

## New Dimensions of the Analytical Thinking Program

The Program for Analytical Thinking at Texas Wesleyan College has added a new dimension this year with the introduction of Suki, another philosophical novel by Dr. Matthew Lipman and the sequel to Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, at William James School, a Middle School in the Fort Worth Independent School District. Several of the thirty-four sixth graders in Mrs. Hazel Robinson's English class at William James will bring to their discussion of Suki a year of analytical thinking experience with Dr. Ron Reed and Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery. Those students who have not had that year of experience with the Program should find very helpful the early sessions of the class which will be devoted to a review of important thinking exercises in Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery.

One of those exercises entitled, "Thinking About Thinking", has already proven helpful in addressing a question posed by one sixth grader, a veteran of the Analytical Thinking Program, on the first day of class--What is the difference between Suki and Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery? On the way to providing one answer to the question, our discussion about thinking generated a distinction between "logical thinking" and "creative thinking". According to one member of the class, logical thinking enables us to understand what is "possible" while creative thinking allows us to consider what is "impossible". For example, chimed in another student, it is illogical to think that a person can turn into a light bulb. That act appears impossible. However, it is creative to think that a person may

turn into one if he drank a bottle of Super Glow or stuck his finger in a light socket. The act of transformation of these cases appears possible. Therefore, concluded the class, creative thinking challenges our views of what is logical or illogical, possible or impossible by leading us to considerations of events which have not happened but might happen under various circumstances. Promoting such creative thinking at every turn of the discussion in addition to logical thinking of the style found in Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery is a feature of Suki which distinguishes it from its predecessor.

Since this thinking skills program encourages creative thinking through the writing and analysis of poetry, Suki presents a special challenge to us as we attempt to develop a form of evaluation to determine the success of our Program on the Middle School level. The challenge involves the development of a test for assessing creative as well as logical thinking skills. The Questioning-Task 4 or Q-4, a test created by Dr. Virginia Shipman and Dr. Matthew Lipman for measuring improvement of thinking skills following the study of Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, provides a useful guide for testing similar skills cultivated by the study of Suki. No such guide, however, exists for identifying and appraising the poetic sensibilities of sixth graders before and after their involvement in writing and analyzing poetry. Constructing a format for making such an assessment is a major goal of our efforts in the Program for Analytical Thinking this year.

Another new dimension of the Program which, at this point, remains in the planning stages involves the inauguration of Analytical Thinking at the Regional Day School for the Deaf

in Fort Worth. Mr. Bill Moffatt, principal of the school, shares our interest in providing a thinking skills program for hearing-impaired children in the fifth grade classroom. Mr. Moffatt has agreed to work as a team while teaching me the subtle movements of sign language, especially those required for engaging students in philosophical discussions. In addition, he has offered to write short stories which include deaf children as characters for use in the preliminary discussions with the children which will precede our study of Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery.

This prospect at the Regional Day School for the Deaf along with the project at William James School adds new dimensions to the Program for Analytical Thinking at Texas Wesleyan College.

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