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College Freshmen Aren't Ready, Professors Say

In a recent survey, college professors said consistently that incoming freshmen are unprepared for college-level work. The survey also reveals that high school and postsecondary teachers disagree on what students should learn before starting college. 35,665 middle school, high school and postsecondary teachers participated in the survey administered by the educational assessment and research organization ACT.

"A mile wide and an inch deep" could summarize college instructors' opinion of current high school curriculum. They would rather see high schools focus on a smaller subset of topics — those colleges care the most about — and cover them in more depth.

For example, in English instruction, college professors care more than high school teachers about basic grammar and usage. They want students to master basic language skills in high school. Then they can use those skills in college instead of having to learn them for the first time. High school teachers, on the other hand, ascribe greater importance to topics like idea development and rhetoric than to the mechanics of writing.

In both math and science, college instructors want freshmen to enter college with a sound grasp of fundamental skills and principles. High school instructors instead value exposing students to a broad range of content topics. College instructors seem to prefer that freshmen grasp essential, underlying principles in math and science, even if it means they haven't been exposed to as many topics in each subject area.

The study surveyed teachers of reading at all levels. High school students spend little time after 9th grade improving their reading skills or working on their ability to understand complex texts. Remedial-course teachers in colleges rate reading skills and strategies very highly for their importance to college students. They also say they spend much of their remediation time teaching these skills. ACT therefore recommends that high schools teach advanced reading skills in all subject areas throughout high school.

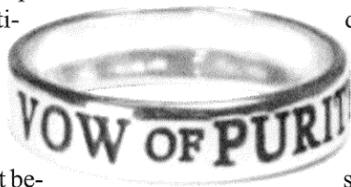
ACT has conducted similar surveys over the past three decades, and has consistently found major differences between what high school and postsecondary instructors think about secondary-level skills.

In this study, teachers at the two levels expressed different opinions about state standards. About 74% of high school teachers thought their state's standards prepared students well for college-level work in their subject areas. Only about 36% of college professors agreed. ACT thinks states will benefit from involving colleges in the setting of state standards. The president of ACT's education division says that over 30 states are already taking some steps to align standards with college and business expectations for high school graduates.

Sound Research Defends Abstinence Education

The ACLU announced in September 2006 that it would take "nationwide action" against abstinence education, especially in 18 states. 43 states participate in the State Abstinence Education Grant program, which gives them federal funds for the programs. Ohio, not one of the ACLU's 18, just became the most recent state to move away from abstinence programs. Saying he doesn't believe abstinence education really works, first-term governor Ted Strickland dropped partially matching state funds from his version of the state budget.

Opponents of abstinence programs gained a boost from a highly publicized study by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. The study followed students in four communities who received abstinence education starting in 1999. In 2005 and 2006, Mathematica found no difference in sexual activity between program participants and their control group peers, who had participated in whatever other health pro-



grams their school districts offered. The participants were an average age of 16 when Mathematica followed up with them in 2005. About half of the students in both groups had had sex. The study also found no difference between the two groups with regard to when the students first had sex, their number of sexual partners by 2005, or their likelihood of using contraception.

Libby Macke, director of the abstinence education group Project Reality, pointed out the study's major methodological flaw in a letter to the *Chicago Tribune* (4-27-07). Since the control group and intervention group students all attended the same schools, this study cannot tell us how the different types of sex education affected students' opinions and behavior, she says. Famously capable of sharing and exchanging information, teenagers simply cannot fit neatly into control and intervention groups under these circumstances.

"More than 7 million tax dollars were

spent to fund this study," Macke reminds us. "Surely the researchers could have found another means of finding a control or comparison group by finding a demographically similar school or by comparing results to national youth behavior studies."

Macke also drew attention to the fact that more than 30 studies have shown positive outcomes from abstinence education. In inner-city Washington D.C., for example, girls in abstinence programs had seven times the abstinence rate of their peers.

What else have such studies shown? According to data from the 2004 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 70% of students who had made an abstinence pledge were still virgins at age 18, compared to only 37% of 18-year-olds who had never made a pledge. Those who did have sex before marriage had fewer sexual partners than non-pledgers; and most of them had sex only with their future spouse. Those who had pledged abstinence were 12 times more likely to be virgins on their wedding night.

Critics of abstinence education assert

(See *Abstinence*, page 4)

What Do College Students Learn in 'English'? What Are We Paying Professors to Teach?

Cho Seung-Hui's murder of 32 students and teachers shook the nation, provoking many questions and fears. What influences are at work in our nation, adding to the confusion so many young people experience?

As an English Department major and senior, what did Cho learn in his courses at Virginia Tech? Every year, the Young America's Foundation identifies the "Dirty Dozen," the twelve college courses where ideology most heavily outweighs learning. In these courses, many of them in English departments, opportunistic professors expound their favorite "—isms" before a captive audience of impressionable students. English professors often borrow these —isms, such as Marxism and Freudianism, from other disciplines where they are now discredited. Radical feminism also dominates many modern English departments.

A look at the websites of Virginia Tech's English Department and of its professors reveals many such ideologies. We don't yet know all of the courses Cho took, but they could have been any of these.

Did he take Professor Bernice L. Hausman's English 5454 called "Studies in Theory: Representing Female Bodies"? The titles of the assigned readings include "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," "The Comparative Anatomy of Hottentot Women in Europe, 1815-1817," "Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the

Cultural Marketplace," "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture," and "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power."

One of the assignments in this course (worth 10% of the total grade) is to "choose one day in which they dress and comport themselves in a manner either more masculine or more feminine than they would normally."

Hausman uses "feminist pedagogy" theory, believing that sex and gender are merely "rhetorical constructs" resulting from cultural experiences, and that "students are more responsible for the creation of knowledge." She lists her areas of expertise as "sexed embodiment, feminist and gender theory, and cultural studies of medicine."

Other titles authored by Professor Hausman include "Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender," "Do Boys Have to Be Boys?," and "Virtual Sex, Real Gender: Body and Identity in Transgender Discourse."

Perhaps Cho took Professor Bernice Hausman's English 3354 on "Fundamentals" for which the syllabus promises an understanding of "deconstruction" (a favorite word in English departments).

Did Cho get evil egotistical notions from Professor Shoshana Milgram Knapp's senior seminar called "The Self-Justifying Criminal in Literature"? Indeed, that could serve as his own self-portrait.

Did Cho take Professor J.D. Stahl's

senior seminar, English 4784, on "The City in Literature"? The assigned reading starts with a book about an urban prostitute who finally kills herself and a book about a violent man who kills his girlfriend.

Did Cho take a course from Professor Paul Heilker, author of a piece called "Textual Androgyny, the Rhetoric of the Essay, and the Politics of Identity in Composition (or The Struggle to Be a Girly-Man in a World of Gladiator Pumpitude)"?

Or maybe Cho preferred the undiluted Marxism espoused by English instructor Allen Brizee, who wrote: "Everyday, the capitalist system exploits millions of people. . . . Our role in the capitalist system makes us guilty of oppression!"

Virginia Tech's Distinguished Professor of English, Nikki Giovanni, has built a reputation as a renowned poet, even though many of her poems feature violent themes and contain words that are not acceptable in civil discourse. She specializes in diversity, post-modernism, feminism, and multiculturalism.

Giovanni appeared last year at a public celebration to open Cincinnati's new Fountain Square. She used the occasion to call Ken Blackwell, then the Republican candidate for Ohio Governor, an "S.O.B.," and when challenged, simply repeated the slur.

We know that Cho took several creative writing classes. Giovanni taught him

(See *College Students*, page 4)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Mexico donated 30,000 Spanish-language textbooks to American schools, and plans to give millions more. Since the late 1970s the Mexican government has exhorted Mexicans who live in the U.S. to speak Spanish. In 2000, Vicente Fox said that "to continue speaking Spanish in the United States is to 'hacer patria' (fulfill one's patriotic duty)." Raquel Romero, director of the Mexican nonprofit Mesoamerica Foundation, described the textbooks donation as "part of a concerted program to educate Hispanic children in the United States, and to help the United States make the transition into a bicultural society this century. It is a way of understanding that Mexican culture is expanding across the border, that it is in ascendance," she said. (*New America Media*, 2-7-07)

The Texas legislature has passed a bill to require public high schools to offer elective courses in the Old and New Testaments. This bill would promote classes on the history and literature of the Old and New Testaments areas, taught in an "objective and nondevotional manner." The bill would also require that the courses not "disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs." Lawmakers in Missouri and Tennessee are also considering plans to incorporate similar classes in their states' elective curricula. (*Houston Chronicle*, 4-3-07, 5-24-07)

For the first time, the Classification and Ratings Administration (CARA) will publicize the rules and standards it uses to rate movies. CARA is responding to complaints from both the public and moviemakers about inconsistent rating standards. The movie industry may also add a new warning: "Many R-rated movies are unsuitable for young children." A spokeswoman from the Motion Picture Association of America said the warning responds to moviegoers who complain that other parents frequently bring young children to violent and sexually explicit movies. (*Christian Science Monitor*, 1-25-07)

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Bad News from Across the Pond

Bad news from the United Kingdom often causes concern over whether today's headlines in the *Telegraph* could be tomorrow's in the *New York Times*. The federal "hate crimes" legislation now moving through Congress bears a striking resemblance to hate-crimes laws already well established in the U.K. The British hate-crimes laws often seek to punish speech the government deems "homophobic" or offensive to certain religious groups. The laws have not had a happy result for those who value freedom of speech and expression.

Religion, tolerance and free speech

In one recent case, two men who disparaged Islam at an event in a tavern in 2004 were accused of hate crimes. One of them had called the religion "wicked" and "vicious." After their acquittal, Chancellor Gordon Brown opined that the hate crime laws need revisiting.

"I think any preaching of religious or racial hatred will offend mainstream opinion in this country and I think we've got to do whatever we can to root it out from whatever quarter it comes," he said. "And if that means we've got to look at the laws again I think we will have to do so."

Teachers' self-censorship of information that *might* be offensive has also become a problem in some British schools. Some Muslims in Britain hold beliefs that conflict with the democratic society in which they live. In a 2006 survey of British Muslims, 30% said they would rather live under Sharia, or Islamic religious law, than under British law. 28% said they hope the United Kingdom will become a fundamentalist Islamic state. 62% do not believe that free speech should be protected if it offends religious groups, and 68% favor the arrest and prosecution of anyone who "insults" Islam.

Worldviews collide in the classroom when some fundamentalist Muslims disagree with the accepted history of certain topics or events. A recent study reported that some teachers skip teaching on the Holocaust, or treat it only briefly, because they are afraid of confronting "anti-semitic sentiment and Holocaust denial among some Muslim pupils."

The study found that some teachers avoid the Crusades, "because their balanced treatment of the topic would have directly challenged what was taught in some local mosques."

The report even mentions the War on Terror as a potentially "emotive and controversial" topic. The 2006 poll, taken just after the thwarted 7/7 terrorist attack in Britain, found that 45% of British Muslims think the 9/11 terrorist attack was a conspiracy by the U.S. and Israeli governments. Less than 22% said it

was definitely *not* a conspiracy. The government's report on controversy in the classroom attempted to provide teachers with strategies for dealing with such conflicting opinions, so that learning could move forward in history classrooms at all levels. (www.haevents.org.uk/pastevents/others/teach%20report.pdf)

Increasingly, the British government seeks to eradicate "homophobia" at the expense of the free conscience of those who think homosexuality is wrong. This policy has even expressed itself in bizarre "zero-tolerance" incidents that have little to do with homosexuality or homophobia. Just ask 11-year-old George Rawlinson, who called a schoolmate "gay" in an e-mail. Two policemen came to his home and told his father, Alan Rawlinson, that

his son might have committed a serious homophobic crime.

"They told me they considered it a very serious offense," the father told *The Guardian*. "I could not believe what I was hearing." The police have decided not to pursue the issue, but still claim "going to the boy's house was a reasonable course of action to take."

Parliament recently passed new anti-discrimination regulations that will affect children placed for adoption, as well as the freedom of conscience in the United Kingdom. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 explicitly aim to end discrimination against homosexuals, but in reality take wider aim at groups critical of homosexuality. They remove government funding from adoption agencies that refuse to place children with homosexual couples. Catholic bishops have said this could force the closure of the Catholic Church's adoption agencies in the U.K.

In a speech in Westminster Cathedral, Cormac Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor questioned "whether the threads holding together pluralist democracy have begun to unravel." The Catholic Church's efforts to gain an exemption from the regulations for their adoption agencies provoked discussion, but ultimately failed. The Cardinal described the act as a historic turning point. "It seems to me we are being asked to accept a different version of our democracy, one in which diversity and equality are held to be at odds with religion," the Cardinal said. "My fear is that, under the guise of legislating for what is said to be tolerance, we are legislating for intolerance. Once this begins, it is hard to see where it ends. . . . What looks like liberty is in reality a radical exclusion of religion from the public sphere."

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Jeff Tinsley



Book of the Month



A Grammar Book for You and I—Oops, Me! C. Edward Good, Capital Books, Inc. 2002, 430 pp., \$17.95

Oops, Me starts with fundamentals, proceeds through

many finer points of good style, and advises how to avoid common mistakes. Because it covers the English language so comprehensively, the book could help anyone, from a high school student to a professional in search of a more polished, readable style.

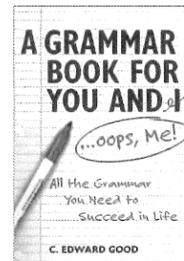
Author C. Edward Good has plenty of experience with this second group: he has taught thousands of lawyers, executives, scientists and other professionals in his writing seminars. Good accuses all these professions of "nouniness," as well as other stylistic problems that confuse the meaning and bore the reader. The book offers practical advice on fixing these problems and communicating more clearly, both in writing and in speech.

Good himself uses an unpretentious, interesting writing style. He makes fun of the most egregious grammatical abuses we hear every day: "Parents might try the exercise out on their children. Bribe them. Put a \$10 bill on the breakfast table and challenge them to make it through a second helping of waffles without using the *tobelike* verb and without misusing the *like* word. Up it to \$100. Your money's safe."

He also uses memorable stories and examples throughout the book. On the subject of ending a sentence with a preposition, Good tells of a grammatically anxious civil servant who labored to avoid doing so in the draft of a government document. "This is nonsense up with which I will not put it," wrote Winston Churchill irritably across his subordinate's draft.

The chapter titles on common mistakes playfully commit the mistakes they correct: "There's lots of these subject-verb disagreements"; "When writing, your participle might dangle"; and the memorable, "Like, I'm like gonna like learn how to like talk."

The indexing is well done and makes the book a useful reference. Reference highlights include the list of ways to avoid writing *he/she* or *him/her*; the sections on noun absolutes, fused participles, and avoiding "nouniness"; and the list of compound prepositions and how to replace them. (Instead of *in the immediate vicinity of*, just say *near*. Instead of *at this point in time*, just say *now*.) Those who seek a comprehensive summary of a missed or forgotten English Composition course will want to read the book all the way through.



FOCUS: Terrorism as Taught by International Baccalaureate

By Allen Quist

Is terrorism real? Not according to the globalist education program known as International Baccalaureate (IB), administered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). To explain its theory of knowledge, which is at the core of the IB curriculum, the IBO website provides the following power-point slide:

"The Learner Profile: A Shared Set of Values:

Freedom Fighter or Terrorist?

'Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress.' [Mahatma Gandhi]

'Whenever two good people argue over principles, they are both right.' [Marie Ebner von Eschenbach]"

According to IBO, terrorists exist only in the mind of the beholder. Terrorists do not exist in a real or objective sense. Is this significant? IB's views on relative truth and morality are central to its curriculum. The IBO website also explains that its purpose is creating world citizens. The meaning is that IBO exists to create students who hold the attitudes, values and worldview dictated by IBO. The kids who are in the 680 American Schools that have adopted IB are being indoctrinated in its relativistic and globalist worldview.

The IBO website describes its mission as follows: "The International Baccalaureate Organization [consists of] programmes of international education [producing] learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right." Gene Edward Veith evalu-

ates the IB philosophy this way: "Theory of knowledge employs a hermeneutic of suspicion that undermines the very possibility of accepting any kind of objective truth." [World 1-13-07, p. 11]

As such, IB is hostile to the foundational principles of the United States. Our Declaration of Independence says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident." One of the foundational pillars of the United States is the recognition of objective truth, real truth. IB undermines this principle and aggressively teaches the contrary view.

What is IB?

The International Baccalaureate Organization was formed in the 1960s to provide a western system of education for the children of U.S. diplomats. In 1996, however, IBO formed a partnership with UNESCO to create a pilot program for what the IBO and UNESCO websites describe as an international system of education.

Today IB is essentially an arm of UNESCO, and when American schools join IB, they agree that IBO-UNESCO will train the teachers, write the curriculum, compose the important tests (which are sent to Geneva, Switzerland for scoring), and dictate the values, attitudes and worldview that will be taught to the students.

In order for IB students and faculty to become world citizens, they are required to memorize the ten learner profile values of world citizenship. The Ten Commandments have been replaced with the ten values of IBO-UNESCO. On its website IBO says: "The attributes of the learner profile express the values inherent to the IB continuum of international

education."

The IB grant application for the Earl Brown and Evergreen Park elementary schools, both in Brooklyn Center, MN, calls for each school to have a General Assembly Room designed to resemble and simulate the general assembly room at the United Nations. A UN history room is added for good measure.

No similar request is made for a U.S. Congress room or a Minnesota Legislature room, of course. This grant application also promises to integrate the IBO-UNESCO philosophy into its core content curriculum.

The Values of IB

IBO says that it endorses the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 26 of UDHR says education shall further the activities of the United Nations. This means that IBO agrees to promote and teach all the activities of the UN, including treaties and documents America has not signed such as the UDHR, the Treaty on the Rights of the Child, Kyoto, the UN Treaty on Biodiversity, the Earth Charter, and the treaty establishing the UN Criminal Court, to name just a few.

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which IBO advocates, describes our fundamental human rights as follows: These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations [Article 29]. Compare that UN view of human rights to the American view contained in our Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that human rights, including life and liberty, are inalienable and God-given.



The big question is, which has greater standing and authority — our God-given, inalienable human rights or the policies of the UN? The Declaration of Independence, the philosophical foundation of the United States, insists on the former. The UDHR insists on the latter. Our Declaration view is the foundation of American liberty; the IBO-UN view is the foundation of tyranny.

The Real Issue

It should not be surprising that IBO denies that terrorism is real. The values of IBO are hostile to America's foundational principles including real truth and morality. The question for the United States is this: Do we have the moral courage to reaffirm our foundational principles, the principles of freedom, and teach those values to our children? Or will we welcome our own destruction by allowing our children to be indoctrinated in the worldview that is diametrically opposed to everything we believe in? That is the real battle for freedom in our time.

Allen Quist is adjunct professor at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. He served three terms in the Minnesota legislature and has authored three books on education: *The Seamless Web, Fed Ed: The New Federal Curriculum and How It's Enforced*, and *America's Schools: The Battleground for Freedom*.

School Extremism about Zero Tolerance

From nursery school to high school, "zero tolerance" incidents continue to stun and amaze many parents and others who remember a simpler time for school discipline.

Cracking Down on Sports Fun

The 75-year-old Knothole Club of Greater Cincinnati recently changed its baseball policies to eliminate all "negative chatter" from games. The change responds to an increase in rude behavior, which in one case last summer led to a violent brawl. Now, anyone who chatters — except to affirm teammates for a job well done — will receive one warning, and then be suspended from the game.

"Chatter is the foundation of youth baseball," says coach Nick Lutz, also a former player. "If my self-esteem had been damaged by Knothole, I'd have killed myself by now. I was probably a .190 hitter. I still had fun yelling 'hey batter-batter.'"

Those who adopted the policy argued that it is necessary in order to keep normal heckling from leading to highly charged confrontations. (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 3-30-07)

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA), which oversees

high school sports in Washington State, has cracked down on fans and players, and may ban all booing and offensive chants. The first phase of new rules, already in effect, prohibits all signs in the stands other than the official school banner. Printed foam fingers, pom-poms with printed text, and artificial noisemakers are also considered unsportsmanlike under the new regulations.

Many coaches, athletes and fans have criticized the WIAA for cracking down on what they see as normal school spirit. "They're kidding, right?" asked one basketball coach, also a former player at another Washington school. Another coach observed that at a recent state tournament, only a few schools were able to bring out a strong fan base. "I think that may be because we don't let them have school spirit as we have in years past," he said. (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 3-3-07)



Kindergarten 'Criminals'?

On March 29, police arrested Desre'e Watson, a Florida kindergarten, handcuffed her and took her in a police cruiser to the county jail, where they charged her with a felony and two misdemeanors. The six-year-old reportedly kicked, scratched and hit a teacher in a fit of temper. Desre'e is a student at Avon Elementary School in Florida's Highlands County.

"When there is an outburst of violence, we have a duty to protect and make the school a safe environment for the students, staff and faculty," said the local chief of police. "That's why, at this point, the person was arrested regardless what the age."

"I was scared," said the six-year-old of her arrest. (WFTV, 3-30-07)

The family of another six-year-old announced they would sue the Downey School in Massachusetts over a "zero tolerance" incident last year. After the

boy touched a female classmate inside her waistband at school, administrators suspended him for three days for sexual harassment.

The lawsuit seeks compensatory damages for the boy, because



Desre'e Watson

of how several teachers and the principal treated him on the day of the incident. Teachers removed him from class, didn't let him have lunch, and scolded, humiliated and yelled at him. According to the

lawsuit, they made him put his head down on a table, and told him "that he was very bad and that he had sexually harassed a classmate." One teacher, a relative of the girl involved in the incident, reportedly rebuked the boy "with patent and frightening hostility, . . . in isolation." The school also made the boy sign a statement about what he had done, before even contacting his parents.

Downey School has since changed its sexual harassment policy to take into account the difference in sexual awareness of young children compared to 5th- and 6th-graders. (*The Enterprise*, 3-23-07)

Daycare Linked to Behavior Problems in Britain, Too

Just as a major American study revealed the link between time spent in formal child care and behavior problems, a similarly large British study came to the same conclusion.

The U.K.'s Department for Education and Skills backed the study, which sought to evaluate the effects of the 2001 Neighborhood Nurseries Initiative (NNI). This initiative hoped to boost employment and child development, especially in impoverished neighborhoods, by increasing daycare usage. It succeeded in the latter — from 31% of all families in 2001 to almost half in 2005. But the recent NNI evaluation found some disturbing trends among the 810 children it observed.

Those who spent more than 30 hours a week in daycare were more likely to display antisocial behaviors such as bossiness, bullying and teasing. The antisocial behaviors increased over time as children attended daycare. Children who attended for 35 or more hours per week were also more likely to seem "worried and upset." An article in the *Telegraph* frankly stated, "Children left in nursery care [are] 'turning into yobs.'"

A British teachers union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, also

weighed in against what they called "institutional child care," saying it has a negative effect on childhood. The union also criticized the popular push to move to an 8 AM to 6 PM school day.

Education Secretary Alan Johnson responded negatively to the union's warning. "The argument that there is evidence that shows women are letting down their children by going out to work I think is just faintly ludicrous," he said. "The thrust of that question is that it is wrong for their kids to be in institutions, women should leave work and stay home looking after them. I don't accept that."

Johnson did not explore the middle ground between all women leaving the workforce, and all children spending 50 hours a week in school or daycare. (*Telegraph*, 4-5-07; www.dfes.gov.uk/research)

The American study found that children who had spent time in formal daycare were slightly more likely to be aggressive and disobedient. The effect persisted through the 6th grade and did not appear to depend on the quality of the daycare the child had attended.



Abstinence (Continued from page 1)

that teenagers will have sex no matter what they learn in school, and that abstinence education only makes them more likely to have sex without contraception. The 2004 Longitudinal Study told a different story. 17% of pledgers and 28% of non-pledgers reported having unprotected sex. Those who pledged abstinence, if they did have premarital sex, were no less likely to use contraception than non-pledgers who had premarital sex.

Specific abstinence programs have proven effective in numerous studies. Two abstinence programs, Teen Aid and Sex Respect, reduced initiation of sex among at-risk high school students in Utah by over one-third. The same study showed that a non-abstinence-based program in the same area, Values and Choices, had no effect on the sexual behavior of participants.

Another study evaluated Postponing Sexual Involvement, a program provided to low-income 8th-graders in Atlanta. This

program reduced the initiation of sex during 8th grade by 60% for boys and 95% for girls, as compared to a similar population of Atlanta 8th-graders who did not participate.

Teenagers are an independent-minded group. The federal government's \$1.4 billion ad campaign against drug use begun in 1998, for example, appeared to reduce teen drug use not at all. One study even indicated that teens who saw the commercials were more likely to experiment with drugs than those who never saw them.

What do teenagers themselves say about abstinence education? One recent national poll found that 93% of teens want to hear a strong message of abstinence. Eight out of ten say that teens should not be sexually active, according to a 2004 report from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The same report told another sad story: 63% of teenagers who have had sex say they wish they had waited longer.

College Students (Continued from page 1)

briefly in the fall of 2005, then had him removed from her class. His writing and erratic behavior frightened other students. Another creative writing teacher chose to tutor him separately, rather than let him come to class, for the same reasons. "I knew when it happened that that's probably who it was," said Giovanni of the shooting.

"When we read Cho's plays, it was like something out of a nightmare," wrote former Virginia Tech student Ian McFarlane about another creative writing class, which he and Cho both took. "The plays had really twisted, macabre violence that used weapons I wouldn't have even thought of." The English Department, not missing the fact that Cho was "troubled," did refer him to counseling based on his stories and plays.

Another class we know Cho took was "Contemporary Horror," where he and victim Ross Alameddine (one of the students who was tragically killed) sat a few feet apart for months. The students in this class were required to keep what were known as "fear journals."

Cho was a frequent user of eBay. He bought and sold many books about vio-

lence, death and mayhem, including several books he had used in his English classes.

Other books Cho sold on the eBay-affiliated site Half.com included books by three authors whose other writings were taught in his Contemporary Horror class. He sold *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, *The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre*, and *The Female of the Species: Tales of Mystery and Suspense*.

Cho said on the video he sent to NBC, "You forced me into a corner and gave me only one option. The decision was yours." He was wrong—the decision and responsibility were his.

Even so, how do politically doctrinaire, ideologically driven courses affect a student who is already confused and full of hatred? Could a course like "Contemporary Horror" do further psychological damage? And what is the difference between a "normal" poem about anger and violence and the creative writing of a dangerous potential killer? In the coming months, Virginia Tech and other universities will need to ask themselves such questions.



One of the books Cho sold on eBay.

What's Going on in the Classroom?

Disturbing incidents of children having sex during school in Louisiana and Indiana have attracted national attention. "After 44 years of doing this work, nothing shocks me anymore," said the sheriff of the rural parish where the Louisiana incident occurred. "But this comes pretty close," he admitted.

The incident at Spearsville School in rural Louisiana involved five 5th-graders. Their class was left unattended for about 30 minutes because of a miscommunication between teachers. The high school teacher who would have been with the students on a normal day was at a special assembly, which the school called to address a fatal stabbing that had happened over the previous weekend. In that incident, a Spearsville 15-year-old allegedly murdered another local teen.

Apparently, when the class of about 15 5th-graders arrived at the unattended classroom, four of them began having sex. The other students remained in the classroom. The story began to circulate, and a week later police arrested the four students, charging them with obscenity. They also arrested as an accessory a fifth student who allegedly stood guard. The police released the students to their parents the same day, but the 5th-graders will be arraigned in juvenile court. Spearsville School expelled three of them, and gave detention to the other two.

One teacher expressed little surprise at the incident, also criticizing how the school is run. Students "cuss at the teachers and throw things at them, and nothing is done," he said. "The students run the school."

A similar incident at Raymond Park Middle School in Indiana happened in December and was not disclosed until March. In this case, two 6th-graders had

sex behind a shop class cubicle, while the shop teacher was in the room part of the time. At least ten students witnessed what happened, with two of them standing guard.

The school reportedly learned of the incident in January, although at one point the associate superintendent told a local news station that the teacher discovered the behavior when it happened and took immediate action. The administration did not notify the school police and would never confirm to local media whether the students were expelled. Parents, who found out about the incident only when it made TV news months later, raised serious questions about the school's handling of the issue.

Furthermore, while the superintendent defended the school's handling by saying, "We're not used to dealing with this," yet another appalling story came out in the weeks following the first disclosure. Three years ago, in a similar shop classroom at the same school, a 14-year-old boy sexually assaulted a 15-year-old girl behind one of the cubicles. The girl got away and got help from a teacher, and the boy was later arrested and charged with sexual battery. He now faces adult charges, in another court,

of rape, confinement and murder. The girl and her mother accuse the school of hushing up the incident three years ago. Just as in the December 2006 debacle, the school chose not to notify parents, even parents whose chil-

dren were in the room when the assault took place.

A few days after she said, "We're not used to dealing with this," the superintendent told the assaulted girl's mother that she knew nothing of the

sexual assault. In a statement, the school cited "students' right to privacy and security" as the reason no one told parents of the two sexual incidents that have occurred at Raymond Park Middle School.

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Jeff Tinsley

