

# Letters

Dear Editor:

You are to be congratulated on the improvement in the format and layout of *Educational Leadership*. However, I urge you to consider selecting a less homogeneous set of authors. In the April issue, other than the interview with Bronfenbrenner you conducted, all articles (11 of them) and the editorial were written by college and university personnel. Of course, professionals from higher education have much to offer, but they should not dominate any issue—especially one that deals with the school's role in socialization. Public school practitioners have much to offer that is practical and valuable. I believe your readers will find their contributions relevant and probably be more likely to accept ideas from peers who are facing issues and solving problems now.

I hope the ASCD staff will seek to assure balance in membership participation in writing, committee work, and offices held.

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Wayne County Intermediate  
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Dear Editor:

Thanks for publishing Carole Crews' "Instructional Supervision: The Winter and the Warm," in the April 1979 issue of *Educational Leadership* [pp. 519-21].

It clearly reminds us that the battlelines of the "supervisor-teacher: a private cold war"<sup>1</sup> are still drawn. It also reminds us of the continuing need to teach supervision for instructional improvement if we are to have "warmer" sessions without "winters" of discontent.

As we strive to accomplish our goal, it seems appropriate to consider Paul Bixby's plan for professional

supervision. In the essays entitled *Supervision in an Age of Confrontation and Negotiation*,<sup>2</sup> he writes:

Supervision in the 1970s is not something a person titled "supervisor" does, but a pool of services to which all members of the professional team make contributions and from which all can draw as their needs demand.<sup>3</sup>

Those of us who have worked with him know he supervises and expects supervisors to establish a posture that enables one to work cooperatively with our colleagues. He reminds us that the power to improve instruction lies with the teacher; thus the supervisor must use influence if one expects to help teachers improve instruction. The goal of this effort is the development of resource pools to which all can contribute and can draw for the improvement of each colleague as well as the program.

Those of us using this model know it works. Perhaps it's time for these essays to be added to the resources used by all ASCD members.

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Dear Editor:

It was most helpful to receive the March issue of *Educational Leadership* at a time when I was in the midst of James MacGregor Burns' book *Leadership*. The articles provided a concise and salient summary of a very large book. With appreciation noted, I would like to add a footnote about Fiedler's generalizations on EL page 395 about the inability of individuals to change their leadership style.

"One reason," states Fiedler for the difficulty involved in changing leadership styles is caused by the fact that, "individuals do not see them-

selves 'accurately' (that is, as others see them)." He goes on to say that "leaders are not even aware of the way members (that is, subordinates) see their behaviors." This, I would agree, is true for some leaders, but not for others.

In a recent study of 72 leaders (principals and department heads) using self-report data and subordinate assessments, I found that in the top one-third of the sample having relatively high school climate scores, the formal leaders agreed with their subordinates on every single one of the 18 subtests measured by the Profile of School Climate Questionnaire. In the bottom third of the sample, however, the principals and department heads significantly ( $p < .05$ ) overestimated their own leadership behavior, the peer-leader behavior of staffs, and the work-group environment of their schools. This finding agrees with results reported by Likert from studies in business organizations. He found that leader and subordinate perceptions became more compatible when management patterns moved away from the authoritarian end of his systems continuum toward more collaborative styles.

It appears that Fiedler has overstated his point.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Blumberg. *Supervisors and Teachers: A Private Cold War*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Paul W. Bixby. *Supervision in an Age of Confrontation and Negotiation*. Unpublished manuscript available from the author at The Pennsylvania State University, 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Paul W. Bixby. "Introduction." *Supervision in an Age of Confrontation and Negotiation*, op. cit.

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