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Class conduct is a forgotten lesson

Bravo to Chuck Raasch for his online column "Teachers, parents, outside world are key to classroom civility" (USA TODAY.com, Aug. 23).

Raasch certainly got a lot of people's attention with his frank discussion of the lack of civility in the classroom.

It got the attention of a principal at the Indio, Calif., school where we had trained teachers in our PoliteChild program. The program is designed to help kids develop strong social skills, manners and proper conduct, starting as young as age two and going through the teens.

The principal shared Raasch's article and how glad her staff was that their district not only recognized the problem, but was doing something about it as part of its daily curriculum.

Social skills are the great equalizer; good social skills transcend social class, economic status, academic achievement, gender and race. With repeated studies showing that up to 85% of a child's success depends on his or her social skills, it's too bad more parents and schools aren't giving attention to this critical issue.

Corinne Gregory

Founder and president The PoliteChild; Woodinville, Wash.

Good glimpse of Iraq

USA TODAY's report "Chaos doesn't drown out sounds of recovery" was refreshing (News, Thursday).

The article gave important details: day-to-day activities of Iraqis, how the economy in Iraq is developing, how Iraqi police are working, Iraqi town hall meetings with the U.S. military and what is taking place with the Iraqi infrastructure.

This is the first newspaper article I have seen that has tried to provide an overall view of activity in Iraq. Mostly I read about violence and demonstrations.

I hope USA TODAY will continue to write these kind of articles.



Mike Willoughby

Cary, N.C.

Explore space

The worst thing we can do now is stop space exploration ("Time to call off NASA enterprise," Letters, Thursday).

Ending the program would insult the many men and women who have participated and given their lives to space adventures. Where would this country be if we just gave up after failures?

Edward Devine

Alexandria, Va.

Unfair criticism

Readers have criticized athletes who were educated and helped with public funding, and say those athletes owe much to the hands that fed them.

It doesn't seem fair to focus only on endorsement deals that feature athletes ("Endorsement deals appear in hands of 'greed team,'" Letters, Thursday).

High school and college athletic programs bring in millions of dollars to their schools through ticket sales. Yet school athletes don't get paid. At the same time, some coaches make enormous salaries.

In addition, there are many factors that contribute to an athlete's success that have nothing to do with public funding, such as talent and professional training.

Peter Bagnolo

Wheaton, Ill.

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