

share with *Educational Leadership* readers the problems associated with changing teaching practice: time needed, flexibility in usage, mandating before understanding, and the importance of coaching and feedback during inservice. Will she also consider these questions? □

#### References

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## Madeline Hunter replies: Develop Collaboration; Build Trust

MADELINE HUNTER

I thank Barbara Pavan for the stimulation of her letter. I regret being unable to respond in person but appreciate the opportunity to do so here.

In response to districts being disappointed in "her" trainers, "my" trainers receive continuing training, coaching, and feedback. Unfortunately, many people "listen" or "read" and then begin to "preach." I am horrified by what some people are doing with our teacher *decision-making* model. Unfortunately, I have no control over the person a district hires. If districts don't inquire as to the trainer's credentials, and check that they are valid, misrepresentation occurs. If I certified everyone who wishes it, I would do nothing else.

Concerning the research supporting the model, it is based on what has been validated by a hundred years of research in human learning. It was not validated solely in primary grades in inner-city schools, however. Because those students were of such concern, they have received the greatest publicity. Much of the model's foundation has been researched from early childhood through doctoral students. I know of no research contradictory to the basic propositions of our program. For example, massed practice at initial learning works with shoe-tying and fighter jet piloting, with gifted and slow learners. The examples *look* dif-

ferent, but the supporting research is the same regardless of students, content, or organizational techniques. In the same way, research in nutrition applies to all meals.

I agree that it is lamentable that people look for those (adjective deleted) seven elements in a lesson. The original article published in *The Instructor* a decade ago stated that it was the teacher's decision whether to include or exclude each element. The problem results from looking for a simple solution to one of the world's

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most complex problems, and from lack of knowledge of the supporting research.

The only use I see for the preobservation conference is when it becomes the joint venture of *planning* a lesson. Otherwise, I believe it is not only useless, but builds bias and wastes time. Collaboration and trust are not achieved in most preobservation conferences, but in the postobservation conferences if they increase the teacher's excellence. Preobservation conferences are vestigial organs of the days when the only way observers knew what was going on was if the teachers told them.

With our current sophistication in instructional analysis (granted not all observers have achieved it—but a preobservation conference won't help them), we look at teaching holistically as a synthesis of art and science. We should not be looking for the presence or absence of particular techniques, but for the appropriateness of teaching decisions in planning and during teaching. In my very biased opinion, but based on work with thousands of teachers, our current model is much more collaborative and effective than a 20-year-old one. □

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