Children and Adults Talk About Analytical Thinking

We are nearing the midway point of our 1980-81 school year. Many teachers and students are involved in Analytical Thinking for Children at David K. Sellars Elementary School.

Wanda Lowrey, Kindergarten teacher using Rebecca, believes this program is the correct beginning for Kindergarten children. "They must learn to organize their thinking before they can succeed in other areas. It is the direction to go. I am sold on the program," Wanda said.

Peggy Witt, also a Kindergarten teacher, remembers a remark made by one of her students as they finished Rebecca last year. His quote was, "I want more Rebecca." Peggy sees carry-over associations in other learning areas with her present class, also.

Sharon Newbury, fifth grade teacher using the second half of Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, said, "The children look forward to class discussions and sharing thoughts and ideas. The discussions have motivated deeper thinking and prompted more rational decision making."

Third grade teacher Margie McCalister said, "The children remind me that it is time for Rebecca and always complain when the class is over. They enjoy the discussions and want more time spent on it. The children in my room who are usually very quiet and never respond in other subjects do participate in our discussions of Rebecca."

In talking with Virgie Havenstrite, first grade teacher, she said, "There is a lot of interest, and the class discussions hold

their attention. Most participate in each lesson. These children are very realistic."

Andrew Walls, fourth grade teacher using Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, likes the program very much; however, he would prefer to spend more time on it. He said, "The children love the involvement. They also find many instances to relate the discussions to their personal experiences."

Fourth grade teacher Mary Harris said, "It's a chance for my entire class to interact and respond. Since everyone can make a worthwhile contribution to the discussion, it helps build self-esteem and strengthens values."

Eloise Spivey, fourth grade teacher, said, "The children look forward to Harry. They never let me forget it. My goal is to get all my students more involved in the oral discussions. I am very pleased with the thought-provoking questions the children ask about the vocabulary."

First grade teacher Darla Shannon recalls, "We have had a lot of experiences that have really been thought-provoking in our study of Rebecca. One day we discussed our tears - what they taste like, why we cry, etc. One little boy said he had an idea - boys' tears were salty, and girls' tears must be sweet. Then we took a vote. He decided that maybe there was another reason some tears were not salty. The children sometimes bring up our discussions at other times, so this lets me know they are carrying over the thinking times. The sessions we had on crying have been very helpful in determining reasons for crying and the effect we have on others by what we say. They understand that we can be hurt inside, emotionally, and want to cry as well as when we are hurt outside, as with a skinned knee."

The following comments are from students who were in the fourth grade class during the 1979-80 school year taught by Betty Stanley. (During that year Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery was used through Chapter 11. This year the students are continuing Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery under the supervision of Sharon Newbury.) I have recorded their remarks just as they told them to me when I said, "Talk to me about Harry and your class this year."

Cary Adkinson: "I like it because it gives us a chance to talk about things we wouldn't otherwise get to talk about. I wonder sometimes if I will be like Harry. Harry always wants to know why. I think this is the way to learn things. I want to be a scientist some day and I think this questioning way of Harry's would help me."

Eric Tomme: "I like it a lot because we can go deeper in thought and work things out with each other. For instance, if you are in a fight you can talk it over and think about the reasons for fighting and realize it was a waste of time and foolish. I wish we could have a lesson every day. I hope there is another book after Harry with more to read."

Christina McKinney: "I like it because I learn a lot. Harry asks so many questions it teaches me to ask questions and learn. I look forward to class. Harry is my favorite character in the book."

Tony Davis: "I like Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery because now I can think and figure out why things happen to me and solve my problems so much better. It helps my parents understand me, and it helps me understand them."

Taujuana Vernon: "I believe that I can use what I have learned in our class to think twice before I make a decision. I hope a book

will be written about Harry after he grows up. I have learned to express my feelings better."

Kahlil Yarborough: "I like it because we learn to think better. It's a fun class to be in and I'd like to have this class every day. Harry and Suki are my favorite characters because they think before they talk."

Lawrence Priest: "This is a fun class for reading and discussing. It teaches me not to jump to conclusions, and now I think before I act. It helps me discover why things happen and how they happen. It's a class that helps me learn to do things that I never had thought of before."

Betty Stanley