

EDITORIAL

A Glance Back, A Look Ahead

Ron Brandt

In the October issue, I wrote about my feelings as an educator-turned-editor, saying it was like being a first-year teacher again. As the school year comes to an end, I am still like a new teacher: glad for the experiences I've had, determined to do a better job next time around, and looking forward to spending the summer preparing for it.

You might like to know what to expect in the year ahead, especially if you are interested in writing for publication. From now on, we will announce future themes in each issue, so authors have a ready reminder of topics and deadlines. As advised by the Publications Committee, we will have fewer theme issues, which should make for more diversity. And for most issues we will request fewer invited articles, so we will have more space for unsolicited manuscripts.

We expect to have the following theme issues in 1979-80:

October—Effective Schools, Effective Teaching (Manuscript deadline: July 1, 1979).

In general, school achievement is closely related to social class and level of income. Children from upper- and middle-class homes tend to do better than children of the poor. That could mean that what schools do doesn't make much difference; that some will learn, and others won't, no matter what schools do.

A number of scholars are producing evidence to the contrary. They point to schools where students *do* learn in spite of the odds. They speak with confidence about what sets these schools apart from others, and what teaching practices are most effective. In the October issue, we will review what they have to say.

November—Mastery Learning (Manuscript deadline: August 1, 1979).

More than ten years ago, Benjamin Bloom claimed that nearly all students could learn what they needed to learn. Schools would have to begin

using mastery teaching rather than traditional sorting and selecting practices.

A few schools here and there are now trying the mastery approach. In November we will report what they are finding out. Among the questions we hope to shed light on: Does it really work? What does it take in extra resources and commitment? How does it relate to competency-based education? What do parents think? Are the advocates having second thoughts?

January—General Education (Manuscript deadline: October 1, 1979).

It is increasingly urgent that we give thoughtful consideration to what all students should learn. The competency movement has raised the perennial issue of school skills versus life skills, and tightening budgets force the setting of priorities. In November 1978, *Educational Leadership* gave passing attention to the jumble of subjects, themes, problems, and fads we called "the patchwork curriculum." We pointed out that universities are reconsidering the unlimited electives approach and rethinking their definition of the "educated person."

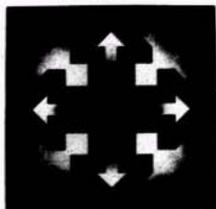
Our January issue will address anew the question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" We would like to examine the goals of elementary and secondary education, present arguments for or against the inclusion of particular content or experiences in programs required of all students, and compare proposals for redesign of the entire curriculum.

February—Improving Teaching (Manuscript deadline: November 1, 1979).

As public concern is focused increasingly on teacher competence, those who work directly with teachers must do whatever they can to improve teaching performance. Our February issue is intended to be helpful to them. Authors will discuss

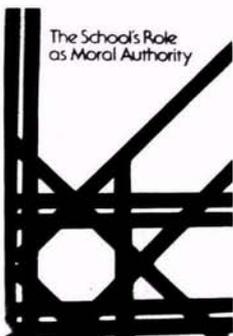
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what skills teachers and other staff members need, what supervisors can do to develop them, how models like "clinical supervision" work in practice.

We also hope to have special features (three to five related articles) on such topics as curriculum implementation, women in education, governance, testing, and leadership whenever we can work them in.

I am not worried about depending on serendipity for much of what we publish, because we receive hundreds of manuscripts a year, many of them perceptive and stimulating. A paper can sometimes be improved by extensive editing, and we are doing more of that than we used to. I am optimistic about what you, the readers and writers, and we, the editors, can do together.



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