# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Correspondents: Arthur Adkins*
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## ASCD Propaganda?

Dear Editor:

Shame on you (or somebody). I'm sure it's not deliberate on the part of your editors, and I don't know the author, but both the article and the title of "Professional Associations Play a Part in the Competency Movement"[1] exhibit a kind of propaganda I would not have expected of ASCD. The title, because "professional organizations" is NEA cant for non-union organizations, implies that unions are nonprofessional. The article omits any reference to unions.

One can propagandize by selection and omission, as well as by distortion and lies. In this era of probable merger of AFT and NEA (classroom teachers, anyway) even unconscious ways of preserving the schism between the two are unwise.

—ARTHUR ADKINS, *Associate Professor of Secondary Education, University of Maryland, College Park.*

[1] William A. Cornell. "Professional Associations Play a Part in the Competency Movement." *Educational Leadership* 31 (4): 350-54; January 1974.

## Instructional or Learning Technology?

Dear Editor:

The theme of the February *Educational Leadership*[2] presented an interesting and provocative series of articles on technology. Common to all of the articles was the use of educational technology as an instructional technology, thus issues concerned instructional packages, modules, designs, management, and instructional materials. Kenneth Komoski's "Learner Verification: Touchstone for Instructional Materials?" was the only one that began to conceive of the use of educational technology from the learner's viewpoint rather than the instructor's perspective.

This may seem like semantic nitpicking, however I sincerely believe that much of the lack of acceptance and lack of utilization of educational technology comes from our preoccupation with instructional models, materials, and designs rather than learning designs, models, and materials. Educational technology as it stands today is a creature of

[2] "Technology: Use and Abuse?" *Educational Leadership* 31 (5): 385-480; February 1974.

the instructional establishment; if it ever breaks through and provides even a partial degree of its potential it will become a creature of the learner.

A learning technology poses no semantic or obvious threat to the professional staff of our schools, whereas the very name of instructional technology provides a direct confrontation for conflict with instructors. An instructional systems designer will always be working with a set of criteria that is aware of the conflict between the instructor and his technological replacement; therefore he will venture forth only in technology that reinforces the instructor in a non-threatening manner.

In reality educational technology has moved to a learning set which accepts that in some instances technology can provide more effective learning experiences without the presence of the live instructor.

Educational technology which is concerned with learning systems, theory, design, and implementation is more likely to be in partnership with the instructor; therefore,

I would hope that most professionals would begin to use a style of thinking and writing which accentuates the learner and learning systems.

Cawelti's thoughtful discussion of instructional theory would, I believe, have been more complete if he had viewed his subject from the learner's perspective. Additional components would have been emphasized which might have included psycholinguistics, semantics, thought and symbol systems. It is essential that the learner have these skills developed to a refined degree if he or she is to benefit from the instructional system. Too often we are satisfied to operate upon the assumption that the psycholinguistic system of a learner is intact and can function with a universal integrity. The educational system viewed from the perspective of a learner might yield a better understanding of the use of technology.

—FRANK B. WITHROW, *Executive Secretary, National Advisory Committee on the Handicapped, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C.*

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