

Letters

Missing Link

We were very pleased to see our article, "New Directions for Educating the Children of Poverty," in *Educational Leadership* (September 1990). Your journal reaches a wide and highly influential audience, who, we hope, will find the article useful.

Upon reading the article, however, we realized we had failed to note that the study on which the article is based was funded by the Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation in the U. S. Department of Education (Contract No. LC88054001). This omission is regrettable for two reasons. First, federal funding for the study underscores the government's commitment to improving schools for the children of poverty. Second, the department has published a two-volume report from the study that is available to the public. Copies of the report are available from:

Office of Planning, Budget, and
Evaluation
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Room 3127
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Not the Usual

The "Synthesis of Research on Compensatory and Remedial Education" by Anderson and Pellicer (September 1990) does not meet the academic standards generally associated with your publication. The synthesis of research articles typically command considerable respect and are frequently quoted, so they make a significant impact on the field. In this case, an important disservice to education is now in print.

The references cited are simply insufficient to treat the topic. There are only 14 sources, three coauthored by

Anderson and four originating in South Carolina. These are too few to synthesize as representative of all compensatory education programs.

The article also lacked internal integrity. There is little to link "the ultimate goal of compensatory and remedial programs—to bring academically deficient students back into the academic mainstream" (p. 14) with "schools should create substantially different instructional programs for compensatory and for remedial students" (p. 15). None of the authors' recommendations are backed by specific, research-based findings.

Compensatory education has performed a valuable service that is virtually never recognized. It has made money available to local educators who develop plans for educating identified youngsters at the site. Thus, local schools have become the laboratory of educational practice with control for decision making in the hands of the practitioners—teachers. As with any laboratory situation, there have been successes, failures, or (most commonly) limited successes. This is not shocking. It is normal. It is what one should expect. It certainly should not be criticized with a statement such as "There is no single identifiable educational program that we can reliably term 'compensatory and remedial.'"

If Anderson and Pellicer really want to research the impact of compensatory education programs, I suggest a careful study of how teachers and teaching have changed. We have surely come to new understandings about skill-based curriculums, pull-out laboratories, small group formats, direct instruction, open classrooms, and countless other innovations—which would never have been explored in depth without compensatory education funds.

JONATHAN HILL
Redlands, California

Quality Teachers

"Six Steps to Teacher Professionalism" by Arthur Wise (April 1990) was excellent as far as it went, and if I were a

parent or an average citizen, I'd probably believe (incorrectly) the six steps listed would solve our school problems. Wise failed to mention the two basic qualities of an outstanding teacher, the ability to teach and the skill to manage large groups of students while actively teaching. He neglected to say how he would propose to seek out and screen for these special people. He mentions student teaching. I assume at the graduate level. What happened to pre-student teaching? The concentration on student teaching, internships, and competency tests implies that one masters information and then disseminates the knowledge to eager and prepared students.

I suggest to Wise that we need to have tighter incentives at the freshman level. First, a payscale that adequately rewards the expertise of teachers would attract more and better qualified student teachers. Second, pre-student teaching is really an excellent indicator of what it takes to be not only a qualified but a capable teacher. Last, teaching techniques and how-to classes should be required for teachers to gain the skills necessary for the challenge in the classroom.

By the time of graduation some of the pre-educators should have been screened out in the observation and student teachers' courses. We need more bright teachers who are first skilled in the art of teaching, then well educated and well paid, and, last of all, able to pass a relevant and nonbiased state or national paper test.

DORIS WARREN SHAW
San Jose, California

Education Revolution

We commend you for printing an article that has the potential to revolutionize public education in the United States, "Individual Education and the 4Rs" by Evans, Corsini, and Gazda, (September 1990). They have outlined a tested, innovative, and thoroughly democratic approach to elementary and secondary education. We urge all school systems to review Corsini's proposals as the educational system of

choice for the '90s. How long are we to continue with an antiquated system designed in the early 19th century?

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Distinguished Professor

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New Legislation for Chapter 1

Anderson and Pellicer's "Synthesis of Research on Compensatory Education and Remedial Education" (September 1990) refers to several weaknesses in Chapter 1 programming: lack of coordination of compensatory education programs with regular or special education classrooms, an excess of seat-work assigned to students, and lack of success of compensatory education students in the regular classrooms.

But it fails to mention that Congress, when it reauthorized Chapter 1 in 1988, revised the law (P.L. 100-297) to address these very weaknesses. According to the new legislation, Chapter 1 administrators must provide assurance that Chapter 1 projects are closely coordinated with regular and special educational programs. Project design must contain specific strategies for teaching and measuring progress in "more advanced skills." And finally, Chapter 1 youngsters are not considered successful unless they experience success in their regular classrooms. With this reauthorization, Congress has given compensatory education additional support and new direction.

In Michigan, we are working to coordinate our New Definition of Reading and our New Math Standards with the new Chapter 1 mandate to provide quality programs for Chapter 1 students so they can succeed in school, no matter which programs they're assigned to.

MARLENE DEVRIS
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The Montessori Way

I thoroughly enjoyed Merrill Harmin's article (September 1990) on Grace Pilon's "Workshop Way." I appreciate the comparison of the Grace Pilon and Maria Montessori methods because both honor the dignity of children and trust children's innate desires to learn.

However, I question whether, as Harmin's article stated, the Pilon method gives students more chances to learn from each other, entices more students into active participation, allows for more self-responsibility, and more opportunity to manage their own powers than the Montessori method does. The total Montessori philosophy and curriculum thrives on cooperative learning, peer tutoring, active participation with the beautiful hands-on materials, real-life

activities, and experiments in science and geography; self-directed work, and an environment that encourages self-motivation.

There are now 110 public school districts and 4,000 private schools in the U.S. using Montessori methods and curriculum. If you'd like more information about Montessori training, write Barbara Moffitt, N.C.M.E. East Coast Headquarters, P.O. Box 813160, Smyrna, GA 30081. If you want public school Montessori information, write Dennis Schapiro, Public School Montessorian, 230 110th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55415.

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