

# Overview

## Teaching Must Be More Productive—and It Can Be

**Ronald S. Brandt**  
Executive Editor

**Anne Meek**  
Managing Editor

**Al Way**  
Art Director

**Jo Ann Irick Jones**  
Associate Editor

**Cheryl J. Weber**  
Editorial Assistant

**Teola T. Jones**  
Advertising Coordinator

**Sylvia Bayer**  
Administrative Assistant

October 1987

Volume 45

Number 2

*Educational Leadership* is intended primarily for leaders in elementary, middle, and secondary education but is also for anyone interested in curriculum, instruction, supervision, and leadership in schools. ASCD publications present a variety of viewpoints. The views expressed or implied in this publication are not necessarily official positions of the Association. Copyright © 1987 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.

ISSN 0013-1784  
October 87/Stock No. 611-87044

A few weeks ago, at a workshop I was conducting on curriculum development, a school board member asked why I put so much emphasis on change. The schools in his district, he said, are doing a good job as they are. His comment gave me pause; I had assumed that everyone shared my sense of urgency.

For example, the academic performance of American students is considerably lower than that of students in most other developed countries. Education is not a race, and we do not want the elitist policies and unhealthy pressures that contribute to higher achievement in some countries, but the evidence seems clear that students are capable of more than we generally expect of them.

The research of Harold Stevenson (p. 4) and his colleagues comparing mathematics education in the U.S., China, and Japan demonstrates the impact of differing values, expectations, and customs on student learning. As a group, Japanese children are already better at mathematics than American children when they enter school. Later on, Asian mothers are less satisfied with their children's progress than are their American counterparts. Asian teachers—and the children themselves—are also less satisfied. Their actual achievement, however, far exceeds that of American children.

Although Stevenson's findings are particularly telling, most of us don't need more proof that the fruits of our teaching are often disappointing. We know from the sometimes humiliating results of our own National Assessment that young people gain less than

we would like from the years they spend in school. We know also, though, that to succeed, any proposed improvements must be compatible with American traditions. And we believe that, before being oversold, they should be carefully tested to be sure they are worth the effort of implementation.

Mindful of this, Bruce Joyce and his colleagues have analyzed the research literature to tease out the forms of instruction that appear to have most effect on pupil learning. In this issue (p. 11), they summarize what researchers have found in the last decade about the impressive power of the strategies Joyce calls *Models of Teaching* (1986).

Research of this sort does not necessarily make a supervisor's job easier, because there are enormous obstacles to its use. Still, having solid evidence that with time and support many teachers can become more productive should give us a sense of direction and purpose. □

### Reference

Joyce, Bruce, and Marsha Weil. *Models of Teaching*, 3d ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986.

Copyright © 1987 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.