

effective in the TAG classes have been incorporated into other classes with success.

Self-managed reading groups in which students take turns in tasks such as assigning readings, organizing vocabulary lists, and leading group discussions were adapted to the school's fourth grade basal reading series after initial utilization in the TAG program there. This approach, adapted from Joseph Renzulli's work, includes his "curriculum compactor" notion in which students test from materials which they have already mastered. This allows

them to work on activities such as advanced-level study projects, enrichment units, and mini-courses. In addition, a program of Learning Centers has been used to display and utilize the results of student independent research projects.

The atmosphere created in the TAG program classes has facilitated the development of many curriculum changes which have had benefit for all classes in the Westside school. Curriculum change has become a more continuous and consistent process. The total curriculum development process at Westside Elementary School can now utilize a

laboratory approach to instructional improvement through this project begun in the TAG classes.

See Paul Weber and Judy Freund, "This Wisconsin Program for the Gifted is a Laboratory for Innovation," *Phi Delta Kappan* 65, 5 (January 1984): 366.

William J. Stewart is Associate Professor, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls; and Conrad F. Toepfer, Jr. is Associate Professor, State University of New York at Buffalo.

Letters

Leader as Servant

The February issue is excellent. I found the articles on "Leadership and Excellence in Schooling" and "A Team Approach to Instructional Leadership" particularly good. However, I strongly feel that any in-depth study of this topic should include Robert K. Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership, (*Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*). I have taught Greenleaf's ideas to future administrators and I have personally applied them. I know that anyone who strives for excellence in educational administration would gain a great deal from reflecting upon and practicing servant leadership.

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Principals Who Rock the Boat

The articles dealing with "Leadership Up Close" in the February issue were very helpful, but I have never seen anyone address the consequences to the careers of principals who run effective schools but rock the boat.

I am sure that most principals would happily follow the recommendations in those articles, except that most of them

do not have multi-year contracts. If a principal offends someone at the central office level, that principal's job is at risk. School-level administrators' positions should be changed only because of documented poor performance and, as with teachers, the principal's supervisors should have to show evidence that they provided assistance. If this were the case, principals would be more effective instructional leaders.

The things I spoke of do happen to principals. They happened to me!

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Teacher-Administrator Relationships

Having recently become an elementary school principal, I found "Managing for Effective Teaching" [February] extremely helpful. Greenblatt, Cooper, and Muth present a practical approach to effective teacher-administrator relationships.

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Practicing Memory Skills

It is difficult to determine what purpose was served by "What's the Capital of North Dakota?" in the February issue. Any cursory review of the literature on thinking and problem solving reveals that memory skills are important to success in these areas. The fact that students need something to memorize at a point in time when they are acquiring or practicing these skills creates the circumstances the authors criticize. It is true that the tidbits of information which serve as the vehicles to practice the skills may not be important, but it is also true that one cannot remember in a vacuum.

When children learn facts through memorization, they learn those facts which, at the time, are compatible with their age, achievement level, or interests. As one grows older, these are often replaced with those facts and isolated bits of information that are complementary to what one is doing at a particular stage in life.

If memory skills are important, and research says they are; if we need something to memorize to acquire or practice these skills; if we use memory skills throughout our lives; what do the au-

thors suggest that school children should memorize?

MICHAEL JACKSON
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Atrocious Research

At first I wondered whether "What's the Capital of North Dakota?" (February 1984) was a joke or parody. Then I thought it was an example of the kind of terrible research some undergraduate education students might do if left unsupervised. But no, despite some good one-liners, it was not a joke, and June Buhler is actually an Associate Professor. This is, apparently, a serious article, and I am appalled.

As a starter, one might wonder what criteria were used to identify "successful people" as "prosperous or happy." Were Jesus, Demosthenes, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Beethoven prosperous or happy? Were they unsuccessful? Didn't John Stuart Mill say something to the

effect that it was better to be a discontented Socrates than a happy pig? Then we may wonder how the authors' "successful" people might compare with unsuccessful ones, but apparently this never occurred to them. And since there is a mass of research correlating economic success ("prosperity") with levels of educational achievement, doesn't the authors' research prove exactly what they say it disproves? That is, college graduates are more prosperous ("successful") than high school graduates, and their recall of facts is indeed higher (48 percent compared to 33 percent)! Again, are the authors opposed to people knowing facts or learning them in certain ways?

The overall impression one gets from the article is that knowledge of facts is of little use. Before I would agree with the authors, I think a much more thorough investigation into the teaching and learning of factual matters is required. As it stands, the article is a jumble of

anti-intellectual slogans, dubious logic, and atrocious research.

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The State of Reading

In your February issue you carried provocative (I hope) observations on the state of reading in our present society. Just today I discovered a review of *Reading in the 1980s* (Bowker, 1983), which is primarily a reissue of the Winter 1983 issue of *Daedalus*. I urge your readers to secure either the journal or the book; the contributors are respected scholars and critics whose views are well worth pondering.

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