

Why schools have no business teaching non-judgmental values

By D.L. Cuddy

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There may be more of a relationship between two reports on the national news recently than most people realize. First, the U.S. Department of Education released its state-by-state comparisons regarding educational performance showing a fourth straight year of decline. Second, it was reported there has been another rash of youth suicides.

In the early 1960s, when America had one of the best educational systems in the world, traditional means of educating students, such as providing them with academic information and assigning practice drills, came under criticism from those claiming this stifled students' "creativity." Never mind the fact that the repetition of educational information caused students to actually learn something. (Don't agree? Remember that nearly everyone today knows the answer to "Things go better with ..." because of repetitive commercials.) The "progressive educator" was more concerned with shaping students' values than with imparting traditional academic knowledge.

Taught to focus upon their own personal feelings, members of the "me" generation arose and perpetuate their perspective today via "self-esteem" (as opposed to self-respect) classes contrary to the biblical admonition toward humility, "let each esteem others better than themselves." This is also despite the fact that a scholarly study some years ago indicated those young people with high self-esteem were more likely to engage in premarital sex and take drugs than those who only had normal or less self-esteem.

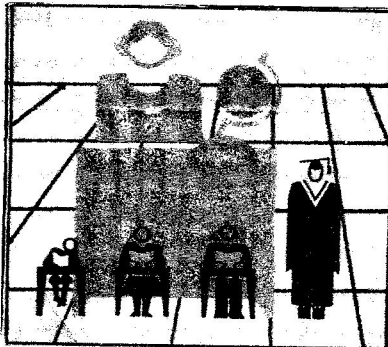
Teachers with only a few days of training to be "learning facilitators" are engaging in the "values clarification" techniques of Carl Rogers' and Abraham Maslow's humanistic psychology, despite the fact that Maslow said these techniques should never be used with children. Their educational approach holds that students are autonomous, moral decision-makers, and no one (including parents and teachers) should impose any particular morality upon them. The problem with this attitude is that the non-imposition of any particular morality is itself the imposition of moral relativism and situation ethics. For example, "what's right for you under the circumstances may not be right for me."

This non-judgmental education was described in a *New York Times* headline, "Ethics classes avoid

teaching right and wrong." Therefore, we should not be surprised if one day some students accused of shoplifting, for example, appear before a judge and claim they are not guilty because they were taught in school that no one should impose any particular values upon them.

Perhaps the area in which this type of values education is most evident is sex education. A co-worker of Rogers and Maslow was Dr. William R. Coulson, who now claims that most sex education programs actually cause sexual activity. He says the research is very clear and consistent on this issue, and of the four co-factors for early sexual involvement, the most important one is sex education itself. Indeed, statistics show that as sex education in America increased, so have the number of teen pregnancies and other related problems.

Similarly, Stanford University psychologist Dr.



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Richard H. Blum's large-scale test in the late 1970s showed that children who went through these non-directive decision-making type programs actually took up with tobacco, marijuana and alcohol more than did children not in these programs. And after "Project Smart," which concerned alcohol use by students, the chief researcher at the University of Southern California told Coulson in 1987 that it was "as if we had driven the children to drink."

Last, concerning recent news reports of youth suicides, is this any wonder given the increase in "death education" in some American schools where students are even asked to write their own obituaries? In at least one state, Maryland, many of the elementary school students were taught the theme song from the movie *M*A*S*H*, which is actually titled, "Suicide Is Painless." Its lyrics say cheating is the only way to win, the game of life is lost any-

way and suicide is painless.

Instead of tampering (under the name of "critical thinking") with the values that parents have instilled in their offspring, schools should stick to the traditional academic basics. Then perhaps not only will teen problems involving drugs, crime, unwanted pregnancies and suicides decrease, but scholastic achievement may increase at the same time instead of falling again — for a fifth straight year.

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