by a Vatican chancery scribe. Its letters connect in the same way as those in Palmer Method cursive writing, but it is easier to read because it

lacks Palmer's loops and varied curves.

For more information about the italic method, send \$16.95 for *Write Now: A Complete Self-Teaching Program for Better Handwriting* from Continuing Education Press, Portland State University, P.O. Box 1491, Portland, OR 97207.

Child Poverty in U.S. Rose Steadily in '80s

Child poverty rose steadily over the past decade and now pervades every region of the United States, the Children's Defense Fund maintains.

The report, based on unpublished Census Bureau figures, offers the first city-by-city count of poor children since the 1980 census.

The report shows that 26.2 percent of children living in cities with populations of at least 100,000 are poor, and that in some cities, one-half to two-thirds of children in minority groups are poor. While child poverty historically has been concentrated in urban centers, the report states that the 20 cities with the highest child-poverty rates in 1989 are "disparate in size and geography."

In addition to such large cities as Detroit, New Orleans, Cleveland, and Miami, the list includes smaller cities such as Laredo and Waco, Texas; Shreveport, Louisiana; Rochester, New York; and Macon, Georgia.

The report also cites cities not in the top 20, such as Salt Lake City and St. Paul, that have "surprisingly high" child-poverty rates, and noted that 86 rural counties have a higher percentage of children living in poverty than the nation's poorest city, Detroit.

According to the report, child-poverty rates reached "startling extremes" for minority children in several cities. In 31 cities, at least half of the black children were poor; in 19, at least half of the Hispanic children were poor; and in eight, at least half of the Asian-American children were poor.

In its state-by-state report, the CDF noted that poverty rates were highest for the youngest children. In 1989, about 28 percent of urban children younger than six were poor, and poverty rates for young minority-group children in some cases exceeded 70 percent.

"Such high rates of poverty among our youngest children are simply not compatible with this country's goal of getting all of our preschool children ready to learn by the time they reach first grade," said Marion Wright Edelman, president of the CDF.—Reported by *Education Week*, September 9, 1992.

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Teacher Survey Cites Students' Lack of Readiness

More than half of all U.S. public school teachers think at least a quarter of their students are unprepared for grade-level work, a national survey has found.

The survey, sponsored by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, polled 1,000 teachers in spring 1992. The results show that many teachers are unsatisfied with students' abilities and feel ill-equipped to deal with the range of students' problems.

About 55 percent of the teachers at all levels said they considered all, most, or at least one-quarter of their students unprepared for their studies.

The survey found wide differences, however, based on the number of minority and low-income students in teachers' classrooms. Forty-two percent of teachers who had few or no minority students said a significant number of students were unprepared. That number jumped to 55 percent

among teachers with "some" minority students, and to 78 percent among teachers with mostly or all minority students.

Similarly, while 23 percent of the teachers with few or no low-income students said a sizable portion of their classes were unprepared, about 60 percent with some low-income students and 77 percent of those with mostly or all low-income students cited significant lack of preparedness.

Two-thirds of teachers who cited student-preparedness problems pointed to a lack of parental support as a serious hindrance to students. More than 40 percent cited poverty, while nearly a third cited parental drug or alcohol problems as the cause of trouble. Other factors identified by teachers included physical or psychological abuse, poor nutrition, student alcohol or drug problems, school violence, and poor health.

Fewer than a third of the teachers who noted classroom problems thought that their own education and training had made them "well prepared" to deal with social factors.—Reported by *Education Week*, September 23, 1992. ✍

CONTINUING EDUCATION MATERIALS STILL AVAILABLE

Teachers who desire continuing education credit for denominational recertification or for professional enhancement can still take tests on the following topics:

"An Introduction to the Teaching Principles of Jesus" Parts I and II, by Reuben L. Hilde

"Individualizing Instruction, K-12" Parts I and II, by Benjamin E. Bandiola

"A Practical Approach to Career Education" Parts I and II, by E. J. Anderson

"Integrating Learning, Faith, and Practice in Christian Education" Parts I and II, by George H. Akers and Robert D. Moon

"Learning Theories and the Christian Teacher" Part I by M. D. Hodgen; Part II by Elisabeth Wear

Denominational History: *"Tell It to the World"* Parts I and II, by C. Mervyn Maxwell; test and objectives by Joe Engelkemier

"Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works" Parts I, II, and III, by Roger W. Coon

"Teaching the Exceptional Child" Part I by Marilyn G. Parker; Part II by Desmond Rice

"Light in the Shadows: An Overview of the Doctrine of the Sanctuary" Part I; and *"Walking in the Light: An Overview of the Doctrine of Salvation in Christ"* Part II, by Frank B. Holbrook

"Light for Living—A Study of the Seventh-day Adventist Health Message" Part I; and *"Light for Living—Choosing a Healthy Life-Style"* Part II, by Joyce W. Hopp

"Hermeneutics: Interpreting a 19th-Century Prophet in the Space Age" Single-part article, by Roger W. Coon

Bible Doctrines: *"The Christian Understanding of God and Human Existence"* Part I; and *"The Mission of the Church, Eschatology, and the Sabbath"* Part II, by Richard Rice

As of July 1, 1993, the charge for study material and tests will change. Study material will cost U.S. \$2.50 for each part (a two-part article will cost \$5.00; a three-part article, \$7.50). To obtain the study material, or to request additional information, write to THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

For each test, send U.S. \$25 in the form of a check or money order (payable to La Sierra University) to NAD/PAC—Prof. Activity Credit, Lolita N. Davidson, Ed.D., 26249 Mission Rd., Redlands, CA 92373 U.S.A. Telephone: (909) 796-4739.

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