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## KERA's rewards and sanctions

By VANDALYN L. HOOKS  
Commentary

Let's talk about rewards and sanctions.

Kentucky's general assembly gave the politically appointed Czar of Education the right to reward those school districts in the state which conformed to the government controlled mandates and to allow the Czar to take over those schools which refused to comply.

In previous historical periods under despots such as mad man, insane Machiavelli, such behavior was frowned upon.

However, now since our government has invested many millions of federal dollars in B.F. Skinner's behavior modification, or human control techniques, hardly an eyebrow is raised when the government uses psychological techniques to bring everyone under control.

When the rewards were announced last spring, one principal declared that her teachers were in the building working night and day, and even on Saturday and Sunday they were there trying to implement KERA. They received a reward from the state for compliance.

However, further studies of Skinner's mentor Pavlov and his salivating dogs, points out that eventually the reward will be taken away and the dogs will still salivate.

Since rewards and sanctions is such a big news item, I thought it would be interesting to share a little more about the man and his methods.

*Time Magazine* called Skinner the "most influential...American psychologist." In a recent John Hopkins University poll, psychology faculties and graduate students named Skinner as the "most respected social scientist (really social engineer) in the world today." (Skinner died in 1994.)

When Skinner published his frightening book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, the Sept. 20, 1971 issue of *Time* drove home the point of Skinner's message as found in this book:

Its message is one that is familiar to followers of Skinner, but startling to the uninitiated: "We can no longer afford freedom, and so it must be replaced with control over man, his conduct and his culture. This thesis, proposed not by a writer of science fiction, but by a man of science, raises the specter of a 1984 Orwellian society that might really come to pass..."

In the Introduction to *Walden Two*, Skinner had written on the reverence of his novel, which had been published in 1948. Consider these words, written in 1976:

"...The 'behavioral engineering' I had so frequently mentioned in the book was, at the time, little more than science fiction. I had thought that an experimental analysis of behavior could be applied to practical problems, but I hadn't proved it. The 1950s...saw the beginnings of what the public has come to know as behavior modification.

Skinner offers many proposals for the "new world order."

First he argues that socialism

"might be the solution," but like capitalism, he rejects it as the final solution. "Socialism is only the process through which we will arrive at the social engineers' final destination..." Lest anyone should be confused, Skinner dreams of a return to the pagan village which they, the omnipotent ones can control.

To accomplish this, Skinner tells his disciples that they must be about the task of reducing the consumers (a reason for abortion).

He says he does not advocate Russia as the model for this annihilation of the people, "They have managed to control their environment, and to dramatically reduce their consumers." (Remember Stalin's destruction of people?) Skinner says he hopes the world of tomorrow would most closely resemble Communist China. He writes:

China may be closer to the solutions I have been talking about, but a Communist revolution in America is hard to imagine. It would be a bloody affair, and there is always Lenin's question to be answered: How much suffering can one impose upon those now living for the sake of those who will follow?...

In the last 12 years the behaviorists have become far more effective in their behavior manipulation. Perhaps their most effective attack has been against the family.

Consider Skinner's concepts of children and family.

"Parents don't need children, and children don't need parents," he wrote.

Instead, Skinner proposed that

"the community would function as a large and affectionate family in which everyone would play parental and filial roles. Blood ties would be a minor issue."

How familiar this has become. KERA and her advocates are continually quoting Skinner when they tell you it "takes an entire community to educate a child."

Skinner wrote, "Children are our most valuable resources and are now shamefully wasted.

"Wonderful things can be done in the first years of life, but we leave them to people whose mistakes range all the way from child abuse to overprotection and the lavishing of affection on the wrong behavior... This is all changed when children are, from the very first, a part of the larger community."

Can you understand now why KERA wants the nurseries in the high schools and three and four year old children in school?

Do we really believe in a psychologically controlled society?

If not, how can we accommodate "rewards and sanctions?"

(Vandalyn L. Hooks and her husband have more than 50 years in education. She has worked in two federal educational projects which were first designated for the poor, but are now mandated in Goals 2000 and KERA for all students. She has been a principal and taught K-12 curriculum. She has been an educational researcher on the reform issue since 1985. The family resides at 1302 Waverly Place, Owensboro, KY 42301.)

## Judeo-Christian values should be taught

By DR. DENNIS L. CUDDY  
Commentary

Several decades ago, John Dewey's "progressive" educators began emphasizing social relationships over academic basics, and by the 1960s they had gained control of our public schools. They inflated grades and gave social promotions so as not to hurt students' self-esteem, and SAT as well as other test scores began to decline.

It was a triumph of the values of the French Revolution over those of the American Revolution. The "liberty" of the French Revolution amounted to a "do your own thing" morality. "Equality" didn't mean equal opportunity, but rather a leveling of society, and it was easier to level down than up. And "fraternity" didn't mean a Judeo-Christian brotherhood, but a humanistic one. As one of the founders of the 4-million member International Humanist and Ethical Union said, if schools teach (moral) dependence on one's self, "they are more revolutionary than

any conspiracy to overthrow the government." Schools did, and he was right.

Nearly all of society's problems (e.g., crime, drugs) can be traced to the question of values, and while there are other societal influences upon youth, school is the one place they are required to be. Today's educational leaders, like Ted Sizer, a quarter century ago were writing that they "doubt the value of giving grades...Christian sermonizing denies individual autonomy, which lies at the heart of the new morality...toward which we are to guide ourselves and other people...Clearly the strict adherence to a 'code' is out of date."

Education isn't value-free, and when Judeo-Christian prayers and morality were kicked out of schools by the "progressives," they were replaced by moral relativism and situation ethics taught via values clarification techniques. Thus, the widely used textbook, *Contemporary Living*, in the early 1980s stated, "if you

follow the guidance of your parents, you might risk the criticism of your peers. The best approach is to try to combine family and peer influences."

Now, after many years of telling students they are autonomous moral decision-makers who don't have to defer to parental authority, there's an effort underway today to teach students values "upon which we can all agree." One value mentioned is "honesty," but is that Judeo-Christian honesty based upon moral absolutes, or is it humanistic honesty based upon situation ethics (e.g., one usually tells friends the truth, but perhaps not if it would hurt their feelings).

The essential question concerning values education in school is "who is the authority" for teaching students something is right or wrong? Is it God, or each person, or 51 percent of society? I would suggest that since the vast majority of Americans indicate they believe in Judeo-Christian values, those values should be

explicitly taught as such. And if that can't be done because of "church-state separation" considerations, then all values-related instruction (e.g., comprehensive sex education) should be removed from the public schools, because it's discrimination to exclude the value system of a majority of Americans while teaching students on the basis of other value systems. Schools should then return to instructing students in the academic basics (including homework) with teaching methods and activities proven successful, rather than continuing their 3-decade infatuation with innovations like the disastrous "new math" of the 1960s and outcome-based education today, where students can take an indefinite amount of time to learn anything.

(Dennis Cuddy, Raleigh, N.C., has taught in public schools, at the university level, and has been a Senior Associate with the U.S. Department of Education. He is the author of "The Grab of Power," concerning the National Education Association.