Letters

Sexist Illustrations Confirm Stereotypes

The illustrations for "Improving Assessment Where It Means the Most: In the Classroom" and "Supervising and Evaluating Principals: Lessons from Effective Districts" (October 1985) reinforce the stereotype that all education administrators are male and all teachers are female. In future editions, perhaps *Educational Leadership* could assume the lead, and feature illustrations depicting women as principals and superintendents. They do exist.

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"Injudicious" Depiction of Patriarchy

As a middle school principal and former high school Assistant Principal who reads avidly each issue of *Educational Leadership*, I was disappointed, even shocked, at the insensitive, injudicious choice of illustration for the article "Supervising and Evaluating Principals..." (October, 1985, page 78). The picture portrays a stereotype which rankles those of us who have struggled to efface such deeply engraved images of the educational hierarchy. The teacher in the drawing is a young female, arms folded. The male principal and superintendnet are depicted on a higher physical plane with an expression reminiscent of a patronizing and self-congratulatory patriarchy.

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Ethical Relativism Fails to Protect Students

Had "Teaching U.S.-Soviet Relations" (May 1985) been limited to the Dan Caldwell and Dianne Jones articles, it would have been excellent.

If Alex Molnar agrees with me that teachers owe students a clear and convincing explanation of our ideological conflict with the Soviet Union and why it matters that we win, he should say so. If not, his position should concern both parents and the community.

Dennis Carlson judges Soviet beliefs to be no worse than ours, but says he is only trying to be neutral. It is difficult for most American adults to understand that Soviets do not think or behave as we do. It would be educational malpractice to expose children to Soviet state-generated propaganda without warning them that is has been distorted.

A straight-talking Czech laborer, a Polish farmer, or an Afghan herdsman could tell teachers more about how to compare freedom with slavery than Mr. Carlson. I am tired of people in colleges of education maintaining that values are so relative that we are no better for our belief in truth than our enemy, who claims the right to dictate—regardless of the facts—what is history and what is not.

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Molnar Replies: "Correct" Ideology Antithetical to Critical Thinking

What, for Mr. Andros, would be the correct explanation of the ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union? In my view, the issues are sharply contested.

Dissenting views should be presented as clearly as possible in schools so students can form their own independent points of view. I advocate substantive content that encourages critical thought. This is not possible when students are exposed only to "ideologically correct" ideas or when they are told that only one point of view is acceptable.

If one opposes thought control, one must advocate free thought, not ideology. Thomas Jefferson would probably take my part in this matter. Who, one might ask, would take Mr. Andros's?

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Carlson Replies: International Politics Are Too Complex for Rhetoric

Mr. Andros has misinterpreted my position. I do not wish to teach that "Soviet beliefs are not worse than ours." I do, however, believe in academic freedom as it has developed in America—a belief Mr. Andros obviously does not share. If excellence in education in a democracy means exposing students to complex world situations, not distorting them into struggles between "good guys" and "bad guys." Reasoned debate and dialogue in social studies classes, not impassioned rhetoric and stereotypes, *must* be a goal of schools.

If Mr. Andros had his way, academic purges and indoctrination would replace free exploration of ideas. Ironically, he supports the tactics and beliefs typical of Soviet education.

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Inadequate Data to Verify HOTS Claims

When Stanley Pogrow spoke at a reading conference in Tucson ("Higher Order Thinking Skills for Compensatory Students," September 1985), I asked him how many Chapter I programs he had observed and urged him to see our program at Nash. Pogrow indicated he had seen "a few around the country over the years," but he has yet to visit one Chapter I school in Amphitheater District. We use the computer daily, along with other approaches, and although there is a place for them, we use no drill and practice. His blanket statement that drill and practice is the "usual approach" is not substantiated in his article.

Pogrow's claim that Chapter I students have fewer friends is ridiculous. At our school students in the program have no fewer friends than the top or middle readers.

The article offers no proof that the HOTS program transfers to reading. Improved self-concept and increased willingness to think for oneself are

helpful, but to say that "reading scores are up" is misleading. One would expect scores to rise at the end of a year's work. The article fails to say how much "up" these scores were, compared to a control group's scores.

If the HOTS program can do all the things it claims, I am delighted—but I am appalled by such writing in a professional journal.

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Teachers' Enthusiasm and Data Support HOTS Results

Barbara Smith pretends that her coolness to the HOTS program derives from the absence of scientifically-derived data, yet she dismisses as "ridiculous" findings from a control group study that do not agree with her prejudices. Similarly, she dismisses without support our findings that the HOTS students had 50 percent more friends on the basis that it is not true in her school.

The reading gains among HOTS students amounted to 14 percentile points over a two-year period without any supplementary content instruction, drill or practice. Most districts would love such "misleading" gains. Math scores were up 9 percentile points, with most of the gain occurring in the second year—despite the fact that the math component of the curriculum had not really been developed. The math gains—and teacher interviews—strongly supported our initial expectations that improvements in self-confidence, language development, and thinking processes would transfer into content gains.

If Smith had not spent our meeting screaming at me (for reasons I don't understand), she would have understood my basis for characterizing "typical" Chapter I programs as being drill-and-practice oriented. The HOTS program is being pilot tested in three districts in the University of Arizona area which have a combined student population 30 times the size of her district, and nationally in districts with approximately 100 times the number of students. In *all* cases the HOTS sites are not drill-and-practice oriented. In *all* cases we had to have extensive meetings with state officials to convince them our non-drill-and-practice approach was legal.

Even as Smith was steaming in Tucson, the largest district in our area was announcing a $1 million expenditure for drill and practice computer labs for their Chapter I programs.

Over the past two years I have talked with hundreds of Chapter I teachers and coordinators and over a dozen state and federal Chapter I officials around the country, and have received over 400 letters. These contacts yielded a picture of gross dissatisfaction with the limited aspirations of the Chapter I effort, and frustration at the seeming inability to implement bolder efforts that work.

All we have done is to help teachers and administrators switch from techniques they perceive to be inadequate to ones that are consistent with their intuition and aspirations. What's so "appalling" about that?

I stand behind our claims. We have demonstrated initial success in using a strictly higher-order-thinking approach to produce measurable, substantial gains in basic skills, social confidence and thinking ability of Chapter I students. Discovering that teachers with appropriate technological, curricular, and training support *can* produce amazing educational results, and suggesting that we *must* achieve such results, are not messages of criticism, but ones of challenge and inspiration.

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Confident HOTS Students Learn—to Teach

As a HOTS lab teacher, I work with 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students in a school with a 60 percent Chapter I population. We completed the first year of the HOTS curriculum in December; our fall 1985 CTBS test results show a 7 percentile point gain for 5th and 6th grade Chapter I lab students, compared with 1984. Many students tested out of the first quartile.

I am excited about these score gains, but even more with these students' growth in self confidence. When a HOTS student brings a friend to the lab, he or she becomes the teacher and leader. By linking stu-

Letters to the Editor

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Index to Advertisers

dents with classroom projects, HOTS students contribute to all students' learning.

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"Magic" Numbers Misrepresent LOGO

I have been reading and rereading "Exciting Effects of LOGO in an Urban School System" (September 1985). I find it disturbing in several ways. First, it seems hopelessly flawed as an example of empirical research. Secondly, spectacular "findings" are not supported with facts. Third, LOGO as a computer language is misrepresented.

The author talks of "effects." As I understand effects they are the result of an experiment, treatment, or condition. In analysis of variance we speak of main effects and interaction effects. While effects used in this way may be awkward, we have inherited its use from agronomy and most of us agree on its meaning. Since "effects" is part of the article's title, I expected to read about comparisons, experimental design, control groups, covariates, and statistical analyses.

What I found was Figure 1, p. 46. OK, I understand percentages, chi-squares, Wilcoxon procedures, weighted measures, Likert scales, and similar procedures to compare these types of data. I don't understand the table. What exactly are "weighted logo effect scores"? How were the weights derived? What values are weighted? Why are they weighted? Only "leading" scores were reported. Why not the following scores?

Only one sentence says anything about how these magic numbers are calculated.

The scores are based on a weighting of the proportion of students improved in each area multiplied by the proportion for whom each effect was reported as significant. Wow! A great new statistical procedure. Seriously, how were the "significant effects" determined? Once an effect has been shown to be significant, why multiply it by anything? Why report "relative strength"? There is no meaningful discussion of the experimental design or statistical analyses. The omission of such information may lead the reader to accept unsubstantiated claims, or discard the article as witchcraft, or possibly to write letters to the editor.

The real danger to ASCD members is that some may think the article presents evidence that LOGO somehow magically transforms the performance levels of all students. Surely I am not the only reader who noticed that the students in the study "spent only 40 hours of the entire school year using LOGO." Holy cow! If a district can benefit so much from only 40 hours of LOGO, just think what is possible with 80 hours of LOGO for each child.

As for my concern about unsubstantiated findings, if the statements below are true, you have published one of the watershed studies of this century. If not, then you may be misleading your readers.

1. "Logo is often a powerful emotional experience for students and is extremely flexible for a variety of cognitive styles."

2. "It turns making mistakes and taking risks into advantages."

3. "...students in the lowest two achievement quintiles demonstrated improvement at about the same rate as students in the highest quintiles."

4. "...students with strong peer relations, compared with social isolates"

5. "...students with extensive nonclassroom learning inhibitors compared to those with minimal outside obstructions."

6. "logo effects seem to be both wide ranging and substantial."

As for LOGO itself. The author was right when he said "LOGO...is only a programming language." He was wrong when he said "it comes with an implicit and loosely defined educational philosophy." He further erred when he claimed "The superintendent took a risk on a relatively unknown language." LOGO is not unknown-...relatively or otherwise. To so claim is naive.

LOGO is a simple computer language. It ranks near the bottom of the languages in power. To talk of the "powerful language called LOGO" is wrong. I wonder what Foshay or Davis, or other past ASCD presidents with credentials in educational philosophy would say about an "implicit and loosely defined" philosophy. When apostles of LOGO in the classroom talk about philosophy, you can be sure it is their own philosophy, not LOGO's.

I hope ASCD continues to publish research findings that will tell *what* the researchers did, and *how* the data were analyzed. The damage done by this article is probably small, but I hope no school administrator offers each child 40 hours of LOGO next year with the expectation of spectacular results for *all* children on *all* criteria.

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Research Constraints Affected LOGO Experimental Design

Any tool has a philosophy for its use, and an ethic and set of rules that define its realm and scope of application. As a tool for educational applications, LOGO's educational philosophy is clearly developmentalist.

Experimental design requires sufficient prior research on a problem to predict magnitude and direction of effects. No body of research exists for LOGO, and only minimally for microcomputers in public school classrooms. The St. Pual research used a survey—in conjunction with systematic observation, teacher interviews, and a 1983 pilot survey—because the research base was sporadic and the effects, especially for large scale applications, were unknown. The survey model was borrowed from Bloom's *Human Characteristics and School Learning*. I expected that LOGO's principal impact would be on social rather than on cognitive characteristics in student users.

The absence of extensive statistical and methodological reporting in an article written for a general audience does not imply poor research any more than their presence, as the history of research in education demonstrates, guarantees good research.

I urge Tim Grady or anyone else

interested in or antagonistic to LOGO to set up an experimental design in a large urban school system. Of course, they may have a problem withholding a potentially large improvement in academic performance from their working-class, low achievement control group in order to demonstrate that the generalized effects I have reported do not occur. The least they will find is a Hawthorne effect, as I implied in the article. When you give kids powerful tools and a lot of adult attention and respect, they tend to achieve, as any experienced upper class private school teacher can tell you.

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Fran R. Schweiger is ASCD's managing editor of special publications.