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Valerie Jeanette Janesick

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Philip A. Casick
Major professor

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VALERIE JEANETTE JANESICK

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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY
OF A TEACHER'S CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE

By

Valerie Jeanette Janesick

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ABSTRACT

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A TEACHER'S CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE

By

Valerie Jeanette Janesick

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain a teacher's classroom perspective. A perspective is a combination of beliefs and behaviors composed of (a) definitions of various situations, (b) actions, and (c) criteria of judgment. This study described the actions and statements of one sixth grade teacher over a period of seven months. His definitions of situations, his actions and criteria of judgments provided evidence for recognizing his perspective as one of creating an effective group and maintaining it in order to achieve his classroom goals. Through the method of participant observation and interviewing, the researcher came to understand how this teacher defined his classroom world and how he constructed his actions. Four exploratory questions guided the study: (1) What elements constitute this teacher's classroom perspective? (2) Which variables outside and inside the classroom influence the classroom perspective? (3) What are the assumptions that this teacher makes about students, learning, and classrooms which support the classroom perspective? (4) How does this teacher synthesize the various types of information about student behavior and background into his perspective?

The study was based on the theory of symbolic interaction.

In accord with the theory, in order to understand a subject's world, the researcher must catch his process of interpretation. A suitable way to accomplish this is to accompany the subject as he encounters, interprets events, and constructs his social reality. And so, the researcher placed herself in the teacher's environment, took a limited role in many classroom activities, and observed the teacher from many vantage points. The researcher also participated in a number of professional activities in which the teacher was central without taking on the role of the teacher. Over the course of seven months of field work, extensive notes were taken and interviews were held with the teacher. The data were then analyzed on a weekly basis in order to discover patterns, relationships and indices of behavior which would merit further study. Final analysis was completed following the field work. This ethnographic method allowed for a proximity to the social situation of the classroom and enabled the researcher to describe and explain the teacher's classroom perspective.

Five major elements emerged as indicative of this teacher's classroom perspective: (1) maintaining a strong sense of groupness, (2) focusing on respect and cooperation as major classroom goals, (3) planning and organizing the events of the school day, (4) remaining the leader of the group, and (5) displaying a style of teaching which reinforced the class goals of respect and cooperation. This style was characterized by individualism, independence in thought and action, pride in teaching, courtesy, humor, personal

relationships with students, and desire for organization and order. These elements when combined contributed to the development of an effective group. Consequently, the researcher concluded: (1) if one is to be a successful teacher, one must develop a community or group much like a gemeinschaft; and (2) if one develops such a group, the classroom remains singular and not easily manipulated or affected by outside forces.

DEDICATION

To the teacher who participated in this study and his class of 1977, and to the other teachers who made a difference in my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	1
Background and Conceptual Framework	2
Methodology	4
Limitations of the Study	7
Significance of the Study	8
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
The Literature on Studies which Used Ethnographic Techniques	13
The Literature on Participant Observation Studies . .	30
III. METHOD	40
Introduction	40
Historical Development of Symbolic Interaction . . .	40
Basic Assumptions	41
Summary	43
Participation Observation: Implications for Research	45
Construction of a Model	46
Central Issues	47
Validity and Reliability	49
Objectivity vs. Subjectivity	51
Presuppositions of This Study	54
Selection of a Subject	54
Role Definition	55
The Method of This Study	54
IV. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA	68
Introduction	68
The City	68
The School	70

The Classroom	73
The Students	78
The Teacher and His Goals	80
The Team	84
Description of a School Day: the Morning	87
The Afternoon	104
Developing a Group: an Overview	111
Rewards	113
Consensus and Norms	113
Phases of Group Development: November to January . .	115
The Christmas Play	116
Group Conflict: January to March	120
Restoring the Group: March to June	126
Original Skit with Song and Movement	127
The Popcorn Ball Factory	129
The Fiesta	137
The Magic Circle	141
The Feelings Book	144
Field Trips	145
Views on Teaching	146
Situations of Conflict	150
Teacher-Principal Interactions	151
The Reading Center	153
The Teacher's Perspective	156
The Teacher as Leader	157
Final Reflections on the Teacher's Perspective . . .	158
 V. CONCLUSIONS	 159
The First Question: What Elements Constitute This Teacher's Classroom Perspective?	159
Maintaining a Sense of Groupness	160
Respect and Cooperation: Major Goals in the Classroom	162
Planning and Organizing the Day	163
Remaining the Leader of the Group	164
Displaying a Style of Teaching	164
The Second Question: Which Contextual Variables Outside and Inside the Classroom Influenced the Classroom Perspective?	166
The Third Question: What Are the Assumptions about Students, Learning, and Classrooms which Support the Classroom Perspective?	168
The Fourth Question: How Does This Teacher Synthesize the Various Types of Information about Student Background and Behavior into His Perspective?	170
Implications	174

APPENDIX A	180
APPENDIX B	181
APPENDIX C	183
APPENDIX D	185
APPENDIX E	186
BIBLIOGRAPHY	188

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: The Classroom Layout	75
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The teacher's world merits careful study. Teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and prospective teachers may benefit from in-depth studies which describe and explain some portions of the classroom world. By getting inside a teacher's world, over an extended period of time, one may more easily understand how that teacher interprets, makes decisions about and acts in the world of the classroom. As the teacher defines his world, makes decisions, and acts in it, he develops a classroom perspective, which is an ordered view of his world.

Therefore, the purpose in this study was to describe and explain the classroom perspective of one elementary school teacher. It is necessary to conceptually isolate that perspective in order to understand (a) the teacher's interpretive process, (b) his decisions, and (c) his actions. This study was therefore guided by the following exploratory questions:

1. What elements constitute this teacher's classroom perspective?
2. Which contextual variables outside and inside the classroom influence the classroom perspective?
3. What are the assumptions that this teacher makes about students, learning, and classrooms which support the classroom perspective?

4. How does this teacher synthesize the various types of information about student behavior and background into his perspective?

Background and Conceptual Framework

This study was based upon the theory of symbolic interaction. Meltzer, Petras, Reynolds, and Blumer characterize symbolic interaction as a process of interpretation.¹ As a person encounters elements of his environment, the person interprets and gives meanings to them. The individual judges their suitability to his actions and makes decisions on the basis of the judgment. Then he constructs the actions of his "self" according to the decision. Blumer indicates that this is what is meant by interpretation or acting on the basis of symbols.² An important implication of such an approach is further explained by Blumer.

Whatever the action in which he is engaged, the individual proceeds by pointing out to himself the divergent things which have to be taken into account in the course of his action. He has to note what he wants to do and how he is to do it; he has to take account of the demands, the expectations, the prohibitions, and the threats as they may arise in the situation in which he is acting. His action is built up step by step through a process of such self-indication. The human individual pieces together and guides his action by taking account of different

¹Bernard N. Meltzer, John W. Petras, and Larry T. Reynolds. Symbolic Interactionism: Genesis, Varieties, and Criticism. (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction." from Symbolic Interaction: a Reader in Social Psychology. Edited by Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967).

²Blumer, p. 141.



things and interpreting their significance for his prospective action.³

The significance of making indications to oneself is that it is distinct from the conventional psychological states and is not subsumed under them. As Blumer clarifies:

Self-indication is a moving communicative process in which the individual notes things, assesses them, gives them a meaning, and decides to act on the basis of the meaning. Environmental pressures, external stimuli, organic drives, wishes, attitudes, feelings, ideas, and their like do not cover or explain the process of self-indication. The process of self-indication stands over against them in that the individual points out to himself and interprets the appearance or expression of such things, noting a given social demand that is made on him.⁴

By means of self-indication then, the individual places himself against his self-indications whatever they may be and then he either accepts, rejects, or transforms them depending on his definition of the situation.

There is little contention with W. I. Thomas' insight that what a man does depends on his definition of the situation. Shibutani has stated that the manner in which a person consistently defines a succession of the situations depends on his perspective.⁵ He sees a perspective as

. . . an ordered view of one's world -- what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events, and human nature. It is an order

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 142.

⁵Tamotsu Shibutani, "Reference Groups as Perspectives" Symbolic Interaction: a Reader in Social Psychology. Edited by Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967).

of things remembered and things expected as well as things actually perceived, an organized conception of what is plausible and what is possible; it constitutes the matrix through which one perceives his environment. The fact that men have such ordered perspectives enables them to conceive of their ever changing world as relatively stable, orderly, and predictable. As Reizler puts it, one's perspective is an outline scheme, which running ahead of experience, defines and guides it.⁶

Thus, for the interactionist a perspective is a reflective socially derived interpretation of that which he encounters which then serves as a basis for the actions which he constructs. The person's perspective is a combination of beliefs and behaviors continually modified by social interaction.

In the classroom, the teacher acts and thinks in a particular way. In the terms of the interactionist, the teacher develops a classroom perspective, a consistent way of thinking and acting in a classroom. The perspective enables the teacher to make sense of his world, interpret it, and construct his actions within it. It is a teaching classroom perspective which this study was designed to describe.

Methodology

According to Blumer:

Insofar as sociologists or students of human society are concerned with the behavior of acting units, the position of symbolic interaction requires the student to catch the process of interpretation through which they construct their actions. This process is not to be caught merely by turning to conditions which are antecedent to the process. Such antecedent

⁶Ibid., p. 161.

conditions are helpful in understanding the process insofar as they enter into it, but . . . they do not constitute the process merely by inferring its nature from the overt action which is its product. To catch the process the student must take the role of the acting unit whose behavior he is studying. Since the interpretation is being made by the acting unit in terms of objects designated and appraised, meanings acquired, and decisions made, the process has to be seen from the standpoint of the acting unit.⁷

Following the tenets of symbolic interaction, in order to understand the subject's world, the researcher must catch that process of interpretation. A suitable way to accomplish this is to accompany the subject as he encounters, interprets events, and constructs his social reality. Accordingly, in this study, the researcher placed herself in the teacher's environment, took a limited role in many classroom activities, and observed the teacher from as many vantage points as possible. The researcher was not a participant observer in the sense of actually taking the role of teacher. Rather, the researcher was an observer of the teacher and a participant in myriad professional activities in which the teacher was central. This approach is a variation of participant observation. Nonetheless, Geer's definition of what a participant observer does, was held to.

A participant observer is at once reporter, interviewer, and scientist. On the scene, he gets the story of an event by questioning participants about what is happening and why. He fills out the story by asking people about their relation to the event, their reactions, opinions, and its significance. As an interviewer, he encourages the informant to tell his story . . . As scientist, he seeks answers

⁷Blumer, p. 145.

to questions by setting up hypotheses and collecting data with which to answer them.⁸

In this study, the actions of the teacher were described and explained during seven months of field work. The researcher observed the teacher in his classroom as well as other settings within his school. In addition, due to the unique situation of the teacher, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the teacher in other schools in the district. The teacher had a part time role as "helping teacher." The helping teacher is one who travels to various schools assisting fellow teachers in instruction at their request. Furthermore, the teacher was asked to conduct workshops for intern teachers. This afforded the researcher still another observation opportunity. Because drama activities were of particular interest to this teacher, the researcher traveled with the teacher and the class to still another school in the district to tour the sixth grade Christmas play. The researcher participated in the physical, social, and academic activities of the classroom, such as field trips, parties, art lessons and reading. Extensive notes were taken on the action and statements of the teacher and interviews were held with him. These notes and transcripts of the interviews were analyzed on a weekly basis in order to discover patterns, relationships, and indices of behavior which would merit further study. As the analyses proceeded, concepts were inferred

⁸Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," Sociologists at Work. Edited by Phillip E. Hammond (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1964), p. 383.

from the data and hypotheses were generated. By means of interviews with the teacher and talking to key informants in the classroom, the validity of the inferences was tested. In sum, this method allowed for a proximity to the social situation of the classroom and enabled the researcher to catch the teacher's process of interpretation.

Limitations of the Study

A recurrent objection to participant observation studies relates to questions of validity. The question arises as to how one knows that he is studying what occurred and not his own perceptions. The reply depends upon an acceptance of the principles of symbolic interaction by the researcher and by those who examine the results of the research effort. As the researcher lives close to the social situation, the description and explanation exhibit an intimacy seldom available from other research methods.⁹ By constant appraisal of observations and inference and by reformulations of questions and hypotheses, the researcher is able to check the validity of the insights which emerge. As a better description of the classroom perspective is articulated, more standardized methods may be applied by those who may wish to do so. Yet any standardized methods would be premature without thorough descriptions of the social situation which the participant observer method can supply.

⁹Philip A. Cusick. Inside High School. (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1973).

Another standard objection to participant observation is that such a method deals with a limited sample and may not be generalizable. While the social phenomenon may be unique, this need not prevent learning from it to occur through intelligent study.¹⁰ A good description of a social phenomenon, however unique, may be quite intelligible to one who never participated in it. Through this study, the behavior and perspective of a teacher can be made understandable given thorough descriptions. Furthermore, hypotheses generated by this study may serve as the basis for continued research on teaching which may be more conducive to generalizing. Should similar studies be conducted, generalizations could be made regarding teachers' classroom perspectives.

Significance of the Study

During a time when a great deal of research on teaching has concentrated on how teachers act and perform, a view of teaching has emerged which considers cognitive processes of teachers as equally important. In this view, the teacher is analogous to a clinician actively engaged in processing information from many sources and synthesizing that information in terms of some manageable model. This enables the teacher to render judgments and make decisions. This approach is based on the work of Newell, Shaw, and

¹⁰Ibid., p

Simon.¹¹ Broadly interpreted by Shulman, in this view the teacher is responsible for:

. . . aggregating and making sense of an incredible diversity of information sources about individual students and the class collectively; bringing to bear a growing body of empirical and theoretical work constituting the research literature of education; somehow combining all that information with the teacher's own experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and purposes; and having to respond, make judgments, render decisions and reflect and regroup to begin again.¹²

This approach while providing a heuristic tool for viewing what is involved in teaching is limited by not disclosing why a teacher chooses to process a particular set of decisions over another. On the other hand, by uncovering the teacher's classroom perspective, it becomes easier to understand the teacher's choice of a set of decisions. Thus, there is a point at which the usefulness of information processing stops and it becomes necessary to find another tool to inform us of the grounds for the teacher's choice of a particular set of decisions.

In this study, thorough descriptive data help us understand the structure of the teacher's decisions because we get inside his world and catch his process of interpretation of the classroom. Here, the social psychology of symbolic interaction serves as the heuristic tool for filling in what information processing is unable

¹¹Allan Newell, J. C. Shaw and Herbert A. Simon. "Elements of a Theory of Human Problem Solving." Psychological Review, 1958, 65, 151-166.

¹²Lee S. Shulman. "The Psychology of School Subjects: a Premature Obituary?" Journal of Research on Science Teaching, 1974, 11, 319-339.

to supply. In this case, the significance of the study is twofold. First, the descriptive record of what the teacher says and does helps uncover the structure behind the statements and actions. Second, this approach supplements the work of those scholars involved in information processing studies.

There are common elements in the two theories of information processing and symbolic interaction. Both views would agree that the study of teaching must take into account (a) the goals of the teacher in a given setting and (b) the characteristics of the task environment or the context variables which set limits to alternatives available at a given time. Where the two theories are not in agreement can be seen in this explanation of the information processing schema by Newell.

. . . there is a sort of symbolic formula we use in information processing psychology. To predict a subject you must know: (1) his goals, (2) the structure of the task environments, and (3) the invariant structure of his processing mechanisms.¹³

The symbolic interactionist would not claim that an invariant structure is part of interpretation or even part of social reality. Thomas' definition of the situation illustrates the invariance involved in a given social context. Although a person may define a situation fairly consistently over time, the perspective is variable and dynamic due to the constantly changing interpretations of given events. The process of self-indication by definition is variant. In summary, the significance of this study may extend

¹³Allan Newell and Herbert A. Simon. Human Problem Solving. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972).

into the elaboration of some type of theoretical development by complementary and supplementary uses of the frameworks of information processing and symbolic interaction.

Methodologically, this research may demonstrate the increased utility of ethnographic approaches, such as participant observation in the field of education, a field where it has not typically been used. This research contributes to a need for descriptive data on teaching. Because the method enables one to get at how the teacher thinks and acts in the classroom, teachers, administrators, and teacher educators may find the description useful.

While acknowledging that the findings of this study relate to one teacher's classroom perspective, it is the uniqueness of this teacher's perspective which makes it valuable. As educators seek to improve educational practice, more information will be needed about the teacher and the teacher's classroom perspective. This research was designed, in part, to meet that need.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study was conducted to describe and explain a teacher's classroom perspective using a variation of the participant observer method. The review of the literature was, therefore, drawn from and arranged into two categories. The first category deals with the few studies in schools which use ethnographic techniques in varying degrees. The method of participant observation is considered and labeled ethnographic by anthropologists and sociologists. The term "ethnographic" refers to a long established method of inquiry, ethnography. This method requires the researcher to become a member of a social situation over time in order to describe and explain that social situation from the viewpoint of the members under study. The ethnographer does not prestructure his inquiry with a priori categories previous to entering the field. Rather, the ethnographer shares in the life activities and sentiments of the people under study in order to recognize the significant concepts which emerge for study. As a result of such an approach, new methodological problems necessarily present themselves. As Bruyn points out:

Unlike the traditional empiricist, the participant observer must view a culture just as the people he is studying view it...This means he sees goals and interests of people in the same way that people see

them, not as functions or experimental causes as would the traditional empiricist...it means that he sees people in the concrete reality in which they present themselves in daily experiences.¹

Thus, the first category of the review includes studies in which teachers or administrators were observed and interviewed in their classrooms and schools. These studies represent a break with traditional classroom research. In addition, they are studies which display the strengths and problems of ethnographic techniques. Furthermore, they demonstrate the usefulness of ethnography in classrooms for certain types of research questions.

The second category of the review consists of participant observer literature. In these studies, field researchers described and explained diverse social interactions through an analysis of group or individual perspectives in settings other than classrooms. The studies were chosen because of their focus on perspectives. Thus, both categories in the review serve to acquaint the reader with ethnographic studies in schools, and ethnographic studies which dealt with perspectives. Given the purpose of this study, these categories seemed most appropriate.

The Literature on Studies which Used Ethnographic Techniques

The researcher selected those studies in schools and classrooms which considered behavior as it occurred in their natural settings. These studies were predominantly descriptive with some

¹Severyn T. Bruyn. The Human Perspective in Sociology: the Methodology of Participant Observation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966).

type of sociological or social-psychological analyses. The studies emphasized the teacher and contextual variables as crucial elements in the process of teaching.

The early research effort of G. Alexander Moore, Jr., and his associates provided a collection of classroom observations based upon nine case studies of classroom situations in three separate inner-city schools.² The purpose of the book was to familiarize the reader with the urban school environment. Moore's study was conducted in a setting similar to the setting for this study of a teacher's classroom perspective. In all three cases, Moore found certain social conditions which, when combined, made both school and teacher a perplexing and foreign experience for the student. These social conditions included: (a) low income, (b) varied ethnic background, and (c) recent migration. Moore attempted to analyze the descriptive data for teachers, including student teachers and those unfamiliar with urban classrooms. He pays particular attention to institutional variables and how these variables shape educational policy. In this system, the teacher is managed by a bureaucratic system as the student is managed by the teacher. Moore looks at routines in terms of rites and rituals and how these routines fit into the network of schooling. Furthermore, he analyzes the individual cases of two teachers who cannot make schooling intelligible to their students. It is concluded that the

²G. Alexander Moore, Jr. Realities of the Urban Classroom (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1967).

teachers' own education has failed them. He concludes his book with a call for teachers in urban schools to become like anthropologists who enter new cultures with very few preconceptions. Like the anthropologist, Moore argues that the teacher must accept his own strangeness to his informants. Lastly, he states that the best guideline for someone coming into a new culture is to establish a real bond or friendship with individuals. The book is completed by Moore's reiteration of his major theme. He states that the new teacher will have to learn from his pupils in order to teach them.³ Moore's finding regarding establishing a bond of friendship with individuals relates to the classroom perspective described more fully in Chapter IV of this text.

A later and equally notable collection of descriptive data is part of Philip Jackson's Life in Classrooms.⁴ Jackson and his associates systematically observed four elementary school classrooms over a two-year period. Jackson's goal was to arouse interest in those aspects of everyday life in schools which receive less attention than they deserve. He illustrates that during the elementary school years, the child is initiated into an institutional setting and must come to grips with institutional life. The characteristics the child must come to grips with include delay, denials, interruptions, and social distractions each produced by the crowded conditions of the classroom.

³Ibid., p. 188.

⁴Philip W. Jackson. Life in Classrooms (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1968).

In his final chapter, Jackson discourses from a common sense viewpoint.⁵ He stresses the complex nature of the teacher's world due to the social character of the classroom. This requires the teacher to work with a group toward complex goals in a complex setting. He questions whether the teacher's primary concern is learning after all, since the teacher's activities and the amount of time which must be spent doing various things covers such a range. He concludes that teachers seem to be guided by certain rules of thumb and these are continually modified by the specifics of each classroom situation.⁶ Next, he presents the evidence of the unpredictability of classroom events and the effects of such a state on teachers' decisions. Finally, he contrasts the clinical approach to teaching with what actually occurs in the classroom and calls for more research in classrooms of an observational nature. If observational studies of classrooms increase, Jackson believes that new ways of talking about teaching are bound to emerge.

Jackson's study supports the argument for more observational studies which look at the rules of thumb continually modified by the specifics of the classroom situation. A teacher's classroom perspective is, in part, made up of these rules of thumb. As researchers uncover teachers' perspectives, they will uncover the rules of thumb and thus more information will then be available

⁵Ibid., p. 159.

⁶Ibid., p. 163.

about the decision making process of the teacher as well as how the teacher views and orders his world.

Continuing with regard to the complexity of classroom life, Smith and Geoffrey provide an intense analysis of life in a single urban classroom.⁷ The purpose of Smith and Geoffrey's work was twofold. First, both researchers sought (a) to describe the activities in an urban classroom and make sense of these activities in order (b) to build a more general theory of teaching. Smith, a university researcher spent a year in Geoffrey's upper elementary school classroom. Smith took the role of a non-participant observer while Geoffrey took the role of participant observer. Both co-investigators kept daily field notes and both worked on analysis of the sequence of events which occurred. The analysis of the descriptive data focused on teacher decision making, the behavior of teaching, the contextual variables which were classified as either fixed or flexible, the school as an organization, renovation of the urban school, and socialization of teachers. This was a study of institutional characteristics and how they were reflected in the activities and thinking of one teacher in an urban classroom. The theme of complexity of the teacher's task is documented and explained. The significance of this book lies in its lucid and articulate account of the method of participant observation applied to a classroom setting over time. This enabled the researchers

⁷Louis M. Smith and William Geoffrey. The Complexities of an Urban Classroom (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1968).

actually to put forth a description of the events of the year and an analysis of those events.

While Smith and Geoffrey accomplished this much, they did not seem to meet their secondary goal of building a more general theory of teaching. They did build a number of models such as a model of the teacher as decision maker or a model of the activity structure in the school. However, model building and theory building are not synonymous. Furthermore, the assumption that a theory of teaching is necessary or desirable is open to debate. If agreement existed as to the need for such a theory, the descriptions presented by Smith and Geoffrey would be of help. However, to set out with such a lofty purpose prior to entering the field setting ruptures the simple purposes of an ethnographic approach. Their account of the value of the ethnographic method in the study of one teacher in one classroom was a motivator for this study of a teacher's classroom perspective.

In contrast to the social psychological analysis of Smith and Geoffrey, Dan Lortie provides us with a distinctly sociological study about teachers.⁸ In his book Schoolteacher, Lortie draws upon historical review, surveys, classroom observations and interviews to capture the meaning of teaching from the teacher's point of view. He uses the analogy of teaching as a craft. He carefully compares the conditions affecting the craft and discloses the

⁸Dan C. Lortie. Schoolteacher: a Sociological Study (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

uncertainties which complicate teaching. These uncertainties are related to three themes of conservatism, individualism, and presentism which determine the nature of the craft. Lortie gives reasons for (a) why teachers are resistant to change, (b) how and why they view teaching as an individual effort, and (c) why the uncertainties of teaching reinforce the situation of working in the present one day at a time. Lortie's reasons are woven into the themes of conservatism, individualism, and presentism. The themes are well grounded in the data, which lends credence to his analysis.

In the final chapter of his book, Lortie speculates about change in the occupation of teaching. He asks: (a) what kinds of changes are likely to occur? (b) what are the implications of such changes should they occur? and (c) what possibilities exist for combining research and action to facilitate change? Lortie goes a step further by making suggestions for additional research and identifying some concrete examples of how teachers may contribute to the development of their occupational knowledge.

Moore, Jackson, Smith and Geoffrey, and Lortie have analyzed teaching by looking at contextual variables and how these affect the decisions of the teacher as well as what teachers do. In addition, all five writers reiterate the complex nature of the environment of the classroom and more broadly the school. Each writer has something to add to the sociology of teaching literature. Each presents some form of explanation which indicates how teachers make sense of life in classrooms. This is relative to the study of

teacher classroom perspective since a perspective enables a teacher to make sense of his world.

The studies discussed up to this point have been characterized by (a) describing and explaining some part of the teaching process, (b) taking place in one or a small number of classrooms over a long period of time, and (c) utilizing one or a small number of participant observers. Unlike these studies, another type of large scale study has taken place in which twelve researchers observed forty classrooms.⁹ This phase of the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study took place in a carefully selected sample of forty classrooms in California schools over an eight week period. However, each observer was in a given classroom for one week only. The researchers observed in classrooms, took notes, and dictated protocols. They were non-participant observers. The observations took place in either a second grade or fifth grade classroom during reading and math classes and each grade had ten "more effective" and "less effective" teachers designated at the onset.

The general purpose of this study was to obtain qualitative information about effective teaching of reading and mathematics in the second and fifth grades.¹⁰ Effectiveness was based on adjusted gains of learners on outcomes derived from a two week

⁹William J. Tikunoff, David C. Berliner, and Ray C. Rist, Technical Report #75-10-5, "Special Study A: an Ethnographic Study of the Forty Classrooms of the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study Known Sample." Far West Laboratory, October, 1975.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

experimental unit, one in math and one in reading, for each grade level. The researchers intended to use observation to identify teacher, student, and instructional characteristics inherent in the more effective teaching of reading and math. After generating forty sets of protocols, they subjected these protocols to some systematic analysis and re-analysis. A team of six people read the protocols and generated a set of dimensions which discriminated between the more effective and less effective teachers. A second team of raters compared pairs of protocols, using a rating instrument developed to incorporate the dimensions generated by the first team of raters.¹¹ Over two hundred teacher, student, and instructional characteristics were identified. These were compacted into 61 dimensions. A schema was devised to incorporate these dimensions into categories of classroom climate, teacher instructional moves, teacher behavior control moves, and teacher characteristics. Following some correlational analyses, the researchers reported that (a) a "family-like" class atmosphere was indicative of more effective teachers, (b) reading and math are taught very differently in various classrooms, and (c) the 61 dimensions generated by the study are worthy of further research.

After reading the report of their study, some basic questions arise. First, the question of the use of terms seems most critical. The researchers used the terms "ethnography," "micro-ethnography," "field methodology," and "non-participant observation"

¹¹Ibid., p. ix.

as synonymous. Although the meanings of these terms overlap in some respects, they are not synonymous. Ethnography is a term from the field of anthropology which refers to observing and participating in a culture apart from one's own over time. Non-participant observation is basically a type of field research methodology.¹² While ethnography is also a type of field research, it contains the elements of participation in the culture under study over a lengthy period of time. Ethnography goes beyond the non-participant observer method. Since the observers in this study spent only one week in each classroom, it would be inappropriate to label this study ethnographic. It is, however, observational.

A second problem arises with the question of observation time. Teachers were formally observed only during reading and math, which means all that relates to reading and math outside of those time frames was not considered. This is extremely narrow in terms of observation time. It was reported that "some informal" observations were recorded. The researchers do not report, however, how, if at all, these informal observations relate to their analysis. The overall effect of such limited observation time is that it isolates the reading and math from the context of the entire classroom experience.

A third problem with the study lies in the lack of a check on the observations. Usually, in field research, the researcher is

¹²Frank Lutz and Lawrence Iannaccone, Understanding Educational Organizations: a Field Study Approach (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 111-113.



in the social situation for a long period of time. This insures that the observer will collect data with some consistency and accuracy as a phenomenon occurs and reoccurs. This insures the reliability and validity of the observations. If the observers are present for only one week, twice daily, as in the BTES, they cannot be sure that the phenomenon described is, in fact, reliable and valid.

Extensive attention is being paid to this study because it serves to illustrate how some educational research is labeled "ethnographic," while not meeting the rigorous criteria of the method. Ethnography is a carefully constructed method which includes a description of a social situation, over time, from the viewpoint of the members in that social setting. In order to do this, the ethnographer becomes a participant in that setting, the degree of participation being determined by the ethnographer and the group under study. While the BTES, Special Study A, attempted to meet some of these criteria, the study was narrow and limited. The description of the social setting was limited to math and reading, isolated from the totality of classroom life. The time spent in observation by a given researcher was less than ten hours. There was no attempt to become a participant in the culture. Consequently, the BTES, Special Study A, is an example of a study which passed for ethnography, but which was not the disciplined inquiry of the anthropological field research investigator.

Although such a study illustrates the misuse of the term "ethnographic," other studies in classrooms have met the criteria

of taking place over time, with some degree of participation within the social setting. One such study on teachers and their social world was conducted by Willard Waller in 1932.¹³ Waller based his analyses on descriptive data on life in the upper grades and the high school. He made use of life histories, case records, diaries, letters, personal documents and observations in order to understand the process of social interaction in the schools. Waller stated his three-fold purpose as follows: (1) to describe with all possible care and completeness the social life of human beings in and about the school, (2) to analyze these descriptive materials particularly from the standpoints of sociology and social psychology, (3) to attempt to isolate causal mechanisms involved in those interactions of human beings having their locus in the institution of the school.¹⁴ Waller analyzed his descriptive data in light of school and community variables, the culture of the school, the teacher-student relationship, and occupational styles of teachers. Of particular interest to this researcher is Waller's chapter on the "Definition of the Situation." Waller writes:

...The problem of social adjustment is the problem of finding a role. The definition of the situation determines one's role and sets up the delimitations of his self feelings. Personality develops through the growth of adaptations to a finely graded series of definitions of situations. The evolution of situations, and of definitions of situations, goes from a simple to complex, with occasional breakdowns (in which complex wholes, of which

¹³Willard Waller. The Sociology of Teaching (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961).

¹⁴Ibid., p. 2.

the structure may or may not have been perceived at one time, break up into simpler units) apparently determined by the laws of attention. Within existing situations, too, there may be a growth of structure attended by a corresponding refinement of adaptation ...Human situations advance from chaotic and confused groups of elements with a minimum of structure to more complex and clearly organized structures.¹⁵

For a study of teacher classroom perspective, one needs to look into the teacher's definition of the situation in order to understand the elements of the perspective which evolve over time.

Another classroom study of four low socio economic status schools was undertaken by two participant observers.¹⁶ Charles Beady and Patricia Flood were part of a research team of nine people studying school climate and outcomes in elementary schools. Beady and Flood were participant observers in four schools for four months. Two of the schools in the sample were low S.E.S. schools, one high achieving and one low achieving. The other two schools were high S.E.S. schools, one of which was low achieving and the other high achieving. In addition to participant observation in the classrooms, the research team obtained information through formal and informal interviews with teachers, principals, and students. The findings of the study show that school climate may have a mediating effect upon school achievement. Each of the four schools was

¹⁵Ibid., p. 297.

¹⁶Charles Beady and Patricia Flood, Chapter V of Schools Can Make a Difference, a research report, Grant Number NIE G-74-0020, from the National Institute of Education, a part of a study of "Elementary School Social Systems and School Outcomes" by W. B. Brookover, et al. College of Urban Development, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1976.

subjected to analysis by school-community characteristics, time spent in instruction, teacher expectations, reinforcement practices, grouping procedures, teaching games, the principal's role and the commitment to providing students with an education by teacher and principals.

The initial phase of the research sought to identify factors associated with academic climate which could account for the variance in achievement levels in a random sample of Michigan elementary schools. The researchers operated under the assumption that climate variables, such as those referred to earlier, would account for variance in achievement over and above that accounted for by S.E.S. and racial composition. The case study phase of Beady and Flood was conducted to find the differences in climate between two sets of schools which had difference in school achievements. Beyond this, the researchers hoped to accumulate data of at least somewhat successful low S.E.S. predominantly black and predominantly white schools. The most important finding of the researchers was that the majority of staff members in the higher achieving schools seemed to demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that were conducive to higher achievement, and the majority of staff members in the lower achieving schools did not.¹⁷

Participant observation studies in schools have been conducted to understand the behavior of administrators, and teachers, outside of the immediate classroom. Gertrude McPherson studied the

¹⁷Ibid., p. 211.

teaching staff of a small rural school in New England, while she was a teacher there.¹⁸ The purpose of McPherson's study was to describe the socialization process of new teachers as they entered a well established system. She paid particular attention to how the teachers viewed themselves and how status affected the faculty which, in turn, affected the school. She used the method of participant observation because it allowed her to experience the socialization process since she was a new teacher there. She found a conservative attitude in the power group of older teachers which was strong enough to discourage younger teachers from experimenting with new methods. She studied the composition of the groups which broke down by age and experience into the older teachers and the young teachers. Over time, the new teachers either joined the established system or left the school. In a sense, McPherson described a self confirming social system, this rural small town school, which prevented new perspectives from developing.

Lou Smith and Pat Keith became participant observers in an innovative elementary school and studied the leadership patterns of staff members and the effect of change upon the school.¹⁹ This school was designed as a model experimental school with democratic leadership, cooperative decision making and shared authority among students, staff, and teachers. The curriculum was one of

¹⁸Gertrude H. McPherson, Small Town Teacher (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972).

¹⁹Louis Smith and Pat Keith, Anatomy of Educational Innovation: an Organizational Analysis of an Elementary School (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971).

individualized instruction and placed a high value on personal student-teacher relationships. Although the plan for this new school looked appealing, the researchers found that students were confused and oftentimes aimless. In addition, there was a great deal of conflict between the teachers and the administration. The teachers were unhappy due to the demands of individualized instruction such as increased planning time and complex planning for individuals. The conclusions reached by Smith and Keith related to the complexity of change. Due to the total overburdening of the school system and the non-functioning administration, the success of the innovation was reduced. An effect of this situation was a high teacher turnover rate. Smith and Keith found that the people involved in this school were not able to anticipate the consequences of such a massive change and, consequently, the innovation was unsuccessful.

Another study which concentrated on the administration of a school was conducted by Harry Wolcott and described in the book The Man in the Principal's Office: an Ethnography.²⁰ Wolcott set out to describe and analyze the elementary school principalship from a cultural-anthropological perspective. He observed a principal in many activities and took on the role, in his word, of a "shadow." In addition, Wolcott interviewed staff members, students, and the principal to get at the process in which the principal was engaged. Particular attention was paid to the context within which the

²⁰Harry F. Wolcott. The Man in the Principal's Office: an Ethnography (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973).

principal worked and the complex interrelationships the principal was a part of. The descriptions of what a principal's day typically looks like, the principal as person, and school and community variables, enabled Wolcott to explain the role of a principal and the function of a principal in society.

For Wolcott, school principals serve their institutions and their society as monitors for continuity.²¹ In other words, the principal contributes to the stability of the school. The principal acts as a formal bearer of organizational and societal tradition. Wolcott states that his book may be helpful in the training of administrators and may provide teachers, prospective teachers and administrators and others with some sense of what it means to be a principal.²² The method of study employed by Wolcott served as a model for this study of teacher classroom perspective. As Wolcott placed himself in the school setting, observing and interviewing his subject on various occasions, so did this researcher with one sixth grade teacher. As Wolcott sought to describe and analyze the principalship of one principal, this researcher did the same with one teacher's classroom perspective. Wolcott followed the traditional criteria of ethnography. He placed himself in the setting over time and took on the sentiments of the subject in order to describe and explain his subject's world. In addition, he did not prestructure his data by inventing categories prior to entering the

²¹Ibid., p. 321.

²²Ibid., p. 323.

field. These criteria were followed in designing and implementing a study of a teacher's classroom perspective.

In each of the studies cited, the researchers were able to describe and explain some part of the teaching process in relation to the classroom, school, or community setting. The participant observation method allowed for a closeness to the respective social situation and was conducive to gathering qualitative descriptive data. The sociological or social-psychological analyses were based on the records of social life over long periods of time. By participating and observing a setting over time, the researchers were able to describe those aspects of everyday life in schools which receive less attention than they deserve. This information about social characteristics of schools can and is being gained from participant observation investigations. Given certain types of questions, the method shows great promise for the study of educational institutions.

The Literature on Participant Observation Studies

Anthropologists as early as 1855 developed the method of participant observation, and this method has been associated most frequently with that discipline.²³ The anthropologist became a member of a group or society by living in the society for a considerable length of time, and carefully observed its social life and organization. These observations were recorded in the form of field notes which were then analyzed. Researchers in the social sciences

²³Bruyn, p. 9.

currently have made use of this method when information is sought concerning the structural characteristics of behavior, roles in social settings, group life and various human interactions. The types of interactions which have been studied vary widely.

William Foote Whyte's study of the social structure of an Italian slum is recognized as a classic study in sociology.²⁴ Whyte studied the structure and leadership of the informal groups of "corner boys" for nearly four years. He lived with an Italian family for eighteen months during that time in order to understand the everyday family life in the community. He learned the Italian language and participated in social and political activities in the area. He analyzed the relationship among the racketeers, politicians, and businessmen and how they served to keep the social system operative. The relationships of these groups and the street corner groups helped to reduce violence and provide jobs. Whyte was conscious of his own role in the study, and he tried to avoid influencing the normal flow of life on the corner. The life in this street corner society was not understood by outsiders. As Whyte participated in daily life over time, he was able to explain the social structure as reasonable and understandable given the context of life in this Boston slum.

As Whyte was able to make life in the street corner society understandable, Erving Goffman made life in a psychiatric hospital appear quite reasonable given the environment of a total

²⁴William Foote Whyte. Street Corner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943).

institution.²⁵ Using the participant observer approach, Goffman spent a year at a psychiatric hospital in Washington, D. C. His immediate purpose in doing field work was to learn about the social world of the hospital inmate. Goffman began his study as an assistant to the athletic director and spent the days with the patients while avoiding any sociable contact with the staff. Goffman believes that:

...any group of persons-prisoners, primitives, pilots, or patients develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable, and normal once you get close to it, and a good way to learn about any of these worlds is to submit oneself in the company of its members to the daily round of petty contingencies to which they are subject.²⁶

Although Goffman did not go so far as committing himself as an inmate, he was able to gather data on the fabric of patient life. He viewed the life of the inmate as part of a total institution, that is, one where a group cut off from the wider society together led an enclosed, formally administered round of life. He analyzed life in the hospital by looking at the adaptation to the environment, the underlife of the institution, the minimizing of differences between society at large and the institution, and inmate-staff relationships. His explanation of primary and secondary adjustments to life in the hospital are critical in understanding the inmate's institutional perspective. Through secondary adjustments, a reasonable system of mutual exchange and rewards between inmates and

²⁵Erving Goffman. Asylums (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961).

²⁶Ibid., p. x.

staff operated. Goffman concluded that the most important factor in forming a mental patient is his institution, not his illness, and that the adjustments made by the patient are those of inmates in other types of institutions as well.

An additional study in which life in an institution was investigated was Becker, Geer, and Hughes, Making the Grade. They studied the grade point average perspective of a large number of undergraduates at the University of Kansas.²⁷ The team used the method of participant observation with four observers over a three-year period. The observers also participated in student life by attending classes, attending meetings, and becoming involved in social activities. Faculty and administrators were also observed and interviewed. The group gathered data on the academic life of students, developed generalizations about student perspectives, and analyzed the data.

They divided the perspectives into several components. First, perspectives contain a definition of the situation, or a set of ideas describing the character of the situation in which action must be taken.²⁸ They found the important features in the students' definition of the situation to include:

a statement of goals one can reasonably strive for in the situation; a description of the organizations within which action occurs and the demands they make on participants; the rules both formal and informal by which one's action is constrained; and the

²⁷Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, and Everett Hughes. Making the Grade (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968).

²⁸Ibid., p. 29.

rewards and punishments one may look forward to as a consequence of his performance.²⁹

The perspective components are similar to Newell's schema of goals and task environment as described in Chapter I of this text.

Second, perspectives contain action. Students take action to gather information about their situation to see how they meet demands of others and what rewards and punishments they may expect.

Third, perspectives contain criteria of judgment. Students judge themselves, teachers, and other students on the basis of the quality of institutional rewards available to them.³⁰ Beyond defining these components of perspectives, Becker, Geer and Hughes concluded that there is a wholeness to the experience of college life. They found:

The world of student organizations (both living groups and campus organizations) and the world of dating, friendship, and personal relations affect and are affected by what happens in the world of academic work.³¹

The significance of the Becker, Geer, and Hughes study for the study of a teacher's classroom perspective is found in the model the research team built of components of a perspective. This model sets the perspective in a framework of (a) the definition of the situation, (b) actions, and (c) criteria of judgment. This model will be employed in the analysis of a teacher's classroom perspective.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 30.

³¹Ibid., p. 29.

Using a method much like Becker, Geer, and Hughes, Philip Cusick³² studied the student groups in a high school to get inside their world. His intent was to describe and explain the behavior of some high school students and how their behavior affects the entire school as an organization. Cusick became a high school senior for six months. He attended classes, ate in the cafeteria, and participated in formal and informal gatherings and social activities. After observing and interviewing certain students in particular groups, Cusick concluded that consistent and definite patterns of behavior were present. These patterns indicated that the students' formal small groups which had little to do with the academic nature of the school. The small groups had a strong affect on other aspects of the school organization. The socio-cultural characteristics of the organization produced certain intended and unintended effects which contributed to the development of a student perspective.

The student perspective was one of noninvolvement with the productive structure of the organization and this produced minimal compliance to that structure. Cusick elucidated further by illustrating that the student groupness was a natural, unrecognized consequence of the school's basic organizational structure.³³

While Cusick studied a small group of adolescents in a school setting, Carol and August Hollingshead studied a cross

³²Philip A. Cusick. Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1973).

³³Ibid., p. 205.

section of over seven hundred teenagers within one midwest town. The study is reported in Elmtown's Youth and Elmtown Revisited.³⁴ This field research study made use of participant observation, interviews, official records, tests, autobiographies, historical documents and visits with adolescents, their parents, and other local people. Over 1600 people were interviewed and the husband-wife research team revisited the field site thirty years after the original study. The team became members of Elmtown and decided to study the social behavior of young people. Their working hypothesis suggested that the social behavior of adolescents is related to the positions their families occupy in the status structure of the community.³⁵ As they observed and interviewed community members for over a year, the researchers found that Elmtown's culture did not provide procedures to help the adolescent define himself as an adolescent in the transition from child to adult. The analysis of the findings was broken down by the categories of status and role, characteristics of social class, the school system, cliques and dates, religious behavior, jobs, recreation, dropping out, toil and trouble, and sex and marriage. The Hollingsheads found that in spite of three wars, increased industrialization, and prolonged prosperity over the years, the status structure of Elmtown was highly resistant to change. Since 1949, when the study was first

³⁴August B. Hollingshead. Elmtown's Youth and Elmtown Revisited (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949, 1975).

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7.

published, it remains a classic analysis of a community's social system through an understanding of its young people.

The ethnographic approach was again employed in still another setting with the study of Boys in White by Becker, Geer, Hughes. and Strauss.³⁶ The researchers studied medical students' perspectives and some faculty and staff members over a period of one year. They observed as many groups of students in as many training situations as possible. They attended classes with the students, followed them from class to laboratory to hospital ward. They also sat in on discussions, oral exams, and casually conversed with the groups. They went on rounds, observed examinations and even went in to observe surgery and delivery. Beyond the participant observation, the team interviewed the medical students formally and informally. The data were analyzed under three categories: (1) group perspectives, (2) student culture, and (3) student actions in the institutional setting. As the field notes and interviews were examined, a set of prevailing perspectives was discovered and labeled as: (a) the long range perspective or "the best of all professions," (b) the initial perspective or "an effort to learn it all," (c) the provisional perspective or "you can't do it all," (d) the final perspective or "what they want us to know." The study provides a rich description and explanation of what happens to medical students as they move through medical school. The

³⁶Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, Everett C. Hughes, and Anselm Strauss. Boys in White (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

students become institutionalized and lose much of their idealism. Their long range perspective becomes transformed by the school experience into a more professional and specific perspective.

What evolves from this wide variety of participant observation studies is the realization that any group of individuals, medical students, teenagers, street corner people, or teachers will develop a pattern of behavior which makes sense given the context of their particular social settings. The method allowed the researcher to catch the process of interpretation of events of the individuals being observed. It allowed one to discover what things were of importance to those being studied and to follow up on the meanings of those phenomena. The researcher became involved in the daily lives of the individuals being studied, and established and maintained a personal relationship with one or more persons. This researcher also adopted such a method to investigate the classroom perspective of a teacher. In order to understand the teacher's definition of the situation and consequently to isolate the components of his perspective, the researcher became involved in the teacher's daily school and classroom life. A personal relationship was established and maintained with the teacher. Through observations, in-depth interviews, informal discussion, and consulting with informants, the researcher collected various types of descriptive data. Initial, intermediate and final analyses were conducted throughout the field work and following its termination. Through this approach, the researcher was able conceptually to isolate the teacher's classroom

perspective and offer substantive descriptive support for those elements which were dominant.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the classroom perspective of a sixth grade teacher. In this chapter, the research method will be examined through an explanation of the basic tenets of symbolic interaction, including a definition of perspective. The implications following from symbolic interaction for participant observation research will then be delineated and the step by step recounting of the procedures used in this study will be presented. The standard objection to this method relates to questions of validity. Consequently, this question will be discussed in light of this study of teacher classroom perspective.

Historical Development of Symbolic Interaction

The development of symbolic interaction into a recognizable social psychology can be traced to a number of writers. John Dewey's conception of "habit," W. I. Thomas' "definition of the situation," and the work of Charles Horton Cooley and William James provide the initial layers of the theory. The fundamental assumptions of the theory were laid out by George Herbert Mead in the period of 1893-1931. Mead presented his ideas in lectures at the University of Chicago. After his death in 1931, his students

published his notes and continued to refine the theory. One of Mead's students, Herbert Blumer, has been recognized as the chief exponent of "the Chicago School" of symbolic interaction. Other contemporary social psychologists who are of "the Chicago School" include Kurt Riezler, Arnold Rose, Erving Goffman, and Tamotsu Shibutani.¹

Basic Assumptions

Having some understanding of the history of the theory, it is necessary to examine the basic assumptions of the theory. Symbolic interaction refers to a process of interpretation. Human beings are viewed as rational and continually involved in giving meaning to their social world. Each individual actor interprets or defines that which he encounters including the actions of other people. The individual does not merely react to his environment as some stimulus-response theorists suggest. Instead, it is more like inserting a process of interpretation between the stimulus and the response. The response made is based on the interpretation

¹Many social psychology texts incorporate symbolic interaction theory and trace its historical development: Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm Strauss, Social Psychology (New York: The Dryden Press, 1956); Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Character and Social Structure (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1953); Tamotsu Shibutani, Society and Personality (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961). George Herbert Mead's Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934) offers the basic groundwork of the theory. Notable works about Mead's position include: Anselm Strauss (ed.), George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964); Andrew J. Reck (ed.), Selected Writings: George Herbert Mead (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964); and Grace Chin Lee, George Herbert Mead (New York: King's Crown Press, 1945).

which is attached to any action, event, or thing. For the symbolic interactionist, then,

...human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.²

Thus, interpretation is the key to man's attempts to deal with the social world.

This act of interpretation and what it implies for the understanding of human conduct has been thought through most cogently by George Herbert Mead. Mead relied on a simple but critical element in his analysis. He dealt with the idea that the human being has a self. For Mead, this self enables the individual to be the object of his own actions. He can act toward this self as he acts toward others. This is the mechanism which enables the individual to make indications to himself. The individual is then able to construct his actions, and evaluate, accept, or reject his indications to himself. Thus, the individual makes sense of his social world by acting toward himself and others through self indications. These self indications allow him to interpret reality and consciously construct his actions. A person's self indications depend on his definition of the situation, also called a perspective.

Becker, Geer, and Hughes divided perspectives into three categories for purposes of analysis:

- (1) Perspectives contain a set of ideas describing the character of the situation in which action must be taken. These ideas are definitions of the situation.

²Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," p. 139.

- (2) Perspectives contain actions or activities which one may engage in given the world as it is defined by the person.
- (3) Perspectives contain criteria of judgment.³

In this study, these categories were used in analyzing the data.

Summary

The history and development of symbolic interactionist theory is traceable to Dewey, Thomas, Cooley, James, and Mead. Herbert Blumer and other students of Mead compiled his notes and refined the theory. The basic assumption of the theory rests on the notion that the human being has a "self" whereby he defines situations and makes indications to himself about the meaning of his social reality. Following from this, human interaction is thus mediated by symbols or interpretations. The sum total of these interpretations over time constitute a perspective. A perspective is a combination of beliefs and behaviors which characterize an individual's definition of a social world.

In this study, a major assumption was that a teacher develops a classroom perspective, a consistent way of thinking and acting in the classroom. This classroom perspective enables the teacher to make sense of his world, interpret it and construct his actions within it. The problem posed in this study was to isolate the components of this teacher's classroom perspective and describe and explain that perspective. In order to do this, a suitable method

³Becker, Geer, and Hughes, pp. 29-30.

had to be used. According to Blumer, the position of symbolic interaction requires the researcher to catch the process of interpretation by placing and immersing oneself in the social situation under investigation. Blumer explains:

The study of action would have to be made from the position of the actor. One would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it. You have to define and interpret the objects as the actor interprets them.⁴

Wirth suggests further:

...insight may be regarded as the core of social knowledge. It is arrived at by being on the inside of the phenomena to be observed...It is participation in an activity that generates interest, purpose, point of view, value, meaning and intelligibility, as well as bias.⁵

This does not mean that the researcher is unscientific.

...this in no way suggests that the researcher lacks the ability to be scientific while collecting data. On the contrary, it merely specifies that it is crucial for validity and consequently for reliability to try to picture the empirical social world as it actually exists to those under investigation, rather than as the researcher imagines it to be.⁶

This is the essential emphasis of participant observation: to systematically describe the social world as it exists to those under study.

⁴Herbert T. Blumer. "The Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 71 (March 1966), p. 542.

⁵L. Wirth. "Preface," pp. x-xxii in Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1949).

⁶W. J. Filstead (ed.). Qualitative Methodology. (Chicago: Markham, 1970).

Participation Observation: Implications for Research

Following the assumptions of symbolic interaction, participant observation is concerned with (1) describing the process of interpretation used by the subject in constructing his world and (2) inferring and explaining in abstract terms the perspective or definition of the situation the subject uses to construct his world. In order to do this, the researcher systematically adheres to the following process.

While the researcher brings with him some theoretical framework related to the study, the researcher avoids prestructuring his inquiry to prove or disprove some relationships of variables. Instead, hypotheses are generated and tested on a day to day basis while doing field work and the explanation develops from the descriptive data. In the field, extensive notes are taken on the actions and statements of those under study. In some systematic fashion, the notes are read, organized, and analyzed tentatively. As the researcher remains in the field over a long period of time, patterns of behavior are noted and the frequency of the patterns is recorded. In some cases, the patterns may be the basis for further hypotheses and warrant further investigation. In such cases, remaining in the field setting is helpful, until the hypotheses are investigated. The researcher develops concepts to explain the phenomena of most importance. As the inquiry proceeds, the researcher makes sense of all these concepts by developing working models to explain the social world under study.

Construction of a Model

The process of reduction of data into a manageable model constitutes an end goal of this method. There is a continual re-assessment and refining of concepts as the field work proceeds. Negative examples are purposely sought since they may disprove some initial hypothetical constructs. As the analysis proceeds, working models are developed which explain the behavior under study. As the analysis continues, relationships can be identified which connect portions of the description with the explanations offered in the working models. There is an attempt to determine the significance of the various elements in the model and these are verified by interviewing the subject, consulting with informants, and additional observation. The final stage of analysis is conducted after the field work is complete. It is in this stage of analysis that the researcher checks his models and realigns them as the data warrant.

The model building for this study was tailored by the four criteria explained by Schutz in discussing how the social scientist constructs a model of a sector of the social world.⁷ Schutz argues that the development of a model must adhere to the criteria of relevancy, logical consistency, adequacy, and compatibility.⁸ In other words, the elements in the model must be relevant to the actions

⁷Alfred Schutz. "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences." The Journal of Philosophy, LI (April 29, 1954), p. 261.

⁸Ibid., p. 264.

observed. These elements are subject to the postulate of logical consistency which warrants the validity of the elements in the model constructed by the social scientist. Adequacy refers to the terms or elements in the model. Each element must be constructed in such a way that an action performed by the individual actor would be understandable to the actor himself as well as to his fellow actors in terms of common interpretation of everyday life. Assuming that the postulate of adequacy is adhered to, the compatibility of the elements of the model with the constructs of everyday life is made recognizable and validated. Following the construction of the model, the next component of the process is presenting the data in narrative form supported by evidence from the statements and behaviors recorded in the notes and interviews. The presentation of the data is often empathic and positive. As the participant observer immerses himself in the social setting, he naturally takes on the perspective of his fellow actors and thus becomes to some extent a sympathizer. This raises some questions regarding the method.

Central Issues

Many critics of participant observation raise the issue of the dangers of empathy. The question asked most frequently is, "How does one know that what is offered as a description is so?" Critics wonder if the participant observer is merely a glorified empathizer. Such an empathizer would simply become interested in the subject's daily life patterns. Yet, he would not be following

the method of participant observation. The participant observer rigorously adheres to a number of guidelines and can insure that what he says is indeed a reasonable picture of the social setting. Homans has outlined six indices of subjective adequacy. These indices are the check on over empathizing. Homans suggests the following to produce a worthwhile participant observation study:

1. Time - the more time an individual spends with a group, the more likely it is that he will obtain an accurate interpretation of the social meanings its members live by.
2. Place - the closer the observer works geographically to the people he studies, the more accurate should be his interpretations.
3. Social circumstance - the more varied the status opportunities within which the observer can relate to his subjects, and the more varied the activities he witnesses, the more likely the observer's interpretations will be true.
4. Language - the more familiar the observer is with the language of his subjects, the more accurate should be his interpretations.
5. Intimacy - the greater the degree of intimacy the observer achieves with his subjects, the more accurate will be his interpretations.
6. Consensus of confirmation in the context - the more the observer confirms the expressive meanings of the community, either directly or indirectly, the more accurate will be his interpretations of them.⁹

It should be remembered that the participant observer comes into the social setting which already has meaning apart from that assigned by the person entering the setting. For example, in this

⁹Bruyn, p. 181.

study, there is some meaning in this teacher's classroom apart from that assigned to it by a researcher. The job of the social scientist who becomes a participant observer is to uncover that meaning. He facilitates that process by adhering to the indices Homans suggests. By doing so, the participant observer strengthens the validity of his explanation.

Validity and Reliability

Assuming that Homans' indices are followed and the descriptive data are complete, the researcher is faced with presenting a valid picture of the social world under study. The data consist of many types of observation and records which cannot be summarized in a table of findings as is the case with quantitative studies. In order for the study to have validity, its conclusions must coincide with the intentions of the subjects as they constructed their actions in the social settings. Bruyn states this well: "What the researcher says is reality in the minds of those he studies, must be the reality in the same way that they conceive it."¹⁰ Validity concerns the accuracy of the data collected. The question is, "Do the data accurately indicate what happened in that setting?" Homans suggests that by placing oneself in the social setting (a) over time, (b) working closely in the same place, (c) in varied social circumstances, (d) with the language of the subjects, (e) developing a degree of intimacy, and (f) confirming the meanings of the subject, the researcher is able to keep a check on the validity

¹⁰Bruyn, p. 255.

of the descriptions. Carefully done, the field research method yields a validity seldom present if research is executed with some standardized types of instrumentation. The criteria and evidence for the validity of the description and explanation rest in the accurate portrayal of the subject's world, as Bruyn suggests.

Cusick discusses this notion:

As one lives close to a situation, his description and explanation of it have a first-person quality which other methodologies lack. As he continues to live close to and moves deeper into the situation, his perceptions have a validity that is simply unapproachable by any so-called standardized method.¹¹

Again, if the individual fashions his study with the indicants described by Homans: time, place, circumstances, language, intimacy and consensus, the research findings demonstrate a higher degree of validity. This is critical, since validity is a central question in a qualitative study.

In a quantitative study, however, a central question is reliability. Reliability concerns replicability and consistency of findings. Since there is standardized instrumentation in the quantitative arena, it makes sense to deal with questions of reliability. In the qualitative arena, there are no standardized instruments or statistical tables for the researcher to rely on. In fact, the researcher would have no need to employ the standardized instrument for it would violate the tenets of the method. The value of participant observation methodology lies in the fact that it doesn't pre-structure the data by imposing categories prior to the research

¹¹Cusick, p. 232.

activity. Consequently, reliability is more germane to quantitative studies. The participant observer does not wish to demean the value of the question of reliability. He merely wishes to point out that reliability is more appropriately a question for the quantitative paradigm while validity is addressed by the qualitative paradigm. Both questions of reliability and validity are present before the social scientist, and relate to basic assumptions regarding objectivity and subjectivity in the social sciences.

Objectivity vs. Subjectivity

Some social scientists claim that social reality is objective and that one can objectively perceive it. Others support and adhere to the claims of the symbolic interactionists, who maintain that participants subjectively construct their social reality. In order to understand the social reality constructed by persons, it is necessary to become a part of it. From this outlook, social reality is subjective in the best sense of the term. Max Weber offers an explanation of this issue:

The number and types of causes which have influenced any given event are always infinite and there is nothing in the things themselves to set some of them apart as alone meriting attention. A chaos of "existential judgments" about countless individual events would be the only result of a serious attempt to analyze reality without presuppositions.¹²

Weber elaborates further:

¹²Max Weber. On the Methodology of the Social Sciences. (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1949), p. 78.

...we are cultural beings endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and lend it significance. Whatever this significance may be, it will lead us to judge certain phenomena of human existence in its light and to respond to them as being (positively or negatively) meaningful. Whatever may be the content of this attitude - these phenomena have cultural significance for us and on this significance alone rests its scientific interest.¹³

Weber concludes that an "objective" analysis of social events is meaningless and impossible.

Similarly, Michael Scriven, in his discussion of "Objectivity and Subjectivity in Educational Research," details an argument which asserts that educational researchers have confused the purposes of research with its interpretations and applications.¹⁴ By stereotyping objectivity with quantitative research and subjectivity with qualitative, we oversimplify the issue and tend to eschew subjectivity. We then look to objectivity as the goal in research. Scriven explains that objectivity becomes an ideology and influences method. This dominant approach favors prediction as the central concern of science. While he does not deny the benefits of prediction, Scriven argues for the pursuit of understanding as a legitimate purpose for research. If we legitimize the purpose of research as understanding, and if as argued earlier, we understand subjectively, then the participant observer is practicing science

¹³Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁴Michael Scriven. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in Educational Research." in Lawrence G. Thomas (ed.), Philosophical Re-direction of Education Research: The Seventy-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 94-142.

as well as the predictable statistician. In order to understand a social phenomenon, the participant observer gets close to the data and develops concepts and categories from the data itself, not from a preconceived, prestructured highly quantifiable set of concepts and categories constructed a priori by the researchers. Indeed, the chief advantage of participant observation rests in its subjectivity. The participant observation method is a form of scientific inquiry which allows the researcher to describe and explain some portion of the social world. While the researcher does not rely on preconceived categories and abstract numerical tables, he relies on his intelligence to select and define problems, concepts and indices and to construct a model of the social system. This might be called a controlled subjectivity. In the quantitative domain with its emphasis on reliability, the controls are found in the instruments, statistical techniques and the like. In the qualitative domain, with the emphasis on validity, the controls are left to the intelligence of the researcher to construct. All the constructs of the researcher must be subject to verification. Here again, application of Homans' indices assist in the process. The participant observer develops a healthy skepticism in checking out his hypotheses and carefully infers from the data. The evidence from the data is then presented to support the inferences. If this were not the case, we would simply have private guesses and uncontrollable speculation about a given phenomenon.

Presuppositions of This Study

We cannot discover what is meaningful to us by means of a "presuppositionless" investigation of empirical data. Rather, perception of its meaningfulness to us is the presupposition of its becoming an object of investigation.¹⁵

A number of basic presuppositions gave shape to this research. First, man is viewed as rational and, therefore, able to develop some ordered view of his world. In this way, he is able to make sense of social reality. Second, the outlook on social reality as described by the Chicago school of symbolic interactionists is adhered to. Following from the interactionist theory, the method of participant observation seemed the most appropriate approach given the types of questions posed by this research. Finally, presuppositions regarding the teacher to be studied need explication.

Selection of a Subject

Since the purpose of this study was to describe and explain a teacher's classroom perspective using the participation observation method, it seemed reasonable to study one teacher in depth, over a lengthy time period. It also seemed reasonable to seek out a teacher who had a number of years of teaching experience along with a reputation for being a good teacher. The time investment of seven months of field work, the task of reduction of great amounts of data, and the fragile state of developing and maintaining rapport with the teacher, were critical factors in making that decision. In addition, since the researcher would be in the class

¹⁵Weber, p. 76.

every day over an extensive length of time, the assumption was made that a good teacher, one who effectively facilitated classroom activities and processes, would be more comfortable with an observer in the room. Furthermore, such a teacher, it would seem, could probably articulate a great deal about teaching and life in classrooms.

The teacher who participated in this study was found through the assistance of a fellow staff member who was a teacher. I approached the staff member to ask if she knew of any experienced teachers in the district who were known as good teachers and who might be interested in participating in research. She suggested two people, one of whom later became the subject of this study. I contacted him, met with him and explained the study and from the initial meeting, he was willing and eager to undertake the field study project. Given a purpose, a method and a teacher, it was necessary to determine the role which I would undertake in the classroom.

Role Definition

Lutz and Iannacone suggest three categories of participant observer roles:¹⁶

1. The participant as observer - in this type of role, the researcher is already fully established as a member of the social setting and keeps his role as observer or researcher unknown to the

¹⁶Lutz and Iannacone, pp. 111-113.

other members. This type of study is surreptitious or ex-post facto examination of the situation. An example of such a study was reported in When Prophecy Fails by Festinger and his colleagues. The researchers were total participants, but were unknown to the subjects under study.

2. The observer as a participant - in this type of role, the researcher identifies the purpose of his presence and to some degree shares in the activities and enters into interaction with other participants. This study of a teacher's classroom perspective is an example of such a variation.

3. The observer as a non-participant - in this type of study, the observer may or may not make other participants aware of his presence and its purpose, but he avoids all forms of participation in the activities in the setting. An example of such a study was Smith and Geoffrey's study reported in Complexities of an Urban Classroom.

In this study I used a modification of the "observer as participant" role. I informed the teacher, students, other staff members at the school of the general purpose of my study and that I would be taking part in certain activities each day. As the study developed and as I spent more time in the classroom, my role as a participant increased.

The Method of This Study

During the month of November, 1976, I conducted a pilot study to acquaint myself with the method within the context of a classroom. The three week period of piloting was planned to discover any problems that may occur in the course of a longer study. At this time the teacher and I discussed all of the guidelines of the study for both of us, assuming he was willing to continue the research over a longer time period. We discussed our roles and agreed that I would not teach at all, but certainly could interact with the children. The teacher felt comfortable with me in the classroom and approved of my writing notes during class as well as wherever and whenever I chose to. We also agreed that the interviews could be taped for facility in transcription. The teacher was assured of confidentiality and anonymity. At this initial point, I explained to him that in the narrative write-up of this study, his name would be changed as well as other names of persons and places so that anonymity could be preserved. From the start, he was most enthusiastic about the study and was always supportive of my presence and activities.

After meeting with the teacher, an informal meeting with his aide and his intern teacher was held. I explained the general purpose of the study and some of the theoretical background for it, at their request. They both welcomed me into the classroom and accepted me without reservation. The next step in gaining entry to the school was an informal talk with the principal. I introduced myself to the principal and the school secretary upon entering the

school initially. I explained who I was, where I was from, and that I was going to talk to the sixth grade teacher. Both the secretary and the principal welcomed me to "their" school. While talking to the principal in his office, I stated in general terms the purpose of the study and mentioned the teacher's willingness to be involved in the study. The principal offered his support to the project. He seemed happy to have someone from the university in the school and requested that at the end of the research project, I write a report about the proceedings. He also spoke in general terms about my attendance at a faculty meeting to talk about the project. I said I would be happy to write a short report and that I would also welcome the opportunity to speak to the faculty, given a week's notice. The principal mentioned the report and faculty meetings in terms of helping other teachers at the school. His concept of having a researcher in the school was related in some way to research as a helpful tool for teachers. As it turned out, the principal did not invite me to speak at any faculty meeting simply because of the hectic schedule at the school and other priorities of topics particular to the school. On every occasion in which the principal was in his office when I entered the building, I made it a point to speak to him and to the school secretary. This seemed to me an important part of maintaining a rapport with school staff.

The pilot study consisted of a pre-interview to discover the teacher's views of teaching, a series of in-class observations, a series of out-of-class observations and another interview based on the observations. During that time, informal talks with the teacher



before school, after school, and in the teachers' lounge were also critical in establishing a working rapport with the teacher. From the pilot study, I learned that I would need to tailor my times for the observations as well as the focus for them, in terms of the teacher's active schedule. I wanted to observe him in the act of instructing in as many areas as possible. I also intended to observe him in every context related to the classroom before, during, and after the school day.

The pilot study served as my vehicle for acceptance by the students into the class. I was introduced to them by the teacher, and I spoke to them briefly about what I would be doing. I told them I was working on a project with their teacher, and I would be coming in every day to write about their teacher. This was a sufficient explanation for them, and they seemed excited about having a story written about their teacher. They asked questions at first: "Is this going to be a book?" "Will you write this for the newspaper?" "Are we going to be on TV?" "Who's going to read this?" I responded to all of their questions and took a seat at a round table which was located on the periphery of the classroom. It was situated so that I was able to view the class and various areas quite easily. Some of the students were interested in the fact that "I could write everything down" and could "write so quickly." I wrote on a note pad of regular sized yellow lined paper. At various times throughout the study, students would ask about the writing: "How many pages did you write today?" "Are you writing on both sides?" "Did your pen run out yet?" At times

individuals would offer information to me about themselves or the class in general. As time went on, I came to know all of them on a first name basis. I established some closer relationships with a few of the students who always spoke to me before or during the times I was present. The students included me in all classroom parties and expected me to become involved in various projects: "Have you designed your batik pillowcase yet?" "Are you coming to the play with us?" "Will you be here for the Mexican Fiesta?" This class of students was particularly accustomed to having adults in the class. They already had an intern teacher, a teacher aide and various substitute teachers in addition to the classroom teacher. I believe that this helped to make my presence comfortably accepted.

Following the pilot study, it was necessary to meet with the teacher to develop a workable observation schedule. The teacher was quite active in district activities and consequently was out of class each Tuesday afternoon for a workshop over a ten week period. In addition, each Thursday and Friday, the intern teacher was offered opportunities to instruct and coordinate class activities. This took the teacher out of his role for certain amounts of time on those days. We both agreed that the optimal time for observing and participating should include the first three days of the week any time during the day, and Thursday mornings and Friday afternoons. If there were a special activity such as rehearsal for the Christmas play, a field trip, or a meeting of the square dance club, I was notified in advance so that I could accomodate my schedule accordingly. We both felt free to call each other at work or at home

if a schedule change occurred. We also established a rapport which enabled us to feel comfortable with a loose schedule subject to change. Being in contact on a daily basis allowed for easy access to communicate. After the decision that I would be free to come in and out of the class each day, I developed a framework for myself which led me to a variety of types of information.

My first days in the field consisted of spending time in class to obtain a thorough description of the classroom setting as well as the individuals in the classroom. While in the school, from that point on, I collected various types of information which constituted the data for this study: (1) Direct observations of the behavior of the teacher and verbatim transcriptions of his statements and conversations compose the greatest portion of the data. (2) Formal interviews were conducted with the teacher based on the observations in order to verify concepts, seek more information, or test hypotheses. (3) Informal interviews were conducted with the teacher, the teacher aide, the intern teacher, the principal, other teachers and some students. Comments from these people were valuable in certain situations and were usually unsolicited. Some of the explanations they offered regarding conflict situations, activities, or matters of importance ameliorated the process of data analysis. (4) Background information was verbally given by the teacher to explain the traditions of the school, its history, and certain types of information about individual students.

My daily procedure consisted of five steps. First, I entered the field setting, the school, and greeted the school

secretary. If the principal were in the office, I spoke to him briefly. If he were not present, I attempted to speak to him before I left the premises. Second, I entered the classroom and greeted the teacher, the aide, and the intern. I always sat initially in "my seat" at "my table." If the teacher were involved with a student or in the process of explaining something to the class, I waited until it was convenient to nod "hello" or greet him. Often, he would work his way over to my table and ask me how I was doing that day. Upon my entering the classroom, many students greeted me with a smile, a wave of the hand, or a verbal greeting. Many of them walked over to me to converse, as long as they weren't engaged in some activity which demanded their attention. Third, I recorded the events of that time period while seated at my table. I was present at various times of instruction and for various class activities. I limited myself to certain periods of observation time. For example, on some occasions, I would record all that was done and said by the teacher in a twenty minute block of instruction, including all his interactions with students during that time. On other occasions, I chose to concentrate only on the transitions from activity to activity during a given morning. Still another type of observation included recording all that transpired over a time block of one hour, or two hours, or some combination thereof. I was in the class for varied time periods from one hour and a half to the entire day including before school planning time and after school.

At any time during the day, students freely approached me and spoke to me about their hobbies, their activities at home, or schoolwork. I made it a point to make contact with each individual at least every other day. Certain students became my friends immediately, and they spoke to me many times during the day. When we went as a group to some other room in the building such as the library, the gym, or the reading center, I did not record what I observed at that time. When I returned to the room, I either recorded everything at that time or noted key words, ideas, and concepts which I later wrote up when I returned to my office. This occurred only a few times when I had to continue observing in the classroom and had to pick up the writing at that point.

Next, I completed the field notes for the day and typed them. For a good portion of the field work, I had secretarial help. Each day's notes were written and typed the same day. Finally, I read the field notes a number of times, looking for significant incidents, conflict situations, patterns of behavior, and frequently recurring actions and statements of the teacher. I noted which statements or actions warranted further investigation. I generated hypotheses about these and tested them or checked them by means of interviewing the teacher or observing him in similar situations. This process was one which allowed me to become immersed in the social situation of the classroom. I found myself thinking about all the occurrences of the day in terms of how the teacher would interpret whatever occurred. As I became aware of what was

important to him, I began to understand how he perceived and made sense of his world.

In addition to the daily procedures, I began a weekly analysis of my field notes following the third month of observation and interview. The person who served as my outside reader for the notes assisted me in this process. He read all of the notes every two weeks throughout the study and wrote out his impressions as warranted. We then discussed our interpretations of what was occurring. This was the beginning of the first stages of model building. The referents for the model building included the exploratory questions for the study, the teacher's statements and actions, and the descriptions of the interactions in the school.

As topics of regular and frequent occurrence or as conflict situations were recognized, my first general procedure was to list these topics and develop categories most representative of them. This sampling of categories became the basis for the initial models. The models were then put up against the exploratory questions. If the questions were not reasonably responded to, I would check the accuracy of my perceptions through formal or informal interviews. In some cases it was necessary to continue observations and my involvement in class projects. When those incidents occurred which led me to believe that a relationship existed between incidents or that some pattern was developing, I continued to investigate the phenomenon.

The field sites for the study included more than the teacher's immediate classroom. Beyond the classroom, I was able to

accompany the teacher to other areas of the school including the gym, the library, the reading center, the kitchen, the teachers' lounge, the office, the corridors, and the schoolyard. I ate lunch with him and his fellow teachers at a nearby restaurant. These lunch sessions provided me with more information about the school environment from the informal conversations with the teachers. The restaurant was a neutral environment where five teachers and I could discuss anything about the school. I was accepted by them and trusted because I was trusted by the teacher I worked with. These five teachers were familiar with the study in a general way and were accustomed to seeing me in the building. Other settings in which I observed the teacher were classrooms in other schools where he participated as helping teacher and various field trip outings to nearby high schools. I was one of the classroom drivers for a number of field trips which afforded me the opportunity to interact with the students who drove with me. We discussed many topics related to things other than the classroom. However, many times the students would naturally talk about school and volunteer information which later was helpful in confirming or rejecting some of my hypotheses.

Seven months of field work produced a considerable amount of information. The field notes and transcribed interviews numbered over seven hundred typed pages. I also accumulated assorted specimens of routine class handouts, letters to parents, permission slips for field trips, personal notes, or various types of printed information. These were categorized and coded according to date,

length of observation time, the list of participants and the nature of the incident or event. On a weekly basis, these were checked for consistency with the working models I developed. In writing the final description of the study, not all data will be included. That which appears represents what I judged to be the most substantive and revealing information given the purpose of the study. As Becker emphasized, the participant observer is always faced with an enormous amount of data and is confronted with the problem of how to analyze them systematically and present conclusions to convince other scientists of their validity.¹⁷ Becker also illustrated how analysis is carried on sequentially; that is, important parts of the analysis were generated during the field work. Consequently, further data gathering is directed from the provisional analysis and the provisional analysis carried on is limited by the exigencies of the field situation. As a result, final comprehensive analysis may not be possible until the field work is completed.¹⁸ The four stages Becker refers to as critical to the participant observation method were adhered to in this study of teacher classroom perspective. Becker enunciates:

The three stages of field analysis are: the selection of and definition of problems, concepts, and indices; the check on the frequency and distribution of individual findings into a model of the organization under study. The fourth stage of

¹⁷Howard S. Becker. "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation." American Sociological Review (23: 652-60).

¹⁸Ibid.

final analysis involves problems of presentation of evidence and proof.¹⁹

In this study of teacher classroom perspective, I have considered the character of my conclusions and reported these with the evidence from the statements and actions of the teacher. In the following chapters, I present my inferences, my conclusions and my data to support those conclusions. I have attempted to describe the contexts within which this teacher functions. I have included descriptions of the school setting, the community, and the daily behavior and interactions of this sixth grade teacher. My explanation of that which forms his classroom perspective refers to the description. As Becker has commented, the question of validity will pass into the hands of the reader as is the case with any research. Given the purposes of this study, the method, and the presentation of the data, the reader will draw his own conclusions about the strength of the explanation.

¹⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the classroom perspective of a sixth grade teacher. Because the interactions of the teacher do not take place in a vacuum, a description of the school environment is included to provide some information about the setting in which this teacher developed his classroom perspective. The findings are presented and include those elements which constitute the teacher's perspective. A description and explanation of his actions, statements and criteria of judgment are selectively assembled in order to understand his classroom perspective.

The City¹

Sancho Panza elementary school is located in an industrial city with a population of 130,000. The automobile industry and state and federal government agencies dominate the employment situation. The median income in the city of Cameron is \$11,000 per

¹All the names of places and persons have purposely been changed in this narrative to insure anonymity.

family.² Many persons who work in the city reside in nearby wealthy suburbs. The majority of the city residents, over 85%, are native born Americans. About 15% of the population is black, Chicano, or American Indian. The schools in Cameron are officially listed as integrated. Sancho Panza Elementary School is located on the west side of town which houses a large minority population.

The school is situated in a very old neighborhood. The homes were built at the turn of the century and are large, wooden and nicely painted. Many of the homes are one family dwellings with well kept lawns and shrubs. Next to the school is a large city park with a pavilion, playground equipment, and basketball, tennis, and shuffleboard courts. The park extends over an area of about five blocks and is bordered by a river. The river divides the back area of the school and the front of a large factory. Many trees and flowers line the streets near the school as well as in the park. The school is classified as a "ghetto" school, yet the scenic surroundings do not fit the label. The school secretary, some teacher aides, and the children all live within walking distance of the school. One of the teacher aides characterized the neighborhood as one "with a sense of community where people work hard."

The 1970 Census indicated that of the city residents, twenty-five years of age and older, fewer than 60% are high school graduates. The figure is lower for the black and Chicano

²All the statistics used in this section are taken from the 1970 census. U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population and Housing, 1970... (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1972).

populations. For example, of the adult population over the age of twenty-five, fewer than 40% of the blacks are high school graduates and about 30% of the Chicanos are high school graduates. Nearly 24% of the blacks and 26% of the Chicanos between the ages of 16-21 do not have high school diplomas. Neither are they enrolled in school. The students at Sancho Panza Elementary are the children of many of these families.

The School

Sancho Panza Elementary School was rebuilt in the mid-1950's. The original building, a red brick schoolhouse, was torn down and that site now serves as the parking lot for the staff members of the new school. The parking lot is asphalt topped with room for twelve cars. The new school is directly across the street from the parking lot. The school is on a corner, and two sides of it, the north and west sides, are bordered by a city park. The south side of the school which is the front faces a residential street. It is trimmed with a well kept green lawn, assorted shrubs, and two trees. A flagpole stands in the front southeast corner. Near the rear of the school is an entrance which most faculty members use to enter and leave the building. Adjacent to this entrance is a small black-topped parking area for about eight cars. A sidewalk runs parallel to this border of the school as well as the front of the school.

The building itself gives an impression of newness. It is a single story with eleven classrooms, five of which are in the

basement. The building is constructed of a light colored, beige cinder block with long windows which allow light and air into the classrooms. The floors in the corridors are highly polished and spotless. Two cushioned chairs are arranged in the lobby entrance. Across from the chairs is the school showcase which is decorated monthly with a seasonal display of students' work. A small 3" x 5" sign is posted on the front door which reads, "All visitors are requested to stop in the office." The office is located immediately to the right of the double-doored main entrance.

There are over three hundred students in the school, from kindergarten through sixth grade. In addition, a small class of pre-schoolers is bussed in daily for a short time. This year the enrollment has fluctuated, but has never gone above three hundred, thirty students.

The main staff consists of eleven teachers, eleven teacher aides and one principal. Included in the support staff are a librarian, a custodian and his assistant, a school secretary and a reading specialist. Assigned to the school for periodic visits are an art teacher, a physical education specialist, a music teacher, a speech teacher, a school nurse, and a social worker. A local violin teacher visits the school twice weekly and gives violin lessons to small groups of students.

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. for the teachers and 8:40 a.m. for the students. Teachers use the forty minutes before the students arrive as planning time. The morning session breaks for lunch at 11:25 for students and staff. The lunch period is one

hour and ten minutes long since all the students walk home for lunch. The afternoon session resumes at 12:40 and concludes at 3:30 p.m. In the sixth grade, the listed daily routine includes:

- 8:40 - 9:00 -- Free Time
- 9:00 - 9:30 -- Spelling or Language Arts
- 9:30 - 10:30 -- Reading
- 10:30 - 11:25 -- Math or Social Studies
- 12:40 - 1:05 -- Free Reading Time
- 1:05 - 2:00 -- Math or Social Studies
- 2:00 - 3:00 -- Reading Center or Art or Music or Science
- 3:00 - 3:30 -- Gym

The schedule for the sixth grade class incorporates all the pertinent subjects as listed above and is subject to change. Sequence of the subjects and length of time spent per subject is flexible and open to the teacher's discretion. Reading class is the constant part of the curriculum since students change classrooms at that time to study with their groups. Any alternative schedules are explained to the students by the teacher so that they are informed about any rearrangements. Time blocks are manipulated if necessary so that students can complete various projects and activities such as art work. In general, more time was spent on instruction and academics in the morning session than in the afternoon session. Social studies, spelling, art, music, science, and singing are flexibly interchanged or eliminated depending on the demands of the day. Despite a regular routine, on occasion, the day is interrupted and rescheduled due to field trips, visitors, and special activities.

The Classroom

The sixth grade classroom is about forty feet long by twenty-five feet wide. The doorway and door are painted a bright orange. On the left, at eye level, outside the door are the names of the teacher, Ken Evans, the teacher aide, Lois Stephens, the intern teacher, Kay Winters, and the researcher's name, with the title of "Shadow." At various times during the school year, a decoration was attached to the window portion of the door. On the immediate left or the west wall is a sink unit with a paper towel rack above and to the right. There is a small cabinet below it. Adjacent to this is the student mailbox center, a wooden box-like unit with partitions the size of a shoebox for each student's workbooks and papers. Each student's name is printed on a partition. The remaining length of the west wall is outlined by tall windows with rolling wicker shades kept at the half way mark. The windows which allow sunshine and light into the room are adjusted if the sun is too intense. The twenty green plants on the window ledge prevent one from putting the shades down flush with the sill. Under the windows are double racked, grey metal book shelves filled with text and reference materials. The top of the book shelving unit serves as a ledge for a terrarium, one-half gallon of Elmer's glue, assorted books, boxes of materials for art class, the teacher's briefcase, and a large box with scraps of carpet squares which are available for the students' use.

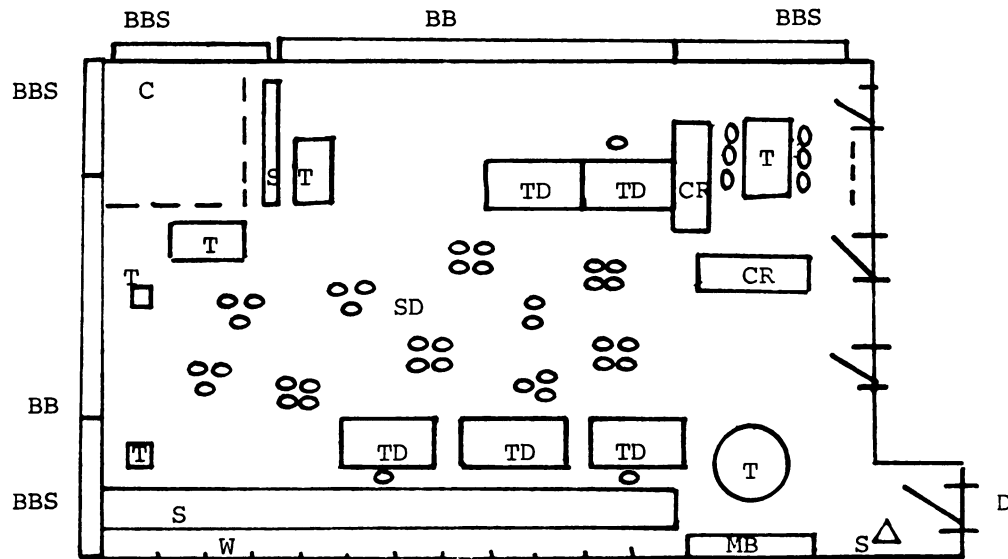


FIGURE 1
The Classroom Layout

T= Table	TD= Teacher's Desk
S= Shelves	SI= Sink
C= Carpet	SD= Student Desk
D= Door	MB= Mailbox
W= Window	CR= Coat Rack
BB= Blackboard	BBS= Bulletin Board

Scale: 10 feet = 1 inch

On the north wall, the blackboard is framed on either side and the top by bulletin boards. The two side boards are changed periodically following some theme. Currently, the boards are displaying information about Central America which compliments the social studies unit. Above the center of the blackboard is a roll up projection screen with a long black plastic covered cord. The screen rolls into a light blue metallic casing. Under the screen is a strip of corkboard with changeable materials. Depending on the season, a typical motif decorates the runner. In spring, flowers trimmed the ends of the board and the cursive letters of the alphabet remain posted for reference. Under the blackboard, the light green cement block wall is visible.

The long east wall is divided into three parts: a large six foot by three foot bulletin board, another elongated, built-up blackboard with four sections, and a medium sized, four and a half by three foot bulletin board. Across the top of the blackboard is a runner about twenty feet long by one and one-half feet wide. The runner is used to display the students' art work. The larger board is most recently adorned with the title "Get in Touch with Your Feelings." Also posted is a bright yellow sign with the title "Magic Circle." The sign reads:

MAGIC CIRCLE

1. Preparation
2. Introduction of Topic
3. Leading Discussion

Rules:

1. Everyone gets a turn
2. You can skip your turn
3. No put downs
4. Share time equally
5. The speaker gets listened to

4. Cognition

5. Closing

The smaller board is changed every week by one of the students who chooses a topic and volunteers to display information on that topic. Some of the displays are pertinent to class activities such as the Christmas play or a class party.

The south wall is broken by doorways leading into and out of the boys' washroom, the girls' washroom, the supply closet and the classroom itself. Between the washroom doors, a portable wooden-trimmed blackboard remains situated. Four wooden portable coat rack units cordon off this area from the main body of the classroom. One set of two racks is perpendicular to the south wall between the girls' washroom door and the supply closet door. The other set of two racks is across from the blackboard, about five feet away. The racks serve as room dividers. They exhibit a polished look due to a clear varnished covering.

The coat racks are five feet high by four feet wide with a shelf trimming the top. Inside the unit which is about two feet deep there are coat hooks every six inches and a metal pole hanging from end to end. Although a number of coat hangers are available for the students' use, many students place their coats on the hooks

or simply drop them on the bottom of the coat rack floor. Within this space bordered by the coat racks is a long wooden work table with a formica top and six small wooden chairs.

The thirty student desks are moved into new sets or arrangements every few weeks. They are placed in groups of two's, three's or four's, facing one another, enabling students to work together and communicate with one another. The wooden desks are built in one unit with the seat attached. The desk opens up for storage of books and supplies. The face of the desk is slanted toward the student and is about twenty-four inches long by twenty inches wide. The desks are slightly worn and have been in the room since the school was built. The tops are finished with some type of covering which is easy to wipe clean. In addition to the students' desks, there are six large wooden teachers' desks. Three of them are placed in a line next to each other parallel to the book shelves on the west wall. One of the desks is Ken's, the middle one a supply desk, and the third desk is Kay's. Lois' desk is parallel to the opposite wall and perpendicular to the coat racks. The two remaining desks are placed in the area near Lois' desk and serve multi-purposes. They serve as storage for papers and art materials, as display space, and as tables to prepare food. Additionally, there are two work tables, a round table with four chairs and a home-made listening center. The listening center is a desk with a built-up top and sides to form a booth. Students make use of this for reading or working by themselves. Whatever the room arrangement, the teachers' desks are stationary and on the periphery, while the

students' desks are movable and in the center of the class. A distinctive feature of the room is the white tiled ceiling which is decorated with mobiles made by the class. The mobiles are changed seasonally or with the time cycle of a project. The mobiles are constructed of metallic materials, colored paper, and multi-textured substances adding a diversified trim to the room. Two ever-present mobiles of Mickey Mouse, the class mascot, hang as if to oversee the room. The touch of the students is pervasive through their colorful art work which filters through the room from ceiling to bulletin boards to wall space.

The Students

There are thirty students in this sixth grade classroom. They range in age from eleven to thirteen years of age. The one student who is thirteen, Charlie, is going through the sixth grade a second time. The students represent a normal spread of heights and weights. They range in height from four feet tall to five feet, four inches tall. Four students are noticeably overweight for their body frames. Two students are noticeably thin and possibly underweight. On the whole, most of the students are of weights suitable to their heights and body frames. Seven students in the class are members of minority groups and half of the students are classified as qualifying for Title I funds. The Title I classification is a result of their families' being listed at poverty level.

At least one third of the students are in homes with one or neither parent. Some are living with grandparents, step-parents or

relatives. In one case a student is living with her grandparents since her mother abandoned her. The family backgrounds of the children are similar to any urban low SES group. Some of the students speak of their siblings who are in prison. Others speak casually of unemployment, welfare, and Aid to Dependent Children payments.

For example, one student, Rita, reported her home commitments which included taking care of the children in the family, fixing meals, doing the grocery shopping and keeping the house in order. Rita is a vivacious, articulate and active student. She is one of the top two readers in the class. She is a Chicano student with light tan complexion, very dark eyes and long black hair worn in braids. She is known as a tomboy, yet every few weeks comes into class dressed very femininely. She wears jeans and t-shirts most of the time. She enjoys showing others her jewelry when she dresses up. She belongs to an after school basketball team and the square dance club. She is the oldest of four children and has taken on the responsibility of caring for the younger family members. Her smile and sense of humor endear her to many students.

Rita is not unlike other students who discussed their similar duties at home and remain active in school activities. In spite of such responsibilities, the students seem happy and are able to take part in the usual activities of sixth graders.

The Teacher and His Goals

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain a teacher's classroom perspective. The central figure in this study is Ken Evans. His classroom perspective becomes recognizable as his actions and statements of belief are understood. It is also helpful to know about his personal characteristics. Ken Evans is in his early thirties and has been a teacher for ten years. He is married and has two children; one daughter is seven years of age, and the other is seven months old. Ken is about five feet, eleven inches in height, slender, and youthful in appearance. His brown eyes and brown hair are usually complemented by his coordinated outfits which give an appearance of professionalism. He makes it a point to wear a tie and to avoid wearing jeans. He believes it is important to dress as a professional as a role model for the students. He remarked about this:

I believe in being a professional. I've been cut down at times because people say, "Why do you feel it's necessary to dress the way you do? -- it's silly -- it's just a show." No, I'm setting a standard. If I don't set an example for the kids, how can I expect them to set standards for me?
(11-10-76)

Ken stands out in appearance and sees this as part of his role as a professional teacher.

He is consistent in his integration of dress as a symbol of professionalism and the view he has of being a professional. He views himself as organized. Of this, he states:

I mentioned to you the other day that I saw myself as being a benevolent dictator. I really see myself

as being very structured with the kids; I should say the classroom. If you can have things well-structured, well-planned, and well-prepared, it allows for greater freedom with the kids because once they learn the procedures, once they feel comfortable -- and again every year we've had to adjust to these things -- then they can function in the classroom and feel like it's more their classroom. (11-10-76)

A well-structured, well-planned class is a reflection of Ken's classroom perspective. A perspective is composed of definitions of situations, actions, and criteria of judgment. As the descriptive data is presented in this chapter, the reader will find the definition of situations in actions and statements of the teacher. This will contribute to the understanding of that teacher's perspective. The criteria for judgments he made are found in the interviews. The criteria for these judgments related to his classroom goals. It is necessary, then, to examine his goals for a more lucid rendering of his perspective.

His goals are the backbone of his definition of the situation. As the descriptions are presented, the perspective which is identified is one of creating and maintaining a group, in order to achieve his classroom goals. This is accomplished through careful planning in terms of the teacher's goals. The goals facilitate the development of the perspective. Furthermore, the goals are the intended outcome of the perspective as well. In thinking over his goals for the classroom, Ken Evans disclosed:

I really think being in sixth grade you automatically set some goals simply because you are thinking at this point in their lives socially and academically they should be reaching a certain degree of maturity and you want very much to see the kids become more

self-sufficient, more self-disciplined, exercising self-control...not only with discipline but also budgeting of time and making use of materials. I want to see the kids make decisions on their own... (11-22-76)

The notion of an independent student who is self-disciplined and able to make decisions is complemented with a major goal.

I think working with the kids with the whole idea of respect and cooperation is always one of my major goals...to show the kids that no matter how much you like or dislike someone...you should be able to function with anyone...it should be possible to work independently right with that person at your elbow. You can each do your own thing and realize that each one has something important to contribute ...It is important for the kids to realize that I do see some value in what they do and...don't stop caring because they have done something wrong...(My goal is) to let them know I am willing to support them. (11-22-76)

The goals of respect and cooperation are tempered with his expectations for the group.

I think in return I want them to realize that...I expect some things and make sure that they understand that nothing is totally free. There is always some catch to it and so I show them that one of the things I expect from them is that they will be respectful to me. I want them to feel I can lead them through channels where they can be successful. I like to let them know that school is fun. Learning can be fun. It doesn't have to be a drag and by working together, cooperating, the whole experience of school is an exciting experience. There are many things we can discover together...I want that in return from them. (11-22-76)

Through careful planning of activities and instruction, the class has the opportunity to work together, cooperate and display respect for each other and the teacher. The teacher as leader of the group facilitates the group's moving toward the classroom goals. As a leader, the teacher models the behaviors which indicate respect and

cooperation, and he sees himself as a facile communicator. He says:

I see myself as someone who is rather easy to communicate with as far as the kids go because I believe in listening. Lots of times I say to the kids -- let me think about it. I want them to feel free to tell me things and I don't want to react too quickly or hastily so that I am going to make bad judgments and end up upsetting them so that they feel like they can't trust me. It's very important. The big word in this room is respect. I think it's very important that they respect me and that I respect them. (11-10-76)

Again the theme of respect is reiterated by the teacher. Respect and cooperation translate into what education means for this teacher. For Ken Evans, the goals of respect and cooperation are serious elements in his definitions of classroom situations, his actions and his criteria of judgment. His perspective, then, is closely related to the classroom goals of respect and cooperation.

As the teacher's perspective unfolds through the data presentation, it is necessary to understand how he organized his class with the members of his classroom team. The team consisted of Lois, a teacher aide, and Kay, an intern teacher. Ken characterized the group in these terms: "I think we've reached a nice understanding this year, the three of us; that we're a team and we're going to have to function that way." (11-10-76)

This team acts as a support system for Ken's perspective. The team allows Ken to spend time with individual students within the context of the group. By having two extra adults in the room, much more attention can be given to individual students in instruction and other activities. The support of Kay and Lois and their



work in the class enable Ken to develop a stable and cohesive group. Furthermore, the team itself is a stable and cohesive group and thus serves as a model of an effective group for the students.

The Team

The classroom team is composed of Ken, Lois, and Kay. Lois is in her 40's and has been a teacher aide in the school for a few years. Her youngest son is in the fifth grade and her older children are in high school and college. She is a small boned woman with short grey hair. She dresses in contemporary clothes and is quite youthful in the sense that she keeps up with what interests the students. For example, she is able to converse with them about Farrah Fawcett, athletic events and TV programs. On the other hand, Kay is in her late 20's and is completing her student teaching internship. She is married and has one child in a primary grade. She was raised and educated in British schools before coming to the States. The students were intrigued at first by the way she spoke and often commented on her pronunciation and vocabulary. She used this to teach the students some new words. They, in turn, explained how they used words and taught her some of their expressions.

Both Kay and Lois regard Ken as the leader of the team. All three meet daily during the morning planning session. At that time, Ken proposes the plan for the day open to any modifications they may wish to incorporate. If there are suggestions, all three discuss them and rearrange the plan accordingly. If there are no suggestions, Ken proceeds to explain in specific terms the plan for

reading. The other school subjects are spoken of in more general terms, such as, "At two o'clock, we'll begin the art projects and Kay, you can finish up the spelling tests. Lois, you may be needed to help with the art papers." In many of the planning periods, there are discussions of alternative methods of instruction or delivery of instruction. Ken allows Kay to experiment with any methods she chooses, as long as she has everything planned. He steps back and gives her the opportunity to teach in her way. The team of Ken, Lois, and Kay maintains a rapport with the students and each other. Between classes and after school, each one reports to the others any interesting proceedings of the day regarding individual students. Ken is able to devote more time to students due to the fact that there are two other adults in the class. He carefully plans what each of them is responsible for on a given day, allowing for opportunities to spend time with individuals. Thus, the value of the team lies in the opening up of time for Ken to continue working with students.

In sum, descriptions of the city, school, classroom, and the people who interact in the classroom provide some basis for understanding the environment in which the teacher develops his classroom perspective. It was in this environment that he constructed his actions in the classroom on the basis of his definition of the situations he encountered. The teacher's perspective becomes more understandable as the reader examines his classroom behavior. The following segment is a description of a typical school day.

Interspersed in the narrative is an analysis of the actions which relate to the teacher's classroom perspective.

The description of a typical day is included to illustrate the various elements of the teacher's classroom perspective. As the reader begins to understand the sequence of events and nuances of the day, the teacher's perspective becomes evident. As the data are presented, the case will be made for the following argument: this teacher's classroom perspective was one of creating and maintaining an effective group in order to attain various goals within the classroom. An effective group is one which retains some level of stability and cohesiveness. In order to reach levels of stability and cohesiveness, the teacher helped to create certain components of group life as the leader of the group. First, he planned a number of activities which provided rewards for the students. Second, he designed and provided group activities which generated a high level of group consensus. Third, he assisted in developing norms for behavior which allowed students a great deal of freedom within the structure of the class, while they took responsibility for their actions. This generated a flexible role for the teacher enabling him to coordinate many class activities at one time. Fourth, he provided leadership for his group. Fifth, he modelled behaviors which represented the major goals of the group, respect and cooperation. Taken together, these elements sustained the life of the group during the school year and reflected the teacher's classroom perspective. At this point, a description of a typical day will acquaint the reader with the salient features of the



teacher's perspective. At a later point in the presentation of the data, elements which threatened the perspective will be discussed.

Description of a School Day: the Morning

Ken arrives somewhere around 7:30 a.m. and stops in the office to check his mailbox for messages or handouts. If there is a phone message, he responds to it within this hour before school begins or at lunch time. He does not take time out of his classroom once the school day begins. Ken states, "During the day, during that five hours or five and a half hours that the kids are here, my contact is with them--not my intern students or my aide." (11-10-76) From the office, Ken goes downstairs to his classroom and begins the ritual of preparing for the students. He hangs his coat in a space in the supply closet. He unpacks his briefcase and any other materials he may have brought in. He picks up his plan book, his calendar, and pertinent texts if he needs to speak about these during the planning time. He seats himself in one of the students' chairs around the work table in the divided section of the class near the south wall. This area is known as the planning area. He begins to look over the routine for the day as Kay arrives about ten minutes after Ken. They exchange greetings and she brings her materials to the planning table as Lois arrives. The team members obtain cups of coffee in the lounge and return immediately for the daily planning session.

Ken has a daily plan in his head and on paper. He judges the time for what must be covered between now and when the students



arrive. If there is time for talking about his current new role as a helping teacher, he does so. If he sees that the team needs more time to go over the agenda for today, he gets to the business at hand. Today, there is an interruption as the team is about to hear the plan for reading. Mrs. Ginch, the reading consultant, stops to check with Ken about the details for today's session from 2-3 p.m. in her reading center. She is apprehensive because the substitute teacher will be bringing the class up and she will not have time to check with the sub before 2:00 p.m. Mrs. Ginch asks Ken to relay some information to the sub regarding the work for the reading center. He assures her that he will take care of the afternoon, and he continues to discuss the plan for the day.

The schedule is turned around today. Ken will only be present for the morning session and consequently will teach spelling, reading, and math. He does not want to relinquish the teaching of math to his substitute teacher at this point. He wants her to "establish a rapport" with the class and become familiar with the classroom environment before taking on the math classes. He offhandedly remarks that this helping teacher routine is taking him out of his "fun" subjects which include art, music, science, and social studies. He also wishes to insure continuity in math and reading so he says he wishes to teach those subjects while he is acting in the capacity of the helping teacher.

The afternoon session will be arranged so that Kay can monitor the reading center and observe the substitute teacher conducting gym class. Prior to this, the substitute teacher will take the



class through social studies and a filmstrip on Mexico. Ken decides to come back to the reading schedule and presents his reading plan. The plan is written on a separate sheet of paper inside a transparent folder for ease in handling. In the section in his daily plan book, only the word "Reading" is printed. On this sheet of paper, the names of the four reading groups and their assignments are printed. Ken suggests to Kay that she take the group called "Wings" in the carpet corner and read through the next story with them. Lois will work with the slowest group on their workbooks. Ken will administer a vocabulary test to another group. The fourth group is working independently today on their reading worksheets. Lois leaves to go upstairs and use the ditto machine in order to run off some reading worksheets. Ken has made the ditto masters the previous evening. He hands the masters to Lois, asking that she run off eight copies of one sheet for the group called "Things" and two copies of another worksheet for two of the students in a special book.

As Lois leaves, Kay asks about Ken's lesson yesterday in which he taught a unit on metrics to second grade students. He says the lesson went well and that he is impressed with the second grade teacher and the principal at the school he visited. He also discloses that he misses his own class and expresses concern regarding their behavior with the substitute teacher, Sheila Andersen. He says he wants them to act as they do when he is in the room. He speculates as to how they will react to Sheila. Some of them know her since she taught some students who are in the class during her



internship last year. They also see her in the building since she is presently a full time teacher aide in the fourth grade. She is able to teach in the afternoons in Ken's class as a teacher without an aide while Lois fills in as the aide in fourth grade. Ken felt it would be wise to keep Sheila as a permanent substitute to assure at least some consistency for the class. It also gives her the experience of teaching an entire afternoon.

Lois returns with the dittos and presents them to Ken. At this point, Kay asks Ken if she should take the spelling class today. Ken is agreeable to this, and listens as Kay tells what she will do during the thirty minutes of spelling. As the bell rings, Ken moves to go upstairs to the door and usher in his class. Kay transports her plan book and materials to her desk. Lois leaves the room again.

The students come into class shivering and commenting on the below zero temperature. Ken is in the middle of the group and is talking to a student who says he went camping for the weekend. Ken asks him which Holiday Inn he stayed at. The students nearby laugh at the remark. Another student shows Ken her right hand which is bandaged and has a small cast on the finger. She explains that she had been square dancing. Ken exclaims that she must belong to a pretty rough square dance group! Three students walk over to the radiator and sit on it after hanging their coats on the coat rack. Ken points out to me that the boys are on the radiator. It is rather chilly in the room today. The final bell rings and the students casually move to their desks. Some are



carrying on conversations with one another. Two students are engaged in reading a library book in the carpeted northeast corner of the room. They are seated on the floor with elbows resting on a cushion. They are reading so intently they do not notice Ken who is nearby and attempting to hang a mobile on the ceiling while extending a pole with the mobile attached to it.

Simultaneously, a student approaches Ken to present her photos of the Christmas play to him. He comments that the class may be interested in seeing them. She smiles as he rests the pole against the blackboard and takes time to look at each picture. At the same time, Amy approaches the researcher to explain why her hand is bandaged. She says she was accidentally pushed while dancing and her hand went through a window. She explains how she was taken to a nearby hospital and "stitched up." She decides to practice writing her name with her injured hand and walks to her desk to retrieve a pencil and paper.

Each morning Ken uses the opening minutes in the school day as a means of communicating directly with the students. He speaks to them about events of the previous day or something immediately of interest to the students. At this time, he communicates with individual students who may have initiated a topic for discussion. Some students who posed questions to Ken regarding future events in the class would raise those questions at this time. In any of these instances, Ken responds to the students, listens to them, and communicates his feelings directly to them regarding the issue at hand. This is his vehicle for remaining in touch with the students and



maintaining rapport with them. In addition, this allows for displaying his respect for them by sharing his beliefs and listening to theirs. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to manifest his leadership by deliberately planning time for this section of the school day. The description of the school day is continued in order to understand more of the teacher's perspective.

Ken says to the class, "Will everyone please look up here for a minute?" Ken displays his courtesy to his students. He prefaces his requests to them with the word "please." At times he asks, "Can I interrupt you?" He has never intruded on their work or privacy without some advanced indication through a courteous remark. This relates to a major part of Ken's perspective, that of respect. He believes that respect for each person in the class is an important component in the functioning of the classroom. He asks with a smile, "Can anyone tell me about the weather reports today?" The students eagerly raise their hands to answer. Two students simultaneously blurt out, "It's 15° below zero." Ken tells them to "bundle up and put on extra mittens and wear a scarf on the face." He warns them about frostbite. He comments that all the adults in the room are dressed in layers of clothes. We all have vests or sweaters over a top. Ken continues, "I even bundled up today. So did Mrs. Janesick and Mrs. Winter." He speaks to the class for nearly three minutes about the weather and it is now 9:00 a.m. He announces, "Today we're going to switch reading and math. Reading will be at 10:25, so you'll stay in the room after spelling." The class spontaneously shouts "hurrah" and the students

smile to one another. They seem to prefer to stay in the room rather than switch. He announces, "Please get ready for spelling. Divide yourselves into two groups, please. Everyone back in their own seats." (sic) As he finishes announcing this, he walks over to his desk and begins to do some writing. He is marking something in the grade book and checking in papers. In the meantime, Kay walks to the front of the room to begin the spelling lesson. The students take their time in being seated. They clear their desks and await Kay's instructions. Some are leaning on their elbows. Some are sitting attentively. Some are sitting on top of one of their legs which is crossed under the other leg. Two students are quietly talking and smiling.

Kay begins by stating, "I want to explain something to you." She shows them a cassette tape and explains how the next spelling test will be on tape. She recounts the advantages to this; that is, that one can take the test anytime during the test day and one can playback the tape to insure that no words are missed. Two questions are raised by students, and Kay responds in one sentence to both. Ken looks up from his paperwork every few minutes as if to observe Kay and the students. Kay begins the spelling lesson, reviewing suffixes, prefixes, and root words. Twice Kay stops to say she cannot hear a response from a student because it's getting too noisy. As she proceeds to define synonyms and antonyms, a few students are inattentive. She draws them into the lesson by calling them by name and redirecting them. Kay ends the lesson at 9:45 a.m.

At this point, Ken says, "Can I interrupt everyone? Would all of you stop now? OK. Because you are taking your spelling test this week on tape, we won't be having extra time on spelling. It's up to you to have it done by Friday." As he speaks, everyone is attentive and looking directly at him. He says, "OK. I'll give you two minutes to stretch, then we'll be ready for math." Immediately the students shift areas. Some move to small groups with their friends. Some stand up and lean against their desks. One student walks out into the hallway and sits down under the steps. That area is used as part of the study area for the class. There is a system operating whereby students take turns going out there to sit, read, or think. No one speaks about the rules for doing this, yet there is a type of process where each group member knows when it's all right to go out in the hall. Only one student remains at his desk.

The following section, describing the next part of the morning, is included to indicate that even with the intern in the room, Ken remains the teacher, the leader, and central figure. He does this by (1) observing the intern while she teaches, and (2) introducing his instruction in such a way that the entire group is reviewing fractions, irrespective of their individual levels. While being fully aware of their individual differences, he teaches math to the entire group as a group. Thus, instruction is also a group activity.

At 9:50, Ken goes up to the side board and begins setting up the overhead projector. Ken then says to the group, "Everything should be put away now. I don't want anything on your desks, and I

want your attention up here." As he walks to the front board, each student begins the task of clearing the desk, and each student follows him to the front with eyes, head, and body. Students shift their positions and rotate from the sides of their seats to the front. The class focuses its attention on him as he says, "About half of you have (sic) completed the unit on multiples and are caught up and ready for fractions. Then, there's another group that still has to work on factors and multiples. What we're going to do now is all of us go over fractions. We're all going to go back to fractions. You probably all had fractions in fourth and fifth grades. Now in sixth grade, we're going to do a lot with fractions. What we're doing is looking at a whole new world." He draws a number line on the board and writes the numerals 0-10 under the line. He continues with the lesson and says, "Well, between zero and one, there's a whole world of fractions." He writes the word "fractions" on the board, and when he begins the sentence to say, "There a whole world of..." the group as a group speaks the word "fractions" as he underlines it. It is clear that they are accustomed to this style of teaching and have been through this responding as a group before. Ken steps forward, one step away from the board with chalk in hand, and says, "Who can tell me what a fraction is?" Herbie answers, "One-half and one-third." Ken says, "That's a good example of a fraction, but who can give a definition? Who can tell me what a fraction is?" Candy says, "It's a part of something." Ken replies, "Yes, a fraction is a part of a number which is made up of two parts, a top part and a bottom part. The top number is N and the



bottom number is D." He writes N/D on the board. He says, "Who can tell me what the top part is called?" Stanley says, "Numerator." Ken proceeds to ask, "What's the bottom part called?" The entire group answers, "Denominator." Ken prints the words NUMERATOR, DENOMINATOR, and FRACTION on the board. He declares, "Now you have three words to learn about today." He requests that Herbie and Bernie come up to the board and write any fractions they want. They write one-third and one-fourth respectively. Ken asks the class, "Are these right?" The class answers together, "Yes." Ken walks forward another step, and says, "Did you notice any difference in how they wrote them?" Russell stands up and says, "Yes, one used a slanted line and one used a horizontal line." Ken asks the class, "Does it matter which line you use?" The class says in unison, "No." Ken speaks conversationally to them, "OK. Listen carefully so you remember. You can write the lines either way. In your book they use a horizontal line. Sometimes I write both, but I use the diagonal line because it looks prettier." The class laughs and Ken laughs with them. Oftentimes during a school day, Ken uses humor in his lessons or in passing conversations. This keeps the rapport at a high level and encourages students to feel free enough to use humor if they so wish.

He continues with the math lesson by asking, "What does one-half mean? I'll illustrate it this way." He draws a large circle, divides it in half and shades in one half of the area. He does this again with a rectangle in fourths and fifths, asking an individual student which fraction he just illustrated. When the student

responds, he asks the class if they agree. The entire class raise their hands to vote in agreement both times. He uses this same technique to drill in the identification of numerators and denominators. He then says, "The D--denominator--tells me how many parts are in the whole thing. Now remember, the denominator is in equal parts." He writes and underlines "equal parts" on the board. "Make sure," he continues, "that you draw your shapes with equal parts." He then draws an example of a circle divided into disproportionate halves. He continues, "Now, the numerator is the parts you have." He writes on the blackboard: "number of parts/number of equal parts in whole." The class is watching him closely. He writes a variety of fractions on the board: one-third, one-fourth, two-fifths, four-ninths, three-fourths, and asks which is the numerator and denominator in each. The class responds as a group to each fraction. During instruction or other parts of the school day, students respond to Ken's questions by answering in unison, as a group. This is a group norm which operates in a variety of circumstances with great frequency. It indicates the highly cohesive nature of this group of diverse personalities.

At 10:15, Ken says, "Nick, will you please turn off the lights?" As Ken turns on the overhead, the class shifts to turn sideways in order to view the information. He declares, "We'll be dealing with a lot of shapes. If you can't see the overhead, please move." Four students move closer. Two of them stand on the outskirts of the group. The other two quickly sit in empty desks. Ken exclaimed, "Now, please think; don't shout." As he draws a

circle, he asks, "What does this represent?" The class in unison replies, "One." Then he proceeds to bifurcate the circle and again asks, "What does this mean?" They all said, "One-half." He continues in this manner with fourths and says to the group, "Now my denominator is..." whereupon he stops and draws a line. The class answers, "Four." He asks them, "Is that a fraction? Is four-fourths a fraction?" They answer, "Yes."

Finally he draws a shape of one-third of a circle and asks the same questions. He deliberately adds a piece which is not a third of the circle. They catch him and laugh about it. They say together, "No." Individuals blurt out, "You have to have equal parts." Ken jokes with them by pretending to have forgotten the equal parts rule. After a few minutes he says, "Oh, that's right. I have a rule on equal parts." He adds, "I finally get it right with equal parts." The class cheers and applauds for him. He laughs and says, "OK. Time for one more." Herbie says, "No, time for four or five more." Ken gives one more example of fifths and says, "Tomorrow we'll do more." He turns off the light for the overhead, nods to a student to turn on the lights, and says, "Will you get ready for reading please?"

The ritual for change of class for reading takes place in less than two minutes. Students scramble to their original seats, open their desks for the necessary paraphenalia, and those who change to the other room assemble at the door in a disjointed line of sorts. Ken walks to the front of the line by the doorway and

stands there perfectly still until the class calms down. When it is silent, he opens the door and leads them to the other classroom.

One of the norms established by Ken was that of waiting at the front of the line without speaking. This wait time for students to calm down before leaving the room is a part of the process of leaving the room. Although no words are spoken, by merely standing and waiting a short time for the group's attention, Ken communicates one of the class norms. This norm is translated as, "Sixth graders should be able to proceed to the gym without reminders about how to walk together and without disturbing others in the school who are working." From his speeches to the group in class and from the high expectations he has of students, Ken successfully communicates those messages which demand maturity of the group in such instances. This type of norm building is useful in keeping the group cohesive and stable. It also points to Ken's leadership, physically, at the front of the line and mentally without exchanging words. The evidence for this is the behavior of the students. As Ken stands at the front of the line and waits for them, they cease any conversations and direct their attention to him. They follow him, as a group, to wherever they are intending to go.

As the eight exchange students file in, they nonchalantly sit in desks or chairs and immediately look up at the front board. On the board as usual is the assignment for each reading group. Ken talks through each assignment and responds to individual questions. In less than six minutes he has verified that everyone knows his/her assignments. He says, "OK." This is a signal for the



groups to assemble. Another norm established in the class is that of responding to word signals. If Ken says, "OK." this means, "OK, begin your assignments." This type of norm once again reinforces the stability of the group.

One group sits on the carpet in the corner to read with Kay. Another groups sits with Lois at the planning table. A third group moves desks together to make two short rows and Ken stands between the rows ready to give a vocabulary test. The remaining students sit in groups of two or three and work independently.

While Ken works on testing with his group, he stops when a student in the room raises a hand for help. He then walks over to the students and on the average spends about twenty-five to thirty seconds responding to the student's question. When he does this, he stoops down to the level at which the child is sitting and looks directly at the child while talking to him. When he finishes with each child, he walks back to the group he was working with originally. No students interrupts him while he is actually in the act of administering the test.

Ken spends time with individual students as they request help. He is able to keep moving without staying too long a time with one student. If he is instructing a small group, no one interrupts him. This is interpreted as another class norm which relates to respect for other students and the teacher. If a student wishes to gain help from Ken while he is instructing, the student raises his hand. Ken nods to the student to acknowledge that he saw the student's hand. The student puts down his hand and

continues to work on something while he waits for Ken to assist him. When Ken completes the work he is engaged in, he walks over to the student to see how he can be of assistance. Ken is able to manage many requests this way and still conduct a small group test. This is an example of operationalizing respect in the class and keeping the group at a stable level during a time period which had the potential for being unstable.

Today's breakdown in terms of Ken's time in reading looks like this:

<u>Group Instruction</u>	4 minutes		
<u>Individual Instruction</u>	2 minutes	(Prior to Small Group Instruction)	
<u>Small Group Instruction</u>	43 minutes		
1M Assignment	5M	Test 3 (group of 6)	
4M Explaining test	9M	Test 4	
8M Administering test	6M	Test 5	
3M Post test waiting	3M	Test 6	
4M Test 2			
<u>Other</u>			
1M Outside interruption	2M	Checking reading materials	
1M Writing on board	60S	Individual checks on students by names	
1M At desk			
30S Monitoring groups	1½M	Wait time	

SCALE: S=Seconds M=Minutes

At 11:20, he says to the group, "Please get ready to change." In less than a minute, the students are at the door in a line. The students who remain in the room return to their desks, put away their supplies, and walk to the coat racks. They bundle up for the walk home for lunch. Four boys and one girl put on their safety patrol belts over their coats and go out of the room headed for their corners. The students change classes and the incoming

group goes to get their coats and scarves immediately. After they are ready to leave, they sit in their places till everyone is quiet. Ken says to them, "I'll be gone this afternoon. Mrs. Andersen will be here to do Social Studies, Reading Center and Gym with you. I hope you show her you can all work well while I'm gone. I'm counting on you." The group watches him and listens very seriously. When Ken is to be out of the class in the afternoon, he usually speaks to the group, briefly, regarding his expectations of them in his absence. This is a reminder of his trust and respect for them. At each of these times, he expects the group to remain as stable for the substitute teacher as they are in his presence.

He says, "OK." At this they bolt for the line. He stops in front of the line and turns to them. He stands motionless looking above them. They understand that unless they maintain some semblance of order, they will not get home as soon as they would like. They stand still and he turns to usher them out of the building. He returns to pick up his coat and briefcase. He departs for lunch and following that, another school where he is assisting in a lesson on metrics for a fourth grade class.

In sum, this morning's session is representative of the morning sessions in general, while Ken is a helping teacher. Even with this one slice of such a typical morning, the teacher's perspective becomes recognizable. From this specimen, indicants of the classroom perspective emerge. Immediately evident is the teacher's rapport with the group as they respond to his questions in unison. His organization of the day through careful planning

for himself and two other adults allows for more freedom with building rapport with individual students. He exhibits courtesy to the class by prefacing his remarks with the word "please." Furthermore, his ability to manage through a lull or a period of wait time reminds the class of the goal of group responsibility. The clarity and fluidity of instruction displays his seriousness about schooling. Finally, by requesting self discipline of the group in his absence, he reaffirms his trust in them and his respect for them. In addition, he offers them the opportunity to undertake this responsibility while he, the group leader, is absent. During the first four months of the school year, this teacher created the essential components of group life. First, he designed and planned a number of activities which provided the students with rewards they enjoyed. Second, he provided group activities which generated a high degree of consensus. This, in turn, helped to solidify the stability and cohesiveness of the group. Third, he assisted in developing norms for behavior which allowed students a good deal of freedom and flexibility within the structure of the classroom. Fourth, he provided leadership in the group which enabled the group to perform tasks within a maintenance system sustained by the group members. Fifth, he modelled behaviors which represented his major goals of respect and cooperation. These elements taken together illustrate the teacher's classroom perspective as one of creating and maintaining an effective group in order to achieve classroom goals. The events of the morning session serve to illustrate the elements of the teacher's perspective. In juxtaposition, the events of the

afternoon indicate that when the teacher is absent, the students' behavior is altered. With a substitute teacher, their stability and cohesiveness is less apparent. The norms established with Ken as leader do not translate into the afternoon session. This series of afternoon events assists in further understanding the classroom perspective of Ken Evens by illustrations of examples which run counter to the perspective.

The Afternoon

Sheila Andersen is in her early twenties and is currently a teacher aide. This is her first year in a classroom. She agreed to be a permanent substitute for Ken's class to gain experience in this grade level and because teaching is what she wants to do. She was agreeable to the researcher's observing her and welcomed the researcher in the room with the statement, "You won't find them the same with me as they are with Ken."

Upon entering the room, during free reading time, all the students are reading. The two adults in the room are not. This is unlike Ken who believes that reading is a must during that twenty minutes. Both Sheila and Kay are writing. When Ken was present for the free reading time, he consistently modelled the behavior of reading during that twenty minutes. This served to indicate both the importance of the reading time, as well as his leadership in the group for he did not exempt himself from the established norm. The students were lacking the teacher as role model in this instance. The front board still has this morning's math on it. It

had not been erased, as it usually is when Ken is in the room. On the portable board there is a hand written note to Ken from Mrs. Ginch who wrote how good the class was yesterday in the reading center. The usual reports about the students in the reading center are anything but good. At 12:55, Kay begins reading and with five minutes left in reading time, Sheila begins to read. Two students are seated on top of the book shelves reading, and one is seated on the carpet. Two girls are reading under the steps in the hallway. The others are seated at various desks and tables in the class.

At 1:05, Sheila announces that, "Everyone should return to their seats." (sic) Students slowly return to their seats and sit attentively watching her. She begins by saying, "I have the names of ten people who are not obeying the rules for silent reading." She proceeds to read the ten names. Next, she warns them that, "Free reading time may be cut from twenty to ten minutes; after all Mr. Evans thought you enjoyed the twenty minutes." She says, "That time has to be quiet. It's silent reading." One student is reading as she speaks. A few pay no attention to her whatsoever. Some students roll their pencils down the desk tops. Some fidget with papers. Other twirl their thumbs around. Some of the class watch her and listen. She continues, "The safety patrol is to be quiet while leaving for duty." Apparently they had not been quiet yesterday afternoon. While she is attempting to communicate this information, she has to stop twice to regain the attention of certain individuals. On the other hand, the students remain attentive when Ken speaks to them or instructs. Part of his rapport with the

class was due to his courtesy and respect for them. There was no occasion when Ken threatened the group. The students were aware than Ken knew how they enjoyed the free reading time. Twenty minutes of free reading time was one of the rewards in the class. Sheila's statement to the class could not have made much sense to them. Why would he cut the reading time by ten minutes when he gave them the time in the first place and he knew how much they valued it under usual conditions?

She continues to explain that, "At 1:20, Officer Kelley will be visiting the school to give a talk on winter safety." She then reverts to her earlier topic regarding the class' behavior. She says, "Yesterday, I told Mr. Evans that I was annoyed because I can't talk to you without being interrupted." Frank raises his hand and Sheila recognizes him. He speaks excitedly, "Well, all of us don't interrupt. Why don't you look for who does it and raise the disaster flag?" The disaster flag is a device used to signal the fact that something is wrong, like too much noise. The flag is an outward reminder to redirect and get back on task. It is a signal Sheila uses in her own fourth grade class. Sheila answers Frank by saying, "When I ask who is responsible, some of you say, 'It's all the boys,' or 'It's all the girls,' or 'It's not me.' So it's a class problem. Not only specific people. But it was a class problem, so I can take gym away from the class." By now everyone is listening to her except Russ who is still engrossed in reading his book. This generates a discussion about how to punish people in such cases. The question as viewed by the students is:

should those who cooperate be allowed to have gym while those who don't cooperate have gym taken away?

The class and Sheila have been studying Mexico for social studies and have been planning a Mexican Fiesta for the close of the unit. The fiesta would carry over through gym time and many students are expressing anxiety over the facts that (a) they may not have the fiesta due to the antics of a few people, and (b) if their gym period is taken away and if they have the fiesta, it couldn't run over through the normal gym time. In any event, the students understand the message from Sheila to be, "If you don't behave, there will be no fiesta." Throughout the discussion, Kay sits at the round table copying Ken's plans for the week in her plan book. There is no resolution to the problem under discussion.

This interaction with Sheila and the group is noticeable, unlike interactions with Ken for two reasons. In the first place, the normal pattern of behavior while Ken is teaching is one where interruptions are not made. Ken responds to students as soon as possible should he be instructing or speaking to the group. One of the class norms is not interrupting someone who is speaking. Second, if a discussion of this nature were to take place, there would be a resolution of some sort. Neither Ken nor the group would be left with an unresolved situation. In terms of the group perspective, this would be a stumbling block to cohesiveness and stability. Also, within the established norms of the class, it is common to have an open discussion of problems as they occur. Such discussions are usually dominated, however, by themes of respect for one

another, cooperation, and responsibility for actions. This focus prevails rather than one of a threatening nature. Consequently, this represents a mammoth shift in norms. It seems reasonable to believe that the students would not respond to such a shift since it was not part of the fiber of their groupness.

At this point in the afternoon, the visiting officer arrives. It is not clear whether or not the discussion would have been resolved had the officer not arrived. Regardless, the fact remains that there was no resolution then nor a later time that day. The students are consequently left in ambiguity regarding whether or not there would be a Mexican Fiesta.

The following section is included to illustrate how even with the most carefully planned schedules, the classroom environment is one which must accomodate a variety of outside variables. On this particular day, the school district sent the safety officer to the school. Ken and the team were aware that the safety officer would be coming in sometime during the week. Even at that, the normal routine was planned without this in mind. However, the schedule was planned so that rearrangements could be made following the officer's presentation. This relates to the classroom perspective since planning for the group assists in maintaining the effectiveness of the group.

Sheila introduces Officer Kelley and he presents his program on winter safety. The slide show concludes at 1:55 and Officer Kelley compliments the class on "how good they were." After he left, Sheila says to the group, "I just want to say that you were a

very good audience. You listened very well and paid close attention to him." She briefly reminds the class of his warnings about ice, snowballs, skating on ponds or the river and the dangers inherent in those activities. As she finishes speaking, Stanley raises his hand, stands up and asks, "Can I go upstairs and cancel reading center?" Sheila answers directly, "No." Since it is 2:00 and time to move to the reading center, she says, "Line up quietly."

As if to defy her imperative, the group makes a great deal of noise and dawdles as they prepare to line up. Today, it takes nearly four minutes. Sheila stands at the front of the assemblage and says on three different occasions, "I'm waiting." When the group is fairly peaceful, they walk upstairs. Thus, the students' behavior individually and as a group is altered considerably. In the morning session, they took less time, responded immediately to Ken's gaze and proceeded peacefully. In this afternoon session, the opposite behavior was displayed and the group was less stable.

Upon entering the reading center, which is an ordinary classroom with a few extra books and tapes, the group makes a commotion. Two boys kick chairs as they enter. Three groups of girls talk above a conversational tone. Students move from seat to seat trying out different places. One boy shouts across the room to a friend. Mrs. Ginch asks for their attention twice. Stan and Oliver sit next to each other, whispering and laughing, talking to one another overtly. Mrs. Ginch begins her instruction by using the overhead. The writing on the transparency is very miniscule and nearly illegible. The few people directly in front of it can

probably read it. The students are straining to see the words and some move closer to see the words. Part of the transparency (about one-third) is not showing on the screen. Mrs. Ginch has her back to the screen so she is unable to see that part of the transparency is cut off. She does not turn around to see what the full effect is. Mrs. Ginch gives the instructions for the day and turns off the overhead. No questions from the students are solicited regarding the assignments. The aide in the room distributes papers and the group begins to calm down as they begin to work.

There are a few disruptions and during the session, Sheila has to redirect students six times. Mrs. Ginch walks around the room commenting to certain students on their work. She says, "Very good. You're getting so good." This same type of comment is directed to four individuals. She also asks, "Who has a 100% on their paper?" (sic) A few students respond by raising their hands. She adds, "Good, now go on to the next paper."

At 2:50 Sheila begins to get the group ready to return to the homeroom and then prepare for gym. The same behavior is manifested by the group, talking above a conversational tone, pushing one another, kicking chairs, and general rowdiness.

Upon returning to the room and waiting for the line to calm down before proceeding to the gym, Sheila reminds the group, "If you aren't ready to go to gym by 3:00, we just won't go." This has an effect. They instantly become model students and arrive in the gym at 3:00. The gym session is part of the schedule, yet also part of the reward system. The class plays a variation of volleyball with

Sheila as referee. When they return to class to get their coats before dismissal, once again there is a bit of commotion while lining up. Sheila stands still and stares at the group. The group does the same. Within two minutes, they walk to the door to be dismissed and another day is completed.

This description of a typical afternoon offers an example of the contrast between the morning and afternoon sessions. The students' afternoon behavior was unlike their morning behavior. An explanation for this may be developed through analysis of the group. Certain interactions and behaviors may have threatened the group. Thus, the group members altered their behavior. The first threat to the group was the absence of the leader. In addition, the substitute teacher threatened to infringe on the reward system by consideration of cancelling the fiesta. Another threat to established norms included the lack of courtesy to students. Ken consistently addresses the group courteously with such words as "please" or "may I interrupt?" By not experiencing this with the substitute teacher, the group's usual response did not take place. The cohesiveness of the group was less evident in the afternoon. A clearer understanding of the contrast between the two sessions may be found through a more detailed overview of the developmental process of group life.

Developing a Group: an Overview

Throughout the school year, the students and teacher were engaged in a process of developing an effective group. Throughout the seven months of this study, the beliefs and behaviors of the



teacher indicated a perspective of creating and maintaining a group. By doing so, he was able to attain his personal goals as a teacher, as well as traditional instructional goals, and engage in activities which he valued highly such as drama activities. The drama activities and other activities he enjoyed were significant for two reasons: first, these activities were of importance to the teacher by keeping his enthusiasm and pride in teaching at a high level. Second, these activities helped to build, strengthen, and maintain a group.

Thibaut and Kelley have delineated certain characteristics necessary for the development of a stable and cohesive group.³

- (1) Group members must receive rewards
- (2) Group members must maintain a high degree of consensus concerning group goals
- (3) Group members must develop a system of norms to
 - (a) Promote behavior which increases stability and cohesiveness, and
 - (b) Control behavior which is a threat to the group
- (4) Group members must accept the leadership system of the group and role differentiation to maintain group outcomes
- (5) Group members must rely on
 - (a) Task functions which allow the group to attain their goals, and
 - (b) Maintenance functions which reduce internal tensions by assisting members with conflict and frustration

³John W. Thibaut and Harold H. Kelley. The Social Psychology of Groups. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959), Chaps. 13-15.

Rewards

As the classroom group developed over time, the group members received certain rewards for being in the group. The rewards included participation in the Christmas play and other drama activities, participation in numerous experiential based field trips, participation in class parties and projects and participation in a friendly relationship with the teacher. Individual students often remarked, "We're in Mr. Evans' class so we get to go to the high school for a play." Another time a student boasted, "We're having a sixth grade trip to the zoo." One student remarked to a sibling, "We're traveling to another school to put on our Christmas play." Other types of rewards included participation in the Magic Circle sessions. During these sessions, fifteen students shared their thoughts and feelings on a topic for a twenty minute period. They expressed their enjoyment about sitting in a circle together and "getting to know what someone else thinks." Still further, a basic reward available for all was the opportunity to walk around the classroom while working on assignments, without requesting permission to do so. Students felt free to speak to one another, discuss their work with one another, request help from one another and exercise mobility in the room as they saw fit, provided it did not disrupt anyone else in the room.

Consensus and Norms

The group exhibited a high degree of consensus during the school day in academic and non-academic situations. Ken and the

students, for example, took part in verbal exchanges during a lesson or previous to one. A sample of such an exchange is seen in the "Fortunately - Unfortunately" game. Ken began by saying, "Fortunately, our math period is shortened today. Unfortunately, some people didn't finish their math papers yesterday." Charlie said, "Fortunately, we can finish them." Ken responded, "Unfortunately, you have to do today's papers as well as yesterday's." This type of verbal exchange was used frequently. Other examples of the high level of consensus of the group were found in common activities, goals, behaviors and perceptions of the teacher as leader. The norms of the group developed due to the high degree of consensus. A major set of norms had to do with proper behavior. The students knew that when Ken said, "Please line up," it was important to do so. Consensus in the group was constructed and maintained through the various interactions in class which provided rewards. The leadership of the teacher and the behavior which reflected group norms promoted group stability. The components of the teacher's perspective grew out of the basic processes of a functioning group.

This research project found that the teacher's perspective was one of creating an effective group and maintaining it. By doing so, the teacher was able to instruct, manage the students and coordinate multidimensional activities. Over the course of the year, several phases of group development occurred. In these phases, the group developed consensus and was cohesive. At one point in the year, conditions of conflict and instability threatened the group as a unit. Following this phase, the group regained its

cohesiveness through planned activities which required the cooperative efforts of group members.

Phases of Group Development: November to January

From November till the early part of January, the group functioned as a cohesive unit. There was a high level of agreement regarding the goals of the group. Put simply, the students knew that there were certain expectations Ken had of them and they eagerly worked to live up to the expectations. An expectation may have been one of completing a math paper or an art project or lining up as a sixth grader should. Although there were no formal discussions of what it meant when Ken said, "Please line up," the students shared a common understanding which behaviorally meant to (a) line up, (b) wait for Ken to appear at the head of the line, and (c) proceed to the gym, reading center, or school exit. Certain days were less stable than others, yet the overall climate of the class was one of (a) listening to the teacher when he spoke, (b) attending to one's work, and (c) working together as a group. There were a number of group activities planned and interspersed throughout the curriculum. These activities served to build group consensus and required the cooperative efforts of each group member. Perhaps the most outstanding testimonial of the high level of group consensus was the Christmas play. The students enjoyed the rewards of working on their parts individually and on the play as a whole. It seemed a perfect opportunity to work together on rehearsals, costumes, set,

and make-up. It also gave the group an opportunity to work as a group in another school.

The Christmas Play

The Christmas play was a major group activity. It was written and directed by Mr. Evans. When questioned on the value of the play, he remarked:

...I really think the main reason I like to do it is that it is the first really solid, concrete proof I have as a teacher that the group can pull together as a unit and all work towards one goal...it's a goal that ends up making them look good directly as opposed to making me be the leader all the time. This is something that is...their product. (1-13-77)

He continued:

I just think that the value we get from the kids all working together cooperating, and the spirit it builds, is one of the major reasons I do it. The other off-shoots are valuable as far as the experience of being up in front of a group. The big thing I stress with the kids is the ability to think on their feet. I don't care how many mistakes they make...if they can cover up, if they don't fall to pieces, if they can come through like champs, then they have really learned something. I think it's a really big growing experience and I'm always interested in the parents' reactions... they like this kind of thing and are always impressed. (1-13-77)

He also viewed the play as valuable for himself:

Even though a play has a certain amount of structure, it allows me to be more creative. And it allows me to be goofy which they (the students) don't get a chance to see often or not enough. It just makes me more human with them. (1-13-77)

While the play offered many-faceted benefits for the teacher, it also was a vehicle for developing group cohesiveness. The day of the second performance of the play which was to be at another school in



the district provided an example of a cohesive group of students working together on a project.

As the afternoon session began, Ken was inserting a cassette into a tape recorder. He had his finger on the start button as he said to the class, "Please put your costumes on and sit in your seats." He then played a piano recording of all the songs for the play. The students sang along very softly as they put on their costumes. They walked from the washroom to their desks to other desks before finally settling into seats. There was a good deal of movement, humming, singing, laughing, and talking which radiated an excitement and anxiety about the play. Ken said to the researcher, "Don't interview me today because I'll tell you all the reasons why not to be a teacher." He laughed as he said this and added, "Yesterday's show was terrible. Grandpa could not be heard. Jenny laughed all through the play and the lead, the dog, didn't get into character." One of the students at this point displayed his pajama costume and pointed to the red dots on his face which indicated that he had measles. Ken walked over to the sink area to assist in making up the characters. Lois was taking attendance and was exasperated because people were moving around too much for a count. Ken applied the finishing touch of gray hair spray on the grandma and grandpa characters and said, "Everyone, please listen to who you will be driving with." He had prepared lists of four-six students per car and read them. He instructed the class to, "Go directly to the auditorium when we get to the school, and remember that school is in session, so please be quiet." He grabbed a bundle of props

and walked out with his group. Three parent volunteers, this researcher, and Kay also drove a group of students to the other school.

Upon entering the school, the students walked straight ahead into the auditorium. They placed their coats on a coat rack and immediately began to put up the set. They moved tables and chairs, rigged up a few tables as backdrops and draped two parachutes over them to serve as a curtain. A handmade chimney-fireplace unit made of cardboard was placed center stage. The Christmas tree was situated on stage right, near the piano. All the adults assisted the students with the students giving directions. One of the district music teachers agreed to play for the program, and she rehearsed the students with one song. They sang "Up with People" with energy and enthusiasm. A few of them said in an aside that they were nervous. After the warm up, the crew, who then became the cast, waited backstage until all the classes filed in to sit on the floor and enjoy the show. Ken walked to the back of the auditorium near the lights to begin the program and observe the show from the sidelines. His expression indicated total immersion in the skit, nodding his head as someone remembered a line, smiling at a laugh line or wiping his brow when a difficult note in a song was completed. It was as though he were performing with the class.

After the play the sixth graders went to a second grade class in an exchange activity. The sixth graders helped the second graders make tree ornaments. The second graders made cinnamon rolls and hot chocolate for the sixth graders. The younger children

served the older students after the older students sang a few songs as a Christmas special for the host class. Again, the sixth grade reinforced their working together, now as big brother or big sister to a younger student. The sixth grade students took special care with their tree ornaments, helping the youngsters choose shapes for the ornaments and magic markers to color the ornaments. On the way back to the cars, one student remarked how she "enjoyed doing the show and teaching a second grader something." In the car on the way back to the homeroom, spirits were high as the students sang each song in the show a minimum of three times each.

In sum the Christmas play was a major group activity. During the processes of planning, rehearsing and performing the play, the students displayed a high degree of stability and cohesiveness as a group. They indicated their positive attitudes and reactions toward the exchange program with the second grade. The teacher also indicated his intent in designing the activity so that the group could "pull together." By the time of Christmas vacation, the group was operating as a group and the teacher felt that the play positively contributed to the group's cohesiveness. This activity was representative of a number of group activities in the classroom. The group activities were tied into the goals of the teacher disclosed in the interview process.

In the classroom, a number of activities point to the teacher's follow up on working independently yet cooperatively. Respect for one another is generated by virtue of the responsibility and interdependence involved in the activity. The evidence for this

can be found in activities such as the Christmas play. Other group activities played a major role in the teacher's perspective as the school year continued. Some of these activities were generated in direct response to a critical conflict situation.

Group Conflict: January to March

Ken Evans was offered the opportunity to become a temporary parttime helping teacher for eight weeks in his district. Such a job required that he be in his class half time and other teachers' classrooms the other half. He thought this over and decided that he would like to try out such an arrangement. He took time with the students to explain in detail what his new assignment would be and how it would affect the class. He said to them, "I have no worries, because I know you can pull it together as a class with or without me." In reflecting upon the new position, he disclosed:

I've had a couple of chances to leave full time and I haven't taken them. And I don't know if I would take them to be truthful. But I did say to the kids that this would be temporary...six or eight weeks...If they could not cope in a six week situation, maybe I was not that good for them in that I was just too much of a crutch and not that good of a teacher.

For Ken Evans, the fact that this would be temporary was the main reason to undertake the job. Other reasons included "the opportunity to learn about the school district and other teachers' classrooms" and "a chance for the kids to prepare for junior high." In junior high, they would have as many as five teachers, so that switching tracks from Mr. Evans to Mrs. Andersen seemed like a preparation for the coming year. The biggest problem foreseen by the



teacher in leaving half time was the problem of planning for two jobs. He stated:

...The only real problem I see is planning time... I feel that I need to plan the whole day here because this is still my responsibility...I don't want to give up this responsibility...Because this is working (as a helping teacher) on a limited basis, I feel I can push myself more...I want to prove to myself and others that I can do the helping teacher's job.

While this was an accurate assessment of planning time as a problem, another situation developed which was unforeseen. The students did not accept the new role of Mr. Evans as their parttime teacher. Up to this point, he had no evidence that they would be as drastically affected by this change as they were. Simply stated, the group felt that Mr. Evans abandoned them and did not care about them "like he used to." They interpreted his absence as a rejection of them and reported these feelings to Lois, Kay, and Ken. Consequently, their behavior was altered and they consistently "misbehaved" in Ken's absence.

In the eight week period in which Ken was out of his class halftime, a daily pattern of behavior developed as if to defy the substitute teacher and the reading specialist. Each day, Ken found it necessary to speak to the group at some length regarding their behavior of the previous day. This was a complex interaction. On the one hand, he didn't want to "come on strong, like a disciplinarian," yet he had to try to restore the group to some level of equilibrium. He had to let them know that he expected more from them. Also, he wanted to keep reinforcing the notion of respect. He wanted them to realize that he respected them, but they would



have to take on the responsibility of "acting as though he were present." Early in January, he continued the routine of speaking to the students before the school day began. Instead of the usual announcements, he was forced to speak to them about their behavior.

During the first week of classes following the Christmas break, Ken spoke to the students regarding their behavior of the previous day. He stood in back of his desk with his hands on the chair in front of him and asked the class to "please look up here." He added, "I want to talk to you about the reading center yesterday. I'm very disappointed in this class today. It's like it was in September. Some are forgetting common courtesy. I was going to have art next, but I don't know if you can handle it." One student, Ben, spoke for the group and said, "We can handle it." Ken resumed, "Well, I'll give you another chance."

The class members began working on their art projects and the incident was dismissed. Few words were spoken regarding the behavior of the previous day. The expressions on the faces of the students displayed their relief that art class was about to begin. By offering the class "another chance," Ken respected the claim that the class "could handle it."

Over the next week, however, the students continued to misuse their free reading time and misuse the time in the reading center. In the middle of the week, Ken found it necessary to speak to the class again. He stood in the front of the class and waited till all the students focused their attention on him. It was very still before he spoke. He said, "I want to talk to you about the use of



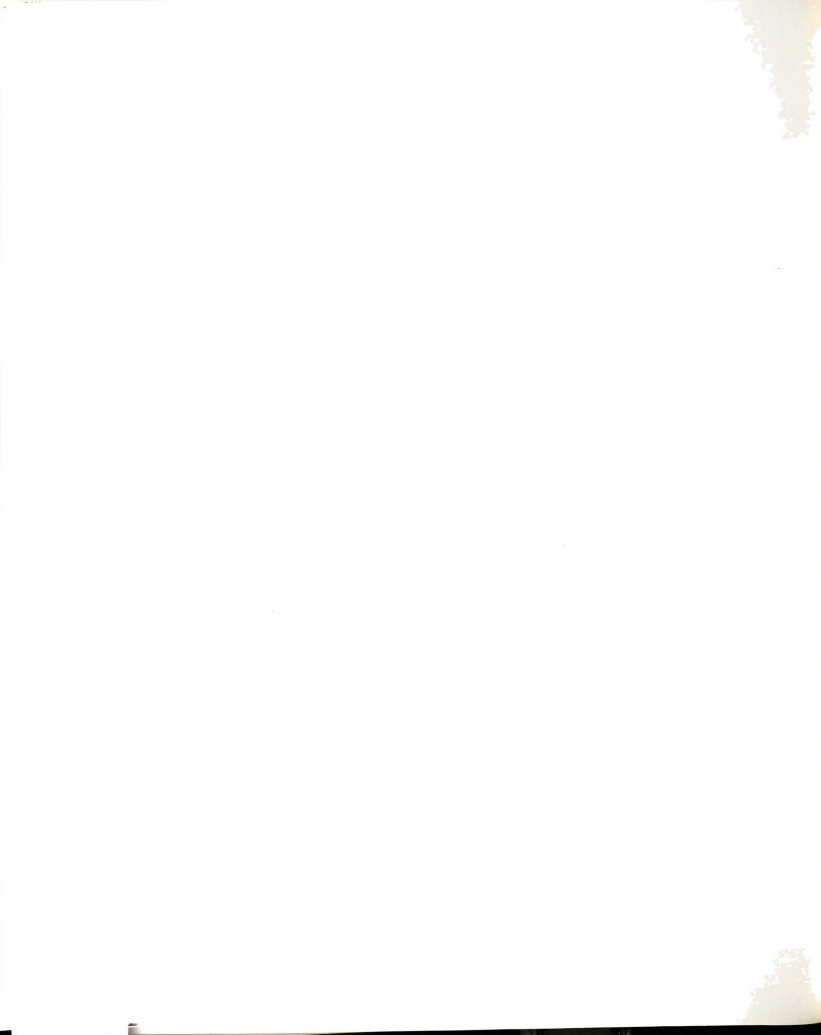
your free reading time. The safeties are supposed to come right in after the bell. Yesterday, you didn't." He continued after a short pause, "If you don't follow the rules, you'll lose all of your freedom. I'm going to have to take away your free time every morning this week and use it for penmanship." This was the first instance where the group was given a task to do while forfeiting their usual free time period. For the next five mornings, penmanship took the place of free time. During the penmanship sessions, there was no reference to why the students were doing penmanship. Within the twenty minutes, the penmanship lessons were of a creative nature. For example, the students were asked to make up nonsense words on one of the days. Ken walked from desk to desk during the sessions, monitoring the progress of students and conversing with them. While Ken was in the room, the classroom functioned well. If he were not present, problems arose.

Into the third week of January, the students voiced their concern about Ken's halftime absence. In addition, they were consistently unresponsive to the substitute teacher, and Ken spoke to the class once again. He sat at his desk as the class members arrived Wednesday morning. By this third week, it was apparent to Ken that the group behavior was altered in his absence. Even with his speeches to the group, and his declarations of expectations, the group did not remain stable. Part of the reason for the change in behavior was due to a pressing concern within the group for Mr. Evans to return full time. He had to explain to them on four



occasions that this was a temporary job and he would keep them up-dated on developments regarding the end of the assignments. The class experienced frustration since they were not accustomed to the norms of behavior which Sheila preferred. They felt that some of their rewards were diminished, as in the case of losing the free time period. The group as it once existed was without its regular leadership. It was no longer as cohesive as it was through December. Since Ken was out of the class, many of the group activities were cut since there was not enough time in the morning to fit in all the requirements.

By the fourth week of January, the class was still in a relatively unstable position. An incident occurred in the library which caused Ken to speak to the class. He stood near the front of his desk following the penmanship period, and said, "I want to talk to you." The group members cleared their desks and sat attentively looking at their teacher. He said, "Yesterday, the librarian told me about your behavior, and I can honestly say I've never had a class misbehave like this. Today, you're going to the library and I hope you act like you know you should. The librarian told me that the sixth grade is the worst group ever. You have been classified as the rudest and noisiest group. Today, I'm going to ask you to operate by 1920 rules, not 1977 rules. I'm going to ask you to be absolutely quiet. You have to concentrate on your library work. I've been told you answered the librarian with, 'Shut up,' or 'We don't have to listen to you, old lady.' For two weeks, you've been



mean to her. Do you think she's going to be syruppy sweet to you today?" The entire group answered in unison, "No." He continued, "Look up at our bulletin board: 'get in touch with your feelings.' I really mean it; get in touch with other people's feelings, too. I was angry about this yesterday, but I'm not angry any more since I've had time to think about this. Now, today, I hope you can show me that you will be able to have a good library period. You know the library shouldn't be a hassle. It should be a time for communicating and listening, but you're making it hard to do that. You're communicating with yelling and screaming and we have to learn other ways of communicating. (pause) Are there any questions?" There was a long period of silence. Barbara broke the silence by asking, "Did people in 1920 really not talk in the library?" Ken said, "Yes, it was very quiet and you only whispered." Ken turned to Kay and asked, "What was it like in British schools?" She replied, "It was very strict; we never said a word to anyone." Charlie exclaimed, "Really, not even a whisper?" She said, "Well, we could only whisper to the librarian." A few students looked at each other in amazement. Ken continued at this point with announcements for the day, followed by the Magic Circle sessions.

During the months of January and February, the stability and cohesiveness of the sixth grade class was threatened. The behavior of the group and the norms governing behavior were altered. The students did not receive from their substitutes what they received from Ken. Thus, the reward system became less effective. In addition, Ken was only present half of the time. Consensus as to the goals of



the class was confused. As a result, Ken was experiencing frustration as well as the students. Ken reevaluated, "If my being away means that the standards start slipping again, that starts troubling me...It's very frustrating." Consequently, Ken decided that certain things needed to be accomplished. He planned the next part of the school year with the intent of restoring the group to its more equilibrated state of working together again.

Restoring the Group: March to June

After returning to the class full time upon the completion of eight weeks as a helping teacher, Ken began to reestablish an effective group. He planned a number of group-centered activities to reinforce his major goals of respect and cooperation. The first day back, he set aside the twenty minutes of free time for the preparation of a short song and movement program for students in the primary grades. The rewards for this program were twofold. First, the students enjoyed beginning the day with singing and dancing. Second, the students would have the opportunity to perform this program. The group developed a high degree of consensus about this activity, that they indeed wanted to participate in it. Ken also participated in the rehearsals which reflected his acceptance of this norm regarding participating in rehearsals. By virtue of Ken's taking part in the program, the students had a sense of leadership's being restored.

Original Skit with Song and Movement

In addition to the in-school program, Ken began another drama activity to be presented out of school at a district-wide function. Each year, the district sponsors a writing contest for students. Ken was active in the committee which promoted the contest, and he proposed to the class a program which would honor the award winners of the contest. The script for this program was written by Ken himself. The students had the option of participating in it or not. Those who chose to participate did so with the understanding that the rehearsals were after school and, if any class time were used for rehearsal, the students had to make up the work. Even at that, more than half chose to do the program and performed for an audience of teachers, parents, and students at a local high school. The skit was part of the culmination of the award ceremony for the district-wide writing contest featuring original stories and illustrations of students. Ken described the experience in this way:

It ties in with the idea of, again, working together. Coming out, receiving recognition for what we do, and the kids need that. To say, 'Hey, you know we are more than just an inner city school'...I think it's a very positive reinforcement for the students...many of them beat themselves down...they hear they can't do this, they can't do that. They always hear they are low in reading and math. This is kind of an ego booster for them. I think it is fun...it helps them remember their sixth grade experience more...one of the students, Lee...in the fall...could not even speak in front of a group. Now he's up in front singing and dancing.

(5-10-77)

Ken's comments on the creative drama experiences are similar:

...the creative dramatics are a big thing for them and are something I feel comfortable with. It is something we can easily do in the framework of our classroom...it gives the kids a chance to be on their feet and to think and that is just good common experience for them in the art of self expression... my feeling is to get even those very timid students up with the group enough so that eventually they will be up by themselves...some kids could not sing a solo or memorize a long spiel. But by doing it in a group like this, they all get involved. (5-10-77)

Ken continued to make use of group activities by interspersing them throughout the school day. Each of these activities provided rewards for the group and helped to develop group stability and cohesiveness. It was as if being in the group were a reward in itself. This enabled a number of projects to be completed. Furthermore, the working together intensified the class themes of respect and cooperation.

Whether the project was a culmination of a unit such as the units on mass production or Mexico and hence a one-shot phenomenon, or whether it was an ongoing class effort, such as the feelings book, or rehearsal for the Christmas play, a sense of the group's working together was displayed. Further indicants of planned cooperative ventures included field trips, after school clubs such as the square dance club, drama activities, singing and the Magic Circle sessions. Each of these activities was initiated by the teacher and over time led to the uncovering of his classroom perspective, which was a group perspective.

The Popcorn Ball Factory

By developing a major class activity such as the popcorn ball factory, the teacher's perspective was translated into an active form. The entire enterprise was a group venture. Each person was responsible for some individual task yet was dependent on other individuals in the group. The factory was an example of what might be accomplished with an effective group. It needed to operate with stability, cohesiveness and a high degree of consensus in order to manufacture four hundred popcorn balls. As soon as the students began their duties, norms were established and a reward system put into effect. Students took over the leadership positions and were responsible for the outcomes of the group. Students also planned the organization and implementation of the factory. The factory was a representation of an effective group enterprise.

Although this was a rudimentary unit on mass production in the science text, the teacher brought together elements from science, math, art, language arts, and social studies to enrich the framework in the text and implement a personal learning experience for the students. The planning of the factory was a cooperative undertaking among individuals in the class and the teacher. The implementation of the project was totally left up to the students. The follow up discussion on what was learned through such an experience was undertaken by students and teacher.

The students evaluated the experience and had mixed reactions about the responsibility of individuals for the group outcome. By discussing all this, the students displayed both figurative and



operative knowledge about this group experience. Figuratively, they planned and discussed their roles for the factory before the experience and evaluated the experience afterwards. Operatively, they actually took on roles, adhered to the norms and received the reward of two five-minute breaks during the day. This relates to the teacher's perspective since the exercise was an intense prototype of an effective group's working together to achieve a goal. In the course of the school year, the teacher created and maintained an effective group in order to achieve classroom goals.

The teacher introduced the unit on mass production by speaking in terms of a sixth grade project. He stated the purpose of the project was "to make a product efficiently for a profit." He continued, "The money we make can be used for an end of the year skating party and a trip to the Detroit Zoo in June." The group demonstrated their excitement by cheering and applause. Ken stressed the point that, "We'll only do this if all are willing to work on this and take responsibilities upon yourself for the factory to run smoothly. We only need to make about \$50.00 for the field trips." He recounted a few facts about last year's experience with the factory. He mentioned the tremendous amount of work it involved, the seriousness of the responsibility, and that it costs money to make money. He then laid out the types of responsibility entailed in such an enterprise.

He said, "First, let me tell you what will be involved and if you are willing to do it, we will. You'll have to design a flyer advertising the sale. You'll be doing all of this. Second, you

have to design order blanks. You'll need to plan all this out. Third, you'll have to handle the publicity with posters and commercials." He held up a sample of a commercial created by a student last year and read the commercial to the class. He continued, "And, finally, you have to be part of the corporation. This means you'll take on a job, and all of you get your jobs by pulling names out of a hat. We need a plan of how the factory will be run, and when we get a good plan, we'll pick a President and Vice-President by who develops the best plans. Most of you are good at making one thing; now you'll have to plan for making hundreds of something. It will take a complete day, all day this Friday. It's a lot of work, so think about if you're willing to commit yourself to this project."

The group was most attentive during this speech with their gaze fixed on the teacher. They displayed their enthusiasm by vigorously waving their hands in unanimous consent when the question was put to a vote. Ken added, "You'll be tired. It's hard work. If you can't handle it, let me know." He walked to the board, and since no one admitted to being "unable to handle it," he turned to the group and asked, "What do you think we'll need to get our factory going?" As the class made suggestions, he wrote these on the board. Various students contributed to the list which included:

popcorn	wax paper	mixing bowls
oil	food coloring	pans
syrup	string or yarn	spoons
sugar	poppers	

Ken stated, "These are all the things we'll have to have before we start." While he spoke, Joel and Greg were not paying attention and

were mimicking a fight with each other by touching each other's hands and pushing one another away. Ken saw this and said, "Excuse me; if you want to hold hands, please go out in the hall. I think it's strange myself." The two boys and the class laughed at the humor and Ken went on with his communication. He proceeded, "It's time for the safeties to get ready. While they get ready, I want all of you to start thinking about the decisions on price; how much we'll charge, how we want to do the orders and what will be the most effective way to make this product." After a small pause, he continued, "I have a filmstrip now for you on mass production."

Up to this point, the words and actions of the teacher exemplify certain elements related to his perspective. The planning of the venture was cooperative. Although Ken laid out what the responsibility might entail, the class participated in the development of what would be included in terms of work load. By their mutual agreement to create a factory, Ken and the class demonstrated their respect for each other. His use of humor and courtesy complemented his theme of respect. By planning this activity together, the sense of cooperation was doubly reinforced.

The filmstrip was set up before the session and ready to go. One of the students manipulated the projector. The filmstrip was in color and was done with attractive graphics and contemporary spoken and musical background. After the filmstrip, Ken asked the class, "How can we get this filmstrip to make sense in our class?" One of the students, Charlie, volunteered, "Well, we'll have to have a set-up for popping the corn, mixing the syrup, wrapping the balls,



tying them and passing them out." Ken remarked, "Good. We'll also have to make use of what we have in the room for the set-up. Maybe one of you will figure out a way to have a conveyor or a pulley or something. Anyway, over lunch I want you to think about it. Okay, the safeties can go." It was 11:24 and this was a sign for the group to get ready for lunch. Ken went up to the office to fill in for the principal as safety patrol coordinator. The students left on this Monday morning with the first taste of what was to come on Friday.

During the week, two art classes and language arts sessions were devoted to a contest for making a plan for the factory, and designing order blanks and advertisements. The blueprint-type sketches were circumspectly executed and presented for the class approval. The group voted on the best plans after the teacher selected the best samples. Elements of the two plans with the highest number of votes were combined to make the final lay out. The two students who designed the plans, Peter and Amy, became the factory president and vice-president respectively. The class also voted on the best order blank and best advertisements. The entire week was centered around what would take place on Friday. In the off class times, between classes and before school in the morning, the students discussed the popcorn ball factory. The enthusiasm was kept high since advertisements were posted everywhere, and by Thursday all the classes had put in their orders. The task for the entire day on Friday would be to manufacture nearly four hundred popcorn balls.



On Friday a large sign was prominently displayed when the students entered the classroom turned factory for the day. The sign said, "WELCOME TO THE POPCORN BALL FACTORY - - - THINK SAFETY." The president of the factory, Peter, personally greeted any person who walked into the room. Throughout the day, a number of teachers and aides from other classes stopped by to see what was occurring. When this researcher entered the room, Peter approached and explained that he, the vice-president, and the two forewomen had clip boards with everyone's name and station. They were circulating around the room at regular time intervals to check that everyone was at his station. There was even a slot for the researcher who was listed as observing all the stations. Each person was involved in some element of popcorn ball production.

Kay was at the kitchen substation coordinating a group of five students who were popping corn on the stove and in two popcorn poppers. Ken was in the center of the main station checking a chart with the listing of the day's work activities. Lois was at the syrup center, helping to supervise the cooking of the syrup and food coloring. The students were at their various posts of popping, syrup making, mixing, forming balls, wrapping, tying and package counting. The excitement of the class was channeled in their work as they conversed, laughed, and adroitly performed their tasks.

The organization of the schema was plainly visible while the plan was operationalized. In both instances where the fuses blew out, the forewoman sought out the school custodian to take care of the situation. Once, when a student burned his thumb with the hot

syrup, the president comforted him and took him to the office for first aid. The workers only rested at their five minute break times which occurred once in the morning and afternoon. If there were any complaints, they were referred to the forewoman or the president or vice-president.

The students were careful with their work. For example, the two boys who were boiling the syrup mixture took pains to shield the pots of syrup as they walked to the mixing station. At one point, Charlie, who is a rough and ready type character, took his pot of syrup to the mixing station and warned, "Sara, please excuse me; this is kind of hot." He waited until she moved clearly out of the way before he added the syrup to the popcorn. Another student, Penny, explained that she enjoyed her job as inspector because she could sit down as she worked, approving or rejecting each popcorn ball. She employed a method of taking two finished samples, one in each hand, and scrutinizing them both. She compared them as to weight, how they were wrapped and neatness of the tie. She rejected any which looked "too sloppy." Once, Kevin, who was forming the balls, made a good sized one. Penny said, "That's too big." He replied, "They're paying 20¢ for this. You have to have big ones." He defended his position arduously. Penny finally approved that size and subsequent products were made accordingly. The entire operation was undertaken by the students. Ken remained an onlooker and offered his help through answering questions and encouraging the students to take on the responsibility of their stations.

Ken believed that the group should undertake the entire project for a sense of working together as a group. He purposively remained on the sidelines as a facilitator and supportive agent. He took time to answer questions and joke around with students, but never interfered in their tasks or the decisions they made during the day. The role he took here was still one of leadership, but in a different sense. He took the total situation into consideration and decided the students would benefit from taking on the total responsibility for the group project. Through this, they would experience what it was like to give orders or listen to complaints. For example, Amy complained to Ken at one point, "This is really hard. Everyone's complaining to me about something. The ties are not right, the wrappings are all wrong, the people are trying to sit down on the job." She threw up her hands to indicate her frustration. Before Ken had a chance to reply, she said, "I know. I can handle it. It's my job."

The break periods began at mid-morning and the students sat down in the area of the room where all the desks were crammed together. Some sat on desk tops and some sat on the seats. They each brought a snack to eat. One of the girls stayed longer than her five minutes and was given a demerit and had to sit out of her station for ten minutes. She was so upset, she pouted while leaning against the window sill with tears welling up in her eyes. On the whole, the students were very conscious of their five minutes and watched the clock closely. They were in good spirits, friendly, and cooperative. For example, when Sam burned his hand, two people



rushed to see how he was and tried to help him. One said, "Here, hold your hand under cold water," as he led Sam to the sink and turned on the faucet. Another student went to the president and reported the accident. Peter came up to Sam and said in a fatherly tone, "Well, what do we have here? First, second or third degree burns?" He added, "Let's get some first aid stuff in the office." Peter took care of this matter and both students returned to their duties in class.

The factory closed before the end of the school day and following the clean up session, the group sat in an area close together recounting what had occurred. Peter and Amy both expressed how difficult it was to give orders to their peers. They both agreed "being the boss is rough." One student noticed how they were all dependent on the people in the unit before them. For example, the people who did the tying had to depend on the wrappers who depended on the mixers who depended on the popcorn makers. Some students said it was very hard to do the same thing "over and over again." Some said they enjoyed the novelty of the whole thing. Four students said they "didn't like working that hard at all." Some expressed surprise that "you had to depend on someone else to do their (sic.) job in order to do yours." Ken expressed his views as follows:

It was really an opportunity to show how we are dependent on one another for certain things and this is true in life...On that day in the classroom, it was really true and (the question is) can you cope with that or how do you (cope) when something isn't going right and you aren't getting what you need? How do you work within the system to get what you need

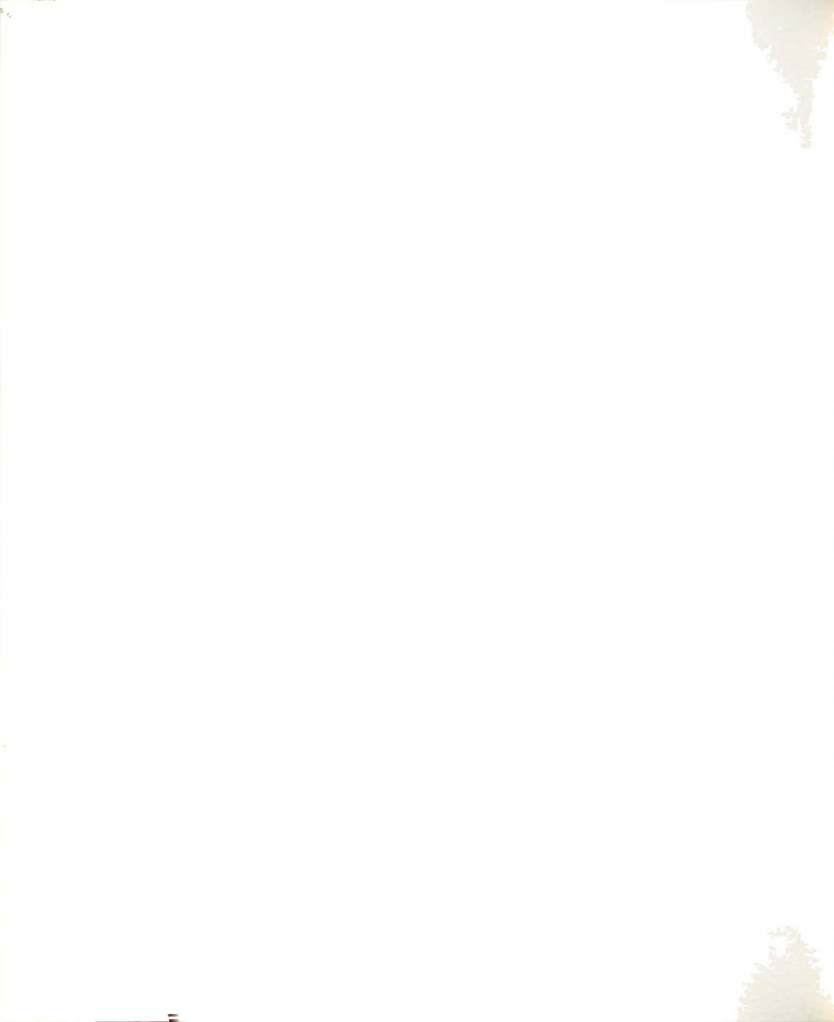


without causing a fight?...I think it really helps them to work together as a group better and the big thing is that we want them to be able to take directions from each other, cooperate with each other, and work towards a final goal. And this is a fun way of doing it without really pinpointing it. (5-10-77)

The popcorn ball factory involved planning and hard work and took a good deal of time. This was a major class activity which reflected the classroom perspective of the teacher. As the leader of the group, Ken decided that the class would have the opportunity to learn to work together as a group, take directions from one another, cooperate with each other and work towards a final goal. The popcorn ball factory was a means to those ends. It provided a concrete activity for experiencing the basic components of group life. The group operated under the norms of the factory and established a reward system for the day. They maintained a high degree of consensus during an intense activity while moving toward a goal. Some took on roles which gave them a new viewpoint on leadership. The total effect of such a group activity was that it was just that. It was a sample of a group's working together toward a goal. It was one group activity of many which the teacher initiated in order to restore the group to a desirable level of effectiveness. A similar activity was initiated by Ken. This activity was part of the social studies unit on Mexico. The class was involved in the planning, implementation and enjoyment of a Mexican Fiesta.

The Fiesta

The fiesta was initiated by Ken, yet implemented by the students and Sheila. Within a few social studies sessions, the fiesta



was organized. The agenda included sampling authentic Mexican food, singing a few Spanish songs, playing Mexican bingo and celebrating with the breaking of two huge paper mache animal pinatas. Four students worked on the design and building of the candy-stuffed pinatas, one for the boys and one for the girls. Ken, his wife Vivienne, Lois, Kay and Sheila assisted in the cooking and preparation of tostadas and buennuellos. While the food was served, the group sang songs and played bingo. After the meal the group ascended the stairs to the gym where the pinatas were strung on either basketball hoop. Ken manipulated the rope as each blindfolded student took a turn at attempting to break the pinata.

The process of breaking the pinatas was a group effort. Before starting the game of breaking the pinata for candy, Ken reminded the class to "cooperate and give clues to one another since the object is to break the pinata." Ken's reminder to cooperate was an indicator of one of his goals for the fiesta. It was an opportunity for the class to enjoy a cooperative activity. Each student had two turns at bat while blindfolded. As a student prepared to swing, the group shouted directions: "Higher; to the right; no, lower." When a student came close to hitting the paper mache figure or actually hit it without successfully causing candy to fall out, the group "ooohed" and "ahhed" together. They monitored each other's progress. On a particularly good hit, someone remarked, "That was great," or "Good try, Shelley." They also jumped around one another and laughed together at various students as they prepared to swing. As a student was blindfolded, he was also twirled around to make it

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more difficult to guess where the pinata was. The group surrounding that student cheered the person on or tried to imitate the person's swing at the pinata. The girls tried to break the pinata first as the boys sat on the sidelines making comments on the various degrees of athletic prowess of each girl. Following this, the boys took their turns. The girls sat on the sidelines eating their candy, conversing, and watching the boys' attempts. As a student came closer to breaking the pinata, the entire group, both on the sidelines and in the center, held their breaths to see if the student would make it. It was as if each person breathed the same sigh of relief as candy poured out of its holder. When both pinatas were totally broken and all candy was claimed, the group was ready to return to class. Some of the students shared their candy with one another. Three students gave candy to the researcher and to Ken. One the way back to the class, the students ate candy, joked about the process of pinata breaking, and talked about the good time had by all at the fiesta.

In the process of restoring the group's cohesiveness and stability, Ken used these group activities in coordination with units in science and social studies. In addition, he combined blocks of time in language arts, art, and math and presented the class with the opportunity to use the skills from those subjects and apply them to the projects. These two activities, the factory and the fiesta, were special events. They occurred once and took a great deal of preparation. Both projects focused on working together as a group. They were part of the curriculum in the class

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which was designed to restore the group to a higher level of effectiveness. As the students practiced the group activities, their stability and cohesiveness increased. This enabled the teacher and the class to move closer to specific and general goals. Other components of the curriculum were used to strengthen the themes of respect and cooperation. These curricular components were group-centered. They included common activities such as the Magic Circle sessions and writing in the feelings book.

The Magic Circle

Another group activity sandwiched into the school day was the Magic Circle. The Magic Circle refers to a short group session in which members share their feelings on a specific topic. The group leader, in this case, the teacher, conducted the twenty minute session with no more than fifteen students at any given time. The teacher attended a ten week training program about the Magic Circle technique and received a certificate upon completion of the workshop. He set the tone of congeniality and openness, helping the students feel at ease as they sat on the carpet in a circle. While one half of the students took part in the Magic Circle, the other half worked with Kay on reading word building drills. As soon as one group was finished with the Magic Circle session, they traded places. Each group then had the benefits of the circle and the reading vocabulary drill.

A typical session began with a welcome to the group and an introduction of the topic. Ken then proceeded by asking, "Who can



remember the rules for the Magic Circle?" He called on five students who reviewed the five basic rules: (1) everyone gets a turn, (2) you can skip your turn, (3) no put downs, (4) share time equally, and (5) the speaker gets listened to. Ken said, "Yesterday, we talked about a feeling, feeling happy. Today, we're going to talk about another kind of feeling. I want you to think of a favorite place of yours." The students closed their eyes for nearly a minute and as they opened them, they raised their hands to indicate their desire to talk about their favorite place. Most students spoke of vacation spots or a friend's house. After all participated, Mr. Evans asked the group, "What did you learn today in the circle?" Various students offered these ideas: (a) many people travel, (b) only one person talked about his own home, (c) some people liked the same place for different reasons. After the students responded, Ken added, "Today, I noticed that we all responded freely whenever we wished. The other day, we went clockwise around the circle one at a time. Today, we all spoke when we wanted to. I want to thank all of you for sharing your ideas with us in the circle." He then called the second group and the format was identical to the first group's. Throughout both groups, Ken put into practice the skills he learned at the workshop. When he learned something new, he shared that with the students prefacing whatever it was with, "I learned something new yesterday, and I want to tell you about it." This was an example of his modeling the behaviors which are central to the Magic Circle technique.



When asked about the value of the Magic Circle, Ken replied:

Just opening up communications between the students and myself...I really don't seem to be able to spend time with the students like I would like to...part of it (the circle) is socializing with kids, really having rapport with them...so the Magic Circle allows the kids to see that I do care. I do want to listen...my head isn't only tied up with academic subject areas, and I like to hear about their personal lives and hear about things that interest them...and I want to know about their feelings and let them know I share common feelings...I would like to do it five days a week.

He also believed:

...the kids need a chance to let each other know through their peers that they can sit next to each other and listen attentively to each other...verbally, these kids are quick at coming back with putting people down and in the circle there are no put downs...it also allows for freedom...opening up the kids who never get a chance to talk. (2-14-77)

The Magic Circle sessions were planned to facilitate communication in the group with a common base of sharing feelings and experiences. The net result was evident in the commitment to the sessions. The students eagerly shared their thoughts and feelings. If someone passed, that was acceptable and viewed as sharing the feeling of a need for privacy. The group kept the five rules and Ken modelled the requisite behaviors for the group. The Magic Circle sessions afforded the group another opportunity to be cooperative. By keeping the rules, the students communicated with each other and with Ken. The rules related to the class themes of respect and cooperation. As the trained leader of the sessions, Ken facilitated the group in reaching the goal for the daily discussion of a particular topic.

The Feelings Book

Along the lines of a group project, the feelings book is a small hand-made collection of pages. The pages and cover are changed on the first of the month. The purpose of the book is to provide a means for students to write down feelings which they have and anyone who reads the book will share in the writers' feelings. On two different occasions, Ken reminded the class that the book was not designed for put downs. "You can say what your feeling is, but you can say it without hurting someone." He encouraged the students to write in the book anytime during the day, which is what they did. It is an individual activity because the student records his thoughts or feelings with a signature. A sample page disclosed the following words: "Today, I feel happy because it is Mrs. Winter's birthday. I will be nice to her today. Signed, Kristin." In addition to being an outlet for individual students, the book remains in the class for the group to read, which often precipitates further writing in it. Although each student does not write in the feelings book regularly, the option to do so is open to the group. About one half of the students take advantage of writing in the book. A small percentage of that half write in the book regularly. Most of the students read the book regularly. The book is an on-going reminder of what an individual is thinking or feeling. It is available for the group to read for the purpose of knowing more about one another's feelings. The Magic Circle offered the opportunity to speak about feelings and the book offered the opportunity to write about them. Ken encouraged the students to be courteous and



respectful in their writing. The norms of behavior in the classroom were followed in regard to the book as in the Magic Circle sessions. For example, "no put downs" was one of the norms. Another had to do with waiting for a turn to write or speak. Respect was operationalized since normal courtesy was required to participate in either the Magic Circle or writing in the feelings book. This enabled the group to practice some of the norms which facilitated cooperation in the group.

Field Trips

The cooperation of the group was evident on field trips when the students and Ken, as a unit, went to another environment. The norms of behavior were stable. The trip itself was a reward for the group. The field trips were a group activity designed to attain some goal. The field trips included attendance at plays, the zoo, the planetarium, and the roller skating rink. The trips were related to some lesson or skill, or as an outing for a time to enjoy something together as a group outside of the immediate classroom. Ken's beliefs about field trips relate to his group perspective:

I try to make it relate to something in the classroom so that it is not just a form of entertainment...I want it to be of benefit to them. I feel strongly about taking them to musicals or plays because those are the kind of things that these students will not go to on their own...from the follow up discussions in class, it's a learning experience for them...as far as trips to the planetarium and the zoo, the zoo is the only one I would say is an extra...it's a big out-of-town trip simply because they are sixth graders. The trip to the planetarium went along with the science unit...by the exchange program with the second graders at Christmas time, I think it helped them to work together as a group better and the big thing is that we

want them to really be able to take directions from each other, cooperate with each other and work towards a final goal. And that is a fun way of doing it. (5-10-77)

The field trips offer an outwardly visible example of the entire group as a group participating in some form of learning by experiencing a play, an exhibit, or a trip to the zoo. Each of the activities described, the popcorn ball factory, the fiesta, the plays and drama activities, the Magic Circle, the feelings book, and field trips are important to the teacher in constructing his actions in the class in reference to goals of respect, cooperation, and group effort. Each of these activities contributes to the understanding of the teacher's classroom perspective.

Views on Teaching

The teacher's perspective contributed to the development of the group through planning and implementing of group activities and projects. The students experienced the activity individually and as a group. Some of the desired effects were related to the teacher's goals. The desired effects of such activities were students who displayed respect, courtesy, and cooperation at various times to varying degrees. The teacher's perspective of creating and maintaining a group to attain goals was achieved by group activities. These activities were of importance to the teacher because they supported what he believed to be valuable goals of cooperation, working as a group, respect for one another, self control, and making independent decisions. Instruction, complementary activities, and the normal flow of the day require a certain amount of planning which

this teacher viewed as essential. His commitment to daily planning times, his extra hours of planning and preparation and his ability to orchestrate demands from many areas made it possible to manage the process of conducting a classroom. From all this, he found:

...a sense of accomplishment, a feeling that you're doing some good for someone else...

His perspective is made understandable through his views on teaching.

He explained:

What I like best about teaching is the kids: the love, the understanding they give back...I find it totally remarkable that kids have that in them--that depth of understanding. I very strongly believe that school should be fun for kids...I think it has to be...we can still make school fun and exciting and they can learn.

Remarking on the kind of teacher he is, in addition to a benevolent dictator, he added:

I guess I would say I'm a strong disciplinarian, but I can also say that I think I'm fair. I guess I believe in keeping the rules very limited so that you're not trapped by them. So many teachers, I think, are trapped by their own rules. I find that I don't have to worry about breaking a rule or making an exception. Anyone would be a fool to say that there's not going to be an exception to almost every rule.

From these comments, the inference was made that he took pride in his work in the classroom. He commented on his pride in teaching:

I think it is something that you build. You know it's a constant building up or you set goals for yourself... and you start getting recognition. You say, I did what I planned to do. Then you start seeing that others recognize you. Students are saying, "That was super. I really enjoyed it. Can we do more of that?" When your colleagues recognize what you do, you get stimulated again. That gets you enthusiastic about your job. Also, recognition from administration and parents (helps)...the nicest recognition is...when I have former students come back and simply say, "Hey, I

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really liked my time in this room." It gives you new motivation to go on and try again. I think I find it exciting for myself that even when I meet with failure, when something bombs out...it's motivation for me to find out why it didn't work... the failures keep you motivated, too. (11-22-76)

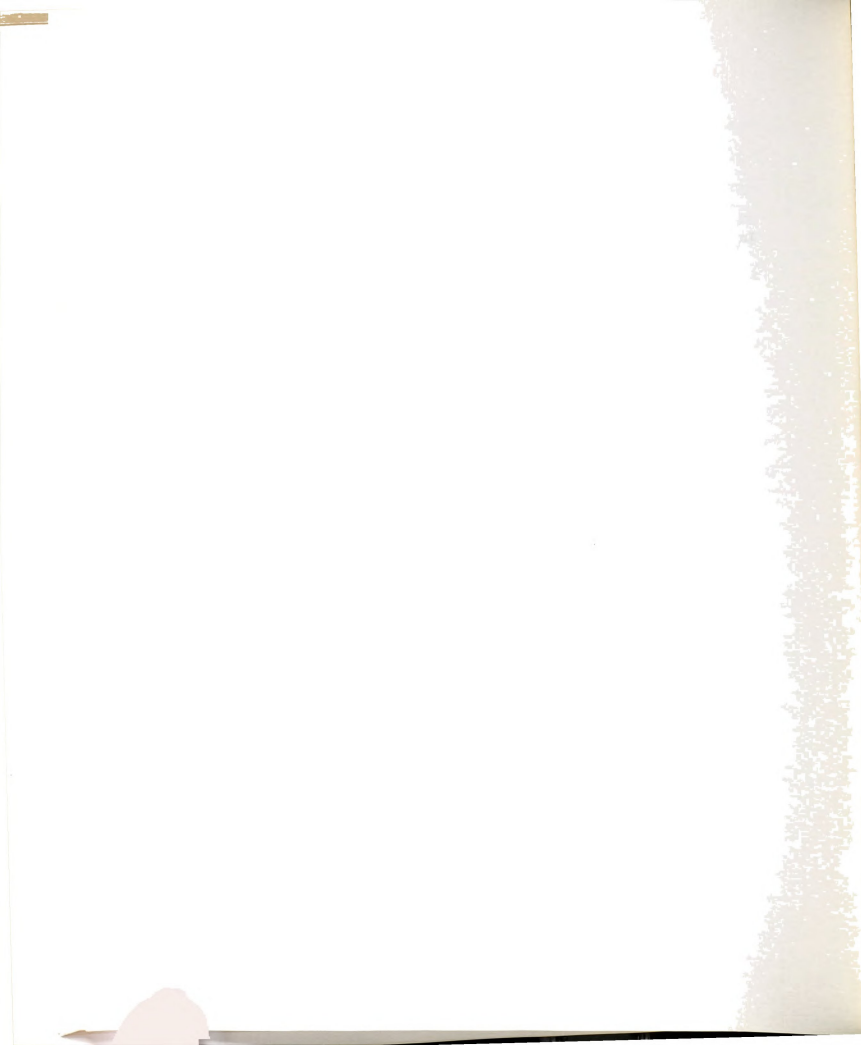
In addition, he believed:

...you have to get the kids to trust you...these students in this school are very slow to put their trust in adults. They have been hurt often. And that's something that I'm very aware of, that I had to learn. Many of our children are from broken homes. Many come from large families and they get very little time with an adult. They've been pushed onto someone else.

Consequently, he had built relationships with each class member, some closer than others. He conversed with them, spoke of their families' interests with them, and learned about their outside-of-school interests. In effect, he did what Moore described in his book.⁴ Ken Evans built a bond of friendship with each student to some degree. This facilitated achievement of his goals of respect and cooperation. It also facilitated the many group activities which occurred throughout the school year.

In addition, Ken viewed himself as a successful teacher in part due to his heavy stress on planning. He modeled his ability to organize and get things going through his morning planning sessions for Kay and Lois. He conducted workshops for intern teachers on classroom management which related to planning. In addition to class time, he worked at home, on weekends, and at times during holidays or breaks, depending on the needs of the class. He

⁴Moore, p. 187.



organized planning committees with parents for activities in the school outside his immediate classroom. He viewed planning of instruction, the flow of the day, special activities, as "really important." He stated:

I do a lot of planning on paper. It really is necessary. Now, that doesn't mean it has to be detailed. It's just the idea of priorities...the hardest thing to get a handle on is length of time. I know how long it takes for me to do something...but planning for an intern or aide, how long will it take someone else (is the question), and I try for variety...even though I'm familiar with materials and books.

(11-22-76)

These outlooks on teaching, his goals, his classroom activities, and his planning contributed to the development of his perspective. From this evidence, the leadership of the teacher emerged as critical to the group's perspective.

He was their leader and this, in itself, was a reward for him. As the leader of the group, he planned projects, activities, and instruction which were group-oriented in order to achieve his classroom goals. Since the group operated with a high degree of consensus, the task at hand was not as critical as the process of approaching the task. The group achieved particular goals, whether they were instructional goals such as a math lesson or non-instructional such as creative drama. Thus, the value of the group perspective was that it was instrumental in achieving goals. If a math lesson needed to be taught, the effective group cooperated and worked on math. If a play were to be presented, the effective group presented it.

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For this teacher, the maintenance of an effective group allowed for a number of achievements in class. Many such achievements were also rewards for the group, such as field trips, plays, and special projects. Rewards are critical in creating and maintaining group life. By designing these types of group activities which were also rewards, the group's perspective became more secure. Of course, in the social world, many outside elements impinge on the most secure and carefully planned activities within a school day. Situations of conflict appeared at various times during the year which affected the teacher's perspective.

Situations of Conflict

Those situations which frustrated Ken's attempts to move toward his goals, for the purposes of this analysis, are labeled conflict situations. Two particular types of incidents are described in this section: teacher-principal interactions, and reading center interactions. These were chosen because of their frequency and regularity. They offer another example of forces which may affect a classroom and which are either unplanned or counter to the plan of the class. In some instances, they worked against the teacher's classroom perspective. Both of these examples illustrate how outside-the-classroom situations may influence the curriculum of a classroom. In addition, Ken believed these interactions affected his attitude in the classroom.

Page 1

Page 2

Page 3

Page 4

Page 5

Page 6

Page 7

Page 8

Page 9

Page 10

Page 11

Page 12

Page 13

Page 14

Page 15

Page 16

Page 17

Page 18

Page 19

Page 20

Page 21

Page 22

Page 23

Page 24

Page 25

Page 26

Page 27

Page 28

Page 29

Teacher-Principal Interactions

The current principal was new to the job and to the school. Ken disclosed that interactions with the school principal negatively influenced his attitudes toward school and his classroom. Although there were a number of interactions during the year which led Ken to this conclusion, the incident related here is merely for illustrating how this affected Ken.

Following the spring break, the students and staff returned to school to "gear up" for the new semester. The first day back was unsettled. The routine had been established long ago, but students and staff needed to re-experience life in the class. Ken was organized and had planned a full day, including activities for Lois and Kay. In the early part of the day, the principal requested that all teacher aides attend a meeting that morning. This took the aides out of the class for a considerable amount of time. In the sixth grade, pulling out Lois necessitated some rearranging of the schedule at the last minute. Both Lois and Ken expressed their disappointment in the principal's judgment about meeting at such an inopportune time.

This incident is included to aid in awareness of how it affected the attitude of the teacher and the plan of the day. Ken was disappointed in the time of such a meeting. He certainly was not objecting to a teacher aide meeting. To have this meeting the first day back in school after the semester break seemed less than sensible. By taking the aide out of the room, the work she would have undertaken would not be accomplished. This affected the other team

members because they would have to rearrange their plans to include Lois' work load. In addition, this affected the students directly since Lois would have worked with many individuals during that time. Because of the schedule for class change and the remaining schedule of the day, she was forced to accomodate by fitting in, if possible, what had to be completed. Finally, this affected the teacher's attitude and beliefs about what ought to be happening in the classroom. Ken believed that decisions which affect the students so directly, that is, taking the aide away from the students, ought to be more carefully considered. The implication here was that the principal didn't do what a principal ought to do. He didn't weigh the consequences of having teacher aides out of the classroom for an extended time period. As a classroom teacher, Ken felt the effects of this decision because his teacher aide was out of the class at a time when she was needed. Ken felt frustrated that he couldn't make any difference here and he was, after all, the teacher in the classroom. He also felt that he knew what was best for his students. At this particular time, the best thing for them would be to have the teacher aide present. Consequently, he viewed this action of the principal as one which was inappropriate.

This was indicative of a number of incidents involving the principal. Throughout the year, there was a build-up of concern on Ken's part about what Ken interpreted as the principal's lack of organization and insensitivity to teachers' needs. The teacher aide meeting was an example of what Ken viewed as inappropriate since it reflected disorganization and lack of concern for teachers' needs.



In addition, Ken felt this affected his morale in the school and the classroom. Ken expected the principal to be as organized as he, himself, was. With incidents of this type, frequently distributed over the year, Ken stated that his attitude toward school and his classroom were negatively influenced.

The Reading Center

The situation in the reading center presented Ken with tensions and conflict on an on-going basis. His concern for the students' using that time productively was prominent. The main question he asked himself about the reading center was, "Are they (the students) learning anything?" In every session in which the researcher was present, certain behavioral indicants suggested that such a question was most appropriate. The indicants included:

- (1) Students could not see writing on the board
- (2) Students could not hear directions and directions were not repeated
- (3) Information written on the overhead transparencies was illegible
- (4) Students finished their work early and had nothing to do
- (5) Students were talked down to
- (6) Students were given idle warnings; e.g., "If you don't quiet down, Mr. Evans will be very upset."
- (7) The two students who were classified by Mr. Evans as in need of the most help were not given any specifically helpful materials. Often they sat together and drew pictures
- (8) There was no reward system for the students while in the center unless Mr. Evans was present. He gave the students some of his time by reading



their tests and drawing a picture with a magic marker on the paper the test was written on. One of the days when Mrs. Ginch saw a drawing on a student's paper, she said, "Oh, what a lovely drawing." The student responded, "Mr. Evans always draws a picture for us. That's why we do these tests." She smiled and walked away as though she didn't hear what he said.

Consequently, the students' behavior was altered in the reading center. They talked in fairly loud tones. They threw books and pencils across tables. They kicked chairs. In general, they were often disruptive. Taken together, these problems created tensions for the teacher, Ken, and the students.

The tensions within the reading center carried over into other parts of the school day. For example, one morning during the planning period, Ken needed some sequence puzzles for two students in the room. He needed them to assist the students individually on a particular reading skill. The puzzles were kept in the reading center and available for anyone's use in the school. Ken went up to the reading center and returned to the classroom shaking his head. He recounted to the group seated at the planning table the incident which had just occurred. "I was just up at the reading center, and I was looking through the cupboards for some sequence puzzles for the kids. Mrs. Ginch walked in and said, 'What do you want?' I replied, 'I wanted to find some puzzles for the...' She interrupted quickly and said, 'Why?'" Ken put his hands on his hips indicating how she stood as she confronted him. Ken continued, "I thought, 'Why should I have to tell her why? I'm the teacher; if I want to throw them out the window, it shouldn't make a difference to her.'"

He shook his head as if to say, "What next?" and continued with the planning session.

All of the above events in the reading center and in the principal's office are examples of daily interactions in the teacher's world which he interpreted as working against him. He expected the principal to be more organized so that he, Ken, could carry on classroom activities smoothly. He expected the reading center to be a place where the students "learn something." Since this was not the case, he turned to the one place where he could get a shared excitement, a good deal of organization, and a good deal of evidence of students' learning something. He found this in his own classroom, his group. Consequently, it was important for him to create and maintain the group as a stable and cohesive unit. If tensions arose within the group, he made attempts to restore the group to its optimum level of effectiveness. Thus, it became important to do all those things listed by Thibaut and Kelly: (1) provide rewards for the group, (2) maintain a high degree of consensus in the group, (3) develop norms of behavior, (4) provide leadership, (5) provide tasks and maintain smooth group functioning. Furthermore, Ken felt that he should be able to plan what occurs in his class. He felt that intrusions by outside forces were a hassle. If he could have a say in those intrusions, it would not be a problem. When he was unprepared for the intrusion, such as the teacher aide meeting, he was negatively affected in two ways. First, he, as the classroom teacher, had no say in what occurred. Second, he believed that something like this affected the students directly because they



could have used the help of the absent teacher aide. Thus, he believed there were elements in his own system which worked against him.

The Teacher's Perspective

This case study revealed that this teacher's classroom perspective was one of creating, maintaining, and restoring a group. When the group functioned smoothly, instruction, management, and activities proceeded smoothly. From the beginning of the school year, the teacher explained that he gradually worked at "building a rapport and a sense of working together." This researcher entered the classroom in November and remained throughout May with short visits to the site in June. From November through January, the observation and interviews confirmed that a stable and cohesive group was maintaining itself. The reward system, consensus level, norms of behaving, and leadership allowed the group to attain their goals of respect, cooperation, and completing their daily assignments. While the teacher was out of the class for eight weeks, the system was unbalanced. Students altered their behavior due to a feeling of being rejected by their teacher. The group displayed an instability. In order to restore the group to its optimum level of stability and cohesiveness, the teacher had to work with the group on projects and activities which required their consensus, cooperation, and required working together. The teacher planned such activities and allotted additional time in the curriculum or combined a number of subjects to allow for time blocks for such activities.

While doing so, he continued to rebuild his rapport with them by interacting with them as individuals and as group members. He used humor and the language of the students to accomplish this. Furthermore, as the leader of the group, he modelled the behaviors which facilitated the building of norms which brought consensus to the group. Throughout this process, he encouraged respect for each individual, including himself, in the group.

The Teacher as Leader

Effective groups function well with effective leaders. In this study, the teacher behaved as a leader in the manner outlined by Homans.⁵

- (1) The leader will maintain his own position
- (2) The leader will live up to the norms of his group
- (3) The leader will lead
- (4) The leader will not give orders that will not be obeyed
- (5) In giving orders, the leader will use established channels
- (6) The leader will not thrust himself upon his followers on social occasions
- (7) The leader will neither blame nor, in general, praise a member of his group before other members
- (8) The leader will take into consideration the total situations
- (9) In maintaining discipline, the leader will be less concerned with inflicting punishment than

⁵George Homans. The Human Group. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950).

with creating the conditions in which the group
will discipline itself

(10) The leader will listen

(11) The leader will know himself

These principles enabled the teacher to lead the group through the many dimensions of classroom life. The leadership skill was a major variable in developing the group and in restoring the level of stability of the group when it was required.

Final Reflections on the Teacher's Perspective

Recalling the requirements of Thibaut and Kelly for creating and maintaining an effective group assists in the identification of this teacher's classroom perspective: (1) he designed and planned a number of activities which provided the students with rewards they enjoyed; (2) by involving students in activities such as the popcorn ball factory, Mexican Fiesta, the Christmas play and programs, he provided the foundation for constructing group consensus; (3) he assisted in developing norms for behaving which allowed students a great deal of freedom provided they were responsible for what they did; by being clear about his expectations of the students, he, together with the class, kept the norms operating; (4) as a leader, he modeled behaviors which represented his major goals of respect and cooperation. These elements taken together reflect the teacher's classroom perspective. Stated simply, his perspective was one of creating an effective group and maintaining that group in order to achieve his classroom goals.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to describe and explain a teacher's classroom perspective. The beliefs and behaviors of the teacher provided evidence for recognizing his perspective as one of creating an effective group and maintaining it in order to achieve his major classroom goals of respect and cooperation. At this point, it is necessary to review the exploratory questions used in this study. Summary responses to these questions can clarify the more salient findings for the reader. The exploratory questions include:

- (1) What elements constitute this teacher's classroom perspective?
- (2) Which contextual variables outside and inside the classroom influence the classroom perspective?
- (3) What are the assumptions that this teacher makes about students, learning, and classrooms which support the classroom perspective?
- (4) How does this teacher synthesize the various types of information about student behavior and background into his perspective?

THE FIRST QUESTION: WHAT ELEMENTS CONSTITUTE THIS TEACHER'S CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE?

Five major elements emerge as indicative of this teacher's classroom perspective: first, maintaining a strong sense of groupness; second, focusing on respect and cooperation as major classroom goals; third, planning and organizing the events of the school day;

fourth, remaining the leader of the group; and, fifth, displaying a style of teaching which reinforced the class goals of respect and cooperation. These elements, when combined, contributed to the development of an effective classroom group.

Maintaining a Sense of Groupness

The teacher was able to develop a group by creating the components of group life: (1) he designed and planned a number of activities which provided the students with rewards they enjoyed; (2) he planned, organized, and provided group activities which generated a high level of group consensus; (3) he assisted in developing norms for behavior which allowed students a great deal of freedom provided they took responsibility for their actions and also allowed for flexibility in his role as teacher by enabling him to coordinate many class activities at one time; (4) he provided leadership in the group which enabled the group to perform certain tasks within a maintenance system sustained by the students; and, as a leader, he modelled behaviors which represented his major goals of respect and cooperation. Each of these elements, when combined, sustained the life of the group during the school year in the best and worst moments of the group. Each of these elements reflected the teacher's classroom perspective.

Over the course of this study, the teacher's perspective was made recognizable through three phases of development. The first phase occurred from November to January. During this time, group consensus was high. The students were a stable and cohesive group.



The norms of behavior which included (a) listening to the teacher when he spoke, (b) attending to one's work, and (c) working together as a group were followed consistently. The rewards for the students included their participation in the Christmas play as well as their regular group-centered activities such as art or music. In addition, the teacher was clearly the leader of the group. The leadership he provided was a contribution to the group's stability and cohesiveness. Consequently, when his leadership was less visible as he became a half time teacher, the group's stability and level of cohesiveness were impaired.

This occurred between January and March or the second phase of group development. The teacher removed himself from the class on a half time basis. A substitute teacher was brought in to replace him. Now the group had two leader figures. The system of norms governing group behavior was altered. The reward system was less than effective, for the students did not receive from their substitute teacher what they had received from Ken. The group consensus was not as high as it was when Ken was in class full time. As a result, Ken, the substitute teacher, and the students experienced frustration. The group was less stable during this eight week period than any other time in the year. It was important then to restore the group's cohesiveness and stability to its previous level. Consequently, Ken Evans proceeded to plan the next part of the year with the purpose of "bringing the group together again."

This took place during the third distinct phase of group development which occurred between March and June. At the beginning

of March, Ken returned to his own classroom on a full time basis. Upon his return, he immediately reintroduced the students to "working together." The first part of the morning was devoted to creative drama which gave the students the opportunity to undertake the responsibility of a major group endeavor. The students responded enthusiastically and the group was on its way to regaining equilibrium and becoming more stable. A number of carefully planned projects were initiated by the teacher with student collaboration. Through such projects, the group moved toward more unity and once again retained a high level of consensus. Leadership was clearly provided for the group. Furthermore, the norms of the class began operating again, and the rewards of participating in the various group activities were helpful in generating a high level of consensus. Thus, it was most beneficial to the class and the teacher to maintain a strong sense of groupness. By doing so, the everyday events of life in the classroom proceeded smoothly. The teacher was able to instruct, manage the class, and coordinate many activities simultaneously.

Respect and Cooperation: Major Goals in the Classroom

The second element of the teacher's perspective can be characterized as focusing on respect and cooperation as major classroom goals. Respect for one another as a major theme and goal in the class was interwoven throughout the curriculum. Instruction, class projects and recess activities were group endeavors which supported the respect theme. The restoration of the group to a point



where a high level of consensus was apparent was accomplished by the teacher to attain his classroom goals of respect and cooperation. He did this through: (1) providing rewards for the group, (2) developing a high degree of consensus, (3) developing norms of behavior, (4) providing leadership for the group, and (5) providing tasks in the form of specific activities and projects which kept the group working together. Cooperating as a stable and cohesive unit was also a reward for the teacher and students. This enabled the teacher to attain his own goals in the classroom, those of respect and cooperation, as well as the traditional instructional goals. The variety of group activities outlined in the previous chapter are punctuated with the themes of respect and cooperation. The teacher's words and actions related these goals to the students. The students themselves used the words "respect" and "cooperation" in their everyday vocabulary. The teacher modelled behaviors which indicated respect and cooperation in the classroom. Consequently, the two elements of the teacher's perspective, maintaining a strong sense of groupness and focusing on goals of respect and cooperation, are closely related and complementary.

Planning and Organizing the Day

The third element of the perspective is that of systematically planning and organizing the many events of the day. The teacher planned lessons and activities for the students by doing his own plans and the plans for the teacher aide and intern teacher. He held a daily meeting in the morning for the aide and the intern to

review carefully what would occur each school day. Mainly, he planned group-oriented activities in conjunction with instruction so that he was able to reinforce the major goals of respect and cooperation on a daily basis. He wrote out his plans, communicated them to his aide, the intern, and the students, and, if necessary, adjusted them to whatever unpredictable events may have occurred. He related that he spent many hours out of school time planning projects, field trips, and instruction. Through the use of planning, he was able to facilitate group development and movement toward the major classroom goals.

Remaining the Leader of the Group

The fourth element of the teacher's classroom perspective has to do with leadership. As the clearly defined leader of the group, the teacher was able to coordinate and provide activities which reinforced respect and cooperation. In addition, he modelled behaviors which represented those goals. As the leader, it was easy to plan group-oriented activities which reinforced the group affiliation and respect for their group leader. Consequently, by providing leadership for the students, the teacher was more able to move toward achievement of major and minor classroom goals.

Displaying a Style of Teaching

The fifth distinctive element of the teacher's perspective can be characterized as reflecting a particular style of teaching. This teacher stated that he knew his students and was aware of their needs. That is why he developed group activities and reiterated the



goals of respect for each other and cooperation. He was courteous to his students and other people with whom he interacted. Thus, the students had direct models of behaviors which reflected respect. Since he developed personal relationships with his students and came to know each one individually, he was better able to plan for them and order the events of the day and the year. He stated he was proud of teaching and enjoyed being in the group. For him, teaching had to do with students, so he was very independent of outside elements. He said he knew what was best for his students and acted on that basis. His desire for organization and order and his ability to plan well kept the routine activities of the day functioning smoothly. He saw himself as the teacher of those students, and those who didn't know them as he did could not be expected to teach them as he did. Instruction proceeded, normal and special activities took place, and the students accomplished a variety of tasks. In addition, the teacher was a charismatic individual and had a dramatic approach to teaching. He was skilled in drama and theatrics and carried these over into teaching. Many of the class activities were dramatic in nature: the plays, the programs, and creative dramatics, for example. His ability to joke with the students, laugh with them and reply to them with humor at various times also were indicative of his style. His leadership in the group appeared as a natural outgrowth of the type of person he was. As a group member, he received the reward of being the leader of the group. Thus, there is a connection among the elements of the teacher's perspective. Those elements included, (1) maintaining

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a strong sense of groupness, (2) focusing on respect and cooperation as major classroom goals, (3) planning and organizing the school day, (4) displaying and maintaining leadership in the group, and (5) displaying a particular style of teaching. When combined, these elements contributed to the development of the group.

THE SECOND QUESTION: WHICH CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES OUTSIDE AND INSIDE THE CLASSROOM INFLUENCED THE CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE?

The outside variables which influenced the classroom perspective most were those of interactions with the principal and the reading center specialist. These were examples of conflict partly because the teacher expected a high degree of organization and planning from other people since he, himself, was so adept at these characteristics. While these two variables were examples of conflict, they aided in keeping the group together. The teacher came to his own group for support, organization, evidence of students' learning something, and cooperation. These elements were of importance to the teacher and were viewed as absent to the degree he would have preferred with the reading teacher and the principal. By coming to the group, as leader and teacher, the group consensus was reinforced because the group respected and trusted the teacher. They sympathized with the teacher and reinforced the perspective of groupness by offering their support to the teacher as they undertook responsibility as a group for their projects, activities, instruction, and behavior. The trust and respect levels of students for the teacher went up as they experienced problems with people outside the classroom group. The students felt they were involved in the

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teacher's problems for he openly told them when he was upset about something and why. Thus, the principal and reading center specialist indirectly influenced the group's development of the perspective.

Inside the classroom, many variables influenced the classroom perspective. A critical influence was the individual student as a person. The teacher was aware of the various home situations and intended to provide a classroom for these students which offered some of the things they could not get as readily at home. In many of the homes, there was no recognizable adult leader, so the teacher became a central adult figure. In some homes, the students experienced unhappy events and were berated or abused. Consequently, the teacher provided activities where the student had fun and learned something as well. Plays, field trips, projects, classwork in groups and belonging to a group itself helped to counter some of the home experiences.

Another variable which influenced the teacher's perspective was himself. His talents as a dramatist and performer enabled him to plan certain activities which brought the group together. His own belief system which concentrated on respect for persons and cooperation with persons found its way into the class as a major classroom goal. His personal qualities which were characteristic of a leader helped to promote an effective group. Finally, his involvement in groups outside of the classroom such as the district's helping teachers' group or the art teachers' association worked to his advantage in creating, maintaining or restoring the group, by

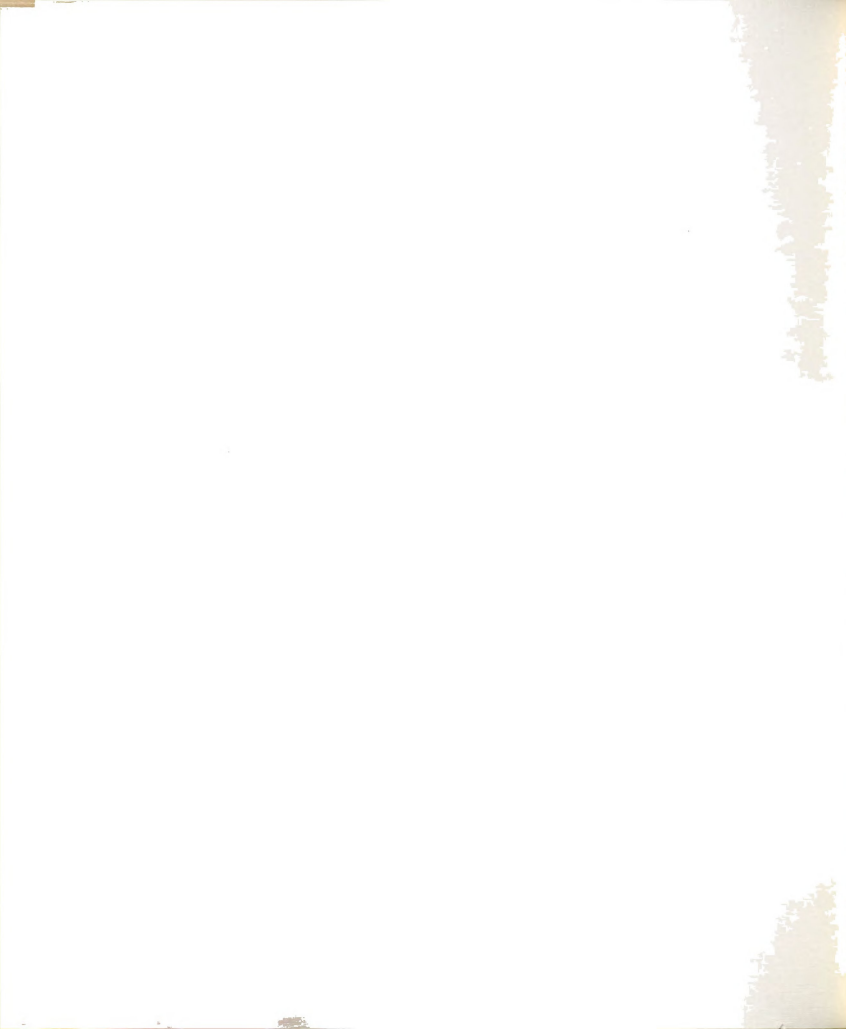


bringing him back to his own classroom for his rewards and further development of a strong group.

A third variable which influenced his classroom perspective was the classroom team. By having two other adults in the room, the teacher was able to plan many group activities. With three adults, small group activities were readily manageable. The team members also viewed Ken as the leader which was an example for the students to follow. Both the teacher aide and intern teacher worked more frequently as facilitators of some group endeavor while the teacher worked as leader and teacher of the class. This made it clear for the students to know who the leader of the group was. In sum, the main variables which influenced the group's perspective included the students, the teacher, the teacher aide, and the intern teacher.

THE THIRD QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT STUDENTS, LEARNING, AND CLASSROOMS WHICH SUPPORT THE CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE?

This teacher maintained that the classroom ought to provide those things for students which were absent or minimal in their own homes. As an experienced teacher in an urban school for nine of his ten years as a teacher, Ken Evans came to understand the students' backgrounds and some of their needs related to such backgrounds. As a result, he viewed part of his role as "mother and father" to some of his students. More accurately, he was an adult leader figure or role model for many of his students. By providing leadership, he was able to be fair in giving of himself to the group. If he concentrated too intently on individuals, he ran the risk of being accused of favoritism. By maintaining a leadership position in the



group, he could be equitable in his availability to students and still be interested in them as individuals without being unfair to some. Over the course of the year, it became evident that the teacher's goals of respect and cooperation were seen as critical for long range consequences in the students' lives. If the probability that respect and cooperation practiced in the home was minimal, then the natural place for the student to experience respect and cooperation would be in school. The teacher based much of his curriculum on this assumption. That is why he articulated goals of maturity, self reliance, independence, respect and cooperation over and above other traditional classroom goals. The teacher did not neglect instructional goals. Rather, he viewed them as important in relation to the major class goals of respect and cooperation. Students who experienced certain conditions in the home such as child abuse, lack of adult guidance, emotional problems and the like were viewed as individuals experiencing these phenomena. Then they were viewed as students of science or reading or social studies. Before the teacher could begin to work on science, reading or social studies, he had to deal with the emotional or physical problem before him and the individual student. Consequently, the teacher's assumptions about his students supported a group perspective. Thus, the student became a member of his own group, equal before his group, without any overt ties to his background. He learned respect and cooperation within the framework of the group as a member of the group and took on responsibilities. This constituted learning for the teacher and the student. Instruction went on and the student also learned about

fractions, South America, treble clefs and synonyms. The student learned this content through the group activities which reinforced the goals of the class, respect and cooperation.

THE FOURTH QUESTION: HOW DOES THIS TEACHER SYNTHESIZE THE VARIOUS TYPES OF INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENT BACKGROUND AND BEHAVIOR INTO HIS PERSPECTIVE?

This teacher's perspective was one of creating and maintaining a group in order to achieve goals in the classroom. As he orchestrated the development of a group, he took into consideration his students' backgrounds and behavior. He also held certain expectations of the students in regard to the goals of the classroom. He expected them to work together. He synthesized the information about student background and behavior through the process of self indication. (See Chapter I.) As Blumer and other interactionists have explained, individuals piece together and guide their actions by taking account of different things and interpreting their significance for prospective action. This teacher guided his actions by interpreting student background and behavior in reference to the group. The teacher was aware of the individual backgrounds of his students and realized that the backgrounds of some of the class members were such that the classroom goals of peer cooperation and personal respect would be minimally practiced in the home. Since the teacher interpreted as most critical the goals of cooperation and respect, it followed that he would naturally construct an environment which reinforced cooperation and respect. He then took into account his students' backgrounds and behavior and interpreted their

significance for the classroom group. He was faced with the task of introducing students to experiences which developed cooperation and respect. He systematically planned curriculum so that many and various group activities were prominent. Through the planning, implementation, and discussion of these group activities, the major classroom goals of cooperation and respect were continually present for the group. The teacher's behavior revolved around his interpretation of the variables of student background and behavior which affected the stability of the group. Such interpretations allowed him to construct his actions which were group-oriented, and which consequently kept the group at a fairly stable level.

The group's stability was threatened during the eight week period in which the teacher removed himself from the class for half of the school day. Since November, the actions and statements of the teacher indicated a definite building of norms which the group accepted and which guided their behavior. Usually, his presence alone was enough to maintain group behavioral norms. If not his presence, a look or a few words sufficed. Based on this evidence, he assumed his temporary absence from the class would not make a big difference in the norms they followed. He was confident that any qualified substitute teacher would find the group as cooperative as he had. Understanding the teacher's interpretation in this matter begins with a recall of some of the components of group life. In the first place, the teacher provided rewards for his group. Blau wrote about the attainment of rewards as incentive for continued

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social interaction.⁶ Rewards in this classroom promoted two types of responses by the group members: (1) the individual group members protected the relationship which had proven itself rewarding; in this case, the students protected their membership in their group and their relationship with the teacher; and (2) the individual group members became increasingly obligated to offer something in return to the group; they reciprocated by following the norms of the group and by keeping up their individual relationships with the teacher and each other. By applying these two principles to the study of the teacher's perspective, it is easy to see why the teacher assumed that the students' behavior would continue to remain at some level of stability.

On the other hand, one of the components of group life is leadership. This teacher provided effective leadership for his students through the first phase of the group's development. Within the second phase of the group's development, he was only present half of the time which presented a problem regarding leadership. His interpretation of the matter consisted of realizing where the group had been and assuming it would continue to develop as it previously had. However, the reward system changed and some rewards were totally absent. As a result, the students felt less obligated to protect their group affiliation and felt less obligated to offer something in return to the group. Finally, the shift in leadership contributed to their sense of frustration and group consensus

⁶Peter Blau. Exchange and Power in Social Life. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964).

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dropped to a low level. The cohesiveness and stability of the group were no longer as apparent in this phase of development.

The third phase of group development, however, enabled the group to restore itself to its stable and cohesive levels through the leadership of the teacher and through the implementation of many group activities. By planning cooperative projects and programs throughout the day, the teacher attempted to lead the group to a more cohesive level. He succeeded by interpreting the events of the previous eight weeks as evidence of the need for reinforcing the classroom goals of cooperation and respect. He then planned his instruction with more and varied group activities as well as other activities in the class. The instruction helped in working toward the goals of the class. The group process of working together and respecting each other was reinforced through instruction, class activities, and classroom management. The effects of this approach were positive. The group members became reaffiliated, followed the norms of the group, felt obligated to offer something to the group, and, consequently, the stability of the group was restored. This enabled the teacher and the group to attain their goals of cooperation and respect.

Implications

This study was designed to describe and explain a teacher's classroom perspective. By achieving this purpose, it brings to the reader the results of direct observation and participation of the educational process in a sixth grade urban classroom. It was intended to assist in understanding one teacher's perspective by explaining how he makes sense of his classroom. The point of view of the teacher in this study unavoidably dominates the presentation for it was his perspective which was analyzed. Given the fact that there is a need for descriptive data on teaching, a study of one teacher, in depth over an extended length of time, was most appropriate. Furthermore, given the basic assumptions of symbolic interaction, it was equally appropriate to conduct a field study using the participant observation method.

The study involved one sixth grade teacher in one classroom. Consequently, caution is urged in drawing sweeping implications from the study. It seems inappropriate to generalize from this particular case to the entire world of teaching; however, it is possible to draw some implications for teachers, teacher educators, and prospective teachers. This teacher worked at developing a sense of groupness and thereby achieved his classroom goals. Therefore, two major implications follow for this researcher. First, this teacher was successful because he developed a strong group, a community, or

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as Tonnies⁷ labeled it, a gemeinschaft. Consequently, if one is to be a successful teacher, one must develop a strong group or gemeinschaft. Second, the classroom which operates as a gemeinschaft is insulated by its nature as a community and is not easily manipulated by forces outside the immediate community.

In order to elucidate what is meant by a strong group, a community or gemeinschaft, it is necessary to understand the commonly held characteristics of gemeinschaft and its opposite type, gesellschaft. Tonnies separated society into two types: gemeinschaft (community) and gesellschaft (society). All private, exclusive and face-to-face interaction is understood as gemeinschaft or community. All public life, that is, society itself, is understood as gesellschaft. Gemeinschaft is often compared to a family while gesellschaft is comparable to the corporate state. In a gemeinschaft, the characteristics include: (1) a natural, unforced association, (2) a family mentality, (3) a conscious collective, (4) face-to-face interactions, (5) unspecialized activities, (6) the means and ends of the group are bound up and often indistinguishable, (7) a small number of individuals are members, (8) the modes are sympathy and identification, (9) there is a resistance to and a check on change, and (10) there is a differential status for community members.

⁷Ferdinand Tonnies. Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft). Translated and edited by Charles P. Loomis. (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1957).

Index

Index

Index

Index

Index

Index

Index

Index

On the other hand, in a gesellschaft, the characteristics include: (1) forced or unnatural associations, (2) absence of a family mentality with emphasis on contracts, reciprocity and rights of individuals, (3) absence of a conscious collective, (4) impersonal interactions, (5) activities are highly specialized, (6) the means and ends of the group are clearly delineated, (7) many individuals are members, (8) the modes are rationality and non-emotionalism, (9) change is viewed as progress and highly valued, and (10) everyone is given equal treatment within status levels.

In this case study, the teacher and the group exhibited all the characteristics of a small, communal family. Their natural association was a continual reminder of their "group," their "sixth grade" community. The goals of respect and cooperation were also the means to achieving their goals. Cooperative activities were the norm in the class whether in the realm of instruction, recess, field trips, or programs. By cooperation in all these endeavors, they reinforced their purposes of being cooperative and respectful. In addition, their reliance on the leadership of the teacher is clearly like the reliance of family members on a family leader. Throughout the year, the group members were sympathetic toward one another, identified with one another, and established constraints on the group from within the group. Furthermore, by virtue of their groupness, they were not easily influenced by outside incidents such as the incidents in the reading center. They enjoyed a differential status because of the group endeavors they participated in. For example, they were the group which presented the Christmas play and

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the writing contest program. They were the class which developed and conducted a factory for a day. They went to plays at high schools and on other field trips as a group. Thus, this teacher's perspective was readily identifiable as a group perspective. This group perspective was embodied in the day to day activities of the classroom and revealed a community or gemeinschaft. This, in turn, allowed the teacher to succeed in attaining his goals of respect and cooperation.

Recalling the literature review for this study, Lortie claimed that teachers view teaching as an individual enterprise, and they dislike interruptions. If the classroom is, indeed, like a community or family, individualism makes sense. The teacher is most likely to know his students best and what is best for them. Outside forces would, therefore, have minimal effects simply because they fall outside of the realm of the gemeinschaft. For example, this teacher chose to ignore the management by objectives system in reading because it "didn't make any sense for the students." He selected those objectives in math which did make sense for the students and incorporated them into his regular math classes.

Again recalling the literature review, Jackson asks if the teacher's primary concern is learning after all. In this study, while learning was a concern of the teacher's, the primary concern was establishing the group, the sixth grade community or gemeinschaft. From this case study, this researcher concluded that the teacher was successful because he developed a group. Certainly teachers, teacher educators and prospective teachers may find this

information valuable. In addition, the group, by virtue of its small, family-like community, was insulated and not easily manipulated by a major management system, a reading center specialist, or the principal. The forces outside the immediate group had a minimal effect on the group or worked to solidify it. Consequently, further research on this phenomenon of building a community in the classroom seems appropriate. In addition, other questions emerge as a result of this study of a teacher's classroom perspective.

Another set of questions is generated concerning the nature of perspectives. Would another teacher with a group perspective achieve his or her classroom goals? Is teaching, after all, an individual enterprise as Lortie suggests so that individual characteristics help to determine what a given teacher's perspective becomes? Would a similar group of students take part in group activities as readily and force another perspective to develop? These are but a few of the questions which suggest a need for continued research on classroom perspectives. This descriptive case study provides data from which hypotheses may be developed for further inquiry. Whether the questions which develop as a result of reading this study are broad or narrow in scope, the study nonetheless, serves as a basis for other researchers to continue disciplined inquiry in the field of teaching. Certain questions will be amenable to the method used in this study, a form of participant observation. If the questions which emerge have to do with the meanings and definitions of situations people ascribe to their social world, then a method such as



participant observation which seeks to uncover meanings is both necessary and desirable.

In summary, in this study of one sixth grade teacher's classroom perspective, two valuable implications emerge. The first has to do with understanding the rudiments of a group perspective in the classroom. The second has to do with empirical questions which may emerge as a result of reading this study. By getting inside a teacher's world, over an extended period of time, one may more easily come to understand how the teacher interprets, makes decisions, and acts in the world of the classroom. As the teacher defines his world, makes decisions, and acts in it, he develops a classroom perspective. By understanding the perspective of Ken Evans, two claims are made: (1) if one is to be a successful teacher, one must develop a community or group, a gemeinschaft; and (2) if one develops such a group, the classroom remains singular and not easily manipulated by outside forces. From this case study, the reader will draw his own conclusions about the validity of the explanation, the researcher's thoughts regarding implications, and the significance therein.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

FIRST INTERVIEW

1. Can you tell me how you became interested in teaching?
2. What kind of teacher do you see yourself as?
3. What do you like best about teaching?
4. What things frustrate you about teaching?
5. Why are you a teacher?
6. What do you get out of teaching?
7. What do you foresee yourself doing in 5-10 years?



APPENDIX B

SECOND INTERVIEW

1. Can you tell me what good instruction means for you?
2. How much help do you get from the teacher aide?
3. How do you feel about having an intern in the room?
4. How is it that you manage the class with all the activity and people in the room?
5. How important is it to you to meet the needs of the students, and how do you know when you are meeting their needs?
6. Do you do a lot of planning on paper?
7. You talked about teaching as challenging and exciting as well as planning carefully. If everything is planned, what makes teaching exciting?
8. How do you know when you have control of the class?
9. As you teach, I notice you only look at a child or say "excuse me" if some disruption occurs, and the student gets back on task. It's no big thing, and management for you is either a look or a word. How did you get to that point? What do you attribute this to?
10. You said you were a benevolent dictator. Can you explain how this relates to your teaching?



11. You spoke of respect and fairness. How important are respect and fairness in the class?
12. How do you think of time, in relation to what you do in the classroom?
13. You said you valued parental backing and input. How do you find out what parents want? How do you get them involved in the class activities?
14. Do you every consciously think about the school board or state regulations when you are teaching or planning?
15. The day you were teaching the unit on factoring, which was new to the class, you put them at ease and introduced the new material. Can you tell me what you were thinking of before you were ready to teach this new material?
16. We talked about the frustrations in teaching. Does that affect what you do in the classroom? If so, to what extent?
17. Do you take teaching home with you? Do you think about school at home? Do you plan at home?
18. This year, what are your goals for the students? What would you like to see happening for them?
19. What do you bring to teaching?
20. Can you tell me why you have such pride in teaching?



APPENDIX C

THIRD INTERVIEW

1. How do your activities, like the Christmas play, fit in with teaching? What do you see as the value of something like the Christmas play?
2. Can you talk more about your reactions to your classroom's being broken into?
3. Can you talk about your new role as a helping teacher? How does it relate to your teaching?
4. Are you considering the helping teacher job as a permanent position?
5. How do you find Kay and Lois adjusting to your absence? What do you think their reactions are?
6. How do the other teachers feel about your new job?
7. How does the principal react to it (helping teacher role)?
8. Are you finding any problems in the shift from here to some other school?
9. Do you find yourself working more at home?
10. How do you find coming back into the class on a half time basis?
11. Can you think of anything else about being a helping teacher that you would like to mention?



12. What can you tell me about your talks to the class as a group?
You spoke to them about your feelings and asked them to stick it out with you. How do you manage this?
13. One of the days during spelling, you walked out of the room with Charlie and talked to him outside of the room. He came back and went on with the day. No one was disturbed. What do you attribute this method of management to?
14. Can you talk about your Tuesday afternoon, magic circle workshops?

APPENDIX D

FOURTH INTERVIEW

1. How do you see things working out in the class with your being gone half the time?
2. What were some of the suggestions the students wrote for you regarding new ideas for the new semester? Which suggestions did you honor and why?
3. Have you tried to put any of these into practice?
4. What do you see as the value of the magic circle?
5. I'm going to ask you about three interactions in class and why you handled them as you did. (Incidents 1,2,3 were recounted.)
6. What do you say to Charlie when you go over and speak to him when he's disruptive?
7. I want to ask you about your expectations of individual students. In each interview I'd like to finish with your views on two students from the beginning of the year until now and your hopes for them. Today, can you talk about Aria and Sam?



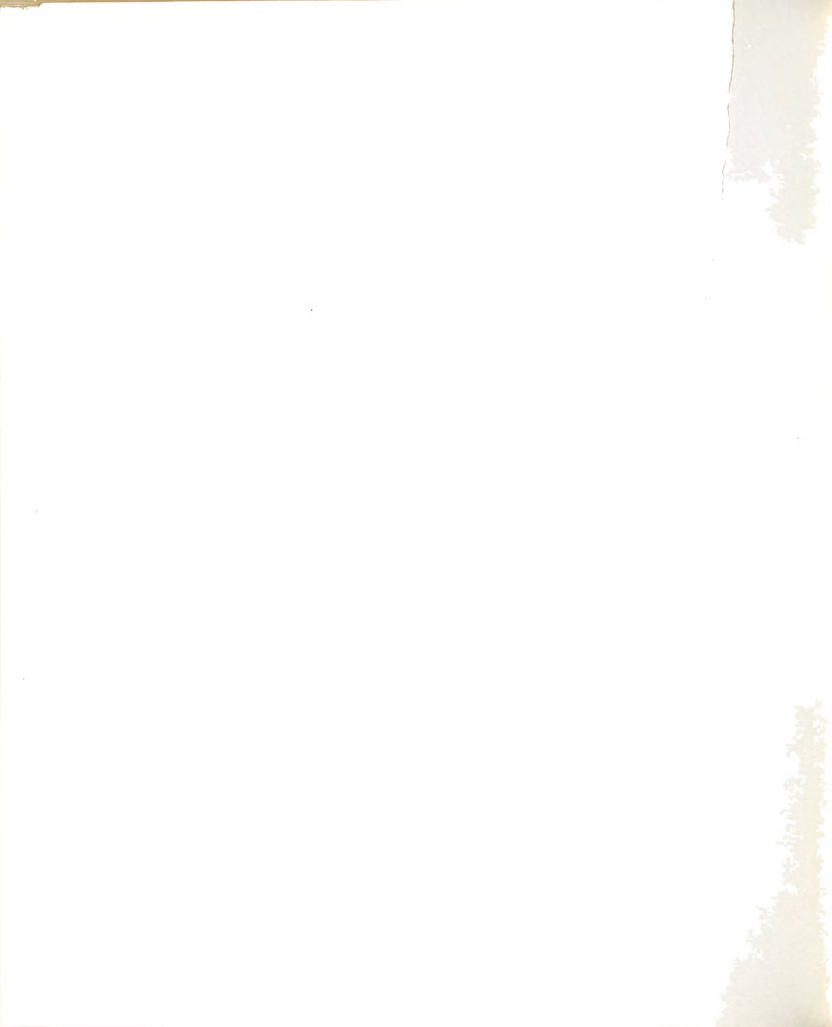
APPENDIX E

FIFTH INTERVIEW

1. How do you see your field trips fitting into teaching? What part do they play for you as a teacher?
2. How do your drama activities fit into what you do as a teacher? What do these activities mean to you?
3. What kind of feedback do the students give you about field trips and plays?
4. How do you see your role now that Kay, the intern, is taking over most of the day? What is your role with her?
5. How do you think the students respond to Kay? Do you think they view you as the teacher?
6. Would you accept another student teacher next year?
7. How did you view your experience as acting principal last week? Did it affect your teaching in any way?
8. Do the interactions with the principal affect you or your attitude?
9. How do you think the principal views you?
10. I'd like to switch the focus back to class activities like the popcorn ball factory. What was your reaction to this? And, what do you think the students learned from it?



11. Did the students relate to you any special things they learned in the process?
12. What is your view on the SAT testing of last week?
13. Have you thought about next year at all? Are you thinking in terms of next year's teaching?
14. This question is about an individual student, Perry. How do you see his developing as a student?
15. If you had anything to do over again this year, what would you do?



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