

Letters

Resolution Conflict

"Shocked" and "dumbfounded" best describe my reactions to the 1990 ASCD Resolutions. I could not believe that I was reading a resolution that actually condones bisexuality or homosexuality—if not outright promotes these sexual orientations. The committee or members who developed *Resolution Number 1. Student Sexual Orientation* are very much mistaken in their call for curriculum programs, policies, and equitable treatment of students who practice actively any sexual activities while in school, least of all bisexual or homosexual relations.

In the schools and media, we actively promote the dangers of drug use. We should do no less when it comes to teenage sexual activity. By urging that schools pursue policies that fail to explain that having sexual relations can lead to AIDS, STDs, unwanted pregnancies, and ruined lives—not to mention the whole abortion issue—we are doing these students a great disservice.

I know that we can't completely stop students from engaging in sexual relationships. But we must make a concerted effort to show them that misinformed choices now can lead to physical, emotional, and psychological harm—or even death. We cannot in good conscience resolve to promote toleration for or passivity about adolescent sexual orientation or activity, in any form. A true moral education must be one that teaches students that monogamous and faithful relationships, preferably within marriage, are truly demonstrations of respect for the dignity and worth of people.

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A Culture for Change

Your May issue on "Creating a Culture for Change" paralleled articles I've read on organizational bureaucracy. A common theme is to empower "on the line" teachers.

However, I have found teachers reluctant to accept responsibility for decision making. In some instances, they cannot make even rudimentary decisions without assistance.

Obviously, much work needs to be done—and has already begun in my district—to assist teachers in taking responsibility for risk taking and decision making.

Without groundwork for motivating teacher ownership for change, creating a culture for change will flounder. The laissez-faire attitude of teachers remains a major roadblock to restructuring and reforming our schools.

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Reading and Writing

Congratulations! The March 1990 issue of *Educational Leadership* is excellent. The collection of articles effectively illustrated the links among reading, writing, and thinking.

In particular, the article by Gordon Wells on encouraging literate thinking, Robert J. Tierney's piece on reading comprehension, and the piece written collectively by Roger Farr and his colleagues express fundamental concerns. Working with high school students in an inner-city school district, my staff and I are always emphasizing the practicality of developing reading, writing, and computational skills. Writing is an excellent vehicle for the students to express their understanding of content.

And writing, particularly exposition and narration, requires the students to think because they have to reflect on the texts, discussion in classes, and personal interpretations before writing. I admit there is greater volume in the paperwork; however, cooperative learning strategies can reduce the volume of work for teachers.

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Writing to Read Program

The opening statement in Freyd and Lytle (March 1990), "... direct corporate *intervention* ... [emphasis added]" rather than 'major corporate investment' sets the stage for a predictably negative critique of Writing to Read (WTR). Why are WTR labs popular? In CES 63 (Community Elementary School 63, Bronx, New York), the WTR lab is used daily by five first grades for one hour each. Ms. Shaw, a paraprofessional, supervises the pupils using the technology as she has done for seven years; the classroom teacher mentors pupils' stories at the writing table. Happy children work diligently and display independence as they move from station to station. Interpersonal communication is not hampered by the earphones, and responding to a computer is better than sitting quietly in one's seat. The children write stories, illustrate them with crayons, and gladly read them to one another and to any adult willing to listen.

Is it cost effective? The four PC Jrs. used for WTR are seven years old and have never incurred a repair bill. At this writing, the cost per pupil may be as high as \$5 a year for use of the hardware and software, \$7 a year for the work journals, and the salary of one aide divided by the 120 pupils with whom she works each week. An informal survey of principals in New York City WTR schools reveals a strong interest in additional materials to carry WTR into the 2nd and 3rd grades.

What is needed is not a denigration of the endeavor supported by a large corporate budget but a call to other industry giants to put forth similar literacy efforts.

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