

# Of Interest to Teachers

## Cooperative Learning Information

If you want more information about cooperative learning, or if you are interested in learning about what resources are available, contact the following organizations:

### The Cooperation Company

P.O. Box 5971  
Salem, OR 97304  
(800) 745-5689

Jim Roy, our guest editor for this edition of the JOURNAL, began The Cooperation Company five years ago in an effort to provide colleagues with a catalog of cooperative learning materials. The catalog now lists over 120 books, games and tapes, each of them designed to promote cooperative strategies in the home and classroom. Jim is a Seventh-day Adventist educator and brings a Christian perspective to the training sessions he is asked to conduct. For a free catalog, use the 800 number or drop them a card.

### The International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education

Box 1582  
Santa Cruz, CA 95061

The IASCE publishes an excellent cooperative learning magazine four times a year. If you are into cooperative learning or want to be, subscribe to this organization.

### Skylight Publishing

200 East Wood Street, Suite 274  
Palatine, IL 60067  
(800) 348-4474

Skylight publishes an excellent catalog full of excellent materials on teaching, learning, and school improvement.

### The Cooperative Learning Center

202 Pattee Hall  
150 Pillsbury Drive, SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
(612) 624-7031

David and Roger Johnson are pioneers in the field of cooperative learning. Besides being prolific authors, they train hundreds of teachers a year in cooperative teaching strategies.

### Kagan Cooperative Learning Company

27134 Paseo Espada, Suite 302  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
(800) 933-2667

Spencer Kagan conducts dozens of workshops each year and has put together many cooperative learning materials that are very successful in the classroom.

## Negative Effects of Peer Pressure

A study of 6,504 U.S. high school students showed the importance of peer pressure on their behavior. A majority said that their school friends thought it was acceptable to smoke or drink. Large numbers said they had easy access to cigarettes and alcohol at school.

Only 38 percent of the students in grades 6 to 12 said their friends considered schoolwork very important, and 30 percent said their friends thought it was very important to behave properly in class.

The study was based on data from the U.S. Education Department's 1993 National Household Education Survey.

A co-author of the report suggested that schools should involve parents in fashioning discipline policies and should make counseling programs available for non-college-bound youth. He also suggested that large high schools be restructured so that teachers can get to know students and families.—Reported by *Education Week* XIV:1, September 7, 1994.

## Most College Graduates Find Employment

A National Center for Education Statistics report reveals that one year after graduation, most U.S. college degree recipients are employed.

- Among 1989-1990 graduates, 84 percent were working one year after receiving their degrees (73.8 percent full time; 10.5 percent part time). Twelve percent were not working either by choice or because they were pursuing further education. Four percent of the graduates were unemployed.

- Students who majored in professional fields were more likely than arts and science majors to find jobs soon after graduation. Employment rates for these groups were 90 percent and 76 percent, respectively.

- Of the full- and part-time employed graduates, 76 percent reported having jobs relating to their majors.

- One year after graduation, the mean salary of the 1989-1990 graduates was \$23,600 and the median salary, \$21,000.

- Thirty-five percent of the 1989-1990 graduates were advancing their education within one year after receiving their degrees. Forty-six percent of these students were arts and science majors, while 28 percent majored in professional fields.—Reported by *Higher Education and National Affairs* 42:20, November 8, 1993.

## More Ph.D.s Awarded in U.S.

Nearly 39,000 doctoral degrees were earned at U.S. colleges and universities in 1992, the larg-

est number ever, according to a report released by the National Research Council.

The study shows that the number of women earning doctoral degrees has risen steadily since 1962, when they earned only 1,235 Ph.D.s. In 1992, 14,366 such degrees were awarded to women, an increase of about 500 over the previous year.

The number of men earning doctorates also has increased, but was below the record 27,754 awarded in 1972. Men received 24,488 Ph.D.s in 1992, about 800 more than in 1991.

People of color (African, Native, and Asian Americans and Hispanics) collectively accounted for only about 10 percent of all U.S. doctorates awarded in 1992. However, the percentages of Ph.D.s awarded to these groups has been increasing since 1977.

Asian students earned more than twice the number of doctorates in 1992 than in 1977 (3.3 percent, up from 1.4 percent). Native Americans increased their share of Ph.D.s from 0.3 percent to 0.6 percent. However, African-Americans earned a smaller portion of the Ph.D.s last year than in 1977 (3.7 percent, down from 4.5 percent).

Citizens of countries outside the U.S. accounted for nearly 12,000 of the doctoral degrees granted in 1992. Among non-U.S. citizens, Asians earned the most, followed by whites, Hispanics, and blacks.

Of all Ph.D.s earned in 1992, the largest number were in the life sciences, followed by education.—Reported by *Higher Education and National Affairs* 42:20, November 8, 1993.

## Math and Science Scores Up; Reading and Writing Results Mixed

American students are doing better in mathematics and science than they were a decade ago, but the changes in reading and writing are mixed, the U.S. Education Department reports.

In general, achievement is about the same as in the early 1970s, according to the latest findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. About 31,000 students aged 9, 13, and 17 were tested in 1992 in preparation for the latest report in the 20-year history of the study.

Federal officials attributed the hard-won gains in science and math to changes in the courses students are taking. Between 1986 and 1992, more students enrolled in high-level science at age 17 and higher-level math at ages 13 and 17. Technology and computer use also soared.

Authors of the study recommended that, to achieve the same improvement in reading and writing, parents should spend more time with their chil-

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dren. The increase in 8th graders' writing skills in this survey appeared to have resulted from more of them receiving at least an hour of writing instruction per week.

## Violence and Discipline Are Public's Top School Concerns

Violence and poor discipline are the public's top concerns about public schools, a recent survey shows.

Poor discipline has been the most-frequently mentioned problem in the annual Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll on education, but for the first time in the survey's 26-year history, the category "violence/fighting" tied for the top spot.

Violence and discipline were both mentioned by 18 percent of the 1,326 adult respondents to the survey. However, some segments of the population were more likely to rate violence as the most important issue facing schools: 31 percent of non-whites, 27 percent of urban residents, and 28 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds.

Lack of financial support and drug abuse, which topped the list in 1993, also have been common responses since the mid-1980s.

On the subject of school choice, which was defined as allowing parents to send their children to any public, private, or church-related school, with the government paying all or part of the tuition, 54 percent were opposed, while 45 percent favored the idea. This was an increase in both those in favor and those opposed over 1991, when more people were undecided. However, the 1991 question specifically mentioned vouchers, while the 1992 one did not.

The 1991 poll, which had also asked whether people favored allowing students and parents to attend a private school at public expense, found 74 percent opposed, 24 percent in favor, and 2 percent undecided.

The poll also found that the public supported many current reform initiatives, such as less traditional ways of grading students and the setting of achievement goals, without specifying how schools should meet these goals.

About three-quarters of the public thought that a standardized curriculum and national exams were "very" or "quite" important.—Reported by *Education Week* XIV:1, September 7, 1994.

## American Teens Get Little Exercise

Despite America's emphasis on fitness, a new government study shows that U.S. teenagers are less physically active than a decade ago, prompting concern about the long-term consequences of their increasingly sedentary life-style.

Only 37 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 reported that they performed at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise—such as running, swimming, basketball, or fast cycling—three or more times a week. While half of the boys said they regularly engaged in strenuous exercise, only one-quarter of the girls said they did so.

The study was done by Gregory Heath, an epidemiologist with the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and his colleagues, based on the 1990 Youth Risk Behavior Study of 11,631 students in grades 9 through 12 in every state and the District of Columbia. It was reported in the November 1994 issue of *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*.

The results show that teenagers are much more likely to watch television than to exercise. More than one-third of high school students reported watching more at least three hours of television each school day, and about 70 percent said they spent at least an hour daily in front of the tube. A demographic breakdown revealed that black female students were the least physically active and watched the most TV.

Teenage girls showed a steady decline in exercise levels as they advanced through high school, although boys maintained about the same levels. White male students had the highest

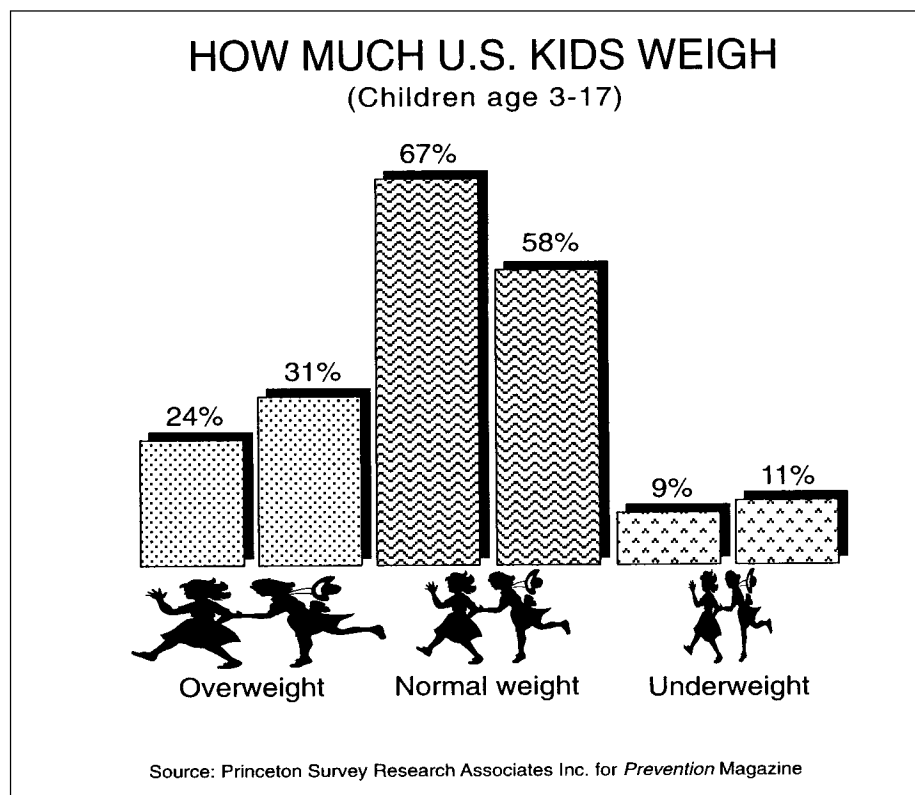
rates of physical activity, followed by Hispanic and African-American males.

The CDC researchers found what they called "disturbing declines" in participation in school physical-education programs and in community recreation programs. Almost half of the students in grades 9 through 12 reported that they were not enrolled in physical-education classes. Only about one-fifth said that they attended physical-education classes on a daily basis—and only 1 in 10 seniors did so.

Health experts said that even being on a varsity team does not guarantee that a student is getting regular, vigorous exercise. "The fallacy of promoting team sports is that they are not all vigorous activity," said Heath.

At the same time, studies show that an increasing number of children are overweight (see bar graph).

A 1993 International Consensus Conference of Physical Activity and Adolescents recommended that teenagers engage in mild to moderate exercise every day if possible as part of regular family, school, and community life; and moderate to vigorous levels of exertion three or more times per week in sessions that last at least 20 minutes each.—Reported by the *Washington Post*, November 8, 1994, p. A1.



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## Vicious Preschool Competition in India

In India, which has the world's fastest-growing middle class, education for young children is in great demand. Overachieving parents now begin grooming children as young as 2 1/2 for the battery of entrance interviews required for admission to New Delhi's most elite private nursery schools. Parents are also given a psychological test as part of the entrance process.

Once in school, the stress only increases. A recent government-sponsored study found that 86 percent of private schools surveyed assigned an average of 4 to 11 books to toddlers between the ages of two and three. As the youngsters reach first and second grade, they will tote a nine-pound load of books between school and home each day.

The trend has so alarmed the country's educators that the government will soon increase age limits on children entering nursery and preschools and this past fall recommended—but did not mandate—elimination of entrance tests for preschoolers, less stringent classroom schedules for toddlers, and limits on the book loads youngsters should carry home each day.

The hunger for education by the Indian middle class, which represents about 150 to 250 million of India's 900 million people, is also fueling an explosion in the number of private schools in a country where many parents are frustrated with government-funded schools' overcrowded classrooms, absentee teachers, and poor curricula. In the past decade, the number of private schools in New Delhi has doubled to 600—about 40 percent of the total schools in the city, according to government officials.

Meanwhile, educators worry that most Indians cannot buy a better level of education and must attend the underfunded and overburdened public schools. Today, India has the largest population of illiterates in the world, and nearly half of the country's children between the ages of 6 and 14 do not go to school at all, according to United Nations statistics.

Child psychologists say their business has picked up as a result of the mental and physical stress placed on children at younger ages. There is a notion that the child who starts earlier will be a winner later, according to Avdesh Sharma, a New Delhi psychiatrist, who says that such children become cranky, have stomach aches, get school phobia, and refuse to attend. "They are forced to do things that are against the maturation process and they can't cope," Sharma says.

During a seminar on preschool education for New Delhi principals, pediatrician Anil Gulati painted a grim picture of a preschooler's typical day. The schedule, Gulati wrote, begins at 6:30 a.m. when the child is roused from bed: "Gets ready, no time for potty, no time for breakfast, pushed into bus or rickshaw, travels through polluted roads and comes home at 2:30 p.m." The toddler then "has lunch, sits for homework, no play, has dinner, watches television and goes off to sleep."

"The child today has lost his childhood," according to a member of one nursery school's admissions board. "He is merely a puppet in the hands of teachers and parents."—Reported in the *Washington Post*, October 29, 1994, p. A21.

## What's Important to Today's Teens

Philanthropy and spirituality are very important to a majority of American teens, according to Peter Zollo, president of Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU) of Northbrook, Illinois. The share of teens who agree with the statement, "It's very important to me to get involved in things that help others and help make the world better," increased from 65 percent in 1989 to 69 percent in 1992, then fell to 63 percent in 1993.

Those who say their religion or faith is one of the most important parts of their lives increased from 53 percent in 1989 to 58 percent in 1992, then fell off in 1993 to 53 percent.

TRU's annual Teen Value Monitor surveys 2,000 young people ages 12 to 19. The most recent survey showed that fashion trends and new technology may be waning in importance. Forty-six percent of teens said it was very important to them to be first to try something new, compared with more than half four years ago. This may reflect a dominant characteristic of today's teens: cynicism. One expression of this cynicism is the rising share who crave instant gratification. Almost 70 percent of TRU respondents agreed that the statement that "I always try to have as much fun as I possibly can—I don't know what the future holds, and I don't care what others think," compared with 61 percent in 1989.—Reported by *American Demographics*, November 1994.

## Some U.S. College Enrollments Drop As Tuition Increases

America's college enrollment seems to be slipping, especially in California. Tuition price hikes may be to blame. "We're starting to squeeze people out of the system," says Patrick Callan, executive director of the California Higher

Education Research Center, a non-partisan research group.

Recession-racked California led the U.S. in confirmed enrollment declines, losing more than 7 percent of its college students between fall 1992 and fall 1993. But other states lost students, too. In its sixth annual survey, the American Council on Education (ACE) found that 1993 enrollment dropped in 12 of the 16 states providing complete information, including Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Virginia. Losses ranged from miniscule (0.1 percent in Maryland) to noticeable (2.5 percent in Mississippi). Georgia's college student population saw a modest increase of 2.6 percent, with New Jersey, Tennessee, and Texas experiencing smaller gains. These 16 states account for more than 40 percent of the total U.S. college population, excluding California, and probably reflect a nationwide trend.

The U.S. Department of Education estimates that college enrollment grew from 14.5 million to 14.6 million between 1992 and 1993. But the ACE survey was based on actual enrollment for both years. Likewise, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, a policy analysis organization, had expected a 1992-1993 college enrollment increase because the number of high school graduates had grown in 13 of 15 states. But higher education enrollments fell in eight states. Excluding California, the region's enrollment grew very slightly. However, California's loss of 160,000 students dragged down the overall region by 4 percent.

California is typical of much of the rest of the U.S., where tight state budgets have forced dramatic tuition increases in recent years. Fees have doubled since 1988-1989 in the University of California and California State University systems. Community colleges have seen similar fee increases.

Many schools are downsizing, cutting class sections, and increasing class sizes to cope. But the increase in tuition goes on. Between 1980-1981 and 1990-1991, public university costs rose 27 percent and private university fees went up 54 percent, while median family incomes increased only 15 percent, according to Postsecondary Education Opportunity.

Despite the high costs of college, obtaining a bachelor's degree adds an average of \$466,000 to lifetime earnings over a high school diploma. In 1992, the median income of male U.S. college graduates was 60 percent higher than their high school graduate counterparts. ☞