To close this volume, I decided to use my “editor’s prerogative” of getting in the last word by making a few remarks on the commentaries by Kirsch and Bandura. Because of space limitations, I will restrict my comments to four issues. Two are issues on which Kirsch and Bandura seem to disagree but on which common ground seems greater than at first glance. The first of these is Kirsch’s distinction between two uses of the term “outcome expectancies”—means–end beliefs and personal outcome expectancies. The second concerns Kirsch’s distinction between task–self efficacy and coping self-efficacy and the nonutility of assessing self-efficacy as the belief in one’s ability to perform simple motor acts. As often happens in these kinds of exchanges, Kirsch and Bandura are in greater agreement on these issues than it would appear from reading their comments. The difficulty is a reflection of the complexity of what may seem to be simple conceptual issues. Two additional issues that I will address briefly are Kirsch’s claims about response expectancies and Bandura’s concept of...
attainment markers and outcomes. Although I find myself in disagree­ment with each on various points, I am nonetheless very grateful to them for taking the time to contribute their comments.

TYPES OF OUTCOME EXPECTANCY

Kirsch contends that research and theory on expectancies have em­ployed two different constructs that have been called “outcome expectan­cies.” According to Kirsch, some studies have assessed perceptions of the conditional relation between an action and its outcome and called this an outcome expectancy. Other studies have assessed the belief that one prob­ably will or will not be able to attain a certain outcome—a belief that includes the belief that a course of action will produce a certain outcome and the person’s belief that he/she can perform the course of action (i.e., a self-efficacy belief)—and called that an outcome expectancy. He suggests that we should not use the same term to refer to both types of measures.

Kirsch then suggests two terms for these two uses of the term outcome expectancy. The first is a means-end belief, which Kirsch defines as “a person’s subjective probability that a successfully executed behavior will be followed by a particular outcome” (Kirsch, Chap. 12, this volume). (This concept and term have been used by other researchers, as noted in Chapter 1 of this volume). The second is a personal outcome expectancy, which he defines as “a subjective probability that the person’s own behavior would be followed by a particular outcome” and as “their belief that their behavior in that situation will produce particular outcomes” (Kirsch, this volume, emphasis author’s). He gives as an example of a means-end belief “the belief that playing basketball exceptionally well brings fame and fortune” (Kirsch, this volume), and as an example of a personal outcome expectancy “a person’s expectancy of achieving fame and fortune by playing basketball” (Kirsch, this volume). Kirsch also suggests (see his Figure 2) that a personal outcome expectancy (my belief that I probably can or cannot attain the outcome) is the result of means-end expectancy (my belief that the behavior, if successfully executed, probably will or will not produce the outcome) and a self-efficacy belief (my belief that I can per­form the behavior at the necessary level of proficiency). For example, I know that it is possible to make millions playing basketball extraordinarily well (high means-end expectancy), but because I know I am a lousy basketball player (low self-efficacy), I know that I cannot make millions from playing basketball (low personal outcome expectancy).

Bandura challenges the viability of this distinction. He contends that Kirsch's definitions of means-end expectancies and personal outcome