

L.A. Enrollment Increases as Expected

Los Angeles Unified School District reported a gain of 6,386 pupils in kindergarten through 12th grade between the fall of 1981 and 1982. While this is only a one percent increase, it bears out predictions that the district's enrollment would increase slightly during the next few years.

Officials speculate that part of the increase came from the return of students who left when the district was under court order to integrate. Also, current economic conditions might have forced some parents to send their children to public schools rather than more costly private schools.

The increase was not experienced at every grade level. There was an increase at the junior high level, a slight increase in kindergarten, and an increase in the 1st through 3rd grades. Senior high enrollment, however, went down.

Spelling Through Video

A unique, multisensory approach to language arts is featured in "Spelling Plus," a videotape series using puppets, live actors, exciting field trips, visuals, and games to teach spelling, language arts, and more.

Each 20-minute lesson, in addition to its language arts content, contains a "plus" lesson in another subject area such as the arts, science, math, history, health, or safety. Presently the program is in use in the schools throughout Orange County, California, and seems to be well received by students and teachers alike. A survey revealed that all teachers and 80 percent of all students who have used the program would like all of their spelling lessons to be in this format. The spelling words used are taken from five major national word lists and are compatible with most existing spelling programs. "Spelling Plus" is available in VHS, Beta, and ¼" formats.

For more information write Robert E. Donker, c/o Vi Owen, Editor, *California Curriculum News Report*, 340 Arthur Ave., Aptos, CA 95003.

Socioeconomic Status Is Important Factor in Reading Ability

Better readers at ages 9, 13, and 17 are students who do more homework, do not watch excessive amounts of television, and/or enjoy reading, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Other factors that appear to

improve reading skills are reading often in spare time and having a taste for fiction as well as non-fiction.

The NAEP study determined that superior reading abilities are found among females, whites, those attending school in advantaged-urban areas, and those with a parent having education beyond high school. The poorest readers were males, blacks, Hispanics, students from disadvantaged-urban areas, and those whose parents did not finish high school. Obviously, socioeconomic status is a factor in who has the best reading skills.

Enjoyment of reading dropped as students grew older, with four-fifths of the elementary students, half of the junior high school students, and a little over two-fifths of the senior high school students stating that they enjoy reading.

The report, *Reading Comprehension of American Youth*, #11-R-02, is available from the Education Commission of the States Distribution Center, 1860 Lincoln St., Denver, CO 80295, for \$5.90.

Education for Pluralism

FRANCIONE N. LEWIS
AND RAMÓN L. SANTIAGO

Sourcebook on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

With the recent influx of Indochinese students into American classrooms,

many teachers have been searching for a curriculum guide that deals with the history, geography, arts, and religious and other customs of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In answer to their quest, the *Multicultural Education Sourcebook* provides learning activities designed to teach children of these ethnic groups about their own background and to enable other children to appreciate the cultures of Southeast Asia.

Developed by a group of teachers, librarians, museum staff, and curriculum specialists who participated in a

Boulder, Colorado, work effort called the Ethnic Studies Internship Project, the sourcebook describes learning activities that can be used for elementary and secondary students. It also includes ways to develop a multicultural curriculum based on Native American and other groups.

For more information or to order a copy of the sourcebook contact: Holly Lanville, Intern Project Director, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, P.O. Drawer P, Boulder, CO 80302. Phone: (303) 497-0200.

Multicultural and Academic Learning Taught Simultaneously

Two new handbooks tell teachers and parents how to use math, reading, and language arts activities to help children learn about their own and other cultures while they master academic skills. Unlike other multicultural curriculum guides, the Responsive Multicultural Basic Skills Handbooks offer not only sample activities but also explicit teaching methods and principles.

Among the specific "how-to's" are techniques for giving children a sense of control over their own learning, methods for making positive use of each child's unique background, and techniques for creating a feeling of cooperation among children in ethnically diverse classrooms. Readers also learn how to adjust activities to children who may learn best kinesthetically, aurally, and/or tactilely rather than visually.

The *Overview* presents a rationale for emphasizing the cultural diversity that exists in most contemporary classrooms and utilizing differences in beliefs, behavior, appearance, language, and thought processes to enrich learning activities. References to children's literature and other media enable primary school teachers to plan individualized lessons for their students. The second volume, *Children's World View: The Basis for Learning Activities*, includes instructions for combining academic with multicultural learning activities as well as examples, sample lesson plans,

and a model curriculum framework.

Most of the activities outlined were developed in conjunction with teachers and parents of primary school children in Fresno, California, and Reno, Nevada.

For more information or to secure copies of the two Responsive Multicultural Basic Skills Handbooks (\$23 per set), contact: The Responsive Education Program, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103. Phone: (415) 565-3171.

After-School Strategy for Third World Students

A new strategy for helping black and other Third World children survive in traditional American public schools is the focus of a two-day conference to be offered in Chicago and elsewhere this spring. The conference, entitled "Re-Directing Intelligence," was presented in several cities in California last November and December.

In discussing the high failure rate of black and other Third World students, conference presenters emphasized that traditional public schools still are not equipped to deal with children whose cultural history, primary language, and preferred learning styles differ from those supported by the schools. For example, black students' strong need to talk and interact while learning is often interpreted as a behavioral problem. Also, teachers must discontinue putting down these children's use of Ebonics,

the hybrid of West African and standard English spoken to some extent by 85 percent of black people in the United States.

The solution presented by the conference speakers, who included Asa Hilliard, Georgia State University, and Carl Mack, Superintendent of the Del Paso Heights school district, is to combine self-knowledge and specific strategies for developing intelligence into a curriculum for after-school classes for black and other youngsters, to be paid for by their parents.

The classes, which cost the parents \$10 a week, teach the children standard or "cash" English through English-as-a-second-language techniques and help them develop academic "process" skills, such as evaluating, classifying, memorizing, and thinking divergently and convergently. At the same time, students learn about their own cultures so that they can identify myths and stereotypes, understand that information about many different cultural groups has been suppressed for political reasons, and develop a sense of motivation and self-esteem.

A procedure and curriculum manual that describes how to create "REDI"™ schools is available (for \$15) from John and Kathrynne Favors, the school administrators and curriculum developers whose organization devised the two-day seminar. For more information, contact the Favors at Jonka, Inc., P.O. Box 19002, Oakland, CA 94619. Phone: (415) 465-8300.

Learning Styles

RITA DUNN AND NANCY RECKINGER

School and Home Cooperate on Learning Styles

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District in Danville, California, has de-

veloped a plan for implementing optional programs that meet learning style needs. The plan calls for assessment of learning style and right/left brain preferences, followed by conferences using the Parents' Record of Educational Progress with parents of participating students. The challenge, according to the planners, is to incorporate current knowledge of learning style into the classroom on a daily basis with the support and involvement of parents. The first phase of the plan being implemented this year centers on the develop-

ment of a year-round school.

For more information: Joan Greenfeld, San Ramon Valley USD, 699 Old Orchard Dr., Danville, CA 94526.

Learning Style Part of L.A. City Inservice

Administrators in Los Angeles are in the second phase of a clinical supervision inservice program, one-third of which is devoted to learning modalities using the Swassing-Barbe model. All principals,

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