

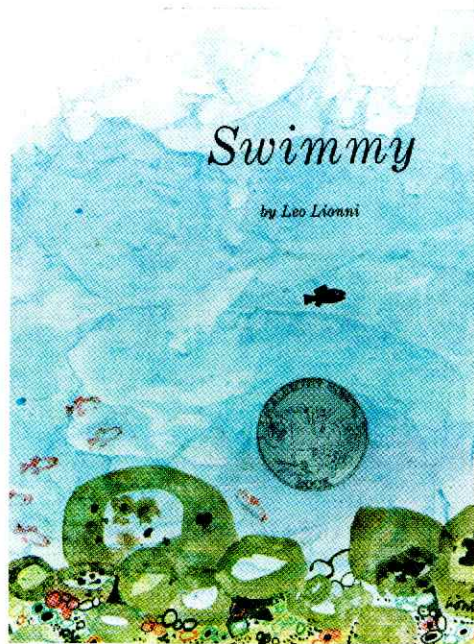
The benefit of teaching values through discussions of a model such as the 7 Habits, for example, is that there is no program to buy. Teachers introduce a concept one week and discuss the concept with students as it is reflected in their daily lives. Students can find examples of the values (or lack of them) among people in the news and among characters in the books they read. Our rich heritage of children's and young-adult literature, therefore, can become a major resource for learning values and ethics (without adding new textbooks).

Furthermore, relating the 7 Habits to children's literature and analysis of news in nonthreatening discussions allows students to "discover" the concepts in the literature and in real life experiences. As they make connections and associations, they simultaneously build their powers of critical and creative thinking, instead of passively accepting ideas.

While Covey's model is simple on its surface, it is by no means easy to automatically adopt and live because, like an onion, there are multiple layers of meaning and diverse ways that it can be applied. Each of his 7 Habits includes various principles and concepts that people could spend a lifetime exploring. Additionally, many of the patterns "typical" of modern America seem opposite to the values inherent in this model, so individuals frequently must unlearn unhelpful behaviors and attitudes while they simultaneously learn helpful ones. For example, in many discussions of public issues on TV, the participants are adversarial, litigious, or competitive. One rarely sees people work through a problem cooperatively with skillful mediation or negotiation.

A School Wide Effort

For the best results in encouraging students to become more ethical citizens, it is desirable to include discussions of the habits every year. Optimally, an entire school or district could focus on one habit per month. When an entire school learns the same vocabulary of ethics, it builds a spirit of community through the common experience.⁵ Although students may study the same list of good habits from



year to year, different nuances of meaning will come into focus as the children mature. Also, using different and progressively more challenging books each year maintains freshness in the program.

Moral concepts, relevant to children and adults alike, can provide a unifying paradigm, or way of viewing life, uniting schools and families. Parents can be involved in such a curriculum in many ways: engaging in discussions of the 7 Habits among themselves or with their children; helping to identify new books that readily demonstrate one or more of the 7 Habits (this activity can provide a worthwhile service to the schools that simultaneously reinforces the parents' own literacy and thinking skills); and sharing a book and discussing one of the habits with a small group of students (so that many children are able to explore and discuss the ideas within the safety of a small group setting). Table 1 lists 109 trade books (with related good habits) that parents and teachers might choose from. When parents and teachers are reinforcing the same ideas and concepts, there is greater assurance of transfer of the ideas to the many facets of life's experience.

Relating the 7 Habits to *Swimmy*

One popular children's picture book, *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni, demonstrates within its story all of the 7 Habits.⁶ In brief, *Swimmy* is a black fish living in a school of red fish. When a large preda-

Students needed a way to remember the "adult" information readily so that they could use it. Consequently, I created the following rhythmic chant containing the essence of the 7 Habits in poetry form, which they enjoyed reciting and performing for others.

Secrets of Success: 7-Habits Rap

by Kaye Anderson

Inspired by Stephen Covey, Robert Schuller, Martin Luther King, Jr., Zig Ziglar, and Mahatma Gandhi

BE PROACTIVE and you will find
That you'll BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND.
Put FIRST THINGS FIRST and THINK WIN-WIN;
To build success you start within.
FIRST UNDERSTAND, THEN BE UNDERSTOOD
To bring real peace to your neighborhood.
SYNERGIZE and do your part
To care for others with all your heart,
Then SHARPEN THE SAW to do the rest,
To grow yourself to be your best.

(Said quietly) Be stronger, wiser, better. Care for others AND yourself.

Seek the truth and what is right;
Dream big dreams with all your might.
Then plan your work and work your plan
One step at a time to your Promised Land.
When you do this, then you will see
That you create your destiny.
Live the SECRETS of SUCCESS
And you will find true happiness.

(Said quietly) We must become the change we seek.

From every circle that you see
From inside out to each society:
Fam'ly, club, and community,
City, state, nation, and globally:
If it's going to be, it's up to ME!
If it's going to be, it's up to ME!
If it's going to be, it's up to ME!

(Said enthusiastically) WE CAN DO IT!

(Said quietly) WE can HEAL the world.

(Change last line as desired. "We can change the world;

We can change our schools; We can change ... ;
We can learn to love; We can learn to read; We can learn to lead;
We can learn ... ; We can end the hate;
We can find a way; We can run the race; etc.")