

Letters

MATHEMATICS RESEARCH

ASCD's booklet *Mathematics Education Research: Implications for the 80's* is a well prepared, important, and comparatively jargon-free contribution to the study of mathematics.

Particularly impressive to me were the essays and responses on "Children's Thinking" by Hiebert and Fuson, and on "Computers" by DeVault and Davis. These articles and others tend to counteract a pervasive feeling beyond the academic community that mathematics is a cut and dried science, that it should be taught rigorously and its curriculum left alone.

In any critique, however, the other shoe must inevitably fall. Too little was mentioned by any of the booklet's authors about the effects on mathematics curriculum of the ever present multiple choice, machine-scored standardized testing of mathematics. This single factor does more to constrict the teaching and curriculum of mathematics than any other.

In addition, the twenty contributors to *Mathematics Education Research: Implications for the 80's* are all college professors. It should be understood by the editor, Elizabeth Fennema, that there are many beyond the university community who have meaningful contributions to make in mathematics, even in the area of research. A balance of academics and practitioners in all educational endeavors is of the essence.

WILLIAM D. CORBETT

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CENSORSHIP IN TIMES OF STRESS

Censorship in American education and in public school textbooks in particular has a long history, much of which is related to political and economic periods of stress. ["Censorship vs. Selection," December 1981.] When our curriculum materials change, as they did in the 60s and 70s, we must expect that people will challenge those changes, especially if they are in conflict with traditional mores and values. Yet most American educators—even curriculum workers—are unacquainted with the

history of the struggle for academic freedom. How many curriculum leaders remember or know of the censorship of Harold Rugg's American history series in the 1940s? Rugg dared to present a view of Blacks in American history that had been ignored by earlier authors and publishers.

In our own era, books are being burned, as in Warsaw, Indiana, or removed from library shelves by citizens after school hours for reasons as general as being godless, immoral, or un-American. The current epidemic is highly political. There is an organized campaign to limit the alternatives necessary for a pluralistic school in a democratic society.

—FRANCES LINK

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GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

First the good news: Precise Teaching and Mastery Learning are even more alive this year than previously. We are also looking at instruments for measuring time on task.

Now the bad news: I am mortified. I sent with my article [November 1981] a table showing our reading and math scores for 1976 to 1981. *Educational Leadership* transmogrified it into a graph with uneven intervals. While the message of improved achievement in basic skills is communicated, the graphing appears so unscientific that I must completely and emphatically disown it. That would have been just as easy to use two-month intervals from 1.7 to 9.4. That approach would have been defensible. Ironically, our improvement would have looked even more dramatic.

—JOAN D. ABRAMS

*Superintendent of Schools
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ALL DAY KINDERGARTEN OVERSTATED

I read with great interest the articles and responses on the issue of all-day kindergarten [January and November].

Nancy Naron stated "Kindergarten teachers have twice as many students

and half the amount of time with each student as teachers at all other grades." She calls this grossly unwarranted and, in fact, irresponsible. It seems to me she is overstating her case or doesn't consider secondary as part of the educational program, since most secondary teachers have 130-190 students per day for one hour or less. Maybe our priorities are not clear; however, I cannot accept that simply more time and fewer students makes for better education.

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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.

WRITING FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We welcome manuscripts on any aspect of curriculum, instruction, supervision, or leadership in elementary and secondary education. Papers should be written in direct, readable style and be as brief as possible (five to ten pages typed double-spaced). We reserve the right to edit for brevity, clarity, and consistency of style.

References may be cited as footnotes or listed in bibliographic form at the end of the article. For examples of either style, refer to a recent issue or to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (University of Chicago Press). Double-space everything, including quotations and footnotes.

Please send two copies. Rejected manuscripts are not returned unless the author provides a self-addressed envelope with the necessary postage.

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