

Letters

Dear Editor:

I have no quarrel with the review of research that the Meskills report on in "The Potential Impact of Collective Bargaining on the Faculty's Role in College and University Governance."¹ I do quarrel with their conclusions.

The Meskills state, "It appears that faculty, when they choose to engage in collective bargaining, are acting under a certain set of assumptions. The first of these is that the administration is an adversary. . . . The second assumption, that faculty make, when they elect to participate in a system of collective bargaining, is that the administration is not concerned with their problems and they must therefore engage a third party, the bargaining agent, to negotiate for them. This assumption is most serious for it undermines the whole philosophy of collegiality and decision making."²

It seems to me that the above statements need careful examination. For many years I was a tenured faculty member at New York University where collective bargaining agents were consistently and overwhelmingly rejected by faculty. The reason was "as plain as way to parish church." There was no need for it. When administration practices, not preaches, collegiality and shared decision making, the faculty responds in kind.

Presently, I am a faculty member at Dowling College where Victor Meskill is the President. This fall Dowling College went through a bitter strike, and the facts speak for themselves. The faculty was fired, en masse, and learned of their dismissal when they picked up the morning paper. Furthermore, new faculty were recruited and, as part of the settlement, their contracts were honored. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for faculty not to view administration as an adversary, unconcerned with faculty problems.

What the Meskills need to learn is that the

sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon the definition of the word "freedom."

Fran Silverblank
Associate Professor of Education
Dowling College
Oakdale, Long Island, New York

Dear Editor:

The Meskills undoubtedly have a genuine interest in what collective bargaining may be doing to college and university governance. In addition to their December 1977 article in *Educational Leadership*,³ they have shared their thoughts about its effect on the role of department chairmen in *College Student Journal* 30, No. 4 (Winter 1976), 380-87. But I see no good grounds for including their article in "Research in Review." It is literate, but it is ill-informed. That is, it has the flavor of discussions one heard in 1971 and 1972, before many people had a chance to be very well informed on these complex issues and realities. Since their last dated reference, 1973, two-thirds of the total literature on the subject has appeared—that is, in the years 1974-77.

How do I know this? I am just completing a comprehensive listing of the literature on governance and employment relations in higher education for the Academic Collective Bargaining Information Service, Washington, D.C. It covers the period since 1967-69, when there was just a trickle. Since 1973, 186 of 319 books, booklets,

¹ L. Drewe Meskill and Victor P. Meskill. "The Potential Impact of Collective Bargaining on the Faculty's Role in College and University Governance." *Educational Leadership* 35(4):229-32; December 1977.

² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

³ *Op. cit.*

and monographs have appeared and 485 of 791 articles, chapters, papers, and other brief items. See?

I feel that it is very important to register warnings in the light of unwarranted high expectations, as the Meskills have tried to do. Union leaders have not always been happy at my doing so in several of my books and articles in this area. But I also feel a responsibility, as a colleague of all of you, to note how very important it is to speak in an up-to-date and informed manner. Not to do so can create more harm than good. That is why I have taken a considerable portion of my scholarly time over the past seven years to help get the information out. That is why I am writing this letter.

The other reason for writing, the one that actually led me to do it, is that Drewe and Victor Meskill seem to speak out of some very real and painful experience at SUNY and Dowling, and they seem to really care. I care to be as good a colleague as I can to administrators like that.

Terrence N. Tice
School of Education
The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Dear Editor:

I have recently subscribed to membership in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. It has been 11 years since I was a supervisor of curriculum, and I decided that new ideas of value might be gained by renewing my membership.

The December 1977, issue has just arrived. After reading the articles of this issue, I am sorry to say that I am very disappointed in them. Why? Generally speaking (and "generally" can lead to many difficulties), I find the articles to be greatly lacking in stating matters of education in a positive manner. True, there are many problems being faced by educators and by public education.

But I found this issue to be more condemning than prescriptive on a practical basis.

This is my twenty-sixth year in public education, having been a principal and having taught at all grade levels from college through first grade.

Again, generally, the ideas presented by the authors seem to be coming from those who sit in the "ivory towers" rather than from the practitioner who works on the "firing line." I found many lines of negative statements about teachers, but few of administration or administrators.

Many of the statements in the various articles are the things that cause teachers to demonstrate a "militant" attitude toward suggestions presented.

There is one very simple solution to public education, in my opinion, and that is to make possible a cooperative sharing among school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, and students (not necessarily in the order listed). For too long, public education has suffered under the myth that only school boards and administrators knew what was best for education. Teachers and parents are equally aware of what is best. Hopefully, California's new law (AB 65) will assure the cooperative working of all for the best interest of the student and of our society in California.

Ves Lawrence
Apple Valley, California

Dear Editor:

Fabulous!

I have just finished reading the November issue of *Educational Leadership* and find it to be most enlightening. Proficiency skill tests are being affected in the Chicago Public Schools this year.

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dynamic educational change lies in the classroom teacher and must be carefully nurtured despite the complexity of contract provisos.

It cannot be denied that we are engaged in an era of compromise with respect to collective bargaining. However, we cannot afford to compromise our standards or beliefs with respect to the worth and dignity of the individual, be it teacher or principal. The demand for a high quality of education in America has never before been paralleled. We as educators are obligated to meet that demand but must be cognizant of the need to maintain both personal and professional ties among the various educational circles. Despite the restrictions imposed by collective bargaining agreements, the processes of sound human relations and supportive cooperation will be critical to the development of curriculum change and teacher supervision in the years to come. [E]

Letters

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It was of utmost interest to me to learn how other school systems are handling the same situation.

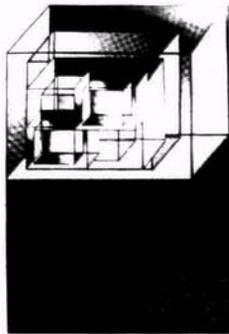
Both Gordon Cawelti and James Beane have underscored the need for less fractionalization of learning and the need for revamping the high school curriculum in a manner that will eliminate the need for competency tests, malpractice suits, and criticism by former students who feel they were not equipped to function in the post-high school environment.

The publications have been quite good this year, but this issue is superb!

Dorothy T. Bryant
Executive Council Member
Chicago, Illinois

[E]

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