

AN ANALYSIS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS'
RESPONSES TO RECREATED FOLKTALE SELECTIONS

by 45

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I. INTRODUCTION

The great difference between the discipline of education and other academic pursuits lies in the profound necessity to act -- a continuous process of compelled motion. Few dispute the need to reveal known truths, insights, and useful procedure to the huge masses of young people. Often this task is so overpowering that perfection of pedagogical techniques and increased educational sophistication loom as the unattained utopian goal. The lack of criticism toward teaching as a goal in no way reflects the bitter feelings held by many about how such a process is to be performed. No doubt the gap between the masters of knowledge and the masters of application will never completely disappear. In other fields, however, the scholarly mind has emerged increasingly more often from a life of first hand experience. There is no reason to suppose that this trend can not also affect the discipline of education to a far greater extent.

Given the obvious necessity to have conscientious teachers be exposed to more data which can produce significant insights into emotional behavior leads to the major tentative question posed as a point of departure for this project.

Statement of the Problem

Can a direct investigation of recreated selections of folklore by high school students reveal significant insights about the effect that the nature of emotion has on the learning process for these students?

Importance of the Problem

The cry for scholars to transcend the fetish for basic research is no where more loudly uttered than in the field of education. There is, furthermore, ample reason for such a plea. The proliferation of personality data--much of which is understood so well by psychologists and philosophers to be considered commonplace--still has yet to make a significant impression upon the mainstream of educational thought. The gap between that which is known and that which is applicable will widen unless educators also indulge in observation. On all levels of scholarship in the social sciences there is a profound need to observe behavior and the functioning of personality, devoid, as much as possible, from the mythology of the past. It is unrealistic to suppose that many teachers will conduct a study such as the one which follows in this paper under the system of rewards now provided by American society. This paper can do nothing more than serve as a suggestion about what can be done with data derived from the classroom.

If interest in the subject of emotion can be used as a yardstick for importance, the relevancy of this study will not be difficult to demonstrate. Even those remotely interested in education should be profoundly aware of the recent enthusiasm displayed toward creativity, the growing emphasis placed on the arts, and the ardent attempt to establish programs which develop individual talents. Subjects not usually considered of instrumental value to scholarship are no longer shunned as being unimportant. Even for those who specifically concern themselves with academic matters, education has, in the past decade, taken an instrumental turn.

The noted educational philosopher, J. E. Bruner, defines the truly important tasks of the future and what this means for the field of edu-