

Of Interest to Teachers

Dealing Productively With Gender Differences

After a decade of focusing on the problems that girls face in school, some researchers are turning to the troubles of boys, insisting that the boys are the ones getting cheated, though there is considerable disagreement on the subject.

Harvard University Professor William Pollack, among others, argues that the structure of most American schools favors girls' learning styles. Boys learn better by doing than by listening—and many classrooms are not set up to allow them to be active. Their writing and reading skills are lower, and many teachers fail to compensate for this. Moreover, many young boys think that the learning process is feminine-oriented, since more than 90 percent of American elementary school teachers are women.

But author/educator JoAnn Deak and many of her colleagues say that misbehaving boys get the teacher's attention, while girls' needs are ignored. Boys respond to teachers' questions more than girls do, and may be better at problem-solving because they are encouraged to take risks, while girls tend to follow rules and memorize spelling words and multiplication tables. As a result, girls are less likely to go into science-related fields or to delve deeply into the subject.

Teachers can adapt their teaching styles to the differences in the way boys and girls learn by allowing different approaches to assignments, working with students in small groups (either single-sex or with equal numbers of boys and girls), giving each child part of a lesson assignment to share with the class, and requiring students to wait a few seconds before putting up their hands to answer a question, thereby giving everyone a chance to think through the problem.

Many teachers also think that more parents

should consider enrolling their sons in school a year or two later than average.

Teachers should also examine their attitudes and practices to see whether they foster the gender divide, according to Chip Wood, author and co-founder of the Northeast Foundation for Children, a nonprofit educational organization in Massachusetts. He suggests paying attention to the ways boys and girls interact and bringing gender issues out into the open by discussing them.—Reported in the *Washington Post*, February 22, 2000.

Largest-Ever Scripture Distribution Project Launched

The American Bible Society (ABS), the Macellan Foundation, and the United Bible Societies (UBS)

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are cooperating in the largest Scripture distribution project in history—a three-year, \$90 million initiative involving more than 60 countries in all parts of the world. “Opportunity 21” will concentrate on several regions where the need is considered “dire”: Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. However, this project will do more than simply distribute printed Scriptures. It encompasses Scripture translation and printing projects as well.

Because illiteracy is a significant obstacle for many trying to read the Scriptures, a major goal of Opportunity 21 is to provide videos and audiocassettes for those who are unable to read. Studies show that 70 percent of all people will not be reached with the printed page.

In 1946, the ABS, a non-profit interconfessional Christian organization which began in 1816 and is headquartered in New York, helped to create the United Bible Societies, a global fellowship of 135

Bible Societies in more than 200 countries that promotes Scriptures worldwide, including translations, production, and distribution. In 1998 the UBS provided more than 561 million Scriptures around the world. The Maclellan Foundation, in Chattanooga, is America’s largest Christian foundation.

For additional information, contact Elaine Nole at (212) 408-1325 or enole@americanbible.com.—
From ABS News Release, September 7, 1999.

Students Vulnerable to Internet Addiction

College students may be unusually vulnerable to Internet addiction, according to a report in the journal *CyberPsychology and Behavior*.

Students from ages 18 to 22 are at particular risk, the report says, because they face serious de-

velopmental challenges as they leave home, solidify their identities, and form intimate relationships, writes the author, Jonathan J. Kendall, assistant director of the Counseling Center at the University of Maryland at College Park. The free, high-speed network access provided to students at many colleges seems to make it easier for them than for other people to turn to the Internet as an escape.

Kendall defines “Internet addiction” as “a psychological dependence on the Internet, regardless of type of activity once ‘logged on.’” He cites several studies done by colleges that reported high levels of Internet addiction among their students.

According to the article, one university found a correlation between high Internet use and a dropout rate that more than doubled; another school has limited the amount of Internet time available to students in order to cut down on overuse; and several other colleges have set up support groups for Internet addiction. ☞

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