

1982

Comets

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leadership (perhaps NSTA) and respond with appropriate changes?

Should we start now with a new kind of pre-service program? If we mounted a major effort, could we expect major changes in the teachers produced that could make a dent on the current situation? Is thirty years too long to wait? Or, is it the only effective way?

Could groups such as CSs make a difference? If state science consultants were to take a stand — especially in states where there is state textbook adoption, would teachers, schools, and publishers take heed? Or, would such leadership merely be ignored?

It is fair to say that Holt still holds a major portion of the secondary science text market: They are successful because they are traditional; they have a product with which most teachers can identify and feel comfortable. They are not likely to change the format, the contents, or anything else as long as they are leaders. What would be the motivation?

I do not feel we can blame publishers for anything. If I were in business to sell books, I guess I'd be inclined to publish what would sell best. What does sell best? It seems to me the answer to that question is — whatever the average teacher will buy.

Our efforts should not be directed to publishers but to our colleagues. We need better leaders — more inspiring ones that can convert more average teachers into more creative ones. More creative teachers will demand better material. Publishers will produce whatever will sell. Their job is not to improve the vision of teachers. It is merely to produce what the majority will buy.

Could teacher committees be formed in each state to help define a better rationale for school science. To many the science that is taught merely reflects what has always been included in various science courses. Don't we know more with respect to developmental theory, the usefulness of school science for daily living, the ineffectiveness of past efforts for 95% of the general public? Should not the current crisis in science education be a time for renewal — a time for new vision? How can we increase the numbers who share such visions to help convince publishers that more innovative approaches would also be good business?

COMETS

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