



Delta-k

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I am a new member of your council and I enjoyed the annual conference very much, but I would suggest that there could have been a "hot seat" type of approach to Dr. Eicholz. Both Edmonton school boards seem to be going away from his texts, and it would have been interesting to have heard Dr. Eicholz's reaction. Dr. Eicholz is very articulate, and would probably have welcomed the opportunity to explain his text in the present form.

The November issue of *Delta-K* gave a great deal of food for thought.

The guide for evaluation of texts is interesting, but I wonder if it is not rather dated. I have taught mathematics at most grade levels and feel that our present emphasis is on the elite who wish to major in mathematics at university.

I have seen all too many students who have an excellent grasp of set theory, yet who do not have the computational skills necessary for the needs of everyday life. Knowing that 7×8 is seven sets of eight is useless if the students believe that the product is 53.

We need priorities, but this evaluation does not even begin to address itself to the problems facing the discipline of mathematics.

First, texts must be written at the students' reading level. It also seems logical that very heavy emphasis be placed on whole number computation. A knowledge of measurement is also vital.

We must have a system of individualizing mathematics so that aspects such as problem solving are given to the student who likes, or needs, this kind of mental exercise. The original purpose of problem solving was to give a practical application to drill, but, like Frankenstein's monster, it seems to have developed a life independent of reason. You solve problems because they are written in the text; the problems are written in the text because we expect to have problems written in the text. Wow!

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It would be equally fruitful to critically examine the study of bases, sets, "logical thinking," irrationals, and such.

What is the answer? Modern thought seems to indicate that individualization is the way to go. I think the readership of *Delta-K* would welcome a column in each issue devoted to the practical individualization of mathematics.

Ronald A. MacGregor
Teacher, St. Philip School, Edmonton

Dear Sir,

I am writing to comment on the latest issue of *Delta-K* (Volume XIV, Number 3, February 1975).

I enjoyed this issue of *Delta-K*, as I have the ones in the past, and was very interested in the Metric Articles and Information Sheet that appeared. However, I was concerned about the spelling of "metre" (er instead of re). I realize there is some controversy in the United States regarding the spelling of metre and litre, but in Canada, it is very clear the "re" spelling is preferred (see National Standard of Canada CAN-3-001-01-73 or CSA Z234.2-1973). I was surprised to see the "er" spelling in an article written by Dr. S.A. Lindstedt, because of his use of the "re" spelling in his Metric Workshop.

Perhaps the "er" spelling was a typographical error and not intended to suggest a change in spelling. If this is the case, I think a statement to this effect should be made in the next edition of *Delta-K* so that confusion does not arise.

The Information Sheet was very well done and I'm sure will be used by teachers. It is unfortunate the error occurred on such a valuable article.

A second point, which is not as serious as the first but probably bears mentioning, relates to the use of the script "ℓ" for litre. The "ℓ" should be used when litre is the unit (i.e. 10 ℓ) but is not necessary if the unit is a multiple or sub-multiple of litre (i.e. 10 ml or 5 kl). Because the script "ℓ" cannot easily be typed or printed, its use should be restricted only to instances where confusion might result.

In conclusion, I hope you will accept these as positive comments because I did enjoy both the article and information sheet, and feel they will be appreciated by professional teaching personnel.

Leonard J. Hall
Metric Coordinator, Calgary Board of Education

EDITORIAL NOTE: Over the years it has been the practice of the publications department, ATA, to use the Webster dictionary. Since the issue of *Delta-K* which Mr. Hall mentions, we have received an official paper from the Metric Commission of Canada in which we have noted its preference; henceforth, in our publications, "er" appearing in things metric will, indeed, be a typographical error. (The information sheet has been corrected and reprinted and is attached to this publication.)
