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Chapter 1

SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF THE BOOK

1. To demonstrate the procedure for building different levels of questions from children's literature.
2. To encourage teachers to develop questions from all instructional areas.
3. To encourage teachers to use multi-level questions in group discussions.
4. To demonstrate that higher level thinking can be attained through effective questioning.
5. To demonstrate that primary grade literature has the potential to arouse stimulating questions.
6. To provide a number of stories from primary literature, so that a range of subjects and topics are available to teachers.
7. To provide examples of questions at different cognitive levels.
8. To provide several strategies for questioning in the teaching/learning process.

QUESTIONING IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

"In every age, in every society, there is always one who wonders, one who questions."

Eileen Lynch

Imagination can be enhanced only when one is given the opportunity to play with ideas, to discover relationships, and, most important, to ask questions. If, as educators, we demonstrate to

the child that his/her ideas have value and his/her questions will be listened to, we are adding a rich source of fuel to that child's motivation for learning. It seems that involving students in higher level questioning will subsequently lead to a more open-minded, self-confident, inquiring person. It is our contention that teachers who actively engage in asking higher level questions will stimulate and increase the amount of child-initiated questions with teachers, family and peers.

Hypothesis No. 1

Teachers who show an appreciation for questioning, who establish a climate where diverse questions are valued, who consistently ask high quality questions will develop students who demonstrate greater involvement in the questioning process.

Students who are encouraged to ask questions are being given an opportunity to explore with their minds, to gain meaning for themselves and to relate new data with old concepts. The new questions, new theories and new ideas remain the most important part of the learning process.

Another benefit in using higher level questions is that it can provide an open-ended learning situation. When one seeks to ask questions about things or events that have no one right answer or a multitude of potentially right answers, an attitude develops where one appreciates the immensity and complexity of the real world data. Perhaps this point can be illustrated by the following quotation:

"Just when I knew all of life's answers, they changed all the questions."

Hallmark Card, Inc.

It is our belief that a classroom situation where questioning is held in high regard will result in an environment that is healthier, and one in which students are more receptive.

Hypothesis No. 2

Teachers who use higher level questions on a consistent basis will increase their students' higher level thinking skills in terms of frequency, depth, appropriateness and complexity.

This second hypothesis involves a concept which is paramount to our beliefs and practices. It is a relationship between good question asking and diverse thinking experiences. One of the basic goals in education is to provide opportunities which will stimulate the learners' higher level thinking skills. A method conducive to enhancing the students' thinking skills is an inquiry-based approach to learning.

QUESTIONING. . . THE BASIS OF INQUIRY

Inquiry is defined by J. Richard Suchman (1968) as a fundamental and natural process of learning by which an individual gathers information, raises and tests hypotheses, builds theories, and tests them empirically. If we relate questioning to this definition, several points can be made.

First, we feel that questioning is a natural process fueled by curiosity—a basic human characteristic. Second, in order to collect data, we must ask questions about the different sources, types and significance of that data. Third, when one begins to develop