

revealing, is not entirely convincing. Much of the value of the curriculum seems to depend largely on a kind of osmosis, in which skills, values and ideas are developed through association and example. Its proponents claim that it works, and this they believe fervently.

It is impossible in a short space adequately to question this faith. It must be left to the reader to make a personal evaluation in the knowledge that this account is both honest and thought-provoking.

B. Flanders

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

68 Thornton Road  
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Dear Editor,

I have worked with people with learning disabilities for several years and was therefore interested to come across your Journal at the West London Institute of Higher Education in Middlesex where I have just embarked upon a Diploma in Social Work course. What a shock! The terms "Mental Subnormality" and "Mental Handicap" are thankfully no longer used within social work. People with learning disabilities who are able to express a preference repeatedly opt for

the label "learning difficulty" or "learning disability" if a label has to be applied at all.

Your terms are both out dated and offensive. Please revise your terminology.

Yours faithfully

C. Taylor

**From the Editor:** *This journal began its life as the "Journal of the Midland Mental Deficiency Society" in 1952 and changed to "The Journal of Mental Subnormality" in 1960. It addressed itself entirely to professionals in this field of work and will scarcely be read by those members of the general public, whose interpretation of the terms might create an adverse reaction, offence or pain. The international professional readership of the Journal uses various terms and contributors are welcome to apply those terms they feel are most suitable to describe their topic of investigation. Hence "Mental Handicap" or "Mental Retardation" and even "Mental Deficiency" are perfectly acceptable in professional writing without expressing any disrespect to the people whose problems are investigated in researches published in this journal.*

*From a practical point of view, it is perhaps better not to change one's well known name - even if not popular - as often as people try to avoid the social implications of a label by inventing a new term. The journal has avoided the now rejected label of "Mental Handicap" for some years but has, starting with this issue, adopted a new "label" which, one hopes, will last a while.*

H.C.G.