

Of Interest to Teachers

U. S. Spending on Education

Expenditures for U.S. public and private education from pre-primary through graduate school are estimated at about \$560 billion for 1996-1997, of which about \$350 billion was spent for elementary and secondary education. The total expenditures for education were expected to amount to about 7.4 percent of the gross national product in 1996-1997, somewhat higher than the 1986-1987 figure of 6.6 percent.—*From Mini-Digest of Education Statistics 1997*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Watching Television Tied to Children's Weight Problems

Children who watch at least four hours of television are more likely to be overweight than those who watch less television, according to a report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (March 25, 1998).

The problem is more acute among

children from minority groups than among white children. For example, 43 percent each of black boys and girls watch more than four hours of television each day, according to the article. By contrast, only 16 percent of non-Hispanic white girls and 24 percent of non-Hispanic white boys watch that much television.

The scientists who wrote the report analyzed data gathered by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1988 to 1994, in which a group of 4,063 children from the ages of 8 to 16 completed a survey about their activities.

The survey did not determine the reason for the increased amounts of fat in the children who watched more television, but they may tend to eat more snacks and have a more sedentary lifestyle.

Benefits of Intergenerational Tutoring

Studies done by the Older Adult Service and Information System (OASIS) in St. Louis, Missouri, have shown that 87 percent of students tutored had improved attitudes toward

reading and language arts. In addition, their teachers reported better class participation, willingness to read aloud, longer attention spans, better verbal skills, more completed homework assignments, and improved attendance.

About 5,500 OASIS volunteers trained in language experience methods tutored 12,000 students one hour each week in 71 school districts in 17 cities across the U.S.

A two-year study of a similar program showed that such tutoring worked especially well for boys. Jerome Kagan of Harvard University directed the Intergenerational Literacy Tutoring project (ILTP) concluded that mature volunteers—age 55 and up—could, with training and supervision, have a positive effect on the reading achievement of non-reading, high-risk, first-grade students from low-income families in Boston public schools. In 1997, 40 senior volunteers trained in language experience and phonics tutored 140 students in three 45-minute sessions per week in six schools. Sixty-three percent of boys tutored by ILTP volunteers showed significant gains, compared

with 30 percent of students not tutored.

How do teachers feel about the program? "The only complaint from teachers was there weren't enough tutors," says ILTP volunteer trainer and reading teacher Darci Vogel of Boston Partners in Education. "Teachers said kids who were shy before the tutoring are now reading aloud and volunteering in class."

Benefits from using older age tutors include their numbers and time available, their motivation and commitment, their ability to nurture, and their emphasis on civility and good manners.

To set up intergenerational tutoring programs, contact:

- Generations United; (202) 662-4283. Ask for their guidebook "Becoming a School Partner—A Guidebook for Organizing Intergenerational Partnerships in Schools."
- Intergenerational Tutoring Project: Boston Partners in Education, Darci Vogel; (617) 451-6145. Model program available.
- OASIS Intergenerational Tutoring Program; nationwide (314) 862-2933.

Picture Removed

Of Interest to Teachers

Recommended reading: *Book Buddies: Guidelines for Volunteer Tutors of Emergent and Early Readers* (Guilford, \$19.95), by Francine F. Johnston, Marcia Invernizzi, and Connie Juel.—From *Style Plus*, *Washington Post*, September 1, 1998.

U.S. College Enrollment Shows Gains by Part-Timers

U.S. college enrollment fell slightly below 14.3 million in the fall of 1994 and was expected to rise above 15 million in 1997. Of the 1997 students, about nine million attended four-year schools and nearly six million attended two-year schools. Between 1987 and 1997, part-time enrollment increased at a faster rate

than full-time enrollment, 12 percent and nine percent, respectively. The proportion of 18- and 19-year-olds attending high school or college and the percentage of those in their early 20s attending school also increased. Despite decreases in the traditional U.S. college-age population, college enrollment has grown each year since 1980. Much of this growth can be attributed to greater percentages of recent high school graduates and women over age 24 who attend college. The proportion of American college students from minority groups has also been increasing, due mainly to the increases in Hispanics and Asian-Americans.—From *Mini-Digest of Education Statistics 1997*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Separate Article
Removed

Picture Removed