

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Correspondents: Beecher Harris  
Michael Jackson  
Harry Stein

### A Comment on Alternatives

Dear Editor:

I note that *Educational Leadership's* November 1974 theme is "Alternative Educational Programs."

May I call your attention to what seems to me to be a fact that we should all recognize, that all alternatives proposed to date are only alternatives—or innovations—within the traditional, prevailing philosophy: that education is learning. All alternatives are only changes in organization, administration, curriculum, methods—all designed in some way to produce more, faster, earlier, better learning—but *always learning*, usually with some subsidiary value—but *always learning*.

In my book, *But What Do We Do Instead?*,<sup>1</sup> I offer a *different philosophy*: education as living. It is the exact antithesis of education as learning. I would hope that you would give some attention to the philosophy I propose. I believe it, or a better one which among us we can develop, should *displace* the learning philosophy, not be an alternative. Until we adopt the philosophy of *education as living*, or a better one, and discard our present philosophy, all the alternatives we can devise will avail us little or nothing. We

<sup>1</sup> Beecher H. Harris. *But What Do We Do Instead? A Breakthrough in Elementary Education*. New York: Vantage Press, Inc., 1973. 165 pp.

still have the same old program, in different disguises, with the same terrible results to young people.

—BEECHER H. HARRIS, *Redding, California*.

### What Do High School Teachers Read?

Dear Editor:

The well-done article "Who's Writing About What in Education's Major Journals?"<sup>2</sup> raises an interesting question. Are the people who are supposed to be reading the five journals analyzed actually reading them? The 1974 article alludes to an earlier article in *Phi Delta Kappan*<sup>3</sup> which served as the basis for the selection of the five journals analyzed. This latter article presented the results of a survey which identified those five journals which got the most votes, so to speak, as journals which secondary school teachers should read. It should be pointed out that none of the journals received more than a 50 percent preference, and two of the journals received approximately a 15 percent preference. Teacher educators, administra-

<sup>2</sup> Ronald E. Comfort, Larry S. Bowen, and Bruce M. Gansneder. "Who's Writing About What in Education's Major Journals?" *Educational Leadership* 31 (8): 663-67; May 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore W. Hipple, Thomas R. Giblin, and Jack Megenity. "Have Your Students Read . . . ?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 53 (7): 441-42; March 1972.

tors, and some curriculum directors were those educational personnel who were asked what secondary teachers should read.

This brings us back to the question posed earlier: Are secondary school teachers actually reading these journals?

This past spring, two colleagues and I conducted a random, stratified survey of the reading habits of secondary school teachers in the State of Illinois. This survey was patterned after a survey conducted in 1971 by Theodore Hipple and Thomas Giblin (two of the authors of the article which was used as the springboard for the Comfort *et al.* article). Seventy percent of the respondents had never heard of, or had never read anything in the *Kappan*; 85 percent for *Educational Leadership*; 77 percent for *NASSP Bulletin*; and 10 percent for *Today's Education*. The *Harvard Educational Review* was not a part of our survey. On the other side of the coin, only 5 percent claimed regular readership of the *Kappan*, and the *Bulletin*; 1.5 percent for *Educational Leadership*; and 50 percent for *Today's Education*.

It appears, therefore, that secondary school teachers are not choosing to read, "those that they should." One might argue that Illinois teachers are non-readers. I'm not sure that it could be argued convincingly.

More attention needs to be given to the concepts, ideas, and thoughts that secondary school teachers would be interested in reading, for it is clear to us that secondary school teachers are not reading those journals which have been identified as important.

—MICHAEL JACKSON, Associate Professor of Education, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

## Reaction to Caucus Comments

Dear Editor:

I've been reading *Educational Leadership* for eight years. Your making space available to the Radical Caucus<sup>4</sup> enables you

<sup>4</sup> Alex Molnar and John S. Mann. "To Serve the Interests of the Masses." *Educational Leadership* 32 (3): 147-50; November 1974.

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to more effectively carry out the purpose of the magazine. We often refer to "getting out of the box" when searching for ideas or in reacting to problems. For me this editorial action makes the magazine intellectually exciting. This is a quality often lacking in education journals save a few from universities with a limited audience. While recognizing the many constituencies within your audience, any effort to offer truly intellectual analysis of education as distinct from curricular or bureaucratic analysis is welcome.

A contemporary Marxian analysis of American education is not only exciting to read in a landscape of non-ideological pragmatists it is also useful in one's own work. I believe there is a large, largely silent readership appreciative of these editorial directions.

—HARRY STEIN, Branchville, New Jersey.

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