

EDITORIAL

CONVERSATION AND COLLABORATION

The theme of this issue of the Journal is conversation and collaboration, that is, conversation between all parties involved in the process of education and collaboration amongst those who set up the conditions for learning.

It has long been known that the climate within the home can have a major impact on how students will function within the school environment. However, it is not an easy task to identify the critical factors that make significant differences in students' achievement. Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, and Bertrand have given us some insight into the common elements that go into the equation that makes a difference when it comes to parents influencing their children's school performance.

Along the same vein, Lam and Peake highlight the importance of triad conferencing in involving parents, teachers, and students in the formulation of individualized educational goals and plans. While their findings give teachers some "food for thought" about their domination of the conferences, the paper ends with an optimistic note about how triad conferences can be an innovative and informative exercise that involves all three parties in the education process.

From a different educational level, but in the same area of concern, Vázquez-Abad, Winer, and Derome develop a well-researched study on dropout rate in physics classes at university level. Their study focuses on students and their perceptions of their skills and knowledge in physics and their degree of confidence in finishing the program. The point is made that professors and students must work together to design and develop the nature of a course and its subject matter in addition to the presentation of content.

Video violence has become a topic of considerable concern to all of us whether we are parents, teachers, or public observers. Kirman's study of

media violence takes a calm and cautious approach to looking at what connection might exist between what children see on television and how likely they may be to imitate what they see. The strength of Kirman's paper is the sensible and substantive suggestions he makes in helping teachers set up classroom teaching experiences that mitigate the effects of viewing video violence.

Field-based research in education makes more and more sense as various issues in the field present themselves, because we have begun to see the futility of higher education persons studying classroom experiences from a detached visitor's standpoint. Duquette summarizes a number of studies in which participants give their perceptions about course work, field experiences, and beliefs about professional competence. The study has its strength in the fact that all persons involved in the study were familiar with and a part of the research process.

Experienced teachers generally have some views about what works and what doesn't work in the classroom. These views have often come out of years of trial-and-error procedures that finally make sense in how one can proceed to teach a particular subject area. Prof. Ralph discusses such a process in his paper on the use of drama in teaching second languages. His sharing of examples that he has found workable lend credibility and theoretical strength to his point of view.

W.M.T.