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Health and Drug Education— A Regional Approach

Prevention of drug abuse and improved health education are attempted on a regional basis in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Two approaches are used: that of the Values Clarification Project and the Berkeley Health Curriculum Project.

One of America's major problems is the prevention of drug abuse. This fact is of special concern to the Loess Hills Area Education Agency, a regional education agency in the southwest corner of Iowa. The agency is working with the 33 school districts in its jurisdiction to solve this problem through two kinds of approaches: the Values Clarification Project and the Berkeley Health Curriculum Project.

About the Agency

The 15 Iowa Area Education Agencies were established by an act of the state legislature in 1974 to replace the 107 county boards of education. The main thrust of the area education agencies is state equalization of educational opportunity for all children. Each agency is separated into three divisions: Special Education, Media Services, and other Educational Services. The Values Clarification Consultants and in-service activities to provide awareness of and technical assistance for the Berkeley Project are instructional support

services provided under the Educational Services Division at Loess Hills Area Education Agency, which is directed by Dr. John E. Jones.

Values Clarification Project

The major long-range goal of the Values Clarification Project is to achieve a reduction in the misuse of drugs and alcohol through the valuing processes in classroom instruction. It is hoped that by using the values clarification process, young people will accept and practice ways that are more positive, purposeful, and enthusiastic, and that this will lead to the reduced instance of drug abuse. Additionally, through exposure to values clarification, it is anticipated that there will be a marked improvement in human relations in classrooms, school buildings, cities, and communities as a whole.

History of the Project

The only educational program for early drug abuse prevention in education in southwest Iowa is the Values Clarification/Drug Abuse Prevention Project of Loess Hills Area Education Agency. Our primary focus group is teachers, administrators, and students. Our work of education and training is clearly done in the educational setting.

In April 1976, the Project sponsored the PEER (Positive Educational Experiences in Relationships) Program for Youth training for teach-



Seventh-grade students dissect an animal's brain. This exercise emphasizes student involvement, both as individuals and through group and team activities.

ers, principals, and guidance counselors. This positive PEER group program instructed interested school personnel in the development of group training sessions for students in their local school districts. The goal of this training is to help students learn the necessary skills essential for building positive human relationships. This core group of students will become the nucleus for local school programs that will exert positive pressure on the peer influences we have traditionally identified as negative.

Another significant extension of the project in 1976-77 was the development of a valuing program tailored for the specific needs of the trainable mentally handicapped students. The ground work was laid to establish this valuing program into the regular curriculum of the trainable mentally handicapped school in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The major goal of this program was to help these students, insofar as they are capable, develop socially acceptable coping and human relations skills. The theory and approach of values clarification has been identified as the most feasible model to be used in this new curriculum development for these uniquely handicapped students.

Theory of the Values Clarification Approach

We have traditionally taught skills needed to analyze an academic problem. Through the Values Clarification Project, we are suggesting that we must now teach the skills necessary for effective

analysis of value-laden life problems. We do not mean we should teach a specific set of values in the public schools (although an honest scrutiny may show that is exactly what we have been doing). Rather than teaching specific values, we need to teach the skills necessary in decision making, communication, recognition, and management of feelings.

What can educators do to help students clarify their values and develop the skills needed to cope with their complex society? What do we mean by "values," and what is the process through which ideas travel on their way to becoming "values?" Valuing, according to Raths, is composed of seven subprocesses:

Prizing one's beliefs and behaviors

1. Prizing and cherishing
2. Publicly affirming, when appropriate

Choosing one's beliefs and behaviors

3. Choosing from alternatives
4. Choosing after consideration of consequences
5. Choosing freely

Acting on one's beliefs and behaviors

6. Acting
7. Acting with a pattern, consistency, and repetition.¹

¹ Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney B. Simon. *Values and Teaching*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1966.

Loess Hills AEA Values Clarification consultant Shirley Henry conducts a student value clarification workshop.



In developing techniques for teaching the skills needed to work through Rath's seven sub-processes, we would in reality be helping students develop the following valuing process skills needed by all effective human beings: (a) skills to enable them to deal effectively with their feelings; to identify, cope, communicate, discharge, and acknowledge feelings; (b) communication skills that develop the ability to send and receive clear messages, listening skills, skills attuned to the nonverbal messages that are sent and received; (c) choosing skills enabling them to search out alternative solutions, examine logical consequences, identify their needs, and remove the effects of outside pressures (such as outside pressures as those exerted by peer groups or keeping up with the Jones's syndrome, and so on); and (d) acting skills to learn to act skillfully in translating and implementing values, thus minimizing internal conflicts that result from behaving in ways not in line with what we value. These are the skills needed in building a positive self-image and obtaining self-actualization, the skills of effective human beings.

It is our conviction, therefore, that today's educational challenge revolves around helping individuals become more skillful in making thoughtful and personally satisfying choices so they are able to act in ways consistent with their own and society's best interest. Additionally, we feel it is important that people think of themselves as worthwhile, valuable, and capable persons who

can communicate in effective ways. As these human concerns become reality, instructional programs of basic skill development assume a truly individualized and personally satisfying dimension.

The Berkeley Project

The Lewis Central Community School District (suburban Council Bluffs, Iowa) was one of four Iowa school districts that agreed to become involved as a pilot district for the Berkeley Health Project in 1973. The emphasis in the Lewis Central district is working toward the basic objectives of education, developing understanding and appreciation of the body and skills for the prevention of disease, and encouraging youth to make their own sound decisions about personal and environmental factors that affect health.

Each participating school district has a team made up of two teachers, a principal, and two general support staff, such as school nurses, health educators, or curriculum specialists. The main objective of the project is to change the attitudes and practices of students in grades four through seven in health and care of their bodies.

The project has been operating throughout the country for the past ten years. It came into being because of a concern for the growing number of youngsters who were starting to smoke. As a result, a curriculum was developed that would not only teach health concepts in a stimulating way,

but would help youngsters to make wise decisions about matters affecting their personal health.

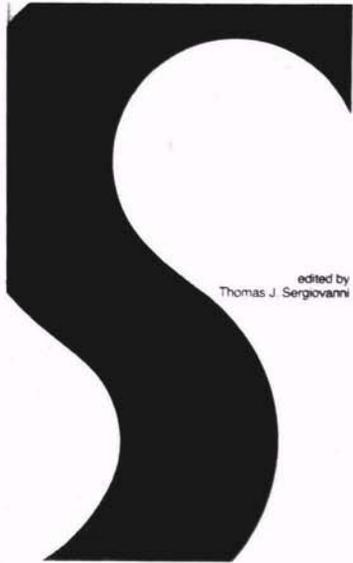
The Berkeley Project is being co-sponsored by the Iowa Heart Association, the American Lung Association of Iowa, and the Iowa Department of Public Instruction. It is under the auspices of the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health, a section of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Any teacher involved in teaching the elementary health curriculum must understand the philosophy and goals of the project so that he/she can learn the methods and familiarize himself/herself with the teaching materials.

The Berkeley Project consists of four intensive units of study. Each deals with sections of the body: (a) the digestive system for the fourth grade; (b) the lung and respiratory system for the fifth grade; (c) heart and circulatory system for the sixth grade; and (d) the brain and nervous system for the seventh grade. The project does more than just teach the rudiments of body function. Each unit contains specific student goals, such as self-enhancement and success, a depth of knowledge of body systems and functions that will enable the student to understand prevention of illness and motivation of the critical thinking processes.

Emphasis is on student involvement, both as individuals and through group and team activities. Through the use of tapes, filmstrips, models, drawings, and dissecting animal lungs, hearts, and brains, youngsters actually see how the various organs function. They also learn how to use such tools as microscopes, stethoscopes, and dissecting equipment.

The program deals with broad aspects of community and personal health. The stress is on pupil motivation, dealing with real-life issues, and the involvement of the school administration, community health personnel, and especially parents.

In the Lewis Central District, the health phase of the Berkeley Project simply replaces the regular science course for that particular quarter that it is in operation. Since the students use all "hands-on" materials, there are no texts. There is a great deal of flexibility in the program because the teachers can bring in other materials. However, they admit that it is a struggle to decide which material to use in the limited 45-minute



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time frame. The units run about eight to ten weeks during the school year for each of the four grades.

The Berkeley Health Project fits well with the process approach in teaching science. There is no grading system used; the pupil evaluation given is a satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The children learn a great deal from interacting together in small groups. Last year's fifth graders spent an hour with this year's fifth graders in "selling" the program to them, so those students were looking forward to their participation for the first time. Talk about alcoholism and drug abuse education weave in and out as natural topics in the program.



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