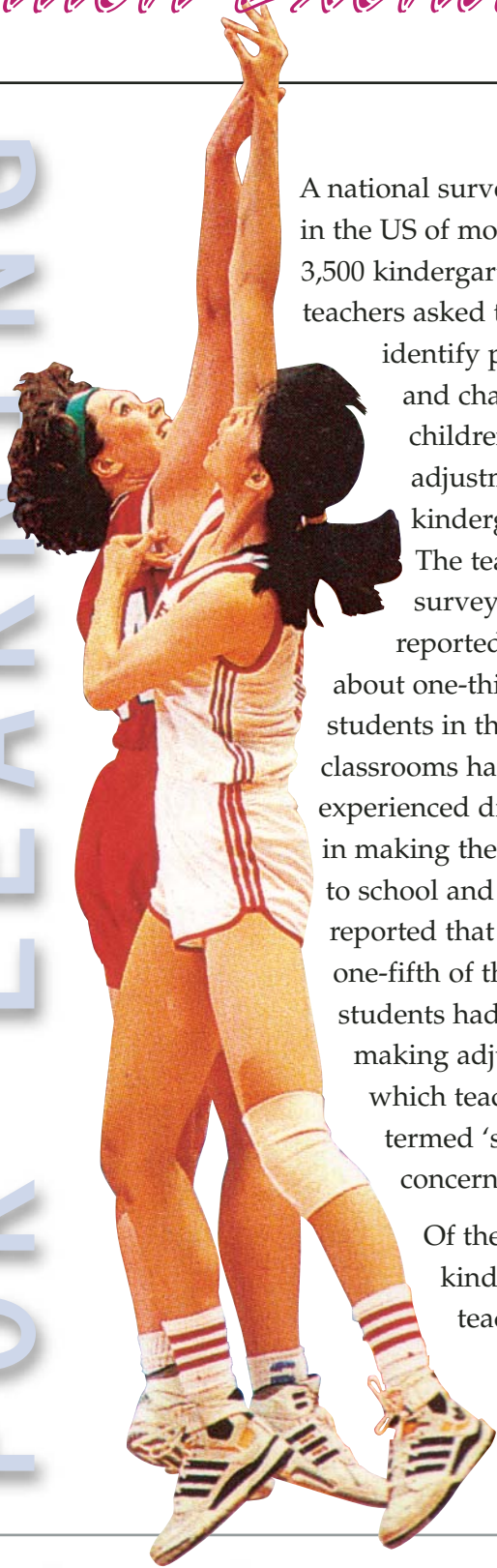


# Education Exchange

## READY TO LEARN FOR LEARNING



A national survey taken in the US of more than 3,500 kindergarten teachers asked them to identify problems and challenges in children's adjustment to kindergarten. The teachers surveyed reported that about one-third of the students in their classrooms had experienced difficulties in making the transition to school and also reported that about one-fifth of the students had difficulty making adjustments which teachers termed 'serious concerns.'

Of the kindergarten teachers

**Not ready for team play**

surveyed, about 46 per cent reported that at least half of the students in their classes had difficulty following directions. Other problems frequently reported by teachers included lack of academic skills (reported

**"At least half of the students in their classes had difficulty following directions."**

by 36 per cent), a disorganized home environment (35 per cent), difficulty working independently (34 per cent), lack of a formal pre-school experience (31 per cent), and difficulty working as part of a group (30 per cent). The study was reported in Early Childhood Research Quarterly.



## ENVIRONMENTAL IQ

The study by the Roper Organization in the United States conducted over the past five years showed once again that fewer than one-third of Americans have even "a passing knowledge of the most straightforward environmental topics."

This year's study found that 10 per cent fewer Americans were educating themselves about the environment than were a year ago, 58 per cent take some action to save electricity in the home, 36 per cent participate in recycling, 23 per cent read labels on pesticides, and 61 per cent "sometimes read an article about the environment."

The study also found that television remains the major source of environmental education for adults (62 per cent) and is the leading major source for students (72 per cent). By comparison, about one-half of students say that their parents and teachers are a leading source of environmental education. The Internet is listed as a source of environmental information by just 9 per cent of students.

## Public Confidence and Teacher Assessment

In an article appearing in the Journal of the B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, two authors examine the link between public confidence in education and the thorny issue of teacher assessment. The authors, Dr. Judy Halbert and Dr. Linda Kaiser are both employees of the B.C. Ministry of Education.

They suggest that the issue of assessment is closely linked to a process whereby Canadians "are searching for certainty in their public institutions." As part of this search for certainty which covers everything from the reliability of water supplies to the

professionalism of medical practitioners, the authors state that Canadians "want evidence that our public schools are delivering on the promise of substantive learning gains for all kids." They

**"Searching for certainty in their public institutions"**

add that the Canadian public "is unlikely to be satisfied with an assessment response that implies "I am the professional and I know best."

The study canvassed the views of a number of researchers on the topic. In a paper entitled *Leadership for Excellence in Assessment* prepared by R. Stiggins of the Assessment Training Institute in Oregon, it is suggested "the reason

educators fear assessment and evaluation is that many don't understand it and therefore cannot gain control over it. But as we gain assessment wisdom we gain that control and anxiety dissipates.

With assessment literacy comes the time to do the assessment job we are hired to do within the time allocated."

Another study entitled *Leading in a Culture of Change* by M. Fullan defines assessment literacy as: "The capacity of teachers and principals to examine student performance data and make

critical sense of them, to know good work when they see it, to understand achievement scores, to disaggregate data to identify sub-groups that may be advantaged, disadvantaged or under performing."

The author also suggested that assessment literacy includes "the corresponding capacity to contribute to the debate about the uses and misuses of achievement data in an era of high-stakes accountability."

**"Unlikely to be satisfied with an assessment response that implies "I am the professional and I know best."**

## Walk to School

International Walk to School Week will be held from October 6th to 10th 2003 and BC students will join millions of their counterparts worldwide in the exercise. A total of 28 countries are participating. In British Columbia the event is coordinated by the Way To Go! school program.

