Effective Education through Affective Education

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Reationale

While studying to be elementary school teachers, we quickly discovered that one could pass any examination in that area by simply stating, "We must educate the whole child." If one wanted a higher grade, one simply added a dash followed by: "physical, mental, emotional, and social."

That statement was the extent to which teacher training programs focused on the social and emotional needs of children. It is not surprising to note, therefore, that teachers are failing to meet this aim of education and these needs of children. Failing? Are we ever! Morse (1964) found that the longer a student attended school, the less favorable his self-concept. That finding is bad enough, but three years later, Schwartz (1967) found added support for this conclusion. Other writers feel that we are not just failing to do something positive, but we are actively doing something negative.

John Gardner says we are educating for obsolescence.

John Holt says that our education is based on fear.

Carl Rogers says that our education fails to promote meaningful or significant learning.

Edgar Friedenberg states that our education punishes creativity and independence.

William Glasser says that it teaches children they are failures.

Charles Silberman says it kills motivation.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH MOST OF THE "WHOLE CHILD" HAS BEEN VERY MUCH NEGLECTED! The school experience is one which quietly acquaints the child with failure and feelings of inadequacy. Combs and Soper (1963) found that decreases in feelings of adequacy already occurred as children moved from kindergarten to first grade. Many children see school as

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a failure experience. This failure can no longer be placed on the children, but instead must be directly acknowledged by the schools. Our schools, not children are failing. In the sales world, if the salesman cannot sell, he is a failure. In teaching, when education is not sold, the child is a failure. This must not continue!

Since counselors, more than any other groups of professionals in education, are aware of how the feelings, values, and attitudes of students can block the learning process, they are the logical resources to provide movement in this direction for education. Counselors can aid in developing opportunities for all children to express feeling and fears, to deal constructively with these feelings, and to become self-confident learners. Materials and commercially packaged programs are currently available to do this.

Mental health education programs are not new. Early in this century in Vienna, Alfred Adler was pioneering community-wide psychological education. Adler revolutionized the psychological profession by stressing an educational rather than a medical approach to helping others. He saw people suffering from the lack of adequate knowledge and information needed to lead a healthy life. The idea of psychological education is not new, yet the technology necessary to apply it systematically with school age children is. A number of new curriculum programs have been developed to help teachers and students to work together on the creation of a humane and open classroom climate. These programs fall under the general area of affective education. Affective education experiences are those that deal with emotions and attitudes as distinguished from cognitive information or strictly academic skills.

How Does a Counselor Do This?

Administrators. In order to introduce affective education programs into the curriculum, the counselor must first enlist the cooperation and support of the school administrators. Since administrators are ultimately responsible for curriculum and the undertakings of the faculty, their collaboration is of utmost importance to the counselor if he is to succeed. Furthermore, by avoiding misunderstandings and gaining active support, the counselor is in a better position to receive time, facilities and materials needed.

As a whole, administrators are concerned with the academic achievement of students. There seems to be a positive correlation between an individual's social and emotional development and academic achievement. The research on the relationship between self-concept and achievement is extensive (Bruck & Bodwin, 1962; Caplin, 1968; Coopersmith, 1959; Fink, 1962; Hans & Hagaman, 1962; Matire, 1956; Roth, 1959; Walsh, 1956; Wattenburg & Clifford, 1964). The conclusions of these investigators can best be sum-

marized by the findings of Combs (1964). He found that under-achievers differed from achievers in that they:

1. saw themselves as less adequate

2. saw themselves as less acceptable to others

3. saw their peers as less acceptable

4. saw adults as less acceptable

5. showed an inefficient and less effective approach to problems

6. showed less freedom and adequacy of emotional expression. (p. 50) Combs, Soper, Gooding, Benton, Dickman and Usher (1969) concluded that "a major determinant of how well one will be able to function is his feeling of capability of functioning" (p. 50).

There seems to be a valid correlation between affective education and helping one individual achieve in traditional subject matter. The social and emotional development of the child should not be incidental to his education.

A number of research studies have indicated the importance of strong positive self-concept for academic and social growth. It seems crucial therefore, that an atmosphere and curriculum be created which facilitates the "whole child." This atmosphere is characterized by:

1. A mutual respect by teacher and child

2. A focus on mutual alignment of purposes by teacher and parent

3. A feeling on the part of pupils that they belong to the group

4. An environment where it is safe for the child to look at inner needs, hopes, and wishes

5. An opportunity to express needs which, if not articulated and clarified, hamper the learning process

6. An emphasis on the importance of self-evaluation in contrast to evaluation by others

7. A climate marked by identification, recognition, acceptance, and appreciation of individual differences

8. An emphasis on growth from dependence to independence

9. Situations in which limits are most often a result of natural and logical consequences and not merely a reflection of the personal needs of the teacher. (Dinkmeyer, 1970, p. 10)

Teachers. In most school systems it is seldom an issue of "selling" affective education to teachers, but rather making the techniques and materials available to them. The materials need to be presented in a practical, usable fashion that fits or can be incorporated into the existing curriculum. Teachers and students do not need another class added to their busy schedule.

Students. This material is received openly by students. The chance to study themselves, their beliefs, attitudes, and values, and their relations with others is something all people (especially uninhibited youngsters) enjoy. How to become personally more effective and how to deal with life's normal "daily" problems has secondary if not primary reinforcing properties.

Parents. It is important that parents clearly understand the affective education program. That it is an educational necessity and not a frill. The emphasis on "normal" should be stressed. A well planned presentation to parents involving written material and demonstrations will alleviate any rumors of "sensitivity training," "value inculcation," etc.

Sample Curriculums

After gaining the support of the administration, teachers, parents, and children, the counselor must decide which program or programs of affective education he will introduce into the curriculum. Although every publishing company has some materials which pertain to self-understanding, it would be best to concentrate on those programs which are sequential, i.e., those which are developmental.

It is best to offer teachers a choice of resources and strategies because:

the question of methods in the helping professions is not a matter of adopting the "right" method, but a question of the helper discovering the right method *for him.* That is to say, the crucial question is not "what" method, but the "fit" of the method, its appropriateness to the self of the helper, to his purpose, his subjects, the situation, and so forth. (Combs, Soper, Gooding, Benton, Dickman & Usher, 1969, p. 75)

The available affective education programs do differ in materials and approach while predominantly focusing on three goals: (a) to help children become more aware of themselves, (b) to help them gain a sense of personal accomplishment, (c) and to help them relate better to others.

Let's look at three programs which have basically the same goals and which differ in the amount of structure provided for the teacher.

The *Human Development Program* (Bessell & Palomares, 1969) provides discussion topics for children in preschool through grade six. The children come together each day to sit in a "magic circle" and verbally explore their feelings, observe, and listen to each other. The teacher, as facilitator, explains

the topic and begins the discussion with an example from her own experience. Sample topics are:

It made me feel good when . . .

Something I can do well . . .

What I do to get attention . . .

Slightly more structured, the *Developing Understanding of Self and Others* (DUSO) program (Dinkmeyer, 1970 & 1973) contains varied activities for children in grades K through four which are centered around major themes such as:

1. Understanding and Accepting Self

2. Understanding Goals and Purposeful Behavior

3. Understanding Mastery, Competence, and Resourcefulness

Teachers are provided with specific guidelines for presenting individual activities. Each cycle of activities contains a problem situation, story, role-playing activity, puppet activity, and supplementary games, songs, art activities, and reading suggestions. The materials provided include storybooks, records or cassettes, posters, puppets and puppet activity cards, role-playing cards, and group discussion cards.

The *Dimensions of Personality* program (Pflaum Publishing Co., 1972), available for children in grades one through twelve, is highly structured. At the primary level, each kit provides worktexts and activity sheets for a group of four children. The teacher's manual provides the information and instruction necessary to attain the goals of each unit. Some topics at the primary level include:

Trying New Things

Making Others Happy or Unhappy

My Feelings Are Me

The intermediate grade materials consist of textbooks and spirit master sets:

Here I am (grade 4)

I'm Not Alone (grade 5)

Becoming Myself (grade 6)

The annotated teacher's editions show the teacher how to initiate goal-oriented group activities.

In addition to these approaches, the following programs have been used by the authors with positive results.

Borton, T. *Reach, touch and teach*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Brown, G. I. *Human teaching for human learning: An introduction to confluent education*. New York: Viking, 1971.

Chesler, M., & Fox, R. *Role-playing methods in the classroom*. Chicago: Science, Research Associates, 1966.

Gelatt, H.B., Varenhorst, B., Carey, R., & Miller, G. P. *Decisions and outcomes*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1973.

Harmin, M. *Making sense of our lives*. Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1973.

Harmin, M. *People projects*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1974.

Simon, S. B., Howe, L. W., & Kirschenbaum, H. *Values clarification: A handbook of practical strategies for teachers and students*. New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972.

After perusing the literature, the counselor may wish to modify the existing programs, incorporate programs, or develop his/her own.

Following the decision on which materials to include in the affective education program, the counselor should demonstrate the various methods to the faculty. Let the teachers choose which materials they would like to be used with their classes. It is then that the counselor should enter the classrooms and demonstrate the use of the materials. The teacher is then free to observe the modeled behavior of the counselor and the interaction process of the class. As the teacher gains confidence, he can co-lead the activities and eventually take full responsibility for the affective education program in the classroom.

If the teacher is not receptive to this idea (i.e. feels too busy already or is uncomfortable relating with students on this level), the counselor might consider para-professionals. Junior high and high school students or parents are usually most eager and willing to spend one or two hours a week working with students within this type of program.

Once the affective education program is established, the teachers will begin to fully understand the implications of the statement: "Educating the whole child." It will become evident how a humane and open classroom environment facilitates learning. And this may be the point at which the work of the counselor really begins—when the teachers start to ask for aid in incorporating social and emotional aspects into all the learning experiences they are providing for the child.

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