

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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*Correspondents: Donald P. Mitchell  
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### Drugs: A Limited View?

Dear Editor:

I have just finished reading Joseph N. Murray's article "Drugs To Control Classroom Behavior."<sup>1</sup> Although this material is enlightening, I personally feel disappointed that all of the research and references date as far back as 1941 and were only associated with the recurring commonalities concerning the administration of Dexedrine or Ritalin to modify behavior. This would have been proper if one was trying to set a progressive time line as it relates to possible treatments but I feel the article was not encompassing enough to inform parents and educators of other recently researched solutions to the problem.

This article leads one to believe that there is a dichotomy with relationship to the problem. If you have a hyperactive child who is the simple product of unstructured and undisciplined environments, little if anything can be done—short of hoping the child will

be placed with a teacher who can tolerate hyperactivity. On the other hand, the identified hyperkinetic child can only be helped with a diagnosis which will ensure the amount of medication needed to control the hyperkinesis. This is just too black and white in nature. Most parents and educators are not emotionally and professionally equipped, because of their direct involvement, to diagnose the classification of overactive behavior and thus are at a loss to determine an effective solution to their child's problem. Professor Murray does relieve the anxieties somewhat with the information that hyperkinesis disappears at the age of 11 or 12 in most children due to a maturation factor. But for those who do not want their children under the constant influence of behavior controlling drugs, what other course of action is possible?

There are other methods of treatment on the horizon with which parents and educators should be cognizant. One that shows great promise is the result of the research done by Dr. Allen B. Cott, Child Psychiatrist, 303 Lexington, New York, NY 10016. I recently heard Dr. Cott speak to the Michigan Chapter of the Association for Children with Learning

<sup>1</sup> Joseph N. Murray. "Drugs To Control Classroom Behavior?" *Educational Leadership* 31 (1): 21-25; October 1973.

Disabilities. His speech was entitled "Treatment of Children with Severe Disorders of Behavior, Communications, and Learning." Dr. Cott is approaching problem child behavior through the orthomolecular approach to the problem which is of great benefit to the welfare of both the child and the family relationships.

It would behoove the editorial staff of *Educational Leadership* to invite Dr. Cott to write about his findings in order to bring Professor Murray's well documented article up to date concerning treatments available for hyperkinesis.

—DONALD P. MITCHELL, *Assistant Principal, Allen Park Public Schools, Michigan.*

## Corporal Punishment Defended

Dear Editor:

The "Letters to the Editor" section of the October 1973 issue of *Educational Leadership* was devoted primarily to letters reflecting the distaste of three writers for corporal punishment in the public schools.

There is no question that the subject is controversial, and there is also no question that children have been abused through the administration of cruel and inhumane punishment. Nevertheless it is appalling that so many educators, usually at the higher education level, demand that corporal punishment shall be completely abolished. Such demands are generally supported by the citation of specific instances of abuse and by the allegations of irreparable damage to the self-concepts of students.

If one is to follow the first line of attack, that of specific instances of abuse, then one might use the same principle to eliminate formal education at all levels, including the colleges and universities, for no one can defend what often takes place under the guise of instruction at all levels.

If one is to follow the second line of attack, that of damage to the recipient's self-concept, this too may be used to abolish the

same education at all levels. Far more serious damage has been administered to the self-concept of many whom we profess to teach by personal remarks and extolling of failure than by the administration of corporal punishment. It has always been accepted that there is no place for sarcasm directed toward a learner in the classroom. How often have we heard the teacher damage the learner's self-concept by the use of sarcasm?

Teachers and administrators require options in treating pupil behavior. Hopefully most such options should be non-punitive. They should address themselves to the cause of the nonacceptable behavior and not merely address themselves to the symptoms. To limit those who stand on the line in the public schools to non-punitive options would seriously restrict their abilities to deal with problems which they face.

Successful administrators are not those who proclaim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," or those who display implements for administering corporal punishment together with epigrams related to their use. Successful administrators are those who offer superior learning experiences to the children under their supervision; however, it is essential that they maintain at least a modicum of discipline if they are to accomplish their goal. With some children, corporal punishment is essential. Properly administered it need not result in physical injury; judiciously administered it need not damage the child's self-concept.

—FRED W. KIRBY, *Assistant Superintendent for Administrative and Curriculum Services, Muscogee County School District, Columbus, Georgia.*

## Bachelor Living: A First Step

Dear Ms. Tanner and Mr. Tanner [coordinators of "News Notes"]:

The October 1973 issue of *Educational Leadership* on page 94 has an article concerning the Bachelor Living offering at Peary

High School in Montgomery County, Maryland. While Bachelor Living offerings certainly are not new and home economics has had a place for men since its founding in 1899, the opening statement in the article leads me to question how aware you are of offerings available in home economics departments.

In a time when we are trying to break down walls in classrooms and curricular areas to make the educational experiences of young people meet their needs, when a serious national problem exists because men, women, and children do not communicate within families, when at least one parent is physically or psychologically absent from many families; when we are finally breaking down some of the sex barriers that have existed and men and women are beginning to view each other as humans, I find it rather saddening that a magazine of the stature of *Educational Leadership* can make the statement, "While most high school boys would not be caught dead in a home economics class. . . ."

I invite you to examine developments in the field of home economics beyond reporting a Bachelor Living offering and then perhaps reconsider what you have said.

—DIANE COLBY, *Curriculum Specialist*  
—*Home Economics, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Milwaukee Public Schools, Wisconsin.*

## Birth of D.E.A.D.

Dear Editor:

As a member of a university community, I am constantly being confronted with acronym after acronym. I am sure many of my colleagues in the education profession are as fed up with these as I am. Therefore, I have set up an organization to put an end to it all.

D edicated to  
E liminating  
A cronymic  
D esignations

The Ultimate Acronym. Perhaps with nationwide attention given to the solving of this problem, we can return to a semblance of sanity in naming our programs, projects, and organizations.

I would appreciate your aiding my cause by publishing a notice in the next issue of your magazine. Anyone interested will please contact J. F. Lamberti, Jr., at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50613. There is no charge for joining. Just send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and you will receive a pin with the slogan "I am D.E.A.D." and a membership card.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

—J. F. LAMBERTI, JR., *Director, Curriculum Laboratory, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.*

## Fight for Academic Freedom

Dear Editor:

Today educators speak of the processes of inquiry, reflection, values clarification, moral reasoning, and critical mindedness as being important educational goals. The proponents of the above processes contend that an examination of problematic areas of our culture should be the central concern of the curriculum; however, these same proponents are cognizant of the inhibitions teachers experience because of uncertainty about academic freedom. It is the contention of this writer that the successful implementation of values education, inquiry, and reflection are contingent upon the existence of academic freedom.

A recent study was conducted by this author to ascertain differences in attitudes of teachers, principals, and board of education presidents concerning academic freedom, procedural safeguards for academic freedom, and classroom openness. The study also sought to compare selected sub-groups of teachers on these questions.

No significant difference was found in

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the attitude of teachers, principals, and board presidents on procedural safeguards. Of the 12 teacher sub-groups compared, no significant difference was found in attitudes on procedural safeguards. It was found that teachers, principals, and board presidents from districts possessing academic freedom policies valued these policies higher than districts which did not possess academic-freedom policies.

Of the three groups being compared, teachers valued academic freedom and the open classroom highest; no significant difference was evidenced when principals and board presidents were compared. When selected sub-groups of teachers were compared on the issue of academic freedom, it was found that the only variable which significantly affected teacher attitudes was size of district: teachers from districts with student populations in excess of 10,000 placed highest on academic freedom.

In all cases of significant difference except one, teachers from larger school districts, or with more experience, or greater preparation, or greater professional involvement indicated higher agreement with the concept of openness.

The findings of this study strongly recommend that academic freedom policies be developed and adopted in order that problems be prevented. This writer would request that ASCD members assume a leadership role in developing and implementing academic freedom policies. We can no longer afford to be neutral observers. ASCD members need to conceptualize the process of procedural guarantees. Supervisors and curriculum designers must become more assertive in the fight for academic freedom.

Ultimately, principles of academic freedom must be established within codes of laws. Litigation efforts, local to nationwide, must be applied to achieve this objective. Educators need to develop a greater sense of professionalism. A final recommendation is the development of "a community of scholars" charged with professional self regulation.

—RONALD G. HELMS, *College of Education, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.*

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