

AN ATTEMPTED EXAMINATION OF THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A STUDENT - CENTERED  
LANGUAGE CURRICULUM AND THE GROWTH  
OF SELF - AWARENESS

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
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## ABSTRACT

This paper describes a project conducted with a group of first-term freshmen at Michigan State University during the spring term of 1971. There are no claims to have proven anything in this paper. I did not use a control group; moreover, the incoming college freshman is exposed to more resounding influences than just his composition class.

The project was conceived along the lines suggested by Douglas Barnes, et al., in Language, The Learner, and The School,<sup>1</sup> a "soft-science" approach to the problem of gathering information about language learning. Hopefully, in the analysis of the interviews of the students there might be some implications for the teaching of language.

The project was to consist of interviewing ten students near the start of the ten-week term; meeting with them twice a week for ten weeks, during which time we were to experiment with various approaches to language learning; and, finally, interviewing them near the close of the term and comparing their final responses with those of their first interviews. I regret that the only value of the experiment was what it contributed to my personal education.

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas Barnes, et al., Language, The Learner, and The School (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969).

I have described the methods I used and why I used them; what I hoped to accomplish and what I did accomplish; and what I would do differently another time and why.

AN ATTEMPTED EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN A STUDENT-CENTERED LANGUAGE  
CURRICULUM AND THE GROWTH OF  
SELF-AWARENESS

by

Sara Culver Elgammal

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## INTRODUCTION

A good deal of the push I got for experimenting with a self-discovery course came from reading the book, Teaching Achievement Motivation,<sup>1</sup> and from the pamphlets which accompany it, especially the one entitled "Who Am I?" I was not out to improve the student's motivation, as such; but some of the games described in those sources seemed excellent as possible ways for the student to get acquainted with himself. In the "methods" section of this paper I will give a brief summary and comparison of those approaches with some of the methods already widely used by the teachers of the "New English."<sup>2</sup>

Another source of instigation was Karen Horney's chapter, "The Tyranny of the Should," taken from her book, Neurosis and Human Growth.<sup>3</sup> She illustrates the difficulty encountered by neurotics in establishing realistic goals for themselves when the self they "should" be tyrannizes the self they "really" are.

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred S. Alschuler, et al., Teaching Achievement Motivation (Middletown, Conn.: Education Ventures, Inc., 1970).

<sup>2</sup>James Moffett, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968).

<sup>3</sup>Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1955).

What primarily interested me was the inter-relationship of the student's language development with his self-awareness. By the term self-awareness I do not mean self-consciousness, implying, as it does, an uncomfortable awareness of self. Rather, I mean that self-awareness connotes that the degree of ease in communication is a reflection of the degree to which the student feels at ease with himself; he will be able to communicate to himself and to others his feelings and ideas insofar as he accepts these feelings and ideas within himself.

The notion of self-acceptance as a basis for personality improvement is the essence of Carl Rogers' philosophy. While the student-centered curriculum is heavily in debt to Carl Rogers, and especially in debt to his essay, "Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning,"<sup>4</sup> I wish to quote from another of his essays: "Characteristics of a Helping Relationship":<sup>5</sup>

Curiously enough a positive evaluation is as threatening in the long run as a negative one, since to inform a person he is good implies that you have the right to tell him he is bad. So I have come to feel that the more I can keep a relationship free of judgment and evaluation, the more this will permit the other person to reach the point where he recognizes that the locus of evaluation, the center of responsibility lies within himself. The meaning and value of his experience is in the last analysis something which is up to him, and no amount of external judgment can alter this. So I should like to work toward a relationship in which I am not, even in my own feelings, evaluating him. This I believe can set him free to be a self-responsible person.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 273.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

This seems like rather a lot to say; as an attitude, however, I think it is valuable because there is no way for a person to overcome intellectual provincialism while firmly entrenched behind his slogans or defense system. For example, one student of mine, when I threw out the question of Women's Liberation, responded with, "It's a bunch of shit!" If I had become annoyed or defensive at that point, I doubt if he would have come out of his mental trench, so to speak. As it was, I asked him which points in the liberation movement he found offensive. His response was that he really did not know that much about it. When I explained the wage scale, employment opportunities, etc., he agreed that women were entitled not only to equal pay for equal work, but to a wider spectrum of job opportunities. On the issue of abortion reform, he thought women ought to have jurisdiction over their own bodies. He was not distressed at the idea of a woman becoming president. He did draw the line at test-tube babies. There had been considerable elaboration and refinement in his definition of Women's Liberation as compared to his first reaction.

A kind of therapy in the classroom is almost inevitable when we compare the objectives of a student-centered curriculum with the kind of education most of the student population has endured. I use James Moffett perhaps too frequently, but he does point out that ". . . intellectual growth will be more a liberation than an acquisition."<sup>7</sup> Playing with language is

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<sup>7</sup>James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 28.

not only using a skill, but releasing tensions and getting rid of walls that intervene in the process of perception.

Moreover, in art, or language, or in any field which reduces the universe to manipulatable form, even adults can indulge in a kind of "play therapy;" rearranging the forces that shape their lives, working out tensions, exploring new possibilities. The unique property of language is, to my mind, the fact that it is ubiquitous, at least among the normal human population. But more than this, speech is the way we establish or deepen relationships. For now, I choose to ignore the way we use language to deceive others--or attempt to deceive them. Certainly our unspoken attitudes, our expressions, our gestures reinforce or belie out sincerity; but imagine how difficult it would be to maintain a meaningful relationship without any symbolic communication whatsoever.

The "New English" (I use the term as Moffett would use it) would not present itself as a skills course, even the skill of using symbols, so much as a humanities course, developing, as it should, the "humanity" of the student. (If I were to define humanity here, I would define it along the lines of Maslow's self-actualizing human being.) With this in mind, it seemed reasonable to combine a possible vital area of interest with language learning.

James Moffett points out in the first chapter of Teaching the Universe of Discourse that language is a symbol system; a way of handling ideas about all sorts of things.

English, French, and mathematics are symbol systems, into which the phenomenal data of empirical subjects are cast and by means of which we think about them. Symbol systems are not primarily about themselves; they are about other subjects.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

## METHODS

The methods I used in the tutorial sessions were, on the whole, lifted from Moffett, from past exposure to the "New English," and from class discussions. The rest, from the "achievement" series, were to be found in the pamphlet, "Who Am I?" and will be listed separately.

The following activities are found in Moffett's book, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers.<sup>9</sup> The "Who Am I?" games included a session of palm-reading, horoscope analysis, drawing up an "admiration ladder," and simulation games.

### Activities:

1. Journals
2. Picture collages
3. Word collages
4. Sensory writing
5. Free association
6. Subjective description
7. Objective description
8. "Sensitivity session"
9. Reactive writing
10. Traveling story
11. Discussion

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<sup>9</sup>Moffett, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers, op. cit.

The most notable difficulty I had with journals was getting the students to write in them. I had planned not to read what they had written, only to check that they had written something. I was finally reduced to purchasing small notebooks for each of the project volunteers. We decorated them with collages and cartoons; but even though the students had not paid for the paper, they still did not want to get it dirty. For about three sessions, we had some "journal assignments" in order to get them used to writing and to keep my frustration at a reasonable level. Incidentally, one reason that much of the students' writing was strictly private, except when they chose to read it aloud to the group, was this phobia they had about it. They were in a remedial group and had hang-ups about "correctness" when committing themselves to paper. I felt that if I could get them to write, and to feel comfortable in so doing, at least in the journals, they would be on their way to involuntary improvement.

The sensory writing, free association, and subjective descriptions were all journal assignments and private. The objective description was of the modernistic sculpture that sits on a pedestal to the left of the entrance to the Kresge Art Center on the Michigan State University campus. This was an assignment that the students shared with each other; the descriptions were read aloud. I felt that it was a fairly successful assignment, for the students were quite surprised at the varying perceptions of the sculpture. Three of the similes were: a futuristic cannon, a camera, and an old-fashioned locomotive.



The "sensitivity session" consisted of having the students take turns at being "blind" and being led by a helper, then reversing the roles, and writing about it afterward. That session provoked the longest concentration span; they wrote until well after the hour and had to be reminded to leave. But they did not seem interested in the idea of reading their writings aloud at the next session.

The reactive writing turned out to be a reactive discussion in all five of the instances I tried it; the students would not stop talking to write. The stimulus was usually a game in which the students heard a brief story, formed opinions about the characters, and then tried to get each other to agree. The discussion in such cases was vehement and stormy and was probably the most fruitful in helping the students "get to know themselves" because judgment of the characters in the story depended on a fairly well-defined value system. I was reminded that the topic of discussion has to be close to home or there is little reaction; abortion pro or con got a less vigorous response than the sore subject of required courses.

The games taken from "Who Am I?" were more explicit attempts at self-definition. If there was a weakness in using them, it was because the "self" they were getting at was the self of the present moment. For example, the simulation game which required that the person ask himself what kind of a flower or animal he is, and why, could elicit differing answers on different days. Similarly, in a despondent mood, one could list oneself on the very lowest rung of the "admiration ladder;" higher up on a better day. How little or how much one could

"read into" the palmistry or astrology might depend on one's state of mind.

Certainly, there are limitation to the "autistic" stage--the period of self-exploration which is primarily self-expression. Because this stage is vitally necessary to solid development, and has been neglected utterly in the past, does not mean that we have to become so subjective in our outlook that the question "What is Reality?" comes across the board quite seriously. Reality can kill you, if you do not pay attention to it. We are not subjective, solipsistic organisms; we exist in relation to other organisms; we exist in situations. There is not much use in making our private universe understandable to others if we do not understand our relationship to the rest of the universe. Certainly that, too, is self-definition; self-definition in a broader context.

Arthur Koestler<sup>10</sup> draws the analogy that the god Janus represents each one of us; looking inward and outward simultaneously. The current lust for individualism at all costs is, in the end, murderous to the psyche; for the individual can lose his anxiety only insofar as he can transcend himself or merge with something that will outlast him; or which he believes will outlast him.

In his book, The Sane Society,<sup>11</sup> Erich Fromm quotes from A. Einstein:

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<sup>10</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Ghost in the Machine (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1967).

<sup>11</sup>Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (New York: Rinehart, 1955).

. . . I have now reached a point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence on society. But he does not experience this dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from this process of deterioration. Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naive, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.<sup>12</sup>

Not being a socialist precisely, I do not agree wholeheartedly with Einstein's last statement. Man can also transcend himself through art, if he is an artist and that is his life, or even through religion. I wonder if my doubts about the student-centered curriculum are because I fear it could become, instead of self-transcending, only a wallowing-about in the self. The latter is, incidentally, almost a quote from Montaigne in his journal: "I roll about in myself." But he in fact reacted to a wide spectrum of ideas in his essays; his gaze was turned outward as well as inward. I feel we should not lose sight of the outside world and the part we play in it; our possible relationships to that world depend upon a sensitive perception of where we stand in it.

As I mentioned before, the greatest difficulty I had was getting the students to commit themselves on paper to

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<sup>12</sup>A. Einstein, "Why Socialism," Monthly Review, Vol. I, No. i (1949), pp. 9-15. The above passage is quoted in Fromm, ibid., p. 204.

anything. Therefore, no papers were collected; I have no samples of their work. Reading aloud from their writings was entirely on a voluntary basis; and that was not too frequently done. So far as measuring any improvement in language, the project was, from this standpoint also, a failure. I think that need not have been the case if I had been more skilled in what I was attempting; as it is, I console myself that perhaps a few of the students learned that writing can be a form of "play therapy;" it need not always be agony.

## INTERVIEWS

I had planned to have two interviews each for ten students, but one tape was destroyed after the students had left for the summer. I was left with two interviews each for seven students and only one interview for the eighth student.

The interviews did not take place as scheduled; the original plan was to space them at least eight weeks apart. The students donated their own time for the interviews; and by the time we could get our schedules to coincide, some of the interviews were only two weeks apart. Oddly enough, I seemed to get more contrasting sets of replies when the interviews were close together; whether this was entirely due to personality differences or whether the students had the questions "more in mind" I do not know.

There is a brief analysis and comparison following each set of interviews. Depending on how the student responded to Question No. 5 ("If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?"), I asked either eight or nine questions.

When I devised this set of questions for the interviews, I really believed that each student would be led to reflect upon whatever discrepancies there were between his present activities and his future goals. What apparently

happened, however, was that the student did not seem to realize that there were discrepancies in his replies. I felt that it would be too threatening to point out such discrepancies; further, I felt that the instructor should not have to take that responsibility as the replies probably would not be affected, anyhow.

James Moffett points out the use to which role-playing can be put in his chapter on Socratic Dialogue:

The Socratic dialogues are read aloud in small groups as scripts and expanded through oral discussion. This gives purpose to the writing and also reveals in a paper the rigged arguments, misinformation, omitted points or points of view, and so on, without necessarily impugning the author, who can claim not to be represented in his dialogue, but will wear the shoe if it fits.<sup>13</sup>

For an example of what I mean about the student's activities not coinciding with the student's future goals, one student, in response to the question of what she wished to be, said that she was going to be a doctor. A few questions later, when asked what she would choose to learn more about, given a free choice, she said she would like a course that studied human relationships within marriage. This is not to imply that persons in the medical profession should not marry; still, it was surprising to find that such concerns took priority over a more objective curiosity about, say, science. Perhaps role-playing in which she could alternate between playing herself and one of her parents could get at this problem tactfully; if this sort of acting-out could be done before a group of her peers, again, in a nonthreatening atmosphere,

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<sup>13</sup>Moffett, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers, op. cit., p. 323.

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perhaps they could point out the discrepancies in the point of view of the character or characters. What consequences follow from A; what consequences follow from B? What happens when you put the two together? Is the result congruence or collision? When the students can point out that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , it keeps the instructor from having to take the role of a judge.

Student No. 1

This attractive black girl was rather shy; she seldom took part in even the most active discussions unless asked a direct question.

Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Well, really, just . . . an education. Ah . . . a way of making more money. You know, having some kind of place in society.

I: What have you gotten?

S: I haven't really gotten the courses I wanted. . . . There wasn't too much I could do this spring term . . . just the basics, really, and I couldn't take too many of them because there weren't many offered. Maybe in the fall I'll get some better courses.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: Hmm . . . what kind of a person? I really don't know . . . in a way I'll just be starting, because I want to be a doctor.



- I: Do you think the courses you have taken so far will help you toward this goal?
- S: No . . . like there's this ATL class . . . it's remedial to what I had. I got this math class that I don't think I should be in . . . but I got it just so I can get the basics like math out of the way, too. But that won't help me any. And then there's German, and that's working towards what I want to be because I have to have it . . . to enter med school. . . . I have a chemistry course that's pretty good, I guess.
- I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?
- S: Uh, well, yeah, I think I would . . . well . . . it's not really, well, I want the degree, but, I want something more than that. But I really don't know what I want. It's sort of a deep feeling I really can't explain; I know that it's more than the degree I want.
- I: If you were not here, where would you rather be, and why?
- S: If I wasn't going to school? At all? Wow . . . I really don't know . . . I wouldn't know . . . because this is what I've always wanted . . . to go to college and try to better myself. I never thought about doing anything else . . . I really wouldn't know. . . .
- I: If you could design a course about anything at all, what would you like to learn more about?
- S: Hmm . . . I can't think of one I'd like to see offered, but I can think of one I'd like to see required; you

know, they have, like, family living classes? Things like that? I think those should be required, 'cause sooner or later most of us will be getting married and having families, and our own homes, and things; and you know, most of them go into it blind.

I: What three things did or do you like least about your college experience?

S: Food! Well, the student-teacher relationship. It's very bad. There isn't any, really. There's very poor student-teacher relationship. Ah . . . I think it's about the biggest problem around here because I think it's backwards . . . I think something could be done for that. It could be a lot better. If someone would start listening to somebody . . . you don't have any say about what goes on in the classroom. Everything is outlined for you . . . the tests and everything are all made up . . . all mechanical things, you know? On account of the relationship. We have a lot of leeway about which courses to take 'n all . . . but the students can't relate to the teacher and the teacher can't relate to the students. I guess that's what they call the "gap" . . . it's not getting us anywhere and it makes a lot of problems. I've got one more to go, haven't I? Well, I can't think of anything else . . . the dorms are pretty nice and comfortable . . . no, I can't think of anything else.

I: What three things do you like most about your college experience?

S: Ah, well . . . like most of the students are pretty friendly . . . that helped a lot, cause when you're a freshman, you need somebody to talk to . . . and, ah . . . I think I like pretty much the way I'm allowed to choose my classes . . . it's not too strict . . . what I have to take . . . like I can pick most of the classes I like . . . and, ah . . . I like being here!

Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Ah . . . I hoped to gain some kind of world knowledge . . . and, ah . . . take some kind of place in society, too . . . not, not really for the money, cause I don't really care that much about it. But, I don't know; I think I just need to gain some sort of place in society.

I: And what did you get?

S: (Chuckles) A lot of travel! No, ah . . . I think . . . coming up here the place is so big . . . and I got to know so many kinds of people . . . it's like a little city in itself, ya know! I learned a lot of things . . . especially how to make it on my own. Ah . . . yeah . . . that's about it . . . about the real big thing . . . learning how to make it on my own. How to adjust to a different situation . . . there's a lot of problems . . . there really is . . .

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

- S: Well, about the same, really . . . except maybe . . . just to . . . know a little bit more . . . to be able to get along with people a little bit more . . . and . . . to be able to vary my taste in things . . .
- I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?
- S: Nooo! (Chuckles) I really didn't get into anything this quarter . . . there isn't too much offered spring term.
- I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?
- S: Probably not. Probably not . . . 'cause money doesn't mean that much to me . . . I really don't really know why I'm here . . . maybe because of my aunt . . . well, maybe to get some kind of social standing . . . or no, I wouldn't be here.
- I: Where would you rather be?
- S: Than here? Ohh . . . lemme see . . . I don't really know the place I'd like to be, I'd just like to be somewhere helping somebody . . . I don't really know how, but just helping somebody . . . you know . . . to better themselves somehow.
- I: And why?
- S: Uh . . . I like to see people have a chance . . . because, like, somebody's giving me a chance, and I want to give somebody else a chance to better themselves, too . . . any way I could help.

- I: If you could design a course, to let you study anything you wanted to learn more about, what would it be?
- S: Probably it would be . . . ah . . . something like . . . let's get to know each other better . . . something like that where you just spend time, you know, getting to know . . . people. Not the stereotype! Not from the books, but the people themselves, I think that's kind of important. That's where we have a lot of our hang-ups.
- I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?
- S: Well, uh . . . it's so, ah . . . what's the word we use? Well, ah . . . impersonal . . . the lack of communication between the students and the teachers . . . I can't think of anything else . . . oh, yeah! The bus service! I don't think they should charge for that! That's wrong. At U of M, they get to ride free. I don't think that's fair, 'cause we pay enough as it is. I don't think they should charge for bus service.
- I: Now three things you like?
- S: Like about it? Well, the way the university is, you really have to learn to make it on your own, and if you do, I think you better yourself somehow . . . you either make it or you don't . . . and if you make it I think you're pretty good, I really do. The students around here are pretty friendly. They were a big help to me when I came up 'cause I didn't know anything, and they didn't have too many orientation programs set

up like . . . they helped me out pretty good . . .  
and, ah . . . there's sort of a closeness between the  
people in the dorm . . . than, ah, out, but there's a  
closeness among all the students . . . but especially  
in the dorm . . . you really get to know them . . .  
and, oh . . . oh! I like all the sports they have  
around here; I really do . . . 'cause I like, you know,  
to participate in sports . . . especially swimming  
. . . and they give you a lot of opportunities to learn  
to play a lot of different kinds of sports . . . and  
that's it.

#### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 1:

Interview No. 1. Possible "collision points" between this student's present activities and what she envisioned for herself in the future might be her interest in the marriage relationship overriding a more objective curiosity in science and her goal of becoming a doctor. Less notable, perhaps, was the difficulty of seeing present work (basic courses) as possibly laying the groundwork for more specialized work later on, with the exception of German.

Interview No. 2. In this interview, the student's reply to the fifth question was ambiguous. This might have reflected economic difficulties rather than preference.

#### Comparison and Summary:

The second interview seemed to contain less confusion (as opposed to uncertainty) about future goals. I think that there had been some change in the direction of more realistic

self-evaluation; she was still interested in a "service" profession, not specifically stated as being a doctor; there seemed also to be a broadening of her intellectual spectrum; and human relationships were still high on her list, but in a broader context than marriage.

The preceding set of interviews with Student No. 1 had about an eight-week interval between the first one and the second one; the following interviews with Student No. 2 were spaced about nine weeks apart.

### Student No. 2

This set of interviews was with a young white male, certainly one of the more aggressive members of the group; he was never at a loss for an answer. He was the only one of my students who was married.

#### Interview No. 1:

- I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?
- S: Enough to get me by . . . in the business world. I'm going into hotel-restaurant management. But the courses I'm taking now won't help me; I'm not able to apply them that much. It won't be until my third and fourth year, or maybe the end of my second year, that I get into the things that are really gonna benefit me, and I've been thinking of dropping, or not taking, some of the natural science and social science courses and just going right on to the core courses, forget about my degree . . . just learn what I have to know.

- I: My second question was what did you get so far . . .  
as compared to what you were expecting.
- S: Well, I haven't been in school for two years now, no,  
three; and right now, what I'm doing is forming my  
study habits, and getting into the swing of things  
here. How I'm gonna approach this whole thing.
- I: Then you did not expect to get anything more from your  
experience than something to help you earn a living?
- S: No.
- I: What kind of a person do you want to be in four years  
time?
- S: Very rich.
- I: Do you think the courses you have taken so far will  
help you toward that goal?
- S: Well, I think the math course I'm taking will, to a  
certain extent. You know, the courses I'm taking now  
are more or less prerequisites for the core courses  
I'm going to be taking. Even though I probably won't  
need them, I have to take them to be able to study the  
courses that I will need later on.
- I: If it were not for the economic advantage of having  
a college degree, would you be here?
- S: Yes.
- I: (At this point, I repeated my question, stressing the  
word "economic.")
- S: No.
- I: Where would you rather be, and why?



S: I'd begin restaurant management; right now, if I wanted to, I could go back to my job, and probably make out. Right now, if I wanted to, I could go back to my job and probably make out pretty well. But my plans for four years from now are for owning a store. This that I'm doing now is just some kind of added education to make me better qualified for my job . . . to make me more sure of myself.

I: What sort of courses would you like to see offered; that is, if you could study anything you liked, what would it be? If you had an option to design a course which you feel would benefit you?

S: Well, more or less, just the core courses. The colleges offer four-year courses, but the first two years is just to round you off.

I: What three things do you like least about your college experience?

S: The pressure. I think they expect too much of you all at one time. Not that with enough studying 'n all, you can get up to their standards, what they want, but as far as testing goes, they expect the average person to complete a two-hour exam in one hour; and also, the informality, too, the formality of the instructors who think that they're too far above any of the students to help them.

I: One more thing?

S: No.

I: Now, what three things do you like most about your college experience?

S: I don't know if you could really classify this as what I like about college, you know, my personal viewpoint is just getting to know a lot more people around the campus, and the fact that I'm getting an education that I'll need later on. It gives you time to mature.

Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Uh . . . enough knowledge to get me through with what I have to do later on in my job. Really not that much more . . . just so I can feel self-assured . . . not what anybody else will think . . . just so I know I can cope with whatever I have to, later on.

I: What did you get?

S: Not much yet, since I've only been here for a term.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: A smarter one. Uh . . . and the rest of the regular old, uh . . . things you want to be when you're four years older.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: Ah . . . probably . . . maybe not as long . . . just long enough so I can feel myself that I'd had enough education to get by . . . but . . . see, it's better right now to go in and stay for four years to please everybody else.

- I: (I repeated the question at this point, as I felt that he was still considering the economic side of it.)
- S: That would be just for my own personal pleasure . . .  
I don't think so. It's debatable . . . can't tell really.
- I: If you were not here, where would you rather be, and why?
- S: On a tropical south sea island with a bunch of girls around me.
- I: (I again asked him why.)
- S: I don't know . . . never been there before . . . it'd be something new, anyway.
- I: If you could design a course, that is, study anything at all you wished to, what would it be?
- S: Umm . . . I don't know . . . I don't think I would or I could . . . can't design one course that would cover everything . . . maybe a course that would install a memory in you . . . that . . . like a computer, maybe . . . that would just get more acquainted with the problems in life and experience different experiences and how you have to cope with them . . . it wouldn't really bother me now if I didn't have a life of my own and just someone else's memory . . . all life is just memory and if you had a memory that was long enough; just like someone fifty years old who in comparison with twenty year old people are more experienced and can cope with life a lot better . . . if



you had one of these memories with a background of different experiences, it would be to your benefit.

I: Three things that you dislike about your college experience?

S: Nothing . . . there's nothing I can think of that I dislike . . . I'm a pretty easy-going guy.

I: What three things do you like most?

S: Would you believe--nothing?

#### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 2:

These two interviews, when compared, frustrated me at first, because the first interview seemed to indicate a clear sense of direction; all the questions were answered, and answered rather thoughtfully. The second set of answers seemed to me to be rather "flip," particularly the response to Question No. 6.

Interview No. 1. There seemed to be no difficulty here about present activities blocking future goals. The student had quite definite ideas as to what he was here for.

Interview No. 2. This interview seemed at first less satisfactory than the other one. In spite of my repeating the question: "If it weren't for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?" I don't think I got as clear a response on this point as I had hoped for. Part of the difficulty may have lain with the question. This was not the only instance where students seemed to respond to the question less in terms of what they may have desired than in terms of necessity.

### Comparison and Summary:

These two interviews, when compared, frustrated me initially, because the first interview seemed to indicate a clear sense of direction: all the questions were answered and answered rather thoughtfully. The second interview's answers seemed to me to be rather "flip," and at first I attributed that to the student having finished his last final examination just prior to the interview. However, on second thought, it seemed that he was more sensitively getting close to himself. The course of study that he wished to take (like a pill?) intrigued me for two reasons. First, it was apparent that he was quite anxious about his judgment; he wanted to make the "right" move in all situations--mistakes distressed him. Second, he was not interested in the process of becoming; he wanted to be. He was not interested (or seemed not to be interested) in exposing himself to the pain and pleasure of learning. With the "computer memory," he would be equipped for distress-free living. This was the first case of "insty-wisdom" I encountered; there was at least one other.

### Student No. 3

The following interviews were spaced nearly twelve weeks apart. The second interview was erased and had to be re-recorded. However, I do not think that the two interviews differ internally (that is, the first one from the second one) so much as might be expected under the circumstances.

This young black man was one of the most interesting of the students I had; veteran of Vietnam, he had scholarships to study both music and acting. He was certainly the most articulate of my students.

Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: I expect to get an advancement.

I: What did you expect?

S: I expect, I expected, to get an advancement in my music career; I expected to get a wider range, a knowledge to help me build my voice up to its complete full potential. My acting ability up to its full potential, and give me a wider idea of what it could do for me.

I: And what did you get, so far?

S: I got just what I wanted. But I've got a lot of feelings after I seen what I got, I really didn't need it, because I really think that I'd of developed it anyway. College isn't really that necessary. I'm really here because of the wishes of my parents ('fore they passed). My parents wanted me to get the education . . . I really think that I could do exactly what I'll be doing after I get out of college, without college.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: A professional musician, a professional singer, a professional actor, very liberal, a person of life, a

person who tries to understand people, living, and society.

I: Do you think that the courses you have taken so far have helped you toward that goal?

S: Some of 'em, no. Some of 'em, yes. I think some of the courses I'm taking now are completely . . . not even necessary. Like, what am I gonna do with Natural Science on the stage . . . or in a nightclub? Natural Science or Social Science in the theater? I think certain courses are not necessary. I believe in private schools for art, like Juliard or Interlochen; that way you get just what you're going for, nothing else.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of having a college degree, would you be here?

S: No.

I: If not, where would you rather be?

S: Out . . . doin' what I did before. Only professionally. I feel that I've learned exactly what I'm learning here; but with experience. In the past year of working on the stage and in nightclubs and things like this, that through experience, you pick up a lot, getting together with people and learning new techniques and helping to advance yourself you can learn exactly what these schools are trying to teach you.

I: What sort of courses would you like to see offered?



If you could design a course, any course that you wanted, what would it be?

S: Design a course? I'd like to see a course in drugs. Because I think a lotta these kids around here really don't know what they're doin' . . . be good if they could have courses. I think it would help them out and I think that they would really want it. Because you'd be surprised about how many of them are really curious about what they do that's why I get things like these pamphlets on it. I try to study as much as possible. I feel, if a person doesn't know what he's doing, he shouldn't do it.

I: What three things do you like least about your college experience?

S: Least about my college experience? The required courses. The methods . . . the way they teach. I think they could be more liberal about the way they teach, and it would help the student to take in more. And, the administration could be way more loose in its idea of the student . . . they still treat a student like he's a kid with his parents . . . he's a grown man or grown woman . . . and they should treat him that way.

I: What three things do you like most about your college experience?

S: I like the unity within the people here . . . to a certain degree. I like the courses I'm taking here . . . that is, the ones that I enjoy . . . the ones

I'm majoring in. Certain teachers around here teach it the way I'm glad they do . . . we do have some very good teachers . . . the atmosphere is nice . . . there's a lot of things to do within this area to keep the kid out of trouble, so he doesn't get into mischief.

Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Basically, what I expected to get from my college experience is a widening in my fields as a musician, as a vocalist, as a choreographer, as an actor, as a pianist, as a theatrical artist altogether; to build it, to build it stronger; to know my field better, to know it more technically, to do it way better . . . better . . . and to . . . so I will last for a longer period of time . . . in the field . . . this is like . . . a . . . this is like a widening of my experience, cause I've already had experience in it professionally. This is to get educated . . . rounded out.

I: What did you get?

S: What have I got so far? So far, I have been managing to get that somewhat. I haven't been going the correct route that I should have . . . I've been goofing off a little bit too much . . . but, ah . . . basically I'm learning what I expected to learn . . . education-wise and the other ways . . . and other things . . . I'm getting basically what I expected . . . I think

I could do a little bit more, but the school doesn't completely offer a decent choreography schedule that would give me that rounding. I might have to go to another school during the summer or something to get that rounding out.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: In four years time I'll be a well-rounded individual; uh . . . a very well-educated musician . . . and stage man . . . I should be able to do anything in the art . . . in the field of theatrical arts and be able to do it good. . . and to be a human being and a good one.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: There are some that have helped me tremendously and there were some that I thought were useless . . . my voice classes, my piano courses, my choreography courses, my theater courses, are very good for me . . . they're doing exactly what I expect them to do, but then my Natural Science courses and things like that I think are extremely useless and wasteful of time and money.

I: Would you be here if it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree?

S: Ah . . . yes . . . no! Yes and no. Because I feel that if I went to a private music school I'd get the

same things and I'd get them even better because they would . . . they would teach me just on the points that I want to learn. 'Cause I already know what I wanta go after, and I feel that college is a good rounding experience; it still gives you things that really are unnecessary and useless for your future.

I: If you were not here, where would you rather be, and why?

S: I'd rather be, like, at Juliard, it's basically a voice and instrumental school . . . it has some acting . . . but not as much . . . choreography is fair, but . . . Juliard's a beautiful school for voice. It would be a better school than MSU; basic reasons I'm going to MSU is . . . the scholarships here, and I can get my financial problems taken care of . . . which hurt . . . it's hard to get a scholarship to Juliard, very difficult.

I: If you could design a course, if you could study anything you wished, what would it be?

S: If I could design a course, it would be in educating the kids how to live . . . I guess that's one course. Another would be in . . . an education on narcotics, drugs, different things like that . . . ah . . . I would like a course on how to be reasonable with yourself and to understand other people, and to cope with them, to be able to be somewhat appropriate in everything you do, to learn how to be a gentleman and not

an obnoxious little brat . . . a lotta people . . .  
they grow up, chronologically, but don't grow up  
mentally, they haven't really been taught how to live  
. . . they think they have been taught how to live.

I: Three things you dislike about your college experience?

S: Three things I dislike about the college experience  
would be, one, its repertoire of classes are required  
for each student; I think they're useless . . . Social  
Science is about the decentest one they have and ATL  
is fairly decent, but really, I think if I could have  
a speech class, I could use that more than I could  
use an ATL course. I don't think that any of them  
are really that good . . . that they're gonna help  
you out that much. Another thing is, ah, well, I think  
the students here at the school . . . they are going  
through a growing-up stage, but still I feel that they  
should be a little bit more open-minded towards people  
. . . and everything else . . . try to understand each  
other, not to hate someone or dislike someone because  
of what color he is instead of who he is . . . be able  
to get along with anybody, no matter what they are,  
or who they are and . . . a lot of the students coming  
into this school are brought up so they know their  
physics, chemistry, and biology, but they don't know  
nothing about man.

I: Three things you like about your college experience?

S: Three things I like about the school? One, I think

its dormitory system is extremely well . . . as a matter of fact, I've visited a lot of universities all over the country and I think this is one of the better dorm systems that I've ever seen . . . I think that the professors up here are extremely reasonable, uh, considering . . . because a lot of them agree about the courses 'n things . . . they dislike that they're required . . . they're understanding with the students . . . more than I expected, really I expected more hard core professors and they're very understanding, very reasonable . . . and three . . . I like this campus . . . it's one of the most beautiful in the world. I've been to Purdue's, Notre Dames', some of the most beautiful ones around . . . the University of Massachusetts, and others . . . this is about the most gorgeous campus I've ever seen . . . only thing I can see wrong with it is the Red Cedar.

#### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 3:

Interview No. 1. There did not seem to be any evidence in this interview that the student's present activities were preventing him from obtaining at least the better part of his goals (which were remarkable in both the cases).

Interview No. 2. The answers in this case were at least twice as lengthy as in the first interview; however, I did not feel that there was a great difference of feeling expressed. There was some noticeable ambiguity as to whether

or not he would attend college "if it weren't for the economic advantage," there seemed to be more appreciation for his education expressed, despite his criticism of much of it.

#### Comparison and Summary:

The most remarkable thing about this student seemed to be his ambition and his hopes for himself. Certainly his reach exceeded his grasp. However, I do not feel that this was a case where neurotic pride had envisioned an "ideal self" that was interfering with achievement. Rather, I think that egotism might be rather widespread in his chosen profession. At any rate, he was doing well in his courses and seemed very much "at ease" with himself.

The discrepancies between the two interviews were, as I have mentioned, an apparently greater appreciation of his education; and, also, he describes a course of study that he would like to take in "how to live." While the extent of this "course" is really the whole of life, I do not have the feeling that this was merely another desire for "insty-wisdom." He seemed less anxious about avoiding possible traumatic experiences due to bad judgment than interested in living as civilized an existence as he could.

#### Student No. 4

The following set of interviews had a time interval of five weeks between the first one and the second one.

This young black student seemed to be outgoing and at ease with people, but she did not seem to be very mature; she

had only a chaotic notion of what an education meant. She was unabashedly party-oriented.

Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: What did I expect to get? Ah . . . I'll just put it like this: I expected that college was a lot of fun, partyin', 'n like that.

I: What did you get?

S: I did get all the parties I wanted . . . I wasn't really concerned with the educational stuff, you know . . . lot of social activities 'n goin' out . . . 'n that's all.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: In four years time? In four years I think I'm gonna accomplish something, like, you know, goin' out, gettin' an education like . . . 'n help someone with . . . lay my education down on somebody 'n that's it.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: None whatsoever. The courses I take are just bourgeois . . . just courses . . . that's all. University courses . . . I haven't taken anything, really.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college education, would you be here?

S: Sort of tough question . . . well . . . I'm not really concerned with the money, at all . . . you know,



afterwards . . . after you get the degree, it wouldn't make any difference, you know . . . I wouldn't care if I got a reward afterwards, or not, from the money . . . you get a social reward afterwards, you know . . . besides you meet a lot of people, you get to talk about a lot of things.

I: If you were not here, where would you rather be and why?

S: Instead of here? If I weren't here? Oh . . . I like to travel! But, the finances say no . . . so . . . I don't go. If I weren't here, I'd be just travelin' around . . . just bummin' from one place to another.

I: If you could design a course, that is, if you could study anything you wished to learn more about, what would it be?

S: Anything I wanted? That's a pretty wide choice . . . I can't think of any special thing.

I: What three things do you dislike about your college experience?

S: Three things up here? Ah . . . first of all, I dislike the food. The food is something else . . . that could be listed under housing, 'cause I'm in a dormitory. And I don't like the rules, you know . . . you have to take these certain courses, I don't like that. I'd like freedom of choice about what you wanna take. Like, it's your education, you're the one that's gonna have to learn it, so . . . don't push it on somebody else, 'nother one. Ah, I dislike

the fraternities and sororities . . . they're just distasteful to me because it's sort of like a life-time pledge; you get branded 'n stuff like that . . . you know . . . you gotta live with the thing later on when you just want to forget about it.

I: Three things you like?

S: Meet people . . . go out a lot . . . another thing is no restriction on when you have to go to class . . . you can show up any time you want . . . but you can get lazy like that! One more? Hmm . . . over where I stay in Acres, there's a lot of land . . . I just get up in the morning and go walking . . . it's so open 'n everything, you can just walk and walk . . . it's real nice, you know . . . and grassy; all wet from the dew . . . nobody else up yet . . . I like that.

#### Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: I expected to have a good time . . . 'n meet a lot of people.

I: What did you get?

S: I got what I expected to get.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time:

S: I hope to . . . to do something for somebody; to use my education to help someone.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped

you toward that goal?

S: No . . . none of my courses interested me in the least . . . they're just the basics.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: Well, I'd like to be . . . this is a real good place to meet people, and when you're done . . . you know, you've got a social advantage.

I: If you were not here, where would you rather be, and why?

S: I'd like to be movin' around . . . seein' new things . . . meetin' new people . . . I don't like to be stuck in one place real well.

I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?

S: Well, for one thing, I dislike livin' in the dorms . . . these rooms ain't exactly the livin' end . . . and then there's the noise . . . I like it quiet, sometimes. I don't like havin' to take required courses . . . I don't like the idea of required courses in the first place. An' I dislike some of the professors up here . . . they act like they wasn't gettin' paid to teach the students.

I: What three things did you like most about your college experience?

S: You get a chance to meet all kinds of people . . . talk with 'em . . . I like the freedom! That's the

best thing . . . no one breathing over your shoulder  
. . . 'cept at exam time. And I like the scenery.

(This question usually comes after questions No. 5 and/or 6.)

I: If you learn or study more about anything, what would  
it be?

S: Well, I think . . . I'd like a course in . . . well  
. . . human relations . . . that type of thing . . .  
I'm not really sure.

#### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 4:

Interview No. 1. The first interview seemed to indicate that the student had really no clear idea of the future. I would say that there was an internal discrepancy between even that hazy vision of the future and the student's activities in the present; unless she was "putting me on," there didn't seem to be much chance of her remaining in school.

Interview No. 2. The second interview was disappointing in that I felt the student had only half her mind on the questions, as if something had recently upset her. (I chose to believe that it wasn't my presence.) The same internal discrepancies (present versus future) seemed present.

#### Comparison and Summary:

The second batch of answers were almost identical with the first, except the tone, which seemed a little bored, or bitter. The differences between the first and second interviews were, so far as I could tell, an indication that she would like a course dealing in human relations (perhaps) and her more noticeable dislike of the professors.

Student No. 5

The second interview in this set of responses was taped about four weeks from the first.

These interviews were with a young white male whose usual first response to a serious discussion was a "flip" remark, as if he didn't want to have to define precisely where he stood on an issue.

## Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: A degree! Well . . . I wanted, that is, I expected that it would make . . . or help me be more mature . . . than I am now . . . better able to earn a living . . . that sort of thing.

I: What did you get?

S: Well, I just got the usual stuff; the university . . . er . . . basic courses . . . some I don't care for; like I don't see what use they'll be . . . but some I like . . . like my psychology course.

I: What kind of person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: Financially well off! And . . . more adult . . . more mature . . . better able to . . . well . . . understand things.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: Nah . . . well . . . I don't know . . . yeah; psychology helps you to understand yourself and be more mature.

- I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?
- S: Yeah, I think so . . . I mean, I'd like to be . . . college broadens your outlook . . . like, you meet a whole lot of people that you wouldn't get a chance to meet otherwise . . . this place has people from all over; so it's . . . so you can get acquainted with someone who has a whole new outlook from yours . . . helps you understand some of the problems in the world.
- I: If you could design a course, that is, if you could study anything you wanted to, what would it be? What would you like to know more about?
- S: Well . . . I think I'd like to know more about . . . that is . . . I'd like to understand more about people . . . how they think . . . why they do what they do . . . that sort of thing.
- I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?
- S: Dislike? Well . . . I don't like the large classes; the lectures. You know . . . it's just so impersonal . . . you don't hardly know any of the other student- . . . and the professor sure doesn't know who you are . . . otherwise I mostly like it here.
- I: Three things that you like?
- S: Women! (Laughs) Well, let's see; I like the students here . . . not just the women . . . I like small classes where you get a chance to talk to the professor

and the other students like human beings . . . that's about all. Oh, yeah; there's lots of things to do around here.

Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: A general education. A degree . . . and a professional education in a specified field. Hotel and restaurant and institutional management . . . and a good time.

I: What did you get?

S: So far, just a little general education . . . social science, psychology, American thought, and language.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: More mature; a business man . . . business-oriented . . . have a family . . . be part of the establishment.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: Hm . . . social science . . . psychology.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: Um . . . hm. I like to learn. Getting an education today is, I think, very important . . . for everybody . . . everybody that could get an education should get an education . . . I think it makes you a better person . . . more aware of all the problems that are happening in society . . . and throughout the world . . . you know . . . help you understand these a

little better . . . you know . . . the sociological aspect . . . the psychological aspect . . . it gives you a better view of what's going on.

I: If you could design a course, what would it be?

S: I think I'd design some type of course relating to life . . . as a whole . . . motives now and motives later . . . you know . . . like you make decisions now . . . over a period of years you look back and say: "Why did I make that decision? Because now it's affecting me." I'd try to design something that would take life as a pattern . . . from the beginning to the end . . . and try to set up the patterns that people go through . . . I'd like a course that would better enable me to deal with my life.

I: What three things do you like least about your college experience?

S: Professors . . . that I can't relate to! I can't think of anything else.

I: Three things you like?

S: I like the majority of my teachers . . . I like the classes that are small, like my psychology class, where students can better relate to the professors . . . and the students. And that's it, I guess.

#### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 5:

Interview No. 1. There did not seem to be too much internal inconsistency here, if any. At first I was not sure if his interest in psychology was not a little off the



beat when compared to his goal of being financially well off.

Interview No. 2. There did not seem to be any internal inconsistency in this interview.

#### Comparison and Summary:

The second set of responses was lengthier, more detailed, but the thought seemed about the same. Looking back, I regret using the phrase "design a course" because that is not necessarily synonymous with learning spread over a period of time. I do call his response to the question of what he would like to study another case of "insty-wisdom," however, because he reflects some anxiety about the consequences of his present decisions on his future. This seemed to me another example of a young person in search of distress-free living.

#### Student No. 6

The next two interviews were spaced about two weeks apart, and seemed to show more change than some spaced over a greater interval of time.

This young black woman was the only mother of the group; she also was very shy, and it was difficult to "draw her out" even to go through the interview questions. The second time went a little more smoothly.

#### Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Well, I expected to get enough education so I could go



on and better myself, and . . . help other people who needed help.

I: What did you get?

S: So far? It's hard to really say now; I'm a first-term freshman and I think it's too early to really say.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: Is that thing turned on?

(At this point I turned off the tape recorded and re-assured the subject that her name would not be used; that her identity would not be revealed.)

S: Well, I hoped to be a housewife; have a home of my own.

I: Have the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: Well, not really.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: No, I'd be working someplace . . . I need the money, see . . . and the education I'm getting here will help me like that. I need some kind of skills to get a good job.

I: If you were not here, where would you rather be?

S: I'd like to be living in my own place; taking care of a family . . . have my own household.

I: If you could design a course; that is, if you could

study anything you wanted to, what would it be?

S: Well . . . nothing, really . . . no, I can't think of anything.

I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?

S: Well . . . I don't like my Natural Science course . . . for one thing, it's too big . . . and there's so many students that it's hard to get help with the stuff you don't understand . . . that's all.

I: What three things do you like about your college experience?

S: Well, let's see . . . I like livin' in the dorm; the rooms are nice, and I like not having to cook . . . it's real nice to get up in the morning and not have to fix my own breakfast . . . and that's all I can think of now.

Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: A degree in nursing . . . I'd like to have a kind of job that I could help people.

I: What did you get?

S: Well, I got some of the basic required courses that I'll need to finish my degree.

I: What kind of person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: Well, I hope to be . . . to have my own place . . . I want to be independent . . . not have to live with

my parents.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: Well, I have to have them to graduate . . . to get the degree . . . so I would say yes.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: No . . . I'd either be living at home or out working.

I: If you were not here, where would you rather be?

S: Well, I need the degree to earn a living . . . and do the other things I want to . . . so I really don't think I want to be anywhere else.

I: If you could design a course, or study anything you wanted to, what would it be?

S: Well, I think I'd like to know more about raising kids . . . know how to bring 'em up so they don't have all these problems when they get big.

I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?

S: Well, like I had this course in design, you know? And all we ever do in there (it's a lecture, like) is look at other people's designs . . . I thought we'd get a chance to do some stuff of our own; you know . . . make something and have the teacher help us with it . . . it isn't at all what I expected it would be . . . and I have a hard time asking for help if there's something I don't understand . . . what else . . .

well, I really hate bein' away from my little boy  
. . . he stays at home with my mother, and I miss  
him a lot . . . I really look forward to going home  
weekends and seeing him.

I: Three things you like about your college experience?

S: Well, I'd say it's the chance to really make something  
of yourself . . . lots of people don't get this chance  
. . . I guess that's about the biggest thing.

#### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 6:

Interview No. 1. The lack of information in the first interview was surprising to me at the time. I am not sure how much this inarticulateness reflected the student's lack of awareness as to how she felt, or whether it was simply shyness. The most startling discrepancies (which seemed to me to indicate a lack of clear thinking) were, first, her response that she wished to be a housewife and, second, that what she liked most about the dorm was not having to prepare meals.

Interview No. 2. This interview seemed to me much more satisfactory; there seemed to be much less confusion.

#### Comparison and Summary:

The second round seemed to show progress, perhaps illusory; she may have been more at ease. Her interest in learning more about child-raising fits in nicely with her interest in having her own household. I was intrigued to note that her idea of being a housewife had evolved into

something more abstract: independence. While it's good to have a concrete idea of what one wants, it's not a bad idea to know why one wants it. I think I felt unjustifiably smug about that interview.

Student No. 7

The following interviews were spaced about seven weeks apart; there seemed to me, at least, to be less difference between them than might have been expected, compared to some of the others.

This young black athlete was the quietest of the male students. He seemed to know precisely what he wanted, although he had trouble labeling it.

Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Before I came to college, I expected a great deal, like, you know, that it would be hard; now that I'm here, I realize that it isn't, ah, that hard . . . it all depends on how you work.

I: What did you get?

S: What did I get?

I: What did you get from your college experience?

S: I realized that I would have to study more, uh . . . more than I had been doing in high school . . . that I would have to dedicate myself to the work in order to make it.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

- S: Well, like I think about majoring in social work . . . because I really like people, like being around . . . I have some experience in a summer job as a junior counselor and I've worked with, you know, kids, and I realize that people need to sit down and discuss their problems with others, and I think this can accomplish a lot.
- I: Do you think that any of the courses you have taken so far have helped you toward that goal?
- S: Well, none of the courses yet . . . I would say ATL is helping a little because, well, you know, we sit in a circle and the instructor gives us a chance to communicate with each other, whereas in a normal class, you would be sitting directly behind each other and, like, you wouldn't get that much attention.
- I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?
- S: Well, really I don't think so . . . but again . . . I would have to say: yeah. Because, like ever since I was in grade school, I've wanted to go to school because, like, my brothers and sisters had gone to school and I've always wanted to go to college. When I was in the twelfth grade, I didn't really think I was going to go, 'cause I saw guys going to school, then droppin' out. But, you know, since I've been in grade school I really wanted to do.
- I: If you could design a course, say, about anything you wanted to learn more about, what would it be?



- S: Well, like everything I could think of is already covered. Any lectures, like, or like, people getting together and discussing anything, you know, really it's hard to say, right off hand, because everything seems to be taken up, really.
- I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?
- S: One thing I dislike about college is the dorm food . . . why? Because it isn't like mama's cooking. I'm not saying that I'm homesick or anything, because I'm not, but I do miss the food. Another thing . . . I guess I would have to say, uh, the noise in the dorm; I realize this is a thing you have to get adjusted to, but people do have to study on the floor, and there should be laws so that people can study who have to study. One other thing? I haven't thought of anything, but if I do, I will let you know.
- I: What three things do you like most?
- S: Well, I like the people, 'cause the people are easy to get along with, like, I'm from the East Coast and I thought I'd have to . . . have to work hard to get along with them, and now I realize that they're just like any other people. Secondly, I like the way the programs are set up here, you can take just about anything, you can study just about any field you'd ever want to study.
- I: Anything else?
- S: Not right off hand, no.

## Interview No. 2:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Well, like I expected it would be real hard . . . maybe more than I could handle . . . but that isn't the case . . . like, I can manage if I keep right at it.

I: What did you get?

S: Well, I think I got accustomed to the way of life I'll have to lead while I'm here . . . like, I'll have to work harder . . . like, not skip any studying for doing something else.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: Well, I would like to be able to do something with . . . or work with people . . . I would like to maybe work with them through athletics; like, I'm here on a football scholarship and I really enjoy sports . . . I would like to do something for kids . . . or people.

I: Do you think that any of the courses you have taken so far have helped you toward that goal?

S: Well, like, it isn't . . . exactly anything toward the goal . . . but there are courses where I think I've, like, learned a lot about the basic skills I'll need later.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: Yeah, like it's something I've planned on ever since I can remember . . . like, it's not just the money . . . it's a social advantage.

I: If you could design a course, that is, if you could study about anything you wanted to learn more about, what would it be?

S: Well, that's really hard to say . . . I might like to learn more about some of the social . . . or, like, the problems people have in . . . living in the big cities . . . and helping them . . . but I think that's already covered.

I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?

S: The food . . . this food isn't any good . . . it just runs right through you; you eat dinner and an hour later you're hungry again . . . I like the kind of food that sticks with you. The noise in the dorm is another thing . . . like I can't always study here when I'd like . . . there aren't any rules for the punishment of those that do make too much noise for those that want to study . . . and, like, I'd rather be comfortable in my own room than sitting in the library . . . I guess that's all.

I: What three things do you like about your college experience?

S: I like the students here, they're real friendly . . . the people aren't hard to get along with . . . another thing . . . this is a real good school for sports . . . I'm glad I came here . . . and that's all, I guess.

### Analysis of Interviews of Student No. 7:

Interview No. 1. This interview did not seem to show any internal inconsistency.

Interview No. 2. This interview seemed also to express a close relationship between present activities and future goals . . . perhaps a little better than the first one.

### Comparison and Summary:

The two interviews seemed to me very nearly alike; at least his likes and dislikes are about the same as before, with the exception of his pointing out that he likes the athletic program at M.S.U. rather than the choice of courses that are available to the student. His combination of athletics with "helping people," while still vague, may be a step in the direction of self-awareness. He seems to have articulated more effectively that his interest in college is because of the status more than the economic value of the degree.

### Student No. 8

This interview (the second one was accidentally erased) was with a young black student who was one of the most outspoken in the group. I would say that she was on her way to becoming more articulate, better able to define who she was.

### Interview No. 1:

I: What did you expect to get from your college experience?

S: Oh, wow! Turn it off! (The recorder was not turned off; this passed as a joke.) I planned to become more

aware of the social environment of America, I also planned to become . . . uh, have different ideas about different things and to become more mature than I was when I first came. I wanted to learn how to get along with people who had different ideas from mine or didn't necessarily agree upon what I agreed upon.

I: What did you get from your college experience?

S: Well, I became more mature, I think, but to get that social thing I was talkin' about, I have to go a little bit longer. And, uh, I still haven't reached the state of maturity that I wish to reach yet, but I'm workin' on it.

I: What kind of a person do you hope to be in four years time?

S: A very well-known woman. Not because of, like I had invented somethin', just because, ah, well, a woman very well known for her ability to get along with other people.

I: Have any of the courses you have taken so far helped you toward that goal?

S: Well, uh . . . most of my psychology classes. Psych 151 helped me because it taught me a lot about myself. I learned about the type of person I am; I sort of had an idea about what I really didn't know in detail like the kind of person I was. Psychology 107 helped me because it learned me . . . it taught me how to express myself 'n stop sayin' things that I didn't really mean because, you know, people just walk over

you like that. I mean, you don't have to go around just tellin' people off all the time, but you have to learn how to say no 'n mean it. And ATL helped me because it was another class where I express things I really wanted to.

I: If it were not for the economic advantage of a college degree, would you be here?

S: Probably not. Hm-mm.

I: Where would you rather be, and why?

S: I would rather be travelin' someplace, because I like people and, uh, and I feel that, what I want to know, I could learn by travelin'. Because lot of your life in college really isn't relevant to what you want to do. That makes you learn what you really want to do and you enjoy it while you're doing it. And I like travel.

I: If you could design a course to learn more about anything you wanted to learn, what would it be?

S: Uh, it would be a course, I guess, in personal relationships. 'Cause, like I say, I really dig people . . . an' I think people like me . . . I'm not really sure about that.

I: What three things do you dislike most about your college experience?

S: I dislike the administration and some of the professors. I dislike the atmosphere freshmen get the first time they're exposed to college life because I feel that there should be somebody there to . . . like

when you first get out of high school you're used to people tellin' you so much what you can do and what you can't do and I realize that when you get outa high school you're supposed to, like, reach a state of maturity where most people feel you should be on your own, but, you've been trained, all your life, to do a certain thing, they shouldn't just, you know, push you out there like that . . . there should be somebody there to help you . . . and, ah, another thing, here at MSU, now I can't say this for everybody, but for the people that I know, like you can party a lot, but sometimes you should just stop!

(Laughter)

I: Now, three things you like.

S: Uh . . . let's see . . . I like . . . the counseling center . . . I like the . . . ah . . . the scenery . . . and most of the people I'm livin' with.

#### Comparison and Summary:

As the second interview was accidentally erased, no analysis, comparison, or summary was made for Student No. 8.





## CONCLUSION

The project, as I conceived it, was a failure due to the fact that the goals were too broad, too ambitious to be confined to a ten-week experiment. (The only exception might be intensive therapy.)

The goals I had in mind for the students were:

(a) increased acceptance of self, leading to (b) more realistic goals for the future, and (c) increased ease in communication. I do not feel that there is anything wrong with these goals, nor that they are unobtainable. I would not dispense with the method I was pursuing in the tutorial sessions; I would extend and refine the methods.

As for the method of measuring progress, the interviews, I would eschew such lengthy lists and confine myself to something manageable, such as: "What do you see around you?" This would probably answer the question in my mind as to how much more the student was able to perceive. If ever I were to undertake such a project again, I would make certain to use a control group so that my implications might have some validity.

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