

VALUE EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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The knowledge explosion of the Twentieth Century has placed an emphasis in the schools on factual knowledge, crowding value development and ethics instruction into the background. However, our technologically complex world also has severe value-related problems which must be solved. Schools must prepare students to deal with problems of ethics, so values should be incorporated somehow into the school curriculum.

Research evidence of the effect of value education has been disappointing to educators who would like to see values emphasized in the schools. Direct teaching methods have proved worthless in the formation of values, but there are many indirect methods which are available to teachers.

Because strength of personality is very important to development of values, the teacher must make every effort to see that students feel comfortable about themselves. Forming values involves making choices, so students need some experience in choosing alternatives and examining consequences of various choices. School and classroom organization and procedures can have a subtle effect upon students' values. The teacher's personal values are often copied or rejected by the student, depending upon his relationship with the teacher.

The formation of values is a difficult process to measure. The best teaching techniques are elusive, but seem to be dependent upon good relationship between teacher and student and between student and his peers.