

co-ordinating the work of the community's youth agencies.

4. To serve to the limit of its resources the cultural, recreational, and communal needs of the adults of its community.

5. To develop in each pupil the competence that will equip him:

(a) To handle well his personal problems,

(b) To give socially valuable expression to his unique abilities,

(c) To make a constructive contribution to the betterment of the social and economic groups of which he is a part,

(d) To cope realistically and intelligently as an individual citizen with the economic and civic issues of his time.

6. To train pupils in the ways of democratic behavior and the technics of the democratic processes of group intercourse, enterprise, and action.

7. To guide the growth of each pupil toward physical, mental, and emotional health."

The philosophy of education as presented in this article is an attempt to illustrate that it is something more than the internal relations concerning a school program. Broadly speaking, education today through philosophical guidance seems to probe into the assumptions and purposes of every field of endeavor. The far-reaching effects of such a philosophy is actually a means, not an end, to differentiate its external characteristics from those patterns which may influence it from within the school system. The ideas, concepts and beliefs that school people discuss might be classified as symptoms of actions mirroring the results of the total environment in which they are conceived and grow to maturity so as to assist in shaping that milieu—including public education.



RUTH LARSON

A Study of Children's Values

This article reports use of a research instrument designed to sensitize teachers to the social values held by their pupils.

PLANNING FOR MORE effective value education in the schools could be aided tremendously by the development of instruments for the analysis of children's values. Knowing their pupils' values could aid teachers in the following ways: (a) they would have more reliable bases for planning with children creative and satisfying experiences that contribute to the strengthening of democratic values; (b) they

would have more understanding of their pupils' adjustment problems; (c) they would be guided in the development of more harmonious teacher-pupil relations; and (d) they would be able to develop evaluation criteria for ascertaining their pupils' value growth. Moreover, the knowledge of values which children accept and reject at various age levels should contribute to the research needed in the develop-

ment of valid theories concerning the processes involved in the maturation of values and the factors effecting maturation. Such theories are badly needed for planning school curricula that will produce more citizens dedicated to democratic ideals and to cooperative ways of working for the achievement of those ideals.

The purpose of this article is to report a study¹ in which an attempt was made to develop an instrument for analyzing children's social values. More specifically, the children were sixth, seventh, and eighth grade pupils; the social values were concerned with those on the basis of which children select or reject their peers as best friends.

A paper-pencil technique, the initial form of the instrument was composed of one hundred items. These items were formulated on the basis of the ten trait-syndromes developed by Bonney in his study of popularity and unpopularity among children.² They are physical characteristics, social conformity, emotional stability, arousing admiration, social aggression, adaptability and tolerance, dependability, dependence on others, providing new experiences, and social service motivation. Ten items representing each category were formulated. They were simple statements representing characteristics, behaviors, or attitudes of children. A few examples of the items follow:

1. Always full of pep and wanting to do things.

¹The article is based on a Masters Thesis, The University of Tennessee, 1954.

²Merl Bonney, "Popular and Unpopular Children," *Sociometry Monographs* (Boston: Beacon House, 1941), #9, p. 8.

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13. Gets mad over nothing at all.
24. Plays ball better than anyone else.

Response to the items could be made in terms of liking, disliking, or indifference. An individual's response was considered correct if it agreed with the majority response of his grade group. The score was the total number of correct responses. Thus, a high score could be interpreted as indicating conformity to group values; a low score, non-conformity.

The instrument was administered to one hundred forty-eight eighth graders. After analyzing the results, the instrument was revised. Items suggested by the use of a free-response technique were submitted for those in the initial form which proved to be poor ones. Ninety items were included in the final form, which was administered to one hundred seventy sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Analysis of the results by the split-half technique produced a correlation coefficient of .7 for the revised form, an indication of the reliability of the instrument. Validation procedures suggested that the instrument was valid for two purposes: (a) for ascertaining the social values of groups of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, and (b) for identifying conformists and non-conformists to their groups' values.

Limitations of space prevent the listing of specific results. There was no

attempt to generalize the data in terms of the ten categories. Useful generalizations must be obtained from more extensive research. At this point it did not seem wise to make these.

Generally speaking, the results concurred with results from previous research in the field. Friendship values such as cheerfulness, enthusiasm, politeness, honesty, generosity, kindness, and tidiness had been found important in children's friendship choices. Each of these was represented by one or more items in the instrument, and each was accepted by the majority of pupils responding. Values negative to friendship formation as indicated by previous research were conceit, disloyalty, bullying, bossiness, acting older, and uncooperativeness. Each of these was represented by one or more items, and each one was rejected by the respondents.

Certain differences in the results of the study with those of other studies were interesting and possibly significant. For example, good-looks had been among the values considered important by children in other studies. In all three grade groups the majority of pupils showed indifference to items related to physical appearance. This may signify nothing more than a genuine difference among children. However, it may reflect problems involved in the utilization of different specificities in an analytic technique, all of which can be related to the same generality. Different kinds of appearance affect individuals differently; hence, the kind chosen for analytic use would affect the generalization derived from the responses.

Another difference noted was that the results of the instrument agreed

more with studies based on friendship-choice than with those based on status-choice. Although other factors could have accounted for the variations, they suggest that there may be differences in children's friendship-values and status-values. In other words, children want their best friends to have certain characteristics different from the characteristics of those to whom they delegate status.

Similar Patterns

In comparing the performances of the three grade groups there were striking similarities. All grades' performances showed similar patterns of conformity and non-conformity. There were large majorities who showed considerable conformity of performance and a small minority who showed non-conformity. This seemed to support the assumption that groups of children share many common social values. However, various problems of interpretation arise. Since the responses required reading ability, one might suspect that poor readers would tend to show non-conformity when actually they did not know what they were reading. This was considered before the construction of the instrument, and ideas were couched in simple words and phrases. Correlations of data from the instrument with data from a standardized reading test were either low or negligible.

One of the helps in solving this and related problems would be to determine whether those individuals identified as non-conformists reflected their non-conformity in their reputations or behavior. In one eighth grade group individual scores on the instrument

were correlated with the opinions of classmates in terms of the items in the instrument; the coefficient obtained was significant. In another attempt to ascertain the relationships of values expressed and social adjustment, individual scores and sociometric ratings were correlated; coefficients were negligible. There was question as to whether significant correlation should have been expected. Since the instrument had not been designed for the analysis of individual value patterns, the items may have been incapable of identifying differences that would affect choices made. Also, the relative importance of status-choice and friendship-choice in sociometric work has never been defined. If there are differences in children's status-values and friendship-values, as was suggested earlier, and if both are involved in sociometric choices, then perhaps the sociometric data were not appropriate for correlation purposes.

Another possible interpretation of the lack of correlation between sociometric ratings and data from the instrument was that the children were insincere in their responses. At the outset of the study this knotty problem had been recognized. Before constructing the instrument, the writer, an elementary teacher, had discussed friendship values with groups of pupils, which provided some basis for the work. In formulating items, various ones were excluded which could hardly be answered honestly without possibilities of adult censure. Even so, there are items in the final form that could seem threatening to a child. It was important to explain the purposes for administering the instrument and the uses of

the data; and it was imperative for the children to have confidence in the sincerity of such explanations.

A free-response technique, mentioned in a previous paragraph, was utilized with two groups of pupils six weeks after the initial administration, enough time to erase from memory the items included in the instrument. The children were asked to make a long list of things they liked in boys and girls whom they would choose for their best friends, and to make a long list of things they did not like. Of the seventy-four items in the final form which had received responses of like or dislike, approximately sixty-seven per cent matched the free-response data. This seemed favorable to the conclusion that the children had responded with some measure of sincerity. The significant correlation obtained between reputation in terms of the items and the scores on the instrument also supported this conclusion. Another encouraging factor was the interest which the children showed in wanting to know the results and in the discussions which followed. Further work will help to solve this problem.

The grade groups were in agreement in their acceptance and rejection of a large percentage of the items. The differences can be summarized rather briefly. Sixth and seventh graders rejected items related to sex and dating; eighth graders indicated indifference. Also, sixth and seventh graders rejected acting silly, copying homework, and teasing; to all of these eighth graders indicated indifference. Sixth and seventh graders accepted playing out-of-doors, liking parties, popularity, success in school, and a nice family; to all of

these eighth graders responded with indifference. Eighth graders accepted the item concerning keeping friends' secrets, to which the other grades were indifferent.

The eighth grade tended to show more non-conformity among themselves than did the sixth and seventh grades. It is possible that this tendency reflected the growing independence of eighth graders from adult authority and their struggles to achieve their own values. However, more prosaic factors may have been involved.

In the comparison of boys' and girls' performances it was found that in all three grade groups the boys tended to show less conformity to the group than did the girls. Various reasons could account for this. The instrument may not have been adequate for both boys and girls. Boys may differ in their attitudes toward adult authority, and, hence, were not so concerned with responding as they thought they would be expected to do. Boys and girls may differ in levels of maturation of values at the ages represented in the study.

The preceding presentation has in-

roduced many problems which can be clarified in further research. The very fact that they exist emphasizes the need for devising objective techniques of analysis which will extend our knowledge of children's values. The complexities of the problems should discourage those who attempt to make relatively subjective analyses based on superficial assumptions.

Further work must be accomplished to determine the instrument's usefulness as a practical analytic technique. At the present it would serve to sensitize teachers using it to the social values of their pupils. However, it could not be used validly for the analysis of a pupil's value patterns or for the prediction of his social adjustment or social behavior.

Undoubtedly the major contribution of the work lies primarily in the implications derived from data obtained from the use of the instrument. The measure of success achieved suggests that it may be possible to design and validate instruments which will produce information so important for children's values.



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