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Letters

A solid education

We believe that the excellent showing of Japanese production and management (SN: 7/10/82, p. 28) is to a great extent based on the solid public school education they receive. When investigating their educational system we found an enormous number of environmental and school variables that may be contributing — see *Comparative Reading and Learning Difficulties* (Lexington Books, 1981).

An important factor in our falling SAT, etc. scores seems to come from the policies of our schools of education. Three factors stand out—low (or no) standards for admission to schools of education (graduate schools in California); grade inflation; the belief that ability to read, write, spell and do arithmetic are not important for school teachers.

We have tested about 500 California teachers. In arithmetic they average 9th grade, minimum grade 3.9. There is evidence that pupil performance in arithmetic is related to the teacher's level of functioning. We believe that an important factor in the relatively poor showing of

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Cover: A quarter-century ago, children in the "radio room" of a Moscow school listen to the beeping signals of Russia's Sputnik 1, the first manmade earth satellite, whose launching on Oct. 4, 1957, inaugurated the Space Age. (Photo: Embassy of the USSR)



- 222 Books

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many of our children in arithmetic may be related to the low level of math ability of their teachers.

It is possible to enter the graduate schools of education in California without having gone beyond 8th grade arithmetic. Our high schools require one year of math in the 9th grade which may be arithmetic review. This is as far as many of our teachers have gone. In Japan the college-bound students take 4 years of high school math — which may include trigonometry, elementary calculus, probability and statistics.

Industrial managers in Japan tend to be familiar with statistics and to apply it to their work.

Because of our interest in Japanese education and industrial development our colleagues in Japan have applied for funds to permit us to enlarge and complete our research. Meanwhile, the University of Venezuela has invited us to lecture to their faculty and students and to continue our international research there.

We are especially interested in going to Venezuela because they have the only Minister of Intelligence whose job it is to improve the intelligence of the population of children entering

school. This is mentioned in our book in the chapter on Venezuela.

Lester & Muriel Tarnopol
San Francisco, Calif.

Unpredictable people

Dr. Blau should know that people, like dice, are not completely predictable (SN: 9/14/82, p. 154).

The very next 100 patients who threaten to do harm may very well do so — then his statistic would be that 4 out of 5 are entirely safe and society would be more the loser.

When Dr. Blau says he "can't blow the whistle on them regardless of the APA guidelines" (to warn authorities when harm is threatened), he is only making himself feel good at society's expense. Come on Dr. Blau; get with the program!

Russell Kiessig
Dana Point, Calif.

Correction: The University of Missouri's research reactor is not the only commercial U.S. producer of neutron transmutation doped silicon (SN: 7/17/82, p. 45). CintiChem, Inc., also produces the material at a reactor in Tuxedo, N.Y.

OCTOBER 2, 1982

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