

Letters

TESTING IN FLORIDA

Regarding the article, "Practical Advice on Proficiency Testing" by Peter Behuniak [May 1980], I must challenge the author's description of the Florida Statewide Assessment Program over which I am the administrator.

Behuniak was of the opinion that achievement gains of Florida eleventh-grade students on the statewide assessment test are not true gains. He stated that "two basic principles of test development and administration were violated": (1) there was no assurance that the 1977 and 1978 tests would be comparable and (2) some of the students were retested with identical items.

The statewide assessment tests are renewed annually on an item-by-item basis in which about 30 to 40 percent of the items are replaced. Every effort is made to maintain the same level of difficulty. Extensive analyses are made after the tests are administered to analyze student growth. These analyses consistently reveal growth in achievement after accounting for differences in the test questions.

The Department of Education does not include retested students in its reports of student growth. Twelfth graders who retake the test are reported separately; hence, the increases in achievement described by Behuniak represent successive classes of high school juniors.

I am of the opinion that the testing program is having positive effects in Florida. The implementation of minimum standards is serving to rejuvenate the public schools, and the vast majority of Floridians appear to be quite satisfied with the program.

—THOMAS H. FISHER
Administrator, Assessment
State of Florida Department
of Education

WHAT MODEL IS T.E.T.?

Glickman and Tamashiro's article in your very fine March 1980 issue on "Discipline Strategies" is helpful in that it sets up a classification system and an inventory to assist teachers in assessing their beliefs about discipline.

However, I take issue with the classification of Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.) as a non-interventionist

model of discipline. First, T.E.T. is based on reciprocal relationships, on mutual accommodation of needs, and use of a problem-solving model, all of which are part of Glickman and Tamashiro's interactionist model.

Second, my research shows that T.E.T. training has the net effect of neutralizing teachers' impact concerns, pupil discipline being one part. The findings could support the contention that T.E.T. has the effect of moving interventionist and non-interventionist teachers toward a more neutral interactionist position.

—JACK L. CONKLIN
Associate Professor of Education
North Adams State College
North Adams, Massachusetts

Carl Glickman Replies:

Our classification of the various popular discipline models has been reported in counseling and education journals, at conferences of education associations, and in our book, *Solving Discipline Problems* (Allyn & Bacon, 1980). It has been reviewed by educational psychologists, T.E.T. trained teachers, and a T.E.T. trainer. Conklin is the first to suggest to us that T.E.T. is misplaced.

Our book provides a full description and rationale for the placement of each model. Basically, our interpretation of Gordon's position is that a teacher who is skilled in "active listening," "acknowledgement responses," "door openers," "method III problem solving," and so on can actively help students bring to the conscious level the roots of their misbehavior. With such understanding, students can then develop a plan based on reciprocal relationships. It is the emphasis on students' capacities to know themselves and to correct their own behavior that places T.E.T. as a non-interventionist model.

INSTRUCTIONAL ENRICHMENT IN NEW YORK

Your articles on the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment program (FIE) by Nicholas Hobbs and Frances Link [April 1980] struck a responsive chord. As a teacher and teacher-trainer of FIE in the New York metropolitan area, I have witnessed the positive effects of its challenging materials and mediational techniques on the functioning of both students and teachers.

I would like to make special mention of its value as an intervention with sixth-grade students, particularly in self-contained classes. Where the teacher of FIE is also responsible for teaching the major academic subjects, I have found that the materials are at least as compelling for sixth graders as for older students.

The reversal of school failure, if present, is best accomplished at the earliest stage possible, certainly before the higher-level academic skills of intermediate and high school are demanded of the student.

The self-contained classroom allows the teacher of FIE to "bridge" the cognitive processes learned into the regular academic curriculum most fruitfully. In this way, the student experiences the strength of these "tools" as they help to master tasks that previously seemed overwhelming.

The value of FIE for the preadolescent in a setting of cognitive and academic continuity has been demonstrated to me in an afterschool program for fifth- and sixth-grade reading under-achievers on New York City's upper West Side, at the Children's Aid Society's Frederick Douglass Learning Center. Here, FIE is taught as a kind of "core" curriculum, branching into selected areas of greatest academic need. At Children's Village School in Dobbs Ferry, a setting with self-contained classes, the FIE program is carried out with mildly disturbed boys from 11 to 14 years of age. Use of the program has led to an increase in purposeful behavior and improvement in academic achievement and social adjustment.

Providing opportunities for the application of newly-learned cognitive functions appears to maximize a primary goal of FIE—to acquaint the learner, perhaps for the first time, with the evolution and power of his/her own thinking.

—SEMA BRAININ
IE Consultant
Greenburgh Eleven Union Free
School District
Dobbs Ferry, New York

Editor's note: Readers' comments on our articles are welcome. Address letters to Editor, *Educational Leadership*, 225 No. Washington St., Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Letters accepted for publication may be edited for brevity and clarity.

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