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# Action Education: An Educator's Response To a Community's Drug Problem

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In the spring of 1969, the Mason City area was brought face to face with an ever-increasing problem in our society—drugs and narcotics. The community and surrounding area were deeply concerned. How had it happened? When did it start? How many were involved? What age levels were affected? What can we do?

As the articles began to appear in the news media, I asked myself several questions. Should teachers get involved? If so, what should the role of teachers be? About this time some material was circulated to teachers describing a three-week intensified course on drugs and narcotics in Chicago, sponsored by the W.C.T.U. After attending this institute, this writer felt that the one word to describe it best would be “tremendous.” There were 32 individuals from 19 states, so just the exposure to these participants and the problems with drugs and narcotics in their parts of the country was an education to me.

The films, filmstrips, guest lecturers and trips to courts, rehabilitation centers, police centers and “skid-row” were extremely valuable. At the same time, a course at Northwestern University that dealt with the reasons why people were turning to a chemical cop-out for an escape was offered to all of us. In the dormitory, we had the opportunity to discuss drugs and narcotics with graduate and undergraduate students from many areas.

I returned to Mason City with a storehouse of information. Extended contract was offered me to develop a course on drugs for our high school students. (Extended contract is reimbursement for time spent in curriculum development during the summer.) Because only three weeks were available, it was almost impossible to do an adequate job. The text, so to speak, was a paperback, *Drug Abuse: Escape to Nowhere*, a guide for educators put out by the National Education Association. Material brought back from the institute was also implemented. One of the first tasks was to set up resource areas in my office and the high school library. (I have listed the material we have to date in our high school library and in my classroom in the bibliography.)

The next step was to write behavioral objectives for the course which was titled "Drug Use and Misuse." The main areas for the objectives follow:

1. *Drug classification*—a list of terms used in conjunction with drugs and narcotics.
2. *Alcohol*.
3. *The social drugs*—such as coffee, cigarettes and the OTC, or over the counter drugs, such as the non-prescription drugs.
4. *Toxic solvents*—such as glue, gasoline, etc.
5. *Marijuana*.
6. *Hallucinogenics*—or psychedelic drugs.
7. *Barbiturates*—depressants.
8. *Amphetamines*—stimulants.
9. *Narcotics*.
10. *Effects and symptoms*.
11. *Treatment*—medical, psychological and rehabilitative.
12. *The law*—control of drugs and narcotics.

During the course, I attempted not to preach but to approach the topic with an honest, fact-finding approach. I tried not to be biased in any way but, rather, to present information that would help the individual make his own decision. (A list of films, filmstrips and guest lecturers will be found at the end of this paper.)

Perhaps it should be mentioned that our timing was good. The science department was in the process of revising courses. One of the courses to be added was E.S.S. (Environmental Science Seminar). It was divided into 10 topics, and "Drug Use and Misuse" was one. At first it was offered only to juniors and seniors. The following year and summer it was offered to all students. The course had a duration of 9 weeks with  $\frac{1}{4}$  credit being earned. The first time the course was offered, 164 students indicated an interest, but the instructor felt that the best results would be obtained with a class of 30 students. This obviously created another problem: how to reach all the students who wished to enroll. It was decided to give a synopsis to all incoming 10th grade students using the orientation time designed for the guidance counselors. As a result, 639 sophomores were exposed as a large group. This was not the most ideal situation, but we did reach more students.

A night school course through the North Iowa Area Community College adult education program was offered for parents and concerned adults in the northern area of the state.

The goals of the course with respect to the students and adults of the community are: (1) to become sensitive and responsive to the situation, (2) to realize that drugs are not the problem but that people are and that the reasons people use drugs are many and complex, (3) to get involved in some way—if only to listen and show the individual that someone does care and is concerned, (4) to try to help the parents realize that they are not alone with this type of problem and attempt to give them some type of hope and (5) to provide in-

formation on how to recognize if they have a problem and, if they do, what procedures and places are available to them when they seek help. In summary, one may say that I try to give them basic facts honestly.

Things are happening in Mason City. This past summer two junior high teachers developed a course for seventh graders. This coming summer a course is being developed for the elementary level, possibly starting with the fourth grade.

This writer helped with the Probation Officers' Program, which is designed for first offenders on drugs and narcotics charges. I have also served on other community committees and programs: the Alcoholism Coordinating Center, the Mayor's Council for Youth and the Area Association for the Prevention of Drug Abuse.

## RESOURCES

### *Guest Lecturers*

1. Dr. Lyle Kelly—Mental Health Center, Mason City.
2. Dr. Stephen Westly—Medical treatment, Mason City.
3. Mrs. Kay Kinvig—School Nurse, Mason City High School.
4. Mr. Wes Greenan—Police Chief, Mason City.
5. Mr. Leonard Wicks—Pharmacist, Mason City.
6. When possible, an ex-addict.

### *Books*

- Wakefield, Dan, ed. *Addict*. Fawcett, 1963.
- Louria, Donald B. *The Drug Scene*. McGraw-Hill, 1968.
- Schaap, Dick. *Turned On*. New American Library, 1967.
- Endore, Guy. *Synanon*. Doubleday, 1968.
- O'Donnell, John A. *Narcotic Addiction*. Harper & Row, 1966.
- Buckwalter, J. A. *Merchants of Misery*. Pacific Pr., 1956.
- Burroughs, William. *Junkie*. Ace, 1953.
- Carey, James T. *The College Drug Scene*. Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Chen, Isidor. *The Road to HI Narcotics, Delinquency and Social Policy*. Basic Books, 1964.
- Ebin, David. *Drug Experience*. Grow Pr., 1961.
- Houser, Norman W. *Drugs: Facts on Their Use and Abuse*. Lothrop, 1969.
- Hyde, Margaret O. *Mind Drugs*. McGraw-Hill, 1968.
- Modell, Walter. *Drugs*. Time, Inc., 1967.
- Rice, Thurman Brooks. *Effects of Alcoholic Drinks, Tobacco, Sedatives, Narcotics*. Row Peterson, 1961.
- Smith, David E. *The New Social Drug: Cultural, Medical and Legal Perspectives on Marijuana*. Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Stearn, Jess. *The Seekers: Drugs and the New Generation*. Doubleday, 1960.
- Jeffee, Saul. *Narcotics—An American Plan*. Erickson, 1966.
- Weinswig, Melvin H. *Drug Abuse: A Course for Educators*. Butler U., 1968.
- Proger, Samuel. *The Medicated Society*. Macmillan, 1968.
- Johnson, George. *Pill Conspiracy*. NAL, 1967.
- Harris, John D. *The Junkie Priest*. Coward-McCann, 1964.
- Hentoff, Nat. *A Doctor Among the Addicts*. Rand McNally, 1968.
- Surface, William. *The Poisoned Ivy*. Doward, 1968.

### 35mm Slides

"The Problems of Drug Abuse," Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Assoc., 1969.

### Tape Recordings

"Community Involvement in Drugs," Dr. Suddjian, Director, Youth Council, California.

"Drugs," Thomas Ungenleiden, M.D.

"Scope of Addictions," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"The Addicted American—Junior Size," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"The Anonymous Addict," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"The Pill Problem," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"The Flower of the Mushroom," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"The New Ideas in 'H'," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"The Un-Anonymous Addicts," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

"'H' and 'Crime'," Westinghouse Learning Corp.

### Film-Strips

"Marijuana: What Can You Believe?" Guidance Associates.

"LSD: The Acid World," Guidance Associates.

"Narcotics," Guidance Associates.

"Sedatives," Guidance Associates.

"Stimulants," Guidance Associates.

"Psychedelics," Guidance Associates.

"The Food and Drug Administration: A Nation's Watchdog?" Guidance Associates.

"Smoking, Glue Sniffing, LSD and Alcohol," Guidance Associates.

"I Never Looked at It That Way Before," Guidance Associates.

"Who's Got the Needle?" Educational Communications Industries.

"The Drug Threat: Your Community's Response," Guidance Associates.

### Films

*Alcohol and the Human Body.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Alcoholism.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service, National Medical Audiovisual Center (ANNEX), Atlanta, Georgia 30341.

*Behind the Skyscrapers.* Visual Instruction Service, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

*Bennies and Goofballs.* National Medical Audiovisual Center, Chamblee, Georgia 30005.

*Drug Abuse: One Town's Answer.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Drug Addiction.* Encyclopedia Britannica Films, 38 West 32nd Street, New York, New York 10017.

*Drugs and the Nervous System.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*False Friends.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Hooked.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*I'll Bee Seeing You (Elementary Level).* Area II Educational Media Center.

*LSD: A Trip To Where?* Area II Educational Media Center.

*LSD: Insight or Insanity?* Area II Educational Media Center.

*LSD: Insight or Insanity?* Iowa Pharmaceutical Association, 302 Shops Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

*Marathon: Story of the Young Drug Users.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Marijuana.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Mindbenders.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service, National Medical Audiovisual Center (ANNEX), Atlanta, Georgia 30341.

*Narcotics and Kids (Elementary Level).* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Narcotics: The Inside Story.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Narcotics: Why Not?* Area II Educational Media Center.

*Pharmaceutical Medicine.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service, National Medical Audiovisual Center (ANNEX), Atlanta, Georgia 30341.

*Speed Scene—The Problem of Amphetamine Abuse.* Area II Educational Media Center.

*The Distant Drummer.* Blue Cross, Liberty Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

*The Terrible Truth.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Public Health Service, National Medical Audiovisual Center (ANNEX), Atlanta, Georgia 30341.

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### **Programs in Environmental Education Readied for Mid-Fall Release**

The latest National Science Teachers Association compilation of going environmental programs held by schools will be available by mid-October. *Programs in Environmental Education* is an aid to teachers, curriculum planners and others interested in examples of current environmental education programs.

NSTA sought information about these programs through an inquiry form that was sent to all state supervisors of science, all members of the National Science Supervisors Association and school systems represented in the NSTA curriculum bibliographies. The primary purpose was to locate materials that are available to others, and so NSTA requested that schools report only those programs that could handle inquiries, either by mail or in person.

Other current NSTA publications relating to the environment are *Vital Views of the Environment*, edited by Mrs. Mary E. Hawkins, and "Environmental Investigations—Getting Help from Uncle Sam" (a summary of environment-related activities of government agencies with a listing of representative publications from each), reprinted from the October 1971 issue of *The Science Teacher*.

Order direct from NSTA. Price per

copy: *Programs in Environmental Education*, \$1.50; *Vital Views of the Environment*, \$1.50; "Environmental Investigations—Getting Help from Uncle Sam," \$.50. Discounts: 2-9 copies, 10 percent; 10 or more copies, 20 percent. Payment must accompany all orders except those on official purchase order forms. Postage and handling charges will be added to billed orders.

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### **NEW PUBLICATION**

*Journal of College Science Teaching* is now being published quarterly by the National Science Teachers Association (Volume 1, Number 1, October 1971). The magazine is designed to disseminate the basic and innovative knowledge of science teaching and to promote the application of this knowledge to introductory college science and its function in bringing greater scientific literacy into general education.

Included will be national and legislative news, abstracts, innovations in curriculum and administration, books and audiovisual materials, and equipment and new products. Subscriptions are \$10.00 per year for libraries and non-NSTA members and \$8.00 per year for NSTA members in the regular, comprehensive or life member categories. Write to 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.