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WHILE STUDYING LITERATURE.

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**THE EFFECT OF TWO MODES  
OF INSTRUCTION ON VALUE CHANGE OF  
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WHILE STUDYING LITERATURE**

**by**

**R. Scott Maricle**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska  
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For the Degree of Doctor of Education**

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**Under the Supervision of Professor Larry K. Andrews**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**August, 1972**

TITLE

THE EFFECT OF TWO MODES OF INSTRUCTION ON VALUE CHANGE  
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WHILE STUDYING LITERATURE

BY

R. Scott Maricle

APPROVED

DATE

Ward Sybouts

7/13/72

Larry Andrews

7/13/72

Ronald G. Joekel

7/13/72

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

GRADUATE COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

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PREVIEW

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study has been to clarify the effect of independent, teacher-directed literature study on the value change of students as they read and study literature. The study also investigated the effect of teacher/student interaction and teacher led question/answer-discussion of literature on value change to assist in determining if one method promotes more change than the other. Specifically, this study has attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Does literature, when studied independently, have a greater or lesser effect on value change than when students study literature with teacher led discussion and question/answer methods?
2. Does the independent study of literature promote a more or less positive attitude toward reading than does the study of literature with teacher led discussion and question/answer methods?

#### II. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

It is generally recognized that the process of making decisions concerning values is part of the normal and appropriate process of maturation. The adolescent in today's society has many alternatives before him, perhaps

more alternatives involving even more difficult decisions than the generations before him. As a teacher working with adolescents for over a decade, this writer has had an opportunity to observe the valuing process taking place in students. As a result of this experience, the impact of the teacher and the study of literature upon the valuing process of students became a matter of increasing personal interest and concern.

As a teacher of literature, this writer became aware that his students were testing their own ideas against those expressed by characters in the literature studied in English. Students were attempting to predict outcomes and then evaluate their own reactions to the situations and experiences provided them through literature.

The awareness of this type of student involvement in literature led to a concern of the teacher's appropriate role in class discussion. As students become interested in the issues and problems presented in their assigned readings and the relationship of those issues and problems, the question of the teacher's role becomes important.

For example, should the teacher promote discussion of the issues presented in subject matter that he recognizes are of interest to his students, even if the discussion of those issues would lead away from that subject matter? Should the teacher be a leader of such a discussion, or should he be a director seeing that those

students who wish to speak are given the opportunity? If the teacher decides that such discussion is appropriate in the classroom and has determined what his role in the discussion should be, he then needs to consider the content of that discussion.

One factor of that consideration must be the teacher's recognition of the need to guard against imposing his personal values upon his students. Raths, Harmin, and Simon have identified a procedure that will allow the teacher to assist his students in the valuing process while protecting them from having the teacher's values imposed upon them. Briefly stated, they would have the teacher encourage his students to make free choices from available alternatives. The teacher should encourage the students to consider what they prize and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their choices. The teacher should also encourage the students to act upon those choices and encourage them to examine which of their behaviors they are repeating.<sup>1</sup>

The teacher who decides to allow and encourage discussion of values in the classroom must realize that he is assuming a greater responsibility than if he

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<sup>1</sup>Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, Sidney B. Simon, Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books Inc., 1966), pp. 38-39.

restricted discussions to the facts presented in the material or to the style of writing and standard interpretation of literature studied. Simon and Harmin offer this caution:

This kind of teaching is not for the faint-hearted. It often hits at the guts, but if we are to see the school as more than a place from which we issue the press release each spring which tells colleges our students made, then we must do more teaching at . . . this values level.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of the appropriateness of discussing values in the classroom has been treated in several articles.

Bono has taken what might be termed a traditional view and has strongly protested the practice of discussing values within the classroom setting. He believes that literature should be studied for its value as subject matter and should be stressed for its own worth as literature, but that discussing the relationship of values presented in that literature to the lives of students should be avoided.<sup>3</sup>

This is a strong statement and it appears to this writer that if this is adopted as a philosophy for literature teaching, little room is left for the real involvement

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<sup>2</sup>S. B. Simon and M. Harmin, "Subject Matter with a Focus on Values," Educational Leadership, October, 1968, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>J. D. Bono, "Languages, Humanities and the Teaching of Values," Modern Language Journal, May, 1970, pp. 335-347.

of students with what they read. One must acknowledge however that the probability exists that a great many teachers of literature agree with and adhere to such a philosophy.

Quite a different view of the appropriateness of the teacher's role in the students' valuing process is expressed by Kirschenbaum and Simon who state: "If we had to choose but one objective for our teaching, it would be to help students search for values."<sup>4</sup> This view is certainly as extreme as the one of Bono's related earlier and serves to point up the divergence of opinion and philosophy concerning the role of the school and the teacher in the valuing process of students.

It should be noted that Bono is expressing opposition to the practice of discussing the relationship of values presented in subject matter studied to the lives of students. Kirschenbaum and Simon are promoting the inclusion of a teaching technique within the classroom that will assist the student in the formulation of his own values. While these two views are not in direct opposition, they are expressing attitudes that are at odds with one another.

Further support for relating the subject matter

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<sup>4</sup> H. Kirschenbaum and S. B. Simon, "Teaching English with a Focus on Values," English Journal, October, 1969, p. 58.



students read to the valuing process of the student is provided by Simon and Harmin who declare that subject matter must be lifted to the values level. They emphasize that if the material read is to be related to the lives of students, discussion of related values is imperative.<sup>5</sup>

John Jarolimek, President of the National Council for the Social Studies, in the Preface to the forty-first year book of the Council has said "The time is overdue when an all-out effort must be made to find productive approaches to values education . . . ." <sup>6</sup> Jarolimek points out that while the need is great, the solution remains complex and difficult.<sup>7</sup> Based upon the teaching experience of this writer, the views expressed here seem most reasonable.

Clymer has reviewed W. S. Gray's major components of reading: word perception, comprehension, reaction to what is read, and fusion of new ideas and old.<sup>8</sup> It is the last two components that are most relevant here. The

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<sup>5</sup>Simon, Harmin, op. cit., pp. 34-39.

<sup>6</sup>John Jarolimek, "Preface," Values Education: Rational Strategies, and Procedures, Forty-first Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1971), p. vi.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

<sup>8</sup>Theodore Clymer, "What is Reading?: Some current concepts," Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction, Sixty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1968), pp. 7-29.

reaction of the student to what he reads and his fusion of new ideas presented to the old ideas already held would seem a logical part of the valuing process. Students do desire involvement with what they read and one would assume that such involvement can best be achieved by encouraging them to relate what they read to their own lives. Such a process provides a testing ground for their own developing values and would therefore appear to aid in the natural process of maturation.

The process of valuing has been carefully treated by Rath, Harmin, and Simon in the book, Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom. They have identified and described the characteristics of the process a student goes through as he develops or changes his values.

The processes described by Rath, Harmin, and Simon will be discussed briefly here. The first aspect of the valuing process is choosing. The student must be able to choose freely from reasonable and available alternatives. Only under these conditions can true choice occur. He must also be able to think through the consequences of each alternative.

The second part of the valuing process is identified as prizing; that is, the student must be pleased with and cherish his choice. In connection with prizing, the student must have the opportunity to express and affirm his choice and demonstrate that he is proud of

his decision.

The third step of the valuing process is acting. The student, when he has actually accepted a value, will reflect that value in his behavior. He will act upon the value and then, when given the opportunity, repeat the action. According to Raths, Harmin and Simon, only if a student goes through this process can it be said that he has actually accepted a value.<sup>9</sup>

The process discussed above is related to the larger, natural maturation process of the adolescent. Although the role of literature study in the valuing process has not been clearly described, it is reasonable to assume that the process of choosing alternatives and thinking through those alternatives would be aided by an exposure to literature where fictional characters deal with problems and situations related to the life of the reader. It is this aspect of valuing and the impact of literature study upon the valuing process of the adolescent that this study explores.

In addition to describing the process of valuing, Raths, Harmin and Simon have identified five categories of value indicators. These indicators, as their title suggests, serve as indications of values held, or being considered by students. The five categories are: attitudes, aspirations, purposes, interests, and

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<sup>9</sup>Raths, Harmin, Simon, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

activities.<sup>10</sup>

The teacher may find these value indicators in essays, discussions, conversations with students, through observing behavior, or in any situation in which a student may express himself. It must be understood that these indicators cannot be used singly to determine the values of an individual. They do however, provide insight into the values held by students. When students talk of goals or purposes for their future, they are revealing a direction in life they are considering. They may be choosing, or testing alternatives as a part of the process of developing a value system. The same can be said for those situations when students reveal their attitudes and interests.

As students express their convictions and discuss their problems and activities, they are providing a window to their character and to their value system.<sup>11</sup> It is through this window that this study has looked in order to clarify the effect of two modes of instruction upon the value development of adolescents.

One mode of instruction used in this investigation was a form of independent study. The type of independent study used differs from the independent study as commonly described. Most independent or individualized study programs in literature include a provision for student

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-33.

selection of the literature to be read. These provisions vary from having students choose what they wish to read from a list provided, to allowing them free choice selection.<sup>12,13,14</sup> Some of these programs stipulate selection procedures for determining which students will be taught by independent study.<sup>15,16</sup>

Studies investigating students' attitude change toward reading in dependent study programs have most often dealt with programs involving a high degree of student choice.<sup>17,18,19</sup> The studies cited here are examined more thoroughly in Chapter Two, "Review of Related Research."

Since the primary questions this study attempted to clarify dealt with the effect of the teacher led

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<sup>12</sup>Bruce Charles Appleby, "The Effect of Individualized Reading on Certain Aspects of Literature Study with High School Seniors," Dissertation Abstracts, 28:2592, January, 1968.

<sup>13</sup>Clarence R. Calder Jr., "Self Directed Reading Materials," Reading Teacher, December, 1967, pp. 248-252.

<sup>14</sup>Mary Kathryn Huser, "The Efficacy of Individualized Readings in Achievement and Attitude," Dissertation Abstracts, 26:2547-48, November, 1965.

<sup>15</sup>Norman Felland, "English Independent Study for High Schools," English Journal, April, 1969, pp. 591-593+.

<sup>16</sup>J. D. Wells, "Independent Study Students in Secondary Schools and Their Expectations and Satisfaction in Independent Study," Dissertation Abstracts, 27:2757, March, 1967.

<sup>17</sup>Calder, loc. cit.

<sup>18</sup>Huser, loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Appleby, loc. cit.

question/answer-discussion technique as opposed to the effect of allowing the student to react on his own to literature studied independently, the use of free choice in reading material was not appropriate. The teacher directed independent study group and the teacher led discussion-question/answer group read identical selections which were determined by the teacher and the investigator. Intact classrooms were used and no selection process for the students in the teacher directed independent study group was attempted.

In any study of this type, the problem of accurate measurement of the variables being investigated must be carefully considered. Cooper indicates that it is difficult to establish validity for testing procedures that will accurately measure students' response to literature. As Cooper points out, most teacher or experimenter developed tests, designed to measure response to literature depend upon written responses from the student.<sup>20</sup> The study presented here has avoided the use of written essay type response. These different tests have been used both as pre- and post-tests. Each test has been validated and used in other studies.

Raths, Harmin and Simon also refer to testing procedures used for measuring response to literature. Their

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<sup>20</sup>Charles R. Cooper, "Measuring Appreciation of Literature: A Review of Attempts," Research in the Teaching of English, Spring 1971, pp. 5-23.

concern is that most tests dealing with values measure what people say about their values but do not provide means for measuring the behavior of people in relationship to those values.<sup>21</sup> The point of Rath, Harmin and Simon is acknowledged, and certainly research aimed at measuring the extent to which one acts upon declared values is needed. This study however, is examining only a portion of the valuing process and the relationship of two modes of instruction in literature study to that aspect of the valuing process.

The suggestion is made by Forehand that the problems of accurately measuring student response to literature is complicated by the fact that "Response to literature is . . . a continuously moving thought process."<sup>22</sup>

The study presented here attempted to compensate for the problems of measurement mentioned above by providing several avenues of response for students. A semantic differential test was developed and used in two ways. It was used as a pre- and post-test to measure change in attitude toward the two modes of instruction used in the study and to measure change in attitude toward relating what is read to one's personal life. A semantic differential was also used to record the students' reaction to each of fifteen stories read.

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<sup>21</sup>Rath, Harmin, Simon, op. cit., pp. 205-6.

<sup>22</sup>Garlie A. Forehand, "Problems of Measuring Response to Literature," Clearing House, February, 1966, p. 396.

The Allport, Vernon, Lindzey Study of Values Test was used as a pre- and post-test to measure change in declared values in the areas of theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious values. In addition to these tests the Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes Toward Reading was also administered as a pre- and post-test. The variety of tests used in this study provided for measurement of change as a result of two modes of instruction in declared values, in attitude toward reading, in attitude toward the two modes of instruction used in the study and in attitude toward relating what one reads to his personal life. Provision was also made for measuring differences in reactions to the individual stories.

### III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The process of value development and value change on the part of the adolescent has long been ignored by the researchers. Only recently has the issue of valuing been thought an appropriate one for discussion by educators. Views vary concerning the appropriateness of value study in the classroom. The conflict over the place of value discussion in the classroom is based in part upon the larger philosophical question that asks what right and/or obligation does the school have to deal with the aspects of child development that were once considered the province of the home and church. The discussion of values leads the