

## Education Techniques and NFP Instruction

During the BOMA 1994 teacher training conference held in Memphis (see p. 11) contemporary education techniques were discussed by Dolores Clark, M.S.N., Professor of Nursing, University of Texas, School of Health and Sciences, Arlington, TX. Clark views NFP as health education and made recommendations which, in her view, would facilitate adult learning. The following are highlights of Clark's talk.

A review of education theories demonstrates the complexities of human learning. "Empiricism" makes use of the idea that all learning is through the senses, which can be acquired through sensationism, reductionism, associationism, and mechanism. This presumes that all information comes from the outside world and is the basic learning mechanism for internal representation of simple ideas and connecting complex ideas. "Rationalism" focuses on the innate ability of the mind, which leads to representation of knowledge and labeling. Learning mechanisms include maturation and appropriate triggering events. "Cognitive" theory deals with central brain processes and goal-seeking behaviors. This type of learning includes: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis. The "Affective" domain entails: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterization that is consistent reflection of a value system. The "Psychomotor" domain is easier to measure

and includes: perception, set and guided responses, mechanism, complex overt responses, and adaptation.

Adult learning theory postulates that adults will: 1) try to learn the things they consider realistic and job-related; 2) need to see the results of their learning; 3) fear external judgements; and 4) resist learning situations that they believe attack their competence. It is therefore important to employ "critical thinking" when teaching adults. Critical thinking involves megacognition requiring a model of megacognition itself and of thinking skills which include both the task oriented dimension and strategies.

Keeping in mind the fact that different people think along different ways, teachers need to awaken the desire to learn by using a structured teaching approach which gives the student the opportunity to: practice the skill; assess performance when using the skill; and develop belief in the value of the skill and personal confidence in using it (self-efficacy). NFP teachers call this last ele-

ment "couple autonomy".

We can organize the steps needed to change behavior as:

Not thinking about changing	Cognitive
Seriously thinking about changing	Affective
Preparing for change	Skills, cognitive opportunities
Trying to make changes	Opportunity to change; practice skills
At risk for not and maintaining change	Skills; personal environmental reinforcement
Maintain changes	Personal and environmental reinforcement

Attitudes alone are not very predictive of health behaviors. Therefore one should focus on the affective factors associated with targeted behavior, that is: "Will they like NFP?" "Will the husband like it?"

Educational techniques which do not work or have minimal effects in changing behavior include those interventions which are: information-based; given only once; lacking of normative values; not reflective of reality; culturally insensitive; delivered by poorly trained and/or non-enthusiastic persons. ■

## Catechesis in Sexuality

Sharon Iler

Too much, too soon? Too little, too late? Too graphic? Too idealistic? While our children are being informed and formed by so many cultural influences beyond our control (out of control!!), an adequate catechesis in sexuality remains elusive. It is increasingly apparent that we shall

have to reflect more deeply and articulate more clearly the truths that make chastity not just achievable, but appealing and desirable as a lifestyle.

Pope John Paul's approach to sexuality catechesis is breathtakingly beautiful. Unfortunately, his reflections have yet to unfold easily from textbooks and

in popular discourse even though he began presenting it in his weekly audiences more than a dozen years ago.

The starting point of the Holy Father's instruction is basic, but largely overlooked by traditional approaches: to learn about ourselves we need to go back "to the beginning" of our existence when God first created us. If we want to understand how to live happily, we need to acquaint ourselves with how God designed us in our original innocence.

The Pope's reflections could be called

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