

Follow Up

FEMINIST CANT

In *Women in Education* (March 1982) Nancy Olson editorializes with a straight face about "the half of human history that has been neglected." While it is arguable that traditional teaching slights the role of women in history, it is ludicrous to assert that "feminist scholarship" (whatever that is) will lift the veil on any significant new body of knowledge. Such cant may wash in *Ms.*, but has no place in a journal aimed at professional persons.

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THE SUPERHUMAN PRINCIPAL

Every article in the February 1982 issue concerning the role of the school principal makes it appear to be beyond the grasp of the ordinary educator.

The "demands," the "skills," the "orientations," necessary to have a manager become "all things to all people," are stressed time and time again. One begins to feel professionals cry for relief rather than doing the job.

Overworked? Then modify your goals. Demands too tough? Then consider the person, the job, and the social setting. Need continued inservice education? Where were you for two to six years of postgraduate study?

Let's modify the rhetoric!

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DIFFERING AIMS OF COMMUNISTIC AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

In the March 1982 issue, John Cogan was very enthusiastic about the Cuban model of education. He forgot to explain to readers the educational philosophy of that country.

In the communist countries the aim

of education is to get a good communist worker and no more.

In our democratic countries the aim of education is to achieve a real human being. Man is free to make decisions because he is something more than a physiological object.

It is very dangerous to recommend foreign educational projects without careful consideration of their philosophical foundations.

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John Cogan replies:

I'm sorry that Dr. Palacios took such strong exception to my piece on "Education and Development in the Third World." I believe he missed the point of the article entirely. Nowhere did I advocate the adoption of either model being discussed. In fact, I pointed out in two different instances that the models were developed in very different sociopolitical and economic environments. Further, I raised the question, "Could these programs become models for educational development in other parts of the Third World?" and then pointed out that the Cuban model was revolutionary in nature and clearly implied social engineering which may not be to everyone's liking.

I'm not ready to judge programs, as is Dr. Palacios, simply on the basis of their ideological foundations. The educational problems facing all nations of the world are too great to dismiss potentially helpful models simply because they were developed in a nation with different sociopolitical structures than one's own.

THE FAILURE OF INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

As a regular reader I was somewhat bemused by the April 1982 issue which focused on Affective Education. There were a number of well-written articles each of which was, in essence, calling for intelligent, thoughtful interaction in the classroom between teacher and students and among the students. Further on in the issue were a series of articles

(equally well-written) analyzing the individualized instruction phenomenon and its failure to have significant impact on the schools while being successful in other learning/training environments.

Before addressing the fundamental law in the so-called "individualized" approach to instruction (usually it means independent learning which is antithetical to fostering strong affective learning), I would like to take issue with Professor Tobias about his claims of success for individualized instruction in the military and in industry.

If one sets aside the claims of the Instructional Systems Design (ISD) adherents and examines closely what is actually happening in the military, the results are far from encouraging:

Item: The attrition rate in "self-paced" training programs is extremely high (20-40 percent or more in many of the occupational specialty courses such as the Navy's Basic Electricity/Electronics Course, the Army's courses in communication technology, and so on).

Item: The majority of soldiers are unable to pass the skill qualification tests (SQT's) after completing their "self-paced" training programs.

Item: The "loss of learning" curve from self-paced training is steep enough to be a matter of major concern to field and high-level commanders as indicated in various reports and position papers.

I do not have any specific data on training results in industry; but if the decreasing productivity and quality levels that plague our society reflect the effectiveness of our industrial training, it would appear that individualized instruction is far from the success venture suggested in the article.

The more fundamental issue concerning individualized instruction in the schools deals with means and ends. The emphasis on isolated, independent learning of specific facts and skills suggests that individualized instruction is a means in search of an end, since nowhere in the literature do its adherents describe the kind of person who is to result from such an approach. Nowhere do they indicate how working alone with a printed module or with a com-

puter or other technology develops the attitudes, teamwork and communication skills, and learning-transfer skills needed for students to function as intelligent, responsible members of an *interdependent* society.

Until the advocates of individualized instruction can define and justify the *ends* they seek and then show how such instruction consistently achieves those ends, people who are concerned with developing productive, responsible human beings rather than test performers would do well to look elsewhere for guidance. Affective education has little to gain from reliance on individualized instruction, as the April issue so aptly implied.

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A MUSHY REFLECTION ON AFFECTIVE EDUCATION

The April *Educational Leadership* emphasizing Affective Education evoked a sense of how important it is that the ethos of a school cherish a child's personhood. I know that sounds "mushy," but that is "how I see it" to quote an Ed Leadership staple. I think it's also a mini-rebellion against the singular acceptable writing style today: lifeless, linear prose amply punctuated by "parenthesized" authors and dates which supposedly "prove" the point.

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CARKHUFF BRINGS HOPE

Thank you for printing "Affective Education in the Age of Productivity" by Robert R. Carkhuff in your April edition. We must begin to reconceptualize the way we approach teacher training and school improvement; Carkhuff's model and his thinking are on the cutting edge.

As Vice President of the Washington Education Association, I am dealing with both the terrible budget deficits for education we are experiencing now and the need for a futuristic image of teaching for our members. Carkhuff's work brings hope!

TERRY BERGESON
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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 questions 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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