DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 109 659 CS 002 064

AUTHOR Sinatra, Richard; Kinsler, Karen Taber
TITLE Values Strategies in the Teaching of Reading.
PUB DATE Feb 75
NOTE 15p.; Unpublished study done at Manhasset Public Schools, New York

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Language Experience Approach; *Reading Instruction; *Self Concept; *Teaching Methods; *Values
IDENTIFIERS *Values Clarification

ABSTRACT

Values clarification strategies or activities in which children explore, list, order, and code their experiences and thoughts, combined with language experience techniques, can provide meaningful reading situations. Values strategies function as affective mobilizers to bring a child's attitudes and emotions into interaction with learning materials, thus strengthening memory for the learning experience. The child's own language is also directly tied to experience. Some educators have urged that the child's reading experiences be made an extension of natural language learning. If materials are chosen that broaden or coincide with the needs and interests of the child, then the child is likely to accept reading as a worthwhile venture. A teacher of reading can select a values strategy to engage a child in a theme, then use the technique of language experience to expand further meaningfulness of this theme with reading growth. (MKM)

Values Strategies in the Teaching of Reading

by

Richard Sinatra,
Reading Coordinator K - 12
Manhasset Public Schools

and

Karen Taber Kinsler,
Reading Specialist
Park Ave. School,
North Bellmore, N.Y.

February, 1975

VALUES STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING OF READING

by Richard Sinatra and Karen Taber Kinsler

Can teachers of reading nurture the child's reading growth by allowing his self worth to be the cornerstone of his work in reading and the language arts? Shouldn't we look prismatically at the potential "somethings" a child has before we proceed with the many marketplace prescriptions that pigeonhole reading thinking processes into neat little packets of objectives? Values clarification strategies reinforced by language experience techniques may provide a highly meaningful reading structure that would place the child at the core. Let's succinctly review the child's interlocking learning circuits that would support this values clarification plus language experience approach for the child with reading difficulties.

RELEVANCE

Weinstein and Fantini (1970) suggested that content prescriptions fail because they lack intrinsic motivation and relevance for the child. Teachers cannot be ignorant of the child's feelings and concerns in the selection and use of materials. They felt that the most important factor in tying relevant content with self - concept is respecting and validating the child's inner concerns, his experiences and feelings, indicating that he does know something.

Meaningful content would necessarily relate school learning to present and past life outside the classroom. When this relevance is lacking in the reading curriculum, children may not be motivated to learn (Glasser, 1969). Reading comprehension taught without relevance in

skill oriented reading clinics and classrooms ignores the teaching of concept development from an experiential base. Pupils' affective input derived from experiences should be an important resource for reading comprehension (Henry, 1974). Therefore, for reading to continue as a viable source of personal and social communication, it must meet the real needs of the learner in a satisfactory way; it must be used to satisfy intellectual and emotional needs (Harris, 1972).

AFFECTIVE MOBILIZERS

The seeds of relevance are found in one's affect. From the point-of - view of child development, it would seem that affect is the foundational base for the cognitive structure. Attitudes and emotions can initiate or propel the learning systems into action, and this suggests that affective influences could have their most profound effect in the child's early educational career (Athey, 1970). Since emotions are important in the lives of young children, emotions could help the child to see the relevance of what he is reading. However, a failure of most school materials could be that they are lacking in emotional richness (Glasser, 1969). Materials which would bring the child's emotional culture to the child's learning experiences may bring this relevance to the classroom. If these self - same materials could captivate the child's interest as well, then motivating forces would be activated that channel attention and energize action (Schubert, 1973).

THE STRENGTHENING OF MEMORY FOR EXPERIENCE

Memory is also strengthened by diffusion of emotions for an experience. Schnitker(1972) pointed out that when experience is colored

by highly emotional overtones, memory for that experience will become more firmly established. Furthermore, when one has an interest in a subject, memory for it will be greater as well. Meaningful learning is retained better because it has more logically associated bonds with previous experiences. This linking of perceptions at different times and different places may be affective or logical (Moffett, 1968); details are retrievable because they are associated with analagous memories. Thus, motivation, attention, and memory operate in an interlocking ring of operants, each interacting with the other to enhance learning (Berry, 1969).

LANGUAGE, THE BEARER OF EXPERIENCE

As one's emotional reaction ties to experience, so does language. How do the two operate in the developing child? Meaning and language are confluent. Thought and expression move in continual life waves in which the crest of one peaks into the other, altering and/or supporting the flow of language and thinking. It's this reciprocal rhythm that gives added meaning to both new ideas and new expression, which in turn, gives rise to new language development.

As language growth emerges, the child internalizes a self language to give structure and meaning to the world. This private language is akin to lived experience, and would seem to become more meaningful if the experience was colored by interest and emotion. The organic Key Vocabulary beginning reading approach of Ashton-Warner (1963) was, in essence, this very concept; first words were no less than intense captions of the child's dynamic life.

Language and experience are then, both very personal and idiosyncratic for the child. The child learns meaning in wholes, that is, he comprehends and uses language in meaningful units. The search for meaning proceeds outward from the child's inner self, reflected in the child's ability to internalize the components of language to achieve greater and greater satisfaction from the world. While the teacher's language in this process of learning can operate as a positive factor for motivation (Azcoaga, 1973), the child learns to reward himself for his acquired language competencies. By his own mastery, he provides his own continuing motivation and reinforcement; he is his own paymaster (Berry, 1969). This would imply that teachers should consider the unique perceptions and language facility of the child before intervention in the child's search for meaning is planned (Dennison, 1974).

Smith, Goodman, and Meredith (1970) capsulized this relationship of language as the carrier of experience and of language's relationship to affect:

> Language is always experienced by the child in the context of the situation ... The child's reaction to the situation is also part of the language - learning process. His emotions and his developing ability to think, to process his perceptions, and to begin forming concepts actually become part of the situation as the child experiences it.

READING, AN EXTENSION OF LANGUAGE

Educators concerned with the mental processes involved in reading have urged that the child's reading experiences be made an extension of his natural language learning (Goodman 1974, Smith 1971). Expressive language can then be regarded as the window of the child's self; his projections and awareness of potency. Through it, educators can realize

the child's concerns and relevant interests. Reflecting upon it, educators can facilitate the child's sense of worth through continuous reinforcement of the child's self with supportive language. Teachers of reading can direct this relevant language and the child's motivation to succeed and to be valued into reading expansion exercises.

VALUES AT THE CORE OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This fine carburation of affect and cognition could be an effective propelling procedure to motivate for the reading experience. Since one's values form from conceptualizing of fragments of knowledge, values strategy procedures would be placed at the apex of the learning pyramid (Harmin, Kirschenbaum, Simon, 1973) to lend greater meaning to the conceptual and factual levels of learning. Brown (1971), using another image, suggested that denying or ignoring the existence of feelings and affect in communicative modes would be like constructing a home without a foundation or framework. Others have regarded the affective domain as the most important in children's learning sequences, in that the child's attitude toward learning, toward success, and toward himself should precede cognitive experiences in programs of individualization (Van Hoven and Van Hoven, 1974). Recently, teachers of reading have been urged to motivate the student by valuing him as an individual and by making him feel that his needs are understood (IRA, 1974).

If materials are chosen that broaden or coincide with the needs and interests of the child, then he is likely to accept reading as a worthwhile venture (Schubert, 1973). Sensing value in reading would be conducive to increased desire to read and would be related to intrinsic

motivation. When high school dropouts realized that their thoughts and feelings were not only accepted, but were considered worthwhile enough to be published, they became excited about writing in a language experience approach to reading (Mulligan, 1974).

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE: A NOTE

By its very nature, language experience is a meaning centered approach. In the traditional approach to the method, language is elicited from the child and this language becomes the beginning basis of his reading and writing experiences (Spache and Spache, 1973; Shohen, 1973). Since stories are the recording of students' ideas, meaning is not only built into the method (McNinch, Layton, and Noble, 1974), but the actual life experiences of the children usually form the basis of the content (Mulligan, 1974). Of all approaches to reading, it is the language experience approach that requires the reader to develop, use, and reinforce skills such as identifying the topic, stating the main idea and related details, establishing sequence, drawing conclusions, through speaking and listening prior to applying these self - same skills to their own reading content (Matteoni, 1973).

Others have stressed the meaningfulness of this content to affectively stimulate children with the reading experience. Manolakes and Scian (1974) have provided young children with materials of high emotional content (usually humor) to involve each child in the theme of a picture story. The authors of RIOTT (McCracken and McCracken, 1972) pointed out the importance of concept and vocabulary development through the verbal interaction of one child speaking to the class while the

others listen attentively. In this way, the speaker develops a sense of personal worth and learns that his ideas have both importance and communicative worthiness. Borton (1970) emphasized a sequential thinking process to generate the student's inner concerns. Children's physical activity became the basis for language experience exercises, such as the writing of haiku and other forms of poetry. The My Books (Borton, Borton, and Borton, 1970), designed for the beginning reader, combined reading exercises with stories that spoke directly to the child's concerns about issues of greatest importance to him. Ashton-Warner (1963) concisely expressed this relationship of language, affect, and the reading technique of language experience, when she suggested that first words meant first wants, but it was the words that had to be elicited first.

VALUES IN READING

Teachers of reading can help children become aware of the factors that are contributing to their reading problems. The teacher can aid the child in making a value judgment about what it is in his present behavior that is contributing to his difficulty (Glasser, 1969). Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966) pointed out that it is this lack of values that is the cause of many children's school problems and that when values strategies are employed, the problems ease in intensity and/or frequency. Thus, the teacher of reading can help the child to alter self denying behavior to become more success oriented. With a positive orientation toward goal directed behavior, the child has accepted a values position in relation to himself. This critical acceptance of achieving behavior then motivates the individual into the forthcoming reading experiences, making them

meaningful and relevant to his accepted values position. With success, a self-rewarding system is built into the values approach.

After the teacher of reading selects a values strategy to engage the child in a theme, she uses the techniques of language experience to expand further meaningfulness of this theme with reading growth. Meaningfulness arises from the values sensing in which the child engages; language experience procedures tie this meaningfulness with reading and writing activities.

To eliminate any potential barrier between student and teacher, both become equal participants in responding to and participating in values strategies. Each may "pass" on any response to a strategy and this pass option is to be valued as a response. The participants of the group, both children and teacher, learn to validate each other, meaning they demonstrate positively supporting statements and gestures toward each other for their verbal and pass responses.

SOME SUGGESTED VALUES STRATEGIES, STIMULUS FOR LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

The teacher of reading may wish to consult the following sources for suggested values strategies that can be developed with children. Some examples from these sources of activities that have provided both a values base and involvement in language arts processing are these:

Bakers, Reading Summer 1974):

1. In this strategy, children are asked to list 13 items in their homes that operate on electricity. This is a writing activity where correct spelling is not stressed. The emphasis is placed upon getting meaningful thoughts on paper. After the list is completed, the participants are asked to make choices by eliminating certain items they could most easily do without, and indicating these choices by

crossing out or encircling certain words. The child has then made certain values choices which may determine how he would relate to this strategy in the language arts activities. Spatial organization, careful listening to directions, silent rereading of written material, and the relating of factual information to a main idea have been involved. This activity may also be used for a sharing of choices made by the children as they read and discuss what they've written with one another.

2. Twenty Things You Love To Do (Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, 1972)

Group participants are asked to confidentially list 20 things they love to do. This list is made on the left half of a folded paper. If some children or the teacher are unable to think of 20 things or they wish to list more than 20, that is fine. There is flexibility to these strategies. The list is drawn from each person's experiences.

Once the lists are written, the group is asked to code each choice by using columns drawn on the right side of the paper.

Some coding options may be:

$ next to each item which costs more than $3 each time it is done;

A next to items which one prefers to do alone;

P next to items in which one prefers the company of other people.

These codings, again, ask the child to use his skills of listening, spatial organization, and writing of thoughts. These lists can be used for group sharing or for leading into the strategy of "I Learned Statements" (Simon, 1974). They can also be incorpor-

ated into values journals (Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, 1972).

3. Rank Order (Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, 1972):

This strategy gives the participants the option of ordering choices, according to their own priorities. Generally, there is a question given and then several responses listed. The person choosing, numbers these choices in order of preference from first to last.

An example from the values clarification handbook is:

Which season do you like best?

_____ winter

_____ summer

_____ spring

_____ fall

This activity requires reading (either oral or silent), sequencing and thought organization. An extension of rank order could be to develop a language experience story from it or to have the child develop his own related rank order questions and choices which could be answered by himself, another child, or the teacher in a sharing of materials.

IN CONCLUSION. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The child engaged in this values processing has, in essence, been using all of his language arts skills to deal with relevant issues concerning himself and his group. Reading has been a function of the child's total communicative interaction with the group, sometimes as transmitter and other times, as receiver. The vehicle has been the child's language, but now it has acted as a springboard into the deeper concerns of helping the child clarify his position and attitudes toward reading.

RESOURCES

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. Teacher. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963.

Athey, Irene. "Affective Factors in Reading." in Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading, ed. Harry Sing and Robert Ruddell. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1970, pp. 98 - 119.

Azcoaga, Juan. "Motivational and Attitudinal Influences on Reading Development." in Reading for All, Proceedings of the Fourth IRA World Congress on Reading, ed. Robert Karlin. Newark, Delaware: I.R.A., 1973, pp. 51 - 55.

Berry, Mildred. Language Disorders of Children: The Bases and Diagnoses. New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, 1969.

Borton, Terry. Reach, Touch, and Teach; Student Concerns and Process Education. New York: McGraw - Hill, 1970.

Borton, Terry, Lynn Borton and Mark Borton. My Books. Office of Affective Development, Board of Public Education, 21st and the Parkway, Philadelphia, Pennsylvainia.

Brown, George. Human Teaching for Human Learning. New York: The Viking Press, 1971.

Dennison, Paul. "Reading Programs are Means - Not Ends?," Journal of Reading, Volume 18, No. 3, December, 1974, pp. 206 - 211.

Glasser, William. Schools Without Failure. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969.

Goodman, Kenneth. "Reading Diagnosis Today ... An Intimate Analysis of the Reader." in Time Frame, published by NASSAU BOCES Research and Development Division, Volume 3, No. 2, Spring, 1974, pp. 13 - 15.

Harmin, Merrill, Howard Kirschenbaum, and Sidney Simon. Clarifying Values Through Subject Matter. Minneapolis: Winston Press, Inc., 1973.

Harris, Theodore. "The Future of Reading." in Reading For All, Proceedings of the Fourth IRA World Congress on Reading, ed. Robert Karlin. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1973, pp. 9 - 16.

Henry, George. Teaching Reading as Concept Development: Emphasis on Affective Thinking. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1974.

International Reading Association, "Motivation - A Key Factor in Learning to Read," Fourth IRA Report on The Right to Read Effort, Volume 1, No. 4, 1974.

Manolakes, George and Marie Jepson Scian. Self - Told Tales, Teacher Resource Manual 1. General Learning Corporation, 1974, p. 3.

Matteoni, Louise. "Developing Reading Ability Through the Language Experience Approach." in Views on Elementary Reading Instruction, 1973, pp. 49 - 55.

McCracken, Robert and Marlene McCracken. Reading is Only the Tiger's Tail. San Rafael, California, 1972.

McNinch, George, Jim Layton and Eleanor Noble. "Language Experience: Reading in the Basic Education Program." Reading Improvement. Winter 1974, pp. 23 - 30.

Moffert, James. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.

Mulligan, Joseph. "Using Language Experience with Potential High School Dropouts." Journal of Reading, Volume 18, No. 3, December 1974, pp. 206 - 211.

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

Schnitker, Max. The Teacher's Guide to the Brain and Learning. San Rafael, California: Academic Therapy Publications, 1972.

Schubert, Delwyn. "The Role of Interest and Motivation in the Reading Process." in Views on Elementary Reading Instruction, ed. Thomas Barrett and Dale Johnson. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1973, pp. 59 - 64.

Shohen, Sam. "A Language Experience Approach to Reading Instruction." in Views on Elementary Reading Instruction, ed. Thomas Barrett and Dale Johnson. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1973, pp. 43 - 48.

Simon, Sidney, Leland Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum. Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students. New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972.

Simon, Sidney. Meeting Yourself Halfway. Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1974.

Smith, E. Brooks, Kenneth Goodman, and Robert Meredith. Language and Thinking in the Elementary School. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1970.

Smith, Frank. Understanding Reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1971.

Spache, George and Evelyn Spache. Reading in the Elementary School, 3rd ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1973, Chapters 7 and 9.

Van Hoven, Colleen and Jane Van Hoven. "The Open System of Individualizing Instruction: A Synthesis of Freedom and Structure." National Humanistic Education Center, 1974.

Weinstein, Gerald and Mario Fantini. Toward Humanistic Education; A Curriculum of Affect. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.