

EDITORIAL

Welcome to 1990 and the very best wishes for the coming school year.

When adults are asked what was the single most important factor contributing to their success (or failure) at school, they very often mention a particular teacher by name or their teachers in general. When pressed further they identify teacher characteristics such as enthusiasm, subject knowledge, the ability to make learning relevant and practical, their ability to relate to their learners, to assess their learning needs and to respond appropriately with learning activities that enhance the learner's developing skills. These characteristics are very general in nature and we need to delve further to identify particular behaviours that make up the general "good" teacher.

Any classroom is an extraordinarily complex setting and many factors are operating and interacting at any one time, especially when culturally based differences in learners lead them to respond differentially to school expectations. However, research into effective teaching is advancing and a body of knowledge of "how" the classroom operates is slowly being built. The use of audio-visual recording techniques has allowed the examination of classroom behaviour in considerable detail and is helping to identify the behaviours of teachers and the consequences of these behaviours for children's learning and development. The theory of teaching is growing.

The study undertaken by Dr Malin (p.9) advances our understanding of how teacher behaviour determines children's subsequent learning and achievement. Work in such fine detail as this will assist in contributing to the theory of teaching and to enabling teachers, teacher educators and students of education to be more confident in stating the characteristic behaviours of effective teachers for each individual learner.

The self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon must be prevented from acting negatively in all classrooms, especially for those with learners who are outside the teachers' knowledge or expectations.

Best wishes



Dawn Muir
Honorary Editor