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Eugene Robert Shaw

has been accepted towards fulfillment
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Ph.D. degree in Educational Administration

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INSIDE THE BARGAIN: HOW LOW ACHIEVERS AND THEIR TEACHERS CONSPIRE TO AVOID SERIOUS AND SUSTAINED ACADEMIC PURSUITS

by

Eugene Robert Shaw

A DISSERTATION

submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration

1993

ABSTRACT

INSIDE THE BARGAIN: HOW LOW ACHIEVERS AND THEIR TEACHERS CONSPIRE TO AVOID SERIOUS AND SUSTAINED ACADEMIC PURSUITS

Purpose

The purpose was to describe and explain the norms in classrooms that contain low achievers. Describing necessitated that the researcher generate data. Explaining necessitated that the researcher apply a theory through which to view and explain the set of data. Both social systems and social exchange theory operate under the premise of norms. Therefore, it was reasonable to apply social exchange theory to the classroom norms.

Sample and Method

The sample contained 21 participants. Thirteen white students and 2 hispanic students, grades 9 through 12 were selected using theoretical sampling. Six white teachers were selected using the snowball method. Initial contacts were made through the principal and a counselor.

The researcher used the theoretical framework to generate a schedule of interview questions. The method used was the tape-recorded interview and non-participant observation. The researcher conducted 21 interviews and used 105, one-hour non-participant observations to confirm, refute and/or extend the interview data. Interviews and observations were tape recorded. Subsequently, all tapes were transcribed. The data

were hung on the theoretical framework and explained in terms of social exchange theory.

Findings

The norms in these classrooms permit and even encourage both sides to give minimal effort. In turn, each side expects and accepts that the rewards for their effort will also be minimal. The classroom norms are mutually gratifying, and therefore, neither side seeks to change the status quo. The behavioral norms which encourage respect for bureaucratic status remain unchanged, and in fact cannot be bargained away. However, the academic norms which regard achievement are established at such a low level that even the organization's policies, which support achievement are subverted. Mutual gratification explains why there is seldom conflict in classrooms. Mutual gratification also explains why the norms go unchallenged.

Recommendations

A theory is a lens through which a researcher views, describes and explains a phenomenon. Further study should be conducted with other students and/or other theories, subsequently integrating the findings with this and previous researches in order to confirm, refute, and extend the current findings.

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EUGENE ROBERT SHAW

1993

DEDICATION

To Paulina, who encouraged my serious and sustained pursuit of philosophical education.

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The researcher thanks Dr. Philip A. Cusick for chairing the dissertation and serving as advisor. Dr. Cusick made it financially possible for me to leave my high school principalship by obtaining the New Graduate Recruit Fellowship, the Julius Barbour Memorial Scholarship and an assistantship with the MASSP. Dr. Cusick guided the dissertation and certainly matched the researcher's level of effort and direct involvement. The degree and dissertation would have been beyond my reach without Dr. Cusick's personal and professional assistance.

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The students and teachers who participated in this study are due thanks for opening their classrooms to an outsider and welcoming me as just another member of the class. The researcher is indebted to too many people to list, and can only say thank you to all who were helpful personally, professionally and many times in both ways.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

A school is a social system. A social system may be viewed as a set of reciprocal relations among participants. This means that the participants have reached understandings about what is to be received from and what is given to the relationship. The established understandings among participants constitute a set of norms under which the social system operates. A school can be understood in terms of its social norms, or set of reciprocal relations among its participants.

Classrooms are also social systems in which participants develop a set of reciprocal relations that solidify as social norms. Some classrooms contain high numbers of low achievers who, ostensibly at least, may not receive much from or give much to academic endeavors. But, these classrooms are not out of control, because there too a set of social norms exists. Low achievers and their teachers know what each other expects to receive and to give.

This research proceeded from Parson's (1968) interpretation of norms. Parsons stated,

> ...the term normative will be used as applicable to an aspect, part or element of a system of action if, and only in so far as, it may be held to manifest or otherwise involve a sentiment attributable to one or more actors that

> something is an end in itself, regardless of its status as a means to any other end (1) for the members of a collectivity, (2) for some portion of the members of a collectivity or (3) for the collectivity as a unit. (p. 75)

Regarding the social norms in classrooms, Cusick (1992) wrote "The problem for the classroom group or any group, is to establish norms. Its participants have to agree on and then submit themselves to some restraints" (p. 54). Students and teachers establish a relationship based on reciprocity. Initial tensions diminish as students and teachers legitimate the social norms.

According to Feldman (1984) groups and individuals "try to operate in such a way that they maximize their chances for task success and minimize their chances of task failure" (p. 47). Hackman (1976) added that group norms "develop gradually and informally as group members learn what behaviors are necessary for the group to function more effectively" (p. 50). Blau (1964) believed that "Morality must rest not merely on group pressure and long-run advantage but primarily on internalized normative standards" (p. 18).

Feldman (1984) continued that group norms generally develop in one of four ways: (1) explicit statements; (2) critical events in the group's history; (3) primacy; or (4) carry-over from past situations. Although Feldman listed four ways in which group norms develop, there may be more. Explicit statements exhibit themselves as classroom teachers establish a set of expectations for student conduct. Critical events

bringing about a normative behavior exhibit themselves when members of the group are embarrassed. As a result, an understanding would be reached to preclude recurrence. Primacy is established in the first meeting of a group. Group members expect that subsequent meetings will be conducted in a similar fashion. As such, low achievers and their classroom teachers may begin to establish the tone for their classes from the first day. Carry-over from past experiences may be interpreted that students and teachers bring expectations to the classroom based on previous classroom experiences.

Feldman (1984) conveyed that groups enforce the established norms when they (1) facilitate the group's survival; (2) simplify or make predictable what behavior is expected of group members; (3) help the group avoid embarrassing interpersonal problems; or (4) express the central values of the group and clarify what is distinctive about the group's identity. Norms and enforcement of norms stabilize the group.

Ideally, the social norms in classrooms would encourage effort and achievement by both students and teachers. According to some researchers, students and their teachers bargained down the time and effort that was expended in classes and the degree to which the subject matter was approached. According to Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, and Cusick (1986) "there exists a complex, tacit conspiracy to avoid sustained, rigorous, demanding, academic inquiry. A 'bargain'

of sorts is struck that demands little academically of either teachers or students."

Sedlak et al. (1986) and Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) indicated that in classrooms with low achievers, the social norms permit and even encourage low achievement. Those researchers contended that low achievers and their teachers bargain down social norms in classrooms to a point where orderly discourse is allowed to proceed, but where academic expectations are reduced. The bargained-down expectations and behaviors that have accumulated into social norms pose a problem for students who may receive little in the way of education.

Low achievement is a problem. The established social norms in classrooms may themselves be a source of this problem. Therefore, the social norms in classrooms that contain low achievers, and the way these social norms are established were studied. This researcher investigated the social norms of classrooms that contained low achievers as the norms related to academic endeavors.

Background

Low achievers and their teachers reciprocate rewards and efforts according to the social norms in their classrooms. There is evidence that this bargain takes place at all levels, from elementary classrooms through secondary classrooms. Teachers have developed a means of accommodating what low achievers can and will do. Kidder (1989) found that even in

elementary classrooms, teachers made bargains with students. One student, Clarence, was a perpetual challenge to the teacher and to other students. As Mrs. Zajac lectured, Clarence punched other students and walked to the pencil sharpener. As Clarence returned to his seat, went out of his way to kick students, or to talk vulgarly to girls. In order to conduct her classroom business in some orderly fashion, Mrs. Zajac struck a bargain with Clarence: If Clarence would leave other students alone, Mrs. Zajac would not ask much of him.

Cusick (1983) found low-level bargains exist between students and teachers. Several teachers were not interested in the curriculum, but had to find some means of relating to the students during the class period. He found that Mr. P., a teacher, used his personal relationship and conversation time to gain student compliance. In fact, Mr. P. was as bored as the students in the classroom. On one occasion, Mr. P. continued lecturing as students sat bored but compliant. It appears that the bargain between Mr. P. and the students, was mutual tolerance of boredom. Mr. P. gave minimal lecture, and the students gave minimal tolerance. When questioned about the situation, the students responded "He's a good guy" (p. 55).

Grant (1988) related scenes from a high school classroom, in which Mr. Carnova, a teacher, used his good nature as a trade for minimal compliance. Grant reported on one particular class when Mr. Carnova was attempting to take attendance, that

the students bantered with him, and he with they. In a school in which many students directly contested teacher authority, the students received tolerance as Mr. Carnova repeated answers for those who half listened. The students chided and stalled him during non academic time. However, students gave minimal compliance when he lectured. Students were allowed to joke around when there was no lecture. There was to be order during presentation time.

One bargain made between low achievers and their teachers appears to be receiving a passing grade for giving minimal effort. Willis (1977) reported of a student who joked about the ease of school, saying that he was upset because he had to do a writing assignment. His intention was to get through the marking period and never have to write. The student remarked that the last time he did any writing,

> ...was in careers, 'cos I writ 'yes' on a piece of paper, that broke me heart. I mean to write, 'cos I was going to try to go through the term without writing anything. 'Cos since we've cum back, I ain't dun nothing. [it was half term]. (p. 27)

Regarding the level of classroom commitment and the general classroom happenings, Powell et al. (1985) remarked that students and teachers accept mediocrity. They state that most coursework was not intellectually demanding.

Classrooms are social systems which operate on a set of accepted social norms. Several researchers suggest that the social norms in classrooms which contain low achievers,

institutionalized avoidance of academic rigor. It was said that low achievers gave minimal compliance, neglected engaging in class and failed to achieve. Teachers know what low achievers can do and will do, and they bargain down their expectations to the level that students can do and will do. It appears that what the teachers get from this exchange is reduced conflict that allows the teacher to conduct the class in an orderly way.

Theoretical Framework

This section introduces and explains the concepts from social exchange theory. This study applied the concepts of reciprocity, comparison level, comparison-level alternative, distributive justice and opportunity costs from social exchange theory by Blau (1964), Homans (1961), Gouldner (1960) and others, to an examination of the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers.

All relationships may be viewed as being based on reciprocity and as such may be thought of as a web of mutually advantageous contracts. Blau (1964) described reciprocity as the "voluntary action of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (p. 91). Reciprocity suggests that people in relationships are inter-indebted. Malinowski (1932) wrote "People owe obligations to each other and that, therefore, conformity with norms is something they give to each other"

(p. 39). It may be said that reciprocity becomes a shared value among relationship members.

Reciprocity solidifies into internalized values which are used to compare the rewards that one receives, to the rewards that others receive for a comparable amount of time, effort and compliance. This process is known as the "comparison level." Blau (1964) stated that comparison levels "serve as standards of comparison and expectation, the average reward received by their members becomes a baseline for evaluating what is a relatively gratifying or a relatively depriving experience" (p. 159).

People continually examine their comparison-level alternative. The comparison-level alternative is a relationship where a less gratifying reward may be obtained with less effort. When an individual is content that the reward received is proportionate to the effort given, she or he remains in the relationship. If the reward received is less than the effort given, the person will seek the comparison-level alternative. The individual may obtain less reward, but will do so for less effort.

Distributive justice is another concept that helps elucidate exchange theory. Homans (1961) referred to distributive justice as practical equilibrium. He stated that people in relationships expect that the rewards received will be distributed proportionately. Meeker (1971) said of distributive justice that people who have established a

relationship do not demand precisely equal rewards. Rather, distributive justice is the comparable treatment of those that are similar in ability and dedication. Individuals who give more effort, maintain higher standards, or have higher status receive proportionately more rewards than those who give little.

Individuals in relationships assess their opportunity costs. Opportunity costs are the rewards which may be received by focusing effort in a relationship or activity other than the present one. Individuals remain in relationships which are mutually gratifying.

Exchange Theory offers us a way to talk about the relationship between low achievers and their teachers. In classrooms, the social norms solidify and become the baseline for the individuals' expectations of reward and effort.

What Schools Should Be

Education is a social process. The individual is born as a very nearly tabula rasa. The single distinction between mankind and other mammals is socialization. Individuals must be socialized in order that she or he not be at odds with society. Therein lies the purpose of education. Education occurs whenever a younger generation is affected by an older generation. The socialization process includes instilling a set of ideals, values, and practices regardless of social class. In addition, education prepares the individual to assume a career of his or her own choice. The end of education

is a the process by which a being becomes a socialized being--a human being. As such, society ensures its own continuation.

Rousseau (1967) described education as a social process. Rousseau stated that as such "man must be educated for society, though not necessarily society in its present form" (p. 221). Education begins "when the child becomes aware of his relationship with other people" (p. 221). Education instills "the fundamental principles which underlie the whole of man's development" (p. 221). Rousseau (1967) maintained that the individual is freed from his being through "social experience of fraternity and equality with citizens who accept the same ideal" (p. 223). Rousseau concluded that the individual who accepts authority "not only belongs to a collective, moral body but also achieves true freedom by obeying a law which he has prescribed for himself" (p. 222).

Durkheim (1956) also treated education as a function of social systems. He stated that education is "an eminently social thing" (p. 28). The individual and society are not opposed because "it is life in society that makes an individual a truly human being" (pp. 20-21). Durkheim maintained that education prepares the individual for society. He stated that each society has an ideal of humankind and that education instills this ideal in the individual. He continued that to this end, education is the influence that an adult generation exercises on youth.

Durkheim (1956) maintained that education develops in the individual "the spirit of discipline, the spirit of abnegation, and the spirit of autonomy" (p. 42). The individual must be taught "our idea of the physical world, our idea of life, our idea of man" (p. 47). Durkheim stated,

> A good mind is one whose dominant ideas, which govern the exercise of thought, are in harmony with the fundamental sciences as they are presently constituted; thus equipped, this mind can operate in the realm of the truth as we conceive it. (p. 47)

Durkheim concluded that education is the "totality of influences that nature or other men are able to exercise either on our intelligence or on our will" (p. 61). As such, education is the means by which "society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions of its very existence" (p. 71).

Newman (1951) too viewed education as a social process. Education prepares the individual both socially and academically. Newman stated that education is its own reward because through education the individual "profits by an intellectual tradition" (p. 934). He added that "liberal education and liberal pursuits are exercises of the mind, of reason, of reflection" (p. 935). Newman elaborated that there are three forms of knowledge, (1) "useful," (2) "liberal," and (3) "religious." He asserted that "to give undue prominence to one is to be unjust to another" (p. 934). Newman continued that "liberal" knowledge is not inferior to "useful"

knowledge. Rather, it is "the distinct class of the useful" (p. 935).

Newman (1951) stated that education is a possession. He distinguished between "useful" and "liberal" when he stated that "Of possessions, those rather are useful, which bear fruit; those liberal, which tend to enjoyment. By fruitful, I mean, which yield revenue; by enjoyable, where nothing accrues of consequence beyond the using" (p 936).

Newman (1951) remarked that there are "two methods of education; the end of the one is to be philosophical, of the other to be mechanical; the one rises toward general ideas, the other is exhausted upon what is particular and external" (p. 936). Newman termed liberal knowledge "a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labour" (p. 936). He concluded that liberal education is "simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence" (p. 939).

The researcher included the reflections of John Goodlad because he is a modern purveyor of classic ideas regarding what students should receive via education. His reflections regarding education were strikingly similar to those of Newman, Rousseau, and Durkheim. Goodlad (1979) also referred to education as "a process of the individual becoming" (p. 38). Through education, society assures its own continuation. Goodlad stated that education plays "a major role in assuring that the needs of the individual and society will not be at

odds" (p. 104). Regarding the end of educational preparation, Goodlad stated that education,

> ...is eminently practical. It prepares not for just one but many vocations; it prepares not just for society as it is but for a changing civilization; it provides not merely for present satisfactions but makes possible a lifetime of enjoyment. (p. 35)

According to Rousseau (1967), Newman (1967), Durkheim (1956) and Goodlad (1979) low achievers should receive some degree of knowledge, skills, self-esteem, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, enjoyment, attention, challenge and preparation for life and work. In turn, low achievers too should give some degree of study time, effort, compliance, attention, completed homework, reading, tests, writing, and participation. Teachers should give some amount of weekly lesson planning, daily lesson planning, correcting papers and tests, lecturing, individual help to students, monitoring, and free time. Teachers should receive ascendancy in the form of some amount of effort, time, compliance, and enjoyment from low achievers.

Purpose and Exploratory Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers. The researcher did so in terms of social exchange theory. The product of the research was a set of propositions, stated in terms of social exchange theory. The propositions explicated the social norms extant in such classrooms. These propositions

provided direction to those who wish to further investigate the phenomena.

Participants in classrooms share a reciprocal relationship in which they receive and give. They assess the value of what they receive, and give what they believe to be a comparable amount. Low achievers and their teachers receive something from classroom activities. However, it is not clear what or how much they receive and give. Therefore, the unit of analysis was the low achievers' and their teachers' assessment of the social norms in classrooms, including what they receive, what they give, and how they balance what they receive against what they give.

The following questions were designed to provide a framework for the study:

I. <u>What bargains are established in classrooms between low achievers and their teachers</u>? This question addressed what bargains existed, who initiated the bargains, when the bargains began, the mutuality of bargains, and what could not be bargained.

II. <u>What do other students receive and give in class</u>? This area of questioning dealt with how low achievers compare themselves to students who exert more or less effort in the classroom, the impact

of their effort on grades, and the low achievers' perception of the distributive justice involved.

III. How do low achievers balance what they receive against what they give? Classrooms must be understood as a social system, in which participants receive and give. This question sought information regarding low achievers' and their teachers' assessment of the value of what low achievers receive in the classroom in relation to their career goals, and how they determine the appropriate balance of what they receive against what they give.

IV. What do low achievers receive in the classroom? This area of questioning focused on the knowledge, skills, self-esteem, external and internal rewards, enjoyment, attention, challenge and preparation for life and work that low achievers receive.

V. What do teachers of low achievers give in the classroom? This area of questioning dealt with the amount weekly lesson planning, daily lesson planning, correcting papers and tests, lecturing,

individual help to students, monitoring, and free time that they give.

VI. What do low achievers give in the classroom? This area of questioning concerned the amount of study time effort, compliance, attention, completed homework, reading, tests, writing, and the participation that low achievers give.

The preceding questions guided this qualitative study. The questions were designed to guide the initial search for a description and explanation of the social norms in classrooms that contained low achievers. The respondents' answers to questions provided the basis to generate a set of propositions.

Methodology

The intent was to gain knowledge of the social norms of classrooms that contained low achievers. The method employed was observation and interview. The researcher conducted classroom observations and interviewed low achievers and their teachers regarding social norms. The social norms in classrooms and the nature of these social norms were extrapolated from classroom observations and the interviews with low achievers and their teachers. Regarding this method, Cusick (1973) stated that an observer begins by locating

himself by those that she or he wishes to study. This method is useful because,

> It can give the writer an answer of what it means to gradually become one of the subjects, and thus he can more clearly explain that group's perspective against his own at various stages of his assimilation into that society. (p. 5)

A pilot study was conducted during the winter term, 1992. Data collection was conducted during the spring term, April and May, 1992. Subsequent interviews and observations were completed in the fall semester, 1992.

Schimidt (1991) stated that structured interviewing involves using a schedule of questions when interviewing participants. The schedule of questions is written based on the information to be sought in the study. Questions are typically open ended, thus allowing the respondent to elaborate in detail, and to provide a broad range of information. The same set of questions is used with all respondents. The rationale for having a schedule of questions is that it maintains a focus on the topic being studied, and it reduces the potential for bias from the interviewer toward the interviewees.

Gorden (1969, 1987) discussed the funnel format of the interviewing process. The initial interview questions are icebreakers which are designed to put the respondent at ease. The next series of questions are related to the research topic, but are broad based and general. A technique to verify responses is to probe into inconsistent areas by seeking

additional information. The subsequent questions become more focused, and draw on narrower, more specific information. Funnel format referred to using initially broad to subsequently narrow questions.

Schimidt (1991) stated that the structured interview works well because (1) it uses a schedule of questions; (2) the questions relate to the research topic; (3) questions are based on patterned behavior; (4) the questions are open ended; (5) the questions are in a funnel format; (6) the same criteria are utilized with all interviewees; and (7) the interview process is the same for all interviewees.

The researcher's interest was in the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers. Low achievers and their teachers were interviewed in private. The interviews lasted one hour per participant. All respondents permitted the interview to be tape recorded. Therefore, anecdotal notes were not taken during interviews. These tape recordings were transcribed, edited and collated into common tracts. Exploratory questions were the basis of the interview. The researcher conducted follow-up interviews with other low achievers and classroom teacher(s) mentioned by the low achievers. This process of selecting new participants is known as snowball interviewing.

Other than introductory comments, and icebreaker questions, the interviews were guided by the areas previously presented. The interviewer permitted some flexibility to probe

into areas where there was inconsistency in responses, or where more information was needed. Transcriptions and tapes were examined according to each of the six areas. Actual quotations and details of events were used to present the research findings. The researcher did not alter the respondents' interpretations or perceptions.

Sample

This is an exploratory study, and as such does not need a random sample, but rather theoretical sampling. Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that theoretical sampling,

> ...is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. The initial decisions for theoretical collection of data are based only on a general sociological perspective. (p. 105)

Glaser and Strauss (1963) quote Zetterberg as stating that random sampling is not necessary in generating theory.

> The researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling with theoretical sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. These relationships are suggested as hypothesis pertinent to direction of relationship, not tested as descriptions of both direction and magnitude. Conventional theory claims generality of scope; that is, one assumes that if the relationship holds for one group under certain conditions, it will probably hold for other groups under the same conditions. (p. 106)

The size of the sample group cannot be predetermined with the use of theoretical sampling. All participants selected for interviews were closely observed in their classes. The researcher attended these students' classes, in order to verify that the information received was accurate.

There were concerns with generalizability. This study was limited to a small group of low achievers and their teachers. Few minority students and no special education students were included. This researcher asserts the sociological assumption that people are more alike than they are different. If a group of people behave in a certain way under certain conditions, then one may assume that others will act the same way under similar conditions.

The participants were full-time secondary students and their teachers. The initial low achievers met the following criteria: (1) freshman, sophomore, junior or senior class; (2) had under a 1.50 grade point average; (3) had a score above twenty on the ACT or comparable standardized test; and (4) demonstrated low effort as reported by the high school counselor and high school principal. The participants were selected from academic, non-vocational classes.

The researcher explained to the respondents the study's purpose and the topics to be included. A consent and assent form were signed by respondents, and by a parent or legal guardian for participants under 18 years of age. The consent form explained that the participants were not obligated to

take part in the research, and that they could withdraw at any time. Participants received no remuneration.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

This study's purpose was to describe and explain the social norms of classrooms that contained low achievers. Two literatures pertained to this research. The first body of literature will be a review of social exchange theory. The second body of literature will be a review of related qualitative researches. The latter review will provide a picture of the current knowledge of the bargains between students and their teachers.

Review of Social Exchange Theory

There are five concepts that combine to outline the theoretical framework. The following are the five concepts: (1) reciprocity; (2) opportunity costs; (3) comparison level; (4) comparison-level alternative; and (5) distributive justice.

The first concept from social exchange theory is reciprocity. Homans (1961) stated that social association can be conceptualized as "an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons" (p. 13). Blau (1964) described social exchange as "voluntary action of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (p. 91).

Meeker (1971) added,

> The basic assumption here is that human social behavior can be logically derived or predicted from premises held by the actor whose behavior is being predicted. These premises include: (1) his values, (2) his perception of the alternative behaviors available to him, (3) his expectations of the consequences of these alternatives to himself and others (consequences including the probable responses from others), and (4) a 'decision rule,' which is a kind of social norm telling him how the first three premises should be combined to yield the prescription of his behavior (p. 485)

Blau (1964) stated that establishing a relationship,

> ...involves making investments that constitute commitments to the other party. Since social exchange requires trusting others to reciprocate, the initial problem is to prove oneself trustworthy. As individuals regularly discharge their obligations, they prove themselves trustworthy of further credit. (p. 98)

He continued that accepting reciprocity via a present or favor is "the starting point of a budding exchange relation and possibly a lasting friendship" (p. 107). Mauss (1954), added that "To refuse to give, or to fail to invite, is--like refusing to accept--the equivalent of a declaration of war; it is a refusal of friendship" (p. 10).

Reciprocity exists in all associations, present and past. Individuals learn normative values through associating with family and friends. Gouldner (1960) believed that reciprocity had its inception in generations past. He views reciprocity as perpetuated through present social associations. Gouldner

stated that "Every social system of course has a history, which means that it has had its beginnings even if these were shrouded in antiquity" (p. 177).

Early social researchers such as Hobhouse (1906) referred to reciprocity as the "vital principle of society" (p. 12). Gouldner (1960) was more precise when he stated that "reciprocity...is the mutually gratifying pattern of exchanging goods and services" (p. 170). The term "reciprocity" means that individuals ensure that all interactions are ultimately equitable. Reciprocity is "the key intervening variable through which shared social rules are enabled to yield social stability" (p. 161).

Other social scientists shared Gouldner's (1960) interpretation that reciprocity yields a stable society. Simmel (1950) stated that social equilibrium and cohesion could not exist without "the reciprocity of service and return service" and that "all contacts among men rest on the schema of giving and returning the equivalence" (p. 387). Parsons (1951) stated that if a social system is to be stable there must always be some "mutuality of gratification" (p. 107).

Gouldner (1960) stated that reciprocity has two functions: (1) stabilizing group functions; and (2) starting relationships. Gouldner wrote that reciprocity as a norm consists of minimal behavioral requirements to which all people must adhere. Gouldner elaborated,

> ...a norm of reciprocity, in its universal form, makes two interrelated,

> minimal demands: (1) people should help those who helped them, and (2) people should not injure those who have helped them. Generically, the norm of reciprocity may be conceived of as a dimension to be found in all value systems and, in particular, as one among a number of 'Principal Components' universally present in moral codes. (p. 171)

Reciprocity stipulates that people who have established an association with one another in a dyad, triad, or larger group are inter-indebted. Malinowski (1932) stated that "People owe obligations to each other and that, therefore, conformity with norms is something they give to each other" (p. 39).

Gouldner (1960) stated that although people in associations are inter-indebted, the rate of indebtedness is not the same for all people. Individuals who possess high status are entitled to greater reward. Gouldner continued that this is due to the potential value of their association. Gouldner concluded that "Obligations imposed by the norm of reciprocity may vary with the status of the participants within a society" (p. 171).

Some social researchers have used the terms reciprocity and rationality interchangeably. However, Meeker (1971) addressed this issue and clarified that "The distinction between rationality and reciprocity is that rationality uses assessment of the purpose of maximizing the value received, and reciprocity seeks to maintain a balance of exchange" (p. 486). Weber (1947) stated that there are four kinds of social

decisions: (1) tradition, (2) emotion, (3) rational calculation of means and ends, and (4) evaluation of the means without regard to ends (p. 115). While rationality is a contributing factor in reciprocity as a conscious calculation of the cost of association, rationality is not in itself reciprocity. Reciprocity provides a non-critical means to view classroom exchanges. The exchanges extant in classes are gratifying to both low achievers and their teachers.

The second concept from social exchange theory is opportunity cost. Homans (1957) equated cost in social exchange to profit in economics. According to Homans, the cost of action is equivalent to the foregone opportunity of an alternative. The potential profit to be had in exchange relations is dependent upon the cost not exceeding the reward. He concluded that the profit is equal to the reward minus the cost. The formula can be expressed as profit = reward - cost.

The value of a reward to be obtained is not interpreted identically by all persons. Reward is weighed against the perceived value and the relationship with the provider. The individual who aspires to establish an exchange relation with someone who has high social status will weigh the reward different than someone who does not desire to establish and maintain relations with the provider. Blau (1964) wrote,

> The typical extrinsic benefits socially exchanged, such as advice, invitations, assistance or compliance, have a distinctive significance of their own that is independent of their supplier, yet an individual's preferences

> for them are also affected by his interpersonal relations with the supplier (p. 94)

Time and subordination are not the only potential costs. Blau (1964) stated that by making a commitment to a given person or group results in losing potential opportunities with other individuals or groups. Blau elaborated,

> Commitments themselves constitute opportunity costs, both 'actual' and 'virtual'. The rewards obtained in the social association or organizations abandoned in favor of the present are actual opportunity costs, and the rewards not obtained from other affiliations that could have been established are virtual opportunity costs. (p. 160)

Expressing respect for a provider, complying with requests, giving time, or passing up opportunities are all cost factors in social exchange. Blau (1964) stated that, a distinctive cost in social exchange was subordination by expressing respect or giving compliance. Blau believed that subordination was a reward given in the form of prestige or power--moral ascendancy.

The next concept from social exchange theory is distributive justice. Homans (1961) referred to distributive justice as practical equilibrium. He believed that people in social exchange relations expect that the reward received from the provider be distributed equally across the referent group. He stated that individuals "will expect that the rewards of each man be proportional to his costs--the greater the rewards, the greater the costs--and the net rewards, or

profits, of each man be proportional to his investments--the greater the investments, the greater the profit" (p. 75).

Homans (1961) stated that "The more to a man's disadvantage distributive justice fails of realization, the more likely he is to display the emotional behavior we call anger" (p. 75). Homans (1957) offered as evidence of expectations and comparison of self and others in distributive justice, through a conversation between two subgroups working in a factory.

> 'We are getting the same pay as they are. We ought to get just a couple dollars a week more to show that our work is more responsible.' When you ask them what they mean by 'more responsible,' they say that, if they do their work wrong, more damage can result, and so they are under pressure to take care. (p. 604)

Meeker (1971) addressed distributive justice saying that individuals do not expect equal treatment across all groups. Rather, distributive justice is the equal treatment of groups similar in ability and dedication. Individuals who exert more effort, maintain higher standards or have higher status should be rewarded proportionately more reward. He wrote,

> ...a person with higher investments deserves higher rewards; investments include the values of acts, cost to the actor, and external status characteristics such as age and sex. Status consistency or rank equilibrium is still another version of this principle, in which it is assumed that people try to distribute rewards proportionately to status on an external dimension. (p. 487)

Blau (1964) referred to distributive justice as fair exchange. He stated that "The concept 'fair exchange' is fundamentally similar to Homan's rule of 'distributive justice'" (p. 156). He continued to explain that in distributive justice, norms exist that dictate the fair exchange rate and the going exchange rate. The first refers to the actual rate based on the effects of supply and demand. The latter refers to the perceived equitable reward for similar commitment and competence. Blau stated that there "are social norms of fair exchange, and the going rate of exchange in a group is not necessarily, or even typically, identical with what is considered a fair rate of exchange" (p. 154).

The final two concepts from social exchange theory are the comparison level, and the comparison-level alternative. Reference groups establish an equitable rate of social exchange. Blau (1964) stated that "In the course of social exchange, a going rate of exchange between two social benefits becomes established" (p. 151).

Group members compare the reward that they receive to the reward which their referent group receives. Blau (1964) referred to this as comparison level. He continued that "Since reference groups serve as standards of comparison and expectation, the average reward received by their members becomes a baseline for evaluating what is a relatively gratifying or a relatively depriving experience" (p. 159).

The reward which one individual receives may not be the same as the reward which she or he receives in another group. When members make comparisons outside of their group, they usually compare against like groups. Blau (1964) stated that individuals,

> ...compare themselves with others like themselves whom they know or whom they know about, in their own groups and sometimes also in groups to which they aspire to belong, and their knowledge of the rewards these others receive in social life affect the level of social reward they expect to be able to claim. (p. 144)

While group members compare themselves against the referent group and other similar groups, they remain aware of the minimum acceptable reward. Blau (1964) referred to the comparison as comparison-level alternative. Blau stated that because people,

> ...belong to many groups, and potentially to still others, which constitute reference groups with which they compare themselves. The members of a group compare how profitable various social experiences are not only among themselves but each also compares the returns he gets for his investments with persons in other groups of which he is a member or aspires to be one. Since the various members of a given group compare themselves with others in different reference groups, whose investments they consider similar to their own their diverse expectations create differences in satisfaction with the same rewards. (p. 158)

Blau (1964) stated that when individuals assess the comparison level in their own group, and comparison-level

alternative in other similar groups, the individuals calculate what association costs. If their effort exceeds their reward, the person will experience dissonance. Blau stated that "People whose standards of justice are violated feel angry as well as dissatisfied and give vent to their anger through disapproval of and sometimes hostility and hatred against those who caused it" (p. 157).

Supply and demand affect how much reward a person might expect to receive for effort. When supply is down, higher reward might be expected. The inverse is also true. Blau (1964) asserted that there is an actual rate of reward and a hypothetical rate of reward. Because of supply and demand, the two may never be identical. Blau said,

> The going rate at which advice is exchanged for compliance and superior status in a group depends on conditions of supply and demand, but the continual changes in these conditions, partly produced by the changes in the exchange rate they themselves have produced, make it likely that the actual rate of exchange never catches up with the hypothetical rate toward which supply and demand pull it. But the going rate sets approximate standards of social expectations that influence the actual rates of exchange between particular partners. (p. 153)

Individuals compare themselves to their referent group, and to groups which they estimate are equal to their own group. Individuals do not leave their group immediately if rewards are fewer than expected. Gouldner (1960) explained,

> These outstanding obligations, no less than those already given compliance,

> contribute substantially to the stability of social systems. It is obviously inexpedient for creditors to break off relationships with those who have outstanding obligations to them. It may also be inexpedient for debtors to do so because their creditors may not again allow them to run up a bill of social indebtedness. In addition, it is morally improper, under the norm of reciprocity, to break off relations or to launch hostilities against those whom you are still indebted. (p. 175)

Summary of Section One

The concepts of reciprocity, opportunity costs, comparison level, comparison-level alternative, and distributive justice provide a useful way to describe and explain the norms of classrooms which contain low achievers. The benefit for using social exchange theory's concepts is that this researcher conducts the study without blaming participants. Low achievers and their teachers are viewed as participants engaged in a reasonable and mutually gratifying relationship. Each side understands the norms. In addition, each side abides by these norms and thus legitimates the norms. Next, the researcher will present the related qualitative studies.

Review of Qualitative Studies of Classrooms

The second literature review is intended to present to the reader what is currently known regarding lowered classroom standards. The researcher will include the following studies: Cusick (1992) The Educational System: Its Nature and Logic;

Cusick (1983) The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School: Studies of Three Schools; Cusick (1973) Inside High School: The Students' World; Grant (1988) The World We Created at Hamilton High; Henry (1963) Culture Against Man; McNeil (1986) Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge; Powell Farrar, & Cohen (1985) The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace; Sedlak Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick, (1986) Selling Students Short: Classroom Bargains and Academic Reform in the American High School; Willis (1977) Learning to Labour: How Working Class Children Get Working Class Jobs; and Neukom-Page (1991) Lower-track classrooms: A curricular and Cultural Perspective.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) described a study's perspective as "the angle of observation" (p. 55). The authors presented in this literature review have observed classrooms and the phenomenon of lowered standards from various perspectives, yet these studies are encompassed within the view of classrooms as social systems.

Studies many times conflict in their interpretations. In seeking a better understanding of the low achievement, the researcher reviewed major qualitative and literary studies of classrooms. The literature illustrates that classrooms bargains exist and that the bargains encourage avoiding rigorous academic requirements.

Neukom-Page (1991) indicated that research findings have both consistencies and differences. In determining the focus of this study, the researcher looked for both consistencies purpose of research is to make a contribution by filling a void in what is not known about lowered academic standards. There was a consistent norm across these books, that disinterested students and their teachers mutually accepted low achievement. However, the explanations found in the related literature did not elucidate how the disinterested students and their teachers established the norms which permitted and encouraged low achievement.

Even though the authors used many different perspectives, the reader will note that there are some consistent themes across the works cited. Lower academic standards are attributed to: (1) a conflict between control and teaching, (2) weak academic policies, (3) inconsistent administrative support, (4) broad-based curricula and (5) students choosing their own courses. Furthermore, students who fail to achieve have low educational aspirations and tend to regard education as a means of attaining only entry-level jobs. As such, lowered academic standards are also attributed to: (6) students' instrumental view of education, and (7) students pursuing opportunities other than education.

This research is a response to Sedlak et al.'s (1986) call for further investigation into classroom bargains. Therefore, the researcher presents these authors' study first.

Sedlak et al. completed a literature review of classroom bargains. The authors stated that there is a bargain struck between students and teachers. The bargain is,

> ...a complex, tacit conspiracy to avoid sustained, rigorous, demanding, academic inquiry. A 'bargain' of sorts is struck that demands little academically of either teachers or students. (p. 5)

Sedlak et al. (1986) argued that organizational policies protect and exacerbate the bargains because those policies "determine(s) what teachers can require of their students, and shape(s) prevailing academic standards" (p. 5). However, policies in and of themselves do not lower standards. Teachers interpret and act upon these policies. The authors believed that along with teachers "students at any time have some responsibility for the scope, character, and level of their education." (p. 21). According to the authors, classroom bargains are,

> ...an adaptation that teachers and students make to the institutions which they occupy together. Each side brings to the arrangement experiences, aspirations, and options, both in and out of school, that make their respective behavior understandable and rational. (p. 5)

Sedlak et al. (1986) also contended that students have become increasingly disengaged because they are aware of their other opportunities such as work and sports. Students prefer to expend their energy on those opportunities rather than on academic pursuits. Sedlak et al. noted that work and sports reduce the time that students can expend on serious study.

Therefore, students enroll in less challenging classes and "...appear to care less about their educational experience and...invest their time, effort and attention elsewhere" (p. 2). In response to student disengagement, teachers reduce academic requirements. In effect, the teachers have consented to a bargain with their students.

Sedlak et al. noted that at base,

> ...the bargain's essential features include: relatively little concern for academic content; a willingness to tolerate, if not encourage, diversion from the specified knowledge to be presented or discussed; the substitution of genial banter and conversation for concentrated academic exercises; improvisational instructional adaptation to student preference for or indifference toward specific subject matter or pedagogical techniques; the 'negotiation' of class content, assignments, and standards; and a high degree of teacher autonomy in managing the level of academic engagement, personal interaction, and course content. (p. 7)

Sedlak et al. (1986) wrote that students had an instrumental view of education. Students are "motivated by the extrinsic value of a high school diploma in the marketplace" (p. 25). Few are "motivated by a love of education for its own sake or the intrinsic interest of the subject matter" (p. 25). They seek the diploma, not knowledge. A diploma is not valued for the knowledge presumably associated with it. The diploma's value does not exceed its usefulness to get into college or to obtain a job.

Sedlak et al. (1986) also attributed bargaining to a diverse curriculum and to students' autonomy to choose their own courses. The authors stated that within the wide curriculum there existed two tracks: (1) the high track or college-bound; and (2) low track or employment-bound. Students were free to select their own classes within each track. Disinterested students could avoid academics altogether through work-study programs.

Sedlak et al. contributed the understanding that expectations for achievement are reduced by mutually agreed upon bargains. The authors believed that the following factors contribute to the bargains: (1) students' instrumental view of education; (2) weak policy; (3) a broad-based curriculum; (4) students' autonomy to select courses; (5) and a conflict between students' out-of-class opportunities and education.

McNeil (1986) studied four schools to see how school organization affects classroom knowledge. Her study's purpose was to explain how managing and controlling by administrators coerces students and teachers to "take school less seriously" (p. xviii). She argues that because "students are controlled in school," they resist the knowledge which teachers offer (p. 14).

McNeil (1986) stated that in three of the four schools she observed, there existed underlying tensions between teachers and administrators. Administrators were attentive to "attendance and discipline" (p. 91) or to "chronic offenders"

(p. 120). Teachers were attentive to instruction and did not trust the administrators due to their past inconsistent enforcement of discipline. Because of this distrust, the teachers and administrators operated almost entirely separate from one another. The author believed that academics suffered because there was a conflict between the administrators' concern with control and the teachers' concern with instruction.

McNeil (1986) also asserted that teachers taught despite policy, not because of policy. She believed that policy was weak with regard to academics, and discouraged academic achievement by emphasizing control. She argued that a contradiction between control and educating became manifest in teachers' "unease and lack of imagination" (p. 92) in instruction. In effect, she believed that because of weak academic policies the staff lowered their expectations of students.

McNeil noted that teachers had slightly different styles, but all used a defensive approach to teach in which they omitted controversial content and lectured to ward off interruptions. Defensive instruction included reducing or eliminating demanding exercises, creating fragmented lessons, and expecting little student involvement. Teachers surrounded information with mystification and smoothed over issues when content was controversial or where their own knowledge was weak. She asserted that teachers controlled the students via

controlling the course content, and by being the sole active participant.

McNeil (1986) noted that the students whom she observed also had an instrumental view of education and questioned the value of knowing anything that they do not already know. Their skeptical attitude toward content lead students to give minimal effort to classes. Credit, and not knowledge, was the important factor to students. McNeil said that the conflict between what was taught and what students valued encouraged negotiating between teachers and students which gave students a "client mentality" (p. 78). Students were free to counter negotiate with their teachers what they (the students) were willing to give in classes. Coupled with students' instrumental view of school knowledge and education in general was the problem that students were free to elect their own courses.

McNeil (1986) also noted that students had opportunities other than education. Over half of the eleventh and twelfth grade students held part time jobs, and were in school only when they had to be. Work opportunities reduced the extent of effort that students gave in classes. She noted that Mr. Seager was a strong teacher. Even though Mr. Seager wanted students to share his concerns, only a few students were attuned. Other students listened passively and took no work home, opting instead to pursue their other opportunities.

Outside opportunities worked both ways. Teachers too availed themselves of outside jobs.

There was one school where McNeil's control thesis failed to hold. Administrators in Nelson High School considered academics, not control, to be their priority. In that school the administrators and the teachers were not opposed. McNeil (1986) believed that most, but not all, teachers in Nelson High School worked hard. But her description showed that even in Nelson the same classroom bargaining occurred. Nelson teachers too instructed defensively because students had an instrumental view of education.

McNeil contributed to the understanding of lowered standards by showing that there is seldom conflict in classrooms because students and teachers come to mutual understandings. Even in the ostensibly good schools teachers and students agree to lower expectations. She held that standards are lowered due to the following factors: (1) a conflict between educating and controlling; (2) unsupportive administrators; (3) weak policy; (4) students' instrumental view of education; (5) students' choice of courses; and (6) students' other opportunities.

Cusick (1992) attempted to describe the whole educational system, beginning with classrooms. In his review of descriptive studies he found that in every classroom, students maintain informal groups which reflect their social class values. In informal groups, individuals give compliance to a

set of values and norms. Group values and norms often conflict with the values and norms espoused by the teachers. Teachers take the central role in the classroom to keep students from returning to their informal groups. He noted that "Poor teachers have out-of-control classes, but all teachers have difficult students and potentially out-of-control classes" (p. 45) because all teachers face students who have norms and values which are different than those espoused by the teachers.

Cusick (1992) maintained that "Students have to adjust to schools, but schools have to adjust to society's classes" and that "the two forces compromise" (p. 39) in the classroom where teachers have two tasks--instruction and control. The author noted that some student groups support the bureaucracy by imposing the school's behavioral standards on their members in order to keep the members in school and therefore in the group. In this way "The roles required by the (school) and by the strongly normed peer groups are supportive and overlapping" (p. 34). Because students impose the school's standards on their group, control, while always an issue, is not always a problem.

Cusick (1992) wrote that "The overlapping of society as manifested in students groups, within the teacher-led classroom is the most important link in the educational system" (p. 18). He contended that a common trait with the working class and lower-class children was that they tend to

resist the school's norms, remain in their peer groups and participate in school through the peer group. Teachers did not push students beyond the level of effort that the groups allowed. The problem for schools was to establish norms which could coexist with the students' norms.

Cusick (1992) believed that teachers gain control by establishing norms to which students submit. Cusick argued that there are two parallel systems in the classroom--instructing and control. The students have their own norms and expectations, and the school as an institution has its own norms and expectations. The institution's norms and expectations are taken by the teachers into the classroom--where the institution meets the students. Teachers attempt to ameliorate conflict and associated control problems by bargaining between the institution's norms and expectations and the students' norms and expectations. Lastly, Cusick contributed the point that teachers and students are free to conform with or to reject classroom norms. The consistent theme across students and teachers is that each individual decides how much effort and compliance she or he is willing to give to school activities.

Cusick (1992) argued that control is always an issue because schools attempt to impose a set of norms that are alien to low achieving (usually poor) students. Individuals can choose to submit themselves to the norms or refuse to do

so. It follows that lowered standards are due to the establishment of bargained norms.

Grant (1988) conducted a qualitative study of Hamilton High School in which he traced the pattern of events over a thirty year period. He believed that because of social policies such as students' rights, mainstreaming and desegregation, that schools in general and Hamilton High in particular had to constantly adapt. In the middle of all of this adapting, teachers had to constantly attempt to keep up with the latest change and did so by bargaining with students.

Bargains were partially attributable to the administration not supporting teachers regarding classroom discipline at a time when the students' rights movement was at its peak and teachers had to use whatever means they might arrange to maintain order. Bargaining encouraged lowered classroom standards, but lowered standards encouraged good behavior by students.

Grant (1988) also believed that bargains were made more prevalent because the curriculum was so wide. Students had a wide range of classes from which they could choose the least challenging to the most challenging. Disinterested students enrolled in easy classes where teachers reduced requirements in order to maintain enrollment. Coupled with the wide curriculum was a weak academic policy which stipulated that of the 18 credits required to graduate, only 10 were mandatory.

Because of their instrumental view of education students filled their remaining credits with easy courses. This form of open enrollment forced teachers to be concerned with maintaining numbers sufficient to offer their courses. Grant concluded that if Hamilton High School had an unwritten slogan, that it would be "Let the students decide" (p. 65). Students had near autonomy over their class selection, their attendance, and their compliance.

Grant (1988) argued that classrooms are social systems in which students and teachers reach agreements. Students and teachers are most often mutually pleased with the agreements which they have established. Grant believed that teachers' and students' agreements to lower academic standards in classrooms were brought about by the following factors: (1) the constant changes in educational policy; (2) administrators constantly trying to keep up with the changes in educational policy; (3) a broad-based curriculum which was the result of policy changes designed to make schools more equal; (4) students' instrumental view of education; and (5) students' having free choice of classes. In effect, the policy changes surrounding students rights were based on the assumption that if the curriculum were made more broad and if the students were free to elect their courses, then students would use these opportunities to acquire more knowledge. But the disinterested students, particularly low achievers, used the freedom to

select easier classes and to pursue opportunities other than learning.

Cusick (1973) completed a qualitative study of student groups in school. He contended that during most of the day, students have opportunities such as being in groups with their friends and that these student groups are strongly normed. Because there is not a great deal for students to do in school much of the students' time is spent in these informal groups. Disinterested students retreat to their groups and watch the teacher and other students interact. Bargains to lower standards occur not simply with individual students, but with their strongly normed groups.

Cusick (1973) believed that good participation did not depend entirely on the teachers because the students were free to accept or to resist the norms. As teachers attempted to work with their classes, disinterested students retreated into their small friendship groups. In one instance, a teacher continued to discuss a worksheet, as students discussed their hunting strategies. When the teacher engaged the disinterested students, they resisted with "I don't know, I'm dumb" (p. 58). The students continued their hunting strategies--the teacher continued his discussion.

Bargains between teachers and students were mutually accepted. A central norm of the bargain was that neither side would force issues. Teachers received minimal effort and behavioral compliance. Students were left to do what they

could and would do. Teachers did not ask much of disinterested students and allowed them to pursue the more rewarding group life. The agreement appeared to be gratifying for teachers who were able to conduct their classes without disruption and for students who were not pushed into uncomfortable situations. When given assignments, students gave only the amount of effort that they deemed necessary to pass. Students hurried to complete assignments and returned to their individual interests, such as reading the newspaper or reflecting on the last football game.

Cusick's (1973) students too had an instrumental view of education. Students liked teachers who gave easy assignments, allowed minimal effort and assured passing grades. However, students did expect to learn something in their classes. As Cusick sat with a student group, the boys discussed a bad teacher. He inquired what the teacher instructed and the boys responded "he doesn't teach a thing. Just a bunch of bullshit" (p. 98). The statement illustrates that students were not disinterested in learning, they were disinterested in school. Many students expected to learn and resented teachers who fell below what the students considered a fair amount of effort.

Cusick (1973) noted that because students had an instrumental view of education, commitment to studies depended on the course's relevance to their future plans. As one student told Cusick,

> Not all kids fool around like this.
> Some of the guys going on to college are

> real serious about their grades and their future and, let's face it, if you want to go to college, you have to have the high grades. But me? Couldn't care less about going to college. You've probably noticed, Phil, our group is very interested in music. I know if I could spend my days taking guitar lessons, I wouldn't be here, I'd be there. (p. 123)

This comment illustrates that even the disinterested students like to learn. However, they like to learn on their own terms--their own interests.

Cusick's (1973) description illustrates that the bargain has limits. The author noted that the students prepared their assignments at the last minute. Teachers accepted this minimal effort and rewarded students with a passing grade. The exchange was fair because the students gave some effort. However, when students added an individual's name who had not worked on the assignment, the teacher failed that individual. That individual gave no effort, and therefore the individual received no grade.

Students compared and assessed each other's work. When grades were issued, each student expected that his or her grade would reflect the level of commitment and effort, so even within the same group, grades varied. The students who gave more effort expected and received higher grades than students who gave less effort. As one student stated "You got a higher mark because your log was better" (p. 115).

Cusick's (1973) description also elucidated how students compared their own effort against the teachers' effort as

well. One student commented regarding a teacher that "he teaches English once in a while, when he feels like it--which isn't often" (p. 148). Because many teachers appeared to be no more committed to academic pursuits than were students, many students believed that the process was a farce. The students noted that they merely had to,

> ...fake their way through. You have to know the little gimmicks, the little tricks. And if you know them, you can get through. Look at me. I might get shitty grades, but I haven't kept a notebook for four years. (p. 148)

Cusick's (1973) book adds to the notion that the bargains encouraged students to seek personal, non academic pursuits. Not all students were committed to serious and sustained academics nor were all teachers. The institution created a situation in which students were forced back into their own social groups. It is from these social groups that the students confront the teachers. Cusick contributes that the following factors lead to lowered academic standards: (1) strongly normed student groups; (2) students' instrumental view of education; (3) students' opportunities for group rewards; (4) students' choice to accept or reject school norms; and (5) teachers accepting students' minimal effort.

Cusick (1983) described the teachers', students', and administrators' interactions in three urban high schools. Cusick noted that the teachers' and administrators' paramount concern in the urban, bi-racial schools during the 1970s was student control. He wrote that the probability of violence in

those urban, bi-racial schools was so driving that control took precedence over academics. As such, teachers used more time and effort to develop positive student relations than to instruct. Teachers who maintained classroom control were left to their own devices and not monitored by the principal. In turn, teachers did not monitor disinterested students so long as they did not create disruptions.

Cusick (1983) revealed bargains between students and teachers in these urban, bi-racial high schools. He found that a number of teachers were not interested in teaching but, they had to relate to students. Mr. P., a teacher, used his personal relationship to gain student compliance. In fact, Mr. P. was as bored as the students. Mr. P. lectured as students sat bored but compliant, but when questioned about the situation, the students responded with "He's a good guy" (p. 55).

Cusick (1983) wrote that the curriculum's wide base also presented problems. In completing their high school program, students were free to select courses that interested them. The teachers in turn were reduced to soliciting student enrollments to maintain full schedules. This was a situation that required compromise by both parties.

Cusick (1983) argued that both teachers and disinterested students avoided academic pursuits by lowering expectations. Lowered expectations maintained high enrollments and reduced conflict. On the other hand, higher teacher standards may

lower enrollments and raise conflict, not only between teachers and disinterested students but between teachers and the administrators to whom these students might complain. Low standards were then attributed to the following factors: (1) a broad-based curriculum; (2) students having choice of courses; (3) the concern with control; and (4) the egalitarian commitment to enroll, maintain and educate all students. The latter element denoted the school's basic obligation to take, interest and succeed with all students regardless of their effort or ability. That obligation forced schools into an endless set of compromises with disinterested students.

Powell et al. (1985) studied how schools "...attempt to entice and graduate the entire adolescent population, and ensure that most are somehow the better for it" (p. 1). The authors stated that students and teachers accepted mediocrity. The authors believed that the treaties between teachers and students "begin with courtesy and cooperation--no put-downs" (p. 95). The treaties were "understandings about the degree to which subject matter will be avoided or engaged" (p. 106). They noted that the only way to fail was not to come to school. The authors contended that the rationale was that schools are like shopping malls because they offer something for everyone. The authors argued that "The 'Mall' wants your good behavior and attendance, and for that alone, they will sell you a diploma" (p. 65).

Powell et al. (1985) argued that conflict seldom occurs because teachers and students reached agreements on how seriously each side worked. These agreements resulted in classroom effort being reduced to worksheet routines that were minimally demanding. Students complied with this norm and gave descent behavior that was asked. Teachers were free from administrators who otherwise might accuse them of being unable to control their classes. In return disinterested students were free from teachers' intervention, while the more eager and aggressive students were free to pursue an education that would help them with their goals.

Powell et al. (1985) too said that students have out-of-school opportunities. Because disinterested students had an instrumental view of education, they enrolled in easy classes within the broad-based curriculum. Students knew that they could enter junior colleges with bad grades. Therefore, students did not make a serious commitment to academics and the teachers did not push for higher standards. Both sides accepted mediocrity. As such, the authors concluded that treaties exist in the classroom because learning "...is voluntary" (p. 309).

Powell et al. (1985) contributed to the understanding that there is seldom conflict because standards vary. Students and their teachers came to an agreement about how seriously education is taken. Willing and eager students find intellectual challenge. Unwilling students find that they can

slide through high school with little or no effort, unharrased by teachers with whom they have struck treaties (bargains). The bargains outlined how much each was to give to education and the bargains constituted a set of norms. The authors attributed lowered standards to the following factors: (1) a wide-based curriculum; (2) students choosing their own classes; (3) students' instrumental view of education; (4) the treaties; and (5) schools trying to serve all students' regardless of interest and ability.

Willis (1977) conducted a qualitative research of a group of male working class students in England to describe how the working class children obtain working class jobs, rather than elevate to a higher class. The author maintained that working-class cultural values run contrary to school values. The working class lads took their class values into the school and acted them out. The lads pursued activities which were reflective of the class and culture instead of pursuing school opportunities for social mobility. In effect, the working class boys (the lads) recreated their social class experience in school. The lads behave in and toward the school in the same manner that their fathers behave in and toward their work in the factory.

Willis (1977) noted that the lads' teachers had little choice but to reduce requirements to what the lads would do. The group norm was to avoid boredom and the lads did so by pursuing entertainment wherever they went. One bargain made

between the lads and their teachers appeared to be receiving a passing grade for giving minimal effort. The author reported that students joked about the ease of school. One lad said that he was upset because he had to do a writing assignment. The lad's intention was to get through the marking period and never have to write. The lad remarked about the last time he did any writing,

> ...was in careers, 'cos I writ 'yes' on a piece of paper, that broke me heart. I mean to write, 'cos I was going to try to go through the term without writing anything. 'Cos since we've cum back, I ain't dun nothing. [it was half term]. (p. 27)

According to Willis (1977) the lads had an instrumental view of education and saw little value in academic work because they had already set their sights on the factory and therefore saw school knowledge as superfluous. The lads did not accept delayed gratification. As such, education which was not immediately applicable was rejected because it was not necessary. Willis argued that the lads attempted to control the time and the effort that they put into classes. When asked to put in more than they wanted, they refused, seeking entertainment rather than pursuing academics.

Willis contributed that there exists a working-class culture, which runs contrary to the school's standards. Working class students rejected education in lieu of diversion. Willis attributed lowered standards to (1) the way working class students recreated their own culture in school;

(2) students' instrumental view of education; and (3) students' other opportunities.

Neukom-Page (1991) conducted a qualitative research in which she used a cultural and curricular perspective to study low academic standards in the Maplehurst School District. The district contained approximately ten percent minority students, and was described as having good inter-racial relations. She argued that educational institutions mediate the conflict between the individual and community. The institution is caught in the middle of educating to the individual's needs or integrating that individual with the larger society by providing a common education.

The author argued that tracking was ceased in the district in the early 1960s with the mandate for desegregation. However, in the same motion, the school board implemented a low track curriculum for the unable and the disinterested students. In total, the curricula contained more than 200 courses. The low-track curriculum contained Additional Needs classes for the students who were not qualified for special education but who were incapable or unwilling to enroll in the college preparatory curriculum. In the Additional Needs classes it was believed that students would have their social and emotional needs met as opposed to exposing these students to serious academics. In Additional Needs classes "...academic progress (was) the least important aspect" (p. 88) of classroom life.

Teachers recommended students' placement into Additional Needs classes, but students too were free to enroll in these low-track classes in order to avoid serious academic pursuits. In fact, disinterested students regardless of their academic capability, were permitted to complete almost all of their course program for graduation in the Additional Needs classes. Disinterested and incapable students were thus able to graduate having avoided any serious studies. Even though the classes were completed in the low-track, the students' transcripts showed the same courses as the high level curriculum, and disinterested students thus believed the low-track's Additional Needs classes to be a good deal.

Neukom-Page believed that students' "...socio-cultural characteristics, become(s) the basis for" (p. 173) course content. Most all students in the Additional Needs classes scored in the third quartile on standardized tests. Some scored as high as the 90th percentile on standardized tests, but teachers still considered these students to be incapable of academic success and believed that the students must be learning disabled.

The author argued that the instruction even in Additional Needs classes reflected the conflict between the institutional and cultural norms. This conflict became manifest in an over-representation of blue-collar, low SES and minority students in Additional Needs classes. Additional Needs teachers believed that these children were either incapable and/or

unwilling to engage in serious studies. Therefore, teachers reduced academics to worksheet routines, which allegedly targeted students' individual social and emotional needs.

Neukom-Page argued further that there was a constant possibility of classroom disruption, which might bring about intervention by administrators. In response, teachers in these classes held the central role in all discussions and followed a typical teacher question/student response/teacher follow-up pattern. Students guessed the best right answer which the teacher had in mind. Teachers believed that by limiting students' involvement, they were limiting disruptions.

Teachers attempted to avoid disruptions and gain students' compliance by offering subject content which the students would need in daily life. But, such topics as drug use and child abuse ran the risk of insulting these students. In addition, teachers gave students individual seat work such as worksheets and subsequently addressed the entire class to solicit student questions. The contradictory combination of individualized worksheets and questioning the entire class confused students. The watered-down content and the teacher centered instruction brought about classroom conflict first because students were insulted and second they were confused regarding their own classroom role.

Neukom-Page described the course content in Additional Needs classes as skeletal. The same topics were presented in the low-track classes, but in but less detail. Teachers in

Additional Needs classes stressed skills more than content. Rather than stressing that students learn the subject matter, teachers reduced such classes as English and history to increasing students' reading skills. Lastly, these teachers presented relevant content. Teachers presented learning material based on their oft-times biased opinion of what their students would need.

Neukom-Page believed that the term "...'low-track teacher' is an oxymoron" (p. 109) because the teachers had nothing to offer Additional Needs students. Teachers realized that they had little to offer because the Additional Needs students were either incapable and/or unwilling to do much in the way of academics, and so teachers expected little either of students or of themselves as teachers.

To Neukom-Page (1991) school is caught up in an array of conflicts. First, between its commitment to the individual and its commitment to the community. Having two instructional tracks permits the school to address these two conflicting commitments. However, teachers still face the conflict of control and teaching in low-track classes in which many students are disinterested or incapable of serious academic pursuits. Furthermore, in these low-track classes teachers face the conflict of instructing remedial or regular lessons. All of this conflict coincides with teachers' negative view of Additional Needs students, and teachers attributing students' ability to socio-cultural background. As such students'

"...socio-cultural (background), become(s) the basis for" (p. 173) reduced course content in the low-track curriculum.

Henry (1963) also studied the impact of culture on students' education. He believed that classroom culture and home culture conflict. Schools are maintenance institutions which transfer a national culture to students and as such "...are the central conserving force of the culture" (p. 286). He believed that drives belong to the occupational world, values to the family and conserving culture to the school. Values give direction but they lack the compelling power of institutional drives. Henry stated that "American conformity is a necessity; it is America's intuitive effort to hold American society together" (p. 148) and it is the school's primary task.

In relating his descriptive study of one school, Henry (1963) selected the pseudonym Rome High School to "...symbolize the disparity between reality and hope" (p. 184) in the school which he discusses. Henry believed that one of Rome High School's problems was its dedication to two contradicting orientations--fun and scholarship. Regarding the students' decisions to not engage in challenging study, he stated that students "see their hard-working daddies are little at home and burdened with...work, why then should they not conclude that hard work is for the birds?" (p. 172).

Henry (1963) believed that education "becomes unbearable when it is rammed down the student's neck" (p. 176). He

continued that "The function of the high school is not to communicate knowledge, it is to oblige children finally to accept the grading system as a measure of their inner excellence" (p. 178).

Henry (1963) contributed to the understanding of lowered classroom standards by showing that the classroom culture and the home culture conflict. Schools are maintenance institutions which transfer a national culture to students. Henry contributed an understanding that there is a conflict between the school's need to acculturate and the students wanting to have fun. Students were content to accept a "C" and thus be able to pursue entertainment, and teachers accepted the students minimal effort and let them have their fun. Henry attributed low standards to a conflict between acculturating and students' opportunities other than education.

Summary of Section Two

Data presented in this section were drawn from qualitative studies in which the authors entered into relationships with students and groups of students, and/or reviewed extant literary material in order to decipher the happenings in classrooms that contain low achieving students. The authors presented in this literature review have viewed classrooms with more consistency than diversity. The authors all described the interactions of teachers and students within classrooms as they agree to lower academic standards.

Cusick (1992) used the perspective of conflict between the students' norms which they expressed in groups and the official school norms. Cusick (1983) viewed classrooms via student groups which operated freely even while instruction was taking place. Cusick (1983) used the perspective of schools' commitment to egalitarianism, accepting and educating all students with no regard to the student's ability or interest. Grant (1988) described the conflicts by changes in social policy as these changes were brought into the classroom where teachers had to adapt. McNeil (1986) viewed the lowered standards process as a conflict between educating and controlling when the organization emphasizes control over academics. Powell et al. (1985) viewed schools as accommodating all students with no regard to ability or interest. The school was obligated to make all students successful, and so teachers struck treaties which allowed each student to pursue an education according to his or her interest. Similarly, Sedlak et al. (1986) said that teachers and students meet in classroom and strike bargains which lower academic standards. Lastly, Henry (1963), Willis (1977) and Neukom-Page (1991) explained how cultural conflict lowers academic standards. While the authors' perspective differed, all described norms that encouraged classroom bargaining which lowered academic standards. It appears that the bargains centered on a set of norms that established how seriously each side endeavored in class. The bargains mediated between

students and their teachers. The norm was easy work for disinterested students in exchange for minimal compliance and effort.

Current research on the classroom bargains clearly depicted that classroom norms permit low achievement. However, current research does not present the manner nor origin of these norms. In no studies did authors address the establishment of the classroom norms which permit and encourage low achievement. Therefore, this study investigated how students and their teachers established the set of norms under which their social system operated.

Chapter Summary

The first section of this chapter described how individuals establish relationships in which they receive rewards for which they pay costs. Individuals give an amount of effort equal to their rewards. In effect, individuals establish a series of social systems in which they pay costs and receive rewards as they move toward their goals. The researcher will use the concepts and tenants from social exchange theory to study the system of norms that low achievers and their teachers establish in classes. Low achievers and their teachers are mutually pleased with the norms which they establish, and as the result there is seldom conflict in classrooms. That low achievers and their teachers remain in the classroom's social system is evidence that each side supports the classroom's social norms.

This researcher will add to the previous findings by viewing the phenomenon of lowered standards via a means consistent with previous research, yet adding a new focus. This study shares the view that schools are social systems. Classroom norms are established, legitimated and subsequently become manifest in the exchanges between low achievers and their teachers. This researcher's study will focus on how classroom norms are established and how low achievers and their teachers interpret, and then act upon the set of norms. By proceeding in this fashion, the researcher will study how low achievers and their teachers established this mutually gratifying set of norms. The researcher will fill a void by studying what has remained unexplained--how teachers establish their expectations, and how low achievers counter with how much they are willing to give. The researcher will explain the set of norms in terms of social exchange theory.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The researcher will use this chapter to present the methodology which guides the study. The researcher describes the data collection method and generating propositions. In addition, a field procedures narrative and a chapter summary are included.

Theoretical Framework

Okey (1990) stated that research progresses logically and naturally when the theory that provides the conceptual framework relates to the study's purpose and assumptions. The study's purpose is to describe and explain the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers. The study's fundamental assumption is that low achievers and their teachers share a reciprocal relationship. However, it is not clear what or how much low achievers receive and give. The researcher studied the social norms which were established between low achievers and their teachers. Therefore, the study's unit of analysis was the low achievers' and their teachers' assessment of the classroom's social norms. The assessment includes what low achievers receive, what they give, and how they balance what they receive against what they give.

A theory should be related to the study's purpose and assumptions. The theory should be broad and general enough to

embody the concept that classrooms are social systems. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) described the perspective as "the angle of observation" (p. 55).

Social exchange theory relates to this study's purpose and assumptions. The theory lends itself to the concept that the classrooms are social systems, and to the definition of perspective. Social exchange theory is an ideal theory to elucidate the interactions among low achievers and their teachers as participants in a social system.

All associations may be viewed as being based on reciprocity. As such, associations may be regarded as a web of mutually advantageous contracts. Blau (1964) described reciprocity as the "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (p. 91). Reciprocity suggests that people are inter-indebted. Malinowski (1932) stated that "people owe obligations to each other and...conformity with norms is something they give to each other" (p. 39).

The researcher will apply social exchange theory's concepts to the social norms of classrooms. This application allows the researcher to extend beyond the allegations that low achievers and their teachers are inept, or coerced into classroom behaviors by outside groups such as their administrators or by the organization.

Current research indicates that low achievers and their teachers bargain educational expectations to a point where the low achievers' and the teachers' needs and desires are both met. The researcher views both sides as willful, knowledgeable participants who actively seek to establish mutually gratifying social norms. By adopting this theory the researcher views low achievers and their teachers as persons engaged in a mutually gratifying relationship. The theory attributes reasonableness and dignity to the actions undertaken.

Data Collection

In this section the researcher will present the method and its benefits. The researcher will discuss the review techniques as well as reliability and validity. The researcher conducted both the pilot study and the primary study via the interview, combined with extensive non-participant observation. The researcher tape-recorded the interviews and the observations.

Schimidt (1991) stated that the interview works well because it: (1) uses a schedule of questions; (2) questions relate to the research topic; (3) questions are based on patterned behavior; (4) questions are open ended; (5) questions are funnel format; and (6) the researcher utilizes the same criteria with all interviewees.

The researcher may administer the interview individually and employ open-ended questions. The following techniques may

be used to verify interview responses: (1) probing into inconsistent areas to challenge responses; (2) seeking additional information; and (3) conducting observations. Interview questions are based on the participant describing how she or he currently handles or recently handled a situation. The concept behind this question format is that people develop behavioral patterns. Researchers refer to this interview format as Patterned Behavioral Descriptive Interviewing (PBDI) or as Structured Interviewing. This questioning format is consistent with Okey's (1991) statement that people are best understood word-by-word, act-by-act.

The researcher should ask open-ended questions regarding present or recent past occurrences. Open-ended questions elicit more information than closed ended questions. This method has high validity and reliability because responses are based on patterned behavior. The responses are based on participants' actual experiences, not on supposition. As low achievers and their teachers are classroom participants, they are able to respond to interview questions on a factual basis. This interview format provides a more reliable answer than would be obtained from person outside the relationship, such as administrators or parents.

Wright, Lichtenfels, and Pursell (1989) stated that interview data are valid. Validity is attained because the questions elicit responses based on behavioral patterns. The responses are verifiable. The researcher can return to

information attained in previous questions, probe into inconsistent or scarce areas, and can verify through observation.

The interview process safeguards interviewees' equal treatment by using a question schedule. The question schedule helps the interviewer to consistently question all interviewees. Without a question schedule, the researcher may inadvertently ask questions which do not relate to the study's purpose.

Probing enables the interviewer to obtain in-depth answers and to better assess the interviewee's consistency. The concept behind using the funnel-format questioning is to start with broad questions/responses and end with narrow questions/responses. The questions used to open the interviews are broad-based and less specific than the major data collecting questions. Researchers sometimes refer to these questions as ice-breakers. Ice-breaker questions allow the interviewee to become relaxed by sharing less crucial information.

Using the same question schedule with all interviewees allows the interviewer to seek patterns and to categorize the data. The interview process provides equality and consistency across interviewees. Treating all interviewees equally reduces the risk of bias or prejudice by the interviewer. The interview does have limitations. This approach may be too structured. Overly structured interviews do not permit an

interview to progress developmentally within the question schedule.

McCall and Simmons (1969) discuss the distinction between informants and respondents. The researchers stated that "Informant interviewing is often the technique chosen to seek information on event that...are not open to direct observation by the scientist for whatever reason" (p. 62). The researcher could not observe the low achievers' or the teachers' cognitive processes of deciding how to balance what they give against what they receive. In this sense, the low achievers and their teachers are informants.

The low achievers and their teachers are also respondents. McCall and Simmons (1969) stated,

> If one is seeking information on external events by treating the interviewee as an indirect or 'deputized' observer, the interview process takes the form of respondent interviewing, especially if the information sought concerns the personal feelings, perceptions, motives, habits, or intentions of the interviewee. (p. 62)

The researcher tape-recorded the interviews and observations during the pilot study. The researcher used this same method for data collection during the spring term, April and May, and during the fall semester of 1992. In addition to interviewing, the researcher conducted extensive non-participant observations to confirm or refute responses, and to extend the information collected. Ives (1980) said of tape-recorded interviews that the tape-recording is a secondary

document. The interview is the primary document source. Ives stated that the tape is the best available record of an interview. The researcher utilizes the interview and observation tape-recordings or notes as primary documents. The interview and classroom observation transcriptions are secondary documents.

According to Cusick (1983) the interview combined with observation is recognized as an acceptable field research method (p. 131). It allows the researcher to interact face-to-face with the respondents and informants. It provides a richness and personal touch that is unapproachable with such data collection methods as the questionnaire. Gorden (1969) stated that the interview offers five advantages over questionnaires. An interview: (1) provides opportunity to motivate the respondent to supply accurate and complete information; (2) provides opportunity to guide the respondents' interpretation of questions; (3) allows flexibility to question the respondent; (4) allows control over the interview situation; and (5) provides opportunity to evaluate the validity by observing the respondent's attitude toward supplying the information.

The interview has specific limitations. The researcher had to learn the respondents' and informants' language. In addition, the researcher has to explore matters which interviewees are unable or unwilling to discuss. In addition, the researcher has to be attuned to the interviewees' biases.

Reliability is the study's consistency and repeatability. The interview method ensures reliability because it connects the observer to the events and situations being studied. The researcher studied the method and established a question schedule for interviews. The researcher's preparation also increases the study's reliability. Tape-recording the interviews and subsequently conducting classroom observations provides reliability.

Validity is established when the responses plausibly explain the phenomenon. Gorden (1980) stated that "Validity refers to the extent to which the data conform to the fact" (p. 40). In addition, Cusick (1973) listed six adequacy indices which give the researcher "some assurance that his findings reach an acceptable degree of validity" (p. 232). The following are Cusick's indices: time, place, social circumstances, language, intimacy, and consensus.

The researcher structured interviews with neutral, open-ended questions. The same questions were used with both low achievers and their teachers. (Questions in appendix A). In total, the researcher conducted 21 interviews and 105 one-hour non-participant observations. The researcher used the non-participant observations to confirm, refute, or extend the interview information. The researcher transcribed each interview and observation on the same day on which it was conducted. In addition, the researcher obtained administrative permission to review CA60 files to verify interview data.

There will be concerns with generalizability. This study was limited to 15 low achievers and 6 of their teachers. Only two minority students were included. No special education students were included. This researcher asserts the sociological assumption that people are more alike than they are different. If a group of people behave in a certain way under certain conditions, then one may assume that others will act the same way under similar conditions. The researcher includes all participants in presenting the data. The researcher presents the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions as a plausible explanation to norm establishment process in classrooms which contain low achievers.

Data Presentation

Durkheim (1956) said that by "leaving aside everything that has been, we have only to ask ourselves what should be." (p. 65). He wrote that "through comparison, by abstracting the similarities and eliminating the differences from them, one can establish the generic types of education which correspond to the different types of societies" (p. 96). This study presents what should be in classes and abstracts the similarities in the perceptions of low achievers and their teachers. What should be according to the philosophers is posited against the perceptions of low achievers and their classroom teachers. The data are presented as an instance of the case, to support an argument that is a plausible explanation for low achievement.

Sampling Techniques

The study's purpose was to describe and explain the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers. A theory explains a phenomenon. The researcher does not claim to generate a formal low achievement theory. However, the description and explanation derived may provide the foundation for a subsequent formal theory. The explanation for any phenomenon emerges as the researcher gathers information. This conception requires that a researcher utilize a sampling technique which is consistent with field research's emergent and generative nature. The researcher used Glaser and Strauss's (1967) theoretical sampling method.

Sample & Method

The sample contained 21 participants. There were 15 low achievers including male and female, Anglo and Hispanic, in grades 9 though 12. The school district contained no other ethnic minority groups. The sample contained no special education students. In addition, the researcher interviewed 6 teachers. The researcher used fictitious names to represent the individuals.

The initial participant selection was made in cooperation with the high school principal and a high school counselor. A high school counselor and the researcher generated a low achiever list. The researcher in cooperation with the counselor selected four low-achieving seniors--two male, two female. These students suggested that two teachers be added

for interviews. The low achievers maintained that they bargained with these teachers.

The researcher and the counselor based the initial selection on there existing a discrepancy between the students' standardized test scores and their cumulative grade point average. These four students scored above 20 on the ACT, and had a grade point average below 1.5. Thereafter, the researcher used the snowball procedure to select low achievers and their teachers.

In the snowball procedure, the researcher asks each interviewee to whom the interviewer should speak to in subsequent interviews. The researcher then contacted the counselor to determine if the students had a discrepancy between their standardized test scores and their grade point average. The researcher selected six teachers for interviews based on the low achievers' recommendations. Low achievers maintained that they currently had classroom bargains with these teachers.

Using theoretical sampling, the researcher asserts the sociological assumption that people are more alike than different. If the situation is similar, then reactions will be similar. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that theoretical sampling is,

> ...the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is

> controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. The initial decisions for theoretical collection of data are based only on a general sociological perspective. (p. 105)

The researcher uses the criterion that the low achievers and their teachers are an instance of the case. The researcher generates the phenomenon's explanation as each instance is added. Each addition to the sample revises, extends, and alters the phenomenon's explanation. When the researcher discovers a negative instance, she or he revises the explanation to account for the negative instance.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) quote Zetterberg that random sampling is not necessary when generating theory.

> The researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling with theoretical sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. These relationships are suggested as hypothesis pertinent to direction of relationship, not tested as descriptions of both direction and magnitude. Conventional theory claims generality of scope; that is, one assumes that if the relationship holds for one group under certain conditions, it will probably hold for other groups under the same conditions. (p. 106)

The assumptions which the researcher sets forth regard the direction of the relationship between classroom norms and low achievement. The relationship between classroom norms and low achievement are not tested for both direction and magnitude. The researcher does not need to use random sampling because no theory is tested for magnitude.

Data Analysis

The researcher ensures reliable data analysis through two criteria. First, the data collection method must be accurate. The researcher transcribed the interviews carefully to ensure accuracy. Second, the researcher must use techniques to categorize relationships. The researcher employed four techniques to analyze tapes and transcriptions. The researcher designed a frequency table to categorize low achievers' classroom experiences and behaviors. The researcher wrote a one-page summary about each low achiever and each teacher. The researcher collected copies of all worksheets, quizzes, tests, or other assignments in order to verify that information regarding these areas was accurate. The dissertation chairman read the transcripts and provided reactions to the transcriptions.

Using a tape recorder increases the researcher's involvement and attentiveness because she or he need not take notes. It is an advantage for the researcher to transcribe and edit his or her own tape-recordings and notes. By transcribing and editing one's own tape-recordings and notes, the researcher carefully reviews and recalls the interviews and observations. The researcher benefits by being closer to his or her data. In addition, tape recording interviews and observations provides a complete record. The researcher can use the interviews' and observations' exact wordings as citations.

The tape-recorded interviews coupled with tape-recorded, non-participant classroom observations provides benefits without unreasonable liabilities. The researcher utilized the tape-recorder in order to listen attentively, closely observe the respondent, to maintain a complete and accurate record, and to give an accurate description.

Research Questions

The study's purpose was to describe and explain the social norms in classrooms that contain low achievers. The researcher set forth propositions that explain the social norms in classrooms that contain low achievers. These propositions will be stated in terms of social exchange theory. The propositions provide direction to future researchers who wish to further investigate low achievement and classroom bargains. The researcher designed the following questions to provide the study's tentative framework:

I. What bargains are established in classrooms between low achievers and their teachers? The researcher uses this questioning to present the bargains that exists, who initiates the bargains, when the bargains begin, the mutuality of bargains, and what cannot be bargained.

II. What do other students receive and give in class? The researcher uses this question to present how low achievers compare themselves

to students who exert more or less effort than they, the effort's impact on grades, and the low achievers' and their teachers' perception of the distributive justice involved.

III. How do low achievers balance what they receive against what they give? This question is perhaps the most crucial. Classrooms must be understood as a social system, in which participants receive and give. The researcher uses this question to present how low achievers assess the value of what they receive, and how they determine the appropriate balance of what they receive against what they give.

IV. What do low achievers receive in the classroom? The researcher uses this question to present the knowledge, skills, self-esteem, external and internal rewards, enjoyment, attention, challenge and preparation for life and work that low achievers receive.

V. What do teachers of low achievers give in the classroom? The researcher uses this question to present the weekly lesson planning, daily lesson planning, correcting papers and tests, lecturing, individual help

to students, monitoring, and free time that teachers give.

VI. What do low achievers give in the classroom? The researcher uses this question to present the study time, effort, compliance, attention, completed homework, reading, tests, writing, and the participation that low achievers give.

Field Procedures

The researcher will use this section to present the study plan and the field procedures. The researcher will explain how he conducted the field research. The researcher will describe sampling techniques and searching for explanations for low achievement.

Federal law requires that field work completed at Michigan State University be approved before the researcher conducts the study. The researcher sought approval through the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS). (See appendix C for approval letter.) The committee's requirements illustrate that field research's participants are susceptible to unforeseen repercussions. The application process compels the researcher to present the study's purpose, procedures, risks and benefits.

The researcher used his educational contacts to gain access for the study. These educational contacts are referred to as special respondents. Serving as what Gorden (1987) terms

special respondents, local administrators and a local high school counselor assisted the researcher in developing a low achiever list. The researcher obtained permission to review the low achievers' CA60 files to confirm accuracy.

The researcher scheduled interviews through telephone contacts and through in-person meetings at the high school. In order to conduct the pilot study and the primary study the researcher: (1) used a private setting; (2) greeted interviewees; (3) explained the study; (4) completed the consent/assent form; (5) recorded interviews and observations; (6) transcribed tapes from interviews, and tapes from observations as well as notes; and (7) reviewed transcriptions for common themes.

The researcher uses demographic data to provide the greatest possible variety. The researcher includes both male and female low achievers and their teachers. The sample contains Anglos and Hispanics. The school district contained no other minority populations. The researcher selected low achievers in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, in academic, non-vocational courses.

The interviewer contacted low achievers and their teachers to gain their permission and participation. The researcher requested the low achievers' and their teachers' recommendations in order to select subsequent interviewees. This sampling technique is called the snowball procedure. The researcher analyzed the data as the sample grows. The

researcher prepared a one-page summary for each low achiever and classroom teacher.

The data collected by adding each new low achiever or their teacher expanded the information which fits into categories. When the categories are filled, the researcher concludes that categories are saturated. The researcher concludes that saturation is reached when common themes develop across the interviewees' responses. Saturation concludes the data collection. When the data collecting is complete, the researcher analyzes the data around the six categories which guide the study.

The researcher conducted 105 one hour non-participant observations to confirm, refute, or extend the information gathered during interviews. There is a challenge to conduct credible observation. The researcher in joining up with a group must not act like the group. Rather, the observer must not act different than the group. The researcher by acting like the group would collude in legitimating the very norms which she or he wishes to study, thereby leading the research in a predetermined direction. On the other hand, to enter the group and act different would violate the norms. If the researcher violates the group's norms, he would be rejected in the classroom and in students' groups. The challenge then, is for the researcher to remain neutral--neither supporting nor violating the classroom's norms.

The researcher entered high school classrooms not dressed like students, rather he did not dress different than they. To enter the classroom in a suit and tie would draw attention to the researcher and away from the normal daily activities. The researcher placed himself at the back of classrooms. During interviews, teachers stated that they allow the low achievers to become invisible if they want. The researcher attempted to become as invisible as the low achievers whose behavior he wished to study.

Many happenings affirmed that the researcher's presence did not alter the students' nor their teachers' behavior. First, students and teachers seldom directed attention to the researcher. That the researcher seldom was the focus of attention indicates that he was simply another person in the classroom. The researcher's behavior was not consistent with the students, rather is was not different. Second, the students asked the researcher if he would like to skip school with them. This request indicates that the students were not intimidated by the researcher and in fact trusted him. The students invited the researcher into their out-of-school world. Third, teachers asked the researcher to attend a School Board meeting after conducting the study and present the study's findings to the School Board. (Presumably in their defense). This request illustrates that the teachers were not intimidated by the researcher and that his presence did not alter classes. The implication was that the researcher had

seen classes as they truly are, and that this should be relayed to the Board. The fourth point which illustrates that the researcher blended into classrooms, is that a substitute teacher admonished the researcher for being not being in a student group. The researcher presents this instance. On April 27, the government teacher was absent. The substitute was Mr. Johnson, a former big 10 assistant football coach. The substitute was standing near the classroom's heater. The substitute attempted to shut off the heater. The following discussion occurred.

> 12:35,
> Substitute: (To the researcher) How do I shut this heater off?
>
> Researcher: I don't know--I've never turned one off.
>
> Substitute: (To the researcher) I thought you high school kids knew how to do all these tricky things.
>
> 12:40, the students sat and talked. The substitute teacher stood with the attendance book, and closed the door.
>
> Substitute: Can I have your attention please. Shhh! My name is Mr. Johnson. I've had the privilege of substitute teaching before. I haven't taught for 8 years now. Most recently, I was an assistant football coach for (a big 10). Now, I substitute teach 20 days per year just so I can keep my health insurance active.
>
> Student: So, you're telling us you're not here for us--you're in it for the money!!
>
> Substitute: You don't understand--my wife and I pay $500.00 per month to keep active health insurance.

12:43, the students talked quietly with each other. The substitute continued to take attendance.

12:44,
Substitute: Okay, your teacher has asked me to get you ready for a quiz tomorrow. Honestly though, you have me at a disadvantage. So, I'll count on you to go to your seats and do this hour as you always do, fair?

Student: Oh yeah--current events time.

12:46, the students moved into their regular groups. There was no misconduct.

Substitute: (To the researcher) Excuse me young man, that means you too. I expect the entire class to participate. You get to your group. (The students were ostensibly surprised that the substitute teacher mistook the 31 year old researcher for a senior. The entire class went along with the misunderstanding.)

Student: (To the researcher) Come on man--what you are doing back there? You're supposed to be in the group for current events. (The researcher sat with the group.)

Researcher: (Quietly to the group) But, I don't know what to do.

Student: Just do like us--don't do nothing. If he asks you a question, you just gotta try. You don't have to get the right answer--just say anything.

Researcher: Okay.

Student: You wanna see what goes on in class with teachers, Dude--here's your chance--he thinks you're a senior.

12:49,
Substitute: As I read each of these, I'll read it slowly enough that you can write it down. Remember that these may

> appear on your pop quiz tomorrow. The first question goes to the left group.
>
> Substitute: Number 1--Perot is willing to spend how many millions of dollars of his own money for a campaign if he runs as an independent candidate?

The aforementioned occurrences and this observation illustrate that the students and their teachers accepted the researcher's presence not only in their classrooms but also in their more private student groups, and in their out-of-school life. The indication is that the researcher's presence did not alter the norms.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the methodology which he used to conduct the study. The tape-recorded interview method, the structured interviews, and non-participant classroom observations were discussed. In addition, the researcher discussed the theoretical sampling technique, and the data review techniques have been discussed.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers. Participants in classrooms share a reciprocal relationship in which they receive and give. Individuals assess the value of what they receive in classes and give what they believe to be equal effort. Low achievers and their teachers receive something from classroom activities. However, what or how much they receive and give is not clear. Therefore, this chapter describes the low achievers' and their teachers' classroom behavior and their assessment of norms, including what is received, what is given, and how what low achievers balance what they receive against what they give.

Sample

The researcher selected Market High School for the study. The school district is located south of Lansing. There are 30 teachers and 588 students in grades 7 through 12. The social relations in the school are generally calm. Students are familiar with the former teacher turned principal. Students, for the most part, abide by the school rules.

The researcher, a local administrator and a local counselor generated a list of low achievers. A sample of fifteen was selected. The sample contained male and female, Anglo and Hispanic students. The school district contained no

Black students. Administrative permission was given to review cumulative records to help verify interview data. The six teachers selected for interviews were suggested to the researcher by students when discussing existing classroom bargains.

This study's sample contained 15 low achievers and 6 teachers. Low achievers did not participate in sports unless otherwise stated. Low achievers did not intend to pursue a post-secondary degree. Low achievers and their teachers referred to two other student groups: (1) "brownnosers" and (2) "trouble makers" or "low lifes." The researcher will use the terms "hard-working students", and "trouble makers" respectively. The researcher finds these terms to be less personally attacking.

Research Questions

Durkheim (1956) said that by "leaving aside everything that has been, we have only to ask ourselves what should be" (p. 65). He wrote that "through comparison, by abstracting the similarities and eliminating the differences from them, one can establish the generic types of education which correspond to the different types of societies" (p. 96). Therefore, in this chapter the researcher presents what should be in classes and abstracts the low achievers' and their teachers' similar perceptions. What the philosophers say should be, is posited against the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. The reader will quickly discern similarities and/or

overlapping between the educational elements discussed. Newman (1952) said of the whole of education's elements,

> ...all taken together form one integral subject for contemplation, so there are no natural or real limits between part and part; one is ever running into another; all, as viewed by the mind, are combined together, and possess a correlative character one with another. (p. 164)

The contrasts will be followed by a summary. The researcher will also describe and explain the affect on classroom exchanges which result from the established norms.

The researcher used six questions to seek information regarding the social norms of classrooms that contain low achievers.

I. What bargains are established in classrooms between low achievers and their teachers?

II. What do other students receive and give in class?

III. How do low achievers balance what they receive against what they give?

IV. What do low achievers receive in the classroom?

V. What do teachers of low achievers give in the classroom?

VI. What do low achievers give in the classroom?

To understand the norms that affect low achievers' and their teachers' behavior, the reader has to understand the process by which low achievers and their teachers become equals and then negotiate, as equals, the classroom norms.

This chapter focuses on the way low achievers and their teachers reduce education to what is useful (marketable) in a market economy. This reduction places low achievers and their teachers on an equal level because with only usefulness as a criterion, low achievers are as knowledgeable as or more knowledgeable than their teachers. Because low achievers and their teachers have equal status, the teacher no longer has the status and natural ascendancy associated with being a content-area expert. In the norm setting process, teachers have at best status equal to their students. Teachers must of necessity bargain with low achievers regarding establishment of classroom norms.

Research Findings

Section 1: Classroom Bargains

The researcher will use section one to present how the bargains are established between low achievers and their teachers. Section one is divided into five sub-sections: who initiates the bargains, when the bargains begin, what bargains exist, mutuality of the bargains, and what can not be bargained.

It will be argued that the bargaining process begins on the first day of classes. It will be argued that the teachers initially offer the bargains. After the bargaining process is legitimated, whomever desires something offers the bargain. It will be argued that teachers reduce education to preparing students for a job--marketability. In addition, it will be argued that teachers elevate the students' status to their own professional level, thus removing the teachers' natural ascendancy over their classes.

Further, it will be argued that students know as much as or more than their teachers regarding what should be instructed in order to make students marketable. It will be argued that the bargains are mutually gratifying to both low achievers and their teachers. It will also be argued that the low achievers and their teachers chose not to pursue a greater commitment to education because the opportunity costs are too high. It will be argued that what can not be bargained is the set of social values which assure society's continuation.

Lastly, it will be argued that the whole of the bargaining process is a set of norms which permit and even encourage low achievers to bargain as their teachers' equals. Low achievers are free to assess, in terms of marketability, the education that their teachers offer. Low achievers are free to give effort in return that is equal to the perceived marketability of their classes.

Initiating the Bargains

Durkheim (1956) stated that students should be in a near hypnotic state of "exceptional passivity" (p. 85). Teachers should have natural ascendancy over students due to their superior experience.

However, Mrs. Selenski removed the natural ascendancy by stating that low achievers were "professional by this age." This acknowledgement elevated the low achievers' status to being their teachers' equals in the norm setting process. During the first class days, teachers elevate the low achievers' status to their own professional level. Therefore, low achievers bargain as their teachers' equals.

Low achievers deserved a reward because they were compliant. Low achievers were not difficult or demanding in their bargaining. Rather, low achievers appealed to their teachers' compassion. When asked who initiates the bargains, Tammy stated,

> ...the students do because they feel we're being good. So, we feel we deserve it. Whoever wants something makes the bargain, but I think usually it's the students. If the teacher needs more time to do her work, she'll make a deal for us to have free time and she does what she needs to do.

Teachers offer the bargains to students to gain compliance. Frederick agreed that "the teachers offer it so they can keep the trouble-makers quiet." Patricio concurred that "the teacher usually offers it on the first few days of school." Evangelina also stated that "It's kinda both...it's

who wants something offers the bargain." Doug stated that "Whoever wants something--If the teacher wants us to be quiet, he'll make the deals. If the kids want free time or less work, we'll make the deals." Mapi also responded that "teachers offer those deals to the kids. But sometimes the students will offer the deal that...if we're good, can we not have homework?" Claudia stated "whoever wants something will make the deal. Like if the teacher is really busy and wants to get caught up, she'll make a deal for free time...if the students are tired they might make the deal."

Teachers' perceptions paralleled low achievers' perceptions. Mr. Hansen stated that "the students will try to make deals with the teachers that, we've been good all hour, how about no homework." Both low achievers and teachers wanted bargains. Low achievers realized that teachers too needed time to complete papers and correct tests.

Teachers also wanted time to sit and socialize. If the teacher wanted free time, the teacher offered the bargain. If low achievers wanted free time, low achievers offered the bargain. Ms. Selenski stated "I feel that the student does in the sense of approaching me. I guess I do in that I can suggest for example the contract."

Mrs. Copucha replied that students "talk me into things, but I don't like to get in the mode of them thinking that they can sway me. I use these bargains as a reward." Mr. Howard conveyed that "it's a little bit of both sides. Sometimes the

students and sometimes the teacher." However, Mr. Floh maintained "I definitely say the teacher. I set the way from day one. This is the way it happens." Mr. Jones explained that "there are kids who will initiate the bargain...What's difficult is striking a bargain with 25 kids, and having everyone of them getting what they want."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 11, Ms. Selenski gave the following introduction and requirements for her class. Ms. Selenski advised students that all they needed to do was "put in their time." Ms. Selenski's class did not require serious and sustained effort. In addition, Ms. Selenski termed the students "professional." This statement places both the students and their teachers as equals regarding status. By the end of the hour, Ms. Selenski also established free time for students to sit and talk. Free time was mutually beneficial to the teacher as well. Ms. Selenski sat at her desk and completed her own work.

> 10:00,
> Selenski: Okay, when I call your name, raise your hand.
>
> 10:02,
> Selenski: This is required class. Fortunately or unfortunately, I'm the only ball game in town.
>
> Selenski: Last year we had 12 seniors who failed. Do your work. That's the bottom line. You will be successful if you do that. All you have to do is try.
>
> Selenski: Every day you have to put in your time. Get to know me. Talk to me if

you are having any concerns of problems. I need to know. If you need some help I can work with you once per week or set you up with the student council tutors.

Selenski: Take out a sheet of paper. Put your name and the date in the upper right hand corner. That is what I expect to see on every sheet you write. Also, put English 11.

Selenski: I consider you professional by this age. I do not have classroom rules. I only have five things that I expect from you.

Number one, be in your seats when the bell rings. Number two, follow directions the first time. Number three, bring book, paper, and pen. Number four, raise your hand to speak. Number five, keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.

Selenski: This is the grading scale:

100-90 A
89-80 B
79-70 C
69-60 D.

Selenski: Remember these things. Everything is just like last year. Nothing new. Same expectations. Also, same as last year, if your grade drops, I have to send notification to your parents.

Selenski: The next issue, show courtesy. Remember, you are a reflection of me. I don't like to make threats, so just do it.

Selenski: Get a notebook to write in as a journal. Also, I want you to keep your notes in chronological order. I will collect them each marking period.

Selenski: Take out a sheet of paper. Put on the heading. Now, draw a rectangle around the edges of your paper. (PAUSE) Now divide the rectangle into six evenly sized areas. (PAUSE) In the areas you

> will use graphics to depict what I tell you. Number the areas one to six. (PAUSE) In number one, draw the symbol of your greatest accomplishment. (PAUSE) In number two, draw the symbol of your family's greatest accomplishment. (PAUSE) In number three, draw three things you will have accomplished by age 65. (PAUSE) In number four, draw what you are the most ashamed of. (PAUSE) In number five draw five things you do well. (PAUSE) In number six, you may write in words. Write three things you would like people to say about you if you died today. (PAUSE)
>
> Selenski: My sister is a head hunter--a personnel recruiter. She uses this to decide if she wants to hire somebody. I'm impressed, I didn't have to repeat a single direction. Now, bring that to me, and well lock them in the closet. I'll have you do this at the end of the year. Then, I'll give this one back to you.
>
> 10:45,
> Selenski: Okay, here's you assignment. Bring this to me tomorrow. You may talk for the rest of the hour. (The teacher sat and worked on papers at her desk).

The following day Ms. Selenski elevated the students' status above her own level. At 10:03, Ms. Selenski took attendance. Channel I played. After watching Channel I, the teacher gave the following introduction for the day's lesson. The day's objective was that the low achievers should tell Ms. Selenski what to teach.

> 10:15,
> Teacher: Okay, take out a sheet of paper. You had to write to about your English experiences. I'll use these to know what I should teach in here. You know better than I do what it is that you want to do in life, and what you already know. My responsibility is to teach you what you need.

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From the first and second days, Ms. Selenski gave students equal status--professional. In fact, by the second day Ms. Selenski had given low achievers ascendancy. She stated that low achievers needed to tell her what to teach--low achievers knew better than she. Ms. Selenski initiated the bargains on the first class days. However, with the bargaining process accepted by both sides, thereafter, whoever wanted something offered the bargain. Bargains were mutually gratifying in immediate terms, because they assured orderly classrooms, free time, and in-class preparation time for both low achievers and their teachers. As students talked, Ms. Selenski completed her own work.

When the Bargains Begin

Low achievers and their teachers were asked when the bargaining process begins. Troy stated "They (teachers) tell us on the first few days what we gotta do to pass...when we can talk." The bargains were manifest in classroom rules. According to Frederick, the bargains began "right at the beginning of the year. You see them in the rules in classes. Be quiet during class time and you'll get free time at the end of the hour." Tammy stated that the bargains form,

> At the beginning of the year. But first, you have to get to know the teacher. Some teachers you just know they won't bargain, they just won't give in. You just know that some teachers just won't get talked into this, but sometimes we'll sneak one in.

Betty responded that bargains begin "the first day of school, the kids say, oh, come on, it's the first day of school. You're going to give us homework?!" Claudia agreed that the bargains form "the first day of school and they go all year." Doug concurred that the bargains begin "when the students walk into the classroom at the beginning of the year." Patricio concluded that "the teachers explain all this to us--it's what they expect."

Teachers' perceptions reflected the low achievers' perceptions. Mrs. Copucha stated that the bargains "form as the semester goes on. I guess that because I initiate the bargain, I can give it as a reward for compliance with the rules and for showing respect." Mr. Jones added that "The first thing I do each year is give them the opportunity to negotiate. I know how interested they are, and I don't push too much." Each side blamed the other side for their own low commitment to education.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During general mathematics, Mr. Jones gave the following introduction and requirements for his class. From the first session, Mr. Jones reduced education to making students marketable.

> 8:00,
> Teacher: My name is Stan Jones. You can call me by my first name--mister. There are a lot of things changing in our world, and you have to be prepared. You have to develop some skills. The purpose of this class is to provide you with some skills and be able to pass the Michigan

Skills Test so you can receive an endorsed diploma and get a job. Now the rules are on the wall. I would like you to understand these rules. Take a few minutes and discuss them with your friends. Rule number one, follow directions. Rule number two, do not prevent teaching or learning. Rule number three, work cooperatively with others. Rule number four, handle materials and equipment in a safe and respectful manner. Rule number five, be in your seat, quiet and your area clean prior to the dismissal bell.

These are some of the things you need to be able to get a job. That's why we do these things and have these rules--so you can get a job. I also expect that everyone be courteous and not embarrass anyone in here. If some time I need your attention, I'll raise my hand. That means I want your attention. I want you to raise your hand also. Pretty soon the people talking will see someone's hand up and get the hint.

I'll keep all explanations to the minimum in here. I don't think we need to spend a lot of time on rules. We should get it right the first day and then do it that way all year. Everything should be the same in here as it was on the first day.

I want you to practice your one-foot voices. That means as you talk to your groups partners you should be no farther than one foot. Practice that now. (The students stayed where they were--about three feet apart and talked. The teacher forgot about personal space--one foot is too close).

8:36, the students are talking loudly. Teacher DID NOT raise his hand as indicated.

Teacher: Okay, quiet down. I'm trying to explain this to you. I just said I want you to use your one foot voices. That doesn't sound like a one-foot voice to me. When I say a one-foot voice I don't

> mean scream it all the way across the room, I mean be one foot away. (The teacher approached a male student. The teacher talked about one foot from the student's face. The student leaned back in his desk to create distance between himself and the teacher. The students did not accept the one-foot voice as a norm. It violated their private space.)
>
> Teacher: Okay, let's go on. I want you to be in your own seats when you are in here. I am responsible for you during the time that you are in this classroom. If the bell rings at the end of the hour and I'm still talking, I expect that you sit and wait. I'll dismiss you when I'm finished.
>
> Next, there are three group rules. (The teacher placed a transparency on the overhead projector). Copy these down and know them. The first group rule is that you are responsible for your own behavior. The second group rule is that you must be willing to help anyone in your group who asks. The third group rule is that you may not ask the teacher a question for help unless all four of you in the group have the same question. (This explained why students did not ask questions).
>
> Now, I put you in groups for only one reason. You have to develop social skills. You need to be able to get along with people in order to get a job.
>
> 8:55, the dismissal bell rang. The students all stood to leave.
>
> Teacher: Hey, sit down! I said you wait. (The students sat).
>
> Teacher: Okay, you're dismissed.

Mr. Jones used the entire hour to reiterate the classroom rules. The observation illustrates that teachers reduce education to getting a job--marketability. Mr. Jones stated

that students needed to pass a state test. However, the end of passing the test was to have an endorsed diploma and get a job--marketability. Lastly, Mr. Jones added that students gain social skills via group work. The end of social skills too was to get a job--again marketability. Mr. Jones' mathematics class was not about mathematics--it was about making students marketable. The bargains were established during the initial class sessions. The bargains were both implicit and sometimes explicit. They were manifest in classroom rules and continued over the entire year.

The observation also illustrates why low achievers do not ask questions. Students are expected to use their groups to teach each other. Unless all students in the group have the same question, students may not request their teachers' assistance.

The Bargains

According to Newman (1951), students should develop a sense of commitment to serious and sustained academic pursuits. Durkheim (1956) stated that students should focus their energies to a greater cause than a commitment to self. Students should pay attention to gain more knowledge and increase their skills. Students and their teachers should establish classroom norms which encourage a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that students should commit themselves to education--not to their self.

However, the bargains permitted and even encouraged low achievers to commit themselves to serious and sustained diversion--not academic pursuits. When low achievers were asked to explain what classroom bargains exist, Betty stated that the bargains included "deals like keep your mouth shut and I'll pass you. Or if you behave all hour, you can have the end of the hour as free time. Listen to lecture and you don't get homework." Evangelina added,

> If we go by the rules we get less work, more time to do our work or more free time. If you try, the teacher will pass you with a 'D-' to a 'C-'. Some of the teachers will say, 'Hey, you've been good all hour, so you can talk the rest of the hour'. It's like if you're quiet and do what they want, most times they'll feel like they gotta do something for you 'cause you were nice to them.

Tammy stated that in the child development class "last week we were going to make cookies on Friday because we were good all week. Then, we got to class and were ready to make cookies and nobody brought supplies. So, she gave the whole hour to talk because we were good."

Alicia added that "if we behave we get free time at the end of the hour. Or when our work is done, we can talk." Troy added that "we pass the class if we put in some effort and don't cause problems." Frederick agreed that "if you put in the effort you're going to pass." Mapi noted that "if you do all your homework but don't pass tests, you'll pass--that happened with my boyfriend in Mr. Floh's class." Brad also

concurred that "if you turn all your homework in, but fail the tests, they'll still pass you no matter what."

The bargains assured that low achievers and their teachers did not harass each other. Andy responded that "I had a couple of teachers told me that if I didn't cause trouble for them, they wouldn't cause trouble for me." George agreed that "the teachers, like Mr. Roberts, make bargains with the students, like don't cause me trouble and I won't cause you trouble."

Teachers reiterated the same bargains as the low achievers. Mrs. Copucha stated that in her 55 minute child development class "if they have behaved...I'll let them bake cookies...I'll say to them, okay you guys gave me 25 minutes of hard work, so you can have rest of the time to sit and talk." Ms. Selenski extended the bargains to include subverting the sports eligibility policy when students were ineligible. She responded,

> They can talk when they're finished with their work. If they fail the first marking period, then they fail the next marking period, if they are in sports, they're ineligible. I make a deal with them that if they do all work, I'll still mark them eligible. I have about 5 of these deals running right now.

Mr. Floh stated,

> ...they get time at the end of the hour is a given. When it's time to work, it's time to work. When it's time to play, you can play. That's a given. When I lecture you listen. Pass the tests and you'll be alright.

Mr. Hansen elaborated that the bargains included passing classes based on the students' behavior. Mr. Hansen said,

> ...the deals that I make with the kids are not verbalized, like if they behave, I give them more free time, and will pass them even if they failed all tests. I normally give them the last 10 to 15 minutes that I back off and let them sit there and just talk.

Mr. Jones responded that he used bargains to avoid conflict. He replied,

> I realized that he (a student) would be a leader in the class. I called him out in the hall, and told him that we can either get along or work separately. So, I struck a deal with the kid, if he could put in effort, behave, follow the classroom rules, and make an effort, he won't have to pass tests, and I think we can get you through here.

Mr. Howard also bargained to receive academic compliance. He stated that "I give them free time at the end of the hour to talk if I'm done with lecture. They understand these things because we establish all of this in the first couple weeks of school, then they don't push it anymore."

The classroom norms permit low achievers to bargain as their teachers' equals. Each side conspires to reduce the commitment required to pass classes. Mr. Howard lowered his standards to the minimal level to pass. The bargain stopped the students from pushing Mr. Howard and established well-understood classroom rules.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. Mr. Howard gave the following introduction and requirements for his class government class.

> 12:30, The students were seated. They talked quietly as the teacher (who was also the athletic director) worked on papers for the athletic program.
>
> 12:35, The teacher took attendance.
>
> 12:40,
> Teacher: Dan, hang this in the hall. Extra credit already.
>
> Teacher: Okay, hopefully you'll be in here for one semester. You have to be here--it is required by law. As you get older and into the real world, you'll develop more interest in government.
>
> Teacher: Each day, bring a pen, book, and paper. You'll turn your notes at the end of each semester.
>
> Teacher: My rules are easy: I expect that you participate. No radio, cards, talking or horseplay.
>
> Teacher: You're seniors--you know when to talk and when to keep your mouth shut. I'll move you one time. The second time I'll move you out.
>
> Teacher: I expect you to take notes, and to not cheat. You have news quizzes once a week. (None of the students write down what the teacher says.) I grade on a curve.
>
> Teacher: Tests are almost always fill-in-the-blank. You will have two term papers, and a debate.
>
> Teacher: I've never failed a student who tried. The only way you can fail this class is to not care.
>
> Teacher: I don't believe in the welfare system. You give effort--I give you a

grade. (3 of 23 students payed attention. The remaining students whispered, doodled, or had their head down.)

Teacher: You have to become informed. It will help you to be a good citizen.

Teacher: The unit tests are long. They are fill-in-the-blank. The best way to test your knowledge is essay, but they take too much time to correct. Maybe it's that or maybe I'm too lazy. So, we have fill-in-the-blank.

Teacher: We'll discuss extra credit tomorrow. You can talk for the rest of the hour. I'll try to give you this time to talk each day. Usually you will have the last 5 to 10 minutes to talk. You can have the rest of the hour to talk. (Teacher removed athletic papers and worked as the students sat and talked).

Mr. Shaw: Tammy, what does your teacher get out of these deals in the classroom?

Tammy: I guess time to do things, the same as Mrs. Copucha. They all sit and work on things or talk when we have free time.

Mr. Shaw: What else?

Tammy: Well, they get time to talk to students and teachers, or like Mr. Howard is the athletic director so he has a lot of things he has to do for football.

The observation illustrates that teachers bargain down their requirements during the first class. It was the teacher who initiated low expectations. Mr. Howard assured a passing grade for effort alone. He stated that students gave effort and he gave a grade.

The classroom norms permitted and even encouraged students to become low achievers. The bargains and the

bargaining process legitimate low achievement as a mode of school participation. Bargaining was beneficial for both low achievers and their teachers. The bargaining was manifest in seven exchanges between low achievers and their teachers: (1) free time; (2) passing classes even when all work was failed; (3) receiving less or easier work; (4) receiving in-class study time; (5) teachers and students not causing each other trouble; (6) receiving candy for perfect test scores; and (7) receiving sports eligibility even when ineligible. The reader can discern six of the seven bargains in the first hour of Mr. Howard's class: bargain numbers 1 through 6. The bargain for sports eligibility even when ineligible, occurred in Ms. Selenski's and Mrs. Copucha's classes.

The norm to bargain was so powerful that the school district's policies were subverted by the process. The district's athletic eligibility policy was established to assure high educational achievement among the district's athletes. The student athletes were required to maintain a 1.5 grade point average and not fail any classes. The policy was disregarded and bargained away by both low achievers and their teachers.

Mutuality of the Bargains

Simmel (1950) stated that social equilibrium and cohesion could not exist without "the reciprocity of service and return service" and that "all contacts among men rest on the schema of giving and returning the equivalence" (p. 387). He

continued that, accepting reciprocity via a present or favor is "the starting point of a budding exchange relation and possibly a lasting friendship" (p. 107).

Parsons (1951) added that if a social system is to be stable there must always be some "mutuality of gratification" (p. 107). Gouldner (1960) was more precise when he stated that "Reciprocity...is the mutually gratifying pattern of exchanging goods and services" (p. 170). The term reciprocity means that individuals ensure that all interactions are ultimately equitable. The consistent theme across the referent social theorists is that reciprocity exists in all relationships. Reciprocity stabilizes the relationship and assures mutual gratification to all individuals.

As per the referent social theorists' indications, the bargains are mutually gratifying for low achievers and their teachers. The bargains motivate the low achievers to be compliant. George stated that teachers,

> ...want their classes to be quiet and get along with the kids--they like them. I think it's that they want us to graduate. Like Mr. Howard, we get along really good. He told me that if I did all of my work, he'd make sure I passed--I'm passin'.

Betty explained that bargains were mutually gratifying because they enabled teachers to complete their own work. Betty said,

> The deals are good for the teachers too. Like when we see a movie, the teacher corrects papers. It's like if we have homework, and no time to complete it in class, the teacher has homework too because she can't correct it in class.

> Almost every teacher here does that. It's like the teachers' study and preparation time too, not just the students' study time.

Frederick revealed that the bargain "motivates you to hold on for just a couple of minutes more then you have free time--it's a reward. It makes the teachers' job easier, and gives the kids free time." Evangelina clarified that the bargains are mutually gratifying because they,

> ...guarantee that the teacher gets his way. It's like it benefits the teacher and the students. The teacher gets his way and the kids get free time. The teacher gets hard-working quiet students--the students get free time.

Claudia also explained that the bargains were mutually gratifying. She stated "the bargain is good for teachers and students. When the students had free time, so did the teacher." Troy concurred that "If the teacher's real far behind on work, he'll give us free days. We get to sit and talk and he does his work all hour. We try to make deals from the first day, but it's like it goes on all year." Alicia also stated that the bargain was,

> ...good for the students and teachers. But, I don't think the low lifers stop and think that it also guarantees that they have to work harder to get the free time. They think they're getting away with something, but they're not.

Patricio also contended that "The bargains are good for both teachers and students. While the kids have free time to talk, the teacher grades papers."

Teachers' perceptions were parallel with the low achievers' perceptions. Ms. Selenski was also the junior class sponsor. According to Ms. Selenski, both low achievers and their teachers,

> ...give and take. They know they won't get anything for nothing. If you want something from me, you'll give me something. I have so many deals. See the bulletin board and the prom decoration? I made a deal with two boys to make those for me and I'm giving them extra credit. That's pretty good, because in my class prom things carry a lot of extra credit.

Mr. Howard said that "it's something that benefits everyone. People know what to expect because that determines what's acceptable and what's not." Mr. Floh added that low achievers and their teachers are equals. The bargains institutionalized what each side should give to and receive from education. He detailed,

> Everything's equal. I state that explicitly to the students. In here all things are equal. I'll treat you the same way you treat me. If you're not rude to me, I'm not going to be rude to you. It's contractual. I think the bargains are implicit in that the bargains set up a certain way that classrooms ought to be run. Then it's explicit in that when they violate those ways, they're seeing if you're going to enforce what everybody already knows is the way it should be.

Mr. Hansen also indicated that the bargain was an institutional phenomenon. He elaborated that the bargain exists at all levels. Bargains were a means of,

> ...keeping the class half way decent as far as discipline, and they realize that kind of thing. With the lower grade

> level kids, 7th and 8th grade, you have to be explicit about the bargains. By the time the kid is a junior or senior, he or she has been socialized and have matured. They know the bargains, and they just do it. They complete their work, they behave, and the end of the hour is theirs. The bargain with the upper classmen is implicit, but it's at all levels, and in all classes, the difference is, is the bargain implicit or explicit, that usually depends more on the grade level of the kids, and their maturity. But usually the bargain comes from the teacher.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 10, Mr. Floh gave the following introduction and requirements for his class. After completing his brief introduction, Mr. Floh used the hour to complete non-educational tasks. The students entered the classroom, and sat where they chose. At 9:00, the tardy bell sounded. Mr. Floh entered the classroom and sat at his desk. He removed a roster and took attendance. Mr. Floh hung the attendance slip in the hallway.

> Floh: Anyone anticipate a change in their class schedule? (No students responded).
>
> Student (Alan) That means does any one plan to make a change.
>
> 9:05,
> Floh: Shut up Mullin! Turn around Mullin! You listen. I talk. You really don't want to start this way Mullin! (Alan turned around and sat quietly).
>
> 9:06,
> Floh: When I call your name, come up and get a book.
>
> 9:08,

Floh: Okay, turn to page 2. "The Monkey's Paw." Read this to yourselves. Tomorrow be certain to bring a pen, paper, your book. We quite often will do the discussion questions at the end of the readings during class. (The students sat quietly and read. The teacher sat at his desk and opened his mail. He sorted through the letters.

9:15, The teacher filled his stapler, and posted the school's calendar and sports events calendar.

9:20, The teacher read the mail. Students read silently.

9:25, The teacher read the mail. Students read silently.

9:30, The teacher read the mail. Students read silently.

9:34, The principal entered the classroom. He watched the class for about one minute, smiled and walked out. The teacher continued reading the mail, and the students continued to read silently.

9:37, Some students completed the reading. They sat and talked quietly.

9:39, Mr. Floh called a female student to his desk.

Floh: Here, take these (papers) to the typing room. If the teacher is there, give them to him. If he's not in the room, leave them on his desk.

9:44,
Floh: Raise your hand if you need a sheet of paper. Put your name and the date in the upper right hand corner. Number one: Tell me about the setting. Number two: Who are the five principal characters? Number three: what creates the action? Number four: what was the first wish? Numbers five and six: what was the second and third wish? Number seven: what country did the object come from? Number eight: Who died? Number nine: Was this

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> coincidence or fate? Number ten: What was the result of the second wish? (Students did not have time to write down the questions or the answers. However, this "test" was not a test--the teacher showed students what test format to expect).
>
> 9:45,
> Floh: Okay, this is the kind of tests you'll have: who, what, when, where, why. Got it? (The students sat and talked. The teacher sat at his desk.)
>
> Shaw: Doug, tell me what Mr. Floh gets out of the bargains?
>
> Doug: Look at him. He isn't doin' anything. He reads his mail, talks to teachers.
>
> Shaw: Is that all he gets?
>
> Doug: He gets a check.

The observation illustrates that the bargains are mutually gratifying for both the low achievers and their teachers. Each side legitimates the norm to bargain because it is mutually gratifying in immediate terms. Neither low achievers nor their teachers submit themselves to serious, and sustained academic pursuits. Low achievers receive free time to study or socialize and a passing grade. Teachers receive compliance, free time to correct tests or papers, and time to socialize. The bargains allow both sides to forego opportunity costs. Required activities which should be completed out-of-school, during conference periods or study halls are completed during in-class time.

The right for low achievers to bargain as their teachers' equals is a norm. The norm is to bargain down requirements;

the phenomenon is unidirectional--always down. The bargain is a set of agreed upon norms established between low achievers and teachers. The agreement establishes the way classes are be run--what each is to give and what each is to receive.

What Cannot be Bargained

Durkheim (1956) stated that to a certain point all education is the same. All education rests upon a common base. Durkheim stated that among all people there are consistent ideas, attitudes and procedures. Education imparts these ideas, attitudes and procedures in children regardless of social class. Durkheim stated "In the course of history, there have been established a whole set of ideas on human nature, on right and duty, on society, on progress, on science, on art, etc., which are the very basis of our national spirit" (p. 70). The referent philosopher's theme is that there are certain values which are not subject to the bargaining process.

When low achievers and teachers were asked to describe what can not be bargained in their classes, Tammy stated that "Cheating, lying, talking all hour" are not available as bargains. Betty added that "cutting people down." Claudia replied that teachers did not bargain "swearing, but I notice the teachers pretend like they don't hear the swearing." Alicia stated that "most teachers won't make any deals about leaving class." Evangelina stated "if it's not in the classroom, like going to the bathroom, we can't bargain going

to the bathroom." Troy responded that teachers "won't let us talk all hour, unless he wants to talk all hour, or if the teacher's behind on work." Patricio added that "If you don't do your work you won't pass."

Teachers concurred with the low achievers. Ms. Selenski stated that she will not bargain regarding "Cheating. Leaving school. Drinking or drugs, smoking. I won't bargain these. No ridiculing. No talking about another teacher or student. No talking about who slept with whom. The courtesy norm can not be violated." Mrs. Copucha also stated that students "know that the bargain is on my terms. I say what goes. I won't bargain anything that is abusive." Mr. Floh added that "No talking during tests...No damaging property. No talking while I talk. These can't be bargained." Mr. Howard concluded that "Cheating is an absolute not. Leaving class to horse around in the hall. Talking when I'm talking. Arguing or ridiculing."

There are two trains of thought. First, certain social norms can not be bargained, because they are vital to society's survival. The social norms which may not be bargained include cheating, lying, stealing, ridiculing, swearing, drug use, and passing with no effort. The second thought is that what is outside of the classroom is outside of the bargain. What could not be bargained was society's collective ethos. As Durkheim (1956) said, these are the areas which are imperative to society's continued survival--as such they may not be bargained.

Section One: Summary

Teachers de-expertise themselves in their students' presence. Teachers remove their natural ascendancy over low achievers. In addition, teachers elevate the low achievers' status to a point where they in fact had ascendancy over teachers. Low achievers are expert regarding what is useful in a market economy. This view of students places teachers at best as their students' equals in status regarding academic matters. As professionals, low achievers know as much as, or more about market economy than their teachers.

Teachers' statements illustrate that education is reduced to preparing students for jobs--marketability. Teachers convey that minimum effort is acceptable and that in return low achievers will receive a minimum grade--a passing grade. Lastly, teachers engaged in personal, non-academic endeavors during class. As low achievers are their teachers' equals, they too are free to do likewise. Teachers legitimate that it is acceptable to engage in personal pursuits in lieu of academic pursuits.

As the result of aforementioned statements and actions, low achievers and their teachers are equals with regard to the norm establishing process. Low achievers and their teachers reduce education to marketability. Neither low achievers nor their teachers commit themselves to serious and sustained academic pursuits.

The bargaining process begins on the first day of classes. The bargains are offered initially by teachers. Subsequently, the bargains are offered by whomever desires something. The whole of this process establishes a set of norms which permit and even encourage low achievers to bargain as their teachers' equals. As such, low achievers are free to assess the marketability that their classes provide. Low achievers are free to give effort that is equal to their classes' marketability.

Section 2: What Other Students Give and Receive

The researcher will use section two to present the findings regarding the comparison level, comparison-level alternative, and distributive justice.

Group members compare the reward that they receive to the reward which their referent group receives. Blau (1964) referred to this as the comparison level. He continued that "Since reference groups serve as standards of comparison and expectation, the average reward received by their members becomes a baseline for evaluating what is a relatively gratifying or a relatively depriving experience" (p. 159).

Blau (1964) stated that when individuals assess the comparison level in their own group, and comparison-level alternative in other similar groups, the individual calculates what association costs. If their effort exceeds their reward, the person will experience dissonance.

Homans (1961) referred to distributive justice as practical equilibrium. He believed that people in social exchange relations expect that the reward received from the provider be distributed equally across the referent group. He stated that individuals "will expect that the rewards of each man (or woman) be proportional to his or her costs--the greater the rewards, the greater the costs--and the net rewards, or profits, of each man be proportional to his investments--the greater the investments, the greater the profit" (p. 75).

In this section it will be argued that low achievers compare themselves to other student groups. Further, it will be argued that low achievers accept that one group receives higher grades than they, while another group receives lower grades than they. It will be argued that low achievers attribute this variance as a just distribution of grades based on students' commitment to education and to college or career plans.

Low achievers and their teachers refer to education as useful or marketable when it prepares students for a job. It will be argued that the education offered to low achievers is not useful. Low achievers' education does not make them marketable as they understand marketability. However, for students who intend to pursue higher education or attain prestigious jobs, it is beneficial to study hard. Last, it will be argued that low achievers were knowledgeable regarding

what is useful in a market economy. Because low achievers are their teachers' equals, low achievers were free to accept or reject what teachers offered.

Comparing Self to Others

Blau (1964) wrote that comparison levels are social standards. The reward that one individual receives for time, effort, and compliance is the base for evaluating what is gratifying or depriving. Blau stated that individuals and groups maintain the status quo in relationships. To ensure that reciprocity endures, individuals compare rewards they receive, to rewards that others receive for equal amounts of time, effort and compliance.

Gouldner (1960) stated that although people in associations are inter-indebted, the rate of indebtedness is not the same for all people. Individuals who possess high status are entitled to greater reward. Gouldner continued that this differentiation is due to the potential value of their association. Gouldner concluded that therefore "Obligations imposed by the norm of reciprocity may vary with the status of the participants within a society" (p. 171).

Blau (1964) concluded that when individuals are discontented with their current relationship, they seek the comparison-level alternative. The comparison-level alternative is a relationship in which the individual would receive more or less reward with more or less effort. When effort exceeds reward, the individual leaves the current relationship to seek

the alternative relationship. The consistent theme across the referent theorists' is that individuals assess their own and other individuals' effort and status. Individuals expect rewards to be distributed equally and according to individuals' effort and status.

When low achievers were asked if their effort is the same as other students' effort, Frederick responded that "There are a lot of people who have their head down and do just enough to get by because they aren't getting much if anything from these classes." According to Claudia "there are some who do work harder than me. There are some who work less than me too. I guess I'm about in the middle."

Betty stated "I don't think any of the students work too hard. I guess I do about the same, some work harder, and some work less." Troy agreed and stated "I work a little bit less than some, and maybe a little bit more than some others." Patricio also agreed that he works "harder than some in general science, but less than others." Evangelina clarified that "some people like the subject, or the teacher. Or they think the class is more useful, so they work harder."

Low achievers gave equal commitment to education--more than the trouble makers, but less than the hard-working students. Low achievers assessed what other students received and gave in order to assure that each individual received equal reward for equal effort. Low achievers gave effort according to the marketability they received.

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Low achievers referred to the hard-working students as brownnosers. Low achievers referred to the students who worked less than they, as the low lifes or trouble makers. Low achievers compared their effort to other student groups. Alicia referred to hard-working students as "the brownies, you know, brownnoser...They brownnose the teachers. It's funny because the teachers know that they're doing that." Evangelina stated "We call them brownnosers. They'll suck right up to the teachers. Some teachers like that, so they get higher grades." Troy extended the concept of hard-working students to being those who were "in sports or they wanna go to college...They work real hard. They study. They participate. They pay attention." Felicity also stated that "some students work really hard 'cause they want to go to college." Doug agreed. He stated that the hard-working students "want to go to college." Tammy agreed and extended the understanding to include that hard-working students "want a really good job so they go for it." Betty also stated that hard-working students "want big pay and good jobs."

George added that "Their parents push them really hard to do well, or they want to go to big universities and colleges. They volunteer a lot, they do all their work, they get good grades on tests." Patricio agreed the hard-working students "probably get all 4.0s because their parents won't accept less."

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Teachers too used the term "brownnosers" when referring to students who worked harder than low achievers. Mr. Howard said "The brownnosers...think they're getting away with something. I guess they think I like my back scratched. These are the kids who stand in the spot light. They'll go on to college." Mrs. Copucha stated "I have three students in the child development class that work incredibly hard. They're all college-bound." Ms. Selenski agreed that hard-working students "want to go to college. Their parents are involved." Mr. Hansen stated that the hard-working students "work a lot harder. I have some who if they don't get an 'A', they're all befuddled." Mr. Jones attributed the hard-working students' effort to "they're motivated, but I don't lecture in there either."

Both low achievers and their teachers referred to the hard-working students as brownnosers. Low achievers and their teachers stated that hard-working students wanted to go to a college or university, obtain high-paying jobs, and their parents demanded success. Low achievers had a realistic attitude about students who worked harder than they.

Low achievers also referred to a student group known as the trouble makers. Trouble makers were less committed to education than low achievers. Regarding the trouble makers' effort, Frederick responded "These are the kids who do nothing. I don't think they'll go anywhere in life...I keep my grades at least to passing--these kids do nothing." Evangelina

echoed this thought. She stated that "in Jones's general math class there is this group that doesn't do anything--they're low lifes." Mapi added the comparison that "They're just trouble-makers. They pay less attention even than I do. They sleep a lot more than I do." Alicia replied that "We call them the low lifers. They cause trouble--you see them in our class. They're the one's who always cause trouble for the teacher." Doug agreed and added that "They let farts, cause trouble, throw things, talk back to the teacher."

Tammy said that the trouble makers "do nothing--they fail." Claudia asserted that the trouble makers "don't do anything. I mean nothing! They flunk." George added that trouble makers lose credit in their classes. He said "They don't do anything! Like my cousin, he doesn't do anything. He should be a senior, but he has like two credits." Brad remarked that the trouble makers "just sit and do nothing. They don't pay attention or do assignments. They flunk tests." Patricio clarified that the trouble makers "don't need what's being taught. They'll never go to college."

Trouble makers had no commitment to education. Mrs. Copucha stated the trouble makers "put in very little. The low achievers put in just enough to get a passing grade. The students who do less than the low achievers do absolutely nothing!" Mr. Hansen agreed and stated that the trouble makers "do practically nothing in class. They don't care if they pass. They sleep, and do nothing." Mr. Jones stated trouble

makers "don't do anything at all. They get in trouble, and if they don't get kicked out, they flunk."

Mr. Floh added that the trouble makers were the dropouts. Mr. Floh stated "These kids get squeezed out. The system finally smothers them and they're gone--they quit." Mr. Floh's comment indicated that the trouble makers were also the dropouts. Mr. Howard also stated that "These kids usually don't get to my level. By the time they hit government they're going to make it though unless they really mess up. There are some who do absolutely nothing--they flunk out or drop out." Ms. Selenski also agreed that the trouble makers "vegetate in my class, but they drop out of school because they are failing."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. Trouble makers caused trouble in classes. When the trouble makers acted out, the entire class was punished. During general science, Mr. Hansen delivered a lecture on waves. As Mr. Hansen lectured, the trouble makers caused trouble. Patricio and Doug were low achievers. Gill and Jerry were trouble makers.

> 11:48,
> Teacher: Hopefully by the end of the hour I'll be able to give you your test grades. Because some people still have to take it, I'll wait until they are done. I won't give you the actual test back until everyone has taken the test--what I will do is give you the score. Let's review--yesterday we discussed measuring waves. How do we measure waves?

Patricio: With a ruler, and great difficulty, Dude.

Teacher: (Teacher chuckled) By the wave length.

Teacher: Okay, if the wave length is 15 feet, how deep would the wave base be?

Patricio: Ah, let's see--about 7 1/2 feet, Dude.

11:56: Two students passed a wallet. One removed some money.

Teacher: Put the wallet away and listen up.

Gill: He stole my wallet. (Gill stood up.)

Teacher: Sit down and act like a senior.

Gill: But.

Teacher: That's it--you have a detention--one hour tomorrow after school.

Gill: But.

Teacher: Would you like to try on 200 sentences too? (Gill sat down.)

Teacher: A Tsunami is a series of 14 waves that have joined force as one wave.

Patricio: What if there are only 13 or maybe 15 waves joining force, is it still a Tsunami?

Teacher: I don't know, I guess it can only be a Tsunami when 14 waves have joined force. That's what the book says, so it must be right.

12:00, the teacher passed out the daily worksheet. A student asked "Why are we getting so much work? You never give us this much work." The teacher did not answer.

12:03, students sat quietly. Gill and another student talked and threw papers.

12:05, the teacher wrote, VOCABULARY on the chalkboard.

Patricio: Hey--chill out Dude! I haven't even got my name on the last sheet you gave us. Chill on the assignments, Dude. Why are we getting so much work, Dude?

Jerry: It's 'cause some cheeser had to throw paper.

Gill: When is all this due?

Teacher: Probably at the end of the hour.

Gill: At the end of the hour?

Teacher: Probably.

Gill: Probably?

Teacher: Probably.

Gill: Wow, Dude--like I can't do all this by the end of the hour.

Teacher: Then do this too--page 408, numbers 1 and 2. (Students were silent).

12:10, Students worked on assignments. The teacher walked around the room and helped students individually when they requested assistance.

12:11,
Patricio: Mr. Hansen--there are three questions on page 408.

Teacher: Oh, okay. Do all three. (The teacher wrote the change on the Chalkboard).

Student: (Jerry to Patricio) We already had two questions to answer, now we have three. God you're stupid.

Patricio: Yeah? I'm stupid? I have a 3.2 in this school cheeser. What's your G.P.A.--a 1.0? I know where you'll be in

> 5 years asshole--you'll be the next parking lot cart-pusher at Meijer.
>
> Doug: He's not that smart--he'll probably have to settle with sorting cans at K-Mart.

The observation illustrates that Gill and Jerry, the trouble makers, did less work and created more trouble than Patricio and Doug, the low achievers. Trouble makers disrupted lecture, threw paper and talked back to the teacher. The class received extra work because the trouble makers caused trouble. The low achievers prodded the trouble makers for not committing themselves to education. The best job trouble makers would get would be pushing shopping carts for Meijer or sorting pop cans for K-Mart.

There exists a clear understanding among students about the effort they give and the rewards they receive. Students were aware of their own place in the system. The students who worked less than the low achievers were trouble makers or low lifes. Low achievers compared their own educational commitment to the trouble makers' educational commitment. The trouble makers did nothing. Therefore, trouble makers received a lower grade or flunked.

Distributive Justice

Individuals in relationships expect that their rewards be equal to their effort. Homans (1961) referred to balancing rewards against effort as distributive justice. He stated that individuals expect rewards to be distributed equally.

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Distributive justice means rewarding individuals equally for equal amounts of time, effort and compliance while accounting for ability and status. The referent theorist's theme is that individuals who give more time, effort, compliance, or have higher abilities and status, should receive more reward. Individuals who give less time, effort, compliance, or have lower abilities and status should receive less reward.

In keeping with the concepts of social exchange, students should perceive that grades are fair when weighed against their effort. When low achievers were asked if they think that their grades are fair Tammy stated "Oh yeah. I could be getting an 'A' if I wanted to work harder but I don't need it." Evangelina added,

> I have about a 1.20, but I don't work too hard. I'm doin' better now than I did before. I guess if I get at least 'Cs' in my classes that's fine. I know I can get 4.0s. I don't really want a 4.0--I do, but it's not worth the extra work. I don't think I want to put in the effort for the extra grade.

Mapi added "I have about a 1.3--I'm not being cheated, because I don't study. I guess my grades are right where they should be." Betty stated that her grades are fair, because "When I'm here is all the time I put in." Claudia agreed and said "I don't put in a lot of time, so I don't get 'As'. If I put in more time, I'd get better grades."

Troy responded that "I don't hardly ever study. Like I said, I put in my time." Alicia expressed that her grades were low because "like general science, I don't like it so I don't

study. Since I don't study, I get lower grades." According to Doug "I don't hardly ever study for his (Hansen's) class. I sleep a lot in there. I don't usually study for it at home either, so if I get a 'D' like on the last test, that's good enough--It's fair." George stated "I get about a 1.4...it's my fault for not doing my work. If I did all of my homework and studied, I know I could do a lot better."

Low achievers weighed the grades which they received against their commitment to academic pursuits. The grades which low achievers received were fair, because low achievers did not exert themselves.

Low achievers and their teachers were asked to describe the fairness of hard-working students receiving higher grades than low achievers. Tammy stated that the higher grades were fair because "They do everything for class. They participate a lot. They do all their assignments. They pay attention. They do a lot more than I do, so it's fair." Frederick also stated "I think so. I'd want a higher grade if I put in the kind of effort they are putting into classes." Betty replied that "Yeah, they earn it." According to Troy hard-working students "work real hard...They earn the grade--the teachers say nothin' for nothin'." Claudia stated that "Of course it's fair--they work really hard."

Evangelina clarified that "If they get a higher grade because they work harder that's fair, but if they get a higher grade because they suck right up to the teacher, no that's not

fair." Alicia also compared the hard-working students' effort to her own. She replied that the hard-working students' grades were fair because "they work harder than I do." Doug agreed and added "they do the work. They hand in the worksheets and I don't." Brad stated that the hard-working students "study harder than I do, so they get higher grades."

Low achievers and their teachers' had parallel perceptions. Mr. Howard responded that hard-working students "understand nothing for nothing. They get the grade they earn." Mr. Floh laughed and commented "Heck, I've never been on a job where they didn't pay on production. You put out more pieces you get more wages." Mrs. Copucha concurred that hard-working students received higher grades "because they are obviously doing more." Mr. Jones believed that "it's fair, because they earn better grades." Mr. Hansen responded "they're working harder, doing more. Oh, you're darned right it's fair."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During government, Mr. Howard corrected tests with the students. As Mr. Howard returned the quizzes, the students compared their grades. The grades were distributed fairly because they reflected the students' effort. The students who gave more effort, received higher grades. Andy, Brenda and Frederick were low achievers. Brenda and Anne were hard-working students.

1:16,

Teacher: Three more minutes. (1 more student carried up the quiz).

1:17, 8 students carried up the quiz.

1:18,
Sharri: How many can you miss and still get an 'A'?

Teacher: Bring up your quizzes.

1:18,
George: (Looked at the researcher) Man, it's easy to remember these. We started with 15 countries the first week, then 10 in the next week, and we add 5 each week.

1:19, the teacher carried the quizzes around to students.

Teacher: Put your name on the back of the person's quiz. I'll read through the answers. Do not interrupt me. Listen close. If you don't hear one of the answers, I'll repeat them individually after the quiz is corrected. (The teacher read down the list of answers).

1:23, the students compared their quiz scores.

Frederick: How many did you miss?

Anne: Awesome, man, I missed just 1.

Frederick: I missed 8, but I only studied last hour.

Anne: Yeah--I studied about 3 hours last night.

1:24,
George: (Looked at the researcher) See, I missed 4.

1:25,
Teacher: Here's the deal--if you missed less than 21 or less, you aren't required to take it over. Remember, you have to get a 70, or I won't pass you. If you had one of those zero wrong refrigerator quizzes--free trip to the candy shop.

(The teacher has an in-school candy shop). This morning we had a young lady in 2nd hour government get a 1 wrong quiz. She's taking it over next week to refrigerate the quiz, and get her trip to the candy shop. I lost 8 candy bars this morning in 2nd hour to refrigerator quizzes.

1:26,
Andy: How'd you do?

Brenda: I missed 6.

Andy: So did I.

Brenda: Yeah, but I didn't study.

The observation illustrates that low achievers compare the effort that other students give, to the grades that other students receive. Low achievers accept that other students receive higher grades than they, when the other students gave more effort. It was fair that hard-working students received higher grades, because they were more committed to education than low achievers.

Low achievers and their teachers were asked to tell about the fairness of the trouble makers receiving lower grades than the low achievers. Trouble makers received low grades because they were not committed to education. Frederick stated that trouble makers "do nothing but screw around and cause trouble all the time. That's just the way it is--nothing is free. If you want to pass you have to give some effort." Doug also stated that "I think they should get 'Es'. They don't do nothing, and then they cause trouble. When they cause trouble then we have to do more work."

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Patricio added that "If they wanted to do better they'd work as hard as somebody who's getting a 'C'." The indication by Patricio was that the trouble makers were also capable of receiving higher grades. However, grades must be distributed equally for equal commitment to education. Claudia stated "they get what the earn." Tammy replied that the trouble makers "don't do anything. They make themselves flunk. They deserve it." Troy attributed the trouble makers' grades to,

> ...the way they act. It's the way they feel--they wanna cause problems and they flunk. They deserve it. Like me, I pay attention, and wanna pass, but they just fool around, and don't do nothing.

Evangelina said that the trouble makers earned lower grades "because they're disturbing the class...it's their fault. They also don't do their work." Alicia agreed that trouble makers received lower grades because "they cause trouble and don't do anything. Then we get in trouble and have to do extra work." George also responded that trouble makers deserved lower grades "because they don't do their work." Mapi concluded that the trouble makers "don't do ANYTHING!!! (emphatic) They deserve what they get."

Teachers' and low achievers' perceptions were parallel. Mrs. Copucha stated that "If I don't get the work, you don't get the grade--that's the way life is--it's give and take. Nothing for nothing!" Mr. Howard concurred that "nothing for nothing. They do nothing; they get nothing." Ms. Selenski responded that trouble makers received lower grades "On the

rationale that you can't get something for nothing. If you want something, you have to give something." Mr. Hansen clarified that "it is fair. They have the ability--they simply don't use it." Mr. Jones questioned "How can they pass if they didn't do anything, right?"

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During general science, Patricio entered the classroom and bragged to Jerry that he did not study the quiz materials. The students took the quiz on the day prior to the following conversation. Jerry commented that he studied the hour prior to the quiz. Jerry usually did not study--he was one of the trouble makers. Patricio and Doug were low achievers. The researcher did not know Jodi. As Mr. Hansen returned quizzes to the students, the following discussion transpired.

12:20,
Teacher: Okay, hold up on your questions as I pass back your quizzes. The number at the top of your quiz divided by 34 will give you a percentage grade.

Jerry: Jodi, divide 22 by 34.

Jodi: It's 64.7.

Jerry: Awesome, Dude--I passed.

Patricio: You got 22 right? I only got a 20.

Doug: Me too--I got a 20.

Jerry: (To Patricio) Fuck you Cheeser--you didn't even study. I got a 22 because I studied. (Patricio said nothing).

Doug: Jodi, what's 20 divided by 34?

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Jodi: That's a 58.8.

Doug: Mr. Hansen, what's 58 percent?

Teacher: That's a 'D' Doug.

Doug: Ooo! I passed. (Relieved).

Jerry: Awesome, Dude. You study?

Doug: Just the last hour before the quiz.

Jerry: Me too, Dude.

The observation illustrates the norms are well-established and universally accepted. Students' grades should be equal to effort. In this case, Jerry did study for his quiz--albeit but an hour before. Patricio became indignant that a trouble maker received a higher grade than he. However, Jerry asserted the norm--you receive as much as you give. In this case, Jerry gave more effort. Therefore, Jerry received a higher grade.

Grades are distributed equal to effort. The trouble makers receive what they give--nothing. It is fair that trouble makers received nothing because trouble makers did nothing. It is also fair that when trouble makers do give more effort, their grades are higher.

Section Two: Summary

Low achievers and their teachers have established well-understood norms concerning the effort given, and the reward received. To this end, the comparisons which low achievers and their teachers make serve two purposes: (1) comparisons assure that rewards are distributed proportionately to students' commitment, compliance and effort; (2) comparisons legitimate

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low achievers' are free to assess what was useful in a market economy. Low achievers' comparisons justified their limited effort, because they will not attend a college or university, and because they will not attain more prestigious jobs.

In addition to assessing what low achievers receive from and give to the relationship, they also assessed what others receive and give. The rewards across these relationships were distributed equally. Low achievers justify their lack of educational commitment by comparing their own educational and career goals to other students' educational and career goals. Low achievers explain that hard-working students will attend a college or university. Therefore, they work harder than low achievers. Trouble makers will never experience success beyond pushing carts at Meijer, or sorting pop cans at K-Mart, because they do nothing. Low achievers use comparisons to justify their own effort.

Section 3: Balancing Effort and Reward

The researcher will use section three to present how low achievers balance what they give against what they receive. This was perhaps the most crucial question. A classroom must be understood as a social system. Participants understand what is to be received and what is to be given. The researcher sought information regarding how low achievers determined the appropriate balance between giving and receiving.

It will be argued that low achievers balance their effort against their future marketability. Education is a commodity.

Marketability is the value that education is given in the job market. Further, it will be argued that low achievers have opportunities other than academic pursuits. It will be argued that low achievers receive little marketability from their studies, so they pursue opportunities other than education.

When Betty was asked how she determined how hard to study, she stated "I really don't get a lot here, and so I don't try too much." Claudia agreed that "I don't get much...I'll study just enough to make it through." Alicia clarified that what low achievers do not receive is useful education. Alicia responded "if I think that the class is going to be useful, then I'll study." Doug concurred that "I'm not gettin' much in this class and I'm not puttin' much into it. It's not going to help me...I do just enough to pass." Brad also replied "It depends on if I think I really need that class." Brenda stated that she balanced her effort against "the career that I want to do." George elaborated,

> It's if I like the class and it's useful...I put in just enough to pass the class--just get by. I need the diploma, and so I do enough to get by...The classes that I just try to get by on, I'm not gonna use later in life, like English, we study poetry. I do a little homework--just enough to pass.

According to Patricio his decision is based upon,

> Whether I think I'm going to get something out of the class. I know what I want to be. I'm not going to waste my time on a class that won't give me preparation for my life and my career. Being a police officer you have to know that if there are 20 hostages and

> somebody tells you 1/4 of them are killed, I mean you gotta know that stuff. You can't be sitting there saying, ah, ah, let me figure this one out first.

Teachers stated that life is a give and take process. Students must give something in order to receive something. The implication here is that life in the classroom and life in society are the same. The same norms exist in each setting. Teachers added that low achievers did enough to pass and then pursued other activities. Mrs. Copucha said that low achievers do not want to feel indebted to teachers. She explained,

> I see them doing just enough to get by. I don't think they see a need to get more, and they don't see a need to give more. I think that they feel they're giving as much as they're getting. They don't want more because they would have to give more, and they don't want to have to give more.

Ms. Selenski added that low achievers had many opportunities that they would rather pursue. She said,

> If they are interested, they study. Now the new kid, Claudia, she's a good example. She's a smart kid, but she's lazy. She didn't even show up for her tutoring. Her boyfriend is coming home from the military. Other students have jobs, cars, friends, MTV. They have all sorts of things to do that take precedent over studying. If they are passing the class with a 'D-' to a 'C', that's good enough for them.

Observations were consistent with low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During general mathematics class, Candi scoffed that what she learned about polygons was not useful to obtain a job.

> Teacher: Who wants to be next? (Patricio went back to the overhead projector. He completed #5, showed the teacher and turned off the overhead projector).
>
> Candi: Don't shut it off--I don't have it copied down, you queer! (Patricio turned the overhead projector back on).
>
> Candi: Right, when am I going to need this? Okay, I've got it--I'll walk into an interview and they'll say to me, build me a polygon before I hire you--NOT!!!

Candi's effort was the minimum to pass the class. In fact, her effort did not exceed copying answers as other students completed the polygons.

Low achievers could obtain higher grades. However, because low achievers receive little marketability, they are content to pass. They do not dedicate more time than is necessary to pass. Low achievers have other opportunities that take precedent over education. What best elucidates reciprocity are the statements that low achievers do not receive much marketability. Therefore, low achievers do not give much effort.

Opportunity Costs

The researcher will use this sub-section to present the low achievers' opportunity costs. Individuals incur costs by foregoing alternative activities or alternative relationships. Blau (1964) referred to foregone opportunities as opportunity costs. According to Blau opportunity costs are rewards which could be received by focusing effort in other relationships or activities. As an individual remains in a relationship, she or

he incurs opportunity costs. The referent theorist's theme is that students have other things to do. Students incur cost when they do not pursue activities other than education.

However, the costs were too high when accounting for the marketability which low achievers received. Therefore, low achievers pursued opportunities other than education. When low achievers were asked what kept them from studying, Betty stated that "I go to see my friends. I go out and party." Alicia added "I watch TV. I like to read books, not study though. Or I visit friends. I ride bike with Evangelina." According to George,

> I have a lot to do. I work, and I have a girlfriend, but if I'm not workin' or with my girlfriend, I'm hangin' out with the guys. I hang out every day. We'd go play pool, or go to the Arcade. You know, if I have to do the homework, I do it in class.

Patricio stated that he preferred to "go to the lake and ride my jet ski. Sometimes I hang out with friends." Claudia stated "my boyfriend. He just came home from boot camp. Or I write letters to my friends--I write a lot of letters!" Tammy added "I work at...McDonald's...That slows me down quite a bit over the weekends--I don't have time to do my homework."

Mapi responded "I'm with my boyfriend. We just go home, watch TV, eat. If I'm not with my boyfriend, I'd rather watch TV, or be on the telephone. I watch TV all day and all night." Frederick added that he created his own anti-drug program. He stated "I started my own drug program as the result of a

contest that I won with 95 FM--WVIC in Lansing...I put almost all of my time and effort into that."

Evangelina replied "in school it's like I talk with my friends. Out of school I watch TV, or call friends. I ride bike." Troy stated "I go to my cousin's body shop and work on cars. Me and him bought a car, and we're trying to put it together. Sometimes we play basketball."

Teachers had an accurate understanding of low achievers' opportunities. According to Mr. Howard, low achievers opted for "TV, friends, telephone, work. But again, remember they don't have a lot of homework. These opportunities keep them from studying their tests, more than not studying homework. They study in class just before the test." Mr. Hansen added that,

> They watch TV, go out with the gang, see girlfriend/boyfriend, go to sports events. They work, in fact, I'd say that's the majority of what they do. Anything other than homework, will take precedent over homework.

Low achievers have opportunities which give them more satisfaction than education. Low achievers perceive education as drudgery. They receive little marketability and no pleasure. Therefore, the low achievers' minimal commitment to education ends when the class ends. Teachers do not have the right to assign out-of-school assignments which impede low achievers' opportunities. Low achievers are busy working, calling or visiting friends and relatives, seeing or writing to a boyfriend/girlfriend, watching television, riding

bike/motorcycle/jet ski, playing sports with friends, partying or reading.

Section Three: Summary

One classroom norm is that low achievers are their teachers' equals. Education is reduced to making students marketable. The norms permit low achievers to weigh the marketability they receive against the effort they give. Low achievers receive rewards that were equal to their commitment. Hard-working students receive more reward than low achievers, because they give more effort than the low achievers. The trouble makers receive fewer rewards than low achievers, because they give less effort than low achievers.

The same perception which provides the impetus for hard-working students to study also provides the legitimate excuse for low achievers to not study. Low achievers know what is useful in a market economy. Because low achievers have professional status, they are free to assess what teachers offer. Low achievers are also free to reject education which is not useful in a market economy. Low achievers choose not to pursue a greater commitment to education because the opportunity costs are too high.

Section 4: What Low achievers Receive

The researcher will use section four to present what low achievers receive. According to Durkheim (1956), Newman (1951), Rousseau (1967) and Goodlad (1979) students should

receive the following elements from education: knowledge, skills, self-esteem, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, enjoyment, attention, challenge, and preparation for life and work.

It is a norm that low achievers and their teachers are equals. It is also a norm that low achievers are free to assess their education in terms of marketability. It will be argued that low achievers and their teachers reduce education to marketability. It will also be argued that low achievers assess their education's worth in terms of marketability, and that they receive little marketability.

Knowledge

The first element that students should receive from education is knowledge. Durkheim (1956) termed knowledge the "fundamental prerequisite for efficacious action" (p. 22). He stated that "through scientific inquiry, knowledge is acquired, which is then applied in practice" (p. 22). Newman (1951), extended this concept to include three forms of knowledge: (1) "useful" knowledge, (2) "liberal" knowledge, and (3) "religious" knowledge. Newman maintained that the knowledge which has only its possession as the end reward is liberal knowledge. Newman continued that liberal knowledge is not inferior to useful knowledge. Rather, liberal knowledge is "the distinct class of the Useful" (p. 935). Newman concluded that liberal knowledge "is desirable, though nothing come of

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it, as being of itself a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labour" (p. 936).

Goodlad (1979) described gaining knowledge as accumulating a general fund of knowledge. He included information and concepts in mathematics, literature, natural science, and social science. He stated that civilization has become complex and that individuals have to rely on their rational abilities. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that all knowledge is worth possessing. Useful knowledge benefits the individual in marketability. Liberal knowledge benefits the individual philosophically.

However, low achievers did not value the notion of liberal knowledge. The knowledge which the low achievers valued was that which had immediate application to daily life or contributed to a career--useful knowledge or marketability. Troy stated that most of the knowledge was not useful.

> Sometimes you don't need what you learn. Sometimes you get good information. Like if we're learning how to do interviews that's fun. I can always use that. Mostly, reading is what helps me. I'll always need to know how to read instructions. Most of what I learn isn't useful.

Low achievers did not reject all knowledge received, only that which was not useful in a market economy. George stated that "for English, all we do is read poems. We don't learn much. I don't think it's valuable for now or even in later life--I won't ever use it." In fact, what George diminished was the value of liberal knowledge. Frederick stated that

"math classes are going to help me, but I don't see how biology will help me much." Evangelina concurred and added that mathematics could be used on a daily basis.

> The general math class has been pretty useful for me...I learn a lot of things that I need to know how to do. Like when I'm shopping I know if someone's giving me the correct change. Or if something is on sale, I can figure out the percentage of the discount.

Felicity stated that she received useful knowledge in senior life skills because "We learn about checking, and interviewing." Brenda also stated that senior life skills was useful because she learned "how to fill out applications, how to do a lot of the things that I didn't know before. For a job interviews we had an Army sergeant come in." Brad added that in senior life skills he learned "how to get a job, how to keep track of our money." In each response the underlying theme was consistent. Low achievers perceived that classes which offered useful knowledge were valuable. Low achievers wanted knowledge which they would use in their daily life, to obtain and keep their job. However, low achievers did not look very far into the future.

Teachers' and low achievers' perceptions coincided. Teachers stated that low achievers did not need the same knowledge as college-bound students. Therefore, teachers provided low achievers with knowledge that could be used in everyday life. Regarding knowledge, Mrs. Copucha stated,

> I try to structure the information so that it's complex enough to challenge,

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> but not overwhelm. For a lot of low achievers this class is exactly what they need. They won't attend college or universities, so what they need are daily skills.

The knowledge to which Mrs. Copucha referred as daily skills included learning to cope with family conflicts and child care. Low achievers and their teachers did not negate the value of having an education. Rather, they indicated that the knowledge should be useful in the job market. Mr. Howard realized the low achievers' dilemma and stated that he hoped to provide knowledge that low achievers needed to function in society. He responded,

> I don't think that they feel that they receive much. What I hope they receive is enough skills to interact in society when someone talks with them about someone, some place, or some political activity.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 10, the class was reading a short story about an ex-actor, who awoke one morning and discovered that his name was in the obituary section. The teacher sat at his desk and read his personal mail, as the students read the story out loud. The teacher concurrently engaged students in a discussion of their existence making a difference in someone's life.

> Teacher: Has it made a difference that any of you have lived?
>
> Student: No.
>
> Teacher: It has made a difference that Alan has lived. He has brought happiness

> to many lonely women's lives (The class laughed).
>
> Student: (Alan) I've saved animals and fed them with eye droppers.
>
> Teacher: So it makes a difference that you have lived.
>
> Teacher: It makes a difference that I'm a teacher. Well, maybe not much in literature, but in psychology. Literature isn't going to change society...It won't change your life. I don't think I'll give you much in here.

Mr. Floh demeaned the value of literature. In fact, what Mr. Floh reduced was what Newman's referred to as liberal knowledge--the value of which should be its possession. Liberal knowledge is not useful in a market economy. As such, the teacher's assumption was that students did not receive much from his literature class.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced the potential knowledge from liberal and useful to merely useful knowledge. There was no mention of liberal knowledge by either low achievers or their teachers.

Skills

The second element that students should receive from education is skills. Durkheim (1957) said that students should develop a set of skills which would enable them to pursue a life-long education. Newman (1951) stated that students should develop a philosophical habit. A philosophical habit means to enjoy learning for its own end. Students should derive enjoyment from their education. As such, possessing skills

would allow students to use their existing useful and liberal knowledge to expand their current skills. In addition, the skills which students received should have potential use for their daily lives and for their future occupation. These skills would give students the potential to expand knowledge through out their lives.

Goodlad (1979) also addressed skills. He stated that in a technical civilization, an individual's ability to participate in society is contingent upon mastering fundamental processes. He stated that language and mathematical literacy enable individuals to apply and use basic skills. Individuals who lack basic skills are limited in their ability to function effectively. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that skills should be useful to pursue both employment and life-long learning.

However, low achievers and their teachers acknowledged skills only for marketability. George stated that "At career center I develop skills that I'll use. But here at the high school, I don't develop any skill that would make me marketable."

Other respondents stated that they received useful skills in the senior life skills class. These skills included maintaining checking accounts, interviewing and budgeting. These skills were valuable because low achievers would use them. In addition, low achievers said that English and mathematics offered valuable skills. However, students stated

that they did not need to know mathematics beyond addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Doug replied that he did not need to know English beyond reading instructions. He said,

> I sure don't see how I'll use what I'm learning in general science. I want to be a police officer--how is knowledge of wave lengths going to help me? No, I don't think that beyond some basics from other classes like math and English that I get much. I guess for students who are going on to college, they need this stuff, but not me.

Evangelina said that the skills she received from her classes were social. She stated that she learns "how to work with students. We have to have good social skills, so the teacher, Mr. Jones, makes us work in groups."

Low achievers had specific career plans and they wanted their education to make them marketable for their chosen profession. Claudia added that she learns "to read, we get our basic math, but we don't really get much that's going to help me for a military career." Troy agreed that reading was a useful skill but that "other than reading I don't develop skills--I just put in my time." Alicia concurred that reading was a useful skill. She stated "I get reading skills. I guess that I don't get a lot out of general science that I'll use...I feel like--duh--what will I use this for?" Patricio added that mathematics was useful because,

> I can use what I learn in general math when I'm police officer. Like we're studying square centimeters, well I could use the calculations to determine the

> surface area of a set of tracks, to compare a set of track to a set of tires to see if they're the same.

Felicity replied that "in senior life skills we learn how to balance checkbooks, make investments...and we learned how to interview for jobs." Brad concurred that senior life skills provided "most of what I need to know once I graduate. We learn about checkbooks and balancing, interviews." Brenda agreed that "checkbooks and balancing...helped me a lot, because I want to be a retail store teller...I want to do all that stuff, so I need to know it."

Teachers shared the low achievers' perceptions regarding skills. Mr. Howard stated that "the skills that they receive are those that I feel that they're going to use for the rest of their lives." Mr. Jones, the general mathematics teacher, elaborated,

> ...what we're trying to work on right now is social skills--cooperative learning. I just started doing that last year in my math classes. We give them information on how to work together. We try to develop their social skills--how to get along with each other.

Mrs. Copucha stated that low achievers are knowledgeable with regard to daily life skills. As such, it is difficult to tell low achievers how to handle daily life situations for which they believe they are already prepared. She said,

> We do things that they can do right here in class. They learn to discuss issues that will confront them. It's hard to sit here and tell them, no that's wrong, you can't discipline a child that way, or you can't speak to a child that

> way. As long as they respond in a common sense way, their answers are correct.

Mrs. Copucha's statement was indicative of the whole process. Teachers reduced skills to a commodity that low achievers exchanged for an entry level job. By this reduction, Mrs. Copucha elevated the low achievers' status to her own level. As such, low achievers and their teachers had equal status.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During general mathematics, the teacher had the students engaged in an exercise creating polygons. He was using an overhead projector. Each student had a set of plastic figures (tangrams). The teacher gave the students a handout with various polygons. The assignment was to replicate these polygons using the tangrams. The teacher asked volunteers to use the overhead projector and demonstrate how to reconstruct each polygon.

> Teacher: Who's next? (Frank went back to the overhead projector).
>
> Terry: Frank's back.
>
> Candi: Frank, you're such a queer. (Frank completed #4 and smiled).
>
> Candi: Good job, Frank. (Candi and Terry copied down Frank's example).
>
> Teacher: Who wants to be next? (Patricio went back to the overhead projector. He completed #5, showed the teacher and turned off the overhead projector).
>
> Candi: Don't shut it off--I don't have it copied down, you queer! (Patricio turned the overhead projector back on).

> Candi: Right, when am I going to need this? Okay, I've got it--I'll walk into an interview and they'll say to me, build me a polygon before I hire you--NOT!!!

Candi used sarcasm, and the currently popular "NOT!!!" from the movie Wayne's World to express her view that knowing how to create polygons was not useful. Knowing how to create polygons is not useful because Candi will never use polygons to obtain a job. Low achievers desired only those skills which were useful as a commodity to make themselves marketable.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced skills from being useful in marketability and in life-long learning to pursuing skills only for an entry level job. Low achievers desired only useful or marketable skills. Low achievers and teachers did not distinguish knowledge from skill. There is no notion of low achievers using their skills to continue attaining useful and liberal knowledge after graduation.

Self-esteem

The third element that students should receive from education is self-esteem. Durkheim (1956) stated that students should develop self-esteem and become independent, autonomous human beings via their education. Students should free themselves from the being which existed as a very nearly tabula rasa at birth. As such, students should derive self-esteem via attaining control over the self. He continued that students should make a commitment to a greater cause than love

of self. The commitment to education should be a life-long development of the self.

Durkheim (1956) stated that education teaches students to contain their natural egoism--to subordinate themselves to higher ends. He continued that students should learn to submit their desires to the control of their will. Students should confine their desires within proper limits. He concluded that the child must exercise strong self-control. Self-esteem is the attitude of a will that accepts rules.

Rousseau (1967) had a similar conception of self-esteem. He stated that stated that "amour de soi (love of self) is always good and, in its purest state, quite spontaneous because it expresses the real essence of human existence. It is an absolute feeling or passion which serves as the source of all genuinely natural impulses and emotions" (p. 220). Rousseau concluded that all passions are good when the individual controls them. All passions are bad when they control the individual.

Goodlad (1979) added that self-esteem is the individual's self-concept. Self-esteem is a referent point for the student's activities. Individuals should develop personal goals and ambitions via their self-concept as a feedback mechanism. Goodlad added that no one has found a direct way to teach a positive self-concept. He concluded that schools can provide a positive environment. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that self-esteem is the autonomy

gained by controlling the self. Self-esteem cannot be taught--it must be intrinsically derived.

However, low achievers seek self-esteem via their teachers' attention and compliments. Brenda stated that "I have family living, that has a lot to do with it...If I'm down one time about a problem at home, we talk a lot about the family...it helps me out a lot to talk about it."

Doug derived self-esteem by being "able to help each other--it makes me feel good." Felicity stated that she received self-esteem "when my teachers tell me that I'm doing a good job." Andy agreed that self-esteem was derived when "teachers tell me that I'm doing well...that makes me feel good."

Teachers stated that low achievers received self-esteem via positive, non-punitive comments. Ms. Selenski responded,

> I think they get self-esteem from the poetry notebook we do in the last six weeks. Their books are displayed. When they get a good grade, they feel good. Also, I try to hone in on each student and say something personal about their poetry. Also we go through in class discussions and quizzes I try to give lots of positive comments. I tell them 'good job--nice answer'.

Mr. Floh added,

> ...group work is where they get the greatest amount of self-esteem. They'll be part of the group--the group receives the same grade for all in the group. Everyone gets an equal grade. Then, there's the social process of being in a group. They are part of a group--the group brings them in. If they were to have performed the activity alone, they

might not have performed as well as with the group if they even did the work at all.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions regarding self-esteem. During English 11, Ms. Selenski used a quiz to prompt an in-class discussion regarding Lord of the Flies.

Ms. Selenski: Okay, what I want you to do is to read the question. Then tell us if it's true or false. After you tell us true or false, tell us why. Let's begin with the last row to my left.

Student #2: Number 2. Piggy assures Ralph that he will eventually return to 'Where you came from'. True?

Ms. Selenski: Is that true, Farrel?

Student #2: No.

Ms. Selenski: Okay, then why is it false? What occurs is that the boys pass over the mountain, and there is a prophesy by Simon that Ralph will go home. Good answer.

Student #1: Good answer.

Student #3: Number 3. While the group is pig hunting, they decide to interrupt their activities with a hunt for the beast. True.

Ms. Selenski: Why is this one false, Brian?

Ms. Selenski: It's the other way around. Exactly. What were they hunting for? They were hunting for the beast. Good answer.

Student #1: Good answer, Brian.

Student #4: Number 4. Ralph daydreams about his comfortable childhood.

Ms. Selenski: Excuse me I can't hear.

Student #4: True.

Ms. Selenski: Good. This on page 104. I think his memories were very comfortable. He thinks about the days at home, eating Corn Flakes. I think that's very comfortable. Good answer.

Student #1: Good answer.

Low achievers obtained self-esteem when the teachers gave them attention. The observation illustrates why low achievers did not believe they received self-esteem via compliments. In each instance, the teacher gave the answer herself. She consistently directed the praise for her own good answer to students. The students were cognizant of this phenomenon. Students prodded each other each time the teacher told them "good answer."

Self-esteem was reduced from autonomy to dependence on teachers' attention. Low achievers sought self-esteem through extrinsic means. This phenomenon was the antithesis to the philosophers' reflections.

Extrinsic Reward

The fourth element that students should receive from education is extrinsic rewards. According to Newman (1951), students should receive extrinsic reward via a liberal education. Possessing a liberal education has as a reward its own end.

Goodlad (1979) stated that the extrinsic reward of education is its possession. Education should be extrinsically motivating. Goodlad added that this extrinsic motivation

includes developing a positive attitude toward learning. Goodlad stated that it should be considered normal for individuals to pursue education for their entire life. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that both liberal and useful education are their own extrinsic rewards.

However, low achievers did not see education as valuable for its own sake. Therefore, low achievers did not receive much extrinsic reward. Low achievers stated that grades and extra credit might possibly be considered a reward, but their grades were not good. Low achievers considered free time and teacher compliments as extrinsic rewards. Claudia stated "the grades I guess would be a reward, or if teachers would write back to us on assignments. That doesn't happen. You've seen what we do, we read and take quizzes." Frederick agreed that "The only external reward I see is maybe the grades. I guess if the grade is low it's not very rewarding."

Evangelina extended extrinsic reward to include "My parents telling me that I've done a nice job. I think it's rewarding to be in groups and help each other." Troy extended the extrinsic reward to having "a good news letter sent home by Mr. Floh. He wrote a letter that says I'm doing better." According to Alicia "going to class really isn't rewarding. I guess the most rewarding part of class is being with my friends."

Extrinsic rewards were contingent upon low achievers' compliance. Doug stated that "When we're good, he'll let us

talk. But when the kids are bad, we get extra work, or less time to work. We're allowed to talk at the end of class." Andy's response was that teachers "give us...extra credit." Felicity's answer encompassed many of the extrinsic rewards which have already been stated. She responded,

> ...my grades are a reward. But my grades aren't very good. I like it when they give me a compliment. Sometimes they give us free time to sit and talk with our friends or they give us time to work on our homework in class.

Teachers also believed that students' extrinsic rewards came from teachers' attention. Teachers noted that with 30 students, it was difficult to get around to each student. Mr. Jones added that the rewards were,

> Probably not the type of rewards that they would expect. I think we as teachers, try to develop rewards that we think are important to high achievers, and these low achievers are looking for something else. Most teachers are probably too structured to give them the rewards that they want, like individual attention.

Mr. Howard said that there was little reward to be had from classes. He stated "I'm not so sure sitting in classes bored is in any way rewarding. These kids can get good grades. In fact, I think they are perfectly capable of getting 4.0, but I can't give it--nothing for nothing." Mr. Hansen extended the extrinsic reward of education to,

> ...compliments, I try to say things to them like nice job, but with 30 kids in a room, it's hard to contact all of them, especially when you're trying to

> discipline some of them. You tend to let the low achievers slide.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 10, Mr. Floh stated,

> It makes a difference that I'm a teacher. Well, maybe not much in literature, but in psychology. Literature isn't going to change society...It won't change your life. I don't think I'll give you much in here.

Both liberal and useful education should be the extrinsic rewards which low achievers receive. However, Mr. Floh diminished the value of liberal education. His comment is indicative of low achievers' and their teachers' whole perspective of education. Low achievers and their teachers misinterpreted education's extrinsic reward as being those rewards which others could give.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced extrinsic rewards from possessing an education, liberal and useful, to receiving free time, little homework, teachers' compliments and a passing grade. Respondents did not acknowledge that possessing an education is a reward in itself. Low achievers and their teachers did not differentiate between extrinsic reward and intrinsic reward.

Intrinsic Reward

The fifth element that students should receive from education is intrinsic reward. According to Newman (1951) students should develop a sense of self-gratification from

education. The reward of education should become self-motivating--intrinsic. The internal reward coupled with education should instill a desire for more learning.

Durkheim (1956) added that the intrinsic reward of education is the freedom associated with becoming socialized. Students should commit themselves to a purpose higher in life than self-love. The intrinsic reward is having become a socialized being. Durkheim added that this intrinsic motivation is at the same time the foundation for students' self-esteem.

Goodlad (1979) stated that education is a process of the student becoming. He stated that the aim of education is to have this process flourish. The process takes place in the individual and the development has individual significance. Goodlad stated that education should have rich meaning and create desire to continue growing.

Goodlad stated that society is complex and not absolute. That society is not absolute, places demands on students. Our society is specialized. Therefore, there is no common body of information which all students can learn past basic skills and normative values. The only way to meet future demands is to develop people who assume responsibility for their needs, via developing intrinsic motivation. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that education instills a sense of intrinsic reward. Education becomes life-long, self-motivating and thus intrinsically rewarding.

However, low achievers did not seek an education which would contribute to their self-esteem and autonomy. Low achievers sought praise as a reward. Low achievers stated that classes were not rewarding. Doug stated that "teachers don't say much about papers. I'll show my work to my friends and they tell me good job...I don't get much of internal reward from classes." Frederick added that classes are merely tolerated. He stated that "It's just that I have to put in the time. Some teachers like Mr. Floh say, 'Good job'. But look at Mr. Howard, he gives out candy bars for getting good grades--I don't even like candy."

Alicia offered an interesting clarification. According to her, low achievers understand the cost and reward of education. She stated that "I don't think that my classes give a lot of internal reward. It's like I get out of it what I put into it. So, maybe the more effort I would put in the more reward I'd get."

Low achievers sought teachers' recognition as intrinsic reward. Betty stated that "The teachers tell you good job." Felicity agreed and added that "It makes me feel good when I do well and my teachers say something about it." Brad also stated that he receives intrinsic reward when "Mr. Jones...tells me I'm doing a good job."

Teachers stated that low achievers did not receive much intrinsic reward. Attending classes was the way to get a diploma--the price the low achievers had to pay in order to

graduate. Mr. Hansen stated "I don't think that they get a lot...most of them perceive the work as drudgery...there is no reward there. The attitude is that we've gotta do this." However, Ms. Selenski surmised that "a lot of the reward comes from the strokes I give to them as we have discussions. I tell them good job or good answer." Mr. Floh added that if low achievers,

> ...don't see a relationship between what they study and what they want to do, I guess it's hard to be internally motivated. If the internal motivation isn't there, there certainly won't be any internal reward.

Mrs. Copucha concluded that "The reward should be self-motivation. Unfortunately they don't seem to have much." Mr. Howard agreed that "the reward has to come from the student's interest and motivation. If they don't see value in what we're doing, they don't get much."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions regarding intrinsic reward. During government, the students completed an in-class quiz. The students exchanged and corrected each other's quizzes. The teacher recorded the grades. Mr. Howard referred to 100% on quizzes as refrigerator quizzes. As he called the students to retrieve their quiz he stated,

> Here's the deal--if you missed less than 21 or less, you aren't required to take it over. Remember, you have to get a 70, or I won't pass you. If you had one of those zero wrong refrigerator quizzes--free trip to the candy shop. (The teacher has an in-school candy shop).

> This morning we had a young lady in 2nd hour government get a 1 wrong quiz. She's taking over next week to refrigerate the quiz, and get her trip to the candy shop. I lost 8 candy bars this morning in 2nd hour to refrigerator quizzes.

Low achievers and their teachers misinterpreted intrinsic reward with the reward which others could provide.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced intrinsic rewards to the compliments derived from their relationships. Low achievers and their teachers did not acknowledge that the intrinsic reward should be the initiative to seek continued education.

Enjoyment

The sixth element that students should receive from education is enjoyment. According to Newman (1951), students should receive enjoyment from education as its own end. Students should desire more education which enables them to be independent thinkers.

Goodlad (1979) stated that enjoyment is needed within society because an individual will spend a large portion of his time working. He continued that an individual's satisfaction would be related to satisfaction with his job. Goodlad stated that to make an wise career decision, students need to know their aptitudes and interests relative to careers. Goodlad asserted that this included but is not limited to marketable skills and specialized knowledge. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that

enjoyment is to be derived through possessing an education and a suitable career.

However, students interpreted enjoyment as being entertained and avoiding boredom. Low achievers stated that teachers were not boring when they joked around and made the class fun. George responded "The only thing I like about classes are the people in them...it's that I like going to school to be with my friends...teachers joke around with us, that's fun." Alicia stated that there was enjoyment to be had when "We get to work in groups. I don't enjoy general science as much because we can't work in groups. That makes it boring." In fact, what Alicia did not add was that working in groups made classes social--not academic.

Andy also stated that he enjoyed classes "when we have free time...he gives us time to talk with my friends." Betty added that "the only fun I get is I can sit and talk anytime I want as long as I don't interrupt the teacher." Troy extended enjoyment to teachers allowing low achievers to "just talk and joke around all hour." Frederick enjoyed education that he could use. He stated that he received useful education in "the senior life skills class...The other classes give us a lot of material that I'm not going to use."

Teachers' and low achievers perceptions were parallel. Teachers also avoided boredom. Ms. Selenski stated "I try to make class fun. We do a lot of group work...I like to have fun in class." Mr. Floh also stated that "The enjoyment is

definitely social. They (low achievers) enjoy being with their friends and in their groups." Mr. Hansen explicitly extended enjoyment to entertainment. He responded,

> I use the theory with a lot of these kids that they want to be entertained. If you can show them a movie, or demonstrate something, they may not get an awful lot of learning out of it, but it keeps them quiet, and they appear to be learning something. So, the class is such that it's tolerable for everybody in there.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions regarding enjoyment. As the students entered the child development classroom, they talked to the teacher about having an easy day. Tammy was a low achiever. The researcher did not know the other two students.

> Sally: Can we walk down to the dairy freeze?
>
> Tammy: We already tried that deal--she can leave campus but we can't so she can't take us for ice cream.
>
> Alice: Can we do something fun today?
>
> Teacher: Okay, easy day. Today, I've brought you a video--<u>Adam</u>. It's about a little boy who gets kidnapped. Thursday, we'll finish seeing <u>Adam</u> (Title of the video). Then, on Friday, I'll bring in the video tape of my wedding.
>
> Tammy: Can we make cookies, please?
>
> Teacher: Yeah, and we'll make cookies. I'll bring everything but the chocolate chips--you have to bring the chocolate chips.
>
> Alice: Did you rent this?
>
> Teacher: No, it came from the ISD. (The teacher leaves the classroom carrying a

> stack of papers. The students sit and watch the video).

When the teacher returned, she combined correcting tests with watching the video. Low achievers and their teachers interpreted enjoyment as diversion and reduced education to obtaining diversion.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced enjoyment to being amused and pursuing social relationships. Low achievers and their teachers did not associate liberal or useful education with enjoyment.

Attention

The seventh element that students should receive from education is attention. Durkheim (1956) noted that education should develop in each individual all the perfection of which he is capable. He stated that making a person is the end of education. Durkheim continued that to educate is to socialize. Therefore, it is possible to individualize while socializing. He maintained that students should receive attention that would meet their needs.

Rousseau (1967) also believed that attention should be individualized. He stressed the importance of a progressive education. He stated that each stage must be adapted to the individual's developing needs and follow "the natural progress of the human heart" (p. 220).

Regarding attention, Goodlad (1979) said that humankind's most intriguing characteristic is that a single species can

vary. He noted that individuals have varying interests, ways of thinking and ways of responding. Goodlad stated that the good teachers have a goal. However, the goal is not that a particular objectives are attained. Rather, the individual should derive meaning from the lesson. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that students are individuals. Students should receive individual academic attention. Without this individual academic attention, the student will not develop all the perfection of which she or he is capable.

However, low achievers perceived attention was social--not academic. Low achievers did not desire academic attention and tuned out when bored. Brad stated that "In Algebra, Mr. Jones pays attention to us. He talks with us...Mr. Dobson pays attention to us...but he doesn't joke around too much." Evangelina extended the understanding to "any attention I get in class is because I ask for the attention." Claudia agreed and added that "The teacher only talks to me if I raise my hand and ask for help."

Alicia interpreted attention to being left alone except when she sought attention. She stated "I raise my hand if I want something. Other than that, the teachers leave me alone." Doug agreed with this point, stating "the teachers leave me alone. Mr. Hansen never wakes me up if I want to sleep...He helps when we ask for help." George concurred that teachers

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"let me do what I want to do. It's like a bargain, you don't bug me, I won't bug you."

Teachers stated that they left low achievers alone rather than deal with potential conflict. Teachers stated that low achievers wanted to be left alone. Regarding the attention received, Mr. Floh stated "they don't wish to read, so long as they'll be quiet, I'll allow them to just sight read along. So how much attention do they get? Hey, if they'll keep quiet, I'll let them become invisible."

Teachers used time at the end of the hour to talk with low achievers. Mrs. Copucha stated "I try to pay attention to each and every one of the students. I'll frequently take the last 10 minutes and talk with the students who don't participate and see what's happening in their lives."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions regarding attention. During child development, Tammy had her head on the desk. The teacher did not call on her.

At 2:16, Mrs. Copucha sat at Tammy's table and talked with her until 2:25. During this time, the other students completed their assignments and talked quietly. Tammy was seated across the room. Therefore, the researcher was unable to present the dialogue between Mrs. Copucha and Tammy. However, the researcher did confirm that the teacher used the end of class to consult students who did not participate. After class, the teacher approached the researcher and stated

that she was concerned that Tammy may have had problems at home. The attention low achievers received was reduced from academic attention, to attention for the low achievers' social and emotional needs.

Challenge

The eighth element that students should receive from education is challenge. Newman (1951) stated that teachers should challenge students to push beyond their basic useful and liberal knowledge and their current skills.

Goodlad (1979) added that through challenge, students would be motivated and learn to deal with new problems in original ways. Students should learn to be flexible and improve skills. He stated that students should be challenged to see any one object from many different perspectives. Through challenge, students should develop the ability to create new and meaningful things and to appreciate other individuals' creations. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that students should be challenged to expand their education and their mind. Expanding education should include the students' liberal and useful knowledge as well as their skills.

However, low achievers were not challenged. They stated that classes were boring and did not relate to what they needed to learn. Regarding challenge, Patricio stated "I really don't have a class that's a challenge. Mr. Jones's class is challenging only in that you have use proofs to

demonstrate something. Opinion doesn't mean anything." Tammy stated "I don't think the class is challenging--I could get an 'A' if I tried harder. If you want a good grade you just have to do your work and pay attention." Betty added that classes "are extremely easy. Do the minimum and you'll pass." Frederick responded that the reason classes were not challenging was that "teachers don't prepare for classes...they just use last year's lesson plans. The classes aren't hard--if you just attend, you'll pass."

Claudia stated "we read and take a true false quiz. That's not challenging--that's boring." Troy clarified that "When it's hard it's that I haven't really studied. He goes over everything that's gonna be on the test, then you study that material." Doug attributed the lack of challenge to "We learn usually about 5 words a day. What makes it challenging is that it's boring."

When teachers were asked about challenge, Mr. Jones stated that classes "can be challenging. I think we have to get away from the teaching just basic skills. They want the challenge of classes, but they want it on their terms." Mr. Howard extended challenge to students challenging themselves. He stated "I don't think that they feel challenged because they don't challenge themselves. They sit content with a 'C' instead of pushing themselves for an 'A'." Ms. Selenski stated that low achievers "dropped out cognitively. These kids don't

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care if the class is a challenge or not. They just want to make it through with as little pain as possible."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions regarding challenge. During government, the teacher set forth his expectations for effort on term papers.

> Teacher: Last issue to discuss today, is there will be vocabulary and map quizzes in here. You must receive at least a 70% on these or you do not graduate.
>
> Teacher: You have to know these things to be successful and to be able to get jobs. Make sure you study for them. I give you five chances to take these tests, you have to get at least a 70.
>
> Teacher: Okay, we're about at the end of the hour. You can have the rest of the hour to talk.

Mr. Howard established the minimum challenge to receive a passing grade. The teacher targeted expectations of world maps and political vocabulary at the minimal acceptable level to receive a passing grade--70 percent.

In addition, the teacher's statement that the students needed to "know these things to be successful and to be able to get jobs," legitimated the perception that minimal education is sufficient for marketability. Marketable is the minimum required to obtain an entry level job. As such, without at least 70 percent, students would not be marketable. The challenge was further reduced by allowing students to repeat the identical quiz five times.

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Low achievers and their teachers reduced the challenge of education to passing easy classes with minimal grades. Low achievers and their teachers did not acknowledge that students should be challenged to further expand their education and their minds.

Preparation for Life and Work

The ninth element that students should receive from education is preparation for life and work. Newman (1951) stated that there should be preparation for life and work. He stated that students receive this preparation via their attaining an education. The education which students receive should prepare them not only for work, but also should prepare them to enjoy a liberal education.

Durkheim (1956) stated that preparation for life and work should be the whole of education. Social preparedness is symbolized by graduation. The student has been transformed into a fully human being. As such, the student can work within society's confines. Durkheim said that education varies across social class and locale. The education of the city is not that of the country. The education of the middle class is not that of the workers. He stated that each occupation, is an area <<sui generis>> which requires particular knowledge. Education must prepare the student for the role that she or he will assume. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that education should prepare students for work, social life and life-long learning.

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However, low achievers and their teachers regarded preparation for life and work as making low achievers marketable. Low achievers stated that the preparation was social. George responded "I don't think the classes here at the high school prepare me for a job. The classes here help me in the sense that it teaches me to always be prepared. It's more social preparation, but not in so far as skills."

Low achievers wanted a marketable education. Alicia stated "Math and English prepare me for my future job because I'll use the knowledge that I'm gaining. We use math and reading every single day. Science--I don't think I'll ever use it on my job. Some people will use it, but not me." Felicity added that education should be immediately useful and that "in senior life skills we learn things that we can use in the future. In fact, I can use it right now. These are the things we need to know for life."

Tammy responded that what she learned did not prepare her for life and work because "I want to be an elementary school teacher...my classes don't prepare me...we learn about babies--I want to teach 1st through 5th grades." Frederick concurred and stated "I plan to go into the Army, but I don't think I've learned much here that will prepare me." Claudia also stated that her education does not prepare her "to go into the military...I have most of the skills that I already need...what we do isn't going to prepare me for work." Doug

also responded was that the education he received "doesn't help me for becoming a police officer."

There were low achievers who valued what they learned. Evangelina responded,

> I think the math and English classes definitely prepare me. I'll have to work with other people. I have to have my number skills--how to do calculations. Also, English helps me with developing reading skills. These are things that I'll use for the rest of my life.

Troy agreed that reading was valuable because "I want to be work in a body shop. It prepares me by teaching me to read instructions--like how to put on a certain part, or the specific way to spray a certain kind of paint." Brad added to this that "senior life skills helps me learn how to look for a job, how to act in interviews, how to keep my job, and use my money wisely." According to Patricio "general math is preparing me, but that's all. The other classes don't help me for criminal justice."

Mapi's perception was not that the education she received was valuable or not valuable. Mapi merely desired a high school diploma. Mapi stated that "when I graduate I have a diploma, and with a diploma I have a better chance of getting a job." She did not see value in the education. Rather, she found value in the diploma which would make her more marketable.

Teachers echoed the low achievers' perceptions. Ms. Selenski stated that "The writing is definitely preparing

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them. I don't think that they feel that the reading improves their skills in any way. I don't think these kids develop a love of learning."

Mrs. Copucha responded that "It's more that they're getting prepared for life. Responsibility has to be learned. That's number one." Mr. Howard added that class "prepares them for social life not merely work life." However, Mr. Hansen replied,

> If they go at the rate that most are going, I don't think that they're going to get an awful lot, because they're not really trying very hard, and that is going to show up when they apply for work. It's not a lack of ability, it's a lack of effort.

Preparation for life and work was reduced from the full development of the self to acquiring the minimum proficiency to attain a diploma and thus be marketable. Low achievers and their teachers did not acknowledge any other purpose for education.

Section Four: Summary

It is a norm that low achievers and their teachers are equals. It is also a norm that low achievers are free to assess their education in terms of marketability. Both low achievers and their teachers reduce education to useful knowledge and the minimum skills needed to be marketable. Neither low achievers nor their teachers acknowledge the worth of a full socialization via education, nor education's liberal aspects.

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Neither low achievers nor their teachers acknowledge that enjoyment is developing the self through serious and sustained academic pursuits. There was no notion that the end of education is be possessing liberal and useful knowledge as well as skills. Knowledge and skills would allow students to continue to develop their self into more fully human being throughout their lives.

Low achievers and their teachers reduce education to making students marketable. Low achievers do not perceive that they receive much marketability. Classes were not void of marketable education. Courses which have overtones for daily use were useful--marketable. Child care, financial planning, and checking, as well as basic language, reading and mathematics are marketable. Low achievers and their teachers described these skills as both necessary and sufficient to make one marketable.

Each side of the relationship blames the other side. Teachers say "That's all kids want." Students say "That's all teachers give." In terms of reciprocity, low achievers receive little marketability.

Section 5: What Teachers of Low achievers Give

The researcher will use section five to present what teachers give. According to Durkheim (1956), Newman (1951), Rousseau (1967) and Goodlad (1979) teachers should give the following elements to education: weekly planning, daily

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planning, correcting papers and tests, lectures, monitoring, individual help to students, and free time.

It will be argued that low achievers and their teachers reduce what teachers give to education to the lowest level. It will be argued that teachers do not give a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits. Teachers bargained away their natural ascendancy over students. Low achievers are their teachers' equals--they know as much as, or more than their teachers about what is needed for an entry level job. As such, teachers are unable to compel students to submit themselves to a greater than a minimal commitment to education. Lastly, it will be argued that this minimal commitment is beneficial to teachers as well as to the low achievers. Neither low achievers nor their teachers are subjected to excessive out of school costs, because what minimal commitment is required, is completed during classes.

Weekly Planning

The first element that teachers should give to education is weekly planning. According to Durkheim (1967), teachers should know their students' interests and needs. Teachers should complete sufficient planning to provide an education which is useful for daily life and employment. Goodlad (1979) added that teachers should develop and use a guiding framework of concepts, principles, and methods that appear to positively influence learning. The consistent theme across the referent

philosophers is that teachers should plan classes which challenge students.

However, teachers did little weekly planning. Teachers merely decided which worksheets to use for the upcoming week, and which pages to read. According to Frederick,

> I don't think the teachers plan. I mean look at Mr. Howard--his notes are old. You can look at the paper and see that he uses them from year to year. Not only that, he didn't even know the name of our Lt. Governor--and he's teaching Government!

Low achievers explained that teachers used worksheets rather than conduct experiments because experiments were too time consuming. According to Doug "I don't think he (Mr. Hansen) puts in a lot of planning. He's gotta cut down on the worksheets. But they're easy to make--easier than experiments." Evangelina responded that teachers "have to decide what worksheet to give us. They have to make copies. They have to plan a lecture. But, I don't think that it takes too much time." Claudia stated that teachers "don't plan much. They use the same thing over and over." Alicia responded "I can't see where Hansen does too much. I mean, he plans worksheets--then he has to make copies, but that's it."

Teachers affirmed the low achievers' perceptions. Teachers stated that their planning was minimal and included updating old material. Mrs. Copucha replied "I do all of my lesson plans on Thursday for the up coming week. Child

development doesn't take a great deal of planning time. All I have to do is update what I use." Mr. Floh commented,

> I don't do extra for the low achieving kids. I try to plan for activities that are open-ended activities, that if they try they can't fail. You, know, make a family tree, write an autobiography. They have to not do the assignments and tests to not make it through.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During government, Mr. Howard sat at his desk. He delivered a lecture about state government. Anne was a hard-working student. Gill was a trouble maker.

> Anne: Who is our Lt. Governor?
>
> Teacher: I don't know--it's a lady--in fact the past two have been ladies. Lately, we have more females electing to go into politics.
>
> Anne: I think if we had a female president we wouldn't have as many wars.
>
> Teacher: I think you're right--women are less aggressive than men.
>
> Gill: Not some of them that I've dated!
>
> Teacher: Okay. We aren't going to vote on this. And let's keep this to a relevant discussion.

The observation illustrated that the teacher did not update his notes from previous years. The teacher did not know the Lt. Governor's name.

Weekly lesson planning was reduced from creating classes which challenged students and met their individual needs, to designing activities which filled time.

Daily Planning

The second element that teachers should give to education is daily planning. Teachers should adjust their plans to meet the students' progress. According to Durkheim (1956) planning would have adjustments to fit the students' needs. Goodlad (1979) stated that teachers should develop weekly plans. Teachers need to adjust those plans to meet the students' individual needs. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that teachers should modify their plans to meet students' needs and daily progress or lack of progress.

However, low achievers stated that their teachers' daily planning involved deciding during class what to do each hour. Teachers did not do much daily lesson planning. As Doug stated "how hard can it be to photocopy worksheets? He's got it all mapped out. Lecture, worksheet, free time. It's kind of like the Army--go in, shut up, listen, work, relax."

Low achievers stated that teachers did their daily planning during class, including preparing or correcting papers and tests. According to Betty, teachers "do most of their planning right in class. While the students do homework in class, the teacher corrects papers and prepares what little they have to do." Evangelina stated teachers "get a conference period, but they grade papers and tests here in class as we do our work." Patricio added,

> ...on a daily basis, the students work harder than the teachers. The teacher prepares for most classes immediately before class--I mean we know

> it because we see it happen. I don't feel I owe these teacher too much.

Frederick stated,

> I don't think they plan even on a daily basis above setting a lecture or test. Even the tests are the same from year to year. When we took the unit test he told us not to write on these tests because he reuses them from year to year--that's not planning.

Troy concluded that "I don't think teachers have to do a lot. Like in English, we read novels. We read 'em in class--I don't think he has to plan at all."

Teachers concurred that they did little daily planning. Ms. Selenski described her daily lesson planning as "Almost none. I plan on Sunday evening in 2 to 4 hours. I can't do much during the week." Mr. Floh stating that his daily lesson planning amounted to "Nothing. Just here we go--keep up. You have to keep the kids at the top moving, or you're going to have trouble at the other end." Mr. Howard stated that daily planning "is where I get most of my planning...I don't always have a lot to do, just when quizzes come up." It is interesting to note that teachers prepared for quizzes in much the same way as low achievers--just before the quiz.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During child development, the students took a quiz. At 1:56, Mr. Floh entered the child development class, carrying his daughter's beauty pageant video. Mr. Floh handed Mrs. Copucha the video.

1:56, the students continued writing their quizzes.

2:00,
Teacher: Okay, we have a surprise today. Did you know about this tape, Anne? (The teacher is holding the tape of Anne Floh in a weekend beauty and talent contest. It is the same tape that Mr. Floh showed in English 10 this same day).

Anne: Who brought that?

Teacher: Your father.

2:02, the teacher approached the researcher.

Teacher: (To the researcher) This is our break. I didn't have this video in the lesson plan, but I want to see it--so do the kids, so we'll watch it.

2:25, the bell rings and the students leave.

The observation illustrates that teachers do little daily planning. Daily lesson planning was reduced from adjusting weekly plans to meet students' needs to deciding in class how to fill each day.

Correcting Papers and Tests

The third element that teachers should give to education is correcting papers and tests. Durkheim (1967) stated that teachers should provide non-punitive feedback to students. Teachers should give sufficient feedback to students that they understand their errors and are able to subsequently complete assignments correctly.

Goodlad (1979) wrote that good teachers do not overuse drill and workbooks. Teachers should involve students in

complex and compelling activities. Goodlad stated that students receive and strengthen their knowledge and skills through the teachers' attentive diagnoses. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that teachers should provide feedback so students gain better understanding.

However, teachers did not provide feedback through correcting papers and tests. Teachers collected assignments which they frequently did not return to students. The papers and tests that were returned to students had been exchanged and corrected during class by other students. According to Patricio,

> Teachers don't correct hardly anything. Most of the time, students correct each other's papers. Like these teachers have a planning period to correct papers. They (teachers) correct them in class when they correct them at all.

Troy added,

> The teachers collect a lot of papers, but we don't get 'em all back...when we get the papers back they just got marks on 'em. They don't usually write in the right answers or tell us why we got it wrong. Most of the assignments we don't never get back--I don't know what they do with 'em.

Teachers did not give much commitment to correcting papers and tests. Evangelina stated that teachers "do the correcting right in class as we do our work...They never give feedback in writing. All we ever get is a red line through the wrong answer."

Alicia stated that "of the about 15 papers we've turned in, we've gotten back about 2 or 3. Mr. Hansen corrects that in class. I don't think he ever takes his time to correct work. Hansen does it as we do our work or as we sit and talk." Frederick concluded that teachers "don't correct papers--the students do. We exchange the tests and papers. We correct them in class and he records the grade." Claudia added,

> The only thing the teacher corrects is the optional essay that only about five students answer. And, she corrects that as we have free time or movies. That's what I mean that the free time is good for the teacher too.

Mr. Howard stated that quizzes,

> ...are corrected in class. They put their name on the back of the person's quiz and we go at it. Most of the correcting that I have to do is the term papers, but again, I don't grade for spelling, structure, etc. I grade them on do they have a cover page, bibliography, etc.

Mr. Floh stated that his correcting amounted to "Very little. I don't have tons of time for this." The amount of correcting Ms. Selenski completed depended on how busy she was. She responded,

> I try not to correct any of the objective tests myself. I have two seniors who do the objective for me. I do the essay or short answer. If I'm really swamped, I'll tell the kids, 'I'm not grading anything but your ideas.' Or I'll say, 'Your grammar and punctuation will be included in this grade.' It depends on how much time I have.

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Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During government, Mr. Howard prepared the students to take a current news quiz. After the quiz, the students corrected each others' quizzes.

> Teacher: Okay, yesterday you received your questions from the substitute. Let's have people in their own seats--we have to take this quiz. Good. What I'm going to do, is read the question to you. I will not repeat the question during the quiz. After the quiz, I will return to ask if you missed any.
>
> 12:45,
> Teacher: Okay, everything off your desk tops. Number your paper 1 to 16--1 to 16.
>
> Teacher: Okay, number 1--Perot is willing to spend how many millions of dollars of his own money for a campaign if he runs as an independent candidate?
>
> Teacher: Number 2--This month marks the 80th anniversary of what historic event?
>
> Teacher: Number 3--What famous South African couple recently announced the end of their 34 year marriage?"
>
> Teacher: Number 4--Why can a horse run only once in the Kentucky Derby?
>
> Teacher: Number 5--Who is in charge of running the Bush/Quayle campaign for re-election?
>
> Teacher: Number 6--How much is the cash prize of winning the Pulitzer Prize?
>
> Teacher: Number 7--The space shuttle which was recently tested will replace which shuttle?
>
> Teacher: Number 8--The world's largest fungus was recently discovered. It is located on the borders of what two states?

Teacher: Number 9--Who was the multi-millionaire owner of the chain of stores who recently died?

Teacher: Number 10--A horse which wins the three major races including this weekend's upcoming Kentucky Derby is said to have won what?

Teacher: Number 11--What large corporation recently threatened to fire and replace approximately 13,000 union strikers?

Teacher: Number 12--The President's grandson recently threw out the first ball in this stadium.

Teacher: Number 13--The United kingdom and Argentina went to war 10 years ago over these islands?

Teacher: Number 14--Which country in Europe has the largest economy?

Teacher: Number 15--Presidential Candidate Brown has selected whom as his running mate?

Teacher: Number 16--The leader of the PLO this month narrowly escaped death in a plane crash in the dessert of what country?

Teacher: Okay, pass your papers to me. (The teacher passed the quizzes to the students.)

Teacher: Put your name on the back.

Teacher: Number 1, $100,000,000.00.

Teacher: Number 2, Titanic.

Teacher: Number 3, Mandela.

Teacher: Number 4, 3 year olds only.

Teacher: Number 5, Rudman.

Teacher: Number 6, $3,000.00.

Teacher: Number 7, Challenger.

Teacher: Number 8, Wisconsin/Michigan.

Teacher: Number 9, Sam Waldon.

Teacher: Number 10, Triple Crown.

Teacher: Number 11, Caterpillar.

Teacher: Number 12, New Orleans.

Teacher: Number 13, Falkland.

Teacher: Number 14, Germany.

Teacher: Number 15, Jesse Jackson.

Teacher: Number 16, Libya.

Teacher: Okay, pass your quizzes forward. If your want to see your quiz you can come up and see it, or I'll read your score when I call your name.

Teachers do not correct quizzes--students do. The students exchanged and corrected quizzes. Teachers reduced correcting papers and tests from an opportunity to give non-punitive feedback to a time-filler.

Lectures

The fourth element that teachers should give to education is lectures. According to Durkheim (1956), lectures should provide a base of knowledge that students need to complete assignments. Teachers should provide information which the textbook does not provide. Durkheim continued that both students and teachers should be actively involved. The referent philosopher's theme is that teachers should inspire students by supplementing textbook information.

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However, lectures were reiterations of textbook material. Teachers did not use lecture as an opportunity to provide information not contained in textbooks. Evangelina stated that they tell "us exactly what's in the textbook. And if we ask something that wasn't in their lecture plan, they get upset and tell us to just hold up and not rush things."

Lecture time was when the trouble makers caused problems, because the lectures were boring. Regarding lectures, Frederick stated that teachers "aren't usually well prepared--like Mr. Howard not knowing who the Lt. Governor is when he's a government teacher. It really don't bother me because I sleep through his lectures." Claudia added "It's pretty boring...they go off on some topic that doesn't have a thing to do with the lesson." Doug clarified why classes were boring. He stated that teachers,

> ...won't discuss anything we want...We get lecture, worksheet, free time. Lecture is when most people cause trouble, because the lectures are so boring. Ya, see--we know how the game is played. We listen to lecture. We do a worksheet. We're quiet while we do the worksheet. After we're done, we can talk. So the lecture holds us up. The faster we get the worksheet, the faster we get free time.

Patricio concluded "I don't know that it can be called lecture, I mean it's straight from the textbook...we get about 10 minutes of lecture then we get our worksheets."

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Ms. Selenski added an interesting thought when she discussed interest in lectures. The interest was her's--not the students'. She stated,

> I can talk 50 minutes non-stop, and I'm going--history is my major and first love. I know a great deal about it. English is different--some of it's real dry and it's not my first love.

Mrs. Copucha stated "I don't lecture every day, but if I do lecture, I stop after 20 minutes. As soon as I feel that I'm loosing them, I stop. I let them do their work, and I do something on my own."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During general science, Mr. Hansen delivered a lecture about tides. Patricio was a low achiever. When low achievers attempted to become actively involved, teachers discouraged them.

> Teacher: We will have a test over this material next Tuesday or Wednesday. Today we will discuss tides.
>
> Patricio: How do tides work?
>
> Teacher: The tide, as I have already pointed out, has to do with the moon. The water, as it is liquid, will respond to the moon's gravity. There is a tide on small inland lakes as well as on the oceans. On the inland lakes the tide is so small that it can't be measured.
>
> Patricio: Does that mean that the wave crests can't be measured?
>
> Teacher: No, now let's just hold up here.
>
> Patricio: If there is no moon, is there still a tide?

Teacher: Yes, well, sometimes it's different. Once a month there is a neap tide. That's when the sun and the moon are aligned. In this case the tide is stronger. This occurs once a month. Next I want to discuss the shape of the basin. If the basin is shallow, the tide will be stronger. If the basin is deep, the tide will be weaker.

Patricio: But, why does the water always move?

Teacher: Probably because of the current or the tide moving out. Sometimes it's the wind. Just slow down with your questions. Next, the shape of the shoreline. If the ocean floor is angled, not flat, the water will pile up. That's why the tide appears higher. Local storms and wind also effect tides. The winds prevent the water from rising as much. Now, if people want, they can purchase charts to tell them when the tides will arrive each day.

Patricio: If you have a 50 yard peninsula that's all sand, will the water cover it?

Teacher: It may. Especially if it's totally sand. No plant life would probably indicate that the area it under water a good deal of time. Okay, today, we're going to do a worksheet on wave heights. When we talk about fetch, we refer to how far the wind can blow without obstruction.

Patricio: Is it bigger on Lake Superior than on Center Lake?

Teacher: Yes, therefore, the waves on Lake Superior are larger than the waves on Center Lake. That's because there is less obstruction on Lake Superior, correct?

Patricio: Correct.

11:58,
Teacher: Okay, go through these. Remember the wave period is the time that it takes

> the wave crest to move one wave length. (The teacher passed out a worksheet.)
>
> 12:01, the teacher wrote the assignment on the chalkboard.
>
> Patricio: You're not giving us questions are you? Man, come on man, no.
>
> Teacher: Okay, let's get busy. Matthew, let's get busy.
>
> Patricio: Mr. Hansen, are you collecting these?
>
> Teacher: Yes. Do the questions on page 411 and 419.

The observation illustrates that when students asked questions regarding topics that interested them, teachers discouraged them. Teachers encouraged low achievers to not ask questions. Teachers preferred attenders not participants during lectures.

Lecture was reduced from supplying information not contained in the textbook to a time-filling activity. Teachers talked and discouraged low achievers from asking questions.

Monitoring

The fifth element that teachers should give to education is monitoring. According to Durkheim (1956) teachers should monitor the students' assignments and should assist students who need help. According to Goodlad (1979), the most productive methods combine interaction models with social system models. This includes providing reassurance to students, and redirecting students when the classroom activity is going off track. According to Goodlad "in order to plan and readjust the lessons, teachers would have to monitor the

students' on-going progress" (p. 92). The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that teachers should monitor and redirect students to assure maximum learning.

However, teachers monitored the classroom only to assure that no students cheated. Alicia stated that teachers "watch to see that you don't cheat, but most sit up at their desk and correct papers as you do your assignment." Low achievers clarified why teachers did not monitor to see who needed help. When low achievers completed assignments in class, teachers completed their own work. According to Tammy,

> ...when we get time to do things in class it's because she has things she has to do. We know why she gives us work time because we always see her sitting at her desk working or studying something, so we understand why we get free time, it's good for her too. Usually the teacher sits at the desk and does his or her own work.

Frederick stated that "The only monitoring they do is to make sure we don't cheat--they aren't monitoring to see who needs help." Claudia concurred that teachers "don't monitor too much. I see a lot of cheating. I think they don't want to catch the kids cheating, so they ignore it." Troy added that the teacher "sits at the desk and watches. They don't much walk around except to see that they're doin' somethin'." Patricio concluded that teachers "just watch to see that you're doing--doing anything."

Teachers stated that they did a minimal monitoring. Ms. Selenski stated that monitoring "depends on the students--some

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classes have to be watched closely, others hardly at all. Third hour would never stay on task." Mr. Floh's perception was that if the students were well-behaved he would "let them become invisible...They usually learn right from the start with me that things have to go a certain way." Mr. Howard stated that he monitored to assure "that they aren't cheating. For the most part they can be trusted. They can't afford to get caught cheating."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 11, Ms. Selenski had work which she needed to complete, so she gave the students free time. Claudia was a low achiever. The researcher did not know the other student's name.

> 10:01,
> Teacher: Alright, you have to be through reading chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4 by Monday. On Monday, I'll review these chapters and then give you a quiz over them.
>
> Student: Why don't you just let us chill today?
>
> Teacher: What does it mean to 'chill'?
>
> Student: Relax.
>
> Teacher: Okay, I don't care what you do, but I suggest you read. (The students sat and talked. The teacher sat at her desk and corrected papers).
>
> Teacher: You apparently aren't taking my advice to read. That's okay, I don't mind if you just sit and talk all hour today. But, I don't want to hear about booze, sex and drugs. You can talk about anything else that you want. (The teacher continued to work on papers).

> Student: Who mentioned drugs?
>
> Teacher: Nobody, yet.
>
> Student: Oh, okay. (The students continued talking. The teacher worked on the papers).
>
> 10:12, Claudia put her head down and slept briefly. When she awoke, she looked around, removed a pen and paper and began to write a letter.
>
> 10:28, The students sat and talked. Only Claudia read or studied. The teacher remained at her desk and corrected papers.
>
> 10:40, The teacher sat at her desk and worked on papers. The students sat and talked. Claudia wrote to her boyfriend.
>
> 10:50, The teacher went to the closet and took out her lunch. She carried her lunch out of the room.
>
> 10:51, The Skill Center students left for lunch.
>
> 10:54, The teacher returned to the classroom.

The observation illustrates that teachers do little monitoring. When students receive free time to relax or complete work, teachers too receive free time to relax or complete work. Teachers do not mind that the students sleep or talk all hour. However, there are topics which are off-limits. Monitoring becomes controlling students' behavioral standards.

Monitoring is reduced from the teacher assisting and redirecting students who have difficulty to being a behavioral controller.

Individual Help

The sixth element that teachers should give to education is individual help. According to Durkheim (1956) teachers should give individual assistance to assure each student's success. Goodlad (1979) added that the most intriguing human characteristic is that a single species can vary so much across individuals. Students vary in interests, thinking, and the ways they respond. According to Goodlad, teachers should recognize individual differences in learning rate and style. Teachers should employ various approaches to the same concepts or skills and assist individual students. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that teachers should assist individual students.

However, teachers left students alone unless they requested help. Teachers helped students only when a they raised a hand. Frederick stated that teachers "don't offer any help. If a student raises a hand in class, they'll help then, but like if you need after school help...most won't do it." Evangelina stated that when low achievers need help after school teachers "send us to the counselor to get connected with the Student Council tutors."

Tammy responded that teachers "don't offer to help students unless the student asks." Betty added that teachers "don't do much in way of helping. If I raise my hand, they'll help, but only when kids ask for help." Claudia perceived that "The teachers leave us alone unless we ask for help." Troy

concluded that "The teachers usually wait 'til someone raises a hand, then the teacher helps the student."

Mr. Howard stated "I help who ever wants help. At the last 5 to 8 minutes of class today, you saw Frederick come up for help as the others sat and talked." Ms. Selenski stated "I try to tutor one day per week. We also have a tutor program by Honor Society. The new student, Claudia, is going to be getting assistance two days per week for the next four weeks." Mrs. Copucha stated "I leave it up to them to request it." Mr. Floh added "They come up and ask. I try to be as helpful as I can."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During general science, Mr. Hansen completed the following lecture. As the low achievers completed their worksheet, the teacher stood at his desk. He left students alone until they requested assistance. Patricio was a low achiever. The researcher did not know Fran.

> Teacher: Okay, with that said, let's get on to our worksheet.
>
> Patricio: Worksheet?!
>
> Teacher: Oh--you poor things. This diagram shows what we just discussed.
>
> 12:05,
> Patricio: When is the worksheet due?
>
> Teacher: For now we'll say the end of the hour.
>
> Patricio: Do you want us to turn these in when we're done?

Teacher: There's more. Do the questions on pages 441 and 443.

12:14,
Fran: Mr. Hansen, will you help me?

Teacher: Yes. (Teacher helped Fran individually).

Fran: Is this the ox bow lake?

Teacher: Yes.

Fran: Thanks.

Alicia: Mr. Hansen, will you help me too?
(Mr. Hansen helped Alicia.)

The observation illustrates that teachers provide individual help to students only when students request help. Teachers reduced individual help from the teacher being an educational mentor to consultant only when low achievers requested help. Teachers did not monitor low achievers' individual progress.

Free Time

The seventh element that teachers should give to education is free time. According to Newman (1951), students and their teachers should meet and consult each other. They should challenge each other to strengthen their useful and liberal knowledge and their skills. The referent philosopher's theme is that teachers and students should discuss educational issues and each side challenge the other.

However, free time was given to engage in social pursuits, not academic pursuits. Low achievers received the last 10 to 20 minutes per class to talk. According to Troy,

> We usually get the last 15 minutes. We get a choice, they usually tell us we can read or talk, whatever we want. If the teacher wants to talk all hour, like if the teacher's tired or behind on work, then we get the whole hour to just sit and do whatever we want to do.

In reality the entire hour was be free time if the low achievers did not disturb the teacher. Claudia responded,

> There's a lot of free time--more than most students think. Really the whole hour can be free time--all you have to do is not cause trouble and you can do whatever you want. Ms. Selenski even says it in class. She told us, she doesn't care what we do as long as we don't disturb her. Really the whole hour can be free time.

Tammy stated "we get free time or study time because the teacher needs time to do stuff, or because the teacher wants free time to relax also." According to Evangelina "if the class is really good, the teacher will let us work on our work right then. As soon as we finish we can talk--that's free time." Doug agreed that "The faster we get through worksheets, the more free time we have." Alicia agreed and concluded,

> We get free time after we get our work done. That's the other reason we don't like the lectures. We like to get through lectures, get our worksheet and get it done. Once we get done we can talk.

Teachers stated that when low achievers completed their assignment, that they could sit and talk. However, low achievers talked all hour. Ms. Selenski stated "I give the last couple of minutes to talk if we're finished. They usually

get the last 5 to 10 minutes." Mr. Floh did not deny the existence of free time or free days. Rather, he stated,

> Sometimes we are covering a short story. Some can be completed in 25 minutes. If it's been a good 25 minutes, I may be done. I may give them the rest of the hour on their own. I don't call it free time, and never free day. That's dangerous language. I just tell them, okay, that's it. I'm done. And the they can sit and talk. They understand.

Mr. Howard's description was interesting. He referred to the phenomenon as a norm, which at times is violated. He stated,

> ...they get the last 5 to 8 minutes as free time. They never get free days, I just don't believe in that. Even the norm that they get 5 to 8 minutes of free time gets violated a lot! But they understand that I'm going to lecture until I'm done and then the hour is theirs to talk.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 10, two hard-working students had just given their oral book reports. Troy and Trent were low achievers. Tiffany was a hard-working student. When the second student completed his oral book report, the teacher stated,

> 9:27,
> Teacher: Okay, we're done.
>
> 9:37, Troy sat and talked to Trent. Two students reviewed <u>The Pearl</u> for the final examination.
>
> 9:42, Tiffany worked on her vocabulary words from her psychology class.
>
> 9:44, Mr. Andrade arrived at Mr. Floh's door. He signaled Mr. Floh to the hallway. Mr. Floh stood.

Teacher: Looks like Andrade is done. Come on Shaw, let's go mess around in the hall with Andrade. (The students sat and talked as Mr. Floh and the researcher stood in the hallway and talked to Mr. Andrade).

Andrade: What in the fuck are you doing here anyway, Shaw? These classes are as boring as hell!

Teacher: (Floh) Do you really get anything from these classes? Nothing ever happens. We always do the same old thing--nothing!

Teacher: (Floh) You ought to save your gas money, sit in your house up on campus and just write the same old thing for each day. This is how the kids are all year--then I'll call if things ever change. (Floh laughed).

Teacher: (Floh) I have to make a call, but I can't leave the kids alone.

Andrade: Let Shaw watch 'em for you.

Mr. Shaw: Yeah, I can watch them.

Teacher: Will you watch them? Thank you! I'll be back.

9:54, Mr. Floh returned. He knocked on Mr. Andrade's door. Both teachers stood in the hallway and talked. The students sat in the classroom and talked.

The observation illustrated that free time was mutually gratifying for both low achievers and their teachers. Low achievers used free time to talk with friends. As low achievers sat in the classroom and talked, teachers used free time to correct papers, to talk with students or to talk with other teachers. Free time was reduced from an opportunity to

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Section Five: Summary

Teachers do not give a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits. Teachers plan immediately before, or during classes when they plan at all. In fact, the only planning evidenced is for quizzes or tests. Planning quizzes or tests involves reusing last years' tests, or combining the past several weeks' handouts. Teachers do not attend to low achievers' individual differences, needs, or interests. The education that teachers give to low achievers does not provide much marketability.

Teachers bargain away their natural ascendancy over students. Low achievers are teachers' equals. Low achievers know as much as, or more than their teachers about market economy. As such, teachers are unable to compel students to submit themselves to a greater than present commitment. Minimal commitment is beneficial to teachers as well as to the low achievers. Neither low achievers nor their teachers are subjected to excessive out-of-school costs, because what minimal commitment is required, is completed during classes.

Section 6: What Low achievers Give

The researcher will use section six to present what low achievers give. According to Durkheim (1956), Newman (1951), Rousseau (1967) and Goodlad (1979) students should give the

following elements to education: study time, effort, compliance, attention, completed homework, reading, tests, writing, and participation.

It is a norm that low achievers are their teachers' equals. As their teachers' equals, low achievers are free to assess their education's marketability. Low achievers are also free to assess their teachers' commitment. It will be argued that low achievers are free to give effort equal to their teachers' effort and equal to their education's marketability.

Low achievers and their teachers reduce what low achievers give to education to passing classes. It will be argued that teachers' commitment and education's marketability are not sufficient to instill a desire for serious and sustained academic pursuits. It will be argued that low achievers give effort proportionate to the marketability they receive.

Study Time

The first element that students should give to education is study time. According to Newman (1951), students should develop a philosophical habit--a love of learning, and a desire to continue to learn. As such, students should desire to expand their useful and liberal knowledge and their skills.

With regard to studying, Durkheim (1956) added that a social being is not fully formed in the crude charter of man. He continued that the social being does not result through spontaneous development. Durkheim concluded that students are

not inclined to submit themselves to self-sacrificing (abnegation). The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that students do not possess an innate inclination to study. Through education, students should develop a sense of abnegation and commitment.

However, low achievers did not desire to expand their useful and liberal knowledge merely out of a love of learning. Study time was deduced to passing classes. Low achievers wanted to attain the credits needed to graduate. The motivation to study was receiving a good grade--a passing grade. Claudia stated that the extent of her studying was "enough to get by." When failing classes, low achievers increased their study time enough to pass. Evangelina said,

> I just study in class. If my grade is down I have to study more. Then I have to study in class and at home. I really don't study much at all. It's that the class is so easy. I know I can get all 'As.' But, it's not worth the extra effort. I study for my tests just before the test.

Classes were so easy that they did not necessitate study time outside school. Tammy responded that "It's not really necessary to study--just pay attention in class and you'll pass." Betty agreed and added that she studies "just before a test. The only thing I've studied all year has been the vocabulary and map quiz in Government." Frederick also confirmed that studying was not necessary and that "I haven't taken a book home in 18 weeks. The assignments are so easy that we can get them done right in class."

George also responded that "I study in class. I don't study at home. The teachers give us time at the end of the hour to talk or study if we want." Andy's response indicated that teachers encouraged low achievers to study only in school. He did not study at home because teachers "give us 10 or 15 minutes in class to look over our notes before the test." Patricio's response added an interesting clarification that "If the teacher is going to assign the work, they better give us the time in class to do the work. My after-school time is mine."

Teachers also indicated that low achievers studied very little, and usually only in class. Teachers provided the last 10 to 15 minutes for low achievers to study. However, low achievers often used the time to converse. According to Mr. Jones,

> I have cooperative learning in here. Some work all hour, some don't work at all. I don't expect any work to be done outside of class. I used to give homework, but it never got done. It was just a bad experience all the way 'round, so I try to achieve most of the study time in class.

Mrs. Copucha stated "I don't see evidence of studying other than immediately before the tests." Mr. Howard concurred replied,

> I truly doubt that they put in any time whatsoever outside of school. I try to get some involved in sports or other activities. They have jobs, friends, TV, telephone. They have a lot of things to distract them.

Low achievers' commitment to studying was minimal. Mrs Selenski stated that low achievers "don't study more than a couple of minutes just before the test--that's it." Mr. Hansen provided insight regarding why low achievers study only in class.

> I give them time at the end of the hour to read, study and or talk. If they don't finish it in class, they can finish it at home. In fact, I encourage them to do it in class to assure that it gets done. Otherwise it's going to come back just the way it was carried out--not done.

Teachers encouraged low achievers to study during class time to assure that the assignments are completed.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During government, the teacher entered the classroom and took attendance. The students studied for their pending quiz.

> 12:38
> Teacher: Everyone listen--watch Channel I or study. Other than that, I expect silence. (Channel I came on. Students studied with friends. Some students were just conversing instead of studying.)
>
> Teacher: Okay, we've got an option on this--we watch this or start the quiz right now. Which do we do?
>
> Student: (Many students responded in unison) Study. None of the students watched Channel I. Students talked quietly as they studied. At 12:42, the teacher sat at his desk. He had the quizzes in hand. He put the quizzes down and continued to watch Channel I. He was the only person watching Channel I.
>
> 12:51,

> Teacher: Okay, put everything away. You need to move around the classroom. Sandy, you sit here. You, put a space between yourselves.

The observation demonstrated that Mr. Howard accepted that students did not study at home. Mr. Howard honored the norm that students studied immediately before the quiz. The students violated the norm when they merely talked. The teacher enforced the norm when he presented an ultimatum--study or quiz.

By providing in-class study time, teachers exacerbated the problem that students did not study out-of-school. However, in-class study time was gratifying for teachers as well. Mr. Howard received time to sit and watch Channel I. In fact, he was the only person watching Channel I. That the teacher gave students study time in class legitimated the low expectation for out-of-class study. In-class study time permitted students to forego costs by allowing them to use school time, not personal time to complete their studies. However, study time was beneficial for teachers as well. The time which low achievers studied in class, reduced the time that the teacher had to instruct.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced study time from exercising a philosophical habit (studying for enjoyment) to studying enough during classes to pass. Respondents did not use study time to extend their useful and liberal knowledge, or to extend their skills.

Effort

The second element that students should give to education is effort. Newman (1951) wrote that students should have a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits. Through their effort, students should expand their useful and liberal knowledge as well as challenge and extend their skills.

Durkheim (1956) added that students should submit themselves to serious and prolonged academic effort. Durkheim continued that what the child received from his parents are very general faculties: some force of attention, a certain amount of perseverance (effort), sound judgement, and imagination. The common theme across the referent philosophers is that students should exert serious and sustained effort in classes. Serious and sustained effort would allow students to expand their education.

However, low achievers did not submit themselves to serious and sustained effort. Low achievers and their teachers acknowledged that the low achievers were capable of attaining higher grades. Low achievers had other opportunities to pursue. Opportunities, included seeing a boyfriend or girlfriend, working, watching TV, or hanging out. Low achievers admitted that their effort was minimal. According to Andy,

> I don't think I'm putting much effort in. I mean I'm putting in some. I could take my books home and study and do better, but I'm getting a decent grade. I'm getting some where in the range of 'C-'. I get an 'A' in gym. I'm getting a

> 'D+' in English. I try to make more study time, but sometimes I can't 'cause I have to work. I work about 20 to 25 hours per week as a pizza chef. This is my third pizza job.

Low achievers had career plans and they gave enough effort to pass. Low achievers equated passing classes with marketability. Tammy stated "I don't really have to put much in. Some people don't put in any effort and they flunk--they aren't going anywhere." Betty added that in order to pass classes "All you have to do is basically pay attention."

Low achievers admitted that their effort was minimal. However, Frederick presented an interesting comparison between himself and his teachers. He stated "I'm putting in as much as anyone else--not much. I guess I'm doing as much even as the teachers." Claudia also compared low achievers' effort to teachers' effort. She stated "I do about enough to get by--I think that most of the kids work as hard as the teachers--not much."

Low achievers studied during class in order to avoid out-of-school studying. Evangelina stated that she studied in class "so I don't have to take it home with me. Also we get to sit and talk after the assignments are done. The teachers usually give us at least 20 to 30 minutes to do our work." Low achievers gave enough effort to pass their classes. Troy concluded that his effort was enough to "pass the class. All I want is to pass." Doug realized that he "definitely could do better. But, I don't need science. Why should I put in the

effort for a 4.0. I just want to put in enough effort to get through." George reiterated this same point "I don't really work hard in class. I guess maybe I should work harder. The others work harder than I do. But all I want is to pass and graduate."

Mapi explained that she considered opportunity costs when deciding how much effort to give. She stated that she had opportunities which made studying outside-of-school prohibitive and therefore "I don't put much effort in classes. I don't like to take the time out to do it. I watch TV, go out with my boyfriend." Patricio extended effort to being contingent on the classes' usefulness.

> I don't put much into English because I don't get out of the class what I need for my life and career. I'm not going to waste my time with it. Now, in general math, I do all I can do in there--I volunteer a lot every day.

Low achievers' effort was also contingent upon interest. According to Ms. Selenski "If they like it or think it's useful, they work harder. If they don't like it they tune out." Mr. Hansen clarified that low achievers put forth effort "If it's something that they're interested in, they might put a little more effort into it. But they have to be definitely interested in it." Mr. Jones concluded that "The low achieving students give minimal effort. Most if anything they do is done in class."

Mr. Howard stated that the effort given by low achievers was so insignificant that low achievers "have to work harder

at not working than if they actually sat down and reviewed the questions Monday evening for the current news quiz...the questions are the same." Mr. Floh concurred. He said that low achievers "give the minimum to get by. By the time they're in the 10th grade, they're tired. They see the light at the end of the tunnel, and they do just enough to get out."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During child development, Mrs. Copucha completed attendance and collected the students' assignments.

> Teacher: Okay, you need a piece of paper. While your getting out a piece of paper, I need your articles.
>
> Teacher: Hank, where's your article.
>
> Hank: I didn't do it--it's only 10 less points. Who cares.
>
> 1:42,
> Teacher: Alright, listen up. I'm considering this a quiz. You have enough information to complete the quiz. There are no wrong answers as long as you answer reasonably.
>
> 1:46, the students whispered and compared their answers. Hank wrote his quiz answers very quickly and then sat and watched the others.
>
> 1:56, the students continued to write their quizzes.

The observation illustrated that low achievers exerted enough effort to pass. Hank indicated, the assignment was only worth 10 points. He was passing the class. Therefore, he opted to not complete the article. In fact, he opted to not take the

quiz seriously. As the teacher stated "There were no wrong answers." Any answer was correct so long as it was not written intentionally incorrect. Therefore, Hank took 4 minutes to complete the quiz that other students took 14 minutes to complete. Hank gave enough effort to obtain a passing grade. That Mrs. Copucha did not confront Hank regarding his actions indicated that indeed his behavior was acceptable under the classroom norms.

Low achievers reduced effort from expanding their useful and liberal knowledge and their skills to meeting the minimal standard to pass. The minimal standard did not even involve completing all work. Rather, minimal meant to give enough effort to pass the class with a decent grade--a passing grade. Low achievers and their teachers did not acknowledge that effort given to classes was beneficial to expand the self, or doing so to enjoy learning.

Compliance

The third element that students should give to education is compliance. Students should be compliant with classroom policies. Durkheim (1956) stated that in most instances, policies reflect what the community perceives to be socially acceptable. He wrote that the word education has sometimes been used "for a very broad sense to designate the totality of influences that nature and men are able to exercise on our intelligence or on our will" (p. 61).

Durkheim continued that authority is neither violent nor repressive. Authority consists entirely of moral ascendancy. Therefore, liberty and authority are not opposed. Durkheim stated that liberty is not to be free to do as one pleases. Rather, liberty is to be master of their self and to know how to act reasonably. Durkheim stated that when an individual receives chastisement, she or he suffers because the authority is legitimate. Durkheim concluded that true liberty is to become compliant.

Durkheim continued that compliance is "The sentiment of rule, of discipline, internal as well as external--it is society that has established it in our consciences" (p. 76). Thus students have to acquire power of control over their inclinations. Power of control over their self is a distinctive human trait. Durkheim added that the more developed the control, the more fully human we are. Durkheim concluded that, education is concerned with limiting the dangerous effects of a too-intense intellectual culture. He stated that "Even the qualities which appear to be spontaneously desirable, the individual seeks only when society invites him to, and he seeks them in the fashion that is prescribed for him" (p. 75).

According to Rousseau (1967), properly controlled freedom lets the human being exercise his power within the limits prescribed to him. Rousseau stated that the truly free man wishes to do no more than this. Well-regulated freedom thus

provides the only valid basis and aim of sound education. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that to become compliant is to become free. Students owe compliance to their self and to society. The end of compliance then is freedom.

However, low achievers and their teachers did not view compliance as an obligation to the self and to society. Rather, low achievers and their teachers viewed compliance as a way to receive free time, less homework, and a passing grade. Claudia stated,

> I go by the rules. I like my teachers. The rules aren't unreasonable. When I moved here the other kids told me what to expect and how to get through my classes. They said to sit and listen. If you don't want to listen, sleep, or do whatever you want, but don't cause trouble for the teacher and everything will be okay.

Regarding compliance, Betty stated "I go by the rules. If I don't like what's being taught, I sleep." Frederick extended compliance to a social obligation to his teachers. He responded "I never break the rules. I don't dislike my teachers--they're nice people. I just don't feel I get a lot here...I go by the rules, but I don't owe them much." Troy added to the understanding that he complied because he did not want to suffer the teachers' reprisals. He stated "If you cause trouble you get kicked out of class and sent to study hall. Then you get an 'E' in the class."

Felicity stated that she goes by the rules in order to receive free time. She stated that she complied because if class has "been really good, he'll let us goof around." Patricio elaborated that low achievers are sometimes jokingly non-compliant in order to hurry the teacher through the lecture. He stated,

> I go by the rules, whether I like the teacher or not. When the students push, sometimes it's just to pick on the teacher, or if they don't like the lecture. That happens in general science. Mr. Hansen knows we're quiet during worksheet time because we want to finish so we can sit and talk. If we push him, he'll stop lecturing, give us the worksheet and we're quiet.

Brenda clarified that compliance was well-understood under the classroom norms. She stated that low achievers knew "what time there is to joke around, what time there isn't. When he's up there talking, it's not time to joke around. Usually he gives us ten minutes at the end of the day to just relax."

Low achievers had transformed compliance into a game. According to Mr. Howard,

> These kids have the best social skills. They are courteous, cooperative. They don't break the classroom rules. They know from the first couple of weeks what to do, and they do it. Oh, I know some of them think that they can brownnose and still pass, but that's all a part of their game.

Low achievers were not compliant with regard to class assignments. Rather, low achievers were compliant only with regard to behavior. Mrs. Copucha stated that low achievers

"avoid conflict. They don't give many confrontations. These are the kids who say give me a 'D-' and pass me, that's all I want. They say that exactly, explicitly! I have several kids who say that."

According to Ms. Selenski "they (low achievers) comply. If they feel that they're cheated, they speak up. But that is very rare. These kids have remarkable social skill." Mr. Floh added that he gained low achievers' compliance because,

> The last thing they want to do is read out loud in class. If they're messing around in class, I'll wait the whole hour. I'll call on them and show no mercy. I do that early. I've seen the sweet pour off them. Very quickly they learn that I don't want to do this again. I think I'll do it the teacher's way.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 11, Ms. Selenski was busy with prom activities. There were papers on her desk which she needed to grade.

> 10:01, the bell sounded and the teacher entered the classroom. As the teacher took attendance, the students sat and talked.
>
> 10:04,
> Teacher: Will you quiet down please. Does anyone need to turn it their book? I want your money or your book tomorrow. (Claudia had her book Lord of the Flies.)
>
> 10:05,
> Teacher: Okay, remember you need to be reading chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4 for your quiz on Monday. Remember that the story is being narrated through the character Gene. (Claudia sat and read a letter from her boyfriend).

> Teacher: Okay, take out your books and read. You have this time to read the first four chapters for Monday's quiz.
>
> Student: (Jerry Stone) Can we take a nap?
>
> Teacher: Okay, if you're not going to read, just take a nap. I don't care--just don't bother anyone else.
>
> Student: (Jerry Stone) Bob, what ya' doing?
>
> Teacher: Jerry--I mean it, read or take a nap--just don't bother me.
>
> 10:24, the teacher sat at her desk and graded papers. The students sat and read their new novel, A Separate Peace. Claudia had her book open and read page 1. Daniel stood in the back of the classroom and painted a mural on an old chalkboard. He is the student who received extra credit for painting the prom backdrop. He now received extra credit for painting this mural.

The observation illustrated a mutually gratifying exchange between low achievers and their teacher. The exchange was free time for compliance. As the teacher stated the students could do whatever they wanted so long as they did not disturb her. The teacher received compliance from the students. The students received free time from the teacher. This exchange enabled Ms. Selenski to correct papers and log the grades. In addition, this exchange provided time for Daniel to earn extra credit by painting the teacher's bulletin board.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced compliance from an obligation to their self and society to a means of receiving study time, free time, less homework, extra credit, and a passing grade. Respondents did not acknowledge the

freedom associated with breaking away from the unsocialized being which, at birth, existed as a very nearly tabula rasa. Low achievers and their teachers did not associate compliance as a social obligation or the result of having become fully socialized human beings.

Attention

The fourth element that students should give to education is attention. According to Newman (1951), students should develop a sense of dedication to serious and sustained academic pursuits. Having a sense of abnegation, students should focus their energies, as Rousseau and Durkheim stated, to a greater cause than commitment to self. Students should give their attention to gain more knowledge and increase their skills. Durkheim (1956) added that students should be in a near hypnotic state of "exceptional passivity" (p. 85). By this statement, Durkheim meant that students should be as attuned to their teachers' instruction, as if they were hypnotised. Teachers should have a natural ascendancy due to their superior experience. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that students should exercise their abnegation. By being attentive, students should gain knowledge and skills. Students would thereby acknowledge their teachers' natural ascendancy over they.

However, low achievers did not acknowledge their teachers' natural ascendancy, and the teachers did not assert their natural ascendancy. The attention that low achievers

gave was not to attain more knowledge and skills. By paying marginal attention, low achievers avoided having to commit themselves to education outside of school, avoided more homework, attained free time and a passing grade.

Low achievers assessed what they received and gave an equal commitment to education. Low achievers stated that they gave as much as they received. According to Betty "I pay enough attention to pass the class. I don't feel I'm getting much and I don't feel I'm giving much. I guess I give as much as I get."

Regarding the attention which low achievers gave, Frederick stated "I really haven't paid attention all year and I'm passing all of my classes. Like in Government, just do the 16 page report paper and you'll pass. Mine is due today, so I wrote it last night." Evangelina also minimized the attention which she gave. She stated "I don't pay more attention than I have to. The class is so easy that we really don't need to pay attention. That's why the students get in trouble--they get bored."

Doug added "I pay enough attention to get through the worksheet." Alicia stated that she payed "a lot of attention. I don't want to take my assignment home with me, and I don't want extra work. Also, if I pay attention, I don't have to study as much." Andy also stated that "I pay as much as I can in class so I don't have to take it home." Low achievers gave attention when they were interested in the subject. Ms.

Selenski stated that attention depended "on their interest. If they're interested, they pay attention. If they're not interested, they drop out mentally." Mr. Floh added that low achievers "seem to pay attention. They don't want to have to work harder, and read out loud because of horsing around in class. They pay attention, or at least don't disturb the class too frequently."

Low achievers compared the attention that they gave to the attention which other students gave. Mr. Hansen believed that low achievers' comparisons caused problems. He stated that low achievers,

> ...are masterful at looking like they're paying attention, but nobody's really home. I lot of times I like to say oh well, let him alone and he won't disturb the class, but that too causes problems because the other students see Johnny doing nothing, and then they want the same thing. They compare themselves to each other, and I've had them then say to me, Well, you didn't say anything to so and so, why are you saying something to me.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 10, the students entered the classroom, and sat where they chose. At 9:00, the tardy bell sounded. Mr. Floh entered the classroom and sat at his desk. He removed a roster with student names and called attendance.

> Teacher: Anyone anticipate a change in their class schedule? (No students responded).

> Student: (Alan talking to the class) That means does any one plan to make a change.
>
> Teacher: Shut up Mullin! Turn around Mullin! You listen. I talk. You really don't want to start this way Mullin! (Alan turns around and sits quietly).
>
> Teacher: When I call your name, come up and get a book.

The norm which was violated illustrated that students are to pay attention while the teacher addressed the class. Alan should have been giving his attention. When Alan violated the norm, the teacher enforced the expectation.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced the attention from a commitment to a expand knowledge and skills to being attentive only while being entertained. Low achievers did not develop a sense of what Durkheim referred to as abnegation.

Homework

The fifth element that students should give to education is homework. According to Durkheim (1956), homework should be related to the students' daily lessons and serve both as reinforcement and review. The students should complete and submit all assignments in a timely manner.

Goodlad (1979) added that teachers should assign a variety of reinforcing material as homework, not simply workbook or drill book material. This approach would not teach less material. Rather, it would teach the same material via many approaches. Goodlad argued that this process increases the chance that all students grasp the material. The

consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that students should complete homework to reinforce and increase their knowledge and skills.

However, low achievers and their teachers perceived homework as routinely completing the textbook questions and completing worksheets. Mapi stated that "there are assignments after the readings. Read the section and answer the questions. Or we have worksheets." Evangelina concurred that homework was "worksheets in classes, or questions in the back of the chapters. They're easy." Claudia added that "the homework is done right in class."

Troy explained that assignments were easier when student groups worked together. He stated that "We just get a couple of questions at the end of each section--we can do those in class...I do them with my friends. We share the answers so we don't have to do all the questions." Alicia concurred and added that,

> ...we always do worksheets in General Science. We do a lot of worksheets in all the classes, but in other classes we get to do our assignments in groups and help each other. If we don't have worksheets, we do questions at the end of the chapters.

George stated that "I do just enough to get by, I mean like to pass the class." Betty clarified the reason that low achievers do not complete homework. She stated that the material was not worth studying--it was not useful. She replied "I guess I could go home and study each night and get

an 'A', but it's not worth learning all this stuff that isn't going to help me."

When teachers addressed this question, Mr. Floh stated that,

> If it's homework, it's usually questions from the back of the chapter. If they do the assignment, you get it. If they don't do it you don't get it. In my English 10 class, I have approximately 2/3 of the students who do not do their homework, and they get a zero.

Mr. Floh demonstrated that reciprocity exists in classes. He stated that when low achievers gave no homework, they received no grade--a zero. Mrs. Copucha stated that low achievers "do all work in class because they simply will not do it at home." Mr. Howard concurred that low achievers,

> ...don't do homework, that's their problem. I give mostly quizzes, and every 2 weeks a unit test. The closest they come to homework is the term paper that they write. But that is not a formal term paper in essay format. I expect them to take 16 pages of research notes and use the notes to defend their debate.

Ms. Selenski concluded that low achievers "don't do homework. They submit homework, but they copy or cheat." Mr. Hansen added that "the homework that they do is worksheet type material. It's busy work...And I give them time in class."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During child development, Mrs. Copucha collected a worksheet which she assigned.

Teacher: Hank, turn in your worksheet.

Hank: I didn't do it.

Teacher: What do you mean you didn't do it?

Hank: I didn't need to do it--I'm passing.

Teacher: Betty, I don't mind if you have your pictures out as long as you're working.

Teacher: Where's your book?

Betty: Home.

Teacher: Come here--you can use one of mine.

Betty: I also need to borrow a pencil and paper.

Teacher: Betty--no more bargains! You know what I expect to receive if you want a passing grade. Meet the expectation or fail. (The teacher told the researcher after class that she had made a bargain with Betty that if she came to class prepared every day, completed all homework, and gave effort that the teacher would mark her eligible for track).

The observation provided two insights regarding homework. First, low achievers were free to complete just enough homework to pass classes. Second low achievers arranged bargains with teachers in order to maintain sports eligibility. When Betty violated the norms, the teacher enforced it. The fact that the teacher did not admonish Hank for not completing his assignment legitimated that doing the minimum to pass was acceptable.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced homework from increasing students' educational base to meeting the minimal standards to pass.

Reading

The sixth element that students should give to education is reading. As Newman (1951) indicated, students should develop a love of learning. They should pursue readings both in class and outside of class. The reading material should be challenging and extend their useful and liberal knowledge and their skills. The referent philosopher's theme is that students should complete readings to challenge and extend their knowledge and skills.

However, low achievers did not complete readings unless the assignments were interesting and could be completed during class. Low achievers admitted that they pursued activities other than reading.

Evangelina stated "We read in class and almost never as homework." Alicia agreed. She stated that "The teacher assigns us pages to read and we do it." George added that "We read a loud in class, then do the questions." Tammy stated that the extent of reading that low achievers did in class was "articles from the teacher that go along with the worksheet. We read it and do the worksheet." Troy replied that he reads "most of the material. If I'm tired or not interested, I'll just look it over and do the questions." However, Patricio explained that because "The teacher lectures direct from the

textbook--you don't have to read. That or they read it out loud in class. I don't read at all." Frederick concurred and added that "that's why I don't do the reading."

Students did not read unless the material were read in class. According to Mr. Hansen "The readings are right on target for grade level, and we don't read much. Almost everything they read, is read in class. If I don't read it with them in class, they won't read the material." Mrs. Copucha responded that low achievers do not read. She stated that low achievers are "masterful at skimming. They can find the answers incredibly quick." Mr. Jones concluded that "Most of the reading is done in class. I don't assign out-of-class reading, and I don't make them read out loud."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 11, Ms. Selenski started reading a story with the students.

> 10:00,
> Teacher: Okay, open your books to page 156. The assignment is to read the story. I want to begin it with you, and then you can finish it on your own. (Teacher reads the first paragraph).
>
> Teacher: What does it mean to score a tree? Doesn't it mean to mark?
>
> Student: To mark.
>
> Teacher: Good, good answer.
>
> Teacher: What is a foible? It is a human characteristic (mannerism).
>
> 10:05,

> Teacher: Okay, read this to yourselves. The teacher sat at her desk and looked through papers.
>
> 10:30, the students continued to read. The teacher continued to do paperwork.
>
> 10:37,
> Teacher: I want you to read this story for tomorrow. We'll have a quiz after we discuss it. Right now I want you to write in your journals. Take the topic "What laws I would break if nobody ever found out."
>
> 10:40, The students wrote in their journals. The teacher sat at her desk and looked through a book.
>
> 10:45, The students stopped writing. They sat and talked.
>
> 10:55, The bell rang and the students left.

The observation illustrated that low achievers completed their reading during class. Their teachers completed whatever they needed to complete during class. Therefore, in-class reading time benefitted both low achievers and their teachers. In-class reading allowed the participants to forego out-of-school costs.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced reading from an opportunity to expand students' knowledge and increase skills to an activity which had to be completed during class time.

Tests

The seventh element that students should give to education is tests. According to Durkheim (1956), tests should challenge students to use a variety of skills. As such, tests

should be a mixture of types, including essay, true or false, multiple choice, completion, and analogies.

Goodlad (1979) stated that tests should not inhibit students demonstrating all they know. He continued that tests should not limit the possibility to give new answers. Goodlad likened multiple-choice tests to the industrial screening processes--the candidates select the best possible answer. Goodlad stated that test questions should require open-ended answers. This allows students to expand the pool of responses perceived to be correct. The consistent theme across the referent philosophers is that tests should be challenging and encourage creativity.

However, tests consisted of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, but usually no essay questions. Patricio responded,

> We take a test about every week and a half. We have different kinds of tests. Like in English the tests are harder, fill-in-the-blank. We don't usually get essay tests. In Senior Life Skills we get true and false or matching.

Evangelina explained that the tests are "fill-in-the-blank." She continued that "for the test we're taking today in general science, I still haven't studied. I'll study 5 minutes before the test." Doug did not study for tests because the tests are "just like the worksheets...I pass them and all I study is what I do in class."

Patricio stated that "The tests are a joke--if you study at all they're easy. Most of them are true and false. They're

just another worksheet." Betty also concluded that "The tests are a joke--they're almost all true/false, or multiple choice." Frederick added that "They're pretty simple. I can't understand how anyone can fail the tests or the class for that matter."

According to George, the tests are easy because,

> ...the teacher goes over the exact questions that are going to be on the tests, but mostly we get quizzes. In English, the tests are hard, because a lot of the questions are fill-in-the-blank, or essay. They're a lot harder than true/false, or multiple choice. If you don't read the material, you don't know the answer, but with multiple choice or true false, the answer is still there, and you can at least still guess.

Teachers stated that tests involved merely memorizing the answers and questions. Teachers provided review sheets with the exact questions that were on tests. Then teachers allowed 15 minutes before the tests for students to review. Mr. Hansen described the tests that low achievers took as,

> ...multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank. They are not overly taxing. I give them review sheets that have all of the answers. The material they receive to review, is the test. If they know that, they can get an 'A' on the test.

Mrs. Copucha stated that tests are "very short answer questions. They're about a paragraph, but remember these are common sense answers." Mr. Howard added that low achievers,

> ...should get a refrigerator test every time (100%). They know the questions ahead of time. They take a vocabulary and world map test 5 times.

> That is they have 5 times to pass it...If they can't pass that with a 70%, I refuse to pass them...They also take a current news quiz every week. They should get an 'A' because they have the questions the day before.

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During government, the students entered the classroom and began to study for their pending test. George and Frederick were both low achievers.

> 12:35,
> George: Big test today.
>
> Frederick: Yeah, I studied about 10 minutes last night.
>
> George: I'll study when I sit down. (George sat and studied).
>
> 12:36, The students continued to enter. They sat and began to study. Most of the students talked about the test.
>
> George: What's the vocab?
>
> Frederick: Here, quiz me. Give me the words the way he does--don't change them.
>
> George: Okay, gerrymander'
>
> Frederick: I said don't change the words. You're changing them. He didn't give us that. It's supposed to be gerrymandering. Stop dicking around. Give me the words the way he does.
>
> George: GerrymanderING! (Stressing "ing".)
>
> Frederick: Okay, that's better--that's when you mess around with the jury. (Gerrymandering means to manipulate unfairly so as to gain advantage).
>
> George: Jurisdiction.

Frederick: That's when you got control over something.

In fact, the low achievers simply memorized the questions and answers which their teachers gave to them on the day prior to the test. The teachers did not change questions or answers between what was given as a study format and what was tested. This was reaffirmed by the Frederick's indignation when George changed the words as they studied for the government quiz.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced the tests from an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to orchestrate all of their skills, knowledge and cognitive ability, to memorizing or guessing the most likely correct response.

Writing

The eighth element that students should give to education is writing. According to Goodlad (1979), students should receive sufficient writing assignments to hone their writing skills. He stated that the writing should be related to the assignments. The referent philosopher's theme is that students should receive and complete writing to reinforce their knowledge and skills.

However, low achievers rarely received writing assignments. Formal writing was reserved for term papers in government and book reports in English classes. However, book reports were limited to one or two pages. These book reports were in a fill-in-the-blank format. The students read the book

and filled in the worksheet. Regarding writing, Andy stated that,

> We do most of our writing in English. We have to write a book report every six weeks. The teacher doesn't really say how long it has to be. She has this form that we fill out, you just like answer the questions. It's not like you have to make it up yourself.

Betty stated "We don't have to write much, except for government class. Most of the writing I do the day before it's due." Frederick concurred and added "We have to write reports for government like mine is due today, so I wrote it last night. It had to be 16 pages, but we don't have to do quotations or footnotes." Brenda added that she considered taking notes as writing. She said,

> I write a lot because I take a lot of notes. We have a writing assignment every day. There are questions in the book that we have to do. They can be answered as short answers but he will not accept short answers. He wants it all written out, explained all the way. Then we have glossary words--usually seven.

Patricio added an interesting concern. He conveyed,

> We almost never have to write. My sister comes home from college and tells me I better practice my writing 'cause I'm going to have to write a lot in college--that scares me 'cause these teachers aren't preparing us for college.

Doug provided insight regarding why teachers do not have students write more frequently. He stated that "the teacher doesn't want to grade it. It's easier for him to grade worksheets and worksheet type tests."

Mr. Floh stated that writing was a skill that low achievers will not use. He stated that technology was such that writing was becoming unnecessary. Mr. Floh described the writing completed as,

> Very little. Probably because teachers don't want to spend the time to correct it. It's a skill that they don't use. They use the phone. They use the TV. They use tape recorders and calculators. Computers. English and writing is going to become another Roman numeral--obsolete.

Mr. Howard related,

> The only writing typically that they do is the notes that they take for debate, or classroom notes. Their writing isn't good. When I grade the term paper, I grade it for essay structure only--does it have a cover page, does it have an outline, does it have a bibliography? If is does, they get an 'A', if it doesn't they lose 1 letter grade 'A' to 'B', etc., for each thing that they missed. I look purely at structure.

Ms. Selenski added that the low achievers' written work has "No sentence structure, few capitol letters, few periods, no depth, no critical thinking--just rudimentary." Mr. Hansen stated that low achievers "don't do much writing, and the writing they do complete is more like 'cause instead of because...They shorten all the words, and have a lot of mistakes in their writing."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During government, Mr. Howard was delivering a lecture.

Teacher: Next, term papers. During the first and second marking periods you will write term papers. In the third marking period you will do a debate.

Teacher: You start out with an 'A'. You take it down by not doing what you are supposed to do. First thing to do, put a title page. The title page should have the name of the paper, the date, my name, the class name, your name.

Teacher: If you are sick or in the hospital, you better have someone bring the paper in to me. No excuses other than if you're dead. If you're out of town, you can mail it to me, or give to me early. No title page you lose one letter grade.

Teacher: The body of the paper has to be 6 pages typed double space or 12 pages in writing. Remember that this is the minimum. I used to give what it took to pass the class with an 'A', but then people failed because they didn't do enough to pass. So, now I give the minimum.

Teacher: Also, provide an outline. If you don't you lose one letter grade. I also want your first draft. I also want your second draft. Last I want your note cards. If I don't get these you lose a letter grade. We'll select topics next week.

Writing involved the minimal effort necessary to pass. Mr. Howard allowed minimum effort. Mr. Howard's statement legitimated that students were free to pursue the minimum and would be assured a passing grade. All students received an "A" for submitting a complete research paper. Low achievers lost points only for not providing the required sections, including a title page, bibliography, etc.

Low achievers and their teachers reduced writing from a challenging cognitive process in which low achievers could demonstrate their full ability, to routinized set of forms such as fill-in-the-blank book reports.

Participation

The ninth element that students should give to education is participation. Students should actively participate in lecture and discussion. Durkheim (1956) stated in education, there is a generation of adults and generation of youth. The two generations interact, and an influence is exercised by the first on the second. Durkheim stated that both teachers and students should be actively engaged in the endeavor. The referent philosopher's theme is that students should be eager and willful participants.

However, students indicated that they were not called on unless they volunteered. Low achievers could not tune out completely. They had to make the teacher think that they were giving some effort. Evangelina remarked,

> The teachers like you to participate. It's like we participate just enough to make the teacher think that you're trying. If you don't they might mark you down. It depends a lot on what they're doing--like lecture is boring, so I just listen, but if it's group work then I'll participate a lot.

Low achievers stated that they put forth enough effort to make their teachers think that they were trying. Betty stated "I do just enough to pass. I answer the questions that the

teacher asks me, and that's it." Doug explained why low achievers had to give at least minimal participation. He stated that "I participate just enough to make the teacher think I'm trying." Low achievers did not pass when they refused to participate.

Troy clarified that low achievers were free to participate or tune out whenever they choose to do so. Troy stated "I participate when I want to. Usually I just sit there and watch what's happenin'. I guess I really don't do no more than I have to do to pass the class." Felicity also confirmed that low achievers participate only when they chose to do so. She stated that teachers "call on me if I raise my hand, but if I don't they leave me alone." George also responded "I really don't participate and the teacher doesn't make me...the teacher knows I don't like to get up in front of the class, and so she leaves me alone."

Patricio, provided the insight that teachers discourage low achievers' participation.

> I participate a lot in general math because I enjoy it. In English I don't participate unless I'm called on. In general science, I participate sometimes. But, you see in Mr. Hansen's class he discourages students from participating too much because if he's talking about waves crests and you want to ask a question about wave length, he'll bite you head off. That's not good. It discourages people from participating much.

Teachers' perceptions parallelled low achievers' perceptions. Mr. Howard stated low achievers,

> ...participate when they want to. They don't cause problems. If I let them, they'll just sit there and not do a whole heck of a lot. They take notes, they answer some questions, but not more than they have to do. It's like they know what the minimum is--I establish my minimum expectations in the first few weeks of school, and we go by it.

Ms. Selenski added that low achievers "don't participate any more than they have to. They will answer a question without caring if it's right or wrong--just show effort." Mr. Floh said that low achievers "give just enough to get by. But I guess that enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm. In 10th grade English, we're all going though the process." According to Mr. Jones "Their participation is the only thing saving a lot of these kids. If I tell them that part of their grade is participation, then they participate; it helps to pull up their grade to passing."

Observations were consistent with the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions. During English 10, Mr. Floh arrived late to class. Troy was a low achiever. Timm, Daniel, and Marcela were hard-working students.

> 9:05, The bell rang. The students stood in the hall waiting for the teacher.
>
> 9:10, The teacher arrived and took attendance.
>
> 9:12, Marcela entered Mr. Floh's classroom to say good-bye and to give him an invitation to her open house.
>
> Marcela: I didn't forget you Mr. Shaw--I hope you come to it. (Marcela handed the researcher an invitation).

9:14,
Teacher: Book reports...who wants some extra credit? (Troy had his head down.)

Teacher: Troy...Troy...I hope this won't disturb you.

Troy: Huh?

Teacher: Would you like to do a report for extra credit?

Troy: No.

Teacher: Do you mind if we do reports?

Troy: No.

Teacher: We don't want to keep you awake, Troy.

Teacher: Daniel...<u>The Outsider</u>.

Daniel: Okay, these people like the boy had two older brothers who had to quit school to take care of them, so they could go to school. Anyway his parents were murdered. Or they died. They got hit by a train or a car, and anyway. These kids get attacked, some people try to murder or drown them. So, they run away to this old church. The one guy always said he'd like to pull a gun on somebody just to bluff when somebody was going to beat him up. When he pulled out the gun, the cop shot him. That's how it ended. It was a pretty good story.

Teacher: Thank you. (Teacher wrote 'A' on the book report form).

Teacher: Timm Floh...<u>Evil Come Evil Go</u>.

Teacher: Where's it take place?

Timm: Um, in Hollywood. It's about a real famous singer.

Teacher: What's his name?

Timm: I don't know. He's got a little kid named Andy. He's got a wife too. Everyone

thinks they're happy, then they start talking about a divorce, and she's gonna take all his money. And, ah--then they're in the divorce and someone steals their baby. On, and, ah, the nanny gets killed. And so this guy ends up killin' himself. So, the police aren't doing much to help find Andy. They think it's someone who knows the parents.

Teacher: Where did Andy wait for the train?

Teacher: You don't know?

Timm: Where'd he go?

Teacher: Okay, that's good enough, have a seat. (Teacher wrote 'A' on the book report worksheet).

9:27,
Teacher: Okay, we're done. (The teacher sat at his desk and relaxed as the students talked.)

9:43,
Teacher: (To the researcher) Look at him! (Troy) He's flunking right now and he refuses to do a book report. I've offered him at least twice to do a report--it's not like the reports are demanding. Now watch, he'll be right in here begging and groveling for a passing grade--he's hoping social promotion is still alive and well and that I'll pass him. I can't pass him--he hasn't even tried. If he'd at least have made an effort.

In fact, Troy did not pass Mr. Floh's English 10 class. He did not meet the teachers' expectation for minimal participation. Realistically, the students who delivered presentations did little more than Troy, who did nothing. Herein lies the difference--the hard-working student participated--Troy did not. The grade difference was an "A" versus an "E".

Low achievers and their teachers reduced participation from willful participant who was eager to engage in learning to attender who participated only enough to pass. In fact, participation was reduced to attendance and minimal compliance.

Section Six: Summary

Low achievers weigh what they give against the marketability they receive. Low achievers give as much as they receive. Reciprocity exists in these classrooms. Low achievers do not receive much marketability. Therefore, they do not give a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits. This was not to say that low achievers give nothing. Rather, low achievers give what they believe is equal to their marketability. Low achievers give more in classes when they believe the education is useful in a market economy. As per the concept of reciprocity, low achievers give equal to what they receive.

Chapter Four Summary

In this chapter the researcher argued that low achievers and their teachers established a set of mutually gratifying norms. This process began on the first day of classes. Teachers reduce their classes to making students marketable. Teacher elevate low achievers' status to a professional level. Teachers subordinate their knowledge to that of low achievers.

Low achievers are their teachers' equals, and as such are free to assess what teachers offer to them in marketable education. The low achievers assess what other student groups receive and give. Low achievers also assess what their teachers give to serious and sustained academic pursuits. Because low achievers received little marketability, because teachers gave little commitment to academic pursuits, and because low achievers had opportunities which gave them more gratification than academic pursuits, low achievers gave what they felt was an equal balance to what they received--just enough to pass.

Conclusion

As humankind does not naturally and willingly submit itself to deprivation and serious, sustained academic endeavor, it is not surprising that low achievers and their teachers strike bargains regarding the commitment which side must give to education.

Reciprocity exits in classrooms in the form of a bargain between low achievers and their teachers. The bargain assured that individuals on each side receive a mutually gratifying contract. Low achievers received little marketability. Therefore, school was boring. Because low achievers received little marketability, they gave just enough effort to pass.

Because low achievers and teachers were equals, teachers realized the potential for classroom disruptions. Low achievers and their teachers established bargains. Low

achievers received easy assignments, free time, no homework, little lecture time, and a passing grade. The low achievers reciprocated compliance and refrained disrupting teachers. The bargain was more than assurance for compliance--the teachers found the bargain to be mutually gratifying. It assured adequate time for teachers to prepare, correct papers, or simply socialize with students or teachers during class time.

The bargaining process begins on the first day of classes. The bargains are offered initially by teachers. Subsequently, the bargains are offered by whomever desires something. Teachers reduce education to preparing students for a job--marketability. In addition, teachers elevate the students' status to their own level, thus removing their natural ascendancy over their classes.

Teachers relate to students that students know more than their teachers about what should be instructed in order to prepare students for chosen entry level jobs. The whole of this process establishes a set of norms which entitle low achievers to bargain as their teachers' equals. As such, low achievers are free to assess the marketability that their teachers offer. They are free to give effort in return that is equal to the perceived marketability of their classes.

The bargain protected low achievers and their teachers from incurring excessive opportunity costs. The bargain institutionalized the commitment which each side was to give to and receive from education. In addition, the bargain

assured that rewards were distributed justly. Bargaining legitimated that low achievers were free to accept or to reject education based on the perceived contribution it would make to increase their marketability.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Purpose

The study's purpose was to describe and explain the social norms of classrooms that contained low achievers. The investigation was divided into six questions: (1) what bargains were established between low achievers and their teachers; (2) what did other students receive and give; (3) how did low achievers balance what they received against what they gave; (4) what did low achievers receive; (5) what did teachers of low achievers give; (6) what did low achievers give.

In previous chapters, the researcher presented the problem's description, reviewed related literatures, explained the methodology, and then presented and analyzed the data. The researcher will use the fifth chapter to answer the research questions, to present the study's logic, to present the classroom norms, and to integrate this study's findings with literature reviewed in chapter 2. The researcher will explain the implications.

Data Presentation

Durkheim (1956) said that by "leaving aside everything that has been, we have only to ask ourselves what should be" (p. 65). Durkheim wrote that "through comparison, by abstracting the similarities and eliminating the differences

from them, one can establish the generic types of education which correspond to the different types of societies" (p. 96). What should be according to the philosophers was matched against the low achievers' and their teachers' perceptions.

Schools and classrooms are social systems. The participants understand what each individual should receive from and give to the relationship. The classroom, as a social system, operates under a set of mutual understandings. This research applied social exchange theory to the classrooms norms among 6 teachers and 15 low achievers in a single high school. Blau (1964) argued that all relationships in social systems are based on reciprocity. This means that participants have a mutually gratifying contract. Blau said individuals' actions are motivated by rewards which they anticipate. Malinowski (1932) stated that one reward people give to each other in social systems is conformity with group norms. Reciprocity becomes a norm within relationships. A key aspect of reciprocity is the trust that others will maintain the status quo for effort and reward. Reciprocity is a social, not legal contract. Viewing classrooms as social systems which operate under a set of mutually gratifying norms, gives reasonableness to the study's findings.

General Findings

In this section, the researcher will present the general findings from chapter four. The section is divided into six

sub-sections. It is here that the researcher will answer the tentative research questions.

In section one, the researcher presented the bargains that existed between low achievers and their teachers. As was argued, teachers reduced education to what is useful in a market economy in order to obtain entry level jobs. The entry level jobs to which low achievers aspire require little knowledge, and low achievers already knew most of what they need to knew for these entry-level jobs. Because low achievers already know most of what they need to know, low achievers and their teachers are equals in the norm setting process. As their teachers' equals, low achievers are free to assess the marketability they receive from their classes, and to give a level of effort equal to the marketability.

In section two, the researcher presented what other students received and gave. Low achievers compared what they received with what other students received in order to assure that the school's overall reward system was reasonably equitable. In addition, low achievers used these comparisons to legitimate their own commitment. Low achievers explained that the hard-working students gave more effort because they plan to seek post-secondary education and/or prestigious jobs. The trouble makers would not be marketable because they gave even less effort to education than the low achievers.

Low achievers compare their own effort against other students' and their teachers' effort, and give effort

comparable to other students' their teachers' effort. The comparison process reinforced the misconception that education's worth is determined more or less valuable according to the students' educational and career goals and the knowledge and skills required to attain those goals.

In section three, the researcher presented how low achievers balanced what they received against what they gave. Students received rewards that were equal to their educational commitment. Hard-working students received more rewards than low achievers, because they gave more effort. The converse was also true that trouble makers received fewer rewards because they gave less effort to education. In keeping with distributive justice, low achievers compared their own effort to other students' effort, and expected that their reward be equal. Low achievers balanced their own effort plus their foregone opportunities against the marketability required for their educational and career goals. The low achievers' marketability was minimal. The sum of effort plus opportunity costs could exceed marketability, or cost would be negative. When low achievers' education cost is negative, education as an experience is negative.

In section four, the researcher provided the findings of what low achievers received. The researcher used Durkheim, Newman, Rousseau, and Goodlad as referent philosophers. The referent philosophers' reflections serve as a benchmark of what education should provide. The researcher posited the

referent philosophers' reflections against the low achievers' and their teachers' responses in order to elucidate possible rewards that could come from education and further to elucidate the discrepancy between what should be and what is in these classrooms. The philosophers all indicated that education consisted of two processes: (1) the full socializing of a younger generation, and (2) teaching the whole of academic knowledge. The referent philosophers argued that through education the being is transformed into a human being. Students should develop a sense of abnegation, and desire life-long learning for its own end. With such goals in mind, students and their teachers should make a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits.

However, low achievers and their teachers do not naturally and willfully submit themselves to serious and sustained academic pursuits. Neither low achievers nor their teachers expressed a sense of abnegation. Low achievers and their teachers reduced education from full socialization and accumulating the whole of academic knowledge, to obtaining minimal useful knowledge and minimal skills for marketability. Respondents did not acknowledge that education is above all socialization. Respondents did not acknowledge the enjoyment of developing one's self through serious and sustained academic pursuits. As such, low achievers and their teachers did not perceive that low achievers received much marketability. Classes were not void of useful education. Low

achievers received knowledge and skills which they would use on a daily basis. Useful knowledge and skills included child care, financial planning, checking, and basic competency in reading, English and mathematics. These topics were perceived both as necessary and sufficient for entry-level jobs, and therefore for education.

In section five, the researcher presented what teachers gave. Teachers did not give much effort to education. Teachers reduced their commitment to completing class preparations shortly before or during classes. Teachers discouraged student participation, and lowered both expectations and rewards. Because students did not receive much marketability, teachers did not expect that students give much effort to their classes. In addition, teachers pursued personal, non-academic tasks such as reading their personal mail, writing checks and talking with students or other teachers during class time.

In section six, the researcher presented what low achievers gave. Low achievers were their teachers' equals. As equals, low achievers were not indebted to their teachers. Low achievers knew as much as, or more about usefulness in market economy than their teachers. Low achievers justified their lack of commitment by arguing the subject material's lack of usefulness for entry-level jobs. Low achievers gave effort that they believed was equal to the marketability they received. Low achievers gave more in those classes which provided useful education, but classes which were not useful

were simply tolerated in order to receive a passing grade. What was given to education was reduced from a serious and sustained commitment to academic pursuits to attaining minimum useful knowledge, minimal skills, a passing grade and receiving a diploma.

In sum, both low achievers and their teachers were mutually uncommitted to academic pursuits. Bargains assured adequate time for teachers to prepare, correct papers and socialize with students or other teachers during class time. Students received time to study or talk during classes, avoided out-of-school studies, and received less work. Through their bargains, both low achievers and their teachers forego opportunity costs.

The researcher will use the general findings to generate the study's logic. The logic will then be used to introduce the set of social system norms.

The Logic

The logic is a brief explanation of how the norms develop in classrooms.

1. Low achievers and their teachers view and assess education as a commodity to be exchanged in the marketplace for an entry-level job.
2. The entry-level jobs to which low achievers aspire and for which teachers

prepare low achievers do not require much knowledge or skill.

3. Low achievers already know as much as or more than their teachers regarding the knowledge and skills required for entry level jobs.

4. Since the agreement is that low achievers do not need to know much and that they already know most of what they need to know, low achievers and their teachers are on equal footing regarding academic matters.

5. However, the school organization demands that status differences and compliance with the bureaucratic regulations be followed.

6. Going back to points 2, 3 and 4, which state that low achievers and teachers are on equal footing because they agree that there is not much to be known and that low achievers already know most of what they need to know, the bargaining is unidirectional--always down.

7. The classroom norms encourage organizational compliance and respect for status differences but permit, and even

encourage low achievers to bargain academic content on an equal basis with their teachers.

The Social System Norms

Given the logic, the researcher will now present the social system's norms, the elucidation of which was this study's original purpose.

Norms Regarding Teachers

1. Teachers will give low achievers free time for minimal effort and behavioral compliance.
2. When teachers need to complete their own work, they will give low achievers free time.
3. Teachers will give low achievers study time for minimal effort and behavioral compliance.
4. Teachers will not push low achievers beyond a comfort level.
5. Teachers will allow students to interact in their student groups during classes.
6. Teachers will give low achievers a passing grade for minimal effort and behavioral compliance.

7. Teachers will give low achievers less work for minimal effort and behavioral compliance.

8. Teachers will give low achievers more work when they are not behaviorally compliant.

9. Teachers will not demand that low achievers participate more than necessary to pass.

10. Teachers will not assign out-of-school work.

11. Teachers will pursue personal, non-academic opportunities during classes.

12. Teachers will ignore the low achievers' copying each others' assignments, because low achievers are compliant.

Norms Regarding Low achievers

1. Low achievers will not do more studying in classes than necessary to pass.

2. Low achievers will not participate more than necessary to pass.

3. Low achievers will not study outside of classes.

4. Low achievers will give behavioral compliance.

5. Low achievers will not impede classes by talking too loudly during lectures.

6. Low achievers will pursue personal, non-academic opportunities during classes.

7. Low achievers will expect a passing grade for, attendance, behavioral compliance and minimal effort.

8. Low achievers will copy each others' assignments to get a passing grade.

9. Low achievers will compare their effort to others' effort and expect comparable rewards.

10. Low achievers will balance their effort against their marketability.

Summary

The norms which low achievers and their teachers established, permit and even encourage both sides to give minimal effort. In turn, each side expects and accepts that the rewards for their effort will also be minimal. The classroom norms are mutually gratifying, and therefore, neither side seeks to change the status quo. The behavioral norms which encourage respect for bureaucratic status remain unchanged, and in fact cannot be bargained away. However, the

academic norms which regard achievement are established at such a low level that even the organization's policies, which support achievement are subverted. Mutual gratification explains why there is seldom conflict in classrooms. Mutual gratification also explains why the norms go unchallenged.

The Study's Thesis

Low achievers and their teachers conspire to establish a mutually gratifying set of classroom norms which permit and encourage both sides to avoid serious and sustained academic pursuits.

Reflections

This researcher described the logic and the norms regarding how low achievers balanced what they received against what they gave. The addition which this researcher rendered is the set of norms which permit and encourage low achievement. This researcher also rendered the understanding of how these norms were established and legitimated by both sides. The researcher discussed the general findings. The researcher will now integrate his findings against the nine qualitative studies reviewed in chapter II. By comparing this study's findings with the other nine qualitative studies, this researcher adds support and credibility to his own findings. The researcher will present where this study's findings support, contradict, or extend the previous researchers' findings.

Integration of Literature

Low achievement coupled with good teacher/student relations has been noted in studies over several years. Cusick (1983) stated that it was amazing how teachers and students established such good relations. Powell et al. (1985) called the phenomena treaties. Willis (1977), McNeil (1986), Cusick (1973), Henry (1963) and Grant (1988) referred to the process as lowering standards. Sedlak et al. (1986) stated that a bargain was struck which required little of either students or teachers. Most recently Cusick (1992) stated that the problem for any group was to establish norms to which all individuals willfully submit themselves. Previous researchers all referred to the same classroom phenomenon. Low achievers and their teachers mutually establish and legitimate norms which permit and encourage low achievement.

McNeil (1986), Sedlak et al. (1986), Henry (1963) Cusick (1973), Cusick (1983), Willis (1977), Cusick (1992), Powell et al. (1985) and Grant (1988) found that students and their teachers accept lowered standards. Powell et al. (1985) stated that students and teachers agree "about the extent to which classes will seriously be confronted" (p. 4). Sedlak et al. (1986) stated that the norm setting process "is not an agreement between parties of equal power" (p. 5). However, this researcher found that low achievers and their teachers did bargain as equals. Teachers initiated the bargains. Subsequently, low achievers and their teachers bargained

classroom norms which were mutually gratifying. The norms were understandings which permitted and encouraged low achievers and their teachers to avoid serious and sustained academic pursuits. Mediocrity existed because low achievers and their teachers established classroom norms which permitted and encouraged low achievement (mediocrity).

Sedlak et al. (1986), McNeil (1986), Cusick (1973), Willis (1977), Powell et al. (1985) and Henry (1963) found that the minimum effort required to pass classes became the maximum effort. Cusick (1992) noted that individuals were free to pursue their own course of action, including how much compliance to give. Lowering standards brought about behavioral compliance. However, one can also discern from these studies that lowered standards brought about only minimal academic compliance. The norm regarding classroom effort consisted of worksheet routine that was minimally demanding. The only way to fail was not to attend, or to not try at all. This researcher too found that behavioral compliance and attendance merited a passing grade. The maximum effort expended consisted of fill-in-the-blank book reports. Low achievers compared their effort against the effort of others. When the norms were violated, so were reciprocity and distributive justice violated. In keeping with reciprocity and distributive justice, teachers failed low achievers only when low achievers violated the classroom norms.

Previous researchers attributed lowered standards to both organizational and cultural factors. This researcher will present the organizational factors, followed by the cultural factors. The first organizational factor was a conflict between instructing and controlling students. McNeil (1986), Grant (1988), Cusick (1973), Cusick (1983), Cusick (1992) and Neukom-Page (1991) found that control is always an issue. Teachers have two duties: control students and instruct and these two objectives conflict. However, Henry (1963) stated that while control is an issue, control is also necessary for social stability. This researcher found that control existed in two forms: (1) behavioral compliance, and (2) academic compliance. Behavioral compliance stemmed from the organization's bureaucratic structure. Academic compliance stemmed from the classroom norms. There was a difference between the hard-working students, low achievers and the trouble makers. Hard-working students gave both behavioral compliance and academic compliance. The low achievers gave behavioral compliance but minimal academic compliance. The trouble makers gave neither behavioral compliance nor academic compliance.

McNeil (1986), Sedlak et al. (1986) and Grant (1988) noted that weak policy or inconsistent enforcement by administrators exacerbated control problems. However, Cusick (1992) noted that students impose the organization's behavioral standards such as policies upon their student

groups. Therefore, policies and student groups reinforce each other. Previous researchers mis-attributed the problem with policy and enforcement of policy. This researcher found that low achievers and their teachers bargained in spite of strong organizational policy and consistent administrative support, not because of organizational policy or lack of administrative support. The athletic eligibility policy was designed to promote academic achievement among athletes. In fact, it was teachers who were weak. Teachers inconsistently enforced a strong athletic policy. Teachers bargained minimal behavioral compliance for a passing grade and athletic eligibility. Teachers and students alike approved of the administrator who was fair and consistent. However, despite strong policy and consistent administrative support, both sides still bargained.

The last two organizational factors to which the previous researchers attributed lowered standards were (1) a wide curriculum, and (2) students choosing their own courses. Sedlak et al. (1986), Grant (1988), McNeil (1986), Cusick (1983), Cusick (1973), Powell et al. (1985) and Neukom-Page (1991) noted that there existed a wide curriculum and that students selected their own courses. Therefore, teachers reduced standards in order to maintain high enrollments. However, Cusick (1992) noted the most important aspect of student choice. Cusick (1992) noted that individuals are free to choose their own course of action. Therefore, even when students are placed into classes by the organization's

officials, students still choose to accept or to reject norms. This researcher found that the high school's curriculum was not wide. Even in stated-mandated classes such as government, the bargains still existed. In fact, students' choices were monitored by parents and counselors who approved the students' selections. The norms encouraged low standards in spite of a narrow curriculum and controlled or non-existent student choice.

Previous researchers also attributed lowered standards to two cultural factors. The first cultural factor was that students had an instrumental view of education. McNeil (1986), Sedlak et al. (1986), Willis (1977) and Cusick (1973) and Powell et al. (1985) maintained that there exists a conflict between the education that students needed or desired and the education that teachers wanted to give students. Students believed that they could enroll in junior colleges or obtain jobs even with bad grades. Therefore, students did not make a serious commitment to studying. This researcher added to the previous researchers' findings that both low achievers and their teachers had an instrumental view of education. Both teachers and students believed that low achievers could obtain an entry-level job even with bad grades. In addition, low achievers did not aspire to higher education. Therefore, low achievers did not pursue serious and sustained academic pursuits, nor did their teachers push them.

The final cultural factor again deals with students' choice. However, this choice deals with a conflict between pursuing academics or pursuing opportunities. Henry (1963), McNeil (1986), Sedlak et al. (1986), Powell et al. (1985) and Cusick (1973) noted a conflict between academic pursuits and students' opportunities. The school had no claim to students' out-of-school time. Students pursued diversion in classes and worked outside of school. These in-school and out-of-school opportunities reduced the students' time available to pursue academics. Sedlak et al. (1986) noted that students' opportunities produced more monetary and social reward than did academic pursuits. However, McNeil (1986) noted that teachers too had out-of-school opportunities such as jobs, and that these jobs took their toll on teachers. This researcher added to the previous researchers' findings that the school had no claim to either low achievers' or their teachers' out-of-school time. Low achievers and their teachers completed all school-related activities shortly before or during classes. Low achievers and their teachers had opportunities which gave more economic and social gratification than academic pursuits. Both sides welcomed norms which permitted and encouraged low standards.

Powell et al.'s (1985) conclusion was consistent with Cusick's (1992) statement that individuals have free choice. Powell et al. concluded that the treaties existed because "Learning is voluntary" (p. 309). This researcher extended

individual choice to include teachers as well as low achievers. Both sides were mutually gratified by their choices. As Durkheim (1956) explained, individuals are not inclined to submit themselves to self-sacrifice. Both low achievers and their teachers would incur costs by submitting themselves to serious and sustained academic pursuits. The norms which low achievers and their teachers established permitted and encouraged both sides to reduce effort and pursue their opportunities, thus reducing cost.

Conclusion to The Study

Current classroom research depicted clearly that bargains exist, but not the bargains' manner nor origin. No researchers to date addressed the creation of the classroom norms which permit and encourage low achievement. The addition which this researcher rendered was the set of norms which permitted and encouraged low achievement. This researcher also rendered an understanding of how these norms were established and legitimated by low achievers and their teachers.

Implications

That reciprocity exists within classrooms is not a problem--in fact it is the basis of stability. Reciprocity could exist at any point on a vertical continuum. The continuum ranges from minimum effort to maximum effort by both low achievers and their teachers. What is problematic, is that

low achievers and their teachers have bargained down academic attainment to a minimum level.

Bargaining to a minimal level in classrooms poses problems not only for low achievers and their teachers, but also for the country as a whole. An article in The Economist's (1992) December issue presented the problems facing education. There are fewer jobs available which require low levels of education, therefore there exists higher unemployment for low-educated workers. Low-educated workers are also experiencing pay decreases against the rising cost of living. As technology increases, high-technology positions are remaining in this country, and the low technology, low-pay jobs are being exported. The new high-technology positions require serious and sustained education. Low achievers do not aspire to such education or positions.

A serious and sustained change is needed within classrooms, and teachers are the key. Teachers need to change the way they instruct, and students need to change the way they learn. This change can come only if classroom norms are changed. Educational reform and educational improvement are not mutually exclusive. In fact, schools can be reformed without making improvement, and/or schools can make improvement without being reformed. Educational improvement must come in the form of re-norming classrooms. Low achievers and their teachers must establish classroom norms which permit and encourage high-achievement from both students and their

teachers. This re-norming of American classrooms must be based on a reciprocal relationship. When either students or their teachers are displeased with the re-norming process, dissonance occurs. The re-norming process will be mutually gratifying if, and only if both students and their teachers mutually agree to the new classroom norms.

The problem in the classroom norm-setting process is that educators have permitted and encouraged discourse about educational goals to be dominated by the pragmatic-sounding talk about preparation for the workplace. Educators have turned away from the broad philosophical goals and admitted to students that we have only entry-level knowledge and skills to offer. Because students know as much as or more than their teachers about such knowledge and skills, the schools and teachers have little or nothing to offer. As such, it is little wonder that the norms described in this study prevail in these classrooms.

The current teacher-empowerment movement seems as likely to fail as all other educational reform movements of the past sixty years. In fact, teachers already have autonomy, bureaucratic status, and should have natural ascendancy. The empowerment lacking in classrooms is teachers' natural ascendancy (moral authority) which teachers themselves have bargained away. Teachers must recapture their ascendancy not from administrators, school boards nor from policy, but from students. When teachers reclaim their ascendancy over

students, they will be in a position to bargain as teachers, not as the low achievers' equals.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I) The classroom bargains between low-achievers and teachers.
A) Do you have any deals with your teachers?
B) Who initiates the deals between low-achievers and teachers?
C) What else can you tell me about these classroom deals?
D) What kinds of things can not be bargained?
E) When do these bargains begin?

II) What do other students receive and give in class?
A) Do you think the grades your receive are fair for the amount of time you put in?
B) Do you do about the same amount of work as everyone else?
C) Tell me about students who put forth more effort than you.
D) Do they receive higher grades than you?
E) Is it fair that they receive higher grades than you?
F) Tell me about students who put forth less effort than you.
G) Do they receive lower grades than you?
H) Is it fair that they receive lower grades than you?

III) How do you balance what you receive against what you get?
A) How do you decide how hard to work in your classes?
B) What kinds of things do you have to do that would keep you from doing your homework?

IV) What do you receive in the classroom?
A) Tell me about the knowledge you receive.
B) Tell me about the skills you receive.
C) Tell me about the self-esteem you receive.
D) Tell me about the external rewards you receive.
E) Tell me about the internal rewards you receive.
F) Tell me about the enjoyment you receive.
G) Tell me about the attention you receive.
H) Tell me about the challenge you receive.
I) Tell me about the preparation for life and work you receive.

V) What do teachers of low-achievers give in the classroom?
A) Tell me about the teachers' weekly lesson planning.
B) Tell me about the teachers' daily lesson planning.
C) Tell me about the teachers' correcting papers and tests.
D) Tell me about the teachers' lecturing.
E) Tell me about the teachers' individual help to students.
F) Tell me about the teachers' monitoring.
G) Tell me about the free time that they give.

VI) What do you give in the classroom?
A) Tell me about the amount of time that you study.
B) Tell me about the effort you give.
C) Tell me about the compliance you give.
D) Tell me about the attention you pay.

E) Tell me about the homework you do.
F) Tell me about the reading you do.
G) Tell me about the tests you take.
H) Tell me about the writing you do.
I) Tell me about the participation you give.

APPENDIX B

ASSENT/CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this study is to gain better knowledge of what happenings in high school classrooms. I will ask questions regarding how you determine what you will do in your classes. I will ask questions regarding how students interact with their classroom teachers. In addition, I will ask for names of other students or teachers who can provide information. This interview will not exceed two hours. Following the interviews, I will conduct observations of the students and teachers interviewed.

All results from the research will be confidential. Your name will not be used anywhere in the study. A fictitious name must be used. If you so choose, you may select your own fictitious name, so that at a future date you may refer to your participation in this research.

Participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate, and may elect to quit at any time. You may elect not to answer any question which you choose not to answer. If you would like to have a copy of the general findings, one will be provided for you.

By signing this form, you indicate that you understand the purpose of this study, and agree to interview and observation. It is also understood that you may drop from the study at any time that you wish.

_____

GUARDIAN IF UNDER 18 (PARTICIPANT MUST ALSO SIGN).

_____

PARTICIPANT

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