

A SURVEY OF PROBLEMS IMPEDING
THE GROWTH OF INDEPENDENT STUDY
IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE UNITED STATES

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
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MARY MAGDALA THOMPSON
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ABSTRACT

A SURVEY OF PROBLEMS IMPEDING THE GROWTH OF INDEPENDENT STUDY IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

By

Mary Magdala Thompson

Problem

Although in principle, independent study has been endorsed by many administrators, faculty, and students in higher education, there has been some question as to their whole-hearted acceptance of it in practice. The purpose of this work was to study undergraduate liberal arts colleges and universities in the United States in order to determine:

1. the extent to which independent study is implemented and made available to all students regardless of academic class or superiority;
2. what factors on the part of the institution and faculty prove inhibiting to the offering of independent study;
3. why, when independent study is available, students do not take advantage of the opportunity;
4. what research on independent study should be carried out in the future.

Design

A questionnaire was sent to a one-third, stratified random sample of liberal arts colleges and universities in the United States to determine the extent to which independent study is made available in all departments and to all students. In addition, institutions were asked what percentage of graduating students had taken advantage of the opportunity and whether or not the institution had attempted to evaluate and/or study the cost of its independent study program.

Twenty-two colleges and universities with reputations for commitment to independent study were visited, and administrators, faculty and students were interviewed in order to learn what factors limited the offering and use of self-directed learning.

Findings

The questionnaire returns indicated that while independent study practices exist in a number of institutions, they are not often made available to all students, and seldom have 100 percent of an institution's graduates taken advantage of self-directed learning opportunities. Few institutions have attempted to evaluate their independent study programs and fewer have studied their cost.

Visits to the campuses revealed that on the part of the institutions and faculty: objectives are unclear;

departmental autonomy creates disunity and prevents interdisciplinary programs; and an unfree environment proves hostile to the kind of flexibility which self-directed learning requires. Student involvement is minimal because of: student apathy; fear of self-direction; and discouragement over red tape, coupled with prohibitions against what students consider true freedom. They find the environment, including faculty, little calculated to encourage initiative, and the methods of evaluating their occasional attempts at independent study disheartening.

Further research should attempt to: clarify independent study objectives; identify compatible environment and appropriate evaluation of outcomes, including student self-evaluation; study cost of the operation; and consider independent study techniques appropriate to students with differing abilities. Finally, research is needed on: those recent methods of introducing independent study--interim programs and off-campus field work experiences; independent study coupled with interdisciplinary programs and group projects; and independent study programs with more substantial periods of freedom, unaccompanied by structured courses.

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HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE
UNITED STATES

By

Mary Magdala Thompson

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Hardly a new publication on curriculum, students, innovation, or the future of higher education fails to include at least some mention of independent study, attesting to its value, describing attempts at its implementation, or predicting its future growth and development. In principle, it is generally praised by administrators, faculty and students; in practice, there is question of their whole-hearted endorsement. Few areas in higher education today are so little understood, so loosely defined, so little researched, and eulogized with such vagueness as self-directed learning.

Students, in their attempts to secure greater freedom, view independent study as part of the package of extended responsibility. Focusing more on student participation in academic legislation and college management, students nevertheless push toward greater involvement in defining the learning process. Undergraduates have become reluctant to accept the present structure of graduation requirements and curricular patterns. They protest against the packaging of courses, the excessive use of the lecture

system, the stipulation of hours, the demand for class attendance and the letter-grading of results.

Long-time critics of higher education show a growing incredulity that in the land of freedom, the university continues to exist as a monolithic bulwark of conformity. They question a total system of prescribed programs which takes some sixteen years to produce students who join society unprepared for independent thought, decision making, and continued unsponsored learning.

Some support for these concerns has come with the appearance of the cluster college, a few innovative colleges, and the investment of Ford Foundation funds in a number of experimental programs of independent study--all of which have attempted to give the student independence and place him at the center of the collegiate operation. Behind these attempts to loosen the system is a background of beliefs and hypotheses giving credence to the concept of independent study and its appropriateness for all students as early as the freshman year of college.

First, it is both obvious and accepted that all learning is accomplished by the learner. Second, researchers such as Bloom (1968), McKeachie (1963), and Minter (1967) indicate that instruction needs to be suited to students' individual differences and goals. Summarizing research findings, Siegel (1968) concludes that

to be most effective, instruction must be tailored to the needs, capabilities, and histories of the individual learners. . . (p. 149).

To accomplish this, the institution must develop and rely on the students' self-direction.

Third, there is some evidence that independent study need not be limited to the academically superior student but should be extended to the creative and to the "respectable learner." Concerning the creative student, Heist (1968) and McKinnon (1968) have found that creativity is not related to intelligence beyond some minimum requirement; yet creative students are the very ones who perhaps above all need the advantage of greater freedom. Heist's studies show that the high attrition rate of these students may be associated with the failure of a system built on conformity to meet their needs. The "respectable learner" according to Baskin (1962) may need a good deal of freedom but for another reason:

Although independent study has been thought of most often as a release of the swift and able learner from bondage to a plodding pace, permitting him to leap ahead with joy, it may equally well be thought of as an emancipation of the slower but still respectable learner from a dizzying pace that leaves him baffled and defeated (p. 51).

Gruber (1962), too, in his study of academic ability and self-directed study, claims that

On the whole, the results of the present study provide little or no support for the notion of a direct relation between intellectual ability and capacity to profit from self-directed study (Chapter 23, p. 8).

Fourth, there is evidence that the greater part of change which takes place in attitudes, etc., during the process of college matriculation actually takes form during the first year (Lehman and Dressel, 1962). Gruber's findings suggest that

Self-directed study may be best introduced in the freshman year, not because it leads at once to better performance but because it leads to the most rapid change in educational values (Chapter 23, p. 7).

Fifth, Loughary (1967) and others predict that survival in tomorrow's society (and one might add survival of it), demands life-long education requiring an educational system characterized by individualized instruction. Independent study which closely resembles later extra-institutional learning is considered an appropriate preparation for tomorrow's self-initiated, life-long learning.

Sixth, and of a more practical nature, is the fact that higher education now faces a financial crisis, and in spite of the present plethora of teachers, may be unable to afford sufficient numbers of instructors to continue the present lecture pattern of education. The alternatives offered are more tightly packed classrooms or greater use of independent study. Seventh, more than instructors, peer influence is highly effective in bringing about student change (Wallace, 1963; Newcombe, 1969), giving weight to belief in the potential for student-shared self-directed learning. Contrary to the traditional conceptions,

independent study need not be "a solitary approach" to the student, denying "the communal aspects of learning, teaching and scholarship" and without the "stimulation of a joint group venture" (The Superior Student, p. 1).

All of these factors are forces pointing to the desirability of encouraging the student from the time of his arrival on campus, whether he be superior or not, to become a self-directed learner, combining this self-direction when appropriate with the advantageous sharing of the experience with his peer group.

The fact remains, however, that there has been no research which has proven either the superiority or the economy of independent study over other types of learning. Churchill (1960) in a small college, and Gruber (1962) in a large university both failed, as have many others, to find hard facts proving significant superiority of this practice. More recent evidence points to the fact that few attempts have been made to take up the challenge and contribute more supportive data. The 1969 volume by Feldman and Newcomb, The Impact of College on Students, having reviewed "everything written of any importance--during the past forty years," does not mention a single study of the effect of independent study on students. Hatch (1960) reports only a few studies of the economics of this practice, and they present "approximations." In the past ten years, nothing significant has been done to investigate the costs of independent study.

Based upon studies such as that of Dressel and DeLisle (1969) which found little innovation in higher education save "tinkering," it was the author's hypothesis that the implementation of independent study is not consistently prevalent on today's campuses. With this belief, the study was initiated to determine:

1. the extent to which independent study is implemented on campuses in this country and offered to all students
2. what factors prove inhibiting to this practice on the part of the institution and faculty
3. why, when the possibility for independent study is available, students do not take advantage of the opportunity
4. what research on independent study should be done in the future.

As we will see in the review of the literature, earlier studies, because of great differences in approach and technique do not lend themselves to comparisons. The plan of this study, therefore, is not based on any one of them but attempts to update and parallel their findings. The desire not to diminish the usefulness of the information by delays which would outdate it before the compilation was completed, influenced many of the decisions on methodology. The use of a random sample of colleges rather than the total

population, for example, reduced the research time considerably.

After gaining some understanding of past attempts to ascertain the state of student responsibility in learning, questionnaires were used to gain insight into the current practices of institutions of higher education in this country. To substantiate what these questionnaires would produce, visits were scheduled to a number of those institutions which indicated that they endorsed independent study to a high degree or in some unique manner. Realizing the limitations of such a series of brief visits, the author attempted to focus on a few specific reasons why even such institutions as these had difficulty, if indeed they did, in expanding or fostering possibilities of independent study. The difficulties might arise in the institutional policies or in faculty and student attitudes.

It must be remembered that this is a scrutiny of problems in implementing independent study on the campuses visited rather than a consideration of their successes. For this reason it does not do justice to the many noteworthy activities which will no doubt continue to stimulate further progress in the development of self-directed learning in the colleges and universities in this country.

This report starts with the findings of past and recent surveys; then presents the information derived from

the questionnaires, followed by insights gained by visits to institutions and interviews with administrators, faculty and students; and finally offers some conclusions and statements concerning the needs for future study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Few persons have attempted to ascertain the state of student-directed study programs in this country. The first of these, a survey of honors course offerings in American colleges and universities was conducted by the Division of Educational Relations of the National Research Council. Its results were published in 1924 at a time when the term "independent study" was not in general use and honors courses were the formal means of offering this type of special work for superior students. This study edited by Aydelotte (1924) presented a description of the various forms of honors courses as described in college and university catalogues; but it is not clear how the particular colleges were selected. Of those bulletins studied, thirty-five indicated offerings of honors work which was required in addition to the usual work for a degree; nine others either had plans for honors based on work replacing the regular requirements or were in the process of putting their plans into operation. Aydelotte regarded the practice of this latter group of colleges, those who replaced usual requirements with honors work, as an improvement over and

a natural outgrowth of the former, and predicted the next step to be the cancellation of the old type of program for honors students to enable them to do individual work for at least two of their four years.

This first survey served not only to point out the paucity of any type of catalogue-listed independent study but also offered a basis for noting in a second look (1925) that the number of institutions offering honors courses had doubled by the following year. In the 1924 study, emphasizing the underlying principles rather than the practices, Aydelotte was more than satisfied to find that the move was away from care of average students "for whom our ordinary academic system works passably well," toward the "recognition of the necessity of allowing better students more responsibility for working out their own intellectual salvation" (Aydelotte, 1924, p. 5). He attached more importance to the promise which the results of the study implied than to the actual achievement recorded, since it reflected

the feeling that our educational system has hitherto devoted an undue amount of attention to the mediocre or backward students and that lock-step methods of instruction have made it difficult or impossible for students of more than usual ability or ambition to do their best work . . . (p. 18).

Aydelotte's recommendation for the future was that the students be given not more coddling, attention, or instruction, but more freedom, coupled with more severe requirements.

Using the colleges and universities accredited by the Association of American Universities (1929-30), on the assumption that this group might include all the institutions most qualified to give honors work, Taylor and Sinclair (1934) found in a catalogue study that 103 colleges appeared to be offering honors work. Replies from deans indicated that only 81 or 35.7 percent of the 227 institutions on the list were in fact doing so. Institutions enrolling 500-1,500 were the most numerous among those offering honors work but the lack of information about the nature of the sample makes this information inconclusive. Only two institutions in this enrollment range had a substantial number of students engaged in honors work.

In this study, honors work was taken to mean a program of independent study, under the direction of a faculty adviser superseding, either in part or as a whole, regular classroom work . . . as distinguished from recognition of work well done under the conventional plan (p. 248).

Totals based on replies, many of which were estimates, showed that of all institutions offering honors work, only 6 had 81 or more students involved in it, while 31 had 20 or less and 13 of these latter had only 1 to 6.

Not only were the numbers of participants small, but the amount of freedom allowed was minimal. The extent to which independent study was permitted without class attendance was generally limited, and the equivalent of ten units was the maximum taken by any one student in the 69 institutions supplying data. There was little evidence that

colleges made provision for honors work by the addition of faculty members, and it appeared to be an extra load for instructors. Only one institution offered honors work to all students and for two others this was a goal. For the most part it was reserved for the exceptional student and was generally assumed impracticable for others.

Several of the colleges emphasized the lack of student interest. Indifference or hostility of faculty members was noted by some as was the need for funds. The general impression was that in more than one-half of the institutions honors work still was in the experimental stage, using only selected students for the trial run.

Taylor and Sinclair optimistically reported

The evidence seems to indicate that the honors program, as a method of independent study, has definitely established itself in this country and is making satisfactory progress, although, generally still in the experimental stage. At any rate, the fact is significant that over 35 percent of our leading institutions of higher learning have already introduced it; in many cases, admittedly, under handicaps of faculty limitations which make it necessary to restrict rigidly both the numbers of students involved and the amount of independent work . . . the past 5 years show considerable progress away from the earlier idea of honors courses to a broader program of independent study (p. 250).

In 1935, Umstattd published the results of a study of 198 four-year college and university catalogues between 1929 and 1931, and 333 such catalogues during 1933. In the first study, he found that 28, or 14 percent, of the institutions indicated offerings in independent study and in the

second study, 54, or 16 percent. The manner in which the colleges were selected for this study is not indicated and it is with some hesitation that Umstattd speculates that since he found one-sixth of the institutions studied announcing such practices, probably less than 175 of the total number of four-year institutions would have such a plan.

Umstattd found that every type of four-year college in the sample except teachers colleges and normal schools had independent study plans in the junior and senior years. The 1933 catalogue survey indicated that (considering the institutions by type of support) 29 percent of the private and municipal colleges, 25 percent of the state and land-grant colleges; and 14 percent of the denominational colleges announced plans and procedures for independent study. Such practices in the freshman or sophomore years were reported by only one institution.

Admission to independent study was based predominantly on "conspicuous" ability and two-thirds of the colleges required "outstanding general scholarship" (Umstattd, 1935, p. 365). Although personal qualities were at times considered, scholarship was the primary basis for approval. In only a few institutions was the student permitted to submit his own plan for study; the majority of institutions required departmentally approved or planned programs of study. The implication Umstattd drew was that "most

institutions were not yet willing to throw the student entirely upon his own resources in selecting and planning his work" (p. 366), although over one-half of the institutions with independent study allowed the student to pursue any subject by independent study.

About twenty years after editing the first survey of honors programs, Aydelotte in 1944, still intensely interested in this growing movement and realizing that a connected account of it had not been given, set about to compile such a report. Acknowledging the limitations of using catalogue descriptions and questionnaires, he and members of the Swarthmore faculty visited 130 of the 200 colleges and universities on the approved list of the Association of American Universities. Those visited were chosen because they had fully organized plans for honors work. About one-half of these were described in his book, Breaking the Academic Lockstep; four-fifths of those omitted fell in the category of part-time honors programs. This category was between the two which he had set up in his earlier work, i.e., honors work as an extra, and honors work on a full-time basis. No attempt was made in the publication to give complete descriptions of particular plans, since the purpose was to show similarities and differences in providing a basis for discussing the principles behind the practices. Typical plans and some unique variations were explained.

After pointing out the irony of the "bewildering" freedom given to students in the area of course selection, coupled with demands for a common standard of achievement, and the extensive personal freedom combined with lack of responsibility for their intellectual development, Aydelotte attempted to show what was being done by the honors plan to rectify this mistake.

The programs identified as "honors work as an extra" (i.e., work elected by the honors student in addition to his regular requirements) were fewer in number than the "part-time honors plans." The latter, the typical American honors plan which had the largest number of members, substituted special honors courses or programs for a portion of required work. A limited number of institutions allowed "honors work on a full-time basis," replacing large portions of course work, as much as the two last years, with independent work of some kind.

Aydelotte's study showed: that the tendency to provide for the superior student was growing in colleges and universities; that in too many places the burden of honors work was borne by the faculty as extra hours of teaching; that state universities found it more difficult to provide for superior students; and that "excessive departmentalization of our undergraduate colleges is one of their greatest evils" (p. 74). The latter made it difficult to offer interdisciplinary programs. Although no evidence was given

that figures were available, instances were cited as a basis for suspecting general increases in cost for faculty, library and laboratory, as well as an expensive loss in faculty time from scholarly pursuits. Aydelotte felt justified, however, in predicting that "higher standards and freer, less rigid methods of instruction will gradually permeate our whole academic system" (p. 52).

Ten years later, in 1954, Bonthius published the results of the first total population survey of programs of independent study. Based on a study of "current" catalogues of 1,086 of the 1,093 four-year colleges and universities in the United States granting bachelor's degrees (except the B.C. and LL.B.), the survey limited itself to programs which were

planned and provided by and for the institution as a whole, given official publicity as a part of the general curriculum, and participated in by all or most of the departments of the institution (Bonthius, 1954, p. 412).

Whereas previous studies had included seminars and other group activities as independent study, here the definition was more limited. It referred only to

study by individual students under the guidance of faculty advisers independent of organized courses, for honors only or for credit toward graduation, available to students who meet certain requirements or required of all students (p. 412).

Bonthius found that 286 or 26.3 percent of the institutions had some type of independent study plan.

Questionnaires sent to 120 with programs for which credit toward graduation was given, indicated that the student participation was very meager. He made a major distinction between voluntary and required programs, favoring the latter and pointing out that of the 93 voluntary programs, 62 of them enrolled only 19 or fewer students. Of the 32 required programs, however, only 18 actually enrolled 100 percent of the students. Over one-half of the voluntary programs were open to superior students only; and in most of the honors plans the students began as juniors or seniors, making independent study according to his survey an upper-class phenomenon. Bonthius found that church-related institutions offered nearly as many programs as all other institutions together. He felt that generally there was an increase in the number of programs open to all undergraduates; where Umstattd had estimated that one-sixth of the four-year colleges had independent study programs, Bonthius found one-fourth. Since their populations do not match, it is difficult to make valid comparisons. Bonthius also felt that a smaller percentage of the voluntary programs than was implied in the Umstattd survey specified minimum academic standing for the student who wished to elect independent study. This suggested to Bonthius a trend toward acceptance of greater freedom for the average student. Conspicuous ability, however, was still as at the time of

the Umstattd study, the chief requirement for admission to voluntary types of programs.

Over one-half of the honors programs were in institutions enrolling 300-799 and 800-1,499, but as Bonthius points out, the existence of 68 programs in the group of over 3,000 indicates that "independent study can be an important part of the undergraduate program even in the largest institutions" (p. 29).

In 1957, a book length report of his survey was published by Bonthius et al. in which the original findings were followed by detailed accounts of the program at Wooster College. Apparent throughout is the view that a required program of independent study indicates a greater commitment on the part of an institution to self-directed learning. His conviction is reflected in the fact that while only 13 percent of the country's reported programs were required, 50 percent of the 20 colleges he selected for visitation had required programs. Bonthius found that in most colleges the independent study method seemed to achieve more depth than breadth. He described the typical project as relatively independent work with a faculty "senior partner" rather than completely independent inquiry. The most frequently mentioned program weakness was inadequate advising, partly because the ten programs on a voluntary basis did not provide faculty course load reductions for student guidance in independent study.

As far as cost was concerned, "the more expensive programs were estimated by their administrators to have increased instructional costs by as much as 25 percent" (p. 215). None of the twenty colleges visited had independent study budgets but depended upon other funds for their support. This made evaluation difficult, but Bonthius on the basis of the visits concluded that "it should be recognized that independent study is expensive, especially if it is required" (p. 215). He also found that even the more advanced programs occupied only a relatively small part of the college student's time and the greatest limitation of most voluntary programs was that they reached relatively few students. Looking to the future he recommends

If the values (of independent study) are considered central in undergraduate education it would seem in order to point course work toward them. If this were done wholeheartedly, independent study programs would be responsible for a revolution in undergraduate study. Independent study plans might reach their full flower if this occurred, or perhaps separate programs might no longer be necessary for the realization of the desired values (p. 217).

In the spring of 1963, Felder (1964) surveyed 520 institutions offering four-year degree programs and having enrollments exceeding 200. Sixty-eight percent of the 445 which responded offered independent study. The type of study selected by students most frequently limited them to gathering and analyzing material derived from library work alone, although nearly two-thirds of the institutions

mentioned field studies as independent study involvement. Conferences of students and advisers, in all but three of the colleges, were a regular practice, ranging in frequency from weekly to every two or three weeks. A few institutions offered one or two seminars each semester planned as an orientation to the independent study program. Over one-half of the colleges surveyed did not grant freshmen and sophomores independent study privileges, but during the last two years most colleges permitted students to take at least 20 percent of their work through independent study. Felder suggests that the culmination of independent study should be

a critical examination of the student's understanding and ability in the area studied. Ideally, evaluation of independent study should aim at determining the student's total grasp of the subject or problem, his understanding of the interrelations of ideas and concepts, and his discrimination in the use of his knowledge (p. 337).

And he suggests that

if increased freedom is to be matched by increased responsibility, partial motivation for carrying out this responsibility could well come from the knowledge that individual study will be critically evaluated by someone other than the faculty member directly involved with the student (p. 338).

In 1969, Brick and McGrath in Innovation in Liberal Arts Colleges published the results of an attempt to estimate some of the trends and thrusts toward innovative practices in liberal arts colleges of the country. Using

the Education Directory, Part 3, Higher Education, published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1965-66, they polled all four-year institutions in the United States offering a program of liberal arts. As one form of innovation, independent study was surveyed and its growing availability to all students on all levels rather than to superior students in the upper classes was noted. They also found: greater appreciation of the relationship of independent study to the student's personality and character, the area studied, and educational goals, in addition to the usual relationship to intellectual capacity; growing experimentation with interim or winter terms; and increasing interest in independent off-campus projects. Concerning the number of institutions offering independent study, Brick noted that since 1961, independent study both for superior students and for all students has increased. At the same time the number of institutions offering honors programs has decreased.

Using a random sample of four-year liberal arts colleges listed in the American Council on Education's American Universities and Colleges (1969), Dressel and DeLisle (1969) found in their study of catalogues that independent study is among those individualizing aspects of the curriculum which have shown the most marked change. They reported a tendency toward independent study's being made available earlier in the college experience to all students

rather than its being restricted to superior, advanced, students; and they found it linked with such calendar experiments as the off-campus terms, experimental college programs, the interim or middle term and general honors.

Summary

An attempt to make comparisons among the data from previous surveys of independent study practices is all but impossible because of the lack of commonality in the material used in them. First, the definition of independent study ranged from a very general category including anything an institution cared to call by this name to a specific type--individual study. Second, the understanding of what constituted a program varied. At times it was a plan for honors students; at times, any program of individual study which granted credit or honors; at times it was not considered a program unless it had offerings in all academic areas.

Great variety also existed in the selection of the colleges and universities studied. Such diverse groups as all four-year colleges and universities, those approved by the Association of American Universities, those with enrollments over 200, or those listed in certain publications have been studied. The variety of methodologies was another consideration since some conclusions were based to a great extent upon the findings in catalogues, some on questionnaires, some on visits, and some on a combination of these.

Compounding this is the fact that from year to year, the number of colleges changed as did their categories, e.g., private and municipal colleges were classified together in one instance. The variations were sufficient to discourage any strong comparative conclusions.

A few statements can be made, however. Independent study which existed in the 1920's for the most part in the form of honors programs for superior juniors and seniors, has increased through the years and has become an opportunity for more students, superior or otherwise to direct their own learning in a variety of ways from the first year of college. While originating as an on-campus activity limited to the regular academic calendar, it has been broadened to include activities exercised off-campus and outside of the regular session, adapting innovations such as the interim session and field work, and at times continuing through the summer. Persisting throughout and handicapping the progress of this form of innovation have been the problems of faculty time and financial hardship.

Although the major purpose of these surveys was to determine the extent of implementation of independent study, there are striking evidences throughout that what growth there has been was not based on solid research findings of either the value or economy of self-directed learning.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The last general questionnaire survey of independent study supported by campus visitation was published in 1954 (Bonthius). This present study was undertaken to determine whether or not there was evidence that this innovation had realized the expanding future predicted for it. It included also an attempt to obtain some information on the factors which served to prevent its expansion, using institutions which purportedly experienced independent study at its best or most unique, either quantitatively or qualitatively.

Sample Selection

From the 1,126 liberal arts colleges and universities listed in the 1969 edition of the American Council on Education's publication, American Universities and Colleges as types: b, d, e, f, j, and k, a 33 1/3 percent sample (372) was selected by stratified random sampling. This represents the following kinds of colleges and universities:

- b. liberal arts and general
- d. primarily teacher preparatory

- e. both liberal arts and general, and teacher preparatory
- f. liberal arts and general, terminal-occupational and teacher preparatory
- j. liberal arts and general with one or two professional schools
- k. liberal arts and general with three or more professional schools.

Excluded were the following types:

- c. liberal arts and general, and terminal-occupational
- g. professional only (not including teacher preparatory)
- h. professional and teacher preparatory
- i. professional and terminal-occupational.

This sample group of 372 colleges and universities was found also to represent the accrediting regions, enrollment, and sources of support (public, independent, Protestant, Catholic) in about the same proportion that they were represented in the total population (Table 1).

Questionnaire

The original questionnaire (Appendix I) asked the president of the institution to indicate whether or not the college or university offered some form of independent study, including any offerings such as: research projects, experimental courses, class attendance exemption, course waiver by special examination, independent reading, independent study groups, computer assisted instruction, programmed learning

Table 1. Total population and selected sample of liberal arts colleges in the United States by support, accrediting region, type, and enrollment

	Total Population (N = 1,126)	Sample (N = 372)	Percent (33.0)
<u>Support</u>			
Public	379	122	32.2
Independent	186	63	33.9
Protestant	315	108	34.3
Roman Catholic	238	79	33.2
Other	8	0	...
<u>Accrediting Region</u>			
Middle States	217	72	33.2
New England	96	31	32.3
North Central	393	133	33.8
Northwestern	55	15	27.3
Southern	287	96	33.5
Western	78	25	32.1
<u>Type*</u>			
b	72	24	33.3
d	31	10	32.3
e	535	179	33.5
f	138	46	33.3
j	130	42	32.3
k	220	71	33.3
<u>Enrollment</u>			
0-750	212	76	35.9
751-1,000	140	44	31.4
1,001-1,500	202	63	31.2
1,501-2,000	104	44	42.3
2,001-5,000	205	64	31.2
5,001-10,000	140	37	26.4
10,001-20,000	76	25	32.9
20,001-30,000	30	12	40.0
30,001-40,000	9	3	33.3
40,001-	8	4	50.0

*Type b, liberal arts and general; d, primarily teacher preparation; e, liberal arts and general and teacher preparation; f, liberal arts and general, terminal-occupational, teacher preparation; j, liberal arts and general with one or two professional schools; k, liberal arts and general with three or more professional schools.

and any other form of self-directed learning. The questionnaire indicated that the term independent study would be limited in meaning only by the exclusion of usual class assignments such as term papers or reports. The next question the president was asked was whether or not the institution would participate in the study, in which case he was requested to name a representative with whom further correspondence might be conducted. A catalogue and any information concerning the program of independent study or offerings in independent study were requested.

In answer to this questionnaire and three follow-up letters, 96.7 percent (360) of the institutions responded. Of these 360, 14.7 percent (53) indicated that they did not have sufficient independent study to participate; 7.5 percent (27) indicated that they had programs of independent study but did not wish to participate; 1.1 percent (4) had either closed or were no longer in the appropriate categories; and 76.6 percent (276) indicated that they had programs and would participate. The latter group received 18-item questionnaires (Appendix II) and after two follow-up letters, 91.6 percent (253) were returned completed. Including the response from institutions who had no independent study, this would still represent 82.2 percent (306) of the total 372 sample colleges.

Selection of Colleges for Visitation

In addition to the overall picture of the status of independent study, the writer wanted a more in-depth picture of a number of institutions which appeared to have implemented independent study practices to a marked degree. Limitations in identifying such institutions permit at best the statement that the group studied was in some ways representative of institutions with more extensive independent study programs than most.

Difficulties in the selection of the most representative institutions are obvious:

1. Independent study has not been fully identified;
2. Information concerning the role and the state of independent study on particular campuses is not always shared, hence some administrators, faculty and students cannot assess the situation;
3. Catalogues and literature do not present an accurate picture of the role of independent study at a college;
4. Smaller colleges and the less-known institutions do not easily gain a reputation for their innovative practices which remain relatively unknown;
5. Much that is publicized in the way of innovation is found on closer inspection to be more the desire or enthusiasm on the part of the initiator or administration than actual practice;
6. Replies from some institutions did not meet the deadline.

The following selection procedures were used:

1. From the sample of colleges completing questionnaires, colleges were selected when they combined the following or evidenced any one to a high degree:
 - a. A high percentage of seniors who had participated in independent study (apart from required senior tutorials or required interim attendance),
 - b. Independent study offered to all students regardless of class or ability,
 - c. Catalogues indicating deep commitment to self-directed study;
2. Some colleges not in the sample whose names were mentioned in various surveys of independent study were selected. For several of these, added assurance of their involvement was ascertained from questionnaire responses;
3. A few colleges known by consultants to be involved in independent study were selected;
4. Because of the interest of cluster colleges in independent study, whole units of three of these were selected.

An attempt was made also to include a geographic spread as far as possible and the following states were represented: Colorado, California, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Iowa, Ohio, Oregon, and Wisconsin (Appendix III). The group of twenty-two colleges included coeducational institutions, single sex institutions, state controlled, independent, and church related. It included five of the six accrediting regions and ranged in student population from close to 300 to somewhat over 19,000.

Definition of Independent Study

Independent study in the original request to presidents (Appendix I) was defined as excluding only "the usual class assignments such as term papers or reports." In the questionnaires and interviews, independent study was also loosely defined, in accord with the views of Martin (1969) in his study of innovations when he felt that "it would be best for individuals in participating colleges and universities to tell the researchers what they meant." In this way, administrators, faculty and students were free to define their concept of independent study, thus decreasing the possibility of excluding any form of self-directed learning.

Interview Technique

Although there were specific questions concerning objectives, etc., and outlines were used (Appendix IV and V) there was a deliberate attempt to keep interviews open-ended in order to prevent the particular interviewee from resorting to a brief formal response pattern. Frequently, after the standard responses were completed, the interviewee became much more forthright.

In regard to the choice of those to be interviewed, the burden was placed on the institution. The president selected the liaison person who then was responsible for the

selection of those other than himself who were to be questioned. It was anticipated that the tendency would be to provide the most representative picture of the institution by someone who was most familiar with the situation. The possibility of having the institution put in the best light was more desired than feared since the interviewer was seeking the problems of independent study under the best circumstances. Intricate systems of random selection of interviewees did not seem warranted.

Most interviews were done individually, although on some occasions faculty and students were scheduled in groups. All interviewees agreed to have the conversation taped. Recorded on an inconspicuous SONY Casette, TC-110, the interviews were then either transcribed or reviewed by replay.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

Institutions Offering Little or No Independent Study

Of the 372 institutions contacted, 360 (96.7%) responded. Of this group, 27 (7.5%) indicated that while they had programs of independent study, they did not care to participate in the survey. In order not to be deprived of all information on these institutions, the writer obtained catalogues of 20 of them. Of these 20, five catalogues made no mention of independent study in any form, and the others did not give evidence of any deep commitment to this practice. Accordingly, one can assume that most of those institutions not participating were motivated, at least in part, by the recognition of the limitations of their independent study opportunities.

Of the 360 institutions which responded, 53 (14.7%) indicated that they either did not have any independent study or had too little to participate. Recalling that only "usual class assignments such as term papers or reports" were excluded from the definition of independent study, we can safely regard these institutions as being

without self-directed study. According to region, type of institution, enrollment and support, these 53 institutions admitting to little or no independent study and the 20 whose catalogues showed little evidence of independent study, fell into the categories shown in Table 2.

Institutions Offering Independent Study

The full questionnaire was completed by 253 (91.6%) of those institutions which indicated that they would participate. Questionnaire responses demonstrated the extent to which the institution was involved in independent study by reporting:

1. the number of departments in the college or university in which independent study was available;
2. whether or not it was available to all students, freshmen through seniors and students other than those who are superior;
3. the percentage of graduating seniors who participated in independent study;
4. whether or not the program had ever been evaluated;
5. whether or not the cost of the program had ever been evaluated.

We will consider in Tables 3-6 the answers to these questions according to the following categories of institutions: support, accrediting region, type of institution, and enrollment. Table 7 indicates the number of institutions with required programs.

Table 2. Institutions with little or no independent study

	Total in Sample	No. with Little or No I.S.	Percent of Total in Sample
	(N = 372)	(N = 73)	(N = 19.6)
<u>Region</u>			
Middle States	72	16	22.2
New England	31	8	25.8
North Central	133	22	16.5
Northwestern	15	1	6.7
Southern	96	21	21.9
Western	25	5	20.0
<u>Type*</u>			
b	24	1	4.2
d	10	3	30.0
e	179	34	19.0
f	46	15	32.6
j	42	12	28.6
k	71	8	11.3
<u>Enrollment</u>			
1-1,000	120	27	22.5
1,001-5,000	171	36	21.1
5,001-20,000	62	7	11.3
20,001-40,000	15	3	20.0
40,001-	4	0	...
<u>Support</u>			
Public	122	25	20.5
Independent	63	14	22.2
Protestant	108	18	16.5
Catholic	79	16	20.3

*Type b, liberal arts and general; d, primarily teacher preparation; e, liberal arts and general and teacher preparation; f, liberal arts and general, terminal-occupational, teacher preparation; j, liberal arts and general with one or two professional schools; k, liberal arts and general with three or more professional schools.

Table 3. Independent study activities by institutional support

	Public Support (N = 82)			Independent Support (N = 44)			Protestant Support (N = 80)			Catholic Support (N = 47)			Total (N = 253)		
	N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%		N	%	
Available in all depts.	50	(61.0)		34	(77.3)		58	(72.5)		33	(70.2)		175	(69.2)	
Available in 50% depts. or more	69	(84.2)		41	(93.2)		76	(95.0)		40	(85.1)		226	(89.3)	
Available to all students	19	(23.2)		14	(31.8)		17	(21.3)		11	(23.4)		61	(24.1)	
100% graduating seniors have participated	2	(2.4)		5	(11.4)		2	(6.4)		3	(6.4)		12	(4.7)	
50% or more graduating seniors have participated	12	(14.6)		17	(38.6)		15	(18.8)		5	(10.6)		49	(19.4)	
10% or fewer graduating seniors have participated	47	(57.3)		10	(22.7)		26	(32.5)		21	(44.7)		104	(41.1)	
Never attempted evaluation of Independent Study program	57	(69.5)		26	(59.1)		58	(72.5)		36	(76.6)		177	(70.0)	
Never attempted evaluation of cost of Independent Study program	73	(89.0)		34	(77.3)		64	(80.0)		37	(78.7)		208	(82.2)	

Table 4. Independent study activities by accrediting region

	Middle States (N = 50)		New England (N = 17)		North Central (N = 96)		Northwest (N = 12)		Southern (N = 59)		Western (N = 19)		Total (N = 253)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Available in all depts.	37	(74.0)	13	(76.5)	64	(66.7)	10	(83.3)	33	(55.9)	18	(94.7)	175	(69.2)
Available in 50% depts. or more	43	(86.0)	15	(88.2)	90	(93.8)	12	(100.0)	48	(81.4)	18	(94.7)	226	(89.3)
Available to all students	15	(30.0)	5	(29.4)	21	(21.9)	3	(25.0)	13	(22.0)	4	(21.1)	61	(24.1)
100% of graduating seniors have participated	3	(6.0)	3	(17.7)	1	(1.0)	1	(8.3)	2	(3.4)	2	(10.5)	12	(4.7)
50% or more graduating seniors have participated	12	(24.0)	5	(29.4)	12	(12.5)	3	(25.0)	9	(15.3)	8	(42.1)	49	(19.4)
10% or fewer graduating seniors have participated	24	(48.0)	8	(47.1)	38	(39.6)	3	(25.0)	29	(49.2)	2	(10.5)	104	(41.1)
Never attempted evaluation of I.S. program	33	(66.0)	14	(82.4)	69	(71.9)	12	(100.0)	37	(62.7)	12	(63.2)	177	(70.0)
Never attempted evaluation of cost of I.S. program	39	(78.0)	17	(100.0)	80	(88.3)	10	(83.3)	47	(79.7)	15	(79.0)	208	(82.2)

Table 5. Independent study activities by type of institution*

	b (N = 16)		d (N = 7)		e (N = 125)		f (N = 24)		j (N = 26)		k (N = 55)		Total (N = 253)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Available in all depts.	13	(81.3)	4	(57.1)	90	(72.0)	14	(58.3)	23	(88.5)	32	(58.2)	175	(69.2)
Available in 50% depts. or more	14	(87.5)	4	(57.1)	114	(91.2)	21	(87.5)	26	(100.0)	47	(85.5)	226	(89.3)
Available to all students	5	(31.3)	2	(28.6)	28	(22.4)	3	(12.5)	7	(26.9)	16	(29.1)	61	(24.1)
100% of graduating seniors have participated	4	(25.0)	0	...	6	(4.8)	1	(4.2)	1	(3.8)	0	...	12	(4.7)
50% or more graduating seniors have participated	7	(43.8)	1	(14.3)	26	(20.8)	3	(12.5)	2	(7.7)	10	(18.2)	49	(19.4)
10% or fewer graduating seniors have participated	3	(18.8)	5	(71.4)	44	(35.2)	13	(54.2)	14	(53.8)	25	(45.5)	104	(41.1)
Never attempted evaluation of I.S. program	8	(50.0)	5	(71.4)	83	(66.4)	21	(87.5)	19	(73.1)	41	(74.5)	177	(70.0)
Never attempted evaluation of cost of I.S. program	13	(81.3)	7	(100.0)	100	(80.0)	19	(79.2)	23	(88.5)	46	(83.6)	208	(82.2)

*Type b, liberal arts and general; d, primarily teacher preparation; e, liberal arts and general and teacher preparation; f, liberal arts and general, terminal-occupational, teacher preparation; j, liberal arts and general with one or two professional schools; k, liberal arts and general with three or more professional schools.

Table 6. Independent study activities by enrollment

	1-1,000 (N = 69)		1,001-5,000 (N = 119)		5,001-20,000 (N = 53)		20,001-40,000 (N = 9)		40,001- (N = 2)		Total (N = 253)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Available in all depts.	54	(78.3)	83	(69.7)	32	(60.4)	4	(44.4)	2	(100.0)	175	(69.2)
Available in 50% depts. or more	65	(94.2)	102	(85.7)	48	(90.6)	9	(100.0)	2	(100.0)	226	(89.3)
Available to all students	16	(23.2)	25	(21.0)	13	(24.5)	5	(55.6)	1	(50.0)	61	(24.1)
100% of graduating seniors have participated	6	(8.7)	4	(3.4)	2	(3.8)	0	...	0	...	12	(4.7)
50% or more graduating seniors have participated	11	(15.9)	25	(21.0)	10	(18.9)	3	(33.3)	0	...	49	(19.4)
10% or fewer graduating seniors have participated	20	(29.0)	54	(45.4)	27	(50.9)	3	(33.3)	0	...	104	(41.1)
Never attempted evaluation of I.S. program	44	(63.8)	88	(73.9)	37	(69.8)	7	(77.8)	1	(50.0)	177	(70.0)
Never attempted evaluation of cost of I.S. program	55	(79.7)	100	(84.0)	45	(84.9)	6	(66.7)	2	(100.0)	208	(82.2)

Table 7. Required programs of independent study*

	No. in Category Responding to Questionnaire	No. with Required Program	Percent with Required Program
	(N = 253)	(N = 35)	(13.8)
<u>Region Accredited</u>			
Middle States	50	9	18.0
New England	17	4	23.5
North Central	96	7	7.3
Northwest	12	2	16.7
Southern	59	11	18.6
Western	19	2	10.5
<u>Support</u>			
Public	82	9	11.0
Independent	44	12	27.3
Protestant	80	8	10.0
Catholic	47	6	12.8
<u>Enrollment</u>			
1-1,000	69	8	11.6
1,001-5,000	120	16	13.3
5,001-20,000	53	7	13.2
20,001-40,000	9	4	44.4
40,001-	2	0	0.0
<u>Type</u>			
b	16	6	37.5
d	7	0	0.0
e	125	16	12.8
f	24	4	16.7
j	26	0	0.0
k	55	9	16.4

*Required of:

all seniors	15
all superior seniors	8
all superior seniors, superior juniors . . .	4
all seniors, superior freshmen	1
all juniors	1
all freshmen	1
all students	5
	<u>35</u>

Questionnaire responses other than those relating to the questions above are beyond the scope of this study.

Summary

Questionnaire results indicate that while over half the sample institutions (69.2%) make independent study available in all departments and close to 90 percent make it available in 50 percent or more (89.3%), comparatively few (24.1%) allow students to participate regardless of ability or class. Considering student use of this opportunity, there is again a tremendous drop both in the percentage of institutions graduating seniors 100 percent of whom have participated (4.7%), and of those graduating seniors 50 percent or more of whom have used independent study (19.4%). The failure of 70 percent to attempt an evaluation of such programs may suggest a lack of concern over the present status of independent study and a lack of interest in expanding it. Acknowledging the close relationship between finances and the implementation of programs, there is added support for the hypothesis of an interest lag, in the fact that 82.2 percent of the sample institutions have never even attempted an evaluation of the cost of such a program.

In terms of the types of institutional support, the independent college stands out with its high percentage of institutions making independent study available to all

students and in student use of this opportunity. By region, it is more difficult to single out one area as most representative, although the Western region has by far the most institutions with 50 percent or more students participating in independent study, and institutions in which independent study is available in all departments. Although in the Middle States area more institutions by percentage make independent study available to all students, it ranks fourth of the regions in students taking advantage of the possibility. The type of institution seeming most receptive to independent study is the liberal arts and general college which leads the others in availability to all students and in student participation, in the latter case leading both in institutions with 100 percent and 50 percent or more graduating students using the opportunity. Institutions with teacher preparation programs d, e, and f take turns in last place or share last place in five of the eight classifications. By enrollment, although the 20,001-40,000 institutions make independent study available to students in more instances and have a higher incidence of 50 percent or more students using the opportunity, the small number (9) in the sample and in that of the 40,000 and above (2) forces us to look at the smaller institutions. Of the three other groups, the 1-1,000 enrollment colleges lead in most categories, and when they do not, they are only a few points from first place.

While it is interesting to see the distribution of independent study activity by support, region, type, and enrollment, no particularly enlightening patterns are formed. The important fact is that few of the institutions indicating that they present opportunities are seriously engaged in these activities. If we add to this the fact that an additional 73 institutions have little or no independent study, we can extend some of the percentages to an even greater degree. Based on the addition of the 73 colleges, we can say with some confidence, for example, that 73.6 percent of the responding colleges do not make independent study available to all students. Since over 80 percent (82.2%) of those colleges which offer independent study have never evaluated the cost, and 70 percent have never even evaluated the program itself there are ample grounds for believing that there is no present rush in the direction of either usage or understanding of independent study as either an improved learning technique or a financial saving.

CHAPTER V

VISITATION FINDINGS

Purposes and Problems

It has been established that little independent study appears to exist in colleges and universities today. Two questions therefore must be considered: what problems make it difficult for institutions to offer independent study to all students; and why, when independent study is available, do students not take advantage of the opportunities? Answers to these questions could have been solicited in the questionnaires since it was suspected at the outset that a problem did exist, but the desire for a better understanding of total institutional difficulties demanded broader discussion that could best be handled by the visitation of a number of colleges and universities. By talking with administrators, faculty and students in institutions appearing to be committed to the concept of independent study, insight could be gained into problems which persisted even for those colleges intent on their solution.

The concern for and interest in independent study by top administrators of the selected institutions was evidenced by the graciousness with which they agreed to accept

a campus visitation, the openness of responses, and the availability of administrators, faculty, staff and students for interviews and assistance.

Some of the visits coincided with the arrival of American troops in Cambodia and this forcibly injected another controversial element into whatever particular problems were current on the respective campuses, e.g., Vietnam, R.O.T.C., environmental pollution, the free university. In some institutions this disruption made interviews more difficult to schedule because of the urgency of faculty and student meetings planned to cool tempers.

Open-ended interviews provided a breadth of insight which more than compensated for the problem of presenting them in a systematic summary. They also made it difficult to limit the discussion of independent study to the two proposed questions. Faculty and administrators in searching for possible explanations, expanded the topics, expressing their attitudes on problems of overall organization, curriculum, finance, pressures of student dissent, black power and a multitude of related ideas. Students commented on faculty in-fighting, administrative weaknesses, over-radical and over-conservative fellow students, political involvement, national, local and institutional issues. There were lengthy conversations about existing forms of independent study, the development of interim periods and off-campus terms, the impressive studies which some students have

conducted through independent study, the contributions made by these programs and attempts (or the lack of them) at evaluation. Although all areas discussed were in some way related to situations compatible with or alien to the kind of student independence which makes self-directed learning possible, those included here deal directly with the two main questions: why is more independent study not available; and why do students not avail themselves to what is there?

Because participating colleges were given the assurance that they would not be identified, their anonymity has been safeguarded. This has been made easier by the fact that individual institutions are difficult to characterize. Just as higher education prides itself on its diversity, so may individual institutions lay claim to great internal differences. While these serve to promote the tensions which stimulate growth, at the same time they make it difficult to typify the total operation. For this reason, by design and by constraint, a topical approach has been taken in identifying areas where difficulties are typically found, instead of singling out specific institutions demonstrating inhibiting factors.

Comments from administrators and faculty were used for a better understanding of the institutions' failure to provide either an opportunity for self-directed learning or an incentive for participation. Remarks from students supplied examples of problems militating against their use

of existing possibilities or the initiation of other opportunities. In addition, generalizations have been made on the basis of an overall review of the interviews and observations.

Reasons for Limited Independent Study Offerings

The size of this paper requires that the number of inhibiting causes discussed be limited to a few of those seeming to be of more general importance. While the following deterrents to independent study are experienced on most campuses, it is impossible to place them in any order of significance since they have varying effects on different campuses. The frequency with which they were mentioned indicated faculty and administrative concern.

Environment

Not only was environment frequently considered inadequate in providing the proper encouragement for independent study, in many instances it was referred to as hostile. Among the many administrators and faculty interviewed, two men, one in a college with only limited understanding of the meaning of independent study and one in an institution supportive of it to a high degree, most clearly described the attitudes and environment which they felt were most conducive to independent study at its best. Drawing

parallel pictures of the climate in which student self-direction could best grow, one spoke from the frustration of having attempted to promote, against great odds, the establishment of such an environment, the other from the strength of having experienced it.

The first man, an administrator, referred to the importance of a unified outlook:

You can't have on one side a regimented situation and then on the academic side a kind of well of freedom so that the student can move about and explore. It's just incongruous and it hampers the whole development. . . . If you're moving toward independent study you're trying to create a certain climate and even your custodial regulations and the rest of the institution have to correlate. . . .

He continued with an explanation of the need for an atmosphere of trust in the student, claiming that independent study is a situation

where the student himself assumes the responsibility of 90% of whatever is done. . . . It's kind of a contractual arrangement where he comes in with a program that he wants to work on laid out. What the student has to find then is someone who can evaluate what he has done. That's the critical thing. So if he wants to work on some topic in parapsychology, we wouldn't be able to find anyone here. His professor might agree to have his work evaluated by someone from another institution. . . . In terms of the professor's time in independent study, it's used in critically scrutinizing what the student wants to do and at that point deciding whether he can judge what the student comes up with and then not seeing the student again until he turns in what he has finalized--a paper, a series of paintings, composition in music. . . . At that point it's evaluated. So in terms of the time of the professor, it's judgment in the beginning

and judgment at the end and maybe there's four hours tied up in the whole thing over the semester.

He concluded by describing the attitude of one of his own colleges toward the meaning of independent study.

When they talk about independent study it is in terms of tutorials, the student seeing the professor regularly, continual progress reports, conferences or a few small seminars. That to me is not independent study. What the student winds up with then is not the student's, it's the professor's.

The second man, a faculty member, claiming that the atmosphere of permissiveness toward independent study was the greatest incentive for its continued practice, went on to explain:

Any student who wants to do something that he has to petition for is going to be discouraged from it and the more you raise the barriers, the more you hassle him over his petition, the less likely he is to see it through. I think that's the nature of students. They lack the confidence that is necessary for seeing a complicated petition through all the signatures it needs to get.

Continuing with his belief as applied to student field-study off-campus:

We tend not to formalize that kind of business but just trust the individual faculty and individual student to do what they perceive as best, which is where we really are in the whole business. In independent study or regular studies, you have to recognize that they will often do things that you don't think wise. But people are so different that what is worthwhile and what is meaningful to people differs so much that you just have to tolerate a great deal of variety of things going on for academic credit. As long as we're stuck with this incredible system of giving formal credit for everything

a student does, ultimately summing it up in this ridiculous institution of degrees, then we're just going to have to tolerate great differences.

Both men acknowledged the need for orientation to this kind of freedom, one of them outlining a sequential program to prepare students from the freshman year for increasing responsibility.

These views cannot be considered the institutional views of more than a few of the campuses visited, but they represent the thinking of many administrators and faculty members attempting to explain why independent study does not work. They feel that existing practices create an environment which stifles opportunities for real self-direction.

An older study (Gruber, 1962) focusing on the development of characteristics which lead to independence found that

curiosity cannot lead to information-seeking and continued mastery of material if the environment presents S with demands that are antagonistic to independent information-seeking. Thus, isolated experiments in self-directed study can have only limited effects (Chapter 3, pp. 2-3).

Most campus attempts to develop independent study have about them a certain isolation: single faculty efforts in a hostile or apathetic department; single departmental attempts in a disinterested college; or single college stirrings in an unconcerned university. Another form of isolated experience is brought about by the practice of great liberality in the social realm accompanied by academic narrowness.

Rarely do all segments share the same free climate. The results reaffirm Gruber's doubt that single innovations can bring the profound changes in college atmosphere that will enlarge the student's responsibility for his own education.

Some advocates of independent study who might tend to lean toward greater liberality feel threatened by the dangers inherent in what they consider the excessive confidence of those institutions which place little faith in orientation to independent study and depend on students to adjust by their own means. Critics of this "instant independence" hear rumors of students debilitated by so much freedom that they are unable to handle the numerous opportunities and varieties of choice. There is a significant difference of opinion on how real this danger is because of the self-selection process whereby students who are attracted to a very permissive institution are prepared to exercise their freedom to a marked degree. In addition, final success or failure of this laissez faire attitude is dependent upon the institution's attitude toward student failure and risk-taking. In one college where the environment is one of general student freedom, a number of both faculty and student representatives expressed enthusiasm for the sink-swim theory which allows a freshman to completely squander opportunities and slowly come to realize that any success will be generated by him alone. Failure, when it occurs, is hopefully followed by academic conversion,

assumed responsibility, eagerness to compensate for lost time and a conviction of the relevance of curricular pursuits. Little is said, however, about those who drop out (and their number is large) without having attained a new lease on education and who depart from the institution with little more than painful regrets and feelings of guilt.

In addition to the two extremes, freedom hobbled by restriction and excessive freedom, are two illusory situations. First, there are institutions which have succeeded in developing an environment which makes possible and encourages individual study and creates the illusion that this represents independence when in reality there are such restrictions that it amounts to prescribed learning.

I think it's safe to say that lip service has always been paid at our college to the idea of what you mean by independent study; but I don't know that in fact we have succeeded in creating an environment which fosters it. I would almost be inclined to argue . . . that we have probably created an environment which offers a large number of opportunities for individual study and created the illusion that these represent independent study, but that the number of students actively engaged in genuinely independent study is still relatively small with us.

These institutions may offer a disservice even greater than those which are overtly antagonistic because they tend to lull students into settling for a modicum of self-direction.

Second, and more difficult for students to understand, are the institutions which create the illusion that they are what they once were, highly oriented to student

academic independence and innovation. Living on their laurels, their earlier momentum having been of sufficient force, they continue to sustain the public image of progressiveness and attract students who identify with the avant garde and enroll only to become disillusioned with the environment. These colleges have not turned back ideologically, but inertia prevents implementation and perhaps presents a prelude to the following stage, one of regression from their former commitment.

In this latter category are institutions turning back from a climate of student freedom. Ironically, institutions which were among the first to establish warm environments for independence, have found the free-wheeling practices of this earlier period taking on structure. In the late 50's one such institution placed great emphasis on both experimental work and independent study and formed colleges based on these concepts. They, in time, began to change and have taken on a different visage.

One of the ironies of history is that although these colleges started out as very loose in their organization, they have over a period of time (and there may be some kind of sociological law) tended to become more and more highly structured so that by this irony or paradox we find ourselves in the position of having the colleges occasionally making more severe curricular demands on students, in the structural sense, than the rest of the program. Nevertheless in their early days they were of tremendous importance in helping establish a climate which moved students in the direction of independent study.

There is much evidence to substantiate Martin's (1969) claim that "sustaining innovation is a bigger challenge than initiating it," especially if change has to do with important aspects of the institution.

It is true that major innovations for educational institutions have been hard to initiate, harder still to transfer into the care of those who did not come under the originator's persuasion, and hardest to sustain over any considerable length of time, particularly if the new venture involved holistic innovation (Martin, 1969, p. 128).

Educators easily fall back into the safe and tried role that institutional organization has encouraged. Although there is today a strong force struggling toward increased student responsibility, we may still say of the national scene what Gruber (1962) had to say about his single institution.

The picture . . . that emerges from the present study is one of an environment fundamentally hostile to independent intellectual work on the student's part. Therefore, no single innovation in education [sic] method could be expected to produce the profound change in atmosphere necessary to give the student greatly enlarged responsibility for his own education. . . . (Chapter 23, p. 9).

Faculty and administrators do not see that independent study will not be implemented to a significant extent until independence itself is stimulated by the catalytic force of the kind of freedom in all areas of the college and university which is conducive to the development of responsibility and maturity.

Departmental Autonomy

Although the climate or environmental atmosphere of a college, whether free or fettered, is in a gestalt sense more than the sum of its individual parts, certain components were seen by faculty and administrators as inhibiting the development of the climate necessary for student self-direction. One of these was departmental autonomy which sometimes fractured institutional efforts.

As pointed out by Dressel et al. (1970) a high degree of departmental autonomy is not unreasonable if developed together with responsibility and effectiveness. At present, however, as related to self-directed study, autonomy exists without significant evidence of either of the latter. Departments differ in their attitudes, and those within the departments are often even more at odds concerning independent study practices. In one institution, for example, a department has ruled that a faculty member can direct only one "special topic" (independent study). A faculty member complained,

this is a real problem if independent study is to function. . . . There are real limits.

In another institution professing almost unlimited opportunities for independent study, the faculty, numbering in the neighborhood of 180 full-time members, are permitted only three independent study projects each if they carry an average teaching load, which most do. This serves upward to 1,000 students.

At the other extreme, the chairman of another department, although he had misgivings about some unorthodox forms of self-directed projects, ran the operation according to the proverb "better grow a thousand weeds than crush a single flower." Although approval of the department head was routinely required, he never refused a project or limited activities.

Differences in attitude on the part of departments ranging from great permissiveness to rigidity are dependent upon many factors other than the chairman's attitude. These include whether or not those involved feel that the particular discipline is one which lends itself to student self-direction; the conservatism or liberality of the members of the department; and the dependency of the department upon the good will of financially influential administrators. Students are confused by the differences in attitude from department to department, some to the point of finding themselves in second choice majors because of rejection or indifference in the department offering their first choice.

Interim programs offer some examples of extremes in attitudes. A social science professor commented,

Our trouble comes from a number of things, one of which is the difference in approach in departments. What we demand is entirely different from what the math department will do. . . . I think our department is the laxest of any. If a kid comes in and wants to hitch-hike across the country, fine, hitch-hike across the country. Our feeling here is that this is your time to do independent study and if you want to fritter it away, go fritter it away.

This hardly speaks for the entire department and at times there are great internal differences depending upon current committee membership.

There are great differences within our department. When I'm on the interim program committee, I have a meeting of the majors in November and tell them what is required of them, what they must turn in before they leave and so on. . . . When Professor _____ is on, he doesn't have any meeting; the kids don't know what's going on. So there are various invidious distinctions.

Frequently, science and mathematics departments veer away from self-directed study supposedly to give their students a better chance of getting into the best graduate schools.

I suppose the more professionally oriented the student and faculty are in the specific fields, the less attractive this is. It's hard for grad schools to interpret. One student wrote to a med school and was told that he had to be in regular courses.

Faculty often claim that those in the sciences are more likely to take a conservative stance. A scientist himself, one professor stated that

scientists in general . . . tend, I think, to be educationally very conservative. They still feel themselves the possessors of a body of knowledge which has to be squeezed into unreceptive heads. They're reasonably authoritarian in the whole educational picture that they have. . . . Scientists are much more concerned that a student get professional guidance and not make mistakes. . . . Probably many of the science faculty feel that essentially everyone graduating from their program will go on to graduate school and they must give them preparation to get them all into Harvard. That's not true at all in the humanities and social study areas. . . . And the fact that someone should come out

with a chemistry B.A. and not know some little detail--that would reflect badly on all chemists at this institution who had certified him. . . .

The most usual types of independent study in the area of science are individual laboratory research projects and self-learning in the use of particularly sophisticated equipment such as the electron microscope. Independent study takes the form of field work in the social sciences and education, and in the latter area frequently becomes another name for practicum, student observation and student-teaching.

Another example of sharply divided departmental differences, this time not so much dependent upon the uniqueness of the discipline but more likely upon the individual differences of the faculty, is in the area of honors programs which assume the responsibility for independent study. Extreme differences can exist in the rationale for the original invitation to membership, final selection and survival of students in the programs. In one institution two language departments together accepted only five students in the last five years and of these only two finished in the program. Another department, open in its policies, saw numbers of students invited, admitted and graduated from the program.

Charging that independent study is a luxury which they cannot afford, departments have little evidence to substantiate this claim and have made almost no effort to

determine ways in which self-directed study might become economical. Chairmen seem satisfied to presume that it would require a one to one relationship with teachers who are already overburdened with large classes of students.

. . . it's tremendously expensive and time-consuming. Since you must be doing what the student is doing, the effectiveness is cut down if you have many students doing different things.

Prohibitions provide a legitimate excuse for those faculty members who wish to refrain and an added challenge and feeling of benevolence for those who insist on overextending themselves. Even when departments seek to prevent the latter by denying credit, they are aware that faculty are in a position to circumvent any such move by various devices among which is having the student register in an existing course. Faculty ingenuity is exercised in different ways depending upon the various obstacles set up both in the department and in the general structure of the college or university.

Dressel (1970) regards the departmental demand for complete curricular autonomy as highly dubious. The regular curricular review suggested by him would serve to increase the possibility of: greater innovation; decisions based on greater knowledge of the financial implications; and hopefully some unity among departments. The present claim to unity lies in the fact that most departments provide devices which safeguard faculty from doing what they do not care to

do and inadvertently encourage others toward what they might not have attempted.

Unclear Objectives

Conversations with faculty and administrators about objectives of independent study made it apparent that while on most campuses both groups shared the desire of offering to students the best academic opportunities, the goals of independent study differed not only between the groups but among their members, especially among faculty. These diverse objectives do not allow for a well-used, unified program.

First, let us consider the faculty. Since the attitude toward the amount and kind of independent study depends upon whether or not it is seen as a valuable learning process regardless of the outcome, or as only a means to the more important end-product of accumulated knowledge, faculty members were asked to express their feelings in this regard. Many faculty unhesitatingly expressed the belief that its value lay in engendering an approach to learning, not amassing facts.

The process is the more important objective because it carries over. The process if successful and sound will carry over into the way a student views his entire college experience and life. He can use this kind of independent approach and thinking in all kinds of situations. This is one of the most important things that can be done in the undergraduate school.

Another faculty member saw the process as a means of preventing the stifling of interest that comes from prescribed study.

I guess I can only answer for myself. I'm more interested in the process. . . . If the student is to be self-generating he ought to have a chance to do that within the framework of his undergraduate years. Then too I'm looking toward the future. All too many students have had it by the time they get their A.B.'s; and they don't read anything or take any real intellectual interest. It seems to me that if they have seized upon an interest and tried to develop it on their own they are much more likely to do it later on.

One of the strongest expressions of faith in the process of independent study regardless of quantitative results came from a faculty member in one of the institutions with the most flexible system of independent study.

I think it's immaterial what the student leaves the university with as far as what's in his head. You can give marvelous courses which teach him an incredible number of facts and destroy his interest in the subject so that five years later he's forgotten the facts and hates the subject. In theory, I am almost completely unconcerned with what the student learns. I think it's important for students to make decisions for themselves. Anything that moves in that direction--even if the student flounders in the freedom--It's the only way to mature.

Some few, on the other hand view the objective as the specific knowledge which the student wants and which, because of a particular curricular problem, he cannot obtain in any way except through independent study. It is then considered to be

a means of exploring aspects of the discipline that have either been treated preemptorily or ignored . . . he can't get it any other way. . . . If we had a wide range of courses perhaps the number of "independents" would automatically decline. . . . Quite honestly, I don't think that many "independents" sponsored in this institution are undertaken so carefully and considerately that the processual aspect of it is consciously in the mind of the instructor. I don't think there is any conscious attempt to have the student explore the process.

Another faculty member discounts the process to the point of negating independent study which he seems to equate with totally unassisted study.

We discover quite generally that the student who is capable of handling independent work is generally most interested in getting a broad background which can be best gotten in a formal course rather than in independent study. It's a lot easier to have a guide through an advanced science course than for the student to do it alone. The student then has to do what the instructor does--go through all the literature, weed out the chaf, organize the grain into a solid whole--an exhaustive process.

Simply stated another said,

process is important; but from the standpoint of gathering knowledge it is a total waste.

Other faculty do not feel that they can put process or product in an order of importance. They see the product as the motivating influence, the process as the means.

The processual part of independent study would not be possible without the student's being motivated toward some particular objective that he was really desirous of knowing.

Sanford (1970) is baffled by the inarticulateness of colleges about their aims. With ill-defined institutional objectives, it is not strange then that college and

university administrators have difficulty in setting forth goals for their programs or offerings of independent study. What is absent in the way of clean-cut objectives is more than balanced by reasons for its introduction. Most deans and directors are quite honest in admitting that independent study is for them one or several of the following:

1. a way of competing with larger institutions which offer relatively the same education for considerably less tuition;
2. a means of expanding the curriculum when faculty shortages make the institution unable to meet students' demands for more relevant courses;
3. a method of doubling dormitory space by replacing students engaged in off-campus activities with other students;
4. a means of receiving the same tuition for short periods of student attendance while students receive remuneration for their off-campus activities;
5. a way of satisfying black students by allowing them to become engaged in group study in otherwise unavailable black culture courses;
6. a means of keeping abreast of other colleges.

A few comments to this effect will express some of their attitudes:

In the sense that it attracts students, independent study makes for economy. It also relieves pressures when students want to study something that is not offered . . . there are all kinds of schedule problems and problems of credit shortages that lead to solution by independent study.

Our response to the discovery that the black students did not really want to become members of the WASP establishment was to accede to their request that a mode of independent study, though a corporate mode, be established for them.

* * *

If we could have a program like this (off campus independent study). . . . It would be possible to save some faculty time, bed space in dorms and lessen the total cost of the student's education by moving a student out for at least one of the eight semesters or even two.

* * *

Administrators, deluged with reasons, seek to fit the use to the need without the answers to three important questions; first, is independent study better than other forms of education? Second, if so, is it better for their particular institution, taking into consideration its program, faculty and particular student body? Third, is it a more expensive type of education?

Even though they have no proof of the superiority or economy of independent study, most administrators either do not see the value of their studying the effectiveness of independent study on their own campuses or do not have the staff to direct such inquiry. On the basis of current writings and the reputation of institutions which introduced self-directed learning much earlier, and strengthened by the foregoing practical reasons, many administrators conclude that it is good. Few have the time, staff, or inclination to explore its highest reaches, and leave to circumstances

and student pressure the amount and type of implementation. Most of the above mentioned reasons for its use are satisfied when independent study is advertised as available, and implemented, in certain limited ways, i.e., work study types of opportunities or interim term programs.

There are almost no institutions having clear-cut independent study goals with sequential plans and adequate orientation, expressed concisely and published or promulgated to the entire institutional community. Programs are more an accretion of regulations often expressed in a negative way and developed out of safeguards based on misuses of the past or on practical needs.

Although most interim periods lead one to believe that the idea of independent study is of primary concern, the objectives for its inauguration in many institutions was the resolution of the problem of "what to do with January" which had become a lame duck session and for some a hazard.

Students would have been working straight through from September until January. If a virus hit, everyone would be flat; if a balmy period arrived, there would be riots.

Even in institutions where faculty and students were aware of the extent of the possibilities of independent study, which often they were not, they frequently differed in their interpretation of what was permissible. Their unfamiliarity with objectives and procedures indicated disuse or at least infrequent occasion for reference to them.

As one director described it, some types of independent study are "buried in the catalogue." This results in either of two extremes--reluctance to become involved or hesitation on the part of faculty to be anything but permissive. The latter solution at times has the distinction of giving the students the opportunity not only to learn but to feel that they are getting away with something by doing so. So said a student:

One good thing about independent study that I've noticed is since the faculty is by and large not very sure of what it is or what you're required to do . . . you can go in and if you approach it the right way you can do anything you want. You can go in and say "This is what I'm going to do in your class. I'm going to do this paper and this paper and I'm not going to take any tests but I'll do a special project for you and then I want you to fill out this little form." And the professors by and large will say O.K. and that way you do what you want and you actually spend most of your time learning things because the things you didn't want to do probably wouldn't profit you much anyway.

Overwhelmed by the tension between the ideals of independent study and the accumulation of immediate needs, practical problems and preventive measures, deans and directors reason themselves into the position, often convincing, that looseness of purpose is the best means for implementing appropriate plans. Individual students and faculty members are free to work out their programs, and social opinion is considered adequate pressure to correct consistent failures by causing faculty to get "pushed back from an unsuccessful pattern."

There are sufficient expressions of desire for more definite goals to avoid concluding that the looseness of structure is intended even though it is at times effective. Two such expressions will exemplify this.

I don't think we are able to define them [objectives] well enough or understand what they should be. But certainly just from this last year we've found a wide variance in interpretation so we haven't gotten across objectives to the faculty even though it's spelled out in the handbook and in the catalogue.

* * *

A lot of faculty members who serve as advisors to students don't really have a grasp exactly on the duties and responsibilities that they should have. So many times I think they will just say, "Well, take an independent study if you like."

* * *

An attempt to clarify objectives is not made easy by the fact that one form of independent study, the tutorial, one-to-one faculty-student relationship, is often equated with independent study and in many instances, attempts to expand the former into wider use meet great resistance from faculty who "have a tough time turning loose of tutorial."

I think a lot of us faculty talk about how mature these kids are, how we think they ought to be released from authoritarian control we've had over them; and yet it amazes me how so many faculty assume that no learning will take place unless that faculty member's around. And that seems to be diametrically opposed to independent study.

* * *

It's possible that faculty have to have company.
We have to have somebody listening to us.

* * *

In summary, a few institutions find the lack of clearly defined objectives either liberating or disastrous. The majority however fall somewhere in between, handicapped by the lack of a common understanding which would allow for differences in implementation while proposing basic goals. Some institutions look hopefully to the building of objectives which are flexible enough to stimulate creativity and fixed enough to allow survival. Certain that this cannot be done by the faculty alone, they view the students as important to the planning process.

I think the issues have to be faced squarely and honestly by faculty members and students together, talking it through. I think it's irrelevant that some kind of mandate about how much emphasis should be placed on independent study comes from on high. It is meaningless. In my view it has to grow up as teachers talk about what does count for them, what they view a learning experience to be or the best way to spend time as a college student.

The fact remains that the objectives of "independent study" are dependent upon the meaning of the two words, and American higher education is a long way from understanding or defining either independence or study.

Reasons for Limited Student Use
of Independent Study

Students were interviewed individually at the first few institutions since this was the original plan. The individual approach was prompted by the desire to obtain a forthright opinion without peer pressure. At one college, however, interviews fell behind schedule and, in an attempt to reconcile the problem of the late hour and waiting students on a Friday afternoon, a secretary sent in the next three students. The resulting interview was so effective that group interviews were adopted as a continuing practice for the rest of the visits whenever possible. Rather than inhibiting honest expression, the group interaction encouraged the exploration of all aspects of both dissatisfaction and satisfaction. Each student's comments served as a basis for further discussion.

Since our purpose here is to identify some deterrents to independent study, we will limit our discussion to negative reactions. Students more apt to be content with structure and rigidity would most likely exist in somewhat smaller numbers on the campuses visited because of the institutional images of liberality. In addition, most students interviewed were selected by the respective directors, and one would expect them to be chosen on the basis of their experience with or interest in independent study. The views expressed, therefore, are largely those

of students with impulsive strivings toward independence. Three of the areas around which they shared common concerns were: the inhibiting nature of the environment; the problem of student apathy, insecurity and discouragement; and inappropriate evaluation of students' efforts toward independence.

Environment

Berelson's (1960) suggestion that there is widespread automatic institutional allegiance to the symbol of independent study without supportive practice, may explain a climate which students find 'dishonest.' An intellectual atmosphere is, to many of them (Heath, 1968), the most significant determinant in the development of academic skills, and a climate of real freedom reinforces and in turn is reinforced by this intellectual atmosphere. Most students, whether interested in independent study or not, find their collegiate environment constrictive. Called by one student (a senior in an institution frequently labeled as one of the most liberal) "rigorous, rationalistic, fairly traditional, enforcedly distributive liberal arts education," the closely structured programs stifle students' incentive to strike out on their own.

In such a climate, which independent study might help to alleviate, the first and most obvious deterrent to student use of self-directed learning is ignorance of its

existence or of its possible application in their academic lives. A senior student who regretted having no knowledge of it earlier in her career commented:

I started private reading just this year. Up until then I didn't know that it was possible which is too bad. . . . I think I would have been ready as a freshman to do this. . . . I think I lost a lot of confidence in myself and in my intelligence after a year in classes here. The college is filled with a lot of smooth talking intellectual people and in class this is sometimes intimidating.

Most institutions seem to depend upon the catalogue to identify independent study opportunities, yet frequently it is not up to date and even directors and deans, checking their publications in the presence of the interviewer, seemed unfamiliar with what they found there. One faculty member suggested that the catalogue description seemed designed to discourage students or to give the faculty a way to say "no" to students whom they don't want. "It's a kind of paper protection" making possible faculty selection of those students whose superior accomplishments will redound to their "sponsors."

Some students feel that knowledge of independent study's existence is not sufficient to impel them toward it. They need positive encouragement.

While verbally it expresses great concern for independent study, _____ College actually does very little to encourage it institutionally. There's not much direction. I don't think there is that much value placed on it. It's the classroom! It's sitting there getting what the professor has to say.

Another reason why students pass up independent study possibilities is the absence of high caliber programs they were promised. As mentioned earlier, some colleges project an image of freedom which no longer exists. Students who are impressed to find that the emphasis in the prospectus is on individuality, soon after arrival learn that in reality programs are somewhat less flexible. Some transfer, others accept the situation and adjust. Members of a third group either wait hopefully for change until it is illogical to withdraw, or attempt to accomplish some reform. The latter never content themselves with less than they originally expected.

Some of us have been trying for years to bring the College closer to that image of being experimental and avant garde and relevant. We failed, however, and there's now an attempt to prevent the College from attracting students who are going to be disappointed, very seriously in some cases.

The feeling that faculty lack confidence in student initiative contributed in no small measure to the students' hesitation toward attempting self-direction. This failure on the part of some faculty is borne out by the statement of one, a professor in an institution with a sizable number of superior students.

I guess in 15 years at _____ College, I've had two or three students whom I could say were capable of working in such a way that they could come in to see me once a month. The average student, particularly the underclass student, to me needs constant reinforcement. They don't know what book to go to next.

This was in an institution with a reputation for top quality students.

Students want faculty trust in their ability not only to select courses but to become more active in wider kinds of decision making and curriculum planning.

The faculty's position basically is that students are not capable of participating in making decisions about curriculum and personnel . . . or the direction of the college because they're not professionals.

Where students find this they lose interest in attempting to assume greater responsibility and, using the faculty's own argument against them, question the justification of the latter's usurpation of some administrative functions and decision making for which faculty are professionally unqualified.

The shortage of faculty available for independent study frequently caused students to lose interest when they realized that faculty were restricted and overworked. There was a great deal of sympathy on the part of students for the faculty overload.

Faculty don't deliberately hibernate. They just don't have the time. They have committee obligations and some have 12 or 15 independents in addition. They can't prepare competently.

* * *

That's an enormous problem. . . . But even as it is, it can be greatly facilitated by . . . letting professors do things they're accomplished in and making it known what their areas are. The breakthrough will come when faculty

and administrators get things worked out so the professors get course credit for participating in so many "independents."

* * *

Interestingly enough, administrative solutions to faculty burdens do not always work toward students satisfaction. At one institution where faculty have what the students call a "huge reduction in course load for taking independent study," students view this as one of the most seriously damaging factors, militating against successful independent study. They see it as the "politics" of a committee which evidently allots the positions on the basis of seniority, making over half of the most senior members of the faculty independent study advisors. This means that many of the young faculty are not involved and according to the students, many of these younger members don't even know what self-directed learning is.

Students at no time blamed the administration for the faculty burdens but attributed them to financial problems, especially since proclamations of future "austerity" living had already been made by some presidents earlier in the year.

In view of the traditional and continued attack of students on administrators, it is interesting that Martin (1969) and a number of administrators interviewed see students tending now to identify the preventive role of faculty in the area of educational reform. As Martin says:

. . . The closer they [students] come to the center of the intellectual city, the more they are likely to find the barriers manned by faculty, not administrators. The more serious the academic challenge, the more faculty are threatened. . . (p. 6).

Students in one college felt the conservative faculty were responsible for most of the handicaps to independent study.

The structure of the school is one in which the faculty is almost in total control . . . it's not so much that the faculty get control, but a certain conservative minority within the faculty have control of the faculty and that's the real problem.

In two institutions, students complained that attempts at independent study in multi-department projects were impeded by faculty failure to cooperate on an interdisciplinary basis.

We're very idealistic, wide-eyed students really. . . . We felt the potential of a small liberal arts college like _____ College was to get away from just representing individual fields but to try to get some direction to the fields. It's amazing how the biologist and the chemist don't even talk to each other most of the time. The chemists sit together at lunch, the biologists sit together; and as a consequence, the real problems which are interdisciplinary . . . are never dealt with. . . . The whole integration, relevance kick is what it is in a way, but I think at _____ College what I expected was really that kind of interdisciplinary activity and that to me is independent study.

Students differ in their conception of a climate conducive to greater independence. The views of some are reflected in the words of a student who felt keenly the

failure of his institution to break down some of its rigid structure, although he advocated less than drastic measures.

I guess I'm not asking as some kids are that College become experimental and avant garde. I'm asking that it become pluralistic, that it allow various types of functions within its environment--within its umbrella of academic rigor. The kids here are brilliant--almost all of them are very bright. The faculty are very capable--almost all of them. I guess that's the most heartbreaking thing about my four years here, that the potential is enormous and it's not being used. It's being funneled into the agonies of taking required courses that you have no business being in and not into things which could be meaningful.

An example of the kind of freedom some students want was given by a student who had just completed an independent study project.

I did this completely on my own. I discussed it at the beginning and at the end I gave him a report on it and this was unlike some of the other projects where there were constant meetings between the professor and the students or even occasional ones. . . . Mine was completely independent and this was what I wanted. For the first time I found I could actually do it on my own without any help in between.

Other students want the system modified even more, to give them the freedom they feel they need to become self-directed.

I don't think you solve anything any more by requiring independent study--or anything. If along with requiring it . . . the structure would be modified to make it possible for students to do an entire semester of independent study . . . your whole view toward independent study would be greatly enlarged and people would do a substantially better job of it.

Half measures frustrate students. One frequent complaint was the reluctance on the part of faculty and administrators to accept independent study for required courses. Students found this harassing. While self-directed learning was attractive and exciting to them, its use for other than required courses often distracted them from the areas in which they were most seriously engaged; and frequently they were forced to forego the opportunity when a heavy major or a change of program left them with little time to elect courses. It also postponed the use of independent study for many until the junior and senior years.

The people I've talked to on the freshman and sophomore levels don't do it (independent study) because they're trying to get their requirements out of the way. I started taking them junior year . . . I'd like to see it start in the freshman year.

These handicaps lead some students to propose that limitations on time, place and direction be set aside as the institution delivers an open and continuing challenge, saying to students (to quote one student's suggestion):

We're absolutely sure that there are things you want to know and we're giving you the resources and the time and the opportunity to do it . . . go out and find out about these things. And if the students are not interested in education, they're not going to stay here.

Compensating in force and enthusiasm for what they lack in number, still other students want to see drastic change. Convinced that desiring anything less is naive, they often, at the same time, realize that desiring more

is equally unrealistic. Recognizing the restrictions placed on the college by the systems below and above it, they believe that both the secondary school which begins the molding process and the graduate school which glazes the formed undergraduate product must also change.

It seems to me that if there is going to be any adequate change it's going to have to be the whole scene . . . that includes high school and graduate school.

To a generation devoted to discussion and dialogue, climatic freedom means that "there must be much more reliance on the individual, on the ability to persuade, to talk to the student rather than to require and to force compliance." Confident that reason will prevail, a very small number of students ask for no non-negotiated demands on the part of the institution.

I don't think that there should be any requirements whatsoever. I think that my philosophy of education basically is that by the time a student is ready for college he is also ready to be persuaded or dissuaded from taking a course of study. It seems more consistent with philosophies of a rational group of men such as our professors, to persuade people to take or not to take language courses or math courses rather than to require them. . . . If you want to operate on the principle that everybody's an intelligent rational person, then there seems no reason why you just can't let that reign across the board.

It is difficult to say what percentage of students represent the mild pleas for freedom and how many want the extreme liberation, but it is clear that most students who find independent study inaccessible or unattractive feel

that in order to participate, the environment must be more conducive; they must know of the existence of independent study possibilities and then find faculty support and encouragement and a freer atmosphere in which to pursue it. All of this is necessary to overcome the apathy, the insecurity and the discouragement which constitute another threat to the implementation of independent study.

Student Apathy, Insecurity, and Discouragement

Students' reasons for failure to take advantage of independent study or their explanations for limited participation range from apathy to strong feelings of insecurity or discouragement. Apathetic students, because of their particular personalities, their background education or the current invisibility of independent study opportunities on some campuses, are disinterested in assuming the additional responsibility inherent in self-directed learning. Given the fact that the number of independent study opportunities is not great, the number of apathetic students must be large; otherwise, there would have been more dissension concerning the subject than there has been to date.

Dearing (1970) places some of the blame for the failure of higher education to improve instruction on the students themselves.

Unhappily, for all their fancied radicalism, students are quite as conservative as faculty in their resistance to change (p. 223).

Much of the so-called student resistance to change such as that introduced by independent study is in reality merely apathy, not only toward the particular innovation but toward the collegiate experience. One student described the attitude of a number of fellow students on his campus.

Everyone here is smart and probably most of the people here are doing a lot less than they could be doing. They figure if they get in here, just stay in. Most of them don't know what they are going to do when they get out so they just do enough to stay.

On many campuses, students of this type while putting in their time choose the easiest way.

I see a lot of kids who'd just as soon take a class that has a lecture three times a week and a mid-term and a final . . . they think independent study is too personal. You have to meet the teacher and you can't show up with nothing or its pretty point blank that you don't have anything. A lot of students take advantage of the fact that in lecture class you can get lost. . . . I really think that they'd just as soon be a number in some cases where they don't have to be responsible for their actions except for a mid-term and a final.

* * *

I imagine that there are a lot of students who just take a course because it's an easy A or B, or even an easy C if that's all they want. The guy they're living with has a copy of the test; and teachers when they teach a long time don't change them.

* * *

The effort required by self-directed learning is beyond what many students bargain for.

You have to be a person who can discipline your time and keep at it because it seems that so often it gets to the end and you realize that you haven't worked.

A student heavily engaged in independent study, making reference to those outside the program, indicated that

some students feel more comfortable in a more structured program where the professor gives them a reading list . . . some of the kids will say to us once in a while, "I'm going to take a regular course so I won't have to think."

Turning from the apathetic students to those who profess an interest in self-direction, we find that they frequently blame their inability to appreciate the full possibilities of independent study on the attitudes toward education formed prior to their college experience.

Our early conditioning in high school and elementary school has made us look on education as something that ends when you're 21 or 22 with college or high school depending on what class you're from and if we could decondition ourselves to think of education as a life-long process, then we wouldn't be hung up on credits. You know, "I've taken 32 courses. I have 32 blocks of knowledge."

Responding to a question concerning the ideal educational process, another student in the group said,

We've been trained for so long that we've built up such feelings toward certain things that I couldn't honestly say at this stage what would be an ideal situation. It would take me a good year of reaction to all the past. . . . I'm sick of papers. I'm so tired of having to produce, that it would take a lot of time just to undo all the past. Deconditioning is going to be necessary.

Another group of students confessed that they found the lecture system and all that related to it so ingrained that they suspected that self-directed learning would have to begin in kindergarten. Most students would not reach the desired level of independence prior to college but would be more disposed toward its development. A faculty member made this observation in response to a question concerning student disinterest in independent study.

On one level a lot of them think that they aren't capable of it. My own personal opinion is that we don't allow the children to do this in grammar school or junior high. By the time they get to high school most typically it's sit down and the teacher talks at you. Our students echo this. They feel very strongly that their high school experience did not encourage them to go off on their own. We scare them . . . make them think we know everything when what we should teach them is that all we know is a few places to start looking.

Growing out of this unfamiliarity with freedom is strong apprehension.

Another valid reason is fear. I didn't want to take an independent study. I was so used to the structure that I wanted to go to class and get down exactly what he thought was meaningful so that I could write back exactly what he wanted, almost verbatim. There have been a few teachers I've had who gave you an "A" if you got everything verbatim. So I was so scared about taking an independent study, I didn't know what I was going to do and I knew I couldn't discipline myself. . . . It just so happened that I had a schedule conflict and in order to graduate when I wanted to I had to take independent study.

The experience is for some students at least uncomfortable, but a number consider it traumatic.

Eric Fromme was right when he referred to escape from freedom. A lot of students talk about wanting to be out on their own, doing their own thing, etc. but it is a very traumatic situation to be in when you have the horizons wide open and there are no limits or channels or guidelines, directions, goals, purposes. You go out and read fifteen books and come back hopefully with some sort of synthesis. In a college context like this you can let those things ride, you have other course commitments, you have to turn in other term papers. You have the day-to-day classroom discussions, etc. and you can sort of get a feeling of anomie. This independence is a nebulous, fuzzy sort of thing which you're not comfortable in.

* * *

I talked with another senior who was just appalled at the idea of taking two independent studies at one time. She would rather have the direction that a class gives her.

* * *

This inability to cope with new-found freedom sometimes leads to and emphasizes the inadequacy of the outcome. If the outcome is the prime consideration in an institution, students feel they have performed inferiorly and are reluctant to attempt other unstructured projects.

Facing yourself is a problem. When you have courses that are structured, assignments by assignment, there's no difficulty in pacing yourself. The professor has done it for you. The problem comes in an independent when you don't have this kind of discipline and you have to be your own taskmaster which I think can be the best but most difficult and it tends often to suffer because you can put it off . . . usually independents are done in a very short period of time--in the last three weeks of the semester. I don't think you get this overall comprehensiveness that is wanted ideally.

Often when the apprehension concerning independence is borderline, the existence of highly regarded courses is sufficient to tip the scales against the risk.

For me one of the problems was that I was very attracted to the courses here. There are a lot of good courses that I could take and when I took an independent last semester I did it at the expense of something I also wanted to take. You do have a certain amount of guarantee when you take a good course from a good professor in a good subject that you don't have when you take an independent.

Turning now to students who are thoroughly convinced of the value of, and their need for, independent study, we find that discouraged, many of them dissipate much of their energy trying to break down the excessive structure.

We're so bound into the course structure--rather enervating to say the least. The fifty minute period is like saying, "Well, how do you suppose they have exactly a half hour of news every day?" It's a hassle to be pressured to fit into the right size box. I've gradually developed sort of a hide about it. . . . I think the course work and what the projects are expected to be come through faculty who are quite tied into their departments and who are structured by them.

Continuing, another student elaborated.

It turns out the departments say, "Oh, great, you're in independent study," and then I fill exactly the same requirements as everyone else. The only difference is that I don't get grades; but I'm doing the same exact crazy little blocks of knowledge. You know "This is your one class in learning theory; and now you know learning theory." So I wind up doing a lot of it in classes.

Some departments make it more difficult than others to break out of the structure.

I know people here who came with a very good knowledge who really didn't need to take the social studies courses. These are the kinds of people who would have been able to crawl out of those requirements and charge forth on an independent program. Most people can get an exempt from science and language courses, but I don't think I've ever known anybody who's been exempted from social studies. There was one guy in our course who was obviously over-prepared. He really had it. I think he could have been doing something else.

Even the most independent students view the role of the faculty as very important but differ in their opinions of how much influence they should exert. Pointing out what he considered a real danger inherent in independent study without proper contact with faculty, a student said,

Being removed from structure can be both a boon and a bane. You can do greater things, get into something you enjoy, something you've been thinking about but with that comes the potential of losing all contact with any educational structure and coming out with a real bust.

Another student suggested that faculty members at times knowingly add to the feeling of insecurity.

The rapport between the student and the professor is not sufficient now. The professors are either afraid or think that at this point the student wants to be left completely alone and wants no structure or guidance or discussion of the material and tends to leave you just alone. What I would have enjoyed much more would have been to be doing most of the work on my own but discussing what I was doing with the professor from my point of view, from my interest. He would somehow be a resource person.

A quiet independent student who needed help at a crucial point in her planning was unable to find it.

I couldn't narrow my research down. It was really hard to get any helpful hints and if I came across anything that really interested me and it was esoteric, like mesoamerican archeology, which is no longer esoteric, nobody knew how to narrow it down or give a suggestion. So I wasted so much time floundering, psychologically and actually, trying to find materials or to figure out how I was going to narrow it down, trying to find a professor to sponsor something. I'd go in and talk to them for hours. It didn't help me that much.

* * *

I've had a hard time finding people to "rap" to and my style is one where the kind of stuff I'm working on makes it really important to talk to other people about it, to kind of get a feel for the idea.

* * *

The quality of the relationship of student and faculty member is important for the success of the venture.

Another problem is that you're working so closely with one faculty member that if it does happen that there is no rapport or poor rapport, you're really in a bad situation for a semester. You start out and this is your anchor, your guide; and if you think he's fundamentally mixed-up or off base in his educational views, you're really in a bind.

The individual differences of students makes it apparent that the offer of complete freedom which excites some students is interpreted by others as disinterest and a lack of sufficient support. A student tried to sum up many of the aspects of student participation in independent study opportunities with reference to the areas in which it may fall short.

The personality of the student enters in. We can't talk about independence as a broad, general, all-encompassing sort of thing. With independence as with course work in general, it's the intentions, the motivation, the personality the student brings to the problem and the rapport and the constructive suggestions of the professor. The ideal is that the student will be self-motivated, inner directed, having a zealous desire to learn this thing. He will be able to regiment himself. . . .

Such is one ideal. For now, however, student hesitation born of insecurity seems, in the total picture, to outweigh the desire for more freedom. The student continues,

At the same time, I think, more and more professors are coming to realize and some students too, that indeed to have it be a valuable experience there should be a little more structure involved.

Evaluation Problems

According to the findings of The Committee on the Student in Higher Education (1968),

With greater or less vigor, the new college student hates and fears the rankings, evaluations, the comparisons, the gradings, of the higher educational system (p. 24).

The hate and fear exist perhaps to an even greater extent when such criteria are used to judge the success or failure of independent study and like innovations.

In order to better understand the inhibiting effect of the present evaluation system on students' independent study activities, it is necessary to consider the students' objectives. Since the determination of success or failure in attaining goals is the purpose of evaluation, one must

know what students hope to have accomplished. One senior expressed the feeling of many others when he said,

The objectives of independent study are to help the student to become resourceful, to learn to look to himself for answers and to learn how to ask the right questions. It makes it possible for him to go beyond something which he was introduced to in a formal classroom situation in more depth. . . . Most important to me, it's a chance to develop a methodology, an approach to study and material which you don't have an opportunity to do in a classroom structure. . . .

When students have these kinds of goals, they want to see some relationship to their achievement of them when evaluation takes place. A student in a program of nearly total independent study said,

Sometimes I feel that I don't know as many facts as students in the other program. That's find. I want to read books on all sorts of things. It changes your whole way of thinking. It can energize everything that's going on already, instead of making it tired and weary. By the time some students get out of the institution they've had it and never want to see it again. I see so many people graduating with a sigh of relief; whereas, I don't want the learning process to stop.

What continues to depress me is the narrowness of faculty measurement. If you say you learned something, they say o.k., let's measure that. Most professors are still very much locked into the paper and pencil type of evaluation.

Whole departments are often locked into the system of term paper evaluation.

The sad thing about independent study is that it degenerates into a term paper with more time to do it than you would have in a course. One of the limitations in some departments is that you must have something written for an independent.

One form of paper evaluation heavily criticized for violating the spirit of independent study was the comprehensive examination when used as a duplication of earlier appraisal.

What I objected to was having to take a comprehensive examination. If you've done a paper, a research project, the only reason you need an exam after that is the same old syndrome. You know, "we've got to have something to prove it."

Comprehensives after independent study say, "We're going to let you work independently; but boy we're going to make sure you know it."

New forms of learning, especially those resulting from freer student activity, present problems for students when faculty cannot accept their validity for evaluation purposes.

An older professor is so used to research paper criteria that he can't see how a film can be educational. I'm working on a film and I've spent the better part of a year on it. How many credits is it worth?

Students seem generally to appreciate the written evaluation sometimes substituted for grades but find that there is some difficulty in maintaining the original purpose.

When faculty are supposed to evaluate with a statement, they end up with a grade. It wasn't designed to do that. That's because a lot of professors couldn't get out of the syndrome.

A faculty member best summed up student comments on written evaluations in preference to grades.

[It] permits the student to be a lot less locked into what the faculty member wants him to learn and better able to study what he wants to learn himself; because the evaluation tends to discuss those things that the student has

done. If he gets interested in one aspect, the evaluation will say that and it won't make some invidious comparison with somebody else who towed the mark and did every last little thing the instructor put on the requirement list. So the students are much freer to follow their own bent in courses. I think the evaluation system is the primary thing that frees them for this.

Actually, it is the attitude toward evaluation and its adherence to the "system" which is more objectionable than the specific form it takes.

Our work in independent study now is being evaluated in terms of "you've done the equivalent of so many courses" which is impossible to do because the whole point when it was first set up was to get away from that and be able to study something in depth and nobody but you could tell whether you'd done more or less. Now you worry about it. You get psychologically hung-up on the fact that you might not be doing as much as everybody in the college.

* * *

I was in another country for two months and when I got back I explained that I had taken a language for four and a half or five hours a day and courses in education, had written a sociological study and my advisor asked, "Now, how would you evaluate that in terms of course credits?" It was really sad.

The credit system comes in for a good share of criticism. As students become more involved in large blocks of self-directed learning, they no longer like to speak in terms of credits.

I think we're too hung-up on credits. I think that's one of the problems. The system of education before you get to college is set up on getting credit and meeting deadlines and by the time they're done, they've convinced the student very effectively that he cannot accomplish the

work without deadlines and that he cannot find any value in his own education without having been evaluated by an outside source.

Even those who concede the possible need for using credits, find the idea of a preconceived number of credits matching a particular amount of work a cause for annoyance.

I'd like to see independent study without a specific amount of credit set, so you could sit down with your professor and look at what you have done and say, "I think I did five hours of work or six hours."

Now we're right down to the gut level of what education is all about. . . . What does 4 hours mean? You and I both know that for some courses you work very hard and for others you don't. Independence itself suffers from expansion of this idea of credits and hours per unit that you must put in. If we're willing to place a premium on independent study . . . how much value will the institution place on it?

Campbell (1963) found in his study of self-directed learning that one of the keys to releasing the capacity for independent study was self-conscious appraisal by the student of his own learning activities, for as he described it,

We broke their set for passive instruction, a set to do just as they are told, which is deeply ingrained after a few years of formal education (p. 14).

Whether or not students are aware of this advantage of self-evaluation they find it more valuable than outside appraisal.

I think it should be a self-evaluation program. I have a feeling that we'd be a lot more strict and a lot more honest with ourselves than they are with us. When you find you can get the same amount of credit by studying the night before a test and taking a test, I don't think that's as honest as when you have to sit down

In front of the teacher and say, "I know this about this, but I don't know this about this. I really don't think I've learned anything and I'd like to do some more work. . . ."

* * *

If I had been asked to evaluate myself in one of my exam fields, Russian literature, I would have said I haven't done enough work and I really can't say that I've learned that much. . . . However, I spent nine hours on the exam and passed it so that I have the credit, although I don't remember anything.

* * *

I don't think the college should be put in the position of doing the certification. When you evaluate yourself you're doing it on all sorts of levels. You evaluate how much you know in subject matter, then there's the area of growth in being a sensitive, mature, individual in terms of, I guess, your own criteria, or your openness to other ideas and to other feelings and reactions. I think you can go through college without ever having done that. And I think it's just as important an aspect of education as the technical fact knowledge.

* * *

For students committed to the independent way of education, their strongest confidence in it stems from their belief that it prepares them for the years to come. Some of their unwillingness to be evaluated upon the completion of particular projects is a reflection of their belief that only the future will determine the success of the process in which they have been involved. One student suggested that evaluation be done in ten years, since the greatest value to her is preparation for continued learning.

I have great faith that we'll be reading for the next 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years; whereas so many people just leave and they don't pick up a book because it's not required. . . . Like I want to do a project this summer. Nobody will see the project; but it's something I really want to do.

Somehow these students, and they are few, do not feel they need faculty to provide their initiative and by the same token are reluctant to turn to faculty for evaluation. They are not sure that faculty even understand their long-term, unstructured, interdisciplinary, attitudinal as well as cognitive goals. Hence, it seems inappropriate for faculty to judge student success in attaining them--even in their incipient stages. An indication of how little students care about the value placed upon the credit process in general can be seen in a statement made by a member of the faculty of a college enrolling a group of very independent students.

A growing number of students are asking for radical alternatives. They'd like the option of getting a certificate rather than a diploma. It would certify only that they were here and enrolled as students, to show that "we did our thing."

Summary

The complexity of colleges and universities makes it difficult to isolate particular institutional factors which inhibit greater development of independent study, but we can identify some deterrents. Administrators and faculty see environmental factors, departmental autonomy, and unclear

objectives posing problems which work against the expansion of opportunities for student self-direction.

Limited student use of available independent study results from: an environment seen by students as alien; apathy, insecurity and discouragement; and problems with evaluation. Students most prepared for independent study will not be satisfied until they are permitted to seek self-selected goals by self-chosen means, culminating in self-evaluation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been the purpose of this study to identify some factors which have inhibited the growth of independent study in institutions of higher education in this country. Past surveys of independent study practices have shown that while they initially developed as honors programs out of concern for superior students, some soon offered opportunities to all students regardless of ability or class. The present study confirms the existence of these opportunities in some institutions but demonstrates the limited use that has been made of their potential. Even when made available, an insignificant number of students take advantage of them.

A survey of literature and the questionnaire returns indicate that little has been done to evaluate programs of independent study or determine their cost. Even without this information, it is generally presumed that self-directed learning is a desirable academic innovation, but one that is usually too expensive for heavy indulgence.

Most of the problems recognized in the early studies, or implicit in them, persist, compounded by the increase in the size of enrollment, institutional complexity, financial

hardship and growing student pressure for change. Objectives remain unclear; departmental autonomy continues to create disunity and prevent interdisciplinary programs; the tutorial concept of independent study still finds faculty too burdened to encourage student participation; and an unfree environment proves a hostile climate for the kind of flexibility self-directed learning requires.

Visits to institutions found little student involvement because of: student apathy, insecurity, bordering on fear of self-direction, and discouragement with red tape and prohibitions against what they consider true freedom. They found the environment, including faculty, little calculated to encourage initiative, and the methods of evaluating their occasional attempts at independent study, unacceptable.

If independent study is to develop in institutions of higher education, certain changes seem imperative. Research accompanying attempts to initiate the following would be essential:

1. Clearer objectives must be developed for independent study, based on institutional objectives and providing evaluative criteria which can be applied to assess the impact of such study.
2. Steps must be taken to create a freer total environment within which independent study practices can develop--one which is not bound by credits,

superficial evaluation and grades. Although much research has been done on environment, application of the findings must be made to its effect on independent study.

3. A regular curricular review should be made so that in the various departments innovative practices such as independent study may be: (a) based on common institutional objectives, (b) evaluated in terms of outcomes, and (c) considered in terms of financial investment.
4. Ways should be found by which faculty not only agree to sponsor independent study but stimulate the apathetic to engage in it, encourage the fearful, and allow a maximum of freedom to those prepared to do it.
5. Faculty who more often than not come from a highly structured and lecture-oriented background must be prepared to guide students to increasing self-direction through independent study.
6. Studies of student self-evaluation are needed to determine the extent to which it can supplant present grading systems.
7. Independent study must be distinguished from the one to one teacher-student relationship of tutorials. Based on a belief in a high potential for student self-direction, independent study programs

must gradually wean students from faculty by early orientation to independence and a sequence of increasingly free activities. Only then can they be evaluated in their own right.

8. Research is needed on the application of various independent study techniques (individual and group) to different ability groups.
9. Evaluation of independent study practices must be so designed that the degree of their success is not misrepresented by participants who are not prepared for self-direction.
10. In order that college students may achieve a high degree of self-direction, secondary education or even lower levels of learning must begin the process of developing independence. More research on earlier use of independent study is necessary.
11. Cost studies must be done on independent study, and cost and success of patterns which require less faculty time than most tutorial systems requires investigation.
12. The role of pass/fail grading, the interim program, and off-campus field work in developing self-direction and introducing independent study programs should be studied.

13. When, after the necessary orientation and development of self-direction, students are ready to spend a complete term doing independent study, they should be allowed to assume great responsibility in program design and project selection.
14. Interdisciplinary independent study should be made more available and its impact studied.
15. More experiments with group independent study should be done with students who have already developed a facility for individual self-direction.
16. External degree programs and the use of the College Level Examination Program should provide opportunities for significant studies of self-direction.

We have waited nearly thirty years for the fulfillment of Aydelotte's prediction that less rigid methods of instruction would permeate the academic system and unless there is more effort than is evident at present, we may well wait another thirty years for its realization.

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APPENDIX I

INITIAL IDENTIFYING QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX I

INITIAL IDENTIFYING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Our institution offers some form of independent study.*

Yes_____ No_____

3. We agree to participate in the study. Yes_____ No_____

3. Further correspondence concerning independent study can be continued with

Name

Title

4. We are sending you our 1969-70 catalog and any information we have concerning our program of independent study or offerings in independent study. Yes_____ No_____

*Independent study in this survey will refer to offerings such as: research projects, experimental courses, class attendance exemption, course waiver by special examination, independent reading, independent study groups, computer-assisted instruction, programmed learning and any other form of self-directed learning. It will not include the usual class assignments such as term papers or reports.

APPENDIX II

THE UNDERGRADUATE AND INDEPENDENT STUDY: CURRENT PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

APPENDIX II

THE UNDERGRADUATE AND INDEPENDENT STUDY: CURRENT PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

1
IBM I.D. (1-8) — — —

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter the NUMBERS or CHECKMARKS (X) indicating your responses to the following items on the lines provided in the right-hand margin. Do not enter any information in the shaded boxes. Use the back page for additional comments if necessary. Your answers will be punched into IBM cards, computer processed, and summarized along with the responses of all institutions completing the questionnaire. Neither individual respondents nor institutions will be identified, unless used as an example of an unusually effective program.

1. Independent Study is available in. (9)
1. All departments
2. Only certain departments (If only in certain departments please check which ones.)
- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Business | (10) |
| Education. | (11) |
| Engineering. | (12) |
| Fine Arts. | (13) |
| Humanities | (14) |
| Life Science | (15) |
| Mathematics. | (16) |
| Physical Science | (17) |
| Social Science | (18) |
- Other (SPECIFY) _____ (19-25)
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Independent Study is available to: (Check all applicable)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1. All seniors. | (26) |
| 2. Superior seniors only. | (27) |
| 3. All juniors. | (28) |
| 4. Superior juniors only. | (29) |
| 5. All sophomores | (30) |
| 6. Superior sophomores only | (31) |
| 7. All Freshmen | (32) |
| 8. Superior freshmen only | (33) |
- (REMARKS) _____ (34)
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Independent Study is required of: (Check all applicable)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1. All seniors. | (35) |
| 2. Superior seniors only. | (36) |
| 3. All juniors. | (37) |
| 4. Superior juniors only. | (38) |
| 5. All sophomores | (39) |
| 6. Superior sophomores only | (40) |
| 7. All freshmen | (41) |
| 8. Superior freshmen only | (42) |
- (REMARKS) _____ (43)
- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Does Independent Study provide a sequence of experiences which place increased demands on the student and provide increased opportunity for independent efforts over the four year period? (44)
1. Yes
2. No
(IF YES, EXPLAIN HOW) _____ (45)

5. The percentage of graduating seniors who have participated in Independent Study is approximately: (Put percentage on line). (46-48)
6. The above percentage is based on (49)
1. Complete data
2. A systematic sampling
3. General estimate
(EXPLAIN IF NECESSARY) _____ (50)

7. Do you have a common procedure for introducing students to the concept of Independent Study (personal responsibility, initiative, self-direction, etc. (51)
1. Yes
2. No
(REMARKS) _____ (52)

8. Independent Study projects include the following: (Check all applicable)
- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Independent reading aided by reading lists and study guides | _____ (53) |
| 2. Independent study groups | _____ (54) |
| 3. Replacement of required courses with Independent study | _____ (55) |
| 4. Independent research projects. | _____ (56) |
| 5. Community service. | _____ (57) |
| 6. Study abroad | _____ (58) |
| 7. Independent art projects | _____ (59) |
| 8. Independent laboratory experiments | _____ (60) |
| Others (SPECIFY) _____ | _____ (61-66) |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
9. The objectives of Independent Study in our institution are: (Rank in order of importance. EXAMPLE: If 'student acceleration' is the first objective, enter a 2 on line 67.
- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Operational economy | _____ (67) |
| 2. Student acceleration | _____ (68) |
| 3. Self-reliance and self-direction | _____ (69) |
| 4. Development of continuing curiosity | _____ (70) |
| Other (SPECIFY AND RANK) | _____ (71) |
| 5. _____ | _____ (72) |
| 6. _____ | _____ (73) |
| 7. _____ | _____ (74) |
| 8. _____ | _____ (75-77) |
| (REMARKS) _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX

IBM I.D. (78-80)

2 IBM I.D. (1-8) — —

10. Selection of participants in Independent Study is based upon: (Check all applicable)

1. High school performance. (9)
2. Some form of intelligence test (10)
3. College grade-point average. (11)
4. Evidence of student's creativity (12)
5. Student's desire to participate. (13)
6. Recommendation of high school principal or counselor (14)
7. College faculty or staff member's recommendation (15)

Other (SPECIFY) _____ (16-18)

11. Concerning self-evaluation of our program of Independent Study, we have. . . (19)

1. Never attempted a formal evaluation
2. Tried unsuccessfully to formally evaluate it
3. Evaluated it with limited success
4. Evaluated it to our satisfaction

(REMARKS) _____ (20-21)

12. Studies have been made at our institution of: (Check all applicable)

1. Our college environment. (22)
2. Our students' goals. (23)

(REMARKS) _____ (24)

13. In studying the college environment, we used: (Check all applicable)

1. College Characteristics Index (CCI). (25)
2. College and University Environment Scales (CUES) (26)
3. Does not apply (27)

Other (SPECIFY) _____ (28)

14. We have studied the cost of Independent Study. (29)

1. Yes
2. No

15. We have found that Independent Study leads to. (30)

1. An increase in expense
2. A decrease in expense
3. Some increase and some decrease
4. No change in expense

(REMARKS)

(31)

16. The increase in expense is found in the following areas: (Rank in order, from greatest increase to least. EXAMPLE: If library expense has increased most, enter a 2 on line 32. All items need not be used.)

1. Faculty
2. Library
3. Laboratory equipment
4. Planning
5. Facilities
6. Program direction
7. Program coordination
- Others (SPECIFY AND RANK)
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

(32)

(33)

(34)

(35)

(36)

(37)

(38)

(39)

(40)

(41)

(42)

(43)

(REMARKS)

(44-47)

17. The decrease in expense is found in the following areas: (Rank in order, from greatest decrease to least. EXAMPLE: If 'faculty' expense has decreased most, enter a 1 on line 48. All items need not be used.)

1. Faculty
2. Library
3. Laboratory equipment
4. Planning
5. Facilities
6. Program direction
7. Program coordination
- Others (SPECIFY AND RANK)
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

(48)

(49)

(50)

(51)

(52)

(53)

(54)

(55)

(56)

(57)

(58)

(59)

(REMARKS)

(60-63)

18. Reports or informal summaries of evaluation studies are available in the following areas and will be returned with this questionnaire. (Check all applicable)

1. Effect of Independent Study on participants.
2. Financial effect of Independent Study.
3. College environment.
4. Student goals.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX

IBM I.D. (75-80)

APPENDIX III

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES VISITED

APPENDIX III

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES VISITED

Antioch College
Yellow Springs, Ohio

Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio

Beloit College
Beloit, Wisconsin

Reed College
Portland, Oregon

Claremont Colleges
Claremont, California
 Claremont Men's College
 Scripps College
 Pitzer College
 Harvey Mudd College
 Pomona College

University of California
 at Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz, California
 Crown College
 Merrill College
 College V
 Cowell College

Colby College
Waterville, Maine

University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado

Goucher College
Baltimore, Maryland

University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

 College of the Pacific
 Raymond College
 Callison College

Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa

The Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland

Wesleyan College
Middletown, Connecticut

APPENDIX IV

**INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR DIRECTORS OF INDEPENDENT
STUDY AND FACULTY MEMBERS**

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR DIRECTORS OF INDEPENDENT STUDY AND FACULTY MEMBERS

- I. How extensive is the practice of Independent Study?
 1. Regular program
 - 1.1 All students?
 - 1.11 All classes: seniors, juniors, etc.?
 - 1.12 All ability levels--not limited to superior students?
 - 1.2 All departments and disciplines?
 - 1.3 All faculty members?
 2. Interim program, mid-term, mini-mester, etc.
 - 2.1 All students?
 - 2.11 All classes: seniors, juniors, etc.?
 - 2.12 All ability levels--not limited to superior students?
 - 2.2 All departments?
 - 2.3 All faculty members?
 - 2.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?
 3. Honors program
 - 3.1 What students?
 - 3.2 What departments?
 - 3.3 What faculty members?
 - 3.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?
 4. Experimental college
 - 4.1 What students?
 - 4.2 What departments?
 - 4.3 What faculty members?
 - 4.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?

5. Senior project or tutorial

- 5.1 What students?
- 5.2 What departments?
- 5.3 What faculty members?
- 5.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?

6. What percentage of your graduating seniors have participated in independent study?

7. What percent of their senior program was made up of independent study?

II. Basis of selection of students

8. Qualifications

- 8.1 High school performance?
- 8.2 Intelligence quotient?
- 8.3 Grade point average?
- 8.4 Creativity?
- 8.5 Desire to participate?
- 8.6 Principal's or counselor's recommendation?
- 8.7 College faculty or staff member's recommendation?

9. (Does this match earlier comments on practice of independent study in regard to open or closed admission policy?)

III. Objectives of the program or practice of Independent Study

10. Have objectives been formally stated and published with rationale and are they known to:

- 10.1 Faculty. Do they have a common understanding of what independent study means?
- 10.2 Students. Do they have a common understanding of what independent study means?
- 10.3 Are faculty members for the most part committed to independent study?

11. What are the objectives?

- 11.1 Operational economy?
- 11.2 Student acceleration?
- 11.3 Self-reliance and self-direction?
- 11.4 Development of continuing curiosity?
- 11.5 Other?

12. How are faculty and students introduced to the objectives and rationale for independent study?

12.1 Orientation meetings

12.11 Director?

12.12 Other?

12.2 Literature distribution?

12.3 Peer influence?

12.4 Informally by chance?

IV. Kinds of Independent Study

13. What kinds of independent study projects are included at your institution?

13.1 Independent reading aided by reading lists and study guides?

13.2 Independent study groups?

13.3 Proficiency exams replacing required courses?

13.4 Independent research projects?

13.5 Community service?

13.6 Study abroad?

13.7 Independent projects in regular courses?

14. Is independent study restricted qualitatively or quantitatively?

14.1 Is it limited to electives?

14.2 Is it permitted only when courses are not available?

14.3 Is the number of courses per semester, per year or per student limited?

14.4 Is credit allotment restricted; or are faculty members permitted to allot a number of credits appropriate to completed work?

15. Does independent study provide a sequence of experiences which place increased opportunity for independent efforts over a four-year period?

16. Are so-called independent projects so structured that they really do remain independent?

17. By the senior year, is a significant part of the student's time spent in independent study or is it limited to two or three courses?

V. Evaluation

18. Have you ever evaluated your program of Independent Study?

- 18.1 Never?
 - 18.2 Tried unsuccessfully?
 - 18.3 Limited success?
 - 18.4 To your satisfaction?
19. Did you evaluate the process of independent study as well as the outcomes?
20. Do you feel that the environment of the institution influences independent study?
- 20.1 Positively?
 - 20.2 Negatively?
21. Have you found that independent study leads to a change in expense?
- 21.1 Increase?
 - 21.11 Faculty?
 - 21.12 Library?
 - 21.13 Laboratory equipment?
 - 21.14 Planning?
 - 21.15 Facilities?
 - 21.16 Program direction?
 - 21.17 Program coordination?
 - 21.2 Decrease?
 - 21.21 Faculty?
 - 21.22 Library?
 - 21.23 Laboratory equipment?
 - 21.24 Planning?
 - 21.25 Facilities?
 - 21.26 Program direction?
 - 21.27 Program coordination?
22. What problems have you encountered in independent study?
23. What problems do you anticipate in independent study?
24. What do you see as the most important outcomes of independent study at your institution?
25. What do you see as the future of independent study in your institution?

APPENDIX V

INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR STUDENTS

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INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR STUDENTS

- I. How extensive is the practice of Independent Study?
 1. Regular program
 - 1.1 All students?
 - 1.11 All classes: seniors, juniors, etc.?
 - 1.12 All ability levels--not limited to superior students?
 - 1.2 All departments and disciplines?
 - 1.3 All faculty members?
 2. Interim program, mid-term, mini-mester, etc.
 - 2.1 All students?
 - 2.11 All departments?
 - 2.12 All ability levels--not limited to superior students?
 - 2.2 All departments?
 - 2.3 All faculty members?
 - 2.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?
 3. Honors program
 - 3.1 What students?
 - 3.2 What departments?
 - 3.3 What faculty members?
 - 3.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?
 4. Experimental college
 - 4.1 What students?
 - 4.2 What departments?
 - 4.3 What faculty members?
 - 4.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?

5. Senior project or tutorial

- 5.1 What students?
- 5.2 What departments?
- 5.3 What faculty members?
- 5.4 Is its primary purpose independent study?

II. Knowledge of and interest in Independent Study

6. Personal knowledge of and interest in independent study.

- 6.1 How much of your program has been made up of independent study?
 - 6.11 As a freshman?
 - 6.12 As a sophomore?
 - 6.13 As a junior?
 - 6.14 As a senior?
- 6.2 Have the objectives, rationale and regulations concerning independent study been clear to you?
 - 6.21 Did you know the objectives of independent study from your first year at the college?
 - 6.22 Did you know when and why you were eligible to participate?
- 6.3 What are the objectives of the program as you know it?
 - 6.31 Operational economy?
 - 6.32 Student acceleration?
 - 6.33 Self-reliance and self-direction?
 - 6.34 Development of continuing curiosity?
 - 6.35 Other?
- 6.4 How were you introduced to the objectives and rationale for independent study?
 - 6.41 Orientation meetings
 - 6.411 With the director?
 - 6.412 With the faculty member?
 - 6.413 Other?
 - 6.42 Literature distribution?
 - 6.43 Fellow students, formally?
 - 6.44 Fellow students, by chance?

7. General student knowledge of and interest in independent study
 - 7.1 How many of your friends are participating in independent study?
 - 7.2 Do you know students who are doing much of or most of their study independently?
 - 7.3 Do students, to your knowledge, react to the idea of independent study?
 - 7.31 With enthusiasm?
 - 7.32 With general acceptance?
 - 7.33 With toleration?
 - 7.34 With disinterest?
 - 7.4 Do you feel that most students are aware of the possibility of participating in independent study?
 - 7.5 Do you feel that most students have a clear idea of the objectives and rationale of independent study?

III. Kinds of Independent Study

8. What kinds of independent study projects are included at your institution?
 - 8.1 Independent reading aided by reading lists and study guides?
 - 8.2 Independent study groups?
 - 8.3 Proficiency exams replacing required courses?
 - 8.4 Independent research projects?
 - 8.5 Community service?
 - 8.6 Study abroad?
 - 8.7 Independent projects in regular courses?
9. Is independent study restricted qualitatively or quantitatively?
 - 9.1 Is it limited to electives?
 - 9.2 Is it permitted only when courses are not available?
 - 9.3 Is the number of courses per semester, per year or per student limited?
 - 9.4 Is credit allotment restricted; or are faculty members permitted to allot a number of credits appropriate to completed work?

10. Does independent study provide a sequence of experiences which place increased opportunity for independent efforts over a four-year period?
11. Are so-called independent projects so structured that they really do remain independent?
12. By the senior year, is a significant part of the student's time spent in independent study or is it limited to two or three courses?

IV. Evaluation

13. Is there any special advantage or disadvantage of independent study to you?
 - 13.1 Advantage?
 - 13.2 Disadvantage?
14. Do you think the climate here affects the practice of independent study?
 - 14.1 Postively?
 - 14.2 Negatively?
15. What do you think of the future possibilities of independent study at this institution?

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