

Letters

Dear Editor:

This is a letter of criticism. Usually I wouldn't bother but I'm feeling a little feisty this morning and said to myself—why not?

In "Overview" for the December 1979 issue you reported that of 144 authors, one-third were women and minorities. Well, who cares? If all the authors were the same it shouldn't make any difference, as long as what they wrote was relevant, of high quality, and interestingly presented.

And look at who did write: those furthest from the classroom! Just who is this journal aimed at?

I wonder how many members are like me and put the journal on the bottom of the pile to be read "when we have time"? I have about ten or more I've not read yet or even looked at, but in the December issue I reviewed two articles: the condemnation of "free materials" and the indictment of "mixers" to get people to know each other.

After reading "free materials" I didn't need to have anyone tell me what was wrong and what was right about it. I can think as well as anyone when I care to and I'm sure most of your readers can, too. Now, where in your journal do you encourage or even allow responses from your general clientele? I'm sure you would have gotten some pithy comments on this article.

I can also see your audience writing in and giving Ellen Sarkis-

ian more suggestions for appropriate ice-breakers, and also some comments on how they feel when they are treated as small children who need to be led. If you encourage readers to speak up, you just might awaken some interest in your public and also discover more about the types of articles people read.

(Name Withheld by Request)

Ron Brandt replies:

Our December issue did not have a "Letters" column but we welcome responses from readers and frequently publish them. When an article is especially con-

troversial, we sometimes include a response along with it in the interest of fairness. Otherwise it takes several months for a reply to appear in print.

As I said in my column, our first consideration in choosing articles is their assumed value and appeal to readers, but we think diversity of authorship is desirable. University professors are more inclined to write for publication than others because they are expected to, and sometimes they have more information about a particular topic because it is their specialty. Nevertheless we welcome good articles—and letters—from administrators and teachers. We are even glad to get letters of criticism. *EL*

Overview (continued from p. 451)

They examine what research says about reading disability among boys, weighing the evidence for various explanations before concluding that the main cause is sex stereotyping.

The full story is complicated and not yet clear. Some neurologists say girls do, in fact, think differently from boys; that "some differences are biologically inherent and unlikely to be modified by cultural factors alone."² Still, expectations are very influential. When I taught in Nigeria in the 1960s, girls were considered naturally inferior in all school tasks. It was not uncommon for an elementary teacher to say, "Fatima

does quite well, for a girl." As expected, most girls seemed not to learn as well as boys.

Few people in the United States would profess such views, but we have our own traditions to overcome. If certain activities and pursuits seem more suited to some students than others, we can learn to adapt methods and materials to different styles and temperaments. We must not, however innocently, help circumscribe the aspirations and potential of half the human race. *EL*

²Richard M. Restak, "The Other Difference Between Boys and Girls," *Educational Leadership* 37 (December 1979): 232-35.

Copyright © 1980 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.