Administrators Talk About Analytical Thinking

Is It Good for My Kids?

Each new dawn heralds its own "new and exciting" program for the educational community. Such a program, out of necessity, is touted as being designed and developed by experts, to be better than all others, and to work wonders with students. Almost as often as a new program appears on the scene, another is fading into oblivion, having failed to successfully accomplish its goals and purposes. In my opinion, there is only one important criterion for any educational plan or procedure: "Will it be good for my kids?" Little human lives are too dear and precious to be subjected to the "guinea pig" approach. We ought not play games with the human mind. Good educators help children understand the thought processes and discover the unique values of their own ideas, concepts and attitudes.

In the fall of 1979, the staff and students of Meadowbrook Elementary School made a fascinating "discovery" with the help of Dr. Ronald Reed and Texas Wesleyan College. We were introduced to the special world of Analytical Thinking for Children. Dr. Reed was bombarded with the following questions: "Is this a "mind-probing" program? Does it control or manipulate children's thought processes? Are my kids being used as an experiment? Will it add positive, useful dimensions to their lives?" He answered these and many more questions with calming assurances. He knew the program and dissolved our fears through evidence of the worth of the program. Now, a

year and a half later, the instructional staff, parents, and students have only praise for Analytical Thinking for Children and are grateful for our expanded world of thought.

What evidence has been observed that Analytical Thinking for Children has been beneficial to our children? Major contributions to our students have been the realization that their thoughts are real and important and the development of the confidences and skills to communicate their thoughts, attitudes, and feelings to others. One of our students expressed his own feelings in these words, "We like listening to each other." That, in itself, is a major achievement for grade four students. Other facets of this program that have added to our students' educational lives are the challenge, motivation, and skills to probe more deeply into their studies. They learn to go beyond surface information. This program, too, tends to develop a cohesiveness among those students who share their analytical thinking sessions. Most decidedly, it has developed appreciation for one's own thoughts as well as those of others. Perhaps the most significant evidence that this program works is the fact that it has been expanded to include several more teachers and many more children during the current school year, 1980-81.

Gene Morgan

Improving Reasoning Skills

In September of 1979, Dr. Joe Mitchell of Texas Wesleyan College came to my office with a proposal for initiating a pilot program of Analytical Thinking for Children at David K. Sellars Elementary School. Dr. Mitchell mentioned that research for a