

# A derisive comment?

The following is a letter from Charles W. Stanfield, Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics, Washington DC:

*ET*38 (Apr 94) contains a letter entitled 'A further comment on TESOL.' The letter is from an anonymous individual who describes himself as a former member of TESOL. In the letter the author states that he would much rather read *ET* than *TESOL Quarterly*. The letter is followed by a comment from the editor, claiming that the letter is entirely bona fide and that the fact 'that the writer's name does not appear on it is a remarkable comment in itself.... What I find remarkable is that the editor of *ET* would... (a) publish an article that seems to have no other purpose than to deride a valuable professional association, (b) publish an unsigned letter which does the same, (c) follow up the letter with a derisive comment... also directed toward the association. All professional associations can improve, including those in the US and those in the UK. However, to my knowledge no American editor has ever used his journal as a bully pulpit to cast aspersions on a British language education association or a British journal. I suspect that many colleagues in both the US and the UK may question the appropriateness of such behavior.

I welcome this letter as a contribution to the discussion prompted by Morton Benson's article 'The Trouble with TESOL' (*ET*33, Jan 93), but note that the identity of the anonymous correspondent is of course known to me. The letter was initially off the record, to support Benson without, *for career reasons*, going public. Because I considered this fact to be of public interest, I offered to publish the bulk of the letter, name withheld. The Benson article, this letter, and my comment are disturbing, but not derisive – and there is certainly no British animus against anything American. TESOL centres on the US; *ET* originates in the UK; both seek to be international. Both are also, I trust, responsive to criticism at such a level. Further comment is, of course, welcome(d). The issues involved are important.

Tom McArthur

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