ABSTRACT

THEORY AND OBSERVATION OF EXPRESSION

IN AN AUTISTIC CHILD

By

Debra Lee Wallett

The purpose of this study is: (1) to gain a theoretical understanding of the expressive process, particularly as it relates to an autistic child, and (2) to present two styles of inquiry organized on mechanical and organic structures.

The theory of expression to be examined is based on R.G. Collingwood's, The Principles of Art. This theory does not utilize the common meanings of expression, such as communication, ventilation of feelings or symbolic representation, but rather relies on a definition of expression as a process of self-clarification. The expressive process, as thus defined, is concerned with elements of internal processing as well as observable behavior. This study maintains that in such processes the meaning behind the observable is as significant as an accurate description of the observed.

The two methods of research utilized were: (1) a reliability study aimed at developing an accurate behavioral account of a prototypic example of expression, and (2) a phenomenological, historical inquiry which attempts to

present the meaning behind the observable event through reflecting the consciousness of the child and his teacher. Each method of inquiry brings to the research a set of presuppositions which influence the procedures and type of information gathered. Based on a discussion of a theory of presuppositions, the set of presuppositions for each method will be presented.

The research was based on a project entitled, "Multi-Sensory and Expressive Approach to Teaching Autistic Children." The subject was a four-year-old autistic child who participated in this program. The presuppositions upon which this program was based and the teaching methodology will be presented. In addition to a description of this particular project, a rationale for expressive education will be developed.

Results obtained from the reliability study showed a high degree of agreement between judges on all test items. Further, affective behavior was reliably observed by all judges in their assessment of the expressive process. The judges were also as reliable in their qualitative assessment as in the observation of molecular behaviors.

The phenomenological historical inquiry emphasized the concrete nature of the phenomena and tended towards preserving the "lived experience" and providing insight into the more internal elements of the expressive process.

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It was concluded that if the primary purpose was to produce generalizations and abstract accounting of the phenomena, then a behavioral inquiry and presentational style seemed sufficient. However, if the primary interest was in non abstract patterns and how to get at the meaning behind the event, then a phenomenological historical writing style seemed proper.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to gain a theoretical understanding of the expressive process, particularly as it relates to an autistic child, and (2) to present two styles of inquiry organized on mechanical and organic structures.

Emphasis will be placed on: (1) developing the conceptual framework for the expressive process in accordance with R.G. Collingwood's book, The Principles of Art, (2) describing two methods of inquiry which may be utilized in an attempt to understand this process, and (3) presenting educational rationale based on a multi-sensory and expressive approach.[1]

The concept of expression in this study focuses on a notion of expression, particularly artistic expression, as a process primarily of self-clarification. As thus defined, the expressive process is vitally concerned with the elements of internal processing as well as observable behavior. In such a concern the meaning behind the observable is as significant as an accurate description of the observed. This problem is particularly complex in an autistic child where the behavioral cues that one usually relies on to gain access to internal processing are either frequently absent or their meanings are so uncommon to be

easily misunderstood.

In Chapter II a theory of expression and the con-
sciousness of the self as stated by R.G. Collingwood is
presented. This is followed by a discussion of autism and
behaviors that, (1) are identified consistently in some
form throughout the literature on autism, and (2) have
relevance to the theory of expression. Lastly, this
section describes the function of presuppositions in the
formulation of thought, particularly concerning scientific
thought.

Chapter III presents the setting of a project entitled,
"Multi-Sensory and Expressive Approach to Teaching Autistic
Children" conducted by the author and others at the Kresge
Art Center, Michigan State University, during the summer
of 1975. From the materials gathered on a four-year-old
autistic child, one of the subjects of this study, an
attempt will be made to apply the theoretical and
methodological considerations discussed to an actual case
study.

Chapter IV contains a mechanically organized analysis
of pre-selected video tapes in an attempt to ascertain
whether the occurrence of behaviors indicating "expression"
can be reliably observed as well as the presuppositions
upon which a methodology is based.

The presentational style which the author finds more
compatible with understanding the meaning behind the

observed behavior is phenomenological history. The
organization, presentational style as well as the pre-
suppositions are developed in Chapter V.

The concern of Chapter VI is the development of a
rationale for expressive education and the examination of
such concepts as individuality, idiosyncratic meaning and
causality.

Chapter VII concludes with a summary and further
observations.

CHAPTER II

THEORY

Expression

The concept of expression presented here is based on a theory of expression developed by R.G. Collingwood in his Principles of Art. In defining expression, Collingwood utilizes none of the common meanings, such as communication of one's self to another, ventilation of feelings or symbolic representation. Expression, as viewed by Collingwood, is a process phenomenon characterized by the development of self-clarification.

Human experience, according to Collingwood, always contains emotional elements even though the individual may not be conscious of them. Therefore, an individual may misinterpret, be confused about or be unable to attend fully to his experience and thus operate on either incomplete or inaccurate information concerning his own being, the world around him, and his interaction with that world. In the expressive process these emotions are brought to the level of consciousness.

Collingwood discusses the emotional affective response in "expression as a process" by explaining that the emergence of a feeling and the expression of this feeling occur simultaneously.[2] Thus, for example, feelings are not experienced at a conscious level then expressed, but rather through the process of expression feelings become conscious.

Collingwood also makes explicit the distinction between the expression of an emotion and merely "exhibiting the symptoms" or ventilation of an emotion. In the latter, all that is required is that the individual display some response, such as a cry in response to pain. However, that response need not contain any element of awareness or consciousness of the self.

Although Collingwood's discussion of expression focuses on the element of emotion, he does not intend that experience and one's awareness of his experience be divisible into emotion versus the external world or awareness of one's emotions as being separate from awareness of the experience as a whole. As one's idiosyncratic meaning system is the basis for understanding not only of the self but of the self within a context, clarification of the self necessarily includes a simultaneous clarification of the lived experience in which one finds himself.

For Collingwood, the consciousness of self includes the emerging awareness of one's surroundings, more specifically of others.

> Consciousness does not begin as a mere self-consciousness, establishing in each one of us the idea of himself, as a person or centre of experience, and then proceed by some process, whether of 'projection' or of argument by analogy, to construct or infer other persons. Each one of us is a finite being, surrounded by others of the same kind; and the consciousness of our own existence is also the consciousness of the existence of these others. Being a form of thought, consciousness is

liable to error (Chapter X § 7); and when first
a child discovers its own existence it
simultaneously discovers the existence not only
of its mother or nurse but of other persons
like a cat, a tree, a firelight shadow, a piece
of wood, where errors in admitting this or that
neighbour to the category of person are no doubt
correlative to errors in its conception of its
own personality. But, however much the
discovery (like any other discovery) is at first
involved in error, the fact remains that the
child's discovery of itself as a person is also
its discovery of itself as a member of a world
of persons.

    . . . the discovery of myself as a person
is also the discovery of other persons around
me.3

Collingwood also recognizes that not every experience

is alike in quality or complexity. Specifically, he

identifies a hierarchy of three levels of experience:

psychical, imaginative and intellectual.

The psychical level of experience is concerned primarily

with experience at the body level and the emotions

accompanying the level are for the most part automatic

involuntary bodily responses, such as the startled reaction

of a child to a loud unexpected noise or the tense muscles

of a man under attack.

It is at the imaginative level that consciousness or

awareness first becomes evident. Experience at this level

is no longer fleeting but distinguishable, attended to,

recognized, held in one's memory and reflected upon. The

sense in which Collingwood uses imagination is to equate

it with consciousness.

At the intellectual level, experience which has become

conscious is available for comparison with other experience
and construction of relationships between experience. At
this level one may begin to consider the meaning of an
experience beyond that which is straightforwardly presented,
such as the understanding of symbols and abstractions.
These levels of experience are utilized by Collingwood
primarily to provide an understanding of the complexity of
the substance of experience and prevent the over-simplifi-
cation of the material which is available to the individual
in the process of expression.

Although stating these levels of experience in the
form of a hierarchy, Collingwood takes care to point out
that each higher level of experience contain elements of
the lower. Thus although emotions at the psychical level
are not in themselves ones of which the person is conscious,
this does not exclude them from being contributing features
of self-clarification. Indeed in terms of the hierarchy of
experience they form the primitive foundation upon which
all experience is based.

Autism

Since Kanner's initial identification of the autistic
syndrome, numerous theoretical descriptions and behavioral
checklists have been postulated for use in diagnosing the
autistic child. Still there exists a considerable amount
of disagreement as to the specific characteristics which
should be utilized in determining autism and thus no one

description has been accepted as definitive by professionals working with autistic children.

Characteristics, such as aloofness, avoidance of social contact, excessive self-stimulation, unrealistic fears, inappropriate affect, discrepent intellectual skills, sensory abnormalities, preoccupation with mechanical objects, insistence upon sameness, repetitive behaviors, difficulty with eating and toileting, unusual or non existent speech, and distortion in mobility patterns have been identified with varying frequency in the literature as indicators of childhood autism.

Rather than attempting to examine such a broad range of characteristics, the author has chosen in this study to focus on two general categories of behaviors that, (1) are identified consistently in some form throughout the literature with autism, and (2) have relevance to the theory of expression.

The first such category has been referred to by such terms as "autistic aloneness",[4] "aloofness and social withdrawal"[5] and extreme ego-centricity. Although the terms differ with each author, such descriptors refer to a common category of autistic characteristics concerned with the child's disinterest in or even aversion[6] to the external world. Within this general category it is possible to identify more specific characteristics which have been observed in varying degrees of frequency in autistic

populations. Such characteristics are: lack of exploratory play, avoidance of social contact, unrealistic fears, lack of awareness of other people or the environment, inappropriate or non existent verbal communication, and excessive self-stimulation.

Closely related to this both in terms of interactive function and behavioral description is a category generally referred to as lack of self-awareness.[7] The characteristics of this category include such behaviors as inappropriate or non existent affective response, lack of initiative behaviors, peculiar posturing and self-directed aggression.

In utilizing such categories and characteristics it must be noted that not all need be evident nor will the form of the observed characteristics necessarily be the same in every child. For example, disinterest or rejection of the external world may be exhibited in one child primarily by lack of exploratory play and avoidance of social contact, while another child may participate in exploratory play but be affectively unresponsive, non communicative and maintain social contact with only one particular individual avoiding all others.

Often the autistic child is highly aware of selected aspects of his environment, such as an extreme concentration when spinning small objects, watching his fingers move as they are held in the sunlight, despair over a remembered object moved from its usual place, or the song that was

heard once on the radio which becomes the only words to be spoken by him.

Rarely does this extreme selectivity serve to bring the child to a higher consciousness; i.e., an awareness of himself, but rather fixates and fosters rigidity. On the other hand, the self-clarifying function of expression provides the child with strategies which are necessary for effective and continued growth.

Presuppositions

In all research the method of inquiry ought to be appropriate to the nature of the phenomena being studied. Each methodology, be it historical inquiry, empirical analysis, biographical description or phenomenological observation brings to the inquiry some presuppositions which influenced the format, the assumptions concerning the basic nature of the phenomena and the possibilities of interpretation. This section will serve to provide the reader with some understanding of the function of pre-suppositions in the formulation of thought, particularly concerning scientific thought.

Collingwood makes a distinction between the function of three basic forms of thought - propositions, suppositions, and presuppositions.[8] Propositions are those statements which are subject to verification; i.e., those statements which may be shown to be either true or false. Suppositions are statements made not for the purpose of verification, but

for the purpose of examining the questions which might
arise from the making of such a statement. Presuppositions
are those statements upon which any question or proposition
is based. Presuppositions function in all thought as
logically prior to the statement or questions to which it
is related.

In scientific thought presuppositions function not
only as logical prior to the thoughts to which they are
related, but also temporally prior. According to
Collingwood, a person who is thinking scientifically rather
than casually is aware that the statement he makes is made
in answer to a question and that the question asked is based
on a presupposition. When engaging in scientific thought,
the person not only recognizes the existence of pre-
supposition, question and statement, but takes care that his
thoughts proceed temporally in the proper order.

An important distinction to remember in Collingwood's
theory is that propositions are subject to verification,
whereas suppositions are not. Thus any attempt to verify
a supposition results in a nonsensical argument. This
distinction between propositions and suppositions is also
useful in understanding Collingwood's definitions of a
relative and an absolute presupposition. Since in addition
to functioning as the logically prior thought to a state-
ment or question, a relative presupposition also
functions as an answer to a question, a relative presupposition

like a proposition is subject to verification; i.e., it may be examined as to its truth or falsehood. However, by definition an absolute presupposition functions only as the logically prior thought upon which any statement or question is based, never as an answer. It, like a supposition, is not subject to verification. Any examination of an absolute presupposition like that of a supposition, may be concerned only with exploring the logical efficacy or the questions that arise from such a presupposition.

The fallacies to be found in pseudo-scientific thinking arise, according to Collingwood, chiefly from (1) a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of a proposition as distinguished from a supposition and thus, (2) either the refusal to recognize the existence of absolute presuppositions or the equation of absolute presuppositions with relative presuppositions.[9]

The function of absolute presuppositions in thought is described by Collingwood as follows:

> We do not acquire absolute presuppositions by arguing; on the contrary, unless we have them already arguing is impossible to us. Nor can we change them by arguing; unless they remained constant all our arguments would fall to pieces. We cannot confirm ourselves in them by 'proving' them; it is proof that depends on them, not they on proof. . . . We must accept them and hold firmly to them . . . .
>
> But not without asking what they are.[10]

Although Collingwood adopts the attitude that absolute presuppositions are not subject to verification, he does not absolve them from the necessity for serious examination of another nature. In the last statement in the previous quote, Collingwood indicates the first step in this examination - that of asking what are the absolute presuppositions upon which one is basing his thoughts. In relation to the presuppositions made by others, this inquiry, he maintains, is of an historical nature concerned with discovering what absolute presuppositions served as the foundation for various schools of thought.

In defining the study of absolute presuppositions as an historical inquiry, Collingwood acknowledges that there is neither a universal set of presuppositions operating throughout time, nor within a given time merely one set of presuppositions held by all. Admittedly a set or as Collingwood terms it a "constellation" of absolute pre-suppositions may dominate an historical era; however, he maintains these presuppositions are subject to continual strain, indicating the existence of conflicting pre-suppositions held by others and accounting in part for the eventual formation of a new set of predominate absolute presuppositions. In identifying the absolute presuppositions held by a group of people, one is involved not merely in identifying a single absolute presupposition, but a set or "constellation."

Once a person is aware of such presuppositions, then
he ought, according to Collingwood, to examine what it
means to have such presuppositions.

> All the same, knowing that he does it
> means more than being able simply to state the
> fact that he does it; it means also being able
> to explain what exactly it is that he is doing.[11]

The importance of such an examination lies not in
attempting to determine the truth or falsehood of such
presuppositions but in being able to determine the
logical efficacy or questions which may rightfully be
derived from such presuppositions.

Chapter III will describe the research setting and
present the educational presuppositions. Chapters IV and
V will each contain a research method of inquiry. Each
methodology will be based on a certain "constellation" of
absolute presuppositions and according to Collingwood the
proper examination of absolute presuppositions lies not in
arguing for the truth or falsehood, but in knowing what they
are and what knowledge one might reasonably expect to gain
from the respective presuppositions of each method.

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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH SETTING

This chapter will contain a description of a research project entitled, "Multi-Sensory and Expressive Approach to Teaching Autistic Children" conducted by the author and Charles Steele at the Kresge Art Center, Michigan State University, during the summer of 1975. From the materials gathered on Jerry, one of the subjects in this study, an attempt will be made to apply the theoretical and methodological considerations discussed to an actual case study.

Subject

The subject was a $4\frac{1}{2}$ year-old male child previously diagnosed as autistic. Reports obtained from the parents before participation in the project stated that the subject had no speech other than a random emission of the "ah" sound, no eye contact, either banged his head on objects or banged his head with objects, avoided contact with anyone other than his mother, would spin rather than play appropriately with circular objects, such as the wheel on his wagon, become highly anxious and have temper tantrums if wet or messy clothes were not removed, displayed little affect, was fearful of various objects and activities, such as his tricycle and bathing or swimming, would wander away and not respond to his name and had a short attention span together with hyperactivity.

Observational Setting

The ten week project was conducted on the following
schedule: 2½ hours per day, 3 days per week for the first
5 weeks; 5 hours per day, 3 days per week for the second
5 weeks.

During the project the participants varied from five
to ten children with the major segment of the project
(seven weeks) being conducted with an average of seven
children participating. The subject and his older brother,
both diagnosed as autistic, participated for the full ten
week period. With the exception of two week placements
each of a retarded child, a hyperactive child and an
emotionally disturbed child, the other participants were
normal children from a local school district and attended
on an average of seven weeks each. The children were
divided into two groups -- the first from ages 3 to 6,
the second from ages 7 to 12. The staff ranged in number
from three to seven and participated on a rotating basis
with the number of teachers in the room ranging from two
to four adults. Sessions in the room and most special
activities were video taped. With the exception of daily
outdoor activities and special activities, such as
swimming, ice skating, picnics, canoeing and camping, the
project was conducted in a large room divided into three
basic sections: one small area for video tape equipment,
one area for materials, such as tools, toxic paints,

sewing materials, etc., reserved for use by the older children, and a large area to be used by both groups of children. The large area contained materials and space for expressive media activities, gross motor activities, fine motor activities, reading and story time, games, toys and music. All such materials in this area were placed for easy access by any of the children.

Although specific activities varied daily, the basic structure of the subject's program for the last five weeks consisted of independent study (child-initiated activities), expressive media activities, clean-up, out-door activities, snack, teacher-directed learning activities, lunch, rest period, music and gross motor activities.

The program was based on the following pre-suppositions:

1. In order to develop perceptual awareness and accuracy of the world, children need structured input from adults.

2. However, every child also needs an acceptable means of self-expression. Expression is defined as primarily the active clarifying of one's covert imagination, emotions and unreflected experiences. Such expression is an integral part of the development of self-identity.

3. Growth requires experiences to be internalized and integrated in the child's life. We can cause a child to change his external behavior; however, the processes of internalization and integration are less subject to simple cause and effect relationships.

4. The intrinsic needs of an autistic child, such as security, stimulation, expression and identity are similar to those of the normal child; only the manifestations are different.

The basic components of the methodology were:

1. A primary concern will be the daily establishment of a constant nurturant and trusting relationship between the teacher and student through affective interrelating combining both verbal and non verbal aspects.

2. Materials which are geared to the child's needs and interests, such as puzzles, manipulative toys, art supplies, gross and fine motor materials, musical instruments, etc. will be gradually introduced to the classroom. The use of these materials will be primarily determined by the child's interests with the teacher guiding his experience when necessary. The room arrangement and materials should reflect a multi-sensory emphasis aimed at developing a child's perceptual awareness and accuracy.

3. Activities involving expressive media, such as water, sand, pudding, finger paint, shaving cream, clay, etc. will be scheduled on a regular basis. The primary function of these activities is to provide the child with a media for self expression which is at a level meaningful to him. Ancillary functions are the development of fine and gross motor skills, facilitation of perceptual awareness (including such specifics as color and shape discrimination), language development and encouragement of social and affective interrelating.

4. All instruction of a specific nature, such as language acquisition, fine and gross motor competency, social relating discriminatory abilities, etc. which involve structured input from the teacher, should occur in a meaningful experiential context rather than in isolation.

The author of this study participated as a teacher-researcher with the majority of time being spent in a one-to-one relationship with the subject.

Discussion

In order to conduct further examination of the process of expression in an autistic child, it was necessary to first establish evidence of the existence of expression as an observable phenomenon. The results of the study indicate that the behaviors may be reliably observed and, therefore, subject to further study. Given the high reliability of observation on all of the ten categories, further examination could focus on establishing correlations between the various categories. Such examination could provide information concerning the structure of the expressive process. Attention given to the frequency of the observable behaviors within various activities could provide information concerning the development of expression in relation to instructional or therapeutic programming.

Establishment of correlations between observable behaviors and rating scales may also provide information concerning what behaviors observers' rely upon in the making of judgements.

The similarity in reliability between participant observers and observers indicate that even those who have not had experience in working with autistic children are able to make accurate observations from the video tape presentations. However, all of the judges in the study had some experience in the field of art and, therefore, may represent a bias with respect to their observation of expressive behavior.

CHAPTER IV

MECHANICAL ORGANIZATION OF PHENOMENA

One of the concepts which played a major role in the educational approach to working with autistic children in the program described in Chapter III was that of expression as developed by R.G. Collingwood.

The focus of this chapter will be to describe a mechanically organized analysis of pre-selected video tapes in an attempt to ascertain whether the occurrence of behaviors indicating "expression" can be reliably observed.

Before presenting the research methodology and results obtained, the following represents the constellation of absolute presuppositions upon which such a methodology is based.

Presuppositions

The following method presupposes:

1. A mechanical organization defined by the notion that the whole may be understood as an addition of its parts. In the mechanical view a phenomenon may be unique and complex because there may be an infinite number of elements to be considered; however, were all of the elements known they would function in a simple additive fashion in forming the whole.

2. The proper method for examining phenomenon is to reduce the molar event down to those molecular elements which may be directly observed and measured.

3. Objectivity as observed by overt behavior. Objectivity is defined as those elements of

phenomena which have physical properties and are observable.

4. The notion of operational definitions, i.e., that an idea is scientifically meaningful only when defined by a measurable process.

5. A deterministic viewpoint in which for every effect there exists a cause and it is assumed that all behavior is a function of causal factors. Coupled with a reductionistic approach, these two pre-suppositions aim towards a methodology which seeks to account for phenomena by reducing it to a series of causal factors.

Reliability Study

In an effort to establish the reliability of behaviors indicating expression by an autistic child, judges were asked to make recorded observations from edited video tape selections of a particular autistic child during his participation in the summer program. Two edited tapes were prepared for observation. One was intended as a prototypic example of expressive behavior, the other as an example of non expressive behavior.

In keeping with the concerns identified in the previous discussion of autistic characteristics and components of expression, both the behaviors selected for observation and the rating scales were concerned with the child's response to another individual. Because the occurrence of repetitive behavior in autistic children is frequently mentioned in autistic literature, two non interactive categories (Repetitive Verbalization and

and Repetitive Physical Behavior) were included.

Behaviors selected for observation were as follows: (1) positive physical interaction defined as any movement by the child towards another person which is directed towards a common goal; (2) positive verbal interaction defined as any vocalization by the child indicating either pleasure, such as laughter, giggling, and/or any vocalization indicating agreement with the other, or is an attempt to produce sounds requested by the other; (3) negative physical interaction defined as any physical movement directed towards another person where the goal is to indicate displeasure or induce the other to move away from the child; (4) negative verbal interaction defined as any vocalization, such as cries or screams, which indicate displeasure or disagreement with the other; (5) avoidance - any movement by the child in which the goal is to move away from the other, or any refusal by the child to respond to either the physical and/or verbal response by the other reoccurring; (6) repetitive behavior defined as any physical movement in which the goal and movement are unchanging; (7) non repetitive behavior defined as any physical movement in which the goal and movement are changing; (8) repetitive verbal defined as any vocalization which is reoccurring, monotoned, and unchanging.

In addition to recording the observation of the

above behaviors, judges were also asked to rate their

impression of the child's awareness of self and others on

a five point scale of sufficient to insufficient awareness

and his affective response on a five point scale of

appropriate to inappropriate.

Subjects

Seven judges were asked to score the video tapes.

The criterion for selection of judges 4,5,6,7 was that they

all had participated as teachers in the autistic program.

In addition, judge 4 is a certified elementary school

teacher with eleven years teaching experience, judge 5 is

an assistant professor of art education and certified art

teacher with fifteen years teaching experience, judge 6 is

a graduate student in art education and author of this

paper, judge 7 is an undergraduate in special education.

The criterion for selection of judges 1,2,3 was that they

had no participation in the autistic program. Judge 1 is

a graduate student in education, judge 2 is an undergraduate

in art education and judge 3 is a graduate student in art

education.

Procedure

From a selection of one hundred 60-minute tapes, four

edited tapes were prepared. The first served as the

training tape for observing non expressive behavior; the

second served as the training tape for expressive behavior;

the third was the research tape exhibiting non expressive behavior; the fourth was the research tape demonstrating expressive behavior. Each tape was edited so that thirty seconds of visual material appeared followed by ten seconds of blank tape. There were six 30-second cuts on each training tape and seventeen 30-second cuts for each research tape. Sony video tape playback equipment provided rewind, stop, forward, pause and fast forward operations.

All judges were required to complete one training session immediately preceding the scoring of the research tapes. The following procedure with one noted exception was followed for scoring both the training and research tapes.

Prior to viewing the tape, the definitions of behaviors listed previously were verbally presented. Any questions concerning the definitions were discussed. Each 30-second segment of the tape was presented in the following manner: during the first viewing judges were directed to observe the material, but make no recordings. During the second viewing, judges were directed to score for physical behaviors (definitions 1,3,5,6,7,9,10). During the third viewing, judges were directed to score for verbal behaviors (definitions 2,4,8). Previous to viewing the tapes, judges were instructed to record observation of the defined behaviors during the viewing of the segments and to mark the five point scales after viewing the segment the second time.

After each 30-second viewing during the training session <u>only</u>, the judges' recorded observations were compared and discussed. Frequently, examples of each of the behaviors defined were pointed out by the trainer.

<u>Results</u>

Analysis of the data using coefficient alpha showed a high degree of agreement between the seven judges on all ten categories.

Coefficient alpha for each of the ten categories over thirty-four trials was computed with the following results.

TABLE I

<u>Category</u>	<u>Reliability Coefficient Alpha</u>		
	<u>All Judges</u>	<u>P (1-3)</u>	<u>P-O (4-7)</u>
Pos. Phy.	.98461	.96726	.97669
Pos. Verb.	.98775	.98347	.97517
Neg. Phy.	.99259	.98295	.98663
Neg. Verb.	.97951	.89433	.99164
Avoidance	.97780	.95398	.97997
Rep. Beh.	.98433	.94119	.97994
Non-Rep. Beh.	.96637	.92862	.92537
Rep. Verb.	.98121	.92907	.97774
Awareness	.98664	.97847	.97442
Affect. Resp.	.99057	.98104	.98140

Discussion

In order to conduct further examination of the process
of expression in an autistic child, it was necessary to
first establish evidence of the existence of expression as
an observable phenomena. The results of the study indicate
that the behaviors may be reliably observed and, therefore,
subject to further study. Given the high reliability of
observation on all of the ten categories, further examination
could focus on establishing correlations between the various
categories. Such examination could provide information
concerning the structure of the expressive process.
Attention given to the frequency of the observable behaviors
within various activities could provide information con-
cerning the development of expression in relation to
instructional or therapeutic programming.

Establishment of correlations between observable
behaviors and rating scales may also provide information
concerning what behaviors observers' rely upon in the
making of judgements.

The similarity in reliability between participant
observers and observers indicates that even those who have
not had experience in working with autistic children are
able to make accurate observations from the video tape
presentations. However, all of the judges in the study had
some experience in the field of art and, therefore, may
represent a bias with respect to their observation of
expressive behavior.

CHAPTER V

ORGANIC ORGANIZATION OF PHENOMENA

The intrinsic character of expression, "individuality,"
personal meaning and the idiosyncratic nature of any
particular person makes these concepts understandably
difficult to examine by the methods of inquiry which rely
upon the logical positivist notions of operational
definition and empirical verification. However, the
difficulty here may well lie more with the limitations of
a methodology than with the validity of the concept.
Therefore, rather than discard the concept of expression,
let us turn to a method of inquiry which may prove more
suited to the nature of expression.

In _The Idea of History_, Collingwood describes an
historical method of inquiry concerned with the perception
of observable events _and_ _also_ to the "penetrating to the
inside of events and detecting the thought which they
express."[12] This he maintains requires more than con-
sciousness as defined as awareness or perception. It
requires self-consciousness in which the perceiver becomes
aware of something and, in addition, becomes aware of himself
as entering into thought concerning what he perceives.
Empirical observation is concerned primarily with the
observation of an event, its relation to other observed
events and the laws of cause and effect by which one may

generalize about the relation between events and often form predictions concerning future events.

In historical inquiry which is concerned with the nature, thought or meaning within the event, one must attempt both to reconstruct the thought of the individual and to be aware of the process of thought in which one is engaged. To enter into such an inquiry it is necessary not only to accurately perceive the single event, but to maintain a perception of the wholistic nature of the individual over time and space and to know, confront and interpret the characteristics of one's own thought processes.

The presentational style which is compatible with this more elusive aspect of expression is called "phenomenological history."[13] Phenomenological history is an attempt to explain or to minimally formalize patterns in a non abstract manner. Its style maximizes the pure phenomenon rather than making a priori attributions of a general nature.

There are various styles which may be employed in getting at the meaning behind the event. For example, writings of Virginia Woolf, Henry James and Richard Hughes represent literary styles utilized in the attempt to get at the consciousness of children.[14] Despite the variation in presentational styles an adult, in trying to present a child's consciousness, is performing an investigation similar to the business of an historian in the sense

discussed by Collingwood. Both are concerned with reconstructing the events as experience rather than primarily as a generalizable abstraction. The task is particularly difficult in Jerry's case as evidence reconstructing the form and content of his consciousness is complicated by the fact that he is both a young and non verbal child.

Utilizing the concepts presented in Collingwood's view of historical inquiry and based on the following presuppositions, this chapter will attempt to get at the meaning behind the observable event; i.e., to gain some insight into the expressive event as a lived experience.

Presuppositions

The following method presupposes:

1. An organic organization in which the whole may not be understood simply as the sum of its parts. Rather the structure has a way of transforming the whole so that its meaning is greater than the sum of its parts. In the organic view, as opposed to the mechanical, complexity and uniqueness may not be attributed to the notion of an infinite number of elements. Even if the elements were finite and identifiable, the inter-relationship among them would transform the whole so that it has a characteristic of its own.

2. In examining a phenomenon a certain amount of reductionism is necessary; however, care should be taken to minimize the reduction and preserve the integrity of the whole.

3. The criteria for objectivity is that it be unprejudiced, unbiased, non emotional, value-free and non perspectible. This criteria does not insist that objectivity be equated with external observable events and placed in opposition to subjectivity. In this sense, it is possible for elements involving internal consciousness, such

as thought or the making of qualitative
judgements to be considered objective as long
as they meet the above criteria. Such
objectivity is concerned with seeing a thing
for what it is rather than what you want it
to be.

4. The validity of an idea does not depend on its
being observable nor must it be subject to
operational definition and empirical
verification. Rather, any serious inquiry
which adds to the understanding of the
phenomenon and whose structure is not
arbitrary, but objective in the sense defined
above, may be considered.

Case History

The following account reflects a movement in

presentational style from an emphasis on observational

reporting to an expression of the meaning of the events

and also indicates a corresponding change in the con-

sciousness of the child and the teacher.

Unlike many autistic children whose behaviors are so

noticeably bizzare, Jerry's autism was more subtle and

initially difficult to assess. At first, he appears active,

curious, independent and a physically attractive child.

As a rather distant and intermittent observer, one is

minorly impressed with some peculiarities in body stance

and a continual voicing of the "ah-ah-ah" sound.

I had been involved in various capacities for the

previous two years with normal, autistic and retarded

children. Jerry was one of the most difficult children to

touch that I had experienced.

At times, his rejection of physical contact was active --
displaying itself by pushing me away, pulling himself away,
running from my presence, crying or hitting. Most
frequently, however, he was quite passive but so efficient
in his avoidance that it seemed calculated. For example,
he would position himself so that the table, chair, toy or
some such object was between him and me or he would adopt
a route of movement that maintained a sizeable distance
between himself and others. Whether active, passive or
some combination of both, the net result was that Jerry's
avoidance of contact with people seemed a consistant and
natural life style.

Although such observations seemed to fit rather
neatly with the literature on autism, I found that they
did not provide me enough insight into Jerry's life. In
focusing primarily on the standard categorizations, such
as avoidance and perseveration, these a priori categories
frequently operated to narrow my consciousness of his
experience. I, therefore, began to examine these
observations in a manner which might provide me with more
insight into their meaning.

Generally, I believe Jerry found people to be an
interference, an irritation to his contentment in being
by himself. He was completely absorbed and occupied when
playing by himself. He would stack and cuddle soft blocks
for a much greater period of time than my patience would

have allowed me to do. He would be so intent and energized that simply classifying his behavior as perseverative seemed somewhat over-simple. What could he have been experiencing with those six-inch multi-colored soft blocks? Can Jerry even think verbal comments? Would Jerry think verbally? Were he to verbally describe his experience, might he talk of:

"Colors, colors, colors! Yellow, red, blue, black! Focus and I see only one. Move and they blur. Pile them up and look down. The pile is short! Squat and look up - it's tall! Push the pile over - the colors move, separate, bounce. Pick them all up. Soft on my hands, soft on my face. Press my head into them and they disappear. Stand up - there they are again!"

Could this be an almost endless monologue, an endless excitement for Jerry in the sensations he experienced with his favorite toys? An excitement that was more than mere repetitive stimulation, rather an involved concentration that allowed him to continually discover those immediate, sensuous elements of experience which children learn to yield to the process of categorizing and objectifying their sensibilities in preparation for conceptualization. If this were so, how might Jerry see the approach of a communicative person.

"Colors! Colors! Colors! Focus and I see only one. Blur them all together . . . Gone! The colors are gone!"

"Jerry, what do you have there? Look, there is an elephant on this block."

"I want to see the colors blur. You're moving them around. Can't see my colors!"

"There is a dog and a tree and . . ."

"Away! Go away! You're moving the colors and I can't see them! The colors were falling and you picked them up before they bounced. Let me see them!"

As I tried to get into Jerry's consciousness, his life began to take on a coherence in which the initial impression of Jerry as an active, curious, noisy, independent, attractive child converges with the behaviors of avoidance, perseveration and inappropriate affect. More than a mere addition of these descriptive elements, Jerry's presence began to have a consistency to it.

I was somewhat apprehensive about using expressive media with Jerry. If he and I were sharing an experience which I directed, he would be required to stay with me and attend. In the past, this had been a source of difficulty.

It was rare that Jerry allowed himself to want something I would present to him. Frequently, while in my presence, he would reject whatever new item I showed him. Later he would go by himself to try it out. Even though he seemed to have an intrinsic love for moving, manipulative objects, he would rather delay his curiosity than deal with my presence.

Initially, being unaware of this strategy, I wondered, "Were the materials too difficult? Was there some common but subtle characteristic about them which he finds offensive but I was missing? Have I assessed his skills inaccurately?" It was not until I paid as close attention to his independent wanderings over the entire span of the day, sometimes days, that I began to notice his gradual use of the new materials when I was a safe distance away. I then realized that his curiosity was active and that he was not afraid to explore, but such exploration could not be demanded. Could he be drawn out? Perhaps.

I needed something that would intrigue him yet push him forward, help bridge the gap between the strategies with which he was comfortable and new strategies that might expand his awareness. What did he get excited about? He loved motion and being able to manipulate material; however, he seemed less interested in things that required a prescribed form of manipulation to produce action. He seemed to respond to the sensory elements of experience-- touching, smelling and watching things move. Could I incorporate myself into his experience, not as an inter- ference, a dictator of his actions, but as a companion, compatible with the flow of his desires and whose input added to the experience.

I decided on shaving cream. It was tactile, easily manipulative and could be put into motion. Yet it

required some new strategies. Although it could be
manipulated, each action produced a somewhat different change
in the material. It would move but Jerry or I would have to
keep it moving, for unlike the mechanical motion of a
spinning top or a pull toy, its motion required continual
interaction.

I put some on his hands and then clapped mine together.
The shaving cream splashed. Jerry saw it fly and then
clapped his hands. It splashed again. He giggled and ran
away only to circle back, still laughing, to reach up to me
for more shaving cream. I was laughing with him. Jerry
had not only stayed but, for the first time, he showed a
desire to continue, an obvious emotional acceptance of my
presence.

CHAPTER VI

EXPRESSIVE EDUCATION

The concern of this chapter is to develop a philosophy
of education and to examine this philosophy systematically
by utilizing Collingwood's method of identification and
examination of presuppositions of the following question:
what is the function of a teacher in the education process
of an individual learner?

Although at first sight the question appears to be
common enough, it does involve three important pre-
suppositions: (1) that a teacher serves some function;
(2) that education is a process; and, (3) that the learner
has individuality of his own. Beginning in reverse order,
these presuppositions will be examined.

The concept of individuality in its fullest sense
and the one used in this discussion is concerned with
more than that which enables us to simply identify and
separate one person from another. It is concerned with
that which gives each of these distinguishable lives
personal meaning. Here "meaning" is not used in the sense
of symbolic interpretation, but rather as indicating
intention, purpose, significance or knowledge.[15] Personal
or idiosyncratic meaning is that knowledge or signification
which, though it might be communicated or expressed, is
peculiar to the individual and operates to interpret,

guide and integrate experience from within.

Beittel, in _Mind_ _and_ _Context_ _in_ _the_ _Art_ _of_ _Drawing_,
describes the integration of experience with idiosyncratic
meaning. Thus, experience:

> . . . reflexively enters into idiosyncratic
> meaning. . . . They become part of images and
> plans, or of organized structures into which a
> hierarchy of acts of execution are already
> integrated.16

> In fact, even when we carry ideas
> foreign to us, or of an abstract nature, to
> the drawing situation they are immediately
> transformed into idiosyncratic meaning 'in
> situ' or we feel we cannot proceed as exploring
> decision systems.17

Most of the content of education, such as reading
skills, math and science concepts, etc. is of this external
nature and requires input by either teacher or materials to
initiate comprehension. As external they are understood to
be neither of first nature "intrinsic" or of second nature
"internalized" to the child. They are in some manner
foreign to the child and will remain so until the elements
of integrative processing come into play facilitating
internalization. When "integrative processing" occurs
the content matches the child's meaning system and provides
him with maximal understanding. This meshing of
idiosyncratic meaning with content is a basic component
of internalization. An educator who establishes the con-
ditions necessary for the content to merge with idiosyn-
cratic meaning, but whose content lacks potency, has failed

to be a responsible teacher. However, one whose content
is well organized and worthwhile knowing, but who fails to
establish the conditions necessary for the child to
internalize this content has also failed. Organization
of content is concerned primarily with methods of
instruction, generalizations about individual and group
development and empirically oriented evaluation procedures.
The nature of this information concerned with either
technique or generalizations allows for the appropriateness
of means-end terminology and a priori description. It is
communicated primarily in the "public" language of the
educational community. As "public" language the terms used
are characteristically generalizations which may be
operationally defined.

"Integrative processing," being less subject to the
"public" language of operationally defined events have
received much less attention. As pointed out earlier,
content without "integrative processing" (the meshing of
content with a child's idiosyncratic meaning system) is
as ineffective as the converse. Therefore, education,
despite the more elusive nature of the conceptualizations
required in discussing this process must also seriously
consider this area.

Beittel speaks both of the elements of technique, i.e.,
external content and idiosyncratic meaning. The analysis
provided concerns drawing; however, as before may be

applied without loss of significance to any content area.

> . . . training which ignores idiosyncratic
> meaning seems progressively to usurp its place,
> leaving us with art as technique, with the
> academic and not the imaginative. Then the
> artist must struggle to overthrow what is
> irrelevant in his habits and what does not
> produce sufficient uncertainty between desired
> and remembered conditions to keep his own
> processes alive. He must find his way back
> to a personal base.[18]

Training which ignores idiosyncratic meaning and

necessitates an individual finding his way back to his

personal base, rather than maintaining and developing that

personal base as an integral part of the educational

process, has either ignored or misunderstood the concept and

function of _expression_ in human development.

Idiosyncratic meaning without form or content represents

feeling at the unconscious level. As part of our existence

of which we are unaware, these feelings have an effect on

our experiences but over which we may actively exert little

influence or control. Form and content without

idiosyncratic meaning represents elements extrinsic and

foreign to our existence and thus often incapable of being

utilized.

Expression as a process in which idiosyncratic meaning

and content are integrated and brought to conscious

awareness functions as internalized knowledge which the

individual may use in directing his own experience.

As stated by deCharms:

> . . . when man perceives his behavior as stemming
> from his own choice he will cherish that be-
> havior and its results; when he perceives his
> behavior as stemming from the dictates of
> external forces, that behavior and its results,
> although identical in other respects to
> behavior of his own choosing, will be devalued.[19]

Most teaching methodologies use techniques oriented

to both means-end terminology and a priori description.

The "integrative process" of expression, however, is

subject to neither of these practices. In his Essay on

Metaphysics, Collingwood identifies one sense of the word

cause:

> Here that which is 'caused' is an event
> in nature, and its 'cause' is an event or
> state of things by producing or preventing
> which we can produce or prevent that whose
> cause it is said to be.[20]

"Cause" is concerned with control. Two events in

nature are identified in the following manner:

> As events grouped in pairs where one
> member in each pair, C, is immediately under
> human control, whereas the other, E, is not
> immediately under human control but can be
> indirectly controlled by man because of the
> relation in which it stands to C.[21]

Within this framework Collingwood describes situations

where one could potentially find multiple 'causes' for a

particular effect. What determines the identifying of

one in particular as the 'cause' is that, (1) it is

subject to human manipulation and, (2) such manipulation

brings about the effect we are trying to achieve. "Cause"

in this sense is further seen as conditional and relative.

"Conditional" means that cause, by itself, may never produce
the effect unless certain other conditions are fulfilled.
"Relative" means that the cause is identified in relation
to that over which one has control. In this sense, means-
end terminology more accurately describes the relation
between the two events. The end being that which we con-
ceive in anticipation of its actually occurring; the means
being that which we manipulate in order to achieve the goal.
Not just any means will do, however. Because one is aware
of the desired end, the conditional factors and one's
position with respect to control, the nature of the means
is pre-determined.

Thus a fundamental aspect of this sense of the word
'cause' or more appropriately the means-end relationship
is that both the end and the means are pre-determined.
The fact that one achieves a goal different from that
originally identified does not contradict the pre-
determined nature of this relationship, but rather indicate
that one was inaccurate in assessing either the nature of
the end in mind, the existing conditions, one's position
in relation to control or the appropriateness of the means.

Thus those things in education which are concerned
with operationally identifiable means and ends rightfully
include discussion of objectives (ends), teaching
techniques (means), child development, classroom organization,
etc. (conditions) and teacher-role (relativity of control).

However, in the crucial process of integration of
content with idiosyncratic meaning, the end is not pre-
determined and thus the application of the means-end
procedures is not only inappropriate, but serves to further
the misunderstanding of this process and hinder its
occurrence.

Expression, previously defined as the integration of
idiosyncratic meaning with content may also be understood
as the active clarifying of one's covert imagination,
emotions and unreflected experiences. Although one may
say that an end of self-clarification may be identified in
relation to the process of expression, this end is one of
an emerging consciousness and its form and meaning cannot
be known in advance of its occurrence. Its identification
is necessarily a posteriori rather than a priori. As such
there are no generalizable techniques or means which may
be formulated based on a knowledge of the desired end. The
procedures utilized must, in fitting with nature of
expression, also be emergent, reflexive, changing and of
the moment. In this sense the act of teaching itself may
be defined as expressive and analysis of the conditions
more clearly aligned with historical inquiry, as previously
described. The process thus not only involves the emergence
of the consciousness of the child, but also the emergence
of the consciousness of the teacher as an integral part
of the alive learning situation.

The role of a teacher in education as "integrative processing" is thus intimately related as an observer to the role of an historical rather than scientific inquirer and as a participant to an expressive rather than prescriptive agent. The teacher must be able to not only observe events, but with a wholistic understanding of the student realize the meaning behind the observable. He must not only be able with this knowledge to direct and prescribe, but to participate in the consciousness of the student so that his directions and involvement have an internal rhythm and meaning to both the child and himself rather than being routines whose reference is an external structure.

Tsugawa has described the nature of this relationship as follows:

> In a relationship between a master and a pupil (consider Socrates and Meno), the master needs to know how far the pupil can be pushed, what his intellectual as well as spiritual resources are; that the pupil indeed wants to, and should become what he aspires to achieve. But none of this is worth anything unless the teacher is aware of the extent and boundaries of his own resources, especially in his capacity to draw things out of the pupil . . . The pupil is like a plant - to be loved, and nurtured, but sometimes to be forced. But one must know when to do so. . . Where there is love (and thus respect), there will be freedom, too, for the pupil to become his full self, though whatever he does will, of course, show its roots in his tradition. It is false love that binds the pupil in the vise of his training, preventing his individuation. . . Chains of influence that as a whole do not yield coherent meanings do not constitute a tradition.[22]

Direction should be such that the student comes to more clearly comprehend the nature of his personal base so that he may come to rely with increasing confidence on his ability to meaningfully direct himself. A path which leads the student away from his personal base and towards reliance on external feedback for affirmation of the credibility of his existence has undermined one of the characteristics which distinguishes man from all other beings - his capability for self-consciousness. Thus at a fundamental level such direction is essentially de-humanizing.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The method of inquiry employed in Chapter IV focused on accounting for the occurrence of observable behavior. Its aim was to provide an understanding of the structure or pattern of the phenomenon at an abstract level. This chapter presented a mechanically organized analysis of pre-selected video tapes in an attempt to ascertain whether the occurrence of behaviors indicating expression could be reliably observed.

Although, as indicated in Chapter IV, there are many other aspects that can be researched from the material gathered on the summer program, it can be reasonably concluded that there was a very high degree of agreement among judges on all test items; the video tapes were a successful way to gather valuable information about the program; with very little instruction judges could be trained to identify expressive activities; affective behavior was reliably observed by all judges in their assessment of the expressive process; and the judges were also as reliable in their qualitative assessment as in the observation of molecular behaviors. In working with the data, an apparent high correlation between the subject's affective growth and expressive activities was observed.

In Chapter V, the method of inquiry was specifically concerned with gaining insight into the meaning behind the

observable. Such a focus tends to emphasize those aspects of phenomena which are concrete and particular. Emphasizing inquiry into the concrete nature tends towards preserving the "lived experience" of the phenomena.

Chapters IV and V described two methods of inquiry and their underlying presuppositions. After applying the respective presentational styles from a specific case study from the project entitled, "Multi-Sensory and Expressive Approach to Teaching Autistic Children," it was concluded that the presentational style depended upon the research methodology and the kind of question that was posed.

If the primary purpose is to produce generalizations and abstract accounting of the phenomena, then a behavioral inquiry and presentational style seems sufficient. However, if the primary interest is in non abstract patterns and how to get at the meaning behind the observed, then a phenomenological historical writing style seems proper.

Just as various methods of inquiry tend to get at different types of information, educational methods effect the nature of the learning which a child may experience. The bias assumed here in terms of educational methodology is that education which incorporates such concepts as expression, individuality and idiosyncratic meaning will most effectively provide the child with the learning base necessary for meaningful growth. Such a bias particularly includes that educational method which ought to be
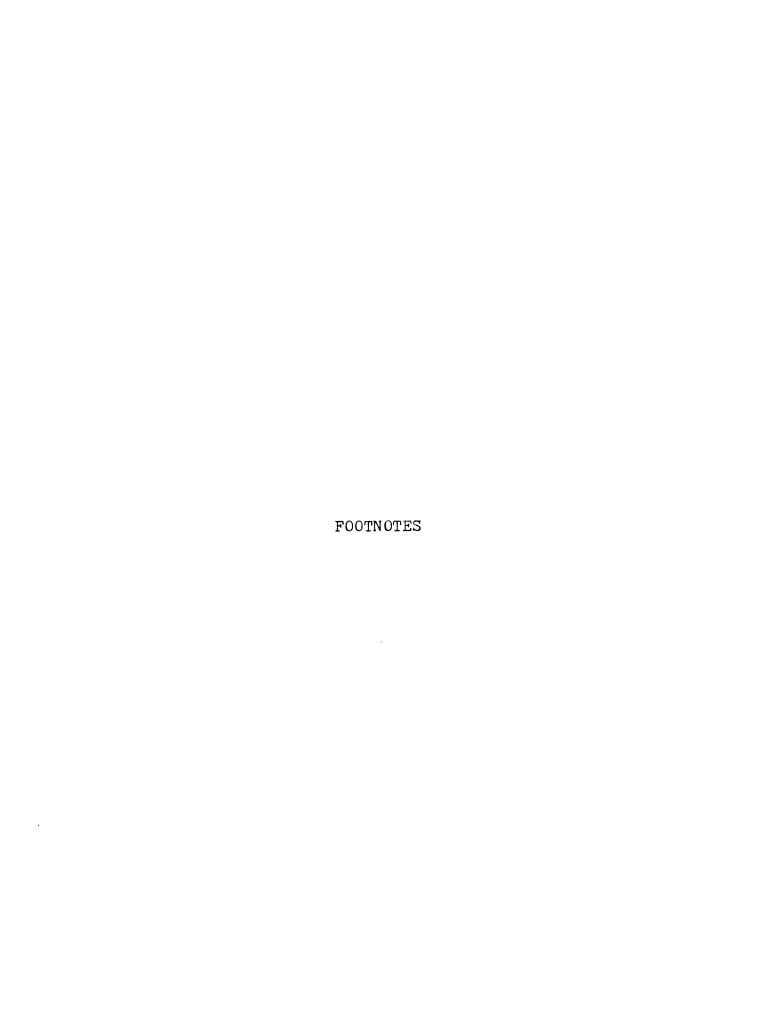
implemented with the special education child.

The special education child no less than any other child has a personal base through which he attempts to make sense of his world. As indicated by his classification as in need of "special" education, this child's relationship with some setting is usually more obviously different than other "normal" children in that setting. However, it should be noted that every child is in some manner different, even handicapped at a more subtle level. Not to recognize this is to make the difference one of kind rather than of degree and leads to the denial of fundamental considerations that ought to be afforded all children. Education that does not recognize, (1) the importance of "integrative processing" as well as structure, (2) the nature of individuality and idiosyncratic meaning as well as observable behavior and, (3) the function of a teacher as an expressive as well as prescriptive agent is as unjustified in special education as in the regular classroom.

Much of what constitutes the content of special education falls under the heading of survival skills. Even fine arts education, if included at all, is usually relegated to communication skills or mindless kids for therapy rather than self-expression. As education this is to afford the child with little more than what our society would provide for him regardless of his ability to function productively. What constitutes the critical factor in the

education of a special child as well as "normal" child is whether or not this survival has personal meaning, i.e., intention, purpose and significance.

In conclusion, where effective communication by the student is frequently hampered and alternatives narrowed, an arrogance of power, even by sincere and well-intentioned individuals may easily develop. In such a situation it is crucial for the teacher to be as perceptive as possible to the meanings behind the observable and to enter into the expressive process as described, for otherwise one risks relying upon generalizations and techniques as the source of guidance rather than the child himself. In doing so one may, according to some abstract generalizable system, be preceding appropriately, while in relation to the child's experiential reality be mistaken.
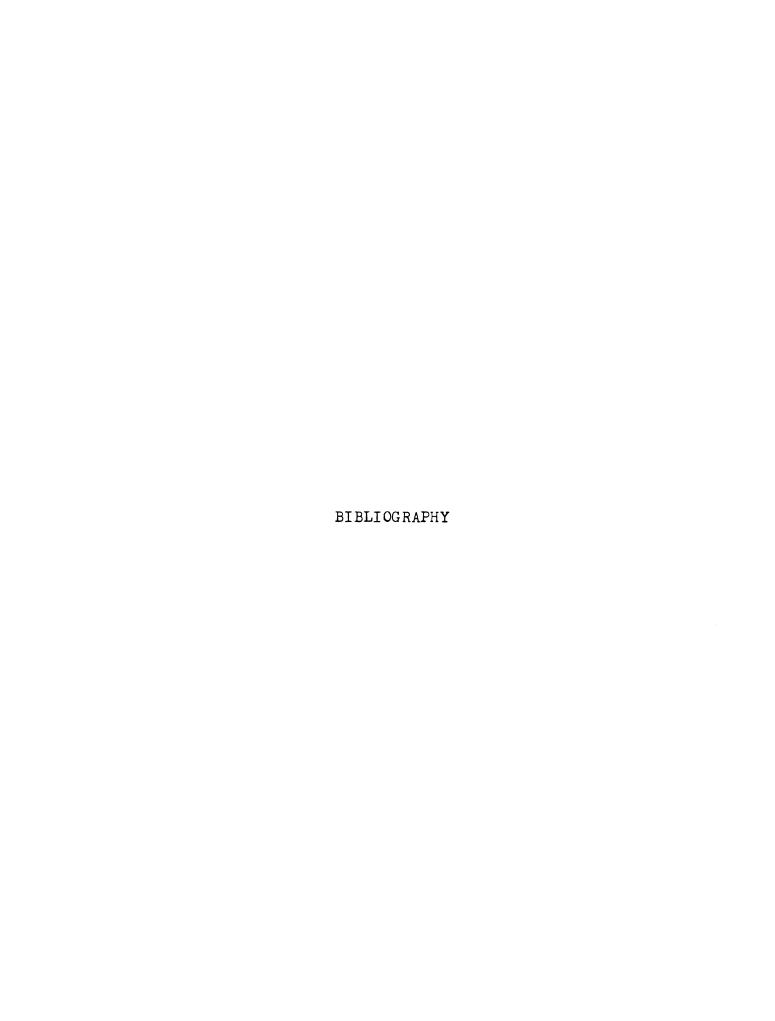
FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

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