ABSTRACT

A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION STUDY OF AN OUTDOOR EDUCATION/EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM EXPERIMENT OPERATING IN A PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

By

William Harold Martin

This research was designed to describe and explain the behavior of students and teachers in a public alternative high school. Employing the case study method, the researcher examined a "school within a school," a subunit of thirty heterogeneous boys and girls who were enrolled in a large comprehensive high school. Most of these students had school defined "problems" related to apathy, vandalism or delinquency. All were voluntary members.

The alternative curriculum was designed to establish an integrated group which the two teachers could use to influence student behavior. To help build the group and to promote student interest, the curriculum was centered on intermittent, adventurous outdoor learning expeditions. These activities were both academic and active and they were planned and financed by students.

The researcher sought data to answer three guide questions: (1) How did students respond to the curriculum? (2) What processes and organizational characteristics threatened the organization? (3) What processes and organizational characteristics held it together?

The students responded to the program by gradually organizing themselves into an integrated group led by the teachers. Most, but not all, became participating members whose behavior conformed largely to teacher expectations. Group integration developed in stages. During the first stage, students were involved enthusiastically because of their idealized expectations and the program's novelty. Students were rewarded initially by diverse activities and this constituted the beginning of group life.

The second stage of group life began when students encountered frustration related to unrealistic expectations and to unresolved questions about the amount of control the program could exert on them. In the absence of norms and with only moderately high consensus, the second stage was characterized by divisiveness.

The third stage developed as more members became consensually committed. This resulted from teacher efforts to individualize and to diversify the available rewards. As more students received rewards, the consensus grew. By midyear, the group was stable and normatively integrated. The final stage of development occurred when members removed the few non-compliant students.

Members of the organization struggled with internal and external problems throughout the year. Some problems related to the unique activities and organizational structure. Frequent out-of-school expeditions inconvenienced some teachers, administrators and parents who were suspicious of the non-traditional nature of the program.

Other problems related to the students' heterogeneity. Differing abilities and interests required the staff to spend much time individualizing instruction and counseling students, activities which drained the staff. Student heterogeneity also led to conflict over demands that certain behaviors be restricted. Necessary group discussions took time away from academic instruction.

Nevertheless, elements held the organization strongly together. Most important was the reward/exchange process. Students valued their involvement in the diversity of present-oriented activities which demanded responsibility and could not be monopolized by a few students. Receiving these rewards promoted two types of student responses: (1) They adopted norms to protect the program; and (2) They became obligated to the teachers.

Teachers accumulated power through this process and became informal as well as formal leaders. They developed legitimate authority which, judiciously applied, enabled them to exert unusually strong influence on the behavior of their students. Teachers sustained their leadership by distributing responsibility among students, by effectively counseling individuals, and by resolving group problems. They were aided by maturity, wit and skill at active listening.

Other elements were important. The small size was significant and so were four mechanisms for controlling conflict: (1) teacher counseling; (2) group sessions; (3) outdoor trips; and (4) the external criticism. Each of these reinforced self-protective norms, promoted cohesiveness, and increased student dependency on staff leadership.

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William Harold Martin

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Education

1977

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1977

DEDICATION

To Carol with love

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No work of this size could be completed without the sustained help and encouragement of many people. My gratitude is expressed to the students and staff of Project Involve who endured a year of nosy involvement. Appreciative memory is devoted frequently to others, especially Julian and Fred who always kept their distant dreams afire. Chuck Blackman should be thanked along with Gib Mouser who intervened at a critical time without knowing it. Neil, Jack, Myrtle, Bid and Andy kept a balance to the direction of energies and Jo and Pearl were instrumental in producing the bothersome and important final typing.

Special appreciation is expressed to three others for whom this document at times represented a trial and a burden. Two of these are my parents, whose considerable and faithful support was indispensible and whose happiness will, I suspect, be much improved with the completion of this task. The other person to whom I remain indebted is Philip Cusick, who managed somehow to inflict on me some of the better parts of his perspective on things in the name of research and friendship. Without the help of these three the document would not be what it has become.

Yet, final appreciation must in justice be given to my wife, whose self-denial and support has made this work both possible and worthwhile. Acknowledging what has been taken from the two of us, this book is dedicated to her and her dreams for a better life for all people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

I. PURPOSE 1

Background and Guide Questions 2
Conceptual Framework and Methodology 5
Limitations of the Study 8
Significance 9

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 12

The Literature on Adolescents in Schools 12
The Literature on Outdoor Adventure Programs . . . 32
The Literature on Participant Observer Studies . . . 37

III. METHODOLOGY 47

Conceptual Background 47

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA 70

The Community 70
The School 72
Organization of the School 74
The School Curriculum 77
Rules and Regulations Affecting Student Behavior . . 79
The Origins of Project Involve 86
The Goals of Project Involve 88
The Curriculum of Project Involve 90
Grading and Evaluation: Part of the Curriculum . . 94
Membership in Project Involve 98
Overview: The Development of an Effective Group . . 101

V. CONCLUSIONS 233

The First Guide Question 233
The Second Guide Question 237
The Third Guide Question 242
Implications 252

BIBLIOGRAPHY 255

APPENDIX 262

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

There is currently considerable interest and professional dialogue about the role and organizational nature of public secondary schools. In the past ten years, in scattered spots around the country, educators have already experimented with alternative experiences and differing organizational structures for high schools. Yet, few descriptive or empirical studies have provided information about what effects these experiments may produce or what problems they may encounter. This research was conducted to provide such information about one alternative school. The study was designed to (1) describe the behavior, interactions and activities among participants in the school and (2) to explain how that behavior was related to the setting in which it occurred. It is the hope of the researcher that the findings may contribute to the substantive knowledge about student behavior in different types of school organizations and thereby add useful information to the current discussions about secondary schools.

Adopting the case study methodology, the researcher examined a "school within a school," a subunit of thirty students and two teachers who were organizationally separate from the rest of a large suburban high school. This program, called Project Involve in this report, was composed of a heterogenous mixture of 16 and 17 year old boys and girls who were formally enrolled in the school. Some of these students had school defined "problems" and others did not. This alternative school is fairly representative of one type of organization in which the structure and nature of the activities are in part designed to form a new social group characterized by close relationships between teachers and students. But the program was also somewhat unique because the school year was organized around a series of vivid "learning expeditions" to different geographical regions. Formal academic and physical activities were designed to prepare for the trips and to follow upon what the students experienced while there. The staff intended that the new group would develop a specific system of collective, normative behaviors which would value and reward increased student participation in physical activity, social interaction, problem solving and academic achievement. It was the nature of this collective behavior, as it developed over time, which the research sought to describe and explain.

Background and Guide Questions

The researcher accepted the notion that individual and group behavior is significantly influenced by the social and organizational

context in which it occurs. This principle has been long established in sociology and anthropology.[1] Yet, despite its widespread acceptance as a theoretical base for research on social behavior, there are comparatively few studies which have examined the behavior of students within the social or organizational context of schools.

Existing studies do provide some patterns of information, however. Early research on the behavior of youth indicated that adolescents tend to form and attach much importance to informal social groups which are based on social class or on activities of mutual interest.[2] Studies which examined the behavior of these groups, as it occurred in schools, indicate that the social/cultural characteristics of the large comprehensive high school tend to encourage student activity in the social group and to discourage involvement in the formal academic activities of the school.[3] Sociological analyses of the high school as an organization suggest that

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[1]John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1922); George H. Mead, Mind Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); Melville Herskovitz, "Some Further Comments on Cultural Relativism," American Anthropologist 60 (1958); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality, a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966).

[2]August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, the Impact of Social Class on Adolescents (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949); C. Wayne Gordon, The Social System of the High School (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957); and James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society, The Social Life of the Teenager and Its Impact on Education (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1961).

[3]Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School, The Student's World (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973); and Richard J. Ayling, "An Exploratory Study of the Formal and Informal Relationships

differences in role, responsibility and expectations between students and teachers promote a social distance between these two groups which can interfere with learning, encourage student grouping, and be a source of conflict.[4]

But, with one exception the above cited studies have been conducted within traditionally organized high schools. Alternative schools have often been organized with very different goals or assumptions about learning. For example, teachers in some alternative schools have deliberately attempted to reduce the social distance between teachers and students, in the hope of stimulating increased student involvement in academic or social activities. The few studies which have examined the nature of student-teacher relationships have found that it was possible to change the interactions, but teachers could not alter authority relationships without encountering difficulties.[5]

Taken collectively, the results of these earlier studies provided guidelines for the inquiry into Project Involve. The researcher sought data which would answer the following questions:

Between White and Black Students in a Racially Mixed, Urban, Secondary School," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1973.

[4]Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (New York: Russel and Russel, 1932); C. Wayne Gordon, Social System of the High School; Robert F. Dreeban, On What is Learned in School (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1958); and Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Rebellion in a High School (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964).

[5]Center for New Schools, You Can Talk to the Teachers: Student-Teacher Relations in an Alternative High School (Chicago: Center for New Schools, 1973).

1) How do students respond to the curricular activities, the demands and expectations they encounter within the alternative school.

2) What activities, processes and organizational characteristics hold the larger organization together?

3) What are the actual or potentially dysfunctional elements which threaten the organization internally or externally?

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

The research was based upon acceptance of the theory of symbolic social interaction.[6] This concept of human behavior is characterized by three central propositions according to Kinch.[7]

1) The individual's personality--the distinctive patterns of behavior that characterize him as an individual--results from and is reinforced by his day-to-day association with those about him.

2) The individual's behavior or conduct follows a direction that is the result of reciprocal give and take of interdependent men who are adjusting to one another.

3) The culture of the group is a reflection of those agreements about proper conduct that emerge and are reinforced by man's continual communication as people collectively come to terms with life's conditions.

As the individual encounters a world of objects, people and situations, he selects a course of action towards those things in accordance with his perspective. Perspectives are combinations of beliefs and behaviors which are continually modified by social contact.

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[6]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction." from Human Behavior and Social Processes. Edited by Arnold Rose (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1962); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality, 1966.

[7]John W. Kinch, Social Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 11.

As individuals seeking rewards of esteem, status and recognition interact with others, they tend to fit together their individual lines of action. From this dynamic process, collectivities are formed, acting units which themselves are made up of acting units. These collectivities tend to develop a common frame of reference as they interact within an institutional setting.[8] This collective behavior and frame of reference developed over time by participants in Project Involve was the subject for this research.

According to Blumer, the procedure most suitable for studying a social situation is for the researcher to involve himself in the dynamics of the social environment. The participant observer methodology allows the researcher to assume the role of participant, to observe behavior as it occurs over time, and experience the setting in which the behavior took place. As described by Geer it allows proximity and yet interrupts the flow of events as little as possible.

> A participant observer in the field 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 an informant to tell his story, or supply an expert account of an organization or group. As scientist, he seeks answers to questions by setting up hypotheses and collecting data with which to answer them.[9]

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[8]Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, and Everett Hughes, Making the Grade (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 28.

[9]Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," from Sociologists at Work, edited by Phillip E. Hammond (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 383.

One advantage of participant observation is that the methodology does not overly prestructure data collection and impose unimportant questions.[10] Most researchers who use the methodology guide their inquiry with initial questions, but maintain that hypothesis formation must remain tentative until the behavior and setting are examined. Once in the field, the researcher explores repeated patterns and inconsistencies in the data. From these he forms working hypotheses which are continually tested with new data and accepted or discarded. This process is particularly appropriate when studying a social phenomenon, such as alternative schools, about which little is known. It is reasonable to expect the researcher to uncover unexpected relationships of interest which a more distant and prestructured methodology might obscure.

In the description and explanation of the behavior of participants in Project Involve, seven months of field observations were conducted. During this time, the researcher participated in the social, physical and academic activities of the organization, approximating as nearly as possible the role of a student member. Extensive notes on the actions and statements of participating students and teachers were made daily. These observations were analyzed on a weekly basis to detect patterns and relationships and to indicate further directions in which data should be gathered. During the course of the research, inferential concepts and tentative hypotheses

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[10]Bernard Glaser and A. Strauss, Discovery of Grounded Theory (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967).

were drawn from the data to suggest possible relationships between the observed patterns of behavior and the social and organizational setting. Participants were periodically asked to confirm, deny or explain the validity of the inferred relationships.

Limitations of the Study

There are two standard objections to participant observation studies. The first deals with questions regarding validity and reliability. The response to this depends upon an acceptance by the researcher, and those who examine the results of his efforts, of the principles of symbolic interaction. As the researcher continues to involve himself in the activities and processes of the social situation, his observations concerning acts and matters of importance possess an intimacy seldom available in research. By constant appraisal of his observations and inferences in light of continuing developments, and by formulating additional questions to check the validity of his insight, the researcher is able to continually improve his validity. As a clearer picture of the nature of the social phenomenon emerges, more standardized research methods with higher reliability can be applied. Such methods would be premature, however, until sufficiently good descriptions are collected of unique and isolated situations.

The second objection to participant observer studies is that they deal with unique and perhaps limited samples and may therefore be ungeneralizable. The response to this is that the uniqueness of a social phenomenon need not prevent learning from it to occur through intelligent study. Furthermore, the study of the unusual

can often provide information about the common or ordinary. And finally, a degree of sameness transcends human action, making understandable the behavior and perspectives of other individuals given enough information about the setting.

Significance

Educators and other social scientists have a standing need for further evidence about the nature of student behavior within a variety of organizational settings. As emphasized by Roberts

> After decades of studying teacher effectiveness, researchers are just now recognizing the fact that direct observation of classroom interaction is the only productive way to learn what happens. Over a thousand investigations provide few guidelines for teaching effectiveness because teaching behavior was not observed in the classroom. For example, subjective ratings of teachers' qualities are not highly correlated with changes in children or any other measure of learning. Furthermore, using student change on standardized tests as a measure for teaching competence is obviously invalid since learners' abilities and motives interact with teacher' efforts.[11]

This research, then, constitutes an effort to expand the amount of information that specifically examines those interactions where they occur. Its findings, in this sense, contribute to a generalized need for substantive knowledge about student and teacher behavior in school.

In another way, the research is a contribution to a more specific need for information. To those with a personal or professional curiosity about the education of youth, the past several decades have introduced great and often conflicting demands for

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[11] Joan I. Roberts, Scene of the Battle: Group Behavior in Urban Classrooms (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), p. 8.

reform of both curricula and structure in the public schools. Alternative schools have proliferated, with mixed results. Interest in further change in secondary schools is currently high. But, in a recent study of the effectiveness of various types of schooling, Rand Corporation investigators stated that "Research tells us little about how effective these vastly different forms of education might be. . . . Experiments or demonstrations of these different forms of education should be implemented and carefully observed and evaluated."[12] While acknowledging that the findings of the study of Project Involve relate to that specific program, and are limited in generalizability due to the uniqueness of that program, it is that same uniqueness which makes its information valuable. As educators seek to diversify school curricula and the nature of experiences made available to youth, more information will be needed about how youth behave and what types of organizations promote learning. This research was designed to meet, in part, that need.

And, finally, this study was conducted to provide further information about how individuals and groups respond to planned stressful contact with the wilderness or semi-wilderness environment. During the past decade, there has been a substantial growth in the number of schools and agencies which provide young people with adventuresome and often risk-filled activities. The advocates of such programs suggest that they can stimulate more satisfactory behavior or more personally rewarding lives. But, few studies have

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[12] Harvey Averch, How Effective is Schooling? A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research Findings (Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1971).

examined the behavior of participants in such programs in an extended and controlled fashion. For this reason, this study should provide evidence to support or refute the claims of those who advocate stressful and adverturesome experiences for young people.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study was conducted to describe and explain adolescent behavior within an alternative school that used outdoor adventure activities as a major part of its curriculum. The review of literature was therefore drawn from and is organized into three separate areas. The first section deals with studies of the relationship between adolescents and schools, including the very few studies of student behavior in alternative schools. The second section examines the studies of groups which experienced planned outdoor adventure activities. And the last section reviews selected studies conducted in differing social settings using the participant observer methodology.

The Literature on Adolescents in Schools

From the vast quantity of studies of adolescents and schools, the researcher selected those which considered adolescent behavior as it occurred in differing educational or cultural settings. These were predominately sociological investigations conducted to understand how factors inherent in the organization of schools or society tend to promote patterns of common behavior among youth.

The early research conducted by Margaret Mead[1] conclusively demonstrated that the behavior patterns of youth are not universal,

but vary from culture to culture. Her two studies in Samoa and New Guinea showed that normal patterns of adolescent behavior were quite different in the two cultures. Depending upon the society, individuals were more influenced by either family relationships or by standards of behavior set by peer and age groups. Mead suggested that both types of influence are experienced by children growing up in America. She felt that grouping young people by age, excluding them from participation in adult activities, and providing many of their experiences in institutionalized settings encouraged the development of behavior, values and interests which were shared by youth but were in some ways alien to adults.

The nature of such distinctions between youth and adults has been of continued interest to sociologists. In his study of the sociology of teaching, Waller[2] noted that the concerns of youth and teachers were at such variance that these two groups formed what he termed "warring camps." He suggested the existence of a youth culture, promoted in part by the legal and customary requirement that students must spend much of their time in formalized educational institutions. Students bring to the school the norms and values of their neighborhoods and their informal peer groupings,

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[1]Margaret Mead, Coming of Age in Samoa (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1928) and Growing Up in New Guinea (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1930).

[2]Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (New York: Russell and Russell, 1931).

making the school the prime focus of their social interactions. To protect this social life from influence or redirection by teachers, students organized themselves as a group. In response, teachers develop countervaling patterns of behavior towards students. Because student behavior represents a potential threat to their obligations to promote orderly learning, teachers devote considerable time to mechanics of control, thereby inadvertently affecting the nature and amount of instruction. Waller describes the relationship between students and teachers as one of sustained, unstable tension. He concludes that this potential for conflict is one of the fundamental social characteristics of schools as institutions.

Following the publication of Waller's book, researchers conducted several important studies to examine the nature of the student social world. Hollingshead[3] studied the social organization of adolescents in a small town high school. His evidence, based upon extensive field work in the school and community, supports the notion that the separation of youth from adult society is significant but not a complete one. He found that students in a single school organized themselves into an amazingly large number of social cliques, each composed of two or more students who engaged in common activities. He observed that membership in the cliques was voluntary and

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[3]August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, The Impact of Social Class on Adolescents (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1949).

and informal, with no explicit rules for participation. Yet, each clique possessed a commonness of value and rules for behavior to which individuals strongly conformed. Hollingshead suggested that the cliques filled a need for security, provided a sense of power and belonging, and reinforced individual decision making. In large measure, the composition of the groups mirrored the social and economic organization of the adult society. Thus members of each group tended to occupy similar positions on the social ladder in the community. Additionally, academic achievement was related to social class. Activities of the cliques often came into conflict with parents, the school and the neighborhood. Despite this, both parents and teachers appeared to be largely ignorant of how the groups functioned or of the importance students attached to group membership.

Further information about the nature of adolescent social behavior was provided by Gordon[4]. His intensive study of the social grouping and interactions within a public high school showed that student groups were organized according to age and extra-curricular interests. Academic achievement, of importance to the school staff, was of minimal importance for determining membership or status in the social groups. According to Gordon, involvement in extra-curricular activities occupied the majority of student attention and interest, since it was that system which provided for the

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[4] C. Wayne Gordon, The Social System of the High School (New York: The Free Press, 1957).

distribution of prestige and status rewards among the student body. Since at least minimal academic activity and achievement was a prerequisite for participation in other school activities, students met minimal expectations and manipulated teachers in order to reduce academic demands. Gordon concluded that the student's social subculture was sufficiently strong to dominate their attention and to insulate them from the academic goals of the school.

Extending the study of the student social world beyond a single school, Coleman[5] conducted a systematic investigation of the social organization in ten high schools of different size and social class background. Like Gordon, Coleman found that the students maintained active membership in and achieved social status through a complex web of social cliques. He found these cliques to be organized around value themes which differed for boy and girls. High status was associated with participation in athletics, social or extra-curricular activities but it was not associated with academic achievement unless such achievement was coupled with talent in the approved activities. Gaining approval of peers was important but teacher and parental approval was not. Coleman suggested that the emergence of separate values and status systems among youth is related to characteristics of modern technological society. Because education now takes place for increasingly extended periods of time in formalized institutions, youth are set apart from the larger

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[5]James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

society. "As an unintended consequence, society is confronted no longer with a set of individuals to be trained toward adulthood, but with distinct social systems which offer a united front to the overtures made by adult society." Coleman suggests that for schools to direct the behavior of youth effectively towards adult sanctioned activity, they must provide rewards of activity, status and achievement which are as equally desirable to students as those provided by the youth culture.

Other sociologists have agreed that their social world occupies much of student attention. But, there is disagreement about the amount of distance between that and the adult world. Epperson[6] agrees that the contemporary adolescent is less involved with family life than preceding generations. Yet, he does not believe that the influence of either the school or the social world is able to disattach youth from the cultural values and behavioral norms of the family. Epperson characterizes youth as possessing multiple loyalties to both family and peer groups. And this view is supported by the findings of a study by Elkins and Westley[7] who investigated the relations between adult and adolescent values. They found sufficient differences to suggest psychological tension between adults and adolescents but enough similarities to suggest cultural continuity.

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[6]David C. Epperson, "A Reassessment of the Indices of Parental Influences on the Adolescent Society," American Sociological Review, Vol. 29 (February, 1964), pp. 93-96.

[7]Frederick Elkins and William Westley, "The Myth of Adolescent Culture," American Sociological Review, Vol. 20 (December, 1955), pp. 680-684.

Nevertheless, the involvement of students in social cliques does appear to occupy a large part of studenttime and activity while in school. Cusick[8] conducted a participant observer study of the activity of such groups in a traditionally organized secondary school. He found that the school provided only minimal amounts of the type of rewards that Coleman suggested were important if schools wished to reduce the distance between the adolescent subculture and the formal organizational goals. Teachers spent considerable amounts of student time in maintenance and supervisory activities, distracting from instruction and forcing students to become passive spectators. When instruction did occur it was usually dominated by the teachers, subject matter oriented, and dyadic in nature. The students gave teachers minimal complaince and redirected the majority of their attention to the activity in their social groups. Rather than provide students with activities which they valued, the school, by default, reinforced the attractiveness of membership in peer groups. Cusick described the overall organization of the student social world as a fragmented one. Rather than a unified perspective, he found that groups maintained separate perspectives and seldom interacted. This separateness among groups was itself a potential source of conflict within schools. Cusick's and Ayling's[9] later

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[8]Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

[9]Philip Cusick and Richard Ayling, An Exploratory Study of the Formal and Informal Relationships Between White and Black Students in a Racially Mixed, Urban Secondary School, U.S.O.E. Grant No. OEG-5-72-0036(509) Project No. 1-E-179, 1973.

study in a biracial high school found that real or potential intergroup conflict forced the school staff to reduce even further the amount of activities which could provide the rewards suggested by Coleman. Again, by default, this reinforced the importance of the social group as the only available source of status and activity. As the school administration instituted more rules and regulations, relationships between students and teachers became more impersonal and the organization became more formalized and bureaucratic.

In his analysis of the traditionally organized school, Dreeban[10] suggests that the social-cultural characteristics of the school do tend to separate students from formal academic involvement, but that these same characteristics are nevertheless functional. He states that schools exist as organized institutions to promote both knowledge aquisition and to bring about the psychological and behavioral changes in youth necessary for their successful future conduct in adult society. To accomplish the dual sets of goals, the school possesses, according to Dreeban, two curricula. The formal curricula is designed to promote knowledge attainment. But, the second curricula, embodied in role relationships, structural characteristics and methods of instruction, is a hidden curriculum which serves to socialize youth to adult behaviors. The hidden curriculum contributes to the learning of four adult norms: independence, achievement, universalism and specificity. Independence

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[10]Robert Dreeban, On What is Learned in School (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1968).

is learned by encountering tasks and testing procedures which can only be completed by individual effort. Achievement is stressed by the competitive and formalized evaluation system and the limited reward structure. Universalism is a norm which requires people to interact with others as equal members of categories rather than as individuals. The school contributes to the learning of this norm through the type of relationship between staff and students. These tend to be impersonal and based upon authority and role differences. Finally, specificity is a norm which requires people to limit their interactions to those which concern the specialized tasks of the organization. The process of schooling, from elementary through secondary school, promotes progressively narrowing interactions based increasingly on tasks and areas of discrete specialization. According to Dreeban, the central activities of both the formal and the hidden curriculum are impersonal and future oriented, alien to the types of relationships and activities naturally sought by youth. As such, a sizeable number of student clients of the school are placed in the position of receiving services which they do not value or desire. This would tend to separate those students from the teachers and the school as an organization. The ultimate result is sustained instability and conflict between them.

It was the nature of that conflict and the social and psychological factors promoting it which Stinchcombe[11] studied.

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[11]Arthur I. Stinchcombe, Rebellion in a High School (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964).

He states that the student teacher relationship is one of the few authority relations in modern society which is consistently characterized by expressive alienation and overt rebellion. His data, gathered in a single high school, indicated that rebellious behavior is encouraged in certain groups of students by characteristics of schooling and society. Such behavior is a rejection of the school itself, promoted by three identifiable factors. The first is the inability of the school to offer any desirable status beyond high school to some students. Those students who are unable to relate present activity to a desirable future status are most likely to rebel against the school. Secondly, those students which are consistently punished by the official grading and the informal status system attached to different curricula were found to reject both the standards and the authorities who applied them. Finally, some students rebel against the doctrine of adolescent inferiority. This refers to the visible social fact that teachers and other adults openly possess the symbols of freedom and consumption. Youth, by virtue only of age and status, are denied these symbols. Stinchcombe felt that these sources of conflict lay within the society itself and occurred in the school because it was the agent of socialization for that society. As such, he believed that there was little the school could change, in curricula or structure, to reduce that conflict. "For the reasons that the school cannot promise much is that the society cannot promise much."

Bidwell[12] did not see the source of student alienation from school to be related to the larger society. He related it to the organizational nature of schools which he described as fundamentally bureaucratic and characterized by: 1) a division of labor, 2) distinct role separation between staff and students, 3) hierarchic ordering of offices with staff occupying high offices and students in lower ones, 4) a limited reward structure, 5) routinized activity, 6) a formalized system of rules and regulations with accompanying sanctions and 7) a task orientation with universalistic expectations which apply equally to all students. Bidwell suggests that taken collectively, these characteristics tend to allign students as a loosely organized group against the school. He felt that there were few ways to reduce successfully the distance between teachers and students or to bring the students closer to goals of the organization. He suggested that efforts to deformalize or debureaucratize the organization and establish closer relationships between students and teachers would inevitably present severe internal problems for the school. The use of punitive grading was seen to have little value for promoting greater student involvement with academic activities. And the only avenue for increasing such involvement lay, in Bidwell's estimation, in modification of the curriculum to correspond more closely to the naturally occurring interests of students.

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[12]C. Bidwell, "School as Organizations" in J. March (ed.) Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

In the past decade, educators have initiated numerous innovations in both the organizational characteristics or the school and with its curriculum. Most of these efforts were designed to increase academic achievement, but some were attempts to reduce consistently problematic conflict between students and the staff. Research data from these experiments substantiates Bidwell's prediction that changes in the relationship between students and the school could not be accomplished without considerable difficulty.

Smith and Keith[13] conducted a participant observer study in a newly opened and innovative elementary school. This school was designed to have democratic leadership, shared authority, and cooperative decision making. Its purpose was to provide individualized instruction and to promote close relationships between teachers and students. The researchers found that the egalitarian authority relationships led to inneffective problem solving and increased conflict between staff and students. The individualized instruction, requiring personal scheduling, led to great complexity of planning, misestimation of pupil skills and ultimately to aimlessness and confusion among pupils. Smith and Keith concluded that the problems of the school were fundamentally related to the amount of change attempted and an inadequate understanding of the unanticipated consequences of such change. The overburdening of the system, and poor functioning of the administration reduced the probability of success of the program and led to high teacher turnover.

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[13]Louis Smith and Pat Keith, Anatomy of an Educational Innovation (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971).

Gross, Giacquinta and Bernstein[14] conducted a similar participant observer study of an attempt to implement an individualized instruction curriculum in an urban elementary school. The researchers identified a number of unanticipated consequences which promoted frustration of both teachers and students. Individualizing instruction increased the need for materials and planning. The chief source of difficulty lay in the lack of an effective feedback system to keep teachers and administrators supplied with information about needs and problems. In the absence of effective communications, the organization became fragmented and conflict arose between staff, students and administration. Because of the inability of the administrators to solve internal problems, the experiment was largely a failure.

Palonsky[15] investigated student social behavior within a secondary school which developed a flexible schedule with a sizeable amount of unstructured free time for students. This organizational change was enacted to give students more responsibility for planning and engaging in independent learning activities. Palonsky found that students devoted the additional time, not to the intended academic activity, but to the activity in their informal social cliques. The

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[14] N. Gross, J. Giacquinta, and M. Bernstein, Implementing Organizational Innovations (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971.

[15] Stuart Palonsky, A Participant Observer Investigation of the Students and Their Social World in an Urban Integrated and Innovative High School, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974.

experiment resulted in a sufficient increase in attendance problems and a simultaneous decline in academic performance among a sizeable part of the student body that it was abandoned at mid year. Palonsky's explanation was that the school was unable to offer academic rewards which were more attractive than those offered by the active, powerful but fragmented student body.

Studies of other organizational and curricular innovations provide additional information. The recent growth of alternative schools has represented, in most cases, efforts to make schooling more personalized and flexible, thus hopefully producing greater student involvement. But, no consistent set of findings has yet emerged. Little research has examined the abundant differences in method, organization and setting of these schools. A few studies have been conducted in schools which share the organizational characteristics described by Deal,[16] (1) Teachers, administrators parents, community members involved in the learning process, (2) Wide variation in the curriculum material, dictated largely by student interest, (3) Emphasis on affective learning, (4) Methods vary as greatly as the curriculum, (5) Emphasis on doing and experiencing, (6) Wide variation in the location of learning; could be private homes, libraries, businesses or forests, (7) Learning takes place with little regard to scheduling - no standardized segmentation into separate classes.

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[16]Terrence E. Deal, "An Organizational Explanation of the Failure of Alternative Secondary Schools," Educational Researcher, Vol. 4, No. 4, April, 1975.

Numerous schools with these goals or characteristics have been set up in the past decade. Generally they have sought to promote close relationships between staff and students, to share decision making, and to have students assume a more active role in planning their own learning activities. Many of these schools operated for a year or two and then closed.

Argyris[17] addressed himself to the problem of why so many of these alternate schools had failed to fulfill the hopes of their innovators. He found no evidence to suggest that students who attended alternative schools learned more or less than students in traditional schools. Argyris described a characteristic series of behaviors in the schools which failed. The schools began with good will. As problems accumulated, cliques formed and came into open conflict. Though administrators wished originally to initiate democratic problem solving, these techniques proved inadequate to resolve the conflict and provide needed planning. The staff was then forced to assume traditional teaching or administrative roles or the school dissolved. Students had failed to become involved in organizational planning and they had failed to assume responsibility for their own learning. Argyris traced much of the school's problems to a failure in communication and a clinging to traditional roles.

A similar analysis was made by Deal[18] who based his conclusions on the results from three participant observer studies conducted in

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[17]Chris Argyris, "Alternative Schools: A Behavioral Analysis," Teachers College Record, Vol. 75, No. 4, May, 1974.

[18]Deal, op. cit.

alternative schools. He described a characteristic three stage cycle in the life of an alternative school. During the first stage, students and staff experienced euphoria over the novelty and freedom of the alternative environment. Shortly, in the absence of teacher directed curriculum, Stage Two began, which he termed the psychic upheaval stage. This period was characterized by normless confusion among students, crisis counseling between staff and students, and overwork of teachers. Organizational problems led to demoralization and dissatisfaction among all participants. Without role separation, standards of directions or leadership, the staff faced the choice of reestablishing traditional authority or dissolving in leaderless confusion. A third option found in one school, was to find an organizational middle ground which preserved the individualistic freedom and curricular flexibility, but still retained a relatively traditional system of authority and decision making.

Research conducted by the Center for New Schools[19] investigated whether informal student and teacher relationship could be maintained over time in an alternative school. The school they investigated had deliberately sought to alter the norms of specificity and universalism identified by Dreeban. They found that students and teachers could interact on topics related to both subject matter and personal matters. Teachers could serve as counselors and students

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[19] Center for New Schools, You Can Talk To The Teachers (Chicago: Center for New Schools, 1973).

could receive highly individualized, non-universalistic attention. The school they described had fewer rules and regulations but there were unanticipated problems which remained through the year. Personalized academic counseling attention led to teacher fatigue. Planning was made much more complex and some teachers were unable to adopt newly demanded teaching styles. The increase of personal attention and mutual knowledge between teachers and students raised the vulnerability of school members to each other.

Wilson's earlier study[20] conducted in the same school shed further light on how alternative schools could resolve what are apparently common organizational problems and still remain alternative. The school was initiated to involve students in making organizational decisions. Yet, over time decision making was yielded to the teachers, for a variety of reasons, and the scheme proved unworkable. Though they assumed organizational leadership, teachers were still able to maintain individualized learning and to continue close student/teachers relationshps with minimal conflict. What resulted was a teacher led organizational which maintained some of the non-bureaucratic characteristics mentioned by Bidwell.

There is additional evidence that changing curriculum or other organizational characteristics of the school can promote

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[20]Steven Wilson, A Participant Observer Study of An Attempt to Institute Student Decision Making in an Alternative School, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1972.

changes in student discipline and academic performance. Cook[21] found that group building activities and role playing conducted in one classroom was followed by changes in the social organization and activities of importance in informal student cliques. Following the activities student attention was refocused from extracurricular activities to academic involvement.

Other studies of non-traditional curricula have been chiefly evaluation reports for alternative schools which designed special curricula for underachieving students. Evidence gathered by Johnson and Parker, Sulack and Nelson[22] shows that achievement as measured by nationally normed tests was improved. Attitude tests showed a general improvement in attitude towards school. Where measured, students showed improvement in self-concepts. All three studies showed much improved attendance among students who had formally demonstrated poor attendance records. Yet, the evidence from these later evaluations was not gathered by experimental means and the results are therefore open to some question. Furthermore, no examinations of the internal organizational characteristics were conducted to reveal the sociological and psychological variables which promoted the changes found in students. Several of these

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[21] L.A. Cook, "An Experimental Sociolgraphic Study of a Stratified 10th Grade Class," American Sociological Review, Vol. 10, 1945.

[22] David L. Johnson and Jackson Parker, "Walden III, An Alternative High School Survives Evaluation Quite Nicely, Thank You,"; Shirley M. Sulack, "The Turnabout: From Boredom to Interest," and Ralph T. Nelson, "FOCUS: An Alternative Model That Works," all found in Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. LVI, No. 9, May 1975.

reports recommended that anthropological observer studies should be conducted to describe the organizational characteristics and processes, seeking their relationship to student behavior.

That such information is important is demonstrated by the research conducted on the social psychology of educational groups. This literature was systematically reviewed by Bany and Johnson,[23] Schmuck and Schmuck[24] and by Roberts.[25] They establish that the behavior of students in school, the relationship between students and teachers and the nature of student involvement with subject matter are affected by social factors operating within individual classrooms or programs. Each classroom or program, possesses unique role relationships, teachers expectations, customary modes of enforcing discipline, and manners of instruction which promote differing norms among students. Differences in classroom norms have been demonstrated to have an effect on student achievement, student perceptions of teachers and school, patterns of interaction among students, as shown in the studies by Brookover and Erickson[26] and Roberts.[27] In theory at least, individual teachers and administrators have some latitude to manipulate these factors

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[23]Mary Bany and Lois Johnson, Classroom Group Behavior (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964).

[24]Richard A. Schmuck and Patricia A. Schmuck, Group Processes in the Classroom (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown and Company, 1971).

[25]Joan Roberts, The Scene of the Battle (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971).

[26]Wilbur Brookover and Edsel Erickson, Society Schools and Learning (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1969).

[27]Roberts, op. cit.

to achieve desired educational goals. However, since these factors are situationally specific, information about them can best be gathered by direct observation of their occurrence in the specific social settings.

It is clear from the sociological and social psychological studies of adolescents in both traditional and non-traditionally organized schools that much remains to be learned about adolescent behavior within specific contexts. Yet, some generalization can be made from a review of the literature.

1. Adolescents tend to engage in voluntary memberships in informal social cliques which occupy much of their time and attention both in school and out. These groups seem to be organized on the basis of age, socio-economic status and interest.

2. These cliques provide valued rewards of status and activity and serve as referent groups for their members. As such they strongly influence member behavior.

3. According to most researchers, these groups collectively form an adolescent subculture which rejects adult authority and is specifically problemmatic for teachers. The attractiveness of activities in the individual groups appears to draw student attention away from the formal academic activities of the school.

4. Efforts to alter the structure or the curriculum in an effort to promote increased student involvement in academic activity seem generally to encounter organizational problems and have often proven to be of limited success. Student involvement in decision making within the formal organization has been generally ineffective. Efforts to provide individualized instruction and personalized informal relationships between teachers and students can be successful, but they place an additional burden of leadership on teachers and administrators.

The Literature on Outdoor Adventure Programs

In both the United States and Europe there has been a nearly a century long history of programs designed to bring adolescents into contact with the outdoors. Advocates of outdoor experiences for youth have contributed some research to substantiate their claims that such activity can promote change in self regard and behavior. Like the studies of student social behavior, the research instrumentation, treatments and findings have been varied.

Much of the research has examined changes in the self concept of subjects who attended a week long outdoor educational experience for elementary children. Beker[28] found that the self concept of school students became more positive following a week long camp experience. A control group of similar students did not experience the same shift. Similar results were obtained by Davidson[29] and Cragg.[30] Cragg found an increase in enthusiasm for classroom learning by 6th graders

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[28] Jerome Beker, The Relationship Between School Camping Social Climate and Change in Children's Self Concepts and Patterns of Social Relationship, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959.

[29] Morris Davidson, Changes in Self Concepts and Sociometric Status of Fifth and Sixth Grade Children As a Result of Two Different School Camp Curricula, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Berkley, California, University of California, Berkley, 1965, DA 26,7,3752.

[30] Nadine Cragg, An Evaluation of the Year Round School Camp of Long Beach, California, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan, 1953, DA 13,3,333.

following a camping experience. Change in teacher behavior also was promoted by outdoor education experiences, as evidenced by Hauserman's study[31] and one by Heppel.[32]

Research on a mixture of programs for older youth have demonstrated equally mixed findings. Cole[33] found that a work/learn camp for potential drop-out adolescent boys produced desirable changes in behavior and attitudes, but had mixed effects on increasing the holding power of the school. Hunt[34] found that a summer camp experience for secondary school girls did not result in consistent improvement in self concept. Using both controls and experimental groups to study the self concepts of high school boys from low income inner city families, Alexander[35] found that a six week summer camping experience did not produce positive changes in the experimental group.

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[31]Billy D. Hauserman, The Effect of an Orientation to the Outdoors on Teaching Behavior in the Classroom, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Buffalo, New York, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1963, DA 26,9,5264.

[32]Ruth Heppel, Determining Changes College Students Undergo in Selected Categories As A Result of the School Camping Experience, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Detroit, Michigan, Wayne State University, 1964, DA 25,10,5787.

[33]Roy Cole, An Evaluation Study of An Extramural School Camping For Adolescent Boys Identified As Potential School Leavers, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Detroit, Michigan, Wayne State University, 1957, DA 18,4,1299.

[34]Burl Hunt, An Analysis of the Influence of Summer Camp Experience in Developing or Changing Certain Behavior Patterns of Secondary School Pupils, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1960, DA 21,3,561.

[35]Albert Alexander, The Effect of a Residential Camping Experience on the Self Concept of Boys From Low Income Families, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Boston, Massachusetts, Boston University School of Education, 1969, DA 31,629A.

But Washburn[36] found that a two week camping experience for 5th to 12th grade students with identified low self concepts significantly raised their test performance and led to improved behavior in school.

Of special interest to this study were the investigations of groups which experienced vivid and highly adventurous activities in the outdoors. Stimulated in part by the growth of environmental interest and awareness, and in part by several private organizations, numerous wilderness programs lasting from a weekend to four weeks are now widely available for people of all ages. Some of these educational ideas and specific wilderness activities had been deliberately incorporated in the school curriculum which this study investigated. Consequently, the review of this outdoor research is particularly of interest.

Adams[37] found that a special program of survival training for emotionally disturbed and institutionalized adolescents significantly improved the self concepts of these participants as measured on a reliable self concept scale. Additional measures of personality and mental health indicated significant positive gains in ego

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[36]Leona Washburn, Summary Report: "ICS" ESEA Title III, Office of Education Grant 3584-4329, 1967-1970, 1970.

[37]Walter Adams, Survival Training: Its Effects on the Self Concept and Selected Personality Factors of Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Provo, Utah, Utah State University, 1970, DA 31,(1-B), 388.

strength and reduction in level of neuroticism. A follow-up of this study would have proven additionally useful. Smith[38] found that a three week wilderness program with highly stressful adventurous activities had significant positive effects on the self esteem of high school junior boys and girls, when compared to a matched control group which did not experience the activity. However, the results did not prove durable after 6 months had passed. Presumably, reimmersion in the original social and family environment acted to reduce the effects produced by the program.

Kelly and Baer[39] examined the effects of a severely stressful 26 day wilderness experience on a group of institutionalized adolescent delinquent boys. Their results showed that the recidivism rate among these boys was significantly reduced. A similar wilderness program was studied by Gillette.[40] He found that it produced mixed and limited attitudinal changes among adolescent and adult participants, as measured on an attitudinal survey. Wetmore[41] found

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[38]Mary Anne Smith, An Investigation of the Effects of an Outward Bound Experience on Selected Personality Factors and Behaviors of High School Juniors, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Eugene, Oregon, University of Oregon, 1971, DA 32-6141A.

[39]Francis Kelly and Daniel Baer, Severe Physical Challenge, Background Variables and Recidivism for Male Adolescent Delinquents, Office of Juvenile Delinquency, Children's Bureau, U.S. Office of Health, Education and Welfare, Grant No. 66013, Research Report.

[40]James Gillette, A Study of Attitude Changes as a Result of the Outward Bound Mountain Ski School, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Greeley, Colorado, University of Northern Colorado, 1971.

[41]Reagh Wetmore, The Influence of the Outward Bound School Experience on the Self Concept of Adolescent Boys, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Boston, Massachusetts, University of Boston School of Education, 1972, DA 32-1498A.

that a group of high school boys who had experienced the same wilderness activities for the same amount of time had significantly improved self concepts at the completion of the program. However, when retested six months later, the changes again did not prove durable.

Examination of the research on planned outdoor experiences for youth yields a mixture of findings. Evidently, such experiences can produce positive effects on both self concept and behavior in certain circumstances. The wilderness programs are of particular interest and they seem to reveal some consistent findings. In all of the wilderness programs subjects were removed from their community for an intense but compact experience of relatively short duration. No program lasted more than four weeks and none included any follow up or reinforcing activities. When tested immediately after completing the experience, most adolescents seemed to demonstrate relatively consistent gains on self concept tests and positive changes in behavior. However, when retested after six months, the earlier gains were not found to be durable. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the intensive experience occurs in such an alien environment, for such a short time, that participants are unable to sustain the impact of the experience when they return to their original social environment. Upon becoming reinvolved in family and social cliques, with their familiar norms and status relationships, the social milieu acted to erase the changes and reestablish older behavior patterns. In short, if the person returns to his original social environment, changes brought about by the wilderness experiences may not be sustained.

In the program investigated in this research, there were some structural differences which could be of importance. Rather than having an intense, single block of wilderness experience, the staff designed a series of four week-long outdoor expeditions which occurred intermittently through a school year. Furthermore, many parts of the in-school curriculum were designed to coincide with the outdoor components, preparing for the adventure or following up on what had been experienced. Deliberate attempts were made by the staff to encourage students to integrate what they learned on the trips with what they were experiencing in their social interaction with friends and family.

The strength of the participant observer methodology becomes evident in this case. The researcher was present to describe student behavior as it occurred from the beginning of the school year. Records were made prior to, during and following trips and continued throughout the year. It allowed the necessary proximity to student and teacher behavior and it provided access to the varied settings in which activity took place.

Literature on Participant Observation Studies

The methodological approach was originally developed by anthropoligists during the Nineteenth Century to conduct studies of the social organization within primitive societies. Analysis was made following direct observation and recording of behavior within the on-going cultural systems. Contemporary students of social behavior, including an increasing number of educational

researchers, frequently rely upon the methodology when information is desired about group behavior, collective perspectives, social interaction or the conditions which promote or affect them. The settings in which these studies have been made have varied widely.

Streetcorner Society[42] published by Whyte in 1943 was an early sociological classic which described the political and social organization of an Italian neighborhood in urban Boston. Whyte sought answers to questions about the exchange of rewards and the maintenance of power within the community.

> What makes a man a big shot and by what means is he able to dominate the little guys? To answer that question, let us watch Tony Cataldo. He is a prominent racketeer, and he is concerned, among other things, with controlling the corner boys. How does he go about it? And let us watch George Ravello, Cornerville's state senator, as he organizes his political campaign. He needs the support of the corner boys. How does he get it?

In order to gather his data, Whyte lived in the community, learned to speak the Italian language, and participated in the social and political activities of the community. He took care to avoid influencing developments and sought to report the behavior of community members without judging their activities. He described a series of reciprocal relationships between politicians, rackateers, legitimate businessmen and social groups. This coalition acted as a loose and personalized organization which met the social and economic needs of individuals within the community. Little understood by outsiders, it successfully functioned to reduce violence, provide jobs and offer social cohesion.

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[42]William F. Whyte, Streetcorner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), p.

In 1958, Herbert Gans[43] also conducted a similar participant observer study of an urban Italian neighborhood which was characterized by extreme poverty. His main research purpose was to study a slum and to understand the way of life of the low income people who lived there. He found their life to be a highly personalized, distinct and independent subculture. It placed high value on peer group sociability and on maintaining extended family relationships. Despite its disadvantages, Gans believed that lower class Italian culture was an understandable response to the limited opportunities and extensive deprivations which its people faced. The high value they attached to interpersonal relationships filled understandable needs for personal status and human care when such needs were unmet by the larger society. Gans was concerned that most urban planners and social agency personnel possessed natural social biases stemming from this middle class background. He intended that his study should revise what he regarded as the inadequate and innacurate understanding of the social organization and values of lower class life.

The anthropologist Oscar Lewis[44] employed the methodology for his ethnological study of the daily life and world view within five Mexican families. Each family had made the social and economic transition from rural peasant society to the urban life of Mexico

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[43] Herbert J. Gans, The Urban Villagers, Groups and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

[44] Oscar Lewis, Five Families (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1959).

City. Though he selected only a very small sample, Lewis had carefully chosen each for the representativeness of their response to the problems encountered during social migration. By in-depth sampling, his research possessed an increased sensitivity and humanness not generally available in survey or statistical techniques. He described the different strategies with which individuals and collectivities coped with their new technological and materialistic environment. Lewis found that in cultural transition, the traditional fabric of religious values and nuclear family cohesion could not remain stable and they were ultimately replaced by varying degrees of instability, disorganization and malaise.

Throughout his career, Lewis has employed the same anthropological field methodology to investigate the family life of Hispanic peoples. In his later book, La Vida,[45] he studied the problems of adjustment and the characteristics of life within extended Puerto Rican families living both in New York and in Puerto Rico. Lewis again choose the techniques of observing family clusters to avoid the tendency of statistical studies to obscure the human quality of individuals and their lives. His methodology was a combination of interview, questionnaire, participant observation and biography designed to accumulate a detailed description of households, their division of labor, family relationships, and political and religious views. Though to outsiders the families would appear to lack organization stability or direction, Lewis described predictably regular

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[45]Oscar Lewis, La Vida (New York: Random House, 1965).

patterns of behavior which were sustained from generation to generation. These patterns, he believed, constitute a present-oriented, immediately gratifying culture of poverty which is an adaptation to the severity of the economic and social conditions surrounding the families. It is an effort to cope with the sense of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realization that achieving success within the larger society is improbable.

A similar study of people in poverty was conducted by Liebow to examine the daily life and social organization among black men living in a poor neighborhood in Washington, D.C. During his seven months of field observations, Leibow sought to understand their life in the terms in which it occurred. His purpose was to,

> describe the man as he sees himself, to compare what he says with what he does, and to explain his behavior as a direct response to the conditions of lower class Negro life rather than a mute compliance with historical or cultural imperatives.[46]

Among the men, he found a culture of poverty similar to the one described by Lewis.[47] It was characterized by low levels of aspiration, a sense of hopelessness, a tolerance for psychopathology and a sense of resignation to a bleak future. The relationships among people were present oriented and highly personal, providing immediate pleasure in the absence of promising future rewards for delaying gratification. Liebow saw this cultural orientation as a reasonable

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[46]Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1967), p. 10.

[47]Lewis, op. cit., p.

response by people born with initial physical or emotional disabilities, who had met a series of life experiences which demanded or encouraged little and provided even less. Although he was a white and middle class researcher, Liebow encountered no problems in gaining acceptance within the lower class black subculture. Acceptance depended, in the final analysis, on engaging over time in the activities and interaction of those he wished to study.

Another participant observation study was conducted by Ianni[48] and an unusual collection of former criminals who gathered data about the organization of crime in metropolitan New York. Ianni suggests that organized crime provides goods and services desired by the larger society and is therefore a functional and integral part of the American economic system. As a career it appeals to youth in ghetto areas because, in the absence of socially approved avenues to upward mobility, it provides a perilous escape from poverty. He found that criminal leaders possess their own internal social system with shared beliefs, values consensus, and an accompanying system for passing this perspective from generation to generation. But upward mobility among the older immigrant groups and a simultaneous growth in power among current ghetto people, has caused the ethnic leadership to pass form the hands of the Italian, Jewish and Irish groups to newly growing personalized networks comprised of blacks and Hispano-Americans. These newer networks were still loosely developed and based upon childhood gang membership, kinship or common prison experiences. However, they were

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[48]Francis A. J. Ianni, Black Mafia (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).

becoming increasingly cooperative and organized to protect mutual financial interests in a highly competitive and hostile environment. Ianni regarded the consolidation of the units into the older pyrimidal organizations built by the Italians and Irish as inevitable.

Using participant observation, Goffman[49] analyzed the social world of inmates in total care psychiatric hospitals. Prior to his study, nearly all information about patients in mental institutions had been gathered with psychological or psychiatric techniques of inquiry. Studies of the sociology of the institutions themselves had only been conducted from the point of view of custodial personnel, nurses, doctors or administrators. But Goffman reasoned that patients, like any group of people would develop their own social perspective, meaningful in terms of their institutional life. He found that when the patients entered the institutions they were collectively treated in such a way that any sense of self-determination was eliminated. In response, the inmates accomodated themselves to their new conditions of role and responsibility with a two stage adjustment. At first, they gave minimal compliance to the demands of the staff and institutional life. This was subsequently followed by the development of techniques to work the institution to the inmates own advantage. Goffman found that these secondary adjustments were carried out with intelligent self-determination and resulted in a reasonable system of mutual exhange and reward between inmates and staff.

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

Participant observation is becoming increasingly popular for the study of educational institutions. Educators have come to realize that schools are complex social systems, possessing multiple perspectives, differing role relationships and structural characteristics which pattern the behavior of participating individuals. Information about such social characteristics can and is being gained from participant observation investigations.

Becker, Geer and Hughes[52] sought to learn the nature of the undergraduate student perspective on academic work at a large public university. In order to gather information, they intermittently participated for nearly two years in the network of student social relationships. Like Coleman's study of high school students,[53] they found that students maintained multiple interests divided into an academic sphere, an area of residential and extracurricular activities, and an area of friendship, dating and courtship activities. Academic demands from the faculty were only partially met because of the involvement students devoted to the other areas. They state that

> The view that interaction between teacher and student affects students values and personalities fails, finally, to give sufficient weight to the organizational context in which that interaction takes place. As we have seen, the system of grades and credits provides an institutional framework that instructors can use to reward those who learn to meet academic requirements and punish those who do not . . . We do not argue that nothing goes on in

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[52]Becker, Geer, Hughes, Making the Grade.

[53]Coleman, The Adolescent Scoiety.

> college classes beyond the exchange of proper performance for a grade. But we do emphasize that the exchange of performance for grade is, formally and institutionally, what the class is all about. Changes in personality or values may indeed take place, but they are not directly affected by the institutionalized system of value and reward.[54]

Becker, Geer and Hughes concluded that students balanced their involvement in the different areas according to the rewards offered by the activity. It was the system of alternative rewards that sets the stage for the separation of students from increased academic involvement. They suggested that, since universities would not be able to alter the system of extracurricular and personal activity, they should reduce the current emphasis on competitive grading to increase the attractiveness of academic activity.

Participant observation studies have been conducted within schools to examine relationships other than the behavior of students. McPherson[55] investigated the role of teachers in a small New England elementary school. Seeking information about how teachers viewed themselves, what systems of status they maintained, and how new teachers became socialized to the school, she became an elementary school teacher herself. She selected the methodology in order to experience the expectations, demands, constraints and pressures which new teachers would encounter over time. She found that the enthusiasm of new teachers was met with cynicism and sarcasm.

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[54]Becker, Geer, Hughes, Making the Grade, p. 79-80.

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

Attempts to innovate or improve teaching were held in restraint by the expectations and demands of parents and administrators. Past histories of unachieved wishes had worked to dim the enthusiasm of the older teachers for change. New teachers were discouraged from speaking of their successes since that threatened older teachers who were unwilling to adopt new methods or expend further energy. New staff was isolated from the older groups until they too had begun to adopt the cynicism and had accepted the notion of minimal expectations. In time, of course, the newcomers either joined the prevailing system or resigned. McPherson presents an unhappy picture of a self-confirming social system which is inured to change and acts to prevent new perspectives from gaining a foothold.

What emerges from all of these participant observer studies is the understanding that any group of individuals, whether teachers, students or Mexican peasants, will develop patterns of behavior which appear reasonable and understandable once the context of their lives is understood. The methodology allowed each of the above researchers to become involved in those lives over time. That they did not share common age, economic or ethnic backgrounds with their subjects made little difference. What counted, in this regard was the capacity of the researchers to establish and maintain personal relationships over time. Having established themselves as participants the research task became one of remaining observant, and sensitive to the conditions of the situation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this participant observer study was to describe and analyze how individuals and groups of students behaved as they encountered the curricular and organizational features of an alternative school. As with any research, the methodology used to gather and interpret information is a reflection of the basic assumptions made about the object of inquiry. This research was based on the notion that both individual and collective behavior is constructed through the complex process of symbolic interaction.

Conceptual Background

Symbolic interactionist theory conceives of behavior as an extension of the meanings that human beings attach to the elements of their world. Individuals are viewed as acting units who, in the continual process of encountering their environment, do not respond directly to the objects, events and situations found there. Rather, they first interpret what these phenomena mean and construct their action on the basis of those interpretations. In explaining the theory, Herbert Blumer describes this process:

> By virtue of indicating such things to himself, he places himself over and against them and is able to act back against them, accepting them, rejecting them, or transforming them in accordance with how he defines or interprets them. His behavior, accordingly, is not a result of such things

> as environmental pressures, stimuli, attitudes, and ideas but arises instead from how he interprets and handles these things in the action he is constructing.[1]

These interpretations are symbolized, emotive meanings which, taken collectively, and developing over time create the perspective through which the individual views his world. This perspective constitutes the individual's definitions of reality, owing its origin to past experience, but being continually recreated and added to as new situations and experiences are encountered.

Most individuals engage in a number of important levels of social interaction which influence and redefine elements of their perspective. These might include a relationship with another individual, or a series of individuals, or membership in collectivities and referent groups. Each of these relationships is understood to be formed as individuals seek social rewards and reciprocally receive them. In the process of interacting together, members ascertain the nature of each other's acts, interpret them, and adjust their perceptions to account for and include these new elements.

Over time participants tend to fit their individual lines of action together, creating common patterns of perception and standards for behavior. In this process, the collectivity becomes its own acting unit, made up of individuals who themselves are acting units. As Becker et al. explained, the collectivity will:

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[1]Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," in Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (eds.), Symbolic Interaction (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 142.

> develop ideas that, because they are held in common, create a universe of discourse, a common frame of reference in which communication may take place. Similarly, they develop, as they interact in a variety of institutional settings and specific situations, patterns of individual and collective activity. The activities grow out of the ideas, being their logical extensions in action. They also give weight and meaning to the ideas by creating patterns of everyday experience that made the ideas seem reasonable and appropriate to the situations they are applied to. In this sense, the ideas grow out of the activities.[2]

Both individuals and collectivities continually encounter and interact with the features of larger social and organizational settings. As these features enter the lives they too are subjected to the same processes of definition and interpretation. As described by Blumer:

> Any particular action is formed in the light of the situation in which it takes place . . . . The acting unit necessarily has to identify the thing which it has to take into account . . . tasks, opportunities, obstacles, means, demands, discomforts, dangers and the like. It has to assess them in some fashion and it has to make decisions on the basis of that assessment.[3]

It follows that no explanation of behavior would be adequate unless it considered the social context and organizational environment in which that behavior was constructed. This can be clearly illustrated by the fact that similar behavior may have quite different meanings in differing settings and circumstances. Maurice Nathanson's explanation of the symbolic meaning of the handshake is an informative example:

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[2]Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer and Everett Hughes, Making the Grade (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968), p. 28.

[3]Blumer, op. cit., p. 145.

> The handshake that consummates the business deal is in purely physical terms no more than an exercise in the mechanics of muscles, tendons, bone, cartilage, etc. From the standpoint of the social order, and the business world in particular, the handshake is significant. It means that something has been agreed upon by the partners in the transaction and that the agreement has been concluded . . . . In purely anatomical terms the handshake may be undistinguishable from that of the acknowledgment of an introduction, the ritual of receiving a diploma, or the rules of courtesy governing wrestlers about to meet in a ring. What is meant by each of these cases is quite different.[4]

Accepting the theory of symbolic interaction implies that adequate research into human behavior must include more than records of overt action. It should provide an assessment and understanding of the ways in which those meanings and interpretations are constructed and fit together in the frame of reference of the actors. And, finally, the analysis should relate the behavior to the social and organizational context in which it occurred. According to interactionist theory, when the elements of the setting are considered, and the interpretive frame of reference understood, behavior can generally be seen as a reasonable accommodation of individuals and groups to the peculiar circumstances of their lives.

This leads directly to the methodology used to study the students in the alternative school. The original questions asked were: "How do students respond to the curricular activities, the demands and expectations they encounter within the alternative school?" "In short, what perspective do they come to develop towards its features?" "What activities, processes and

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[4]Maurice Nathanson, ed., Philosophy of the Social Sciences (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 8-9.

organizational characteristics hold the larger organization together?" "What are the actual or potentially dysfunctional elements which threaten the organization internally or externally?"

According to Blumer, the most appropriate procedure for studying behavior begins by immersing oneself in the social order:

> 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.[5]

This is done so that the researcher builds an intimate familiarity with the experience of the actors, with the matters which affect their lives, the things with which they must contend and the patterns of meaning and nuance which these elements take on. The researcher must be present as the interpretations are made, the meanings acquired and the perspectives developed. Since the elements of perspective are not static, but are dynamic and are constantly modified over time, the researcher must himself participate over time in the social order.

If an attempt were made to interpret behavior outside of this social order, without familiarity with it, the risk is increased that explanations are to one degree or another irrelevant. As Blumer states:

> To try to catch the interpretive process by remaining aloof as a so-called "objective" observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectiveness--the objective observer is likely to fill the process of interpretation with his own surmises in

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

> place of actually catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it.[6]

Participant observation is the method of inquiry which allows the closest relationship to the interpretive processes. The researcher actually becomes a member of the social setting, maintaining his presence for the purpose of scientific investigation. He assumes a role which allows observation of the behaviors of interest and he takes part in the activities of participants in order to view the world of his subjects from their perspective. He becomes part of the ongoing interpersonal dynamics, experiences the things which they must encounter, and takes part in the process of giving these things meaning.

Basically the methodology operates on two levels: (1) a description of the patterns of behavior and the setting in which they occur, and (2) an explanation of that behavior in light of the accommodations and interpretations that people make toward the situations which confront them.

The researcher brings with him a broad and in-depth familiarity with the areas of theoretical knowledge relating to his topic of study. Yet, he avoids prestructuring his investigation to prove or disprove specified variable relationships. Instead, the theory grows out of the data. Once in the field, extensive notes on the actions and statements of participants are collected and analyzed periodically. Initially, this results in what seems to be

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[6]Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," op. cit., p. 146.

a mass of confusing and often contradictory data. Gradually, however, patterns and frequencies or perhaps the intensity of a single incident will warrant further investigation. If it appears that some phenomena exerts a persistent influence within the organization, the researcher seeks to establish the magnitude of the phenomena and to develop a concept to explain it. These concepts, developing out of the data, become the working hypotheses.

Searching his theoretical background, consulting informants and further studying the behavior of participants, the researcher gathers additional data to substantiate, refine or disprove his working hypotheses. Negative examples are deliberately sought which would contradict his concepts and alternative hypotheses are formulated and themselves tested. The expanding data base provides continual correction of the initial concepts and absence of plausible rival hypotheses increase the likelihood that the phenomena is what the researcher says. This set of procedures is known as theoretical sampling and it continues within each category of investigation until the researcher is satisfied that his hypothetical statements are accurate representations of the situation.[7]

During this stage of the study, the researcher is distilling and clarifying small partial models of parts of the organization. Gradually, relationships can be established which link discrete portions of the description and explanation together and a more

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[7]For an extended discussion of theoretical sampling see Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, "Theoretical Sampling," in Norman K. Denzin, ed., Sociological Methods (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 105-114.

comprehensive model is constructed. An effort is made to establish the necessary and sufficient conditions for certain phenomena to occur. And an attempt is made to determine the magnitude of importance attached to various elements in the organization. These are verified by the use of informants and still more observation, until the researcher is confident that he has developed an adequate understanding of the object of study.

The final systematic analysis is conducted during the post field work stage of the study when the researcher rechecks and realigns his models. Finally, he faces the difficult problem of presenting his data in a way which satisfies the inevitably raised questions regarding validity. Generally, the data are composed of many types of observations and records which cannot be simply summarized in standardized tables of findings, in contrast to quantitative studies. For this reason, participant observer studies are most commonly presented as extensive narratives. Of necessity, the writer cannot publish all of his evidence, but he must include a sufficiently complete amount to allow the reader to follow the development of conclusions.

Participant observer studies are often objected to because of their lack of standardized checks for validity and reliability. In order for the study to have validity, its conclusions about behavior must coincide with the intentions of the subjects as they acted in their social context. As Severyn Bruyn explains: "What the researcher says in reality in the minds of those he studies must be

the reality in the same way that they conceive it."[8] Although much of the data are necessarily subjective, the validity of the conclusions is increased by adhering to the six indices of subjective adequacy outlined by Homans and restated in Bruyn:

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. Langauge - 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]

Of course, this proximity and familiarity are continually controlled by trained skepticism. If done carefully, the field research study yields a validity seldom present if research is conducted with other types of instrumentation. In discussing this point, Cusick explains:

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[8]Severyn T. Bruyn, The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 255.

[9]Ibid., p. 181.

> 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 . . . standardized method.[10]

For participant observation studies to have satisfactory reliability, other investigators must be able to replicate the study and produce similar findings. This is quite possible to do if the initial researcher is careful in outlining his research perspective and the procedures used. But, it should be noted that participant observation is customarily an exploratory methodology used in situations about which little is known. As such, it is not meant to determine with absolute finality both the direction and the magnitude of variable relationships. As Cusick explained:

> The final product of the [participant observer] study is the tentative explanation of social behavior which may be used to generate hypotheses for further testing. The end of the participant observer's work is the beginning of someone else's.[11]

As with any method of research, the observer must be able to gather information while minimally interrupting the situation. Lutz and Iannaccane have outlined three categories of roles available to the participant observer:

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

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[10]Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 232.

[11]Ibid., p. 232.

other members. This type of study is surreptitious or ex-post facto examination of the situation.

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.

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.[12]

In this study I used a modification of the "observer as participant" role, informing both teachers and students from the outset that I was taking part in their activities for the purpose of studying the program. Predictably, as time passed and I was more accepted into the groups of students, my role became one of more complete participation.

During the spring of the year prior to conducting this field research, I conducted a month-long pilot study to familiarize myself with the methodology and to discover possible problems to be anticipated. With the permission of the assistant superintendent of schools and the high school principal, I studied a group of boys and girls who attended a nearby public high school. In several ways, this smaller study was similar to the larger one: the school was a fairly

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

large public high school with a comprehensive curriculum; the guide questions were much the same; the student population was composed of students from a wide range of ethnic and economic levels; and, finally, the group of greatest interest to both the administration and to me had been identified as having minimal interest in academic accomplishment. Unlike the group studied in the larger research, the students were predominantly members of minorities. The school personnel were supportive of the study because the students had shown many signs of being disaffected with school. Curiously, none of the boys would try out for interscholastic athletics, even though they were academically eligible and it was widely thought that there was sufficient talent among them to field a team which could defeat the varsity.

For a month I attended classes with the boys, ate in their cafeteria, smoked with them in various parts of the building, and accompanied them in skipping classes when they found the weather appealing. The results of this brief study were interesting although they are not discussed further in this report. They are mentioned because the experience gave me considerable familiarity with strategies and problems to avoid in the larger study.

This study was conceived after reading an article on Project Involve published in a popular educational journal. Since I had special interest in the application of wilderness activities to secondary school curricula, I wrote to the director of the program, Danny Jeffers, requesting his permission to conduct a study and providing my credentials. It was a lengthy letter which included some

rationale for the type of study I proposed. Several months passed before he returned a letter indicating equal interest and inviting me to visit the school to be interviewed by the students. It explained that although he favored the idea of research, the final choice would rest with a committee composed of both faculty and students. I agreed and visited them for several days in May.

The program had already attracted the attention of educators and writers and the number of requests for visitation was so substantial that the student/teacher committee had been formed to limit and screen the visitors. This was explained by the director during our first face-to-face meeting. The following morning, I met the student committee and they led me to a small and carpeted section of the library where they took seats on the floor and circled me. One girl took the initiative and asked, "Well, what do you think of Project Involve?" I had been there for one period and replied that I thought it was very interesting and that I would very much like to study it next year. They expressed considerable skepticism of research and the people who conduct it and asked me what I wanted specifically to do, continuing for some time to probe for my thoughts about alternative and open education. I became somewhat concerned that they might indeed have the power to prevent the study and I firmly stated that educators needed to have sound studies which demonstrated how alternative schools worked and how effective they were. "If something is really happening here it's important for other people to know what it is." This seemed to satisfy them about my intent and our meeting soon concluded. Evidently, they met later

that day with the director and informed him that they approved of my coming. He seemed pleased when he told me this and mentioned again his sensitivity to the need to document what his activities were accomplishing. I was frankly surprised by the student interview format and intrigued at my need to argue persuasively before the students.

Arrangements were made for me to be present from the first day of school in the fall. This seemed to be a good step since I would be able to observe the development of the curriculum in its entirety and would probably also find it easier to gain acceptance among the students during the disorientation that generally accompanies the opening of school. I would not have to enter after friendship and behavior patterns were more stabilized.

As we concluded our agreement, no reference was made to gaining permission from the principal or the staff in the central office. In fact, our accord was so firm and cordial that I concluded that the director would or already had gained the needed permission and I dismissed the matter from my mind until my arrival at the building two days before school opened. Wanting to reassure the principal about my goals and procedures, I was surprised to find him apparently unaware that any study had been planned. "Good," he said affirmatively, "I'm glad you're here. I've been wanting to find out what goes on down there myself. Danny's pretty much on his own. I don't get in his way and I don't have time to anyway." I was slightly alarmed that he might resent my appearing without his prior approval but he made me feel immediately welcomed. "I'm glad to have

some research on that program. It's a good one. If I can be of any help at all or if you need the help of anyone on the staff, let me know. You might want to see Dave Ravitz, the division principal and let him know you're here. He'll be of help to you too."

My meeting with the principal concluded amicably and I subsequently met with the division principal who administratively oversaw the section of the school which housed Project Involve. He too welcomed me enthusiastically and, without questioning me further about my project, let me know that he would be of any help he could. I had purposely planned these meetings to occur before school opened to avoid encouraging the students' drawing associations between myself and the teachers or authority structure in the building.

Naturally, some people have skeptically questioned whether I was not too old to gain access to the student world in school. After all, I was thirty years old when the project began. This objection is based on the assumption that differences between adults and adolescents are based on biologic, psychological or chronologic distinctions. But this research was predicated on the assumption that behavioral differences are more related to matters of role, situation and expectation. For the purposes of this study I did not need to "become" an adolescent or even to force an identification with them by adopting phrases from their jargon or copying the subtleties of their dress. I think they would have resented this. What I did need was for them to allow me to observe closely their daily activities and to discuss these matters with them.

Consequently, I paid considerable attention from the first day to making my presence welcomed among the students. In order to accomplish this, I consciously engaged in some behaviors and avoided others that I thought would jeopardize our relations.

During the general orientation session on the first day of school, I briefly explained that I was from a university and that I was "conducting a study of Project Involve. I want to know what it's like to be a student in an alternative school." Several students asked questions which I answered briefly, mentioning that I was there to learn "how an alternative school works." The whole introduction took only two or three minutes, during which several students expressed a favorable reaction. Of far greater interest were the description of the activities, the maintenance details and becoming acquainted with the other members of the class. From the start, I was establishing friendships and contacts with other students, just as they were. I took a seat on the perimeter of the group next to Karl Moutin, one of the larger boys who soon demonstrated a quick and ironic wit. This pleased me and I pursued a relationship with him, estimating that he would become a student with high status in the program.

I had learned in my pilot study that contacting a student of high esteem was a valuable entry to a student group. In both of my studies I found that students were quite suspicious of outsiders, especially until they determined that they were not part of a surreptitious effort by the police department to apprehend narcotics users. The presence of a stranger, especially an older one, was

quite easily accepted if a student with high social status would say "It's O.K. He's only doing a study." Whenever this happened, students would invariably relax and return to their original activities or conversations.

There were several other advantages which related to my identifying my presence as a researcher. By establishing myself as a neutral observer who was interested in what they were doing, and by not engaging in behaviors which were noticeably different from their own, I was given the mobility to interview from within several of the different social groups which inevitably developed in the program. Only a very few students are allowed access to more than one group. Had my findings been restricted exclusively to one group of students, I believe it would have been to the detriment of the study. To preserve my mobility, I carefully avoided becoming involved in the disputes and disagreements which occurred. Several developed throughout the year, and when they did, I never took sides. I also avoided contact with students of low status. This was difficult since a scapegoated student will intensely and pathetically seek to maintain contact with sympathetic others. This ostracism occurred to two students during the year, for quite different reasons. As the other students separated themselves from these two, so did I.

To avoid becoming identified with teachers or administrators, I tried to avoid engaging in those adult behaviors which adolescents most frequently see or must endure. I would eat in the student cafeteria, attend classes, use student lavatories and follow their schedule rather than those of the adults. I restricted my conversation

with teachers or staff during the first few months of the study to keep associations from forming in the students' perception of my role. I refused to offer suggestions about how problems might be solved, how someone should behave or how to do something. Mostly, I listened and frequently took notes.

Since students were aware of my purpose from the first I did not feel that taking notes in their presence would seriously threaten the study. Generally, from the first day on, I carried a small spiral ring notebook, much as they did for their classes and I would usually take notes in their presence, sometimes asking permission from respondents if we were in an individual or small group interview. Students never objected to me or their teachers about the process, despite the fact that I asked several students if it bothered them. However, I was judicious about the process. I quickly learned to judge the sensitiveness of a particular question or issue, especially those relating to use of drugs, sex or inter-group relations. I would not take notes about these issues in the presence of students and I would not ask questions about these areas until I was sure that my relationship with the people involved was a solid one. Surprisingly, students did not even make my presence the subject of jokes. It was simply accepted as part of my role and explained my reason for being there. In another situation, perhaps in a group which was more cautious or had more adult members, I would not use the same technique. To adults I may have represented a greater threat. To students, I generally did not.

There were several problems which developed during the field research. First of all was the question of how to behave when students engaged in illegal or dangerous activities. Several times I was invited to accompany a small group of students as they left the school during one of the periods in which they were not assigned to Project Involve. Once, five of us went to a local diner for a breakfast and Bob Laing, one of the students, drove. Bob's driving habits would certainly have resulted in our arrest had a patrolman observed it and it frankly terrified all of us in his car. My research role was in contrast to my adult perspective on safe driving, but I remained quiet and we thankfully returned alive to the school. I maintained the same silence when students used drugs, which happened a number of times during the year. I thought it was the best policy to be non-threatening and non-judgmental in these circumstances and this seemed acceptable to everyone.

Another problem encountered was related to the degree of access given me by the multiplicity of groups which developed within the program over the course of the year. I could not maintain an equal level of intimacy with each and so I had to make a choice of which I wanted to most closely associate with. Some level of contact was consistently kept with virtually all students, despite this fact, but certainly some information was not made available to me.

The principles of research contain strong strictures against modifying the environment under study. In this regard, it could be argued that my presence unavoidably changed parts of the program. I

would have to agree that there were some phenomena which to a degree were influenced by my presence. Once, when I was questioning Sally Carr, the female co-teacher in the Project, I asked her about her response to the students referring to her as "Mom." This question inadvertantly touched a point which she had apparently been considering for some time previously. Thereafter, my research notes revealed that she was becoming noticeably more assertive within the group and more willing to disagree with Danny Jeffers, the other teacher. Although I feel, in retrospect, that my question served as a stimulus, I also believe that her self perception had been preparing for these changes quite independently of my influence. Undoubtedly, there were other times my presence changed things and yet, I feel that they were few and minimal. I tried to maintain a passive presence and feel that I was generally successful in this effort. I sought to distribute my membership among several student groups without damaging my relationship in any and I feel that this was relatively well accomplished.

While I was in the school, I collected a variety of types of information which became data for this study: (1) Direct observation of behavior and verbatim transcription of conversations constitute the greatest amount; (2) Informal interviews were frequently conducted with students, parents and teachers. These sought their comments and explanation of activities and matters of interest to the group; (3) Formal interviews were conducted during the last month of the study to verify portions of the concepts and conclusions I had developed; (f) Background information was gathered from census

reports, local school records and people from the community; and (5) Finally, some data was supplied by counselors about individual student records of achievement and past behavior. This source of data was severely limited by the legal and professional concerns expressed by the counselors, despite the assurance that all such information would remain confidential.

As topics of frequent occurrance or special interest were encountered in the research, my first general procedure was to determine the extent to which the phenomena was shared among the students. At one point a student reported that he was disenchanted with the leader of the program. He told me that the "Students will see through him." I checked with other students about their perception of Danny's ability and popularity as a teacher. Although one other student expressed similar skepticism, no one else did. This sampling alerted me to the possible formation of a subgroup allied in opposition to the program. Simultaneously, I closely watched the leadership ability of both Danny and Sally to determine what behaviors led to their control and popularity among the rest of the class.

The students were frequently of great help in volunteering information. Of course, their statements were fruitful avenues of inquiry but they could neither be taken at face value nor discarded. For example, one girl laughingly told me that she "didn't give a damn about school and never had." Her other teachers, outside of the project, were in agreement that the girl had caused constant trouble in classes and "frankly, didn't belong in school." Yet, the girl

continually handed in assignments for Project Involve on time and observations of her behavior in the class indicated that she was quite helpful to the group in solving problems of logistics. She did this with surprising determination and enthusiasm.

During the model building state of the study I would check the accuracy of my perceptions and conclusions by directly interviewing participants and informants as well as continuing to observe activities. At one point, I began to suspect that there was a close relationship between student-expressed frustration and the amount and timing of the vigorous outdoor adventures. In one month-long period which contained no out-of-school activities, I carefully noted the incidents of student frustration and conflict, deliberately seeking out examples of student-expressed happiness with the program, in other words seeking both negative and positive data. When a considerable amount of conflict and negative comments were found, this substantiated my suspicions. I then asked students directly to confirm or explain the importance of activity for explaining their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the program. They confirmed that they had joined the program "to do things," meaning out-of-school activities.

Seven months of field study produced an immense amount of information, over seven hundred and fifty single spaced pages in all. These were classified and coded according to the nature of the event, the participants and the date and then laboriously checked for their consistency with my developing conceptual model of the school. During the year, many conversations were recorded with attention to emotions,

hesitations, tears and smiles for the purpose of catching the richness of the social situation and the innuendoes of communication. Obviously, in the process of drafting the final description of the research, not all data are included. Those which appear represent what I judged to be the most revealing or characteristic information. Social reality logically contains an infinite amount of information with meaning which could have been recorded and included in this report. In one sense then, the reader therefore relies on the researcher to determine and present matters which are of importance. Controlling my biases in this report has been therefore a continuing and conscious act, one faced by any participant observer.

However, Howard Becker commented that in the final analysis, the question of validity will pass also to the hands of the reader. This too is true of any research. I have attempted to describe the conditions under which this program operates. I have included descriptions of the community, the school, the day-to-day behavior and statements of the individuals who attended Project Involve and taught in it. Ultimately, the reader will draw his own conclusions about the reasonableness of my inferences and the accuracy of my descriptions.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

This research is an exploratory study conducted in a public alternative high school. The purpose of the study is to describe and explain how students behaved as they encountered the activities, situations and characteristics which were part of the organization and curriculum of the alternative school. The findings include description and explanation of the activities and processes which hold the organization together and enable it to function and survive within the larger and more traditionally organized parent high school. Similarly, they included descriptions of those elements which constituted real or potential threats to the internal stability or to the maintenance of smooth relations with other parts of the school, the school district or the community.

The Community

Herman Melville High School is one of two comprehensive high schools in the town of Stoneham. Stoneham is predominantly a residential community with 16,000 inhabitants, most of whom are employed in either the nearby larger and heavily industrialized city of Millhaven or in the more distant but still accessible New York City. Stoneham is an attractive community. Its major roads had been laid out nearly two centuries ago when the county was overwhelmingly

rural and agricultural. Many of the residential areas contain houses from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and a few from the seventeenth. The older homes, scattered throughout the community, are in good repair and the historic ones are marked with discrete signs mentioning the original owner and the date of construction. Attractive newer homes are well kept and have been built with attention to preserving mature trees and to providing winding suburban streets.

The town is divided by two major thoroughfares which have both social and commercial meaning to the residents of the town. The major east-west highway separates the commercial and suburban areas from the beach community which lies to the south and is heavily populated only in the summer with vacationers from New York City. In the winter few permanent residents live there. Stretched along the east-west highway is the main commercial district of town. The other highway is a busy commuter route running roughly north and south and being rapidly developed with small shopping centers, diners and gasoline stations. To the west of this road lies the more fashionable Rhododendron Hill section of established wealth and more prestigious homes. To the east are the much more economically diverse and newer sections in which the students of Herman Melville live. Thoughtfully, the administrators of the school district established the attendance lines to follow the highway.

In general, the inhabitants of the Melville section of town are employed in the factories and offices of Millhaven. Some are professional people, some are skilled workers or craftsmen and a

number of laborers. Quite a few are self-employed owners of small businesses in either Stoneham or Millhaven. The Melville communities have considerable ethnic diversity, due in part to the fact that the immigrants from central Europe were and still are able to find employment in the factories of Millhaven. Families speaking broken English still arrive and settle in the town, generally because an older uncle or aunt has already been established and employed in the town. There are many small delicatessans and restaurants catering to ethnic minorities. The largest of these minorities is the Jewish community whose members predominantly live in Melville school areas rather than in the Rhododendron Hill division.

Currently, 11,678 pupils are enrolled in the schools of Stoneham. To maintain their schools, the Town Council annually allocates operating revenues following a budgetary request from the School Board. A public town meeting is required to complete this process, and it is generally well attended. There is no school tax, the schools being supported by general public revenues from local sales taxes augmented by funds from the State Department of Education. Like most school districts in the state, educational policy decisions are made by the locally elected Board of Education. There is considerable interest in the election of this six member body and their regular business meetings are frequently well attended.

The School

Herman Melville High School was opened in 1956 on a forty acre tract of land now surrounded by new apartment buildings and

recently constructed, moderately priced single family dwellings. Architecturally, the school building is like many other modern high schools. But it was initially designed to create four physically separate sections of classrooms in which teachers of these courses not requiring special physical facilities could carry out their pedigogical duties. Each of these separate wings would have common access to the two gymnasiums, the centrally located cafeteria, the well equipped industrial arts areas, the music rooms and the spacious and attractive auditorium. This physical design was selected to enable the school to be organized into separate administrative entities. The then innovative theory was that the "House Plan," as it was known, would allow both pupil and teacher to become better acquainted and would provide closer and more personal supervision of students and their work.

Despite seventeen years of intensive use by the more than 2000 students, the interior and exterior of the building appear fresh, crisp and well maintained. In part this is due to the well intentioned use of painted cinder block and tiles, which line the classrooms and long corridors patiently and frequently cleaned by the custodial staff of 13. But, additionally, part of the atmosphere of cleanliness and newness can be traced to the partial renovations which were made following a serious and deliberately set fire which occurred in 1971.

Organization of the School

Each fall when students begin their classes they receive a copy of the Student Handbook of Herman Melville High School. Found in the first two pages of the 63 page booklet is a broad and generalized statement of Educational Philosophy which in broken syntax outlines four categories of goals which justify the school's existence.

> The particular functions of the school whose goal is the development of self-realization and whose commitment is to the ideals of a democratic society are: (1) to be concerned with intellectual, emotional and physical development; (2) to identify and teach to each student's limitations and potentialities; (3) to make each individual as fully aware as possible of himself and the society to which he is a part; and (4) to make each student's life increasingly more meaningful to himself and to others.

A similar statement is available in most high schools. In order to accomplish these goals, schools are generally organized in a vertical fashion, that is they assume that left to their own resources, students would be less efficient or negligent at learning than if adult staff members, possessing greater knowledge and skills, were to supervise their learning and their activities directly. Customarily, students are subordinates in the educational process supervised by teachers hired to transmit subject matter. Teachers are in turn supervised in their efforts by several administrators. The first of these is a department chairman, who by virtue of skill, training and experience is selected by his own administrative supervisors to direct their activities. The building principal and vice principals share supervisory responsibility to oversee the efforts of both teachers and students. These administrators are themselves

responsible to the Superintendent, and he is responsible to the Board of Education.

In most ways, Herman Melville High School was organized in similar fashion. The 2061 students are divided into four grades, 9-12 depending on the number of years in attendance and the number of academic credits earned. Supervising them are 135 professional teachers, 90 percent of whom possess five years of college, including a masters degree. Most of the older teachers have undergone an additional year of educational or subject matter training and 25 percent have completed an educational specialists degree requiring three years of study beyond the baccalaureate degree.

However, the organization into academic houses represents a distinction between Herman Melville and other schools. Twice within the first two pages of the Handbook for Students reference is made to the House Plan and its advantages. Between forty and forty-five teachers of different subject matters, representing the spectrum of courses offered in the school, are assigned to each house. Approximately 700 students attend this house for all four years. Each house has an administrative "Housemaster" who is given considerable latitude to determine the curriculum and make decisions within his division of the school. He is assisted by a dean whose responsibilities are to resolve conduct problems and maintain attendance and decorum among students. Each house has its own secretary.

Another unique and important administrative arrangement found at Herman Melville is the responsibility and role given the guidance staff. Most secondary schools have a guidance department

with counselors to assist students in making decisions about careers and courses. Customarily, these counselors are on an equal status with teachers and are equally subordinate to the administrators. At Herman Melville, however, the authority for making curricular as well as scheduling decisions was shared equally between the administrative Headmaster of the school and the Head of Guidance. Persons in these two roles receive equal financial remuneration and theoretically have equal hierarchic status. Similarly, on each House level, the Guidance and Administrative Housemasters hold equal authority over matters of curriculum. This became important in developing Project Involve. All scheduling was conducted by the guidance housemasters which tended to offer unusual and considerable influence to educators who, by virtue of their training, were more familiar with the techniques and theory of human development and counseling.

In 1973 the four original houses were realigned into three. The most significant change which resulted from this reorganization was that the houses became staffed in a way that accommodated a widening diversity of pedagogical philosophy held by teachers. Under the new plan, those who wished to maintain a more traditional or authoritarian atmosphere in their classes would work collegially with others of similar conviction. In theory, parents and students would be able to decide cooperatively with the counselors on which of the three houses was most compatible with their own educational values and wishes. The courses of study available within each house were similar. What differed were the teacher's

and administrator's approach to matters of philosophy and teaching technique..

The School Curriculum

Within each house several traditional courses of study were available: an academic course for those students with certain plans or hopes for attending college; a general course for students who might wish to attend college or who might terminate their education upon graduation from high school; and a vocational course for those students interested in careers in the manual or industrial arts. Each curriculum was composed of four years of required and elective courses selected by the student in consultation with his counselor.

Since most of the courses could be taught with varying degrees of academic intensity and with differing requirements, the school maintained a publicly acknowledged system of grouping by ability. Students who had demonstrated by their performance on standardized tests or in past academic work that they were better able to produce superior work were assigned to sections of the course which were labeled as more advanced. Generally most of the commonly required courses were ability grouped and students were quite familiar with the meaning of a class labeled A1, B2 or C3. Most students enroll in either five or six courses each semester earning one point for each course successfully passed. English 9, 10, 11 and 12 are the only required year-long courses and students receive two credits for each year satisfactorily completed. To receive a diploma from the schools of Stoneham, the student must complete 4 years of physical education, 4 years of English, 1 year

each of Mathematics, Science, World History, Modern History, United States History and 14 elective semester courses.

To complete each course, the students must successfully fulfill the requirements which the teacher has established. Twice each semester the teacher issues formal interim ratings and report cards to both the student and their parents. These include a traditional letter grade in accord with a 6 point scale running from A+ to F. Some courses in the school, predominantly electives, are offered on a pass/fail basis, a relatively innovative procedure. Having earned 33 points, the student has met the graduation requirements and is issued a diploma. By special arrangement, requiring written permission from parents, and with considerable early planning with the counselors, it was possible for students to complete these requirements at the end of the junior year or after the first semester of the senior year. The administrators at Melville were among the first educators to adopt this innovation.

In addition to the formal academic offerings of the school, a student may elect, if he is academically eligible, to devote his time to a relatively traditional number of extra curricular activities. These include 10 competitive interscholastic teams for boys, a surprisingly limited 2 interscholastic teams for girls, 7 intramural activities, student government, special interest clubs, and three different student publications. Provision is made for the creation of new clubs, but consistent with all of the other organizational aspects of the school, each of the school activities had to be sponsored by an adult teacher employed by the school system.

A reader familiar with the curricula of many comprehensive high schools could conclude that the one at Melville was largely traditional. It was designed in keeping with the rational assumption that the attending student, proceding intelligently through the sequence of courses, complying with the requirements set by teachers, and being placed or placing himself in courses which are neither too elementary nor too advanced for his stages of development and inherent skills would proceed satisfactorily towards graduation and ultimately would receive his diploma. It is a complex system but one with built in provisions, especially noted in the unusual role and function of guidance personnel, for attention to problems and individual differences occurring among students.

Rules and Regulations Affecting Student Behavior

For all the rationality of the school's offerings, administrators, students and teachers still devoted considerable interest to the system of formal rules and regulations and to the accompanying sanctions placed on those students who did not give them proper compliance. Thirteen pages of rules and regulations were cited in detail in the Handbook. A quotation was included from the State School Attendance Law, followed shortly by the school policy defining legitimate and illegitimate causes for absence and the regulations applying to tardiness.

On the fourth day of school, each house had an assembly ostensibly to "Welcome Students to the House." In fact, all but a short portion of the assembly was devoted to further elaboration and

specification of the attendance and disciplinary policies in effect for the year. A description of what transpired is informative.

Five hundred students were noisily seated in the bleachers of the gymnasium when Mr. Levy, the bearded and congenial Housemaster of Emerson House called repeatedly for order. In a straight line below the students were two administrators and the two guidance staff members from the House. To the side where they could watch both students and administrators stood forty unsmiling teachers.

Mr. Levy began: "I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Emerson House. We have a great year planned for you. I know that the beginning of each year introduces a whole series of new experiences and problems. We have a staff to handle conflicts of scheduling and other problems and I would like to introduce them to you. First of all, Mr. Gerstein, head of the whole guidance staff at Melville."

Mr. Gerstein, a short well dressed man, stepped forward from the administrative lineup and took the microphone. The students were quiet. "Hello. I'm Mr. Gerstein, the head of the guidance department at Herman Melville. I want you all to know that kids come first in our office. That's our motto." There were several loud groans and jeers from students in the bleachers, and many students began restless motion and conversation among themselves. After a pause, Mr. Gerstein began again: "Well, if you have any problems, please don't hesitate to come and see me or Mr. Collizzi the guidance counselor. Well, thank you."

Mr. Levy again took the microphone and introduced Mr. Collizi, a dark haired man about forty years old. "Hello. I'm very glad to see you all. I know that many of you have a number of problems with scheduling and so forth. Please feel free to come to my office and we'll work these things out quickly and as easily as possible. My office is always open." He returned the microphone to Mr. Levy and the students had remained quiet. Mr. Levy: "Thank you, Mr. Collizi. And next, I'd like you to meet your new house dean who has some nice choice comments for you. Mr. Toledo."

At this a surprising large cheer erupted from the bleachers as a stylishly dressed and trim black man took the microphone. He spoke with confident softness. "Hi. I'd like to speak to you first about tardiness." The bleachers were silent. "The third tardiness will result in a half hour of detention as will every offense after that." Loud whistles and many jeers exploded from the bleachers. Mr. Toledo waited for a moment and the crowd quieted quickly. They knew there was much more. "For violations of being in the halls, denial of senior priveleges for one week for the first offense, two weeks for the second, three weeks for the third and four weeks for the fourth, with parental contact." The jeers and whistles again broke out instantaneously. "Now about smoking." The crowd quieted again. "For the first offense there is probation. Second offense is a three-day suspension. Third offense is a ten-day suspension." This provoked considerable conversation among the students. Mr. Toledo continued. "Now so far as unexcused absences from school. Oversleeping, even with a note from the parents is an

unexcused absence." Jeers chorused again. "There is one more item." The boos continued lustily and grew in intensity. Mr. Toledo, for the first time raised his voice. "There is one more item." The boos grew louder. "Can I have your attention please." The noise gradually subsided. "There is one more item. Last year there was considerable difficulty with card playing. This year there will be no card playing in the school building." Boos began again from the bleachers and this time a row of perhaps 30 students began to rhythmically stomp their feet. Mr. Toledo had finished.

Mr. Levy took the microphone. "Stop the stomping, please." At this a large animal growl, perhaps like a lion came from the upper rows. The stomping became almost inaudible but it was spreading to other rows. Ignoring it, Mr. Levy continued: "I'd like you to meet Miss Stocatto, the head of the Herman Melville Choir."

A woman obviously in her twenties, dressed in a brilliant colored dress with quite a short skirt rushed to the microphone. Perhaps fifty loud whistles greeted her arrival. One boy said loudly, "No solicitations in a public building, please." Miss Stocatto didn't acknowledge her raucous greeting, but launched into an impassioned plea for students to join the choir. She talked rapidly and breathlessly in animated enthusiasm, to which the students responded with more cheers. Unfortunately she said, "I want to see what Melville people can really do! There are other activities besides choir." This comment triggered a barrage of cheers, jeers and whistles. "I want to start a barber shop quartet and several other groups. My big motto is . . . I always say, 'Let's talk it over.'

Drop by my office." More cheers continued, the stomping had captured nearly the entire audience and Mr. Levy moved quickly to take the microphone away from the floundering Miss Stocatto. "Alright. Alright," he said. "This concludes the assembly for today. Return to your third period class."

As the students left the auditorium, one was overheard: "They always say the same thing year after year."

This rather lengthy description is included to illustrate that teachers and administrators in Melville, like those in many other American high schools face continuing and frustrating acts of expressive student alienation. Controlling the behavior of two thousand adolescents is traditionally problematic. Intermittently throughout the year, staff members were confronted by individual or collective, open or covert acts of vandalism, defiance and challenges to the teachers' authority over their lives and movements. These acts and what to do about them was a continuing topic for discussion among the staff. No uniform concensus existed among the faculty or even the administrators about how to manage students and this division of opinion was partly resolved by placing staff with similar opinions and attitudes about student behavior in the same academic house of the school.

Meetings of the entire school staff were far less frequent than meetings of the individual house staffs and therefore the entire faculty seldom debated the issue with intensity. However, when they met for morning coffee discussion and disagreements occasionally occurred. One morning, the custodian was expressing concern about

damage recently done to a plate glass window in the cafeteria. As a result of a fight, one student had been thrown through the window, a frightening but fortunately unusual occurrance. "We have trouble with kids busting things up, horsing around, mostly in the cafeteria and the study halls. Miss Raffio had to go in there (the cafeteria) the other day and just yell at the kids. Just yell at them. They are just pigs, just pigs. It's awful."

Miss Raffio was seated having coffee and had overheard the conversation. "Yes, and I hate to do that. I asked them not to do it and they just stared at me. Then a bunch of them gave me smart alecky answers. That's when I yell. The cafeteria situation is just a mess. I hate being that way but I just get pushed too far. I just can't take it."

The custodian, known as "The Chief", was a burly, businesslike and gruff talking man familiar with hard manual labor and seldom able to sit for long. "Yea, the cafeteria and the study halls, that's our problem. Like that kid getting thrown through the window the other day, that's just a mess, the whole business is just a mess."

One of the older staff members who has taught at Melville since the school opened entered the conversation. "Now I am from the old school. I am fed up with all of the nonsense the kids pull. I think they ought to straighten 'em up. I think we've got to get hard on them, not soft on them." The Chief interrupted him quickly and used an ironic tone of voice. "Yeah, this is really bad. I've been here twelve years and things are bad now. But we had another principal here. He came down really hard on the kids. 'You drop

something you pick it up.' 'One smart word and you're out of school. Bring your parents in or we aren't letting you back in.' Well, when that guy got finished the kids were cutting up all of the seats of the auditorium and were breaking all of the windows in the school just for fun. They were pulling fixtures right out of the wall. No. That isn't the answer either. I don't know what is."

At this the English teacher sulked out of the conversation and the Chief continued to describe how the students in the school with the former principal had destroyed all of the toilets in the boys lavatories and started a wave of false fire alarms which were so frequent that the school was forced to simply ignore them. "Well, my attitude was, 'It's your health.' So I left the wet toilet paper on the racks after I fished them out of the johns. That stopped it. You've got to understand kids. You've got to be straightforward with them. You can't let them get away with things but you can't run roughshod over them. They can whip you in the end no matter what."

This is not to imply that Herman Melville was a particularly violent or disrupted school. Nor did the majority of interactions between students and teachers take the form of heated verbal exchanges or confrontations. But the teachers there were readily aware of the fact that some forms of student behavior represented a tangible threat to their ability to accomplish effectively what they were hired to complete, their task of academic instruction. The threat of student defiance and its attendant and intended humiliation was deeply resented by almost all teachers regardless of their proposed

methods of dealing with it. The staff tended to believe that almost all students were prone to defiance "if the shackles were taken off" but they also believed that most trouble could be traced to a group of students for whom the school offered little reward. One group of faculty believed that the school would run more smoothly if "it didn't have to deal with 'those' kids." Speaking of the same students, another faculty member would lament that the school "really should offer more to 'those kids.'"

The Origins of Project Involve

It was against this background of concern and even despair over the inability to control destructive and defiant student behavior that Project Involve was begun. In 1967, approximately thirty of the most disaffected boys were assigned by the Guidance Headmaster to a widely respected male English teacher for half of the school day. Free to elect one or two courses from the regular curriculum, the students received the bulk of their academic instruction from this single teacher, Danny Jeffers.

What lay behind this unusual relationship was a notion, shared by Jeffers, by Mr. Johnston, the Principal, and perhaps most importantly by the Guidance Headmaster, Mr. MacWheir. Each believed that traditional instructional authority and school sanctions were ineffective in dealing with the behavior of these boys. Nevertheless, for different reasons each was reluctant to see the boys expelled. In mutual consultation, Mr. MacWheir and Danny Jeffers developed the idea that a situation could be created in which control of the boys

could be accomplished by personal rather than institutional leadership.

From the outset, the intent was to have the teacher create an integrated group among the students and to manipulate both the norms maintained by the group and the value system of the individuals who became part of it. To stimulate the group formation and to promote high initial interest, it was decided that outdoor activities with an element of adventure and challenge would be a major part of the curriculum. Both Mr. MacWheir and Danny had prior experience with the potential promise inherent in groups: Mr. MacWheir because of his training and experience in the guidance and counseling profession; Mr. Jeffers because he had been trained as a rabbi, was serving as the educational leader of a local synagogue and possessed strong faith in the Hebraic conception of extended family and integrated community. Similarly, both men had experience with summer camping programs and Mr. MacWheir had owned and operated a camp for boys earlier in his career.

These things were not revealed to the first group of boys who enrolled in Project Involve. At the outset, Danny consulted with the boys to have them express how they perceived school and what they thought would meet their educational needs. When the students responded that more than anything else they would like to leave school and abandon all traditional academic and vocational curricula, Danny acknowledged that this might be possible but certain conditions would have to be met. He mentioned the possibilities of taking some "learning expeditions" but indicated that in order to do this the

boys would have to be in good physical condition and would have to do some academic work relating to the trips. To this the boys eagerly agreed. What followed was a year of bargaining between the teacher and the students and a curriculum which emerged from their continuing group discussions.

When this study was conducted six years later, the same basic rationale of attempting to build an integrated group whose members periodically engaged in frequent out-of-school learning expeditions continued. In the interim, the program had become coeducational and to diversify the curricula and provide special attention to the girls another teacher, an energetic woman named Sally Carr, was added to the staff. Danny maintained responsibility for teaching language arts and social studies and Sally taught science. Both teachers gave academic credits in these respective fields and together they gave credit for physical education. Students earned four credits for taking the class each semester with the option to gain additional credits either by enrolling in one or possibly two courses from the rest of the school curriculum or by arranging a special contract for a course from Sally or Danny. Most students did this for at least one course.

The Goals of Project Involve

A document produced for dissemination to parents and other educators outlined in a general way the goals of the Project:

> The goal is simple. As adults, as teachers, as parents in our own right, we want our students to be able to develop into mature, socially sensitive, rational individuals--

> people who are confident in their ability to cope with reality and who revere life and society enough to help build for its excellence. We hope to help young people turn themselves on to the excitement of living and continued learning. And perhaps most important of all we want to help students help themselves prepare for the future shock which awaits them. The future will not be easy. It will demand flexibility of a personality, a tough commitment to the ideal that social problems can be solved through intelligent and compassionate efforts and genuine self respect and a respect for others. The key to acquiring these characteristics of personality rests upon the foundation of a positive self image. The key to future success in living is the possession of a positive stance that allows for continued educability. What is educating for educability? Teaching for educability means that we try to help the student become an agent in his own growth. In other words, we try to teach the skills and attitudes that ensure the student's ability and desire to continue to acquire knowledge and develop self reliance . . . . The facts will quickly fade from memory but the life style of curiosity and involvement will remain for the rest of one's life (underlining theirs).

In one sense this statement is quite similar in tone and content to the general goals of the school. Certainly it is not a radical document. But close examination, especially of those phrases underlined by the staff, reveals an unusual attention to developing values and elements of personality within individual students. Few teachers would quite so publicly or glibly acknowledge that "facts would quickly fade." In a personal interview Dan explained, "Educability as defined by us is where we get the student to become an agent in his own growth. And this can only take place, we feel, after the individual has come to terms with certain aspects of his personality. So we see the self-image as all important. The instructor is needed to 'hook' the student into seeing something in a certain way. The goal is strictly developmental, since the teacher, or manipulator, eases himself out of the picture . . . . We

want them through experiencing and retrospection to begin to gain insight into their own behavior, to help them make statements like 'I'm beginning to see how I didn't or did do that. I'm beginning to see that the group does this.'

The Curriculum of Project Involve

The emphasis on "experiencing and retrospection "can be seen in the series of adventurous and vivid learning expeditions which occurred intermittantly throughout the year. In the autumn, at the height of the fall color change, the entire group spent four days hiking the Appalachian Trail in central New England. In early winter, they spent a long day observing the cycles and rhythms of a major city from 4:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M. In mid-winter, they revisited the same region of the mountains to note the dramatic changes which accompanied winter and to subject the group to the severe and challenging rigors of cold weather camping. The advent of the first warm weather in spring coincided with the group canoeing the length of the Susquateague River ending where it empties into the Atlantic. As the school year ended, they bicycled more than a hundred miles to study and enjoy one of the barrier islands which follows the Atlantic coastline.

Each aspect of the approximately bi-monthly trips, including raising all money for any activity, was planned and executed by the students, sometimes in small groups, sometimes with the entire membership participating, but always with the guidance and influence of Dan and Sally. As a prerequisite each student was expected to

prepare himself physically and academically for each out-of-school experience. For example, during the weeks prior to the four day fall backpacking trip, the entire group ran or bicycled for several miles on most days, keeping records of physical performance and noting improvements. Sally used these records as part of her science unit on the human body and the principles of nutrition. Simultaneously she taught a course on ecology and natural science which focused on the biotic region for which the trip was organized. During the same period of time, Dan provided an introduction to descriptive writing and to the literature relating to the outdoors, especially the writings of Frost and Thoreau. For physical education credit, in addition to the conditioning, the trips and occasional coed games of soccer or football, each student was to be certified in emergency first aid.

Following each trip small group discussion and observations connected to the experience were conducted. Each student completed one required piece of poetry and one major research paper written on some topic relating to the trips, perhaps about the edible wild foods of the New England mountains, or the lives of hawks, or early New England architecture, all individually selected topics which related to the direct and tangible experience. The results of these academic efforts were then shared in small groups, subjected to peer criticism and offered for the learning of other students.

In discussing the purposes of the trips, Dan explained, "I see them as high adventures, as going out into new areas, the collection of new experiences which are both individual and social.

Then, the retreat back into the comfort zone of their daily life where they can retrospect on the experience. Each time they are able to gain new strength and new insight into themselves. These are controlled experiences to some extent but they serve their needs for mobility, their need for adventure and their desire for encountering social experiences in an atmosphere that is not so tainted by what they see in their home town, the school and their families. These activities are joyful. They expand their physical being, experiencing their bodies as they seldom have the chance to in school. Of course, the humor that comes out of it, the overcoming of obstacles, introducing a reverence for life, a reverence for small miracles. We'd have a hard time doing these things in a textbook, though it is easier perhaps in a microscope."

Whether in fact all of these things were accomplished in the minds and translated to their behavior by the students is one matter. But it is clear from Dan's explanation for the trips that he enthusiastically believes in their worth and has devoted considerable thought to presenting an articulate rationale for including them as the basis for the program's curriculum.

While the outdoor adventure-oriented trips constituted one major portion of the required curriculum, additional optional activities were available to all students and many enrolled in them. The most popular and well organized was Project Giveback, a system by which the best members of the program could volunteer two periods of free time from school each week to tutor elementary school students and to assist their teachers. This program was controlled by rules

and students signed contracts governing attendance, which had to be consistent and predictable in order to avoid inconvenience to the cooperating teachers. Patty Lebanon, a former student in Project Involve at that time and a student at a local community college, administered the program for Dan and Sally. Sally had found that the time required to organize it and to drive students to the schools was too demanding and therefore a position had been created a year ago with a nominal salary. Eighteen of the thirty-three students in Project Involve continued to volunteer satisfactorily in Giveback during the course of the year. The ideas behind this program were developed between one of the elementary school principals and Dan, who eagerly noted a consistency between the idea of service to a community and his goals of developing an ethical individual.

In discussing his overall goals, Dan explained his ethical perspective and intent without apology. "There's no question in our minds that we are trying to nurture what we would consider to be a constructive and creative social individual. There's an ethical system in play here. It's a relatively simple one. That which is good is anything which upholds life, and is reverent of life, that is constructive of life. Anything is bad that degrades, that destroys, that tears away from reverence for living things. This is a simple ethical code and yet I think it is the one that has permeated our program over the years."

At other times during the year, Dan or Sally would present possible activities to the group which were similar though short termed. Everyone in the group had the opportunity to teach a one day

workshop on the topic of their choice for a junior high school in another town. Fifteen students volunteered to do so and devoted a week of work after school to prepare for their presentation. At other times, the class as a whole group would participate in clothing and food drives for needy families, activities which are generally more common in elementary classrooms than in secondary school.

Grading and Evaluation: Part of the Curriculum

Dan and Sally, as well as the members of the guidance staff, devoted an exceptional amount of thought to the nature and timing of the student evaluation which the school required from Project Involve. They did not discard the traditional grading system but they had considerably revised and added to it. As Sally explained the reasoning, "A lot of these kids would be really discouraged by being immediately confronted by this (traditional grades) right now. Someone like Larry Cantalino. This is the first time in his life that he's ever done anything academic. You have to recognize deadlines, but you have to be flexible because so many of these kids have never done anything at all in school. Lots of them have no reason for doing so now unless we're careful and support them. I wouldn't say the same thing to Luke Bruyn. He needs to feel the pressure."

The teachers were quite delicate and subtle in handling matters of grading. It could be argued that the evaluation procedures were part of the curriculum. During the first month of school, each student filled out a form requesting them to write down

the things they would like to know, physically feel and socially experience. These were "goals statements" which were kept in a cumulative student folder. Prior to and following each trip and at other regular times during the year, students would complete another of these goal statements, or one of the retrospective examinations in which they would outline what they perceived they had accomplished toward their individual goals. Each of these was added to the growing cumulative folder for each person.

During the first marking period in late October, the teachers gave all students a perfunctory grade of "incomplete" in each subject. This was done in accordance with the theory that it would prevent discouragement and would allow the group to become more interpersonally integrated without calling attention to potentially divisive differences in academic ability. The term papers and poetry which were written during the second marking period and science tests and projects which were done at the same time were given traditional letter grades. But these were not added to the students' report cards until the staff had had an intensive personal interview with each student.

The purpose of these evaluative interviews was to explore his progress towards his own goals and to receive formal and evidently intensive verbal feedback, supported by behavioral evidence noted by the teachers. During this interview, the teachers and student examined the cumulative folder to discuss how vaguely or specifically the goals were written, how well he was meeting them and the nature of his behavior within the group. This interview,

which could be and was quite intimidating to many students, was deliberately planned to occur after the student had had some tangible opportunities to experience situations, to establish relationships and to reflect on them. This was the process of "retrospection" which Dan and Patty often mentioned after midyear. It was designed to have the staff and student together, with as non-threatening and non-confrontative an atmosphere as possible, begin to discriminate some of the patterns of behavior which were self-serving or self-defeating for the student. The idea was to help each individual identify specific patterns of behavior which he wanted to improve or extinguish, help him clarify these as goals and help establish criteria for measuring his success. The influence of counseling techniques and the underlying theory of behavior therapy were evident. Intermittently throughout the year the staff would lead discussions or present handouts on behavior or human development, generally distributing these at times when the group had recently completed one of their learning trips or had concluded some major and perhaps difficult group business.

At midyear, and later in the spring, the students received mimeographed handouts on which teachers, parents, the student and two of their peers were to respond to questions about the performance and behavior of the individual. Each questionnaire contained rating lists of personal-social, intellectual and physical performance, which were assessed on a ten-point scale. Another handout which was distributed only to the student was a fifty-five item personality

inventory which was used on a pre- and post-test basis. The parents' evaluation handout included provisions for evaluating parent/student relationships, for gaining their impressions of the program, and for reporting their estimate of the behavioral and attitudinal performance of their child. All of the results of the inventories and annecdotal assessments were kept discretely in the personal file and periodically Dan or Sally would refer to these with the student.

In other regards, the grading and the nature of most of the academic assignments became traditional following the midyear evaluation. Students received letter grades on papers, poems and tests but generally this followed an often lengthy process of revision and rewriting. While Sally and Dan did not require frequent assignments, especially so during the first two marking periods, they let it be well known that they valued quality and effort. In discussing quality of work, Dan explained to the students, "We'll keep submitting it for questioning and probing by me and by others. You can keep improving. Mostly, all great writers keep rewriting and subjecting it to the examination of themselves and others. When you are happy with it, bored with it because you don't feel that there is anything more to be gained, you'll feel done." To this one of the students had responded, "But when you criticize our poetry, it's embarrassing." Dan, throwing up his hands in mock despair and laughing: "Well, *your* stuff." The girl and the rest of the students laughed.

Membership in Project Involve

During the year that this study was conducted there were thirty-three juniors enrolled in the project and thirty seniors who had experienced the junior program the year before and had continued into the senior program. The senior year was organizationally and curricularly different. The year had begun with an attempt on the part of the staff to unify the two programs but this was abandoned immediately prior to the fall camping trip when it became evident that the seniors were much more experienced in accomplishing group tasks. This denied the juniors opportunity to experience planning, researching and coordinating the complexities of such an expedition. At that point the staff engineered a separation of the two programs, and readopted the original framework and activities which had been used in the previous five years of operation.

Each student who became a member of the program did so through one of two processes. The majority of them established first contact through discussions with a guidance counselor, a teacher or another student. Their interest was conveyed to Dan and Sally who kept these names on file until the middle of their sophomore year. At that time a large group meeting was held in which the teachers provided them with an overview of what could be expected in terms of physical stress, the difficulties in establishing a group, and the academic activities. As Dan explained, "We paint a picture that is more discouraging than encouraging so that we can weed out those who are just there to get involved in something different." After the group meeting, the students must indicate their sustained interest

and undergo a personal interview. In some cases, the teachers ask guidance counselors for additional information.

The program, which originally was composed only of students with an evident history of expressive alienation, had in its sixth year a somewhat different student composition. Girls had been admitted after the third year and a more heterogeneous population was sought from that time on. The staff still identified in each student some element of need which the program could address: a number of students came from families with alcoholic parents; several were only children living in a restricted and protective atmosphere; several had been in jail, some for violent crimes, some for possession of soft or hard narcotics; many had academic histories of chronic failure and those who did not had been identified as underachievers; more than five were under psychiatric care and two had been hospitalized for such treatment; several came from broken families. Several of the students had a history of success with the academic rigors and routines of school, but each of these was also selected by the staff for one or more of the above reasons.

The selection of thirty students from the more than one hundred and fifty who annually applied was made by Dan, Sally and several students from the previous year's program. The final decision for each student rested with the staff, who listened closely to the suggestions of guidance counselors but reserved the right to make the choice without administrative edict. The counselors agreed to this procedure. In an interview with Stuart Gerstein, the Guidance Headmaster of Emerson House, he was asked about his authority over

decisions made in Project Involve: "I don't even see it that way at all. In fact I see him [Dan] as having more authority than I do. I might ask if he would consider taking a student with special needs, as I did with Joan Venice, and we consult together on these sorts of things. But these decisions are his." Dan was eager to reserve this authority to protect the program from the possessive or zealous effort by a counselor to place a particular student in the curriculum. The danger, as Dan saw it, was that since the nature of the group development depended on the students who were members, the composition should be judiciously made. "We set up an informal quota system which tries to accept as many diverse types of students as possible. We are looking for socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic spread, academic performance, native intelligence, quickness of mind, mechanical ability, athletic ability, and all of these things go both positive and negative. Drug situations, family solidarity. We try to come up with as cosmopolitan an overview as we can. We then pick the ones we feel are in greatest need of the program. Boys and girls are on a fifty-fifty basis."

Once the students are tentatively selected they must have permission of the parents who in turn must attend a parent meeting to receive a careful overview of the program. This is done as much to protect the program from misunderstanding as it is to stimulate parent/student discussion.

During the fourth year of the program, Dan accepted two students later in the year on the recommendation that they would profit from the experience. The resulting discussions among the

students were judged to be so valuable, in terms of issues raised about student government, social conscience, and group decision making that the staff decided to formalize the process in subsequent years. Although neither the group nor the new students became aware of the policy, two new students were deliberately recommended for membership by the guidance counselor late in the fall of each year. The staff justified the resulting deliberation and decision making, done almost entirely by students, as part of their formal social studies curriculum.

It was from this instructional community and personal background and into this developing series of activities that thirty-one students noisily arrived in Room BM 15 on September 8, 1974. Their subsequent behavior did not take place in a vacuum but within the specifics of the organizational setting and in response to complex forces which developed over the year. What follows is an effort to describe their mutual attempts to build a successfully functioning group that could attain both traditional educational goals and engage in outdoor group activities.

Overview: The Development of An Effective Group

From the opening of school until the end of the year both teachers and students within Project Involve shared in a common task. They needed to create and maintain an effectively functioning group in order to attain the goals they individually sought. According to

Thibault and Kelley,[1] for a group to form and remain stable, several conditions are necessary: (1) First of all, individual members entering into the group relationship must receive a set of rewards that outweigh the costs of maintaining their membership; (2) Secondly, for the group to form and continue to function effectively, there must be a consensus among a relatively large number of members, possibly a majority, as to what the goals of the group are; (3) Third, since larger groups such as Project Involve bring together individuals capable of engaging in a wide range of possible behaviors, some system of norms must develop to control behavior which is threatening to the group and to promote behavior which increases cohesiveness and stability; and (4) Fourth, the effective group must develop systems of leadership and role differentiation to maintain two types of group outcomes if the group is to survive. The first of these are task functions which allow the group to attain its primary goals and operate successfully within its environment. The second of these are maintenance outcomes, functions which reduce internal pressures by helping members effectively cope with the conflict, disappointments and frustrations they experience.

Effective groups are not willed into existence. They develop over time. Consensus seldom exists a priori in organizations but rather it is constructed and refined by interaction among members and by the continued process of members receiving adequate rewards

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[1]For an intensive examination of the conditions necessary for effective group formation and maintenance, see John W. Thibault and Harold H. Kelley, The Social Psychology of Groups (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1959), Chapters 11-15.

over time in relation to relative costs. The system of leadership and normative behavior which helps sustain this group develops as individuals cope with the internal difficulties and external threats that promote instability. Patterns of behavior either successfully help the group to overcome these difficulties or, failing that, the group dissolves or splits apart. The development of these elements of collective behavior are of necessity dynamic, growing out of the process of individuals interacting with each other within a changing environment.

This study found that the students and teachers in Project Involve were able to develop successfully and maintain a stable and cohesive group over the course of the school year. But, as implied this occurred in several stages during which the members gradually constructed consensus and stability and were required to overcome threatening conditions of instability and conflict.

Initially, maintaining a cohesive social unit posed little difficulty. Because of the high agreement as to the goals, and because of the novelty of the experience, students were eager and enthusiastic participants. They entered the program with a high estimation of the rewards of membership and a corresponding low estimation of the costs of constructing an effective group. To protect the group during its initial stages, they tended to suppress unanticipated conflict which was disruptive and which might prevent them from attaining the first major outdoor activity, the fall backpacking trip. Membership in the program during the first few weeks was made almost irresistably attractive by the comparison between

their current life and their former role of student in the traditional school.

Once the objective of the autumn trip was attained, there was no longer any central and consensually agreed upon task which promoted unity and prevented conflict. Subgroups maintaining differing expectations about how the group should function brought their concerns to the attention of others who shared differing expectations. Internal social alliances and cliques which formed prior to the program or during the initial activities struggled for influence. Additional threats were posed by the concerns of suspicious parents, other teachers and peer groups outside of the program. If the group was to maintain itself successfully, its members needed to develop effective task and maintenance systems to cope with these external and internal challenges. The process of doing so constituted a new stage in the life of the group which continued until these threats were effectively reduced or overcome.

Once the group was able to solve successfully the difficulties its members faced, it arrived at a final stage of stability and consensus where an increasing number of student members shared in its rewards and were willing to participate in norms which protected the organization. For some, however, the cost of maintaining membership was too demanding or the personal investment was too intrusive on their personal lives. These individuals were gradually separated from those who found membership satisfying. With the separation of non-compliant members, the organization reached a maximum stability and remained unified until the end of the year.

Most successful groups must undergo similar developmental growth. What follows is an effort to trace the development of the stages of group life in Project Involve and to examine the particulars of student behavior and interaction, noting how they related to the formation of the group or represented a threat to it.

First Weeks: Escape from Traditional School

Students had been attracted to the program and were excited about having been accepted for membership for several reasons. First of all, it offered an opportunity to attain the traditional high school diploma and simultaneously to escape from the student role which had been required of them in traditional school. This role, described by Cusick, Dreeban and Coleman,[2] is one of passivity and spectatorship, where teachers generally do most of the talking, acting, questioning and leading. When students in the traditional school had the opportunity to interact with teachers it was almost always related to subject matter, and generally it took the form of individual students answering a teacher's question. This left the rest of the students with little or nothing to do. The traditional school was based on the principle that future rewards would be available to students if they were willing to delay gratification and respond as teachers wished, remaining compliant and completing their academic tasks.

Regardless of how well students had achieved in the traditional school, they were eager to leave behind the role of passive subordinate that it required of them. During the first weeks of

enthusiastic membership in Project Involve, many students spoke disparagingly about their earlier experience. Al Boudreau, a tall, skinny boy, explained, "In regular school, with all the structure in what you do, I'd just sit around and not do much of anything. You just wait for the teacher to do something. You just hand the stuff in to please the teacher and get her off your back." Allison Sayre, a short articulate girl who told me that she would have dropped out of school if she had not been accepted into Project Involve agreed with Al. "The teachers do all the talking and that's about everything that happens."

Though they disliked their former role, most of the students did desire to complete high school and receive their diploma and so, faced with a series of academic demands which had to be met, they had worked to reduce those demands and give them minimal compliance. Monica Darby was a talented girl who had expressed hatred of school, though she had generally done well, explained how this was done. "Last year, you'd just copy off of everyone else before you went to class." Allison laughed at this and explained, "Most of the classes were a joke. Last year was so bad. Like on exams. Everybody cheats. Everybody in the whole class cheats and the dumb teachers don't even know it. I used to feel like a computer. Plug me into the subject matter and out comes the grade. All the kids just copied their reports out of the encyclopedia."

Bill Hitchcock, one of the athletes in the Project laughed and said he had done the same thing. "You could do everything you needed just copying out of an encyclopedia. This year (in Project Involve) I've read my first book."

I: "You mean you've never read a book?"

Bill: "Nope, not since elementary school. We didn't have to. And besides, playing ball was more important. I could get good grades just by copying, so why read anything more. This year I'm interested though."

The majority of students had few positive things to say about their previous teachers and some were even vitriolic. Kathy Wollansak was generally congenial about most matters, but about her teachers in the traditional school she was unusually resentful. When she observed a teacher who had just apprehended a student and sent him to the office, she commented: "So many of the damn teachers want you to kiss their feet. Like Mr. Bosley. He's a bastard. The authority does funny things to them. Last year I told one teacher off every day. I'd try to stick up for our rights. The teachers want us to look up to them so much. They want the highest amount of respect. And then they act like jerks and wonder why we don't give it to them." She didn't explain what "being a jerk" was, but it was clear that it referred to the power teachers maintained over student lives.

Not all of the students had been able to meet teachers' demands despite their dislike of the process. Asked about the previous year, Larry Cantellino was at a loss. He snorted disbelievingly and began, "I don't remember one thing I did last year. Not a single thing. Nothing! It is like it all vanished because there was nothing that I believed in . Like all I did last year was went out and got stoned everyday. Skipped out on classes and that is all

I did because I saw nothing in school and I couldn't see any future for me in the regular school system." He then went on to explain how lucky he felt he was to be in Project Involve.

While Larry Cantellino was one of a small number of students who took the demands of school so lightly, almost all students were resentful about some aspects of their former schooling. When they joined Project Involve, they anticipated that all of their dislikes of school would be put behind them. Membership in the program offered them the opportunity to attain the same future rewards available by graduating from the traditional school. But it would, they initially believed, be done in an exciting and more meaningful fashion. In actuality, they knew very little about the nature of the school year in Project Involve, but naturally they greatly idealized their expectations, and discounted any possible costs of being members.

By careful planning of the first few days of the Program, the staff attempted to further this feeling of freedom from the traditional. On the first day of the new year in Project Involve, students were presented with the marked contrast. Following an hour of discussion and explanation of the academic structure of the year, both juniors and seniors met for a community meeting. Names were shared and brief introductions made and then the entire group changed into running clothes for a mile run and an afternoon swim at a local beach. The distance was demanding but within reach of all students, despite the fact that many were physically unprepared for its stress. The teachers ran with them, leading the

way to a local lake where the group swam and had a brief discussion before returning to the school building at the close of school. While there, most students discussed topics of apparently little substantive interest. These were initial interpersonal forays to discover the values and likes of the other student members. The students were jubilant. The opening day of school was markedly different from the passivity and inactivity which had characterized much of their previous experience with school. They had enrolled in the program with the anticipation that the teachers would be different and better and that the year would contain many such vigorous activities. It seemed to have begun well.

A Sense of Separation

From the first day the students enjoyed the perception that they were organizationally and socially separate from the traditional school. They believed that they were members of a program which was significantly different and, in their estimation, much better than the rest of the school. Yet, the conception of what traditional school was like, or what they thought it was like, remained a referent for them. Occasionally things would happen to remind them of its negative qualities. On one afternoon Barney Mead had been reading outside of the building during one of his free periods. Although the staff of Project Involve had not expressly forbidden them to be in the courtyard, it was against school rules. As Barney explained what happened, "Mr. Bross, the Drivers Ed teacher came out of his room and hassled me about being there. 'What are you doing out here?' I told him that I was

reading. What the hell did it look like I was doing? And he says, 'Where's your pass?' 'I don't have one,' I said and he says, 'Get in the building! Now!' I really resent that. I'm supposed to be in the school to learn and I'm doing that and he hassles me. I really resent that."

"What did you do?" someone asked.

"Went inside. What else can you do? If you hassle them back, it'll get the program in trouble."

Such incidents would predictably provoke student resentment, since the students felt themselves free from the restrictions of the larger school organization. In their view, the traditional school no longer was responsible either for controlling their behavior or for offering them the desired future rewards of graduation. Graduation would be accomplished through Project Involve and it was to that program that they maintained a sense of responsibility. In large measure, the host school was less relevant for their lives.

This can be seen in the Involve students' responses to the meetings of Emerson House. Like the rest of the school they were required to attend these and so they were present when Mr. Levy, Miss Stocatto and the other administrators had described the applicable rules for conduct. But, interestingly, when the majority of the other students had jeered, booed and shown such raucous disrespect to the speeches, none of the Involve students had joined in. The whole business simply didn't apply to them.

On another occasion in October a similar example occurred. Emerson House was called to a general assembly to meet the candidates

running for offices in student government. As the speeches were given, again the majority of students jeered and booed the speakers. At one point, a tidy and well starched girl had promised to work for an open campus and unlimited smoking privileges. Unfortunately, in concluding she said, "What a wonderful school Herman Melville is and we really should support it more." This had provoked overwhelming jeering and laughter which soon escalated into a shouting match of such intensity between the candidates and the audience that one of the teacher sponsors felt compelled to stop the meeting and protect the candidates from crowd abuse. The candidates were visibly shaken. Yet, none of the Project Involve students had jeered or booed. They simply watched. As we left, one explained, "None of this means anything anyway." Another responded to him, "I don't know why we even have to attend these things."

Encouraging such a sense of separation from the organizational, curricular and pedigogical realities of the traditional school was consistent with the attempt to build an effective group. Consequently, the staff also supported and emphasized the differences. Once, during the first two weeks of school, Dan was teaching English to the juniors. When he reached a point where several students disagreed with each other over a point in the text of a poem, he pointed to one student and asked, "Is he right?" Without waiting for an answer, he turned to the girl. "Is she right?" No one answered his rhetorical tone. "All of your education up to now has expected you to say 'Black! White! Yes! No! Red! Green! Speak! Don't speak! Smart! Dummy!' Right?" There is a poignant silence and

the students nod their heads affirmatively, smiling slightly with irony and agreement. "Well, I would like you to go beyond that in this class and I hope that you can go beyond that in your life. You can look at life as an ordinary thing or you can go beyond it."

Such comments from the staff and such activities as the swim the first day were related to a strategic plan in the teachers' minds. For many students their earlier experiences with school had been ones of frustration, failure, apathy or hostility. Each had long before established a personal and individual strategy to cope with teachers, administrators and their demands. And, although Monica, Allison, Bill and some others had developed patterns which the school found acceptable, the majority of the students had been self-defeating, particularly in relation to academic performance. The staff hoped that by emphasizing the difference between Project Involve and the traditional school, they could create conditions where earlier behavioral patterns would be unfrozen, allowing students to respond to subject matter and teachers in new and more fruitful ways. The sense of separation was thus functional both for the purpose of creating a new group and for the goal of creating new behaviors.

First Weeks: Academics

Of course the staff faced the problem of how to address the issue of academics without bringing out the reservoir of prior resentment against tests, homework, studying and lectures. They couldn't, nor did they want to surrender their responsibility to be teachers and they were candid about this in front of the students.

Once Dan was challenged about why the academics needed to be a part of the program and he responded quickly, "Remember, we have a responsibility to you. We have an obligation to help you become literate."

B.J. Arbaugh challenged further, not seriously but with a joking tone, "Suppose we don't want to?"

Dan: "Then it is a conflict. We will have to work that out. I have a special obligation to you to help make you literate. I am especially worried about you all individually."

B.J.: "That's not fair."

Dan: "I want each of you to be successful human beings."

B.J.: "But you shouldn't take that responsibility."

Dan.: "But, I did when I became a teacher and was hired by this community. And there are even more reasons why."

But B.J. accepted this frank and forthright explanation and Dan didn't need to go further. The other students who had been watching nodded their heads acceptingly and thoughtfully.

Still, during the first two months the staff was careful to reduce the possible discouragement attendent to academic work by pointedly establishing visible links between each activity and the outdoor trip planned for the second week on October. Sally worked hard to design science units and activities which related to environmental issues and ecological relationships which would be found in the Appalachian Mountains. Further, she used the almost daily physical exercises of the group to collect and analyze data relating to physical fitness, nutrition and the principles of health. This coordination of academics with

a strongly desired goal gave the students a tangible reason for studying the material the teachers had so carefully selected.

Dan proceeded similarly in his English classes. During the first two months almost all of his classes contained a clever mixture of two types of activities: poetry or descriptive writing relating to nature and activities designed to make the students more familiar with each other. During one English class, for example, Dan began: "On the backpacking trip I would like you to focus on things, not just on the people, but on your surroundings. Unless you are careful, you will find yourself concentrating on your feet.

"I would like you to hear some of the kind of writing others in Project Involve have written as an example. I used these last week when I spoke before the NCTE and one of them is going to be published in a literary journal." He then began to read with care and enthusiasm two poems, the last one about a very tangible image of a gnarled tree.

Dan: "Can you see that tree? Can you see the scene?" He paused, and then said vigorously, "Louise, stand up! I want you to act like that tree on a quiet night when the wind's not blowing." Louise raises her hands in serious imitation of the tree. Dan lets her continue for a moment and says, "O.K. Now move with the wind that just came up." Louise does so admirably and to the enjoyment and appreciation of the other students.

Dan: "O.K. Let's try another. What we are trying to do is integrate your writing as much as possible with the backpack trip.

During the trip we'll be going through some pasture land. Here's another person's poem about a pasture." He distributed mimeographed copies of Frost's "The Pasture" and read it with expression and sensitivity to the group.

"What sort of person is saying this. What is he like?" Five students volunteered eagerly from their seats on the carpeted floor. Their comments were active and continued for about ten minutes until Dan abruptly changed direction in the class. "Vlad!" Vlad Pulaski was a quiet long haired boy who seldom joined group discussions though he intently watched what happened. "Vlad. Identify the names of those people who have contributed to the discussion." To the amazement of the students, Vlad did so correctly.

Dan: "Betsy, is he correct?"

Betsy: "I think so."

Dan: "He is! Good! We're making progress. Now, I want someone different to stand up." Monica Darby does so. "Come here, Monica." She did so. Dan whispered something in her ear, Monica smiled and stood thoughtfully for a moment, all eyes of the class on her. After a minute she stooped down and studied a spot on the floor intently, a faint smile of satisfaction, almost awe, on her face. Looking around she focused on another student and beckoned him with a finger to examine the same spot.

Dan interrupted: "O.K. What are you thinking. What is she saying?"

Two students raised their hands but Dan said: "Go ahead, Monica, you're in charge." Monica then led a short discussion on

what she had acted out in pantomine, showing that she had something interesting to show someone else and that they should come because they would like to share it with them.

Dan interrupted again: "O.K. Isn't that essentially what Frost was saying in "The Pasture"? The students nodded and Dan continued: "And that is what I would like you to be doing on the trip. Look for things. Make your writing tell someone else what it is that you see."

This type of class was not atypical during the year. In general, academic classes had similar characteristics: varied and vivid activity; obligatory student participation in interesting and non-threatening performances; attention to increasing the number of people participating; some activity for those reluctant to engage in performances before people; teacher directed and well planned. Their pace was fast, almost hectic or frantic. Certainly, Dan and Sally were both gifted and dramatic teachers who mixed subject matter with comments and jokes directed to the specific personalities of the students present.

From the student point of view, if academics needed to be part of the program they had entered, this was a minimally painful way to do it. Alex Malraux, a seventeen year old junior who was a year behind in school because he had several failures in English, put it this way: "What they do in Involve is make you want to do the work. Because you're interested, you know. And when they give it to you it's exciting. Like you want to go see and find out and

you want to write about it. That's what makes it more interesting. We're not just sitting in a classroom. We're going to go out and do it."

For Alex, and others like Vlad, and Larry Cantellino who had always had difficulty completing academic assignments, the rewards imminent in the backpacking trip and the opportunity to produce for such talented teachers outweighed the costs of completing homework or writing. Academic work was seen as a vehicle to attaining the trip, a goal which they were willing to pay for. For other students like Monica, Barney, Allison and others who had been underachievers, membership in Project Involve offered additional rewards. Because of the novelty of his program and because of his speaking ability, Dan had achieved a substantial and favorable reputation in New England educational circles. He was often invited to speak and when he did he gave maximum exposure to the work his students produced. Likewise, he constantly sought to have the best of the student poetry and essays published in journals and magazines. This represented an achievement which wasn't available before in school, one which was beyond the reach of most students without the help of Dan to tell them how to improve their work, how to contact publishers and how to copyright their own materials. Association with Dan, seeking his advice on matters of both academic and personal importance was potentially fruitful, and this too made membership in the program attractive for some.

Early Weeks: The Role of the Teachers

In comparison with most of the adults the students came into contact with in school, Dan and Sally were especially attractive. Within the community they were relatively well known, since the program had attracted considerable attention in local newspapers and had also been the subject of a documentary film by a nationally televised news network. They were frequently invited by community service groups in Stoneham, Millhaven and many other local towns to speak about the program and they were widely sought as speakers at educational conventions throughout New England. This often required weekend travel out of town and this, to the students, seemed a glamorous life. The staff would mention these trips casually, but the students were eager to hear more about them since it raised the importance of Project Involve in their own eyes. There were frequent requests from reporters and education professors who wished to come and interview the students and observe the program in operation. These too were flattering for the students to hear, and increased the esteem of Dan and Sally held by the students.

Of the two, Dan was much more active and verbal in interaction where he tended to stimulate an enormous number of ideas with an enthusiasm that almost approached fervor. He worked hard to make every activity sound exciting. "Wouldn't that be great! Just Great!" And he teased people frequently and affectionately. Once when a student was discouraged about the prospect of a lengthy bicycling trip to help prepare them for the stress of the backpacking trip, Dan observed her disconsolate expression, "Hey, Dottie! You're going

on the trip today aren't you?" Dottie replied that she hurt from yesterday's biking and didn't want to go. Dan began to mimic a person walking with great pain in their legs. He exaggerated and groaned and made faces until Dottie was smiling, then laughing and directly said, "Sure, I'm going." Dan had the capacity to dominate most discussions and interactions with him. He would often interrupt a person speaking to him, tease them, laugh, grimmace or joke about their discomforts in a way that turned most situations into ones of humor, but not at the expense of the other person. In an interview with the school principal, Mr. Johnston revealed that he had been Dan's basketball coach in his high school years. "Dan was a great basketball player. Lots of hustle, a real sparkplug. He was the kind of guy that made the big play and if he chased the ball out of bounds he would jump over the bench in doing so." This would imply that Dan enjoyed performing before people and this seemed to be true. Certainly in his academic classes he was very much in charge, directing, commanding, teasing, and maintaining a fast but very much controlled pace. Yet, in the community sessions he was quite different. There, he would introduce ideas and topics, would almost always then listen intently, offering only occasional comments until some natural closure seemed reached or called for. At that time he would often summarize and quickly move the group to another topic, generally with enthusiasm and vigor.

Sally was much more empathic, and less verbally forceful in her impact with the classes. She was a highly competent and organized teacher, orderly and more prone to quickly think of

unanticipated consequences to Dan's more enthusiastic suggestions. She was also quick to tease students but she seldom teased Dan in contrast to his frequent jibes towards her. When students were frustrated, she was quick to estimate their level of emotion and would often accurately assess what they were feeling during class discussions. Customarily she would label these emotional states and this had a reassuring effect on those present. Once, for example, the teachers had to make a radical change in the schedule which upset some of the students. Noting their anxiety more from their faces than from anything they had said, she interrupted the class. "Some of you must be very much scared by this change. We've done so much planning that we've ignored the impact of the change on the individuals. I hope you won't be intimidated by this and that you will remain flexible in the face of it." Thus assured that the staff understood what they were feeling, the group was able to dismiss their concerns over the change and move more quickly onto other matters.

In their discussion of the functions of leadership within organizations, Thibault and Kelley[3] suggest that any effective group needs to develop both task leadership and maintenance leadership. The first of these, task leadership, conceptually refers to those functional activities and leader behavior which enables the group to attain its desired collective goals and to operate successfully on or within its environment. Task leadership helps the group accomplish required work and protects it from obstacles

[3]John W. Thibault and Harold H. Kelley, op. cit., pp. 274-275.

placed in its way by the environment. Pressure to attain collective tasks, however, can often unavoidably promote internal conflict, raise anxiety or increase costs for individual members, threatening the organization internally. Maintenance leadership conceptually refers to those acts and processes which release internal tensions, increase rewards for individuals or lower the costs of membership. Thibault and Kelley suggest that it may be more effective to separate those different leadership functions among different members of the same organization.

Such separation developed within Project Involve as Dan and Sally assumed functionally different though overlapping roles. Dan tended to be more task oriented, keeping the group moving toward planning the trips and applying pressure on individuals to join in the exhausting physical exercises. He had major responsibility for planning the academic schedule. If there was a difficulty with the administrators who needed information about the trips or the out-of-class activities, Dan met with them. If a class discussion bogged down about some aspect of trip planning, Dan would move the group toward a decision and manage the floor when extended debates became dysfunctional and frustrating. As one of the students put it, "When Sally talks, people talk. When Dan talks, people listen." But this comment referred specifically to Sally's impact on the larger group meetings. It does not imply at all that she was a less important part of the leadership functions within the organization.

As implied, Dan's orientation toward task accomplishment provoked resentment by some students. As he applied pressure for

the students to become physically fit, or when he was forceful in managing the floor in order to move the group to a decision, this angered some students. During the first weeks, students kept their feelings undisclosed. But Sally was attentive to signs of individual frustration or discontent, and would seek the students out after class discussions. Her naturally empathic skills and inclinations toward affective relationships led her to adopt more of a role of nuturant adult and the students would often seek her out when they were distressed.

Students would often drop by both teachers' desks to discuss matters which they didn't want taken to their families or friends. The teachers encouraged this type of interaction since if offered the opportunity to receive knowledge about how the students perceived the program and since it was also consistent with the counseling orientation through which they viewed the entire program. In keeping with the differences students perceived between Dan and Sally, they tended to take different types of problems to each teacher. Questions about school, careers, colleges or the activities of the group were more often directed to Dan. To Sally, they brought more affective and emotional concerns, family problems, questions about sex, dating, or feelings of failure or anger about school or the program. In time, the students began referring to the program as a "family," relating Dan with male dominance and Sally with female nurturance.

This relationship of personal and individual counseling developed gradually. At first students brought small matters to

discuss. But as their confidence in the relationship with the teachers grew, and as more internal conflicts emerged in the larger group, the counseling became more substantive and more important for maintaining smooth relationships within the program. The teachers were prepared for this by training, though it was not nearly as extensive as that of a professional counselor. They had each read widely and had experienced several workshops to train teachers to use the skills of empathic listening, one set of fundamental prerequisite skills advocated by most counselor training programs. They also had reciprocal access to the professional counselors in Emerson House, with whom they would frequently have private and discrete afternoon discussions about individual students with particularly difficult problems. In these, Mr. Gerstein, Mr. Collizi or Mr. McWheir would suggest strategic approaches for the most troubling situations, and the teachers could thus avoid behaviors with students that might be non-fruitful.

As the counseling relationship developed, it became functional in several ways. The staff was able to gauge the development of the group and to discover what problems individual students might be having with the program. Similarly, they were able to become more familiar with the individual personalities, likes and dislikes of each student. The students found the relationship rewarding, too. Being able to articulate their concerns or fears to adults who would actively listen tended to reduce the intensity of the feelings. It reassured them that difficult situations would not have to be faced alone. And, if the problem were specifically related to the program,

being able to discuss it directly with the staff in effect increased the individual student's power within the organization. He or she was given a direct avenue to the key decision makers and to the two people of highest status in the group.

First Weeks: Student Participation in Decision Making

The staff, however, did not intend to maintain an exclusively hierarchic and teacher dominated organization where teachers controlled all of the power and made all decisions. Even in the initial meetings with students prior to the school year, they stressed that one of the rewards of membership was the opportunity to participate in the decision making and to share in developing the rules relating to behavior and activities. The intent of so including students was to avoid the situation whereby a hierarchy promoted a sense of powerlessness to which students would respond with either apathy or rebelliousness. This was what the teachers believed was a major limitation and unintended consequence of the traditional school. If students were responsible for at least some of the decisions affecting their lives, the staff reasoned, then at least some of the unwanted responses would subsequently discontinue. To engage student participation they institutionalized a large amount of decision making in community meetings.

Half of each four hours of Project Involve was devoted to a community meeting of both juniors and seniors in a single classroom. In these sessions two types of problems were presented by the teachers for the group to deal with. The first of these were

related to planning and coordinating the large group trips. These complicated outdoor expeditions required logistical decisions about where to go, how to get there and how to raise the needed money. Each student, especially the juniors, needed additional training and skills in order to cope successfully with the outdoor environment. This was done through student researched reports, delivered during community meetings to avoid taking time away from academics. The second type of issue brought before the students in the community sessions were those incidents of student behaviors which potentially threatened the group by incurring parental or administrative disapproval. These included violations of school rules or other behavioral improprieties.

Within the traditional school, student behavior was in theory governed by regulations enforced by teachers and subsequently by administrators who possessed sanctions which, again in theory, students wished to avoid. In practice, of course, many students did not find the sanctions sufficiently unpleasant to deter them from cutting classes, leaving the building, smoking in unauthorized places or using forbidden drugs or alcohol. Many of the students entering Project Involve had chronically violated these rules and were accustomed to circumventing or ignoring administrative control.

Within Project Involve, the theory was that most of the power to control behavior rested not with the administration, but with the community of teachers and students. Predictably, all students did not automatically discard past behaviors but sought to determine the nature and limits of their freedom in this new

situation. During the first few weeks of school, no students missed classes assigned to the program but several were caught smoking in unauthorized areas and several left the building during an unassigned period to get coffee at a local diner. The staff anticipated this and were prepared, strategically to capitalize on the situation.

Teachers outside of the program had apprehended the offenders, brought the matter to the attention of the House administrator who in turn carried it back to Dan and Sally, a procedure agreed upon prior to the school year. The staff in turn brought the issue to the group without offering their preferred solutions. To do so would have essentially been no different from procedures in the traditional school.

What the teachers hoped to do was build the belief that power to control its own affairs rested with the entire community. If the students came to believe this, and if the group could maintain consensus about the worthwhileness of membership in the program, then the members would have to over time develop norms and a system of internal control. They knew that the processes of developing norms would require discussions of social control, individual rights, community rights, individual responsibility and ultimately social ethics. Such discussions, the teachers believed, were not only important for the development of the group but were also consistent with the principles of the cognitive and affective goals of the parent school.

The teachers felt that after several days of operation in the program the group was ready to begin tentative discussions of these issues. Thus they brought several incidents occurring over the past two days to the attention of the large community meeting. They did so without anger or adding special inflection to indicate that these matters were of immense proportion. Dan initiated the discussion quite factually. "We have a number of problems. Yesterday morning, two students were coming into the building period one (an unassigned period) and they were apprehended by Mr. Toledo. He brought the matter to me and asked if we wanted to handle the problem ourselves. Added to this is another problem which you all may or may not want to handle. Yesterday, we had a good soccer game but it was obvious that a lot of us aren't in shape. To prepare us for the upcoming trip, which I know we're not ready for physically, I thought it was a good idea for us to take another lap. At least ten students missed that and headed for the school. I am concerned about these things. I told Mr. Toledo that I would bring that up before the entire community and he said he found that agreeable.

The first student comment came from a senior boy. "These rules tend to be a little ridiculous. Not the running but the ones about being in school."

Ellen Braun disagreed. "We've got to take on and show a greater sense of responsibility."

Barney answered facetiously, "We can always lie when we are smoking or leaving school." A number of students disagreed vocally about this. They preferred their actions to be open and forthright.

Ellen continued: "Couldn't we go to an open campus system. They already have something like that at other schools. I think we're old enough to have it here."

Barney became more serious: "Well, we need something. As it is we're putting Dan and Sally on the spot."

Dan: "The problem is not my being on the spot. The problem is with the internal mechanics of the group. We should be willing to live up to our responsibilities to the school as members of Project Involve."

Earl Chappel, another senior, was irritated: "This business of being Project Involve for everything is getting pretty ridiculous. Everything we do seems to be Project Involve."

Ellen returned: "Yeah, but what if we <u>weren't</u> in Project Involve?"

A long pause followed her statement and no one disagreed.

Finally, after perhaps ten seconds, Jack Melchior, an athletic, articulate and quite verbal senior, said: "There's a double standard operating here. Sometimes we want to be considered Involve members and sometimes we don't. But, we've got to remember that lots of times we get a break because we are members."

Ellen: "Well, I see a lot of people in the program who aren't living up to their responsibilities.

Barney: "I don't know about 'a lot of people' but at least some of us aren't. I'm one. But, we have to know what the rules are first. What things are allowed and which aren't?"

Nancy, another senior: "I don't think Dan and Sally should have to do that for us."

Jack replied, "Are you suggesting that it's time for us to have a government?"

This comment referred to a problem troubling the group. When the staff had decided to combine both the junior and senior classes into a single larger organization, they realized that this would make the process of student participation in decision making more difficult. Prior experience had shown that the valuable group discussions, so important for developing agreements, were often quite time consuming and accompanied by frequent and lengthy arguments, even with thirty students. With sixty, each problem would be magnified and the process might become frustrating to the group. Their proposed solution to this problem was to plan a representative government rather than a fully participatory democracy. A committee of students and teachers had met the previous summer and drafted a proposed government with committees of students and teachers to handle each major area of responsibility. These committees would then bring recommendations to the larger community for final resolution, thus preserving the commitment to democratic decision making, but reducing the amount of time required for decisions.

The plan had been formally presented to the community during the first week of school and the teachers and the constitution committee had been surprised at the hostility it provoked. The majority of students had felt that a representative government violated what they understood to be one of the major rewards of membership in the program: full participation in decision making. As many students defined this they did not want any decisions made outside of the light of the entire group. They seemed to have confidence in decisions if they were made in a face-to-face manner with all participants present, but they were suspicious of any occurring in "back rooms" where they might not be present to counter an argument or see which people were supporting which proposal. There were many students who were particularly resentful over the plan to have a "Rules and Disciplinary Committee" which would review situations when members violated community rules. This committee was proposed to have the power to recommend sanctions against the offenders. One student had argued sarcastically, "It looks like a police force to me." Another had said, "It sounds like regular school." Some student members, eager to begin the lengthy preparations for the fall backpack trip, had argued for quick acceptance of the government. But, noting the amount of disagreement, Dan had then suggested that the time was not right for passing the proposal. His advice had temporarily kept the matter from reaching the floor until it resurfaced in Jack's comment during the discussion about students being caught leaving the building.

When the issue of the proposed government arose this second time, Dan again suggested that it be postponed. One chief reason for his reluctance to press for adopting a government was his observation that the seniors had almost totally dominated all community sessions since the opening of school. The juniors had been present but they were silent observers. The seniors were more familiar with group discussion, with the issues facing the community and with each other. They already had a high degree of unity from their previous year and they seemed to better know what matters were at stake and how to handle them. Being newcomers, the juniors watched. Yet, they had joined the program anticipating that they would be full and equal participants. Dan sensed that they would soon become frustrated at their exclusion from what was going on. If this situation continued it would inevitably lead to difficulties in developing a cohesive larger group.

Keeping the juniors and seniors equally involved posed severe problems. During its early formative stages, the combined group faced three difficulties which prevented them from becoming stable and unified. First of all, the large group as yet had no system for regulating these types of student behavior which potentially threatened its comfortable relations with the administrators. It did not yet have either norms or rules acceptable to the majority of students for controlling its members.

Secondly, it was having difficulty creating an effective mechanism which would allow the norms to form through interaction among the participants. The community sessions were designed to

accomplish this purpose, but they were so large that discussion involving the majority of students was unfeasible. A possible alternative, the representative government, was also unacceptable to a large part of the membership because it excluded them from full participation in all decisions. The third possible mechanism for promoting unity, the fall trip, held wide common interest among all students but it could not effectively unify the juniors and seniors.

Collectively planning the trip was intended to promote the desired cohesiveness by focusing everyone's attention on attaining a common goal. It failed to do this for the larger group although it was effective for the groups seperately, for two reasons. First, the trip was not equally regarded by both groups. The juniors were fascinated by its prospects and opportunities, but the seniors regarded it as a pleasant but repetitive experience. They preferred to seek new experiences and challenges and were reluctant to repeat those of the previous year. When the staff had committed the program to using the same curriculum, they had underestimated the ease with which the seniors could carry out the planning and overestimated the amount of junior involvement. This brings up the second point. Planning the fall trip was complicated, but it did not truly require the full participation and effort of sixty students. Faced with familiar experiences, the seniors quickly and satisfactorily did what needed to be done with the unintended consequence that half of the students, the juniors, were unexpectedly excluded from participation. With no superordinate goal to unify the groups,

and with half of the group denied goals they had joined the program to attain, the condition invited apathy or anger to develop within the juniors. If the program was to develop the desired involvement among the juniors they could not continually and systematically be excluded.

The Middle of September: Efforts to Cope with Divisiveness and Keep the Larger Group Together

The differential status between juniors and seniors represented a major line of cleavage which interrupted the attainment of group cohesiveness and threatened to promote hostility. If the group were to survive intact, the staff would have to break down the differences and focus attention on common issues. Their first efforts proved ineffectual. They gave assignments for essays on "Rights and Responsibilities in a Community," hoping to use these as the basis for community discussions. These assignments were new and satisfactory to the juniors but were resented by the seniors who believed that they had spent the previous year mutually resolving those questions. For them, the writing and discussions were redundant, unchallenging and resented. More effectual and realistic measures were needed if the organization were to hold together.

The first helpful solution was suggested by both teachers and students. This was to hold occasional separate community meetings for the different groups. It was argued that this would allow some autonomy from each other, would provide the opportunity

for juniors to begin to manage some of their own affairs and would provide an acceptable outlet for the building resentment. In fact, separate sessions proved quite satisfactory. Being able to meet together gave the juniors a mechanism for releasing their resentment at being excluded by the seniors. Separately they were able to articulate their common plight and thereby begin to establish their own unity independently from the seniors.

In their first separate meeting they revealed the depth of anger they had suppressed. It was opened by Sally who suggested that they could talk about whatever they thought important. Marcia Kline wasted no time in venting her anger. "What I want to talk about is how the seniors ignore the opinions of the juniors. They never give us a chance to talk about anything. I think that they have been really mean." Following Marcia's frankness, the seniors were vilified for twenty-five minutes for excluding the juniors in the community meetings. One of the concluding comments was made optimistically by Luke Bruyn: "There is such an experience gap but things will get better as we gain more experience."

But things didn't. When the preliminary committee meetings were held to allocate tasks relating to the fall backpack trip, the seniors again dominated the sessions and the juniors were spectators. This was to be expected since the seniors had planned and carried out five major trips the year before. Faced with a similar situation, they efficiently told the juniors what needed to be done, or more accurately told each other and ignored the juniors.

The juniors were almost desperate to participate in the affairs of the larger community but there were few opportunities to demonstrate this. One of the few came late in September when Mr. Gerstein visited the class and proposed that the large group accept a new member at his special recommendation. This girl had been in intensive institutional therapy and under his guidance for several years. He made a rather emotional plea for her acceptance. To handle the situation and others which might similarly occur, the community agreed to form a committee of students and teachers to screen new applicants and make recommendations. Two spaces were on the committee for juniors. They met separately to vote and the action was incredibly fast and active. When nominations were opened, Allison Zayre had volunteered to lead the floor. She could hardly keep up with the volunteering hands. Twelve students placed their own names in nomination, hands waving in each others faces, eager to be recognized by the chair. As discouraging as the large community sessions were for them, the separate sessions were equally exciting. Students waited after school, some missing their busses home, while the votes were counted. It was one of their first opportunities to exert their independence and contribute to the larger community. A week later the committee had met and recommended admission for the girl who shortly thereafter was accepted to the program.

It was becoming clear to the teachers that the juniors were much more able to contribute and interact in productive ways in the absence of the seniors. This was quite noticeable in the discussion

which they held to decide the ground rules for behavior which the group would follow on the backpack trip. In past years this series of discussions prior to the trip was regarded as a crucial arena for individuals to argue out issues of individual rights, the consequences of behavior, and the responsibilities of being a member of a community. The session was opened by Sally in the last week of September, three weeks before the trip.

"We are having this session to discuss the rules for the backpack trip. The seniors have already been through this and now we have to focus on ourselves."

Allison was first to volunteer. "I don't see why we have to make any rules about anything. We might as well do everything anyway. We get pegged as peacenik, hippie-types anyway."

Sally answered casually and undefensively. "Well, I think we should examine this very carefully with the majority of us participating to get a lot of views and different perspectives. It will be a majority decision but I think we should focus on consequences.

Chastity Vargas was a generally loud, tough talking and aggressive girl who was frequently in trouble in earlier years of school. She clearly articulated the reward/cost issue at stake. "I don't care if we do get pegged as hippies, but I think if a ranger catches us (using drugs or drinking) and it gets back to the school, no more trips for Involve. No more Involve."

Arlene Byrd, a girl who had done well in school prior to this year, and did not personally use drugs, was sensitive to the

image maintained by the program. "There are enough criticisms anyway. We don't need any more."

Unlike Arlene, Luke Bruyn was currently on court probation following apprehension and trial conviction for using marijuana. He still wanted a reason for not using drugs. "But, we have to decide why we aren't going to allow drugs. Just saying that this will protect us from our parents' criticisms isn't enough. Parents get upset about anything anyway."

Sally expanded the scope of the discussion: "I think that there are a number of issues to be resolved in addition to drugs. We have a problem where sex is misinterpreted very easily. Because we're coed, I have to convince the parents of the worth of things. Our parents come from many different backgrounds. I'm not against sex or love." (No one laughed or even smiled because the issue is sufficiently realistic and the power to decide did seem to rest with the group.) "I am against the consequences of some courses of action. The parents would be upset about coed tenting arrangements. It would come back to the school as people 'sleeping together' and that gets misinterpreted."

Artie D'Angelo seldom spoke before the group. He was tall, silent, long haired and bearded and the students usually listen carefully whenever he joined the conversation. "I think we should set up some rules as a proposal and have discussion of them."

No matter how reasonable the idea, or how high the esteem students had for Artie, the use of rational decision making was alien to the group this early in the year. No one seconded Artie's

suggestion and Marcel Blau took the group in a different direction. Dan had been silent, intently watching as the group listened to Marcel: "We are all members, representative members of Involve. And we are reflecting on all the other members in the program. People are always going to be looking at us and we have to remember who we are." Marcel's comment had implied that people should restrict their behavior to protect others and to protect the group.

Allison responded by trying to estimate how much power for decision really rested with the group, or whether in fact, teachers or administrators had authority over students who do not behave in a way that protects the group. "There is something we have to understand. You and Dan aren't really responsible for us. We are responsible for ourselves." Allison had made this comment as a statement, not as a question, but it was a manner of seeking information about the limits of power and with whom it resided.

Sally responded quickly, "Let me make this very clear. Everybody is responsible to everybody in Involve." She paused and let the words rest. No one argued. "You have to remember that all of us are different individuals and you have to respect privacy and individual rights." Sally's message was that there were individual rights but that they must be coordinated with those of others, in short, a community awareness was necessary.

Several students responded with more comments saying that they should forbid use of drugs in order to protect the program from critics and to allow them to continue to have the trips and the

independence. A few others digressed to express anger at those outside critics who disliked the program.

At that digression Artie brought the group back to the main issues which needed closure. "We'd better get back to the topic. I make a motion that we set down a set of rules to act as a basis for discussion."

This time the effort was successful. Vlad seconded the motion and Arlis Sapata, one of the girls, introduced it to read, "There should be no drugs and no drinking on the trip."

Vlad immediately challenged her, opening the way to a lengthy discussion in which he was the only student who disagreed with the proposed ground rules. Vlad's point was not that he wanted to use drugs, but that he wants the right to make his decision independently of the group. Others argued intensely, pointing out the repercussions if parents or the school were to discover any use.

Darleen Fineman said that if they were caught they would never be able to go on another trip.

Artie argued that use of drugs would have adverse effects on their ability to hike and climb.

Luke Bruyn argued that being under the influence of drugs at home or in the school didn't affect the program but that using them on the trips could jeopardize the whole organization. Bill Hitchcock emphasized that "one good reason not to use them was that the whole program might be lost."

Vlad's continued counter-argument was that the responsibility for such a decision rested with the individual and that the group had

no right to determine the choice. Seven different students outlined what they defined as responsibilities to each other, and reiterated potential costs to individuals and the program. It was quite a remarkable discussion considering the previous junior participation. Twenty-five of the thirty-one students participated, almost all arguing against the use of illegal drugs or drinking, despite the fact that use of marijuana and alcohol was widely spread among the students in the project. In fact, some students believed that all were experimenters. Luke Bruyn asked, "But who in here doesn't smoke?" Several students didn't, but they were reluctant to state that publicly. At that point Sally protected them by saying, "There are some who don't. Don't assume that everyone lives the same way as you do."

Slowly, the group moved toward a vote. Three students tried to close discussion, but Vlad still dissented and the majority were unhappy to end without him publicly agreeing with the obvious majority decision. Vlad solved the problem by volunteering to lead the voting, requesting for a formal motion and receiving it from Artie. The voting went smoothly, 26 in favor, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The next problem dealt with sleeping arrangements, but no discussion occurred and the issue was decided quickly with no one voting against separate tents for boys and girls.

The students were happy to have had the opportunity to make these decisions. Helen Malik had called it "a very valuable discussion" and others had agreed enthusiastically. Dan and Sally were happy, too, for it resembled the discussions which in earlier years

had been so important for laying groundwork for community integration and the development of strong community norms. It appeared that the separate junior sessions were accomplishing the teachers' purposes. The only negative comment about the session even further heightened the value of having the groups separated. This was made by Luke Bruyn who said, "You know, the only trouble is that we already know what we would do. The group last year is doing it, we're doing it. And so it seems useless to talk about it." This was true. The technical unification of the program did make the juniors somewhat influenced by the precedents established by the seniors earlier in the week. This disturbed the staff.

They were even further concerned when the first of the final committee reports was given. Two seniors gave a brief, perfunctory report outlining the trails the group would follow on the backpack trip. They said little more than that they were going to the same place they had been the previous year. This was sufficient information for the seniors, but it was meaningless for the juniors who immediately became angry and for the first time openly complained in front of the joined community session. Previously, they had remained silent, repressed their anger and ventilated it in their separate sessions. The seniors, under attack, quickly became defensive and the feelings became bitter. Fortunately, this occurred late in the day and the students left the building dispirited and confused. This gave the staff the opportunity to discuss what they had been considering: formally separating the group. It was apparent that the important processes for holding

the juniors together were being unavoidably interferred with by the presence of the seniors. They decided to meet separately with the two groups the following day and convince them to divide the larger organization.

At this point in the development of the larger program, the major cleavage was too severe to prevent open conflict. It had not particularly damaged the junior development, since the external discrimination tended to reinforce their mutual interdependence on one another. The seniors, too, were relatively unified internally but their experiential advantage unavoidably set them apart from the juniors. Decision making in a group of sixty was made uncontrollably complex and hence it had become a source of widespread frustration. Students who had wanted to become good friends found themselves angry with each other. And so, despite the best efforts by the staff and the altruistic wishes of the students, continued unity of the larger group was impossible.

Late September: The Groups Separate and the Juniors Pull Together

Both groups saw advantages in a separation. The staff met first with the seniors and convinced them to draft a formal proposal dividing the community. The seniors discussed it and agreed, bringing it to the floor of the next community meeting the following period. After hearing the recommendation, the juniors then met separately to consider the proposal. It meant surrendering the formerly sought goal of an idealized large community but it offered the freedom of self-determination. Their ensuing discussion brought

about a new highwater mark for their own internal unity and commitment to collective action among themselves.

Marcia Klein, a frequently sarcastic girl bitterly called attention to the discrimination they had experienced at the hands of the seniors. She began, "I'm really hurt. I don't understand why I've been treated this way. But, I feel that if I leave the program now that would be a screwed up decision. Everyone thinks they are so liberated here. Age doesn't make a difference, sex doesn't make a difference, color doesn't make a difference. But in here, being a junior makes a difference."

Everyone broke out laughing in welcomed humor.

Bobby D'Arlis was also confused. "I don't understand what we're holding the seniors back from."

Bill Hitchcock: "They shouldn't have to go through the planning of the trips again."

Monica Darby: "I haven't learned a thing from those committee reports."

Allison disagreed. "That's our fault for not making them really good. We should have insisted that they be well done."

Kathy Wollansack: "I see the seniors' point. I came into this program because I was bored with school. I really wanted to do things for myself, not have someone else do them for me."

Chastity Vargas: "I think that it's our own fault. We let them screw things up. It's too late now."

Only a week remained before the fall trip and it seemed too late to plan a separate program, but Chastity's comment triggered a

clamor of disagreement. Many students shouted, "No!" "We can still do it ourselves." Marcel spoke affirmatively: "I think we shouldn't feel sorry for ourselves. First of all, we're so damned lucky to be able to participate in what's going on. I don't even know some of you. Let's get to know each other on our own trip. Do a good job of planning it for ourselves and get on with it."

This cheered the juniors and made them enthusiastic. It had seemed for a few weeks that the program was not going well at all. The reports were disappointing, the group discussions confusing and the trip jeopardized. Now there were cries from the juniors like a college football huddle: "We can do it. Let's do it for ourselves." "Let's meet tomorrow for a planning session to get things done and let's do a good job on the reports and have a really good trip and really pull ourselves together!"

They reported back to Dan and Sally that they found separation acceptable, that they were ready to plan all parts of their trip and were eager to go. Dan assembled the two groups and began final discussion on the vote. Ellen Bruyn, the senior sister of Luke, wanted to argue against the proposed split. To permit this to occur, in accord with their avowed democratic principles, would have been threatening. Though he seldom made comments in community sessions, Dan intervened abruptly. "We've had a day to think this through. I think that's enough!" Ellen was angry, but the requirements of task leadership made this denial of individual rights functional to the group. Without any further discussion

the group passed the proposed separation and began two separate programs.[4]

October: The Fall Trip

For the juniors, the fall trip proved to be both a unifying factor and a conflict producer. A week was hardly enough time for them to complete their preparations for the fall trip, so long anticipated and so universally sought. Of necessity there was virtually a feverish pitch to their sessions in the first weeks of October. Committee reports and group decisions needed to be made on food, tent groups, travel and equipment. First aid supplies needed to be procured from the general fund raised earlier by the combined group in two bake sales. Information and maps of the trail needed to be disseminated so that no one would get lost and so that they would know where to expect water and camping spots.

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[4]The separation of the juniors and seniors represented a new and unanticipated difficulty in conducting this research. The research methodology required close observation and frequent interaction with the members of the program. Since there were now two programs, loosely affiliated, but still only one researcher, a decision of which group to study more closely seemed unavoidable. The original intent of the research had been to trace the behavior of participants as it developed over time, determining how it was functionally related to the alternative structure and the outdoor activities. In the belief that understanding the development of the junior group would have greater potential value for others interested in alternative schools, the decision was made to align more closely with the younger group. After October, the seniors were taught by two different teachers from the school who had experience and interest in alternative education. Dan and Sally remained in contact with the senior students by initiating Monday night seminars. The researcher had some intermittent contacts with the seniors but focused the study on further development within the junior group. Hence, the remainder of the research report applies much more directly to them and their activities.

Such an amount of background study, group decisions and learning about safety and comfort on the trail required the happy participation of virtually everyone. It promoted interaction and cooperation.

The bus departed as planned on October 19th, a welcome and brilliant autumn morning. Even when the weight of the heavy packs was first felt, spirits were high. People groaned because no one had remembered to try them with all the heavy drinking water and fuel. But they were happy. After all, for almost everyone this day was the culmination of weeks of planning and for many it represented the greatest single reason they had volunteered for the program. Within two hundred yards from the trailhead, some had scattered behind and their loud complaints continued up the precipitous ridges and along the rocky and uncomfortable trail until the first night's camping spot was reached. Some had blisters and many were pained by uncomfortable or ill-fitting packs. Some tried to solicit sympathy for the severity of their suffering, while others were disgusted by the slow performance of those who dragged behind. Some were boistrous and bragging about the ease with which they had fared, and others were quiet or efficient about building the fires, setting up the tents and digging the pit latrines needed by the whole group.

By the third day, the disparity of the group members was evident. To some, it was important to be the first out of camp and on the trail. These people prided themselves on their strength and the speed and ease with which they covered the difficult spots of the trail. Others, slowed by blisters or facing difficulties in

self-organization or fitness were chronically late at entering the trail. To these latter fell the task of policing the campsite and putting out the fires. This was much resented by those students, most of whom were girls.

Mike Mooney, a tall, gangly boy on the football team and Phil Jorgenson, a troubled, athletic boy who had an unhappy history of chronic academic failure and running away from home were among those who led on the trail. Others shared their desire to lead: Alex Kennedy, Bobby D'Arlis, and Chastity Vargas all started early in the morning in an effort to be first on the trail. Behind, they left the majority of the group and the lingerers with the responsibilities of cleaning the site.

Anna Koeplinger began to cry in frustration as she faced the many fires which had to be put out, and the trash which needed to be policed. She was angry and so was Kathy English. "They left me with the heaviest things and on the hardest day that we have to walk." Kathy commiserated with her: "They do that so darned often. They shouldn't have done that."

Anna focused her anger on Phil Jorgenson. "Phil's gotta go. What he's on is an ego trip. He's always saying, Mark and me gotta be first. These kids have got to be told off. Here we are sitting down here with all the trash left to be picked up and they are tramping off."

With the exception of Sally and Dan, the only students left in the campsite were the weaker hikers and they were demoralized by facing a strenuous climb and a long hike. At the top of the first

hill, Sally hurried along the trail and caught up with the faster hikers informing them of what was happening at the back of the line. Sally returned with this message: "I talked to those kids who are up front. I told them that what they had done was very unfair and I told them we'd get together tonight and talk with them. I told them Father would speak with them this evening, Mother was talking this morning. They understood that."

Dan smiled for he had been expecting this. He was patient and friendly when arriving in camp and it wasn't until ten o'clock that night that he passed the word that a meeting would start. Unlike the earlier evenings, when there had been no single group campfire, but a series of individual cooking fires, this evening was more of a group meeting.

It was Dan's time to talk and the group respected that, even looked forward to it. He began with a story of an earlier trip with another group and how a private school had refused to help them when they were in need of a telephone. They had been asked to wait outside because their clothes weren't clean. "What they lacked was humanity. And that's what you have. Like when some of you came down and helped with the packs. And someone had helped pick up somebody's sleeping bag when it came off. That's great. I noticed that Alex and Larry helped when Kathy was having trouble. That's the kind of spirit we are trying to build here. There's only one negative and that's not bad. But those of us who were left in the back of the line had to carry a large bag of litter up. I hope

this doesn't happen again. Now, tell me about some of the things you felt today, some of the emotions that you experienced."

The students all wanted to talk at once, and Dan and Sally remained quiet for ten minutes listening to the laughter and stories.

Dan: "It's interesting for Sally and me to watch the frustration levels rising. Anxiety and frustration is definitely building, and when it does, the question is what will you do with it. If you are frustrated, some of you will be bitchy, some of you will start laughing, some will be mad and pointing a finger at someone else. Without this frustration, there can be no growth. There's a reason for this. If you're not frustrated, you will continue to use the same old things and the same old answers you've always used when you face things. You'll never discover that you can accomplish a lot more than you thought. And some of you are already finding some muscles you never thought you had."

The group was happy. It was a good speech, giving Dan the chance to show some of his characteristics they had heard their predecessors speak so well of. They listened attentively, laughing occasionally and smiling often. Dan cracked a joke, told them some of the things their friends might say on the return to school, and referred to incidents on the trail that provoked raucous laughter from the students. He closed with a curious reference to those at the front of the line. "We've already seen some changes in people. On these trips it's not a matter of who finishes first. If that's the game you're in it's the wrong game. Kathy impressed me the most today because she competed with more things than anyone else. Some

of you have been helpful and some have been very selfish. When we look back on this trip, and it may be months from now, you'll see what's happened.

"Oh, there's one more tradition we have in Involve and we do it every year. Everybody in a circle and what we do is give a backrub to the person in front of you." The students cheer and there is a high degree of happiness, evidenced in the smiles, the laughter illuminated by the fire.

The next day was raining and cold. Anna again was in the back of the line, her blisters hurting her severely, but this time Mike Mooney stayed with her and added some of her belongings to his own pack. The Black Stag Inn was the final staging area where the group cheered as each straggler arrived, dripping beneath poncho and pack. Buses arrived and the group was happy to board them, heading for showers and home-cooked food. The trip had been one unifying force for the first month and a half of the year, a goal universally valued by the members. It helped them to overcome conflict and build a degree of common experience. Now, its conclusion and the attainment of one group goal had brought them closer together, but also opened the door for new conflict which was to emerge in the next months.

Retrospection on the First Two Months

Recalling that the original task of both teachers and students was to create and maintain an effectively functioning group to provide rewards of activity and participation, it could be

said that during the first two months the program both succeeded and failed. It failed in that it could not prevent a major line of cleavage from dividing the larger group into two smaller ones. Yet, each group separately succeeded in developing a consensual base which held it together and enabled it to continue to operate and develop functionally.

Several factors promoted the unity within each program. First, the students had all voluntarily been attracted to the program and were eager to participate in the autumn backpacking trip, something quite different from traditional school experiences. Second, that they were able to join an exciting curriculum and still achieve the widely desired goal of graduating with an acceptable diploma. Thirdly, they were able to participate in decision making affecting matters of interest and importance to them, rules governing their behavior and activities of challenge and interest. Fourth, they were able to associate with attractive and empathic adults who knew how to advise them in attaining even more intriguing rewards, publishing their own materials or gaining acceptance to colleges. Fifth, they were able to escape effectively from the penalties and undesirable qualities of the role of student in the traditional school. Collectively, these tended to promote among a sizeable majority of the students a high estimation of potential rewards to be gained from membership.

Of course, they had no way to estimate the negative costs which joining would inevitably bring. The cleavage of the class along junior/senior lines resulted in the younger members being

excluded from desired goals, promoted bitterness, and ultimately led to the division of the program. But, despite the frustration associated with the separation, it was functional for both groups. The perceived discrimination against the juniors promoted their banding together in self defense and gave them the opportunity to interact together and solve a difficult problem collectively. When the final split was unavoidable, it was functional in that it reduced the size of the two groups allowing them to make collective decisions more efficiently with the maximal opportunity for more individuals to participate. In the larger group some people unavoidably were excluded and some opinions overridden because of the need to move on. Had this continued, the situation would have invited apathy and resentment.

The two new smaller organizations were able to sustain a consensus of willing students for other reasons. First, effective task leadership carried out mostly by the staff, but also distributed among students, was able to keep the group moving toward the widely sought goal of the fall trip. Second, effective maintenance leadership largely among the staff correctly diagnosed the source of internal difficulties and was able to move the group to accepting a mutually satisfactory resolution to its problems. Thirdly, the juniors were largely willing to suppress their frustration and keep it from further complicating the community sessions. Three reasons could probably account for this: At first the juniors were newcomers to an established group and were attempting to determine the appropriate manner of behavior. Most people are unwilling to be assertive until they felt comfortable in their

knowledge of sanctions and norms governing behavior. Additionally, their resentment was kept in check by their strong desire to go on the fall backpack trip. Had they promoted conflict it might have jeopardized the group's ability to plan and carry off the trip. More than anything else, the trip represented the central unifying force during their difficulties, for it was widely valued by both juniors and seniors and represented the most vivid and tangible of the rewards of membership. Third, the juniors were able to suppress major conflict in the larger community for a long period of time because their independent sessions were rewarding mechanisms for accomplishing their own goals and for ventilating their frustration. When they were no longer able to withhold their antagonism, the organization was sufficiently flexible to allow the groups to divide successfully.

Looking back at Thibault and Kelley's requirements for a group to form and remain stable, the junior class of the Project was in the process of becoming an effective group. A large portion of the group was happy at the rewards received from membership. They now had both a commonality of experience and the opportunity to interact frequently and intensely. They had a mechanism, the group decision making combined with the outdoor activities, for keeping a majority of members interested and active. The fall trip had promoted tension and internal disagreements, but the members were able to control it initially and to prevent it from becoming open conflict. And finally, the group was developing effective leadership, partly in the alliance of Sally and Dan, and partly among

student members. Collectively, the members were beginning to develop an effective organization from their process of interaction and activity. A degree of cohesiveness was evident, but it would soon be challenged in the next part of the year as new problems emerged.

October to February: The Group Confronts New Problems Internally and Externally

The fall trip had been an effective superordinate goal of high value for almost all members of the junior class. But, once completed, the students no longer shared a centrally important and imminent objective on which they could focus their attention. In the absence of such a goal, the door was opened for the members to confront a new series of both external and internal problems. Some of the problems can be traced to sources outside of the program, to relationships which were important from the beginning of the year for the program to have survived. These were the relationships with teachers, administrators, parents or peers who were suspicious of or hostile to the unusual activities that were part of the curriculum. Intermittently throughout the year problems relating to these sources unexpectedly appeared or the generally stable relationship took an unpredicted and negative turn.

Other problems can be traced to the internal mechanics of the group, to the prolonged cooperative efforts needed to sustain the curriculum. These had predictably led to interpersonal conflict and resentment which broke out on the trail but originated earlier. And problems grew out of the differential expectations and the diversity of interest and value among the thirty heterogeneous adolescents now brought into frequent interpersonal contact.

Whether internal or external, many of the problems had been present from the inception of the program but had been held in check by the influence of the trip or the careful pre-planning of the teachers. Once they began to emerge, the efforts made by the staff and the students determined whether or not these stresses on the organization would damage the program or interfere with the staff's intent of exerting a positive influence on the individual students and the group's dynamics.

From the perspective of group analysis, any problems which reduced the rewards of membership or increased the relative costs for individuals would damage the initial consensus developed during the first two months. Any problems which divided the student's agreement about the purpose of belonging to Project Involve would similarly threaten consensus and promote instability. Any problems which interferred with the further development of mutually protective norms would expose the program to internal divisions or the disapproval of external critics. In the face of difficulties, the students and teachers would have to sustain the leadership that had thus far successfully coped with the surrounding environment, including the teachers, administrators, parents and the rules and role relationships that were part of the parent school. And, finally, if the group were to continue to succeed, the members would have to continue to develop the mechanisms, activities and relationships that kept internal frustrations and conflict from becoming destructive.

In the sections that immediately follow, each of the real or potential problems encountered by the group is discussed separately, outlining the nature of the difficulty it posed and tracing the ways in which the teachers and students responded over time. Of course, organizing the discussion into discrete problems would make it appear that both problems and their solution were more isolated and perhaps more rationally approached than they actually were. Some of the problems were less complicated and were more easily or efficiently resolved. But most were complex and intertwined, one problem compounding another, one solution effective in one situation being equally effective in another. And no problem was resolved quickly or permanently. The teachers wrestled with most of the external problems throughout the year. And the entire group struggled with the most difficult of the internal issues during the fall and early winter months of October, November, December and January.

Effective Leadership Reduced Real or Potential Problems with the External Environment: Administrators

For Project Involve to operate in Herman Melville High School, the staff needed the sustained support of administrators in the building and the school district office. This was initially achieved long before the school year began and can be clearly traced to the origins of the program five years before. Administrative cooperation had been needed to develop the special schedule which brought the students together for four consecutive periods with the same teachers. Permission had been needed for the

group to leave the building frequently and for extended periods of time. Administrative help was needed to construct the unusual system of grading and evaluation which was important if the curriculum were to be significantly different from the traditional school. And their support was needed when other teachers or administrative critics brought their concerns to the building office rather than taking them directly to Dan or Sally. This breadth of assistance was present from the program's inception.

Two key administrators, the Headmaster for Guidance, Mr. McWheir, and the Building Principal, Mr. Johnston, were originally participants in planning the program. This did not mean that all of the other building level administrators had been equally supportive. One, in fact, was hostile to it on the grounds that disruptive students needed "firm discipline, not educational frills." But Mr. McWheir and Mr. Johnston occupied the key levels of responsibility within the traditional hierarchy and power structure of the school and they were thus able to both initiate the program and shield it from the criticism of others. To reduce the disruption that the unusual activities might promote within the building, they placed the program in Emerson House where the teachers and staff were more receptive and supportive toward both educational experimentation and close student/teacher relations. This type of support reduced the points of conflict between the program and the rest of the school. And the fact that it was made by the two administrators with the most responsibility in the building discouraged critics from carrying their objections to higher authority.

It was unlikely that someone would approach the Superintendent with their concerns since no conflict emerged that was serious enough to risk incurring the resentment of either Mr. McWheir or Mr. Johnston.

These two men also had paved the way for support by the personnel in the central district office. Together with Dan they had originally prepared rationale and description of the concepts for the superintendent, who, though not enthusiastic, had agreed to allow it to begin as an experiment. Once underway the curriculum began to attract a favorable reputation beyond the local district and those central office administrators who might have been skeptical found the publicity placed the district in an attractive light. They were able to demonstrate to other administrators that the Stoneham Schools were taking assertive steps toward solving some problems chronically faced by most secondary schools.

Maintaining good relations on the building level and with the district offices was also made easier by the fact that Dan had graduated 15 years before from the Stoneham High School. At that time Mr. McWheir and Mr. Johnston had been teachers and coaches and Dan had been an outstanding student, a fine athlete, and president of the student government, which Mr. Johnston supervised. Once they became administrators, Dan's past record indicated to them that he would be a responsible, articulate and energetic leader of the Project.

Five years after the program had begun, two new administrators and a guidance counselor had assumed direct responsibility for the Program. These were Guidance Housemaster Mr. Gerstein,

Administrative Headmaster Mr. Levy, and Guidance Counselor Mr. Collizzi. Being unfamiliar with the program and lacking the personal knowledge of Dan, the relationships with each of them needed to be cultivated and maintained. Dan did this carefully and earnestly throughout the year.

He followed strategies that would lead, in his estimation, to a personal, open and horizontal communication flow between himself and each of these administrators. If this were accomplished, both parties would know each others' concerns and be able to take action to avoid problems. Initially, he met separately with each new person and outlined the objectives, rationale and activities of the program. He asked for their suggestions. He invited Mr. Collizzi to attend the fall trip to "Get to know the kids better." Thereafter, he met with each frequently after school to inform them of new activities the group was planning and to ask for potential problems which could be circumvented. Each administrator was given an open ended invitation to attend the community meetings, to attend a trip or to drop in the room at any time. From the counselors he would ask for advice about individual students in an effort to involve them in the student's development and to assure them that the program had therapeutic potential for dealing with the problems of troubled adolescents.

Of the three administrators, Mr. Levy had the greatest power to permit the program to continue or to restrict its activities. Fully aware of the importance of Mr. Levy's approval, Dan was cautious and thoughtful about their relationship. As with his

relations with students, Dan comfortably joked with him, teased him and met often with him after school. After their first few meetings, Dan gave him a personally and thoughtfully selected poster for his office, one drawn by an Israeli artist, containing a quote from the Talmud about "building a better and more ethical world." Both men were Jewish.

Dan made sure that Mr. Levy possessed information about each of the proposed major activities ahead of time to ensure that, if something went awry, he would be aware of the issue and something of its history. When the two men met, Dan was always well prepared, presented his agenda concisely and listened attentively when Mr. Levy began one of his often lengthy but always amusing stories. This is not to imply that Mr. Levy was unaware of Dan's efforts to seduce his administrative support. Once, Dan suggested that they have a drink together to discuss a problem with the program. Mr. Levy laughed and countered, "How about an ice tea here in my office?" Both men then laughed and Dan refocused their attention on the issue. Their relationship was a healthy standoff which required Dan to anticipate difficulties before Mr. Levy would point them out.

Dan was less careful about his relationship with the guidance staff. He had cultivated a supportive relationship with Mr. Collizi by inviting him to attend the fall backpack trip, but he had failed to inform him of the unusual policies of deferring grades for Involve Students until mid-year. Attending to his guidance responsibilities, Mr. Collizi arrived at Dan's room one day agitated about not having

grade reports from Project Involve. Dan hastily explained the situation and rationale, and Mr. Collizzi understood but was irritated at not being informed earlier. In another situation, where Mr. Collizzi may not have had the positive predisposition toward the program or where the support was not present at higher administrative levels, this lapse in the generally effective communications may have had more serious or negative impact.

Another incident illustrated the importance of developing the communication and information network to prevent critics from damaging the curriculum or the freedom of the program. In late fall Dan made contact with instructors from a school that taught mountaineering techniques for educators. He arranged for them to come to the high school and provide instruction for the students in the Project prior to their winter backpacking trip. This involved placing ropes safely anchored on the roof of the gymnasium and allowing the students to practice rapelling and climbing, skills used to overcome steep and icy trails. Though the activity was quite safe under the expert guidance of the team of instructors, it appeared to the uninformed to be spectacularly dangerous. Dan had informed Mr. Johnston, Mr. McWheir and Mr. Levy about the activity and they had given their approval. Unfortunately, on the day that the excitement was to occur, all three administrators were called to a closed meeting with the central office staff about another matter. The sole administrator left with responsibility for the building was the Housemaster of another division of the school, the same person who was so suspicious of the program being an "educational frill."

Evidently, no one had informed him of what to expect and, seeing the climbing apparatus and the students descending a thirty foot vertical wall, he became frightened and called the Assistant Superintendent for Buildings and Grounds. This man arrived on the scene quickly and insisted that the activity stop immediately. Dan requested an impromptu meeting to discuss the issue and, when pressed for reasons that the activity should be stopped, the Assistant Superintendent mentioned that, safety aside, the building was in danger of damage by the students and the strangely clothed mountaineering instructors.

Carefully avoiding anger, Dan resorted to persuasive and articulate discussion to change the man's mind and to avoid disappointing the students who thought that the activity was a high moment of the year. Dan patiently outlined again the rationale and purposes of the entire program, demonstrating that the day's activity was part of a consistent and well reasoned plan for stimulating the very students who had formerly represented a real physical threat to the building by their previous vandalism. Avoiding an angry argument, he was effective in manipulating the situation and successfully resolving it in his favor. He indicated in a later interview that had the administrator not changed his mind, Dan would have suppressed his resentment to avoid confrontation. To do so would have perhaps jeopardized the future support and escalated resentment toward him or the curriculum. Dan generally chose carefully the grounds on which he wanted to fight, weighing present issues against a strategic awareness of the vulnerability of the

program. This awareness, his planning, his maintenance of a personal communications system, and his verbal ability at times of disagreement with administrators were clearly part of the task leadership needed to control the environment in which the program existed.

These examples of Dan's leadership had a complex and generally positive effect on his relationship with the students. Such incidents as the one that occurred when climbing the gymnasium walls as well as the other visible interactions with Mr. Levy, Mr. McWheir and Mr. Toledo demonstrated that Dan had the important and valuable power to intercede on behalf of the students. He had articulately challenged and overcome the arguments of people who possessed the legitimate power to restrict or deny what many students thought were the most attractive activities of the program. Such ability to protect the program from administrative interverence lay beyond their control and Dan thus assumed an increased importance and esteem in their eyes. It also led to a greater dependence on him for attaining group rewards. His effective assumption of task leadership increasingly led the students to perceive the program to be "Dan's program." Dan was dominant, male and task oriented. Sally, who met less visibly with the administrators, was his empathic, female, maintenance oriented colleague. Successfully resolving the potential problems with the administrators reinforced the student perception of Project Involve as a "family" rather than a high school classroom. As long as the same administrators remained in the school and as long as Dan was able to manage the unforeseen or odd

occurrence, the "family" was able to survive in the school, shielded and reinforced by its relationship with administrators.

Effective Leadership Reduced or Prevented Real or Potential Problems with the External Environment: Other Teachers

Protecting the program from the criticism of other teachers was also important since their complaints could make administrative support more difficult to obtain. Also, many of the students in Project Involve were enrolled in classes with other teachers and if the program caused too many difficulties the students could become vulnerable to their anger or resentment. Dan and Sally both were careful to reduce potential conflicts with their professional colleagues and thus protect the reputation of the program among the faculty.

There were one hundred and thirty-five faculty members on the staff of Herman Melville, heterogeneous in age, training, teaching skill and philosophy. Naturally, among them were some who opposed the program on purely philosophical grounds. Take for instance, Mrs. Alonzo, a corpulant, unsmiling woman in her late fifties who taught English. She simply did not believe that anything of importance or value could occur in a class in which students often sat on a carpeted floor, engaged in large group discussions, used non-standard English, or perhaps worst of all, left the physical seat of learning for prolonged periods of time. "I'm from the traditional atmosphere," she explained. "We are supposed to be giving these kids skills. We are supposed to be preparing them for the future, giving them structure and academic skills. Going through

the corridors, these kids (Project Involve) run out of the room and into somebody, never saying excuse me or please. I think they should all be ladies and gentlemen. Maybe I shouldn't say anything because I'm not in there but I see what's going on. We go by and we see those kids sitting on the floor and strumming a guitar. (This occurred two hours, two days with one student during the year). I guess that has some value someplace but I don't know where. And the language. Kid's don't have to use profanity to communicate. Kids aren't supposed to behave that way. . . . I generally object to their behavior in its entirety. On the other hand, these kids seem to like the program and I guess that's saying something. They never liked anything before."

Any program as unusual as Project Involve would unavoidably attract the complaints of some teachers such as Mrs. Alonzo, who would prefer students to be compliant, orderly and genteel. Her resentments were based by her own admission on limited evidence yet she was willing to form conclusions about the general behavior and operation within the program from having observed a single student playing a guitar one day on a free period. But, any program would attract the disapproval of some teachers. Generally, such criticism was dampened by the fact that the more conservative teachers worked in other parts of the school building and thus seldom had contacts with any of the students from Project Involve.

But there were some teachers within Emerson House, in which the program operated, who would voice doubts or objections if asked, and these people represented a more serious threat. Several points

of conflict led them to resent parts of the program or perhaps individual students within it. One issue was the noise and disruption caused when the group would leave the building for a day bicycle trip or for running on the track. These exits did not necessarily occur at the change of periods for the rest of the school. The disruption did not appear to interfere with the teachers directly but rather it would often stimulate comments from other students who were in class and would either derogatorily or with envy notice the thirty Involve students leave. Because of the physical placement of the Involve rooms, this might attract the attention of perhaps four other classrooms.

Mrs. Hennessy occupied one of the rooms adjacent to those used by the program and she was on generally friendly but not close terms with Dan. She explained how the program caused her some difficulty. "This morning I was teaching and some of the P.I. students came by making noise. Now that's hard on my kids. I run a regular classroom. Most of the P.I. kids are really nice. And some of them have come in and apologized for making noise and that's appreciated. But, some of the P.I. kids just don't seem to respect the fact that there are others in the school. Sometimes I do feel that their attitude is not fair. Not disrespectful, because I don't want to say that. But they don't seem to feel that they fit under the rules of the school. And my classes will say 'How come we can't do that?' or 'They don't ever do anything except go biking.' I think the communication could be better. I don't think it's my

place to take class time to explain what P.I. is trying to do. I think I'll tell Dan about that."

This, of course, was the response that Dan sought to promote when conflicts occurred. If the teachers would approach him directly with their complaints, it would avoid the program becoming an irritant to the administrators. Dan could reassure the teacher, listening carefully to them for both content, which he could further use for solving the problem, and for affect, to determine whether the person was a serious critic and how deeply concerned they were about the problem. The content of the complaint could then be carried back to the community meetings where it would become the subject of discussion about responsibility to the group and could lead to behaviors that would reduce the problem. Dan needed to be judicious about confronting the students with these reports, for it could increase their existing resentment toward the parent school and the traditional teachers. If the teachers would bring their complaints directly to him, he could select the most appropriate time to present the matter to the group.

Another issue which disturbed some faculty members related to the student attitude toward traditional school. During the early months of school, some students became irritated and impatient about the one or more classes that they were enrolled in which had more orthodox teachers or teaching methods. They expressed their unhappiness either directly to the teacher or by becoming lethargic. Most of the teachers involved promptly brought this to the attention of Dan or Sally, again a practice which Dan encouraged and developed

over the several years of the program's history. In most cases this was an effective technique leading to a resolution of the problem. Dan would initially and interestedly listen to the concerns of the teacher and wait until their resentment had been ventilated. Then he would explain that this was a common experience with some of the students "during the first part of the year." He encouraged the teacher not to tolerate the behavior and to explain concisely to the student what the realistic consequences of the behavior would be. Dan then promised to bring this to the direct attention of the student and to help them in overcoming their self-defeating attitude, asking the other teacher to monitor the student through the year and to note any signs of improvement. The strategy was to defuse the teacher's anger initially, and then elicit their aid in helping the student to realistically cope with the situations of his school-life.

It would be unrealistic to expect all teachers to join Dan in his efforts at lengthy modification of behavior through personal counseling. But, most of the teachers were reassured by Dan's interest in the situations they brought to him and by his suggestion that they not be bullied by the students in the Project. Most of the teachers in Emerson House had a great amount of respect for Dan's willingness to work with students that they had been unsuccessful with and they had a positive regard for his demonstrated past success at working with "those kids." Several came to him occasionally for suggestions about how to handle other students experiencing trouble with school but not necessarily in Project Involve. Dan described

this as a result of his conscious strategy in dealing with the faculty. "Over the years I find myself saying less and less at faculty meetings, restraining myself even if I want to talk. But simultaneously, I find that when I speak, more people listen and more carefully."

In dealing with the students' discontent with parts of the school, Dan occasionally had to intervene directly to prevent them from damaging the carefully constructed relationship with other teachers. Once, two students had observed a teacher smoking in an unauthorized area. Perhaps if the teacher had been well liked by the students the issue would not have concerned them, but the person was known for his strictness in making students adhere to the policies of the building. Jack suggested that a photograph be taken of the violation and published in the school newspaper. Dan was present as the students first reported the incident and he suggested that there were cases of hypocrisy in the enforcement of school rules by students. Taking this to mean that Dan supported both their idea and their resentment, B.J. began to get his camera. "Hold it," Dan intervened. "There are things that need changing and there are ways to change them. But doing what you guys are proposing is committing political suicide." The two boys looked at each other and had second thoughts. "Yeah, you're right," B.J. said and the boys dropped the matter. Had Dan not been present the idea may still have developed and in their zeal the students might have opened the program to bitter and considerable criticism.

Another type of problem developed from the fact that Project Involve demanded a considerable amount of time that the students had normally devoted to other activities, either curricular or extra-curricular, in the school. Some teachers naturally disliked having the students absent from their classes during the extended trips. This was unavoidable, as Dan saw it, since he believed that the rewards and social processes relating to the trips were essential to the program. He personally and privately discounted the seriousness of the objection, believing that "students could miss half of the year and not suffer in their cognitive learning." But he conceded that the teacher feelings were important and he thus restricted both the number of trips and their duration. The students were encouraged that they were responsible for making up any work that they missed.

Taking another test or doing a homework assignment late presented no obstacle for most students or teachers. But, the students found that it was not always so possible to maintain full participation in their extra-curricular activities. Bill Hitchcock, Mike Mooney, Sal Capaletti and Artie D'Angelo were on varsity teams as were Chastity Vargas and Joanne Friedman. Luke Bruyn, Bobby D'Arlis and Al Boudreau were in dramatics and Arlene Byrd was active in junior class government. Most of the teacher sponsors did not object to their being absent; some in fact supported the trips, but the football coach did not. When presented by a request from Bill, Mike and Sal to miss four days of practice and still play in Friday night's game, he retorted, "What do you want to do? Play football

or put up pup tents?" Bill and Mike still wanted to go on the camping trip and agreed to sit on the bench for the game. This was easier for them since they weren't starting players. But Sal was angry. He attended the trip, sat on the bench during the game and resigned from the team the following week. Interestingly, this incident was one of many that plagued the football coach that season, culminating with the resignation of the entire starting team just prior to the Homecoming Game with the neighboring rival high school. Later in the year, after a disastrous season, he approached Dan for some suggestions about how to better manage his players.

In the same ways that Dan managed the objections raised by administrators, he was successfully able to restrain the most important difficulties and conflicts with other teachers. His strategy was to deal with them directly when problems arose. He would mollify the complaintant, offer the suggestion that the situation would improve, work to eliminate or reduce the points of conflict, and carry the issue back to the individual student in personal discussion or before the large community. He carefully chose when he would disagree and when he would argue. He was openly receptive to criticism, relying on his reputation and history of success to keep many disagreements from becoming serious.

Of course, the obvious differences between the Project and the rest of the school opened it to humorous teasing, as well as criticism. Other faculty would often ask, "Will there be speed limits for bicycles in the halls this year," or "If the P.I. students

can bring their bicycles into the school, can I bring mine in and ride it in the faculty room?" The continuous assault of these comments could have irritated a serious and innovative program director who devoted weekends and nights to making his curriculum work more smoothly. But, Dan would respond with equal humor or with silence and smiles. With serious problems potentially present, these comments were not ones to make issues over.

As with the relationship with the administration, the ability of Dan to overcome or mediate the objections of teachers had a generally positive effect on his dealings with the individual students. From the teacher complaints about specific students, they were able to more accurately understand the types of difficulties the students had with school. These were discussed in individual counseling where together they would examine the ways in which the individual had been self-defeating and they could establish personal goals which would be more self-serving. The knowledge gained from other teachers could be used to make the student/teacher relationship more personally helpful, although it also made the students more vulnerable and exposed before the knowledge possessed by the two already observant adults.

By the manner in which Dan used the teacher complaints about the large group he was also given power to influence the development of the group and its norms. Exposing the students to the visible criticism of potential enemies made them aware of the program being vulnerable, and made them aware that their behavior influenced how others regarded Project Involve. This led most students to understand

the need for developing and adhering to norms which would protect the program from its opposition.

Management of Real or Potential Problems With the External Environment: The Parents

An almost identical dynamic was stimulated by the concerns and criticism originating in the parents' fears that the innovative program might not be the best possible education for their children. It was unlikely that the parents would band together in collective opposition to the Project, which the teachers could more easily have done. The parents were too heterogeneous in outlook and value to organize themselves. But they didn't need to join together to promote tension within the program. As individuals they could simply withdraw their child or telephone the school and make life difficult for the administrators by complaining. Consequently, Dan sought to protect himself and the student membership from the anticipated questions and fears which the parents would raise.

The most common concern of the parents was whether Project Involve would prepare their child for further education or a respectable career. Many of the parents had high aspirations for their children attending college. Mr. and Mrs. Byrd, whose daughter had previously done well in school and was uninvolved in either drinking or drug use, wanted to be sure that Arlene would receive the academic challenge and skills to ensure she would do well once she left home. This same concern was shared by Anna Koeplinger's parents who had seen their daughter in the past few years become increasingly uninvolved with school, skipping classes and sometimes

missing school entirely. Anna's parents were professional people. Her father was a hard working and conservative teacher in a neighboring school district and like most parents he wanted his child to do well in school and to go on to succeed in college.

To reassure their concerns about the academic potential of the curriculum, Dan met with the parents long before the year began. Never promising that their child would do as well, he would still point out that the past history of academic success achieved by the Involve students was enviable. Ninety-five percent had been accepted to post-secondary education and were continuing to do well. This was reassuring to the parents but Dan went further. He carefully explained that the curriculum was quite different, and he described in detail the rationale, goals and specific activities which were part of it. He stressed that there would be times when their children would come home visibly agitated or upset. His previous experience had taught him that many students would go through a period of anxiety and anger toward other students and perhaps at times question the value of the program itself. Dan explained "that this was to be expected as students wrestled with their responsibility and choices available within the program." This forewarning of the parents prevented most of them from being surprised when their children did become introspective and frustrated.

In this and other public meetings with the parents, Dan and Sally were both careful to present the program in a way that had the broadest possible appeal. In Dan's words, "There are groups that raise questions about what we do but most of these spring out of an

ideology. I can help the conservative person, for example, the person of rather puritanical background who values hard work, long-term pursuit of a goal, a process of difficulty, challenge, who values the idea of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. This person can look at the program and see these elements. On the opposite pole, I might get a highly liberal person, even with radical ideology, that would favor flexibility, open personal relationships between students and teachers, off-campus kinds of activities, a program in which students have a part in their educational destiny and, if they look at the program closely, they can see elements of that. Politically, the program is able to string its tightrope between these extremes. . . . One of the biggest threats is misunderstanding. . . . This can happen because we try not to walk around saying 'Hey, look at what we're doing!' We try to keep a low profile and consequently some people don't understand what we're doing. This leads to misunderstanding. But, when the concerns arise, we can usually resolve them if we are there to present our rationale."

The parental concern with academics was understandable and Dan was sympathetic. He did not design the program to be non-academic. After all he was a professional teacher with a deep interest in learning and knowledge. But, as earlier explained, he reduced the academic stress within the first two months to avoid discouraging those students who had not previously succeeded with tests, papers or teachers. Thus, the first part of the year was to be more physical and active, with the latter part devoted to more academic matters. Dan welcomed the parental interest in academics,

since he knew that if he were patient, the students themselves would begin to internalize their parents' wishes and bring the issue to the attention of the larger group. It wasn't that the parent interest in academics was unwanted, but rather the problem for Dan was to control how and when that pressure would be exerted on the class to have an effect.

Several of the parents were impatient with the process or never clearly understood it. Noting their daughter's lack of homework during the first few weeks, and observing that she was happy about going to school, Arlis Zapata's parents became concerned. "Kids aren't supposed to be happy about going to school and they are supposed to be doing homework. . . . I was really concerned at first when Arlis came home and told us that the first day of school she had gone on a run and then gone swimming. They didn't do that when I was in school. And then I became kinda concerned when Arlis was working too hard for the program, baking four cakes for the bake-sales (for the trip). It was just all impressions. She hit us with the picture of having a good time. Running down roads, going swimming, having encounters with one another. These things were just totally unrelated to school or at least how we saw school. The schools try an awful lot of innovation and experimentation but it just doesn't always seem to work out. This just seemed to be another experimental program and the other thing was the influence of the peers. One kid influences another. That's the way things are."

After a week, Mrs. Zapata had called the school and asked that Arlis be taken out of the program. She spoke with Mr. McWheir

who asked, "Have you consulted Arlis about this yet?" Mrs. Zapata: "Well, that really did it. I got angry with him. I said that as a parent and as a teacher we both had responsibility. But, his ends at 2:05 and mine goes on forever. My feeling is that if a kid has problems, the school should call the parents. That's the parents' responsibility, not the schools."

The situation needed Dan's best arguments. He telephoned the family and arranged to meet with Sally and the Zapatas at their home, with Arlis not present. He then suggested another alternative which had frequently proven valuable before: having the skeptical parents telephone other parents who had had students in the program in previous years. Several times during the year, this technique proved to be invaluable and surprisingly powerful. It wasn't often needed, but when it was it was invariably successful. In general, the parents had a high degree of confidence that Dan, Sally, and the other teachers were competent professionals. But, once that confidence was lost, the teachers and the whole school quickly lost their credibility, as though a dam had burst. At these times, which occurred infrequently, Dan would turn to an informal network of parents linked by jobs, church membership, shopping centers and beauty parlors. This network had great authority. Mr. Zapata spoke with another parent and the situation was immediately and completely reversed. "Mr. D'Angelo talked with me. He's had a daughter and a son go through the program. If he said it's O.K., then the program is O.K."

This same network was used to help reduce another concern which many parents shared. They feared that by belonging to the program their children were labeled as "potential dropouts." Despite the fact that Arlis had frequently missed school the year before and that Anna had frequently cut classes, their parents were reluctant to admit that their children were having difficulty with school. In fact, Mr. Koeplinger had to be forcefully and angrily disputed by his wife before he would acknowledge that his daughter was not succeeding as a student. It was embarrassing to admit to their academic failure and it was frightening to imagine their children in a program with others who had probably more serious problems. As Mrs. Zapata said, "Picture us when we hear that the program is for potential dropouts. You're tempted to take your child out. But, I know that the program is different now. Talking with some of the parents. Mr. D'Angelo works with John and we called up Mrs. LaSalle who goes to our church. Well, she was so enthusiastic that we decided to keep Arlis in the program. Otherwise she would have been out that first week."

The students themselves weren't totally powerless to reduce their parents fears and overcome their objections. Once they discovered their parents' worries, students like Arlis lost her naivete and began to edit what information her parents would receive from her. Other students were bolder. When her father criticized the amount of time spent outside of school buildings (he was a teacher), Anna simply struck where the vulnerability was greatest: she

threatened to drop out of school unless he stopped criticizing the program.

Another potential source of parental fear and concern lay with the possible use of drugs, drinking or coeducational sleeping on the trips. Surprisingly this issue was quickly and imaginatively resolved when the parents agreed to allow their children first to join. In the first meetings Dan had stressed the fact that the program was designed to allow students to assume responsibility under the guidance of the teachers and at a time when the students were still living with their parents, theoretically under their beneficial influence. This message had struck a sensitive note among the parents who knew that sooner or later their children would be leaving. Two in fact refused to live with their parents and already had apartments with friends. The parents' reasoning was "now or later." As Mrs. Byrd stated, "Our philosophy as parents is to ease them into responsibility now and not waiting until some college comes up miles away and we don't know what they are going to be up to. We have some trouble pinpointing what she is going to do (in the program), but that doesn't make me uncomfortable. That's because I trust Dan and Sally."

In dealing with the parents, Dan's strategies were similar to those used with other possible critics: anticipate problems; prepare people for them, use active listening when criticisms occur and rely on personal persuasion. He was aided in his effort with the parents by the students themselves, the support of the administration and the surprisingly effective backing of other parents.

Like the handling of the administrative and teacher problems, dealing with the parents had effects on the internal mechanics of the student group. The parental concerns gave Dan and Sally insight into the background and value system in which the students had lived for sixteen years, observations which they could use to guide their personal counseling with individuals. The parental concerns were also used to further the community discussions and deliberations about drug use, drinking or general misbehavior on trips. Those students initially inclined to disregard parental values were confronted by the fact that some of their new friends would be jeopardized by such behavior. Were it ever discovered that rules were avoided or broken, Arlis, Darlene Fineman or Arlene Byrd would be removed from the program by their parents. The only way to avoid that risk was to restrict the unwanted behaviors. This was exactly what Dan and Sally had hoped would occur when they planned the heterogeneity among the student body. The group discussions, in which the parents were really almost participants, would initiate the norms and awareness of responsibility among the group.

Management of the Real or Potential Problems with the External Environment: Peer Relations

The members of the program also experienced problems with other students in the school. As in most other high schools, the students in Project Involve attached considerable importance to their membership in informal cliques of peers with whom they shared time, interests and social activities. In fact, the selection process

used by the teachers had inadvertantly brought two of these informal groups into the program virtually extant, an unforeseen and unintended fact which promoted internal difficulties discussed later. But, when they entered the program, the majority of students still maintained close friendships with several students not participating, their friends whose esteem was sought and whose opinions were valued.

Coleman and Gordon[5] suggest that the informal peer groups maintain their importance among students because they constitute the social system from which adolescents receive rewards of status, influence and esteem. Coleman suggests that the school and its teachers have limited power to influence the values or behavior of students unless it can offer rewards which are equally attractive as those achieved from the peer groups. As the students became involved and excited about belonging to Project Involve, their membership had the potential for realigning their relations within the peer groups, especially among those groups who shared a norm which placed little value on being a student or about being excited about attending school. The program also competed with the peer groups for the student's free time. It broke from the traditional school schedule and thus prevented the students from meeting their friends between classes and during lunch. For those students who were becoming attracted to the rewards of membership in the program, the potential

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[5]For further insight into the peer group relations maintained by adolescents see James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), and C. Wayne Gordon, The Social System of the High School (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957).

was developing for conflicting allegiances to two referent groups, their friends and the program.

This was regarded as serious business by the students, who were concerned that the program maintain a good name among the rest of the student body in the school, particularly their close friends. The separation and the unusual activities provoked resentment and teasing from other students which very much upset them. One morning Carol Welch arrived at school angry. "You see this bandana? (an inexpensive western style handkerchief knotted stylishly around her neck. None of the other girls in her friendship group wore them. Carol was experimenting.) Well, when I got on the bus this morning, this friend of mine says, 'Is that some kind of a symbol?' and I said, 'Symbol?' and she says, 'A symbol for P.I.' I just said my famous phrase, 'Eat shit!' It really bugged me."

This sort of teasing and sometimes genuine misunderstanding by their friends was reported in community meetings. When it first arose, Dan mentioned that "This may be a very important lesson for each of us. This may be the first time in your life that you've been discriminated against." Yet, Dan and Sally did not have the power to intervene directly with the peer groups in the same way that they could ease a solution with parents, teachers or administrators. The students, many of whom were quite genuinely in conflict over the matter, found their own solutions.

Bill Hitchcock revealed the dilemma faced by many of them. Since elementary school his interests had been largely devoted to competitive athletics and most of his friends were on teams with him.

These particular athletes had little interest in classroom activities, in nature study, the arts or drama. They liked sports and were rather limited in their tolerance for other things. One school day, the English classes from Emerson House had the opportunity to hear and interact with a poet who came to the school as part of an "Artist in Residence Program" supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. Dan brought the P.I. class to the library loft where, on the carpeted floor some eighty or ninety students from different classes surrounded a youthful, pony-tailed, bearded young man who had recently returned to the United States after a trip to Nepal and India. His legs were crossed and he was wearing jeans, a flowered shirt, and a beatific smile. About six boys from the football team, including Bill, were seated in the back of the group and one of them said under his breath, "Freaky son-of-a-bitch. What do we have to listen to this shit for?" Their teacher was seated behind them and was visibly annoyed, both at the boys and at the shoeless poet. The poet ingored the comment and read from his work, mostly brief poems about nature and the simplified life praised in some Oriental philosophies. Three of the football players tried to sneak out of the back of the room but were arrested by the hard glare of their teacher, "We'll all be going in a minute." One of the boys mumbled something under his breath and the other boys laughed. But not Bill. The teacher ignored the scene, afraid that the boys would create a larger disturbance. The poet was in his final piece and afterward asked for questions. Five of the P.I. students eagerly began to ask questions, since they were also writing

poems about nature, having completed the fall trip. This annoyed the other students who were restrained by the questioning and hoped the morning would end quickly. But, more of the Project students began to ask questions and the only hope of the football players was to simply bolt. They headed toward the door as a group and Bill was left standing between them and the poet, not wanting to leave either group. When the two groups decided to react differently to the same stimulus, Bill was left in conflict and was literally saved by the bell which rang at that moment. This gave him the opportunity to remain discretely with the poet and the P.I. students while the football players exited in the crowd from the library.

Interviewing Bill later about the commotion in the back of the room, he said "The guys who were jeering were making fun of the poet because he seemed like such a typical hippie. I was sitting with them when I came in because I play ball with them. When the poet said 'Oh, wow,' that really cracked them up. 'Look at that hippie freak' is what they said.

I: "Did you laugh with them?"

Bill: "No. I might have before I was in P.I. Like the kids I was with are jocks. They behave differently. They have different feelings. I'm not so much like them anymore. I really wanted to hear what the guy was saying."

Joann Friedman was with the athletes too during the incident. She played field hockey and dated some of the football players. She added to Bill's comment, "The jocks were angry with P.I. They identified the P.I. people with the poet. They said he wasn't their

type. They think we're all freaks who are heavy into drugs and smoking and all.:

I: "What do they say about you being in it?"

Joann: "They think I'm different."

Bill, Joann and many of the other students tried to sustain that illusion in the minds of their friends. To do this they would avoid drawing attention to their membership in the program and would not verbally or vigorously defend it unless they were severely pressed. They hoped this wouldn't occur. Many of Bill's friends didn't discover that he was in the program until quite late in the year and by that time his membership in Project Involve was more important to him than they were.

Most of the students carefully tried to divide their attention between both the program and their friends. As the year progressed, the students in the Project began to spend more of their free time together, reflecting new friendship patterns and the growing cohesiveness of the group. A table on the cafeteria patio became their common meeting place, but the students only went there after they had spent an appropriate amount of time with their other friends outside of the program. During the lunch period, for example, they would eat the main portion of their meal with their friends scattered at separate tables throughout the cafeteria, but they would save their dessert or a cigarette to share with the others in the Project. Their friends would often accompany them toward the table but would veer nonchalantly off at a predictable distance from the students in the Project. No words were spoken. It was amusing

to watch, but serious to the students as they wrestled with their divided loyalties.

Maintaining a divided loyalty placed considerable strees on the students, especially if the values of their friends were considerably different from those of the program or if they had to resort to duplicity about being in the Project. Inevitably, some students were forced to choose how they wished to spend their time. If the rewards they gained from the program were individually important, then they would devote their time to pursuing those activities which brought them valued achievements. This reduced the amount of time that they spent with their friends outside the program and tended to separate them from that group.

Barney Mead serves as a good example of how this happened. The school nurse had known him since he was in elementary school and she was struck with how he had changed. "Barney was always a winner. He was selling shots of whiskey for 25¢ a shot from his father's bottles in junior high school. He's always been a hustler but he's really changed. I've seen it." Barney confirmed what she had described and explained how he had come to develop a new perspective on what matters had importance for him. "I used to fight Jeffers, just to fight him. Now I see that as a lot of negative energy." The change began after the fall backpack trip when Dan was impressed with a poem that Barney had written. Dan emphasized that it was excellent and helped Barney have it published in a major monthly literary magazine. This had been a flattering and powerful reward which Barney continued to pursue. He described how it had resulted

in a break from his friends. "Last year, all my friends were into pulling false alarms and throwing cherry bombs down the toilets. My friends are still doing that but I don't see them so much any more. I'm into different things. I'm writing poetry now." It is useless to speculate about what course Barney might have followed had he not become interested in writing. There is simply no way to tell. But, as of this writing, it is incontrovertably a fact that he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and will graduate with honors from the English Department of a major and prestigous western university. Barney mentioned, "I'm glad I don't see those guys now. We don't have anything in common anymore."

Most of the other students found that over the course of the year their involvement in the program rearranged their friendship patterns and interests. Most of those who experienced this were not unhappy with the results since they were provided other compensations of individual value. For Barney it became writing; for Arlis it became involvement with re-creating an ancient Indian Village as a museum for the Y.M.C.A.; for Larry Cantellino it became rock climbing and mountaineering. A similar exchange of rewards was developed mostly through contacts with Dan for almost all of the group of 31. Increasingly through the year, most students found their peer groups to be less rewarding and less totally commanding than membership in the program. Only four students found that dividing their loyalty represented a greater cost than they wanted to pay. One of these was Maryellen.

Maryellen Mantegna was sixteen and she was a beautiful girl. Prior to joining the program, much to the dismay of her parents,

she had moved out of her family and begun living in an apartment with another girl. Evidently in the same year she had begun to date a junior boy who attended Millhaven University, a small university in the center of the adjacent city. Their relationship occupied the devoted attention or thoughts of Maryellen on afternoons, weekends, evenings and most of the time spent in school. By October, they announced their plans to marry the following summer and by December she had a respectable diamond ring to demonstrate the seriousness of their intent. She was reluctant to spend the time that the trips required her to be away from her boyfriend, and she believed that the program represented a threat to her exciting social life. By early winter, she was less interested in her membership in the program and, when she had a difficult experience with the winter camping trip, she increasingly became a perfunctory member. Apparently being a sixteen year old courted by a twenty-one year old college boy provided more promise of a desirable future status than being involved in a high school curriculum.

Other students felt the strain, though, and at times when the group was experiencing a troublesome week trying to decide on some issue, they would question the rewards of membership. Yet, when the difficulties would be resolved or another major expedition was imminent, these same students no longer articulated these concerns. In fact, like the other external threats, the peer criticism had a positive effect on group cohesiveness. In the community sessions someone might mention, "people are starting to criticize us again" and the group would all claim angrily that they were misunderstood

and propose solutions to inform others about how valuable the program was.

One of their suggestions was to have a community session on the stage of the auditorium during a meeting of the whole school. As improbable as this idea was, the group thought it was a good one and would probably have pursued it had not Dan and Sally told them that it interferred with other activities of greater importance. Neither Dan nor Sally wished to promote any higher visibility than they already had. Another student suggestion was to invite their friends into class meetings to demonstrate that "We're really doing things in here and not just goofing off." They asked Dan if this could be done but he vetoed the idea on the grounds that visitors would innundate the program. They probably would have too, since a number of other students outside of the program would chronically hang around the rooms of the program, cutting their own classes because they liked the appearance of the activities in the Project or because they had friends within it. A third proposed student solution was to initiate a "P.I. Newspaper" and to make a movie demonstrating to their critics "what the program was <u>really</u> like." This idea received the blessings of Dan and the newspaper became a device for disseminating the concepts of the program to other students, but more importantly to Dan, to the other educators and parents who frequently asked for more information about what they did. The movie concept would have gone farther also since it was liked by the teachers but it was pre-empted by a television network and the representatives of an outdoor equipment manufacturer who

sent teams of professional filmmakers to document the program. The students were flattered to have this happen and they were glad to present the program in the best of possible lights. They wanted very much to silence their critics.

The Effects of the External Threats

The conflict experienced with the external environment actually strengthened the program and was functional rather than damaging. Even the antagonism of their peer groups never seriously detracted or broke apart the consensus developed in the first two months of operation. It did promote stress at times, but that was more helpful than harmful. Lewis Coser[6] notes that criticism only damages those organizations which do not have a high degree of internal consensus about the basic purpose of the group. When such groups are in internal agreement about their goals, they are made stronger by opposition. This was the case with Project Involve.

The external threats were functional in three ways: (1) They promoted and enhanced sound task leadership and reinforced the status maintained by the teachers. Teachers in most classrooms possess status conferred by by the institution and theoretically by their expertise. Such status is sanctioned by the school and the community but not necessarily by the students. Dan and Sally, on the other hand, became members of high status within the group because they were able to provide group rewards sought by the

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[6] Lewis Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press, 1956).

majority of the students, rewards not attainable without their aid. As long as the rewards were desired, the students were dependent on the beneficence and skill of their teachers.

(2) The external criticism was also functional for another reason. It promoted among the students the awareness that the program was vulnerable and dependent to some degree on their willingness to refrain from some types of behaviors. The teachers judiciously introduced or enhanced this awareness by bringing the criticisms of others into the large community sessions. These sessions thus became an effective mechanism for solving group problems and for ventilating frustration accumulated from the discrimination they felt. Among themselves, the students could argue out ways to defend the program and in the process become more cohesive in the face of real or imagined hostility against them.

(3) The third reason that criticism was functional was because it provided the teachers with a more full awareness of the family background, relationships with teachers, attitudes toward school and relations with peers that each of their students maintained. This increased the teachers' power to use the counseling relationship to influence the directions pursued by each student.

Resolving the problems presented by relationships outside of the program was not accomplished quickly. In most cases the strategy used to diminish external threats was conceived by the teachers with a long-term perspective in their minds. The solutions were cumulatively arrived at in some cases over a period of years. And they were not uniformly successful. They failed with Maryellen and

nearly failed with the Zapata family. In at least two ways they led to compounding of internal difficulties discussed in the next section. Yet, they were largely beneficial resolutions which sustained the group and allowed it to continue intact.

Overview of the Internal Threats

Being able to resolve the external difficulties which faced the group was not in itself sufficient to create a stable organization that would accomplish the aims of both teachers and students. Both teachers and students wanted to create a group, but there the similarity ended. The teachers wished to use the students' group membership to influence their values and interests. They wished to elicit the predictable group stresses to help individuals recognize the consequences that their behavior had within their own lives. Most of the students were largely unaware of this strategic intent. And among them was a considerable variance in opinions about what the program should accomplish. They shared a basic and common agreement only to participate in a program which would allow them to take exciting trips and simultaneously complete high school. Beyond that, their individual goals and aspirations varied widely and invited conflict over what the collective goals should be.

This potential for internal divisiveness was ensured by the selection process which deliberately brought together a heterogeneous collection of individuals and, inadvertantly, several groups which possessed differing values and histories of success or failure in school. To an extent, the students became aware of their differences

early in the year, but the superordinate goal of the fall trip and their difficulties with the seniors provided enough momentum to the program to carry the juniors through the first month and a half with a high degree of cohesiveness. But, following the trip the students were confronted with new elements which accentuated their differences in value and belief and forced them to confront their own heterogeneity. (1) The first problem was faced immediately following the fall backpack trip when the staff introduced academic tasks which were far more demanding than those which had been given prior to the trip. Increasing the amount of academic demand satisfied some students and disturbed others. (2) The second of the potentially divisive elements had been present from the beginning of the year but had not promoted significant internal conflict among the juniors until the trip. This was the question of how much involvement and normative compliance the members of the program could legitimately demand from one another. (3) The third problem was closely related but applied more directly to the staff rather than the total membership. This was the question of how legitimately the staff would be allowed to use the group processes to manipulate the students and their development. If the group were to accomplish the goals which the teachers had intended, each of these potentially disruptive issues needed to be resolved or controlled.

Controlling these elements once again depended on the efforts and judiciousness of the teachers being applied and becoming successful over time. As in their handling of the problems with the external environment, the teachers approached the situation

with strategic perspective, managing each issue by relying on five basic approaches: (1) The first of these was to continue to cultivate and use their personal counseling relationship with each individual student. By late autumn the staff began to orient their individual counseling toward examining the types of behavior which each student found to be self-defeating and interferring with their productive use of time in school. As problems of a self-defeating nature were identified by the student and teacher together, the teachers suggested techniques and manners of behavior which helped to resolve them. (2) The second strategy was to attempt to maximize the rewards received by each student. Whereas previously they had oriented the students toward attaining widely desired collective goals, by October the teachers were seeking to involve the students in more personal goals which would have individualistic rewards and have a greater probability for improving the student's ability to solve academic and personal life problems. (3) The third strategy was to maintain tight control over the community meetings and to use them to further develop protective norms and to ventilate the expected interpersonal conflict. The purpose of this was to elicit peer pressure to provide information to individuals about their behavior. This avoided the problem of identifying the staff with the role of punitive prescriptive adult or teacher, a role which many of the students had long before insulated themselves against. (4) Fourth, the teachers carefully avoided taking sides in the interpersonal student conflicts and they avoided publicly accentuating the differential abilities of the students. This kept

the group together and prevented a status system from developing where some students were endorsed by the teachers and some excluded or disapproved of. And, finally (5) the teachers again relied on the intermittent use of both modest and ambitious group trips which acted as superordinate goals and kept the organization together by providing involvement and adventuresome activity.

None of these strategies alone was sufficient to prevent internal divisiveness. But, collectively they developed a cumulative and persistent power which began to be effective with some students in September and continued to operate on others throughout the year. By January the vast majority of the members of the program had developed the mutually agreeable behaviors that resolved the potential internal difficulties and made the organization stable.

Managing the Problem of Heterogeneity in Student Academic Ability

By their selection process, the teachers had brought together students with widely differing ability and interest in pursuing academic activities or developing their academic skills. Some of the students like Arlene Byrd, Joanne Friedman and Charlene Rice brought to the program their own aspirations for attending college, pressured and reinforced by the similar desires of their parents. These girls were attracted by the outdoor trips and adventures but wanted to achieve these without sacrificing traditional academic learning and skill acquisition. By contrast, other students such as Larry Cantellino, Vlad Pulaski and Alex Malraux would have been quite happy if the program consisted of no more than the camping

trips, or other physical activities which required little reading, writing or studying. Most students occupied a position somewhere between these two extremes. Most would tolerate academics if they were presented in an interesting way and most would agree that the teachers had the right to establish some requirements directly relating to learning, but they would prefer these to be minimal. On entering the program, the majority of students had only vague or nonexistent aspirations for attending college and their prior experiences with school had taught them to work to diminish the teachers' expectations and to circumvent the demands placed on them. When all of these types of students with differing expectations and goals were brought together, it created a collectivity of individuals having great variance in their willingness to become involved with academic matters.

Even if the motivation to pursue academics were equal, which it wasn't, there was a similar diversity in academic ability and talent. If both Joanne and Alex were equally interested in studying some topic relating to the fall trip, edible wild foods for example, Joanne would have been able to use the library efficiently, take careful notes, labor over the writing and produce a final paper which was far more interesting and superiorly written. Joanne could and did write such a paper with little direction or help from the teachers while Alex needed a great deal of help and time from them in order to complete any assignment at all. Having circumvented the school's demands for many years, skipping classes and chronically failing English, he simply lacked the same skills

that Joanne possessed. Alex would find the same assignment to be a far more painful task with far fewer rewards for his efforts. Thus, it is reasonable that among the students there would be greatly differing feelings attached to increased demands for more academic work. While some students were afraid if the program weren't academic enough, others were equally or more afraid that it would demand more of them than they would be able to give.

There is a third problem raised by the students confronting the issue of academics. This is an issue commonly experienced by teachers in any classroom where some students produce work of superior quality in comparison to others. If the teacher provides the better student with increased rewards and attention, this essentially represents the creation of a hierarchic system of status imposed by the teacher. Such a system excludes less able students from the approval of the teachers, perhaps discouraging those with the greatest need for assistance and attention. If this were to happen in Project Involve, it would have created considerable resentment among the students since Dan and Sally were so widely regarded and their esteem so much desired. If academics were not to become internally dysfunctional, the teachers needed to approach them in a way which applied pressure for achievement equally on each student. Given the differing levels of motivation and ability, the teachers would have to abandon universalistic criteria of success and rewards. In their place they substituted individualized instruction but equally they strived to create and maintain among the students an ethic of personal achievement.

Individualized instruction is not a particularly new idea in education. For it to be successful it depends on the teacher possessing a sufficiently comprehensive and accurate appraisal of the abilities, needs, motivation and skill of each student to determine the nature and amount of pressure which can be realistically applied without the student becoming discouraged. And, like other forms of teaching and learning, it depends on the student's willingness to involve himself in the subject if it is to be optimally effective.

Because of the close personal relationship developed during the first two months of the program, the teachers felt that they were able to assess accurately and to monitor the abilities and needs of each student. But, they also knew that many of their students were unlikely to devote themselves to academic study unless the teachers could increase their motivation, confidence and desire to become involved in such work. They wanted to install in their more reluctant students the belief that such involvement would offer the promise of a desirable set of rewards, the accomplishment of which lay within their ability. Consequently, the teachers initially designed assignments which offered a high probability of success for low achievers and the simultaneous opportunity for more able students to do well and experience challenge.

The first of these assignments was given immediately after the return from the backpack trip. The teachers knew that the experience had been sufficiently vivid that each student would be able to retrieve some images of concrete and personal interest both

to them and to others in the group. Capitalizing on this, they asked each to write a descriptive poem of any length interpreting some aspect of the days spent in the mountains. The students became quite excited in their struggles to find the appropriate words and images to describe to others what the experience had meant. The teachers spent two days of the designated English classes to provide large group instruction in the mechanics of writing and then devoted a week of English class to writing and having individual conferences with Dan about the rough drafts. He refused to grade them but offered suggestions and probed for further improvement. As the students indicated that they felt the poem complete, they were encouraged to begin others and these too were submitted for comments but didn't receive grades. Several of the students handed in five poems for the fall trip and many continued to hand in optional poetry throughout the year for Dan's suggestions. Dan asked permission from several students to read their work before the class, but he never revealed the name of the author to avoid emphasizing the differences between the student abilities. By the second week after the trip, every student had satisfactorily completed one assignment which the teachers regarded as requiring thought and sensitivity.

The teachers reasoned that having successfully completed one task, they could now move the group on to more difficult academic demands, a research paper related to the backpack trip. They allowed the students to select their own topic for the trip because they wanted to eliminate the possibility that the students could

excuse their possible failure by blaming it on an uninteresting assignment given by an authority figure. Three weeks of class time were taken from community sessions and English classes to provide instruction on how to select a topic, take notes, use the library and organize the paper. Most of the actual research was also conducted during this school time when the group would bicycle together to a local library. By leaving the building, the teachers were able to relieve some of the tediousness associated with study and at the same time monitor how each individual was proceeding in coping with a rigorous responsibility. These efforts made the process of involvement in academics more palatable. Never-the-less writing and research are unavoidably solitary processes with high personal threat to many students. Consequently, a sizeable number of the students soon resorted to the same behavior toward academic activity which had previously been self-defeating.

The students would work intently and well when Sally and Dan were present to offer help and suggestions. However, in the absence of direct teacher supervision they were unable as a group to remain productive and attentive to the assignment. Some were, to be sure, using the time in the libraries well and were much involved in their research. But, the second time that they went to the library, Dan was absent from school and Sally had responsibility for the entire group. Many of the students, including Vlad Marcel and Luke Bruyn were having difficulty collecting notes because there were few materials on the topics they had chosen. All three were discouraged and so was Alex Malraux who had located material but

because of poor reading skills was having difficulty in reading the books he had found. Since Sally had only a limited amount of time she was unable to help them all.

When some of the students found that the material was difficult and the personal attention not immediately available, they turned their own attention away from the task and began to interact with each other about things they had found in the library. To their surprise, Al Boudreau and Vlad discovered that the library had an extensive collection of phonograph recordings and a listening room. Vlad told his friend Marcel who told Joan Kaplan and Alex Kennedy and soon a group of the students were intently listening to records rather than gathering research on their projects.

Sally observed some of this redirection of energy and heard about more later, but she did not confront these students for two reasons: first, she was doing all that she could to help other individuals; and second, she and Dan were carefully collecting information about how students responded to academic pressure. This information was added to the other observations made by the teachers since the beginning of the year. Because the completion of the research paper was conducted in stages, the teachers had the chance to observe and monitor how the individual students responded over time to the stress. Predictably, some students performed well, using the opportunities to advantage. Others had consistently avoided their responsibility or been unable to meet it because of deficiency in skills. This the teachers had anticipated.

In early November, they began to conduct a series of formal personal interviews in which they helped the students examine and reflect upon their academic and personal performance since September. The two teachers brought with them the individual folders showing records of the physical and academic successes thus far achieved. Through careful discussions and thoughtful listening to the student's perception of his own abilities and weaknesses, the teachers sought to help the student articulate a set of realistic goals for self-improvement. In these interviews they brought up their perceptions of the individual mechanics of self-defeat which caused some students difficulty in producing well for the research paper. They were quite careful to avoid accusatory or inquisitory approaches in these interviews and they provided an empathic support for what the students were doing well and what they needed to improve on.

The interviews were designed to leave the student with four messages about his relationship with the staff. The first was that the teachers found the student to be a likeable, respected human being in whose individual welfare they were genuinely interested. The second message was that the staff was aware of and empathic toward both strengths and weaknesses. The third was that they maintained high expectations that the student could improve his deficiencies and capitalize on his strengths. And the fourth message was that improvement and development had already been made by the student. To demonstrate this, the teachers could point to specific instances in their poetry or physical developmental records. To convey these four messages effectively required considerable

subtlety and sophistication on the part of the teachers. They could have easily placed greater emphasis on one message and, in doing so, have obscured another. The counseling process required careful teacher attention to how each individual student was perceiving and responding to their comments and observations. Their ability to assess the student's perceptual stance accurately was enhanced by their considerable familiarity with the personality, interests and history of each student. For those students who were ready to begin to improve their skills and work habits, the staff helped them to set realistic and achievable goals to overcome past patterns of self-defeating behavior.

Naturally, such an optimistic and idealized strategy for self-improvement was differentially received by the students. Some of the students such as Joann, Bill Hitchcock, Arlis and Amy were all doing well on their progress toward completing the research paper. The interview served to encourage them and stimulate further effort. Joanne continued until she completed an extensive paper, over a hundred pages with superbly hand-drawn illustrations of all the edible wild plants in the New England Appalachians. It was a genuinely professional quality manuscript virtually ready for publication without further aid of Dan or Sally. Joanne candidly said "It's the best thing I've ever done. I never expected it to be this good." Bill Hitchcock was working well also and produced a similar document about the flora and fauna of the Salt Marshes of Long Island, illustrated with slides taken canoeing among the sloughs on his own time on Saturdays. The paper had required reading from thirty

sources, including the three books which Bill mentioned were the first he had read since elementary school. By the date that the research paper was due, 13 of the students had completed a piece of research that they expressed pride in. But, in most cases these were the students who possessed a relatively satisfactory level of basic skills, found the effort to be within their ability, and were pleased to produce for Dan and Sally.

There was another group of students who were having more difficulty. These were mostly students who had a high desire to produce quality work in the program, but had few skills. This group included Vlad, Alex Malraux, Larry Cantellino and about six others. They were discouraged by their experiences at attempting thè research. For these students the interview and the personal counseling had a different effect. They had felt terribly badly about "letting Dan and Sally down." The interview showed them that the teachers were understanding and tolerant of failure, and it identified the specific nature of their problems. When Vlad and Alex and others with similar feelings began to realize that their failure was due in part to their own patterns of behavior, they began to blame themselves. Dan and Sally defused that guilt by acknowledging that self-defeating behavior was common in virtually everyone and that it was possible to overcome it through concentrated efforts and self-understanding. The teachers then suggested ways that the student could develop more personally helpful approaches to learning and to the productive use of time. They directed some students into remedial reading practice in self-guided materials

available in Dan's room for use in free time. And the teachers remained after the school day ended to help them with their writing. The students perceived this attention as a reprieve and an opportunity to change things which in their lives had caused them failure. These students were "hooked" by their desire to work up to the staff's expectations and by their own guilt which the teachers were now replacing with an ethic which valued and promised improvement.

When Vlad, for example, came out of his interview, his face was lit with enthusiasm. "I don't believe it! Dan and Sally. I mean they really understand! They know that I'm having trouble with my term paper and they really understand and are helping me. I mean they know what it's like.! I: "What it's like?" Vlad: "Yeah, not to know what you're doing. Like all my other teachers never knew that I didn't know what I was doing and I never let them in on it. But, Dan just knew! And they're interested in other things I can do, like music."

There were other students who had different reactions to both the research paper and the personal interview. These were the students who were marginally involved with the program, cautious about any adults and had demonstrated earlier in the year that their compliance was less enthusiastic than that of Vlad, Joann and the others just discussed. With these students, Dan and Sally were quite cautious in the interview to avoid threatening the existing level of trust established since September. They had observed each of these students well enough to confront them with specific documented facts about their behavior. These teacher observations

demonstrated areas of weakness in either compliance to the program or in producing an energetic effort on the academic work. In doing this, they carefully avoided tones of voice, specific words or inflection which would imply that the teachers thought the student to be unlikeable or to be blamed. If the student became defensive or evasive they would leave him or her with the impression that they understood what the student perceived but didn't necessarily agree with it. They avoided any intense confrontation that would damage what they perceived to be a fragile relationship. Following the interview with these students, the teachers approached them with two different strategies.

First, they avoided setting up a hierarchic status system which would give teacher rewards and attention to the more highly compliant students. They did this by carefully distributing their attention, teasing and conversation equally among all students and they avoided emphasizing the accomplishments of the other students who were doing well or producing exceptional quality academic or group-serving work. To do so would have provoked resentment toward not only the teachers but toward the more highly involved students.

The second strategy was deliberately to attempt to maximize the rewards available for the marginal student, to find the activity or mode of interaction which would have the greatest probability of making the student value his membership in the program more highly. This was done with the assumption that increasing the rewards made these students more dependent on the program and thus more susceptible to the teachers' seductive persuasion to examine their behavior and

adopt an ethic of involvement and achievement. Since there were approximately fifteen students in this category, and since they were quite heterogeneous in interest, the teachers initiated a wide collection and type of optional activities designed to appeal to the diversity among them.

The teachers were looking for activities which would provide the students with an additional level of experience which required responsibility, or provided enjoyment. One of these optional activities was Project Giveback where the students could use a free period, if they had one in their schedule, to tutor elementary school children or serve as a teachers' aide at a nearby school. This activity required consistent dependability and offered the student the opportunity to be useful to others who needed their help or support. Fifteen students were able, because of their schedule, to become involved in this project.

Another activity designed to appeal to others who especially enjoyed the physical activities was an optional weekend camping trip to the Adirondack Mountains. Dan and Sally didn't attend this trip but they helped plan it and arranged for having responsible leadership willing to take the group. Seventeen students attended this trip and returned to school enthusiastic over their struggles with an early winter snowstorm and freezing weather. The scenery, evidently, was remarkably beautiful.

Another activity was designed by Dan and Sally to provide opportunities for responsibility for marginal students. This was a one day field trip for the large group to visit and observe the

rhythms and patterns of life in a major urban area. Dan carefully engineered key students about whom he was concerned into the positions where the success of the trip depended on their carrying out obligations. When this trip proved successful, the students with responsibility for it were pleased and proud.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of both the astuteness and the effective results which came from the teachers' efforts to involve the marginal students was seen in his handling of Kathy Wollansak and her friends Maryellen Mantegna and Marion Kowalski. These three girls were members of one of the two peer groups which the selection process had inadvertently brought into the program. None of the three girls had been especially successful in academics prior to the program and they had been attracted to it only by the trips. As Kathy explained, "We had been friends since elementary school. We do a lot of hanging around together and we usually date guys from the same group. They're older and we go to bars a lot. I joined the program because it looked like something different. School was so boring and this gave us a chance to do something different." Marion agreed that she had joined primarily to attend the trips because her parents would not have let her do things like that on her own. Maryellen had applied because Kathy and Marion had.

From September to December these girls were only marginally interested in the program and they avoided the academics. Marion had found them particularly discouraging. During the time devoted to taking notes, she had been reading magazines and talking about

dates with a friend outside the program. Kathy had tried to help her with suggestions about how to complete her notes, but Marion became frustrated and switched the topic, "God, this school is getting boring." The three girls together considered skipping out of class on the day that rough notes were due for the research project. Kathy, the most influential of the girls, explained their feelings toward the class. "Well, I'm not that good a friends with the people in the class. Some of them are friendly, but some of them are stuck up. I said burn it. I'm not going out of my way if others don't care. Some of the other kids are really involved. I don't think I will be. I don't think that I could get into it like some of the kids. I like the class and all but I wouldn't die without it." Marion nodded in agreement.

But Dan and Sally, because of the interview and their familiarity with the group, were aware of their feelings. In the second week in December, he put out his effort to "hook" the group. Earlier he had made contact with the leaders of the outdoor school that was going to provide the instruction in ropes and rapelling. He gained their permission to send four students from the program beforehand to their outdoor school for advanced instruction, ostensibly so that there would be more assistants to help the large group. In his judgment, this was the opportunity to provide the rewards which Kathy would most value. He selected her as one of the students, as well as Larry Cantellino, who was a member of the other peer group which formed a clique within the Project. Dan's comment about the selection of these two was, "We'll get Kathy with this.

I think we already have Larry but this will seal it." The other two students were Artie D'Angelo and Helen Malik who were students with already existing high compliance to the program. These four spent a weekend together climbing rock faces at the outdoor school and when they returned, they were excited. Dan held an individual meeting with each student on the following Monday to discuss what the trip had meant. Evidently the students were very much moved both by the experience and by their conversation with Dan.

A week later, these students helped the large group when they used the ropes and climbing apparatus on the outside gymnasium. This was the incident that had caused the trouble with the Assistant Superintendent but it was nevertheless a vivid and successful experience for the entire group. Within ten days after she had left for the outdoor school, Kathy was articulating a different level of involvement with the program. "I didn't feel too close to them (the group) but it was my fault. Like I wasn't involved and I didn't go and I didn't feel close to the class like I thought I would feel. (In November). It was my own fault. I can't explain it too good. I don't know what was in my head then. I just don't think I realized a lot of things . . . I guess it took a while to hit me."

I: "For what to hit you?"

Kathy: "Their feelings. I don't know. It just took me longer than others to realize it, what I was doing, why I was all wrong and I was hurting so many people. I guess I was just too carefree. Now I realize that I had better use this day because I'm

not going to have it again to do something with. I am not going to have this same class to come back to. I have to use it because it won't come again. Like I was complaining because I was bored, but it was just because I didn't let myself get involved."

I: "What led to that awareness?"

Kathy: "It was one of the things that Sally said. She mentioned that you only have this day once to do something with and we really got a lot of meaning out of that. I never thought of it that way before but it's true. I was just screwing up when I could really be getting something out of it. I feel like going on and really trying. I think a lot of people realized that from what she said. It's really bad when you let Dan or Sally down. You know you did something wrong and you're not helping yourself."

Kathy had been marginally involved prior to the outdoor weekend. But within three weeks she was articulating both motivation and the guilt which had been effective with Vlad, Alex and Larry. This made it much easier for Dan and Sally to provide the type of counseling which would lead to involvement in reading instruction, writing instruction and the research project. They had overcome Kathy's marginal involvement and in its place had managed to promote an ethic of self-improvement. Since Kathy was the most forceful member in the subgroup that included Maryellen and Marion, as she became more involved in the program she placed pressure on these two. But, Maryellen's attachment to her fiance was gaining increased strength in December. She had just received her engagement ring and when Kathy began to suggest privately that she devote more

attention to the program, it resulted in a further separation of Maryellen from the program, ultimately leading to a split in the friendship between the two girls. The opposite happened with Marion. In response to Kathy's encouragement she began to join in the optional activities and became quite involved in planning the winter camping trip for the whole group. Dan, too, continued to work on Marion. He discovered that she enjoyed being teased and he informed Sally of this fact. The two teachers began to use the pet name "Fang" which grew out of a private joke between Dan and Marion. With constant, gentle prodding, Marion gradually became more involved as she gained more rewards from her participation and more confidence in the leadership of the teachers. The teachers cultivated their relationship with her until she too adopted the ethic of achievement and involvement.

Reflections on the Issue of Academic Heterogeneity

By avoiding a system of competitive grading, by abandoning a single standard criteria of success, and by avoiding the creation of a hierarchic status system related to academic achievement, the teachers were able to apply persistent pressure on those students who were less motivated. Increasing the rewards received by these students led to their increased dependency and trust in the program. This made them more susceptible to the persuasion of the teachers and gradually added them to the basic core of students who found their membership to be highly valuable. Rather than damaging the consensus within the group, the manner in which the teachers

approached the issue of academics enhanced their ability to strengthen the group and manipulate its value system to one of self-improvement and achievement. The expected failure experienced by some students was turned to advantage because the teachers were observant and accepting, avoided blame and instituted a sophisticated counseling relationship which helped the students better manage their individual problems.

All of this was not accomplished without costs. For one thing, the teachers had to abandon the idea that there was a given body of knowledge which all students needed to possess. The individualized teaching and counseling required that Dan and Sally sacrifice a universalistic curricula and a desire to "cover the material" which many teachers feel compelled to accomplish and which many principals require. Had the program had a standard curriculum which all students needed to learn, some like Joanne, Arlis and Arlene would no doubt have done well. But others would have been left with little enthusiasm and probably fallen again into the same discouragement they had demonstrated in previous years. The staff willingly accepted this drawback, rationalizing that instead of subject matter, they were teaching individuals how to approach their personal learning problems in a way that offered the best opportunity to succeed. Dan's argument was that motivation and problem solving skills precede learning. Consequently, they devoted their efforts to maximizing motivation and providing individualized prescriptive learning rather than an attempt to cover a specified body of knowledge.

The second problem was that the enormous amount of individualized counseling and the optional or required group trips took time away from academic instruction and left some students with considerable free time. In a more traditional school, students would have received three hours of formal academic teaching during this time and one hour of physical education. The students in Project Involve did not receive any formal instruction in history or social studies, although they did receive a traditional class each day in science from Sally and usually three classes in English from Dan each week. But other subjects such as foreign language, mathematics or laboratory sciences were not available within the program. The staff would counter these objections by pointing out that the students could and did enroll in these special courses outside the program during their twice daily free periods. They justified the trips, by equating them with physical education credit in lifetime sports of bicycling, hiking, camping, canoeing and running. In response to the absence of formal instruction in history, the staff vigorously defended their curricula in two ways. They believed that the group experiences in democratic problem solving and personal problem solving accomplished the goals of most traditional curricula in the social sciences. They reasoned that the purpose of the social sciences is to promote self-understanding and social ethics and pursuing this argument they would suggest that their curricula could be directly translated to responsible and involved citizenship. Their second argument was that students who wished to have more traditional knowledge about history, or virtually

any subject in which the teachers were certified, could contract individually for directed reading under Dan and Sally's supervision. And the teachers' final argument was that the free time given students while others were being counseled was productively used to engage in their own writing, learning and studying. During the first three months of the program this did not appear to be accurate. Many students would spend their free time listening to music or interacting with their friends in one of the two rooms set aside for the program. However, once a sizeable majority of the students adopted the ethic of self-improvement and became involved with personal and individual learning, Dan's statement appeared to describe accurately what all but four students did with their available free time. One of the four not observed using that time well was Maryellen, who was already discussed. The other three were Phil Jorgensen, Carol Welch and Joan Kaplan. These three students were not receiving sufficient rewards to value their membership in the program and, when they violated several norms shared by the other students, they were gradually excluded from the program. More will be said of these students in the next section.

But, there was a third cost to the program which was directly related to the individualized attention to academic and personal problem counseling. The mode of instruction and the organization of the program placed the burden for its success largely on the shoulders of the teachers. They needed to manage the problems with the administrators, parents and teachers, attend Parents' Nights, speak at the Rotary, Kiwanis and the regional New England educational

conventions. They needed to do the initial planning for the large group trips and make some arrangements for the optional activities. They needed to schedule and remain empathically attentive in innumerable individual conferences with students to determine how their writing and personal development was progressing. They needed to assess in their own minds how students were responding to the program and what other personal strategies might be successful with the marginal ones. And the camping, canoeing and mountaineering trips kept them away from their families for three to four days at a time, increasing the already heavy burden of administering the complex program. All of these factors strained the vitality and resources of the staff.

Dan and Sally generally maintained a high level of vitality, reinforced by the fact that the program itself gave them considerable opportunities to keep physically fit. But when the program was experiencing difficulties, or when they were worried about a particular student's progress, the strain was evident. One afternoon, after the close of school, Sally and another teacher were in her room discussing the performance of a student in the program. Dan walked in, head down and obviously exhausted. He stood for a long time watching without a word. Noting his disconsolance, Sally recorded it, "You look like you've had it." Dan paused before he began. Looking at her he said, "You know what this reminds me of? When I was a freshman in college and I was playing football and was in the student government and taking five courses. I would get up at 5 a.m. to study and never quit until midnight. And then one

afternoon I was on the football field wondering how I could keep it up and that's when I got it."

Sally: "You mean your leg?"

Dan: "That's when I got hit and broke it. And that's the way I feel now."

Dan and Sally were both drained by the program, especially during the months which followed the backpack trip when they were devoting an extraordinary amount of energy to overcome the external and internal threats and to develop the cohesiveness that they wanted to carry the group through the year. It was one of the unavoidable costs, for the complexity of the program and the intensity of their aspirations demanded it. In time, as more students became more intensely involved, and fewer were marginal in their commitment, the strain was somewhat reduced because the group members had established and strongly began to enforce norms which supported the teachers' efforts and promoted a stable organization. By January, the organization was sufficiently stable to reduce the drain and carry itself through the rest of the year.

The Development of Internal Control

Much of the stability that sustained the program after January was related to the increasing control that student members began to exert on each other. Such control first became evident prior to the fall backpack trip and it continued to develop through the winter. It was instigated by the nucleus of students who found their membership to be highly rewarding and who therefore invested

a greater amount of their time and their personality to the program. These highly compliant students began to speak with the others who were less involved or less compliant, encouraging them to increase their commitment to the program. There were several reasons for these students to be concerned with internal control.

The threat from the external environment was one of the most important causes. Student awareness of the vulnerability of the program and their knowledge about their external critics increased the importance that undesirable behaviors be eliminated. In an effort to protect the program, the more involved students suggested that the others refrain from leaving the building on their own time, that they share equally in the group activities and that they eliminate those activities which irritated other teachers. Initially, the students exerted this internal control with some caution, for they did not want to alienate or antagonize the less involved students. Had they been energetically forceful at first, it could have triggered resentment and possibly led to some students separating from the program. Any student had the right to withdraw from the program at any time. This would have been undesirable, from the group members' perspective, since any member dropping out would appear to justify the suspicions of the external critics.

Most of the less involved members responded positively to the pressure from their friends or from students held in high esteem. The example of Kathy and her friends, discussed earlier, is an example of how many of the less involved students were brought closer

to the organization. As Thibbault and Kelley explain, members of a group continually tend to estimate the rewards that other members receive. If they believe that these rewards are similarly available for them, it tends to increase their motivation to seek the similar goals. Convincing the less involved students that rewards were universally available was one function of the counseling sessions that Dan and Sally were frequently conducting with each individual. These teacher efforts and the efforts of the students were thus mutually reinforcing and together they placed concerted pressure on the less involved students.

One example shows how this pressure effectively reduced one of the behavioral problems which threatened the group. Many of the students in the high school were accustomed to leaving the building by cutting a free period or a class. One common meeting place was a local diner where they would have a late breakfast or a cup of coffee with their friends. When the school year began, many of the Project Involve students continued this habit until the issue was raised in one of the community sessions. Immediately after that discussion, a number of the students no longer left the building because they wanted to protect Dan, Sally and themselves from the complaints of the administrators. Of course, the students who initially restrained themselves were those who were receiving personal rewards which were more valued than the cost of giving up the pleasant morning escape from the building. Other students were less willing to stop the practice but it was gradually eliminated as the year continued. By December, only four students left the

building during their free periods: Chastity Vargas, Carol Welch, Joan Kaplan and Phil Jorgensen. On many mornings this subgroup continued to go to the Turnpike Diner, a long steel restaurant with a well lit, clean interior filled with many small booths. At that time of day, it was usually filled with laborers who were on a coffee break or with high school students who were cutting class illegally. December 5 was the last day that these four students from Project Involve came to the diner as a group. A few minutes after arriving their conversation declined into an awkward and depressing silence. Chastity looked at the others, "This is getting to be a drag."

Joan was looking around the booths to see who else was cutting out from school, but she too was depressed. "I'm going to stick around a while. I never get to see anyone anymore. I never even see Marcel (Blau). He's been working" (on Project activities).

Carol nodded in agreement, "Yeah."

Joan: "Everyone hates us for going out here, too."

Carol, who was always concerned about personal criticism, "Why? Did they say anything?"

Joan: "Marcel, Larry and Vlad. They don't even look at us when we cut out. They don't say anything, but Marcel (who had been her best friend since elementary school) gives me a dirty look."

This comment was met with silence for a moment and then Joan continued: "Like we use to be out with lots of the people (from Project Involve). We still go every morning but it's getting to be a real drag."

I: "Why is that?"

Joan: "No one wants to come out here anymore. That's what the drag is about."

By December, these were the four least compliant students in the program. Among them, Chastity was most happy about belonging to the program and she broke the silence with a suggestion to return to the school. "Hey, let's go back."

The others were discouraged but approved of her idea, paid their bill and started to return together. The mood in the automobile continued to be somber and no one said anything for a few moments. Phil was driving that day and he had long been harboring resentment toward the others in the program who disapproved of his leaving the building. He was also still angry with many of the more involved students because they had criticized his behavior on the fall camping trip when he failed to help pick up the group's litter. Because he revealed his resentment, they in turn increasingly disliked him. Whether any of these things were on his mind was unknown, but suddenly Phil took an unexpected detour down a side road and began to accelerate the car wildly. It careened from lane to lane and literally began to fly over small bumps in the pavement. The girls were immediately apprehensive and one asked him to slow down. But Phil began to laugh and accelerated even more until the girls were almost desperate. He continued the wild drive and they became silent in fear until he tired of the game and relented, returning them to school. This was the last time that the group left the school together. From that time on, Chastity and Carol no longer left the school grounds and they also began to avoid Phil on the weekends.

This incident reveals several things of importance for understanding the development of the internal group stability. First of all, it indicates clearly that Marcel, Vlad and Larry had internalized the norms which protected the group from external threat. They had applied subtle pressure on their non-compliant friends, placing sanctions against them by not talking with them and refusing to join them in the undesirable behavior. As Thibbault and Kelley explain, this internalization of norms by the students represents a significant step in the development of a mature organization. "The ultimate development away from personal control by in-group agents (or the group leaders) is achieved when the norm is internalized and the norm-sending functions are taken over by the individual himself."[1] By December, only these few students were unwilling to help protect the program. Because of their failure to do so, these four were gradually excluded by the others who found membership important.

The incident reveals a second feature of the dynamic of involvement for individual students. Namely, the teachers in Project Involve were successfully able to fragment individual students from their extant peer groups. As mentioned earlier, the selection process had inadvertantly brought two informal social groups into the program. One was composed of Marion, Kathy and Mary Ellen and it had been broken apart by the efforts of the teachers directed at its strongest personality, Kathy. The second group was composed of Joan Kaplan, Marcel Blau, Larry Cantellino, Larry Pieros, Vlad Pulaski and Alex Kennedy. These students had been friends since the

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[1]Thibbault and Kelley, op. cit., p. 242.

fourth grade when they had begun to experiment heavily with sniffing glue. They remained together through junior high school when the central unifying activity of the group had become their progressive involvement with halucinogenic, stimulant and depressant drugs. The long history of the group, its size, and its high degree of integration made it difficult for the teachers to involve these students in school-oriented and adult-sanctioned activities. But, Marcel was one of the two most influential members of that sub-group and he became involved in the program just before the fall trip. Dan and Sally had been able to gain the involvement of Larry and Vlad through the camping and mountaineering. Alex Kennedy became excited about writing during November and so, by December, the group was fairly well fragmented. Joan Kaplan remained low in her commitment to the program but, because of this, she was increasingly isolated from her long standing friendships. She tried to form a new alliance with Carol and Chastity, but soon Chastity broke away also and became closer to the program.

Despite the pressure and overtures from teachers and students, Phil Jorgensen, Joan and Carol continued to resist giving higher commitment to the program. From the very beginning of the year each had reacted negatively to Dan's forcefulness and his task leadership, especially his ability to subtly manage the floor of the community sessions. On occasion, Carol had become angry and had openly defied Dan in front of the other students. Attacking Dan angered the compliant students who recognized their dependence on his leadership. In response they began to gradually exclude Carol from

their friendship, making her even angrier and more alone. "Everybody just kisses Dan's ass. I see everybody doing it and it makes me sick. Anything he says, they gobble up. Anyone who tries to take control gets into his way. I think he really tries to control a person . . . . Dan has this weird way of getting what he wants when he wants it. He convinces the kids that they are deciding what's happening but he is really getting his way . . . . I feel the push. I shove back. It might not help me. It might hurt me. But, you just have to push back and say, 'There! How do you like that?!'" On another occasion, Carol revealed that she strongly identified Dan with her father, another dominant male with whom she frequently quarrelled. Considering the family-like quality that the program assumed, it is possible that she and others would transfer or displace their hostility related to other situations in their lives.

Phil also had a similar struggle in adjusting to Dan's leadership and predominance in the program. He never participated in class discussions or shared in planning the group trips. He strongly resisted the pressure and even the friendly contacts from other students. And, he often mentioned that he was wealthy. This was a fact, but it did not endear him to other students who came from middle class or lower middle class families. In earlier years, Phil had been asked to leave several preparatory schools which had evidently led to frequent bitter arguments with his father, to whom he often referred with anger. Although Phil never articulated a relationship between Dan and his own father, he repulsed all of Dan's efforts to establish a positive relationship. In November, he

drew a cryptic analogy between Dan and a character in a poem, "The program's a lot like the poem called the 'Dancing Bear' by Archibald MacLeish. It's about a fellow that has a bear who loves to dance and when he meets the guy the man talks him into going into show business. The bear likes to dance a lot and so he thinks that he can teach other people to enjoy dancing. So, they go into the entertainment business and are very successful and make a lot of money. But the people who come to watch the bear dance laugh at him and the man knows it but doesn't tell the bear. The bear doesn't understand at first. When the bear catches on that the man doesn't really appreciate his dancing either, and is just making a fool out of the bear, the bear gets upset and angry and eats the man." Phil emphasized the word "eats" and looked expectantly at the researcher with a smile on his face.

I: "Phil, that's a pretty heavy story."

Phil: "Yeah, it is. But sometimes, in here, I feel like the Dancing Bear."

With such intense antagonism toward both Dan and his fellow students, it was unlikely that Phil would respond to even sustained efforts to involve him unless they occurred simultaneously with professional counseling. Dan attempted to secure the aid of a psychiatrist who worked for the school district, but this man indicated that he could do no more than test for personality disorders and recommend that the family seek therapy outside the province of the schools. Dan recommended that this procedure be instituted and in the meantime attempted to use Sally's more empathic

and less threatening skills to involve Phil. This had been somewhat effective with Carol, who often dropped by Sally's room after school to share her feelings about the program. But, Phil never developed a relationship with Sally either, and occasionally he directly disobeyed her requests in class. This upset Sally, and greatly angered many of the other students. They increasingly shunned him and finally held a community session in which they voted to not allow him to attend the spring canoeing trip. Phil withdrew from school shortly after that and his parents enrolled him in a preparatory school for emotionally disturbed youth.

The decision to not allow Phil to attend a major group trip was repeated later in the year with Carol and Joan, the last two non-compliant members. These girls had secretly used marijuana on the canoeing trip and later dared the group to do something about it. The strongest sanction available to the group was to vote to prevent them from attending a major bicycling expedition along the New England coast. Dan and Sally accepted the group decision but attempted to soften it with supportive counseling for these two girls. Nevertheless, in reaction to the sanctions placed against them, they also withdrew from the program in May. This option was available to any student throughout the year, but only Phil, Carol and Joan used it.

Considering the case of these three students, it would appear that the program was unable to offer desirable rewards for all of the students that had applied. Yet, out of thirty one students, these were the only negative instances of involvement.

That the program would fail with some was probably inevitable, given the heterogeneity of membership and the fact that the curriculum demanded such a considerable investment of time, interest, values and personality. The separation of those students who eventually did not comply to its demands was probably also inevitable, given the presence of the external critics. As Coser suggests,

> Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside tend to be intolerant within. They are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from the group unity . . . . Such groups assume a sect-like character. They lay claim to the total personality involvement of their members. Their social cohesion depends upon total sharing of all aspects of group life and it is reinforced by the assertion of group unity against the dissenter.[2]

The involved members of the program were willing to separate the non-compliant members because their behavior was an annoying disruption to their internal activities and an unwanted threat to their external relations. Without the three non-compliant students, the group became even more homogeneous and thus more integrated.

Of course, the discussions which surrounded whether group members should be formally sanctioned were filled with conflict and disagreement. Many students believed that the girls who had broken the rules of the group should be treated charitably. Others disagreed because the particular issue had severely jeopardized the group in the eyes of critics. Even though this decision to punish the girls was a difficult one, it was still functional for the group. As Coser notes,

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[2]Lewis Coser, op. cit., p. 103.

> Internal social conflict which concerns goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure. Such conflicts tend to make possible the readjustment of norms and power relations within the group in accordance with the felt needs of its individual members or subgroups.[3]

For all of the members, except for the three excluded students, the discussions about punishing non-compliant members never attacked the basic assumptions on which the program was based. The action of the three students served to revitalize and articulate the norms which compliant members would adopt and follow. As the norms were more clearly articulated, the organization became more integrated and more stable.

Mechanisms for Reducing Internal Conflict

Even though the organization became integrated and stable, it was impossible to eliminate what Coser refers to as "unrealistic conflict." Unrealistic conflict is the tension and hostility which naturally occurs when people are required to work closely and cooperatively together for an extended period of time. Even between the highly compliant students who shared in the belief that the program was valuable, frustrations and resentments unavoidably developed. But, as Coser notes,[4] closely knit groups tend to suppress this unrealistic conflict because the members perceive it to be a danger to their intimate relationships. By suppressing small issues

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[3]Ibid., p. 151.

[4]Ibid., p. 152.

that divided members, hostility tends to accumulate and grow in intensity unless there are mechanisms for ventilating and reducing internal tension.

Three such mechanisms existed in Project Involve. The first of these was the personal counseling with the teachers. Dan and Sally were able to ventilate much of the inter-student hostility by using the same counseling techniques which had been effective with the parents, administrators and other teachers: careful active listening which reassured the student that someone understood and accepted their feelings of frustration and anger. Frequently, private discussions with the teachers resolved the minor issues and relieved the student's irritations. However, some interpersonal problems were more persistent and cumulative. The same individual counseling sessions enabled the teachers to recognize when a problem within the group needed resolution or ventilation. By knowing what matters were of immediate concern to the student members, the teachers were able to maintain control over when such conflict should emerge.

The staff was able to manage interpersonal conflict because they knew how severe the problems were and because they controlled the agenda of the community sessions. The students would not allow the conflict to erupt within a community session because they knew that the teachers had always planned an abundance of varied and often vivid activities for each day. This planning by the teachers was so carefully done that there was simply no time left over for students to interrupt the daily activities without causing

considerable disruption. As Sally explained, "Very seldom does a kid spring something on us. If it does happen, we don't usually stop it. But almost always they come to us before hand, ask our advice, and ask when they should bring it up. Lots of times they're scared to bring it up and they want us to do it. We generally don't let them get away with that, because conflict is a natural part of the growth of a group." The students confirmed that they would never bring an issue up to the community meetings unless they had first talked it over with either Dan or Sally. "You never know what is going to happen on a given day in a community meeting. Something important might be planned and you don't want to interfere with it unless Dan and Sally say it's O.K."

When the teachers decided that an issue was important or that internal tensions were high, they would initiate the discussion about the problem. "Something seems to be bothering a number of you and it's evidently been going on for quite a while. Maybe it's time to bring it out in the open and talk it out." By planning and monitoring this release of the internal tension, the teachers were able to prevent it from erupting unpredictably. Instead, they could help the group reach a mutually satisfactory solution and be present to protect students from the zeal or anger of others. Generally, the teachers would conclude sessions in which there was release of such internal tension with an unanticipated group activity such as bicycling to a sandwich shop or running to a nearby pizza parlour. These concluding activities brought the group back together and allowed them to enjoy their mutual company again in a pleasant setting.

There was a third important mechanism which allowed the group to reduce unavoidable interpersonal conflict. This was the intermittent planning of other adventurous large group trips that formed the mainstay of the organization and its curriculum. Each trip became a superordinate goal inherently satisfying to almost all members. Having them spaced throughout the year provided an intermittent reward and a commonality of experience. Since they required the participation of the majority of members to carry them out successfully, the group members could celebrate their mutual accomplishment and forget their differences.

By possessing several mechanisms for ventilating conflict, the organization was strengthened. As Coser noted,

> A social structure in which there can exist a multiplicity of conflicts contains a mechanism for bringing together otherwise isolated, apathetic or mutually hostile parties. Moreover, such a structure fosters a multiplicity of associations and coalitions whose diverse purposes crisscross each other . . . thereby preventing alliances along one major line of cleavage.[5]

He goes on to state,

> Conflict is not always disfunctional for the relationship within which it occurs; often conflict is necessary to maintain such a relationship. Without ways to vent hostility toward each other, and to express dissent, a group member might feel completely crushed and might react by withdrawal. By setting free pent-up hostility, conflict serves to maintain a relationship.[6]

This was the case in Project Involve, where the internal differences and dissent growing out of the heterogeneity of the student

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[5]Ibid., p. 155.

[6]Ibid., p. 48.

membership were satisfactorily managed by the action of the teachers and the structures that they had built into the program.

Final Reflections

Having returned again to the adventuresome trips as a fundamental part of the alternative curriculum, the analysis of the program has come full circle. The research has shown that the teachers had been successful in their efforts to develop an integrated group which attained educational objectives. It was possible to sustain a subunit within a traditional school, carry on activities which were very different, and yet still attain the goals of traditional education. The next section will summarize how this was accomplished.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This was an exploratory study designed to describe and explain the behavior of students and teachers in a public alternative high school. It has attempted to trace the individual and collective responses made by participants as they encountered the social, organizational and circumstantial features of their environment. At this point, some summary discussions can clarify and distill the more salient findings for the reader. To structure these discussions, the conclusions will return to the original guide questions that provided focus for the study.

The First Guide Question

It will be recalled that the first guide question was, "How do students respond to the curricular features, the demands and the expectations that they encounter within the alternative school?" The answer to this question is at once both simple and complex. Put simply, they responded by organizing themselves into a highly integrated social group. Ultimately, most but not all of the original junior members who joined the program became compliant and participating members of this group. Furthermore, the behavior of the group members largely conformed to the expectations and goals of the teachers and administrators who had developed the program and its curriculum.

At the simplest level of explanation, the formation of an integrated group was made possible because the teachers and students were able to create the elements necessary to sustain group life: (1) they established and expanded a system of rewards that outweighed the personal costs of membership; (2) they developed and maintained a consensus among the vast majority of student members as to what the goals of the program were; (3) they developed norms which protected the organization; and (4) they developed effective task and maintenance leadership.

Like almost all groups, their integration into a cohesive social unit was dynamic and occurred in stages. During the initial stage, student enthusiasm and involvement was a predictably intense reflection of their idealized expectations. In this honeymoon period, they believed that by joining the program they would escape the passivity and inactivity associated in their minds with traditional school. Membership offered the opportunity to engage in exciting and adventurous outdoor activity without sacrificing the traditional reward of graduation with a standard diploma. They expected to participate in organizational decision making and to assume responsibility for activities which would be useful to the group and to others in the school or community. While accomplishing these things, they anticipated receiving recognition and status from their new association with influential and widely respected adults.

When many of the students did begin to receive these rewards, it constituted the starting point of social interaction and group life. However, not all students were immediately rewarded by their

association with the program and its teachers. And even among those who were, frustration was inevitable because of their unrealistically high expectations. Problems emerged following the fall trip, when the heterogeneity in talent, interest and values among the students led to internal divisiveness. In the absence of norms, universal rewards, and mechanisms for resolving conflict, they disagreed over (1) the amount of control that the program could rightfully exert over its members, and (2) the amount of involvement in academic and program activities which the group could require from each member. This struggle with internal issues was intensified and complicated by the impact of criticism and suspicion from external sources. These unanticipated problems were the costs and obligations of social life. They led to the disenchantment of some students, especially those who were marginally rewarded by their membership. Confronting these costs constituted the second phase of group development.

However, even during this period of disenchantment, the staff continued to develop an influential system of task and maintenance leadership. The development of teacher leadership and influence was directly related to their ability to provide a diversified and expanded system of rewards for their students. Even during the most disorganized period following the fall trip, the teachers sustained a sizeable nucleus of students who were involved and obligated to the program because it offered something they valued. The other students, those less involved, were actively and individually pursued by the teachers who tailored and selected rewards for them on a student by student basis. In doing this the staff followed the existing lines of

social influence among the students, and therefore their success at involving one student was occasionally multiplied by that student's influence with his friends. The result of this strategic approach was that one student after another was added to the nucleus of those who were already obligated, compliant and involved.

This growing nucleus of involved students, the consensual base necessary for any group to survive, was interested in preserving the system which provided its members with valued rewards. To do this they gradually (1) developed and adhered to norms which protected the group, and (2) began to coordinate their behavior to attain valued group goals. These efforts were assisted by the development of the mechanisms for reducing conflict and tension. Once the organization possessed these elements, it had satisfied the conditions necessary for a group to be maintained and consequently it assumed a degree of stability.

By mid year the group was relatively cohesive. But, the ultimate stage of stability was reached when the members refined the mechanisms for managing internal conflict and used them to remove those few students who failed to give compliance and thus threatened the group. What continued through the final months of the year was a highly stable organization, characterized by high compliance, high normative integration and high student involvement in the various academic, social and physical activities of the group. Because of their official role in the school hierarchy, the teachers were the formal leaders of the alternative school. But, importantly, because they were instrumental in attaining group goals, the teachers were

also the informal leaders of the social group which coexisted within the boundaries of the formal alternative organization. For this reason, it was possible for the teachers to exert a level of influence upon their students which is uncommon in public secondary classrooms.

The Second Guide Question

The second guide question was "What were the actual or potentially dysfunctional elements which threatened the organization internally or externally?" From the foregoing section, it might be concluded that the organization was a highly successful educational innovation. This may be true. But throughout the year, the teachers, students and administrators struggled with a number of dysfunctional elements which were unavoidably related to their efforts to create an effective organization.

The first set of problems grew out of the uniqueness of the program. Although this uniqueness was attractive and invigorating to the students, it caused understandable problems for others. For one thing, it made life more complicated for the administrators who needed to make special arrangements for the block scheduling, the placement of rooms, the freedom to leave the building, the unusual grading procedures, and the inevitable complaints from teachers or parents. Most secondary school administrators struggle to keep their complicated organizations running smoothly. Special exceptions disrupt their planning and require additional time and decision making, straining what may be limited resources. In highly bureaucratic organizations it is often difficult to arrange such exceptions and therefore the sub-units tend to be internally similar and

governed by standardized rules and regulations. Had Project Involve been required to conform to all of the procedures which applied to other teachers and students in the parent school, the staff would have been unable to include many of the activities they wished to provide. Failure to provide these activities may have severely restricted the formation of the integrated group.

Additionally, the uniqueness of the program raised objections and suspicions among others. Teachers who were exposed to the program were divided in their acceptance of its philosophy and activities, as were other students and parents. In the absence of information and understanding, many of these critics were willing to suspect the worst and were critical of the program. No doubt, in the case of some teachers, there was also jealousy about the reputation of the program and the attention that its teachers received. In the case of the parents, there were many fears about whether such a very different form of education would adequately prepare their children for later education or good jobs. Student peers were derisive or jealous of their friends' involvement in school and in some cases, they were resentful about the breaking apart of long standing friendships. Although the staff and students spent considerable effort informing people about the reasons for the program's uniqueness, they were not totally reassuring to the program's critics.

In some cases, the outside teachers' suspicions were aggrevated by the students' attitudes and actions in traditional classes. No doubt many of the students had formerly expressed apathy or resentment toward teachers or classes. But, once the students

joined the program, the other teachers identified student apathy as a problem related more to the program than to the individual student. Some teachers were willing to participate in the effort to provide a supportive environment for the student, allowing time for them to develop new attitudes. But not all were. Some resented what they regarded as special treatment for an undeserving minority of troublesome students. Others were irritated by the amount of time that the program required students to be away from classes or extracurricular activities. Still others objected to the risk and danger which were inherent to the outdoor expeditions. A single injury, or worse, a death would have been seized upon by the existing critics and created new hostility.

The second set of problems was related to the heterogeneity of the student membership. By their selection process, the teachers brought together students of widely differing temperaments, talents and values. To accommodate the differences in academic talent and interest the staff was obliged to resort to an individualized program of instruction. Although the scheme proved workable, it required considerable time and consultation with students on an individual basis.

This time spent in academic consultation was only part of the counseling demands the teachers placed on themselves. They were also committed to providing help with the personal problems of the students. This meant that the teachers assumed the burden of listening to and relating to a wide range of major and minor student crises. Since the majority of students were selected because they were known to be having some degree of family or school difficulty, it ensured that

personal problems would emerge frequently but unpredictably. As the students discovered the counseling to be effective, they increased their use of it, further contributing to the drain on the teachers.

A related problem was the fact that the heterogeneity among the students led to conflict associated with forming the group. Primarily these conflicts occurred over issues of behavior, involvement and compliance. In order to protect the group, the members needed to restrict certain behaviors such as cutting school, using drugs, missing class discussions, or failing to hand in assignments. Naturally, this pressure was resisted and resented by some students. Additionally, those students who were less involved were predictably resented if they didn't fully share in carrying out activities important to the group, tasks such as planning the trips, participating in the fund raising and many other obligations both social and academic. This situation could have created a status heirarchy among the students or it could have created a series of subgroups divided according to differences in value or degree of compliance. With so many students working together over an extended period of time, the natural differences among them were further aggravated by the pressure of the unnatural closeness and required cooperation.

Seldom are adolescents required to form a workable organization out of such heterogeneity. It is doubtful that an effective group would have been sustained unless the teachers and students together devoted considerable time to discussing and thereby forming or revitalizing norms. Time was required to mediate conflicts and

reduce tension. And still more time was required to plan the trips which were so important for bringing the group together. All of this, of course, took away from formal instruction, opened the program to the criticism of skeptics, and further drained the teachers.

A final dysfunctional element was related to the fact that the organization demanded the involvement of a large part of the personality of both the student and teacher members. This had several potentially negative consequences. First of all, those students who found the program to be attractive and valuable were inclined to devote considerable time to it, time which might have been spent in other useful activities or with their friends. If their other interests or friends were also valued, it placed the students in conflict and sometimes led to stress.

More importantly though, was the fact that the students and teachers came to know each other in far greater depth than is customary in secondary school. Both teachers and peer members possessed considerable power over each others lives and thus, as individuals, they became vulnerable and exposed to the others in the program. In most cases this was not problemmatic. However, the selection process had brought several students into the program who were severely disturbed. For different reasons the probram appeared to be therapeutic for all of these disturbed youth. But, in one case this came about only because the staff was forced to acknowledge that the intensity of the relationship was less helpful than comprehensive professional counseling. Despite their professional training, or

perhaps because of it, not all teachers would be capable of recognizing the limits to their own usefulness.

The final problem related to the intensity of the program was the potential for divisiveness and competition between the teachers. The program required two teachers to work and plan cooperatively under stress for an extended period of time. As indicated, these two particular staff members were able to establish an effective alliance which divided the task and maintenance functions of leadership. Their success was probably due to both innate characteristics and trained ability. Even so, their cooperation was not always easy to attain and virtually required the skills needed for a successful marriage. Quite obviously, not all teachers would have been able to sustain such an effective leadership team.

Taken collectively, the above dysfunctional elements placed considerable strain on the organization and its members. Nevertheless, it did remain stable and appeared to accomplish the goals of the teachers and the school. This was due to the collection of variables which tended to hold it together.

The Third Guide Question

"What activities, processes and organizational characteristics held the organization together?" The answers to this question should have value for a wider audience than those with an interest only in outdoor or alternative education. This is because the teachers in the program successfully attained such a high degree of control and positive influence with students who earlier had related

unfavorably to the school. Furthermore, compliance with the demands and expectations of the teachers was given willingly rather than attained by coercion or threat.

Understanding what held this organization together and gave teachers such influence begins with a discussion of rewards. As described by Blau,[1] the attainment of rewards is the incentive for social interaction to continue. Thereafter, receiving rewards tends to promote two important types of responses by the recipient: (1) the recipient begins to protect the relationship which has proven itself rewarding, and (2) the recipient becomes increasingly obligated to reciprocate, that is, he must offer something in return. Applying these principles to our study of the program economically explains how it became effective and how the teachers assumed such influence.

It is clear that the students in the program were being rewarded by their membership and they were therefore obliged to protect the organization and offer their involvement and commitment. It would be helpful to specify the rewards that each student received, but it is extremely difficult to document them precisely. Many possible courses of reward were identified. But, as explained by Blau

> In contrast to economic commodities, the benefits involved in social exchange do not have an exact price in terms of a single quantitative medium of exchange which is the reason why social obligations are unspecific. It is essential to

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[1]For an extended discussion of the processes of social exchange and rewards, see Peter Blau, Exchange and Power in Social Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), Chapter 1.

> realize that this is a substantive fact, not simply a methodological problem . . . . The obligations individuals incur in social exchange therefore are not defined only in general somewhat diffuse terms. Furthermore the specific benefits exchanged are sometimes primarily valued as symbols of the supportiveness and friendliness they express, and it is the exchange of the underlying mutual support that is the main concern to the participants.[2]

No doubt, many of the students found the obvious support and encouragement of their teachers and friends to be an important source of reward. But the reader's attention should be directed to the widespread student interest in the periodic outdoor expeditions and the preparation for them.

The outdoor trips were widely discussed throughout the year and they never failed to promote unity among the group. One possible explanation for their appeal is that they were challenging but not overly threatening. In his general discussion of rewards, Blau is again informative.

> Indeed, thorough involvement in any activity, be it a game, a sport or one's work, seems to depend on an intermediate challenge which makes the outcome problemmatical but limits the threat of failure, either because failure is not too serious . . . or because failure is not likely. If the risk of failure becomes serious, the stimulating challenge can quickly turn into an unpleasant threat.[3]

It was probably less important that these activities were in the woods or on the water than that they possessed an appropriate degree of this "intermediate" challenge. The challenge and the vividness of the activities broke the lock step routine of the traditional school and brought the students and teachers together in a very

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[2]Ibid., p. 92.

[3]Ibid., p. 42.

different environment. This unfroze old relationships to teachers and made possible new patterns of response to authority and to academic learning. The new environment provided humor, stimulated interaction, and occasionally offered an aesthetic experience. Participating in the trips demanded involvement. Preparing for them required students to assume responsibility. What's more, the opportunity to fail or perform inadequately was realistically present. But, since the teachers were adept at turning failure into productive learning, through their counseling techniques, even unhappy experiences at failing were turned to advantage. Therefore, there were few elements that did not ultimately result in a rewarding experience for the students.

It was clear that these particular outdoor activities were a fortunate choice for rewarding the majority of students, but not all of them. To meet the interests of others, different rewards were available: serving in nursing homes; tutoring elementary school children; organizing fund raising events; coordinating the outdoor trips; becoming involved in their writing or other academic activities; or simply interacting with the teachers. All of these were active and present-oriented. There were enough diverse rewards available that something was appealing to almost every student. Furthermore, the amount of things available to do was so great that it could not be monopolized by a few students. Ultimately, all but four students out of the thirty-one became obligated to the program, primarily because of the rewards they received.

Since the teachers were instrumental in providing the rewards and seeing to it that each student received some, the students in turn were obligated to discharge their debt to their benefactors. The only available way for students to do this was to comply willingly with the teachers wishes, even if they were disinclined to do so. Teachers had offered unilateral benefits for which they accumulated a capital of student compliance. In this way the teachers accumulated a power which is uncommonly found in high schools. This power was not institutional in the usual sense that the school organization provides it for all teachers by virtue of their rank and role. Instead, it derived from the specific processes of exchange within the alternative program.

The teachers used this power judiciously to sustain their leadership. They continued to help attain group goals and they continued to build close relationships with each student individually. Their age, experience and community reputation added to the student inclination to accept teacher decisions. Over time, these elements led to the students collectively legitimizing the power of the teachers and accepting them as approved authority. The teachers could have overused or abused their authority but they did not. Had they done so, it would probably have weakened their relationship with the students and created opposition.

One way they could have abused their authority was by asking students to provide more compliance than they could give. They could, for example, have maintained unrealistically high expectations for those students with low ability. Instead of ensuring failure for

those students, most of whom wanted to satisfy their teachers' expectations for them, the teachers abandoned universal standards for grading. Instead of criticizing or blaming the low ability students, or penalizing them with low grades, the teachers were supportive and encouraging. They tried to make useful sense out of the personal dynamics of failure and involve students in appropriate remediation strategies. This accepting stance in relation to failure increased the student indebtedness, since they knew the teachers could have been much more demanding or punitive.

The authority of the teachers was also enhanced by their distribution of the leadership functions among the students. The teachers remained constantly at the top of the organization; forcefully initiating, suggesting and monitoring the group's activities. However, at every possible opportunity, they distributed real responsibility to the students for seeing to it that important tasks were carried out. This brought the students closer to the organization and established networks of leadership through which the teachers developed additional influence.

In another important way, the teachers exerted leadership to resolve group problems. As we have shown, internal conflict was unavoidable. The teachers used their personal contacts with students to remain aware of the devisive tensions and problems within the group. Their prior experience kept them sensitive to the stages of group development and when they detected problems that needed resolution, they initiated the discussions and shepherded the group toward satisfactory solutions. If discipline were necessary, the teachers

preferred the group to administer it. If tensions needed release, the teachers provided and developed satisfactory mechanisms to resolve them.

One of the most valuable skills the teachers possessed was their ability at actively listening to other people. Time and again they were able to adjust their actions because of their accurate assessment of other people's perspectives. This was evident in their dealings with the administrators, the teachers and parents. But no place was it more effective than in their counseling with individual students. Although one teacher tended to be more task oriented and the other more inclined toward maintenance leadership, both were good at identifying problems, at being supportive and at effectively listening. They generally accepted other peoples points of view, or at least acknowledged them, even if they disagreed. And when there were dangerous conflicts or obstacles present, the staff was careful not to lose their strategic advantage by making a major issue out of inconsequential matters. They remained constantly aware of the vulnerability of the program and of other strategic goals. It was clear that one of the most important variables which contributed to the organizational stability was the effective way that the two teachers behaved as leaders. Their performance corresponded closely to the maxims outlined by Homans.

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 situation
9. In maintaining discipline, the leader will be less concerned with inflicting punishment than with creating the conditions in which the group will discipline itself.
10. The leader will listen.
11. The leader will know himself.[4]

These principles are the old chestnuts of effective ability at organizing people, but they are often ignored in the press and complication of classroom life. The teachers in the program, however, tended to adhere to them and as a result, they sustained their influence over their students.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the leadership skill combined with the reward system were the two most important variables which account for the group development. Other factors, however, were important and mutually supportive. Among these was the dynamic of the group process itself. As some members began to receive rewards and become involved, it tended to stimulate others to do so. This is true because individuals in organizational life continually tend to estimate the rewards gained by others. If they believe they are equally available, these rewards and symbols of them become mutually desired goals. Individual perceptions and beliefs tend to become fitted together and mutually reinforcing.

Another very important factor contributing to group development was the small and manageable size of the program. The smallness

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[4]George Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1950), pp. 425-440.

allowed the full participation of members and prevented some from becoming lost or overwhelmed by the organization. The face to face relationship fostered effective, flexible communications which in turn promoted a sense of involvement and allowed people to remain aware of what was happening. The teachers did not need to rely on memoranda or chains of command to pass important messages to the students. Communication was as direct as possible, which was a help in planning their complicated activities and in resolving their conflicts and problems.

The conflict which occurred within the program could have damaged the development of the group. It did not because the teachers anticipated its occurrence and developed mechanisms to manage it. They were able to reduce it with three structures: first of all, the personal counseling managed much of it; second, the large group discussions ventilated conflicts and enhanced the formation of protective norms; and third, the use of the outdoor trips on an intermittent basis served as a superordinate goal which promoted unity and helped overcome internal tensions. These mechanisms collectively strengthened the organization and permitted it to survive.

The organization was also made stronger by the external threats posed by parents, teachers and administrators. Instead of damaging the program, these potentially disruptive elements forced the students more closely together and enhanced the development of protective norms. They reinforced the importance of the leaders and they made the students aware of the consequences of their behavior.

Since the external threats did not weaken the basic agreement as to the purpose of the organization, they were far more useful than destructive.

The final element which appeared to hold the organization together was the network of parents and former graduates. Under times of stress or uncertainty, the parents or administrators who might have harmed the program were reassured by the favorable comments of those who had previous associations with it. This network was seldom needed. But, when called upon, its authority was considerable. Periodically, it served to resolve conflicts and to enhance the image of the program within the community.

This network was only one of a multiplicity of factors and processes that held the organization together. The external threats, the mechanisms for managing conflict, the size of the program, the leadership skill and behavior of the teachers, and the reward-exchange processes were all important to sustain the program and help the development of an integrated cohesive group. This group operated in sustained tension with its environment, but consistently it was able to resolve its problems and become increasingly stable. Because of their informal and formal leadership, the teachers were able to use the group's organization to develop considerable influence with the students and still address themselves to the goals of the larger school. Briefly, those are the summary findings of this study.

Implications

For a number of reasons, I would prefer to be quite cautious in drawing implications from the study. For one thing, the purpose of the research was deliberately restricted in terms of the questions asked. It was not designed to create advocacy for alternative or outdoor education or to become a broad based research support for determining whether such programs should be widely implemented. The guide questions did not attempt to assess the "effectiveness" of the program, since the term cannot be operationalized for the purposes of research. Instead, the study was conceived as an investigation of how one alternative program operated and what processes were influential in sustaining or threatening it. It is the belief of the researcher, that given the fact that little is known about alternative high schools, a restricted exploratory study was an appropriately narrow focus. And, I believe, that this task has been adequately accomplished.

There is a second factor which suggests that caution be used in drawing inferences from this report. This is the undeniable fact that the program under study involved only thirty-one students from the junior class in a single high school. There is no way to know whether the ninth, tenth or twelfth grade students would respond as the juniors did when they encountered the program. I attempted to gain information about this from the seniors who were involved in a similar parallel program. Their review of my observations and tentative hypotheses were helpful and they indicated that the mechanics of group development occurred in much the same way in the

senior program. Still, however useful the senior observations were, their behavior was not the object of controlled study. It was logistically impossible to document the development of the two programs simultaneously and there is therefore no basis for making more generalized inferences. Even less information is available about other groups from the ninth or tenth grades since there was no program operating for them in the school.

It is also unwise to suggest that students in other parts of the country would behave similarly if they were to experience a similar program. They might do so. But, given the relative newness of such experimental curricula, it is appropriate to wait for further development of controlled studies using similar research procedures before generalizations are warranted. There are real questions regarding the "representativeness" of Herman Melville High School and the teachers who led the alternative program within it. Would, for example, the students have behaved similarly with different teachers? Even given the same teachers, would a similar group have developed had the students come from a more economically heterogeneous background? What would have happened if the students were ethnically integrated in the program or if they all came from low income or high income backgrounds? Would the program have developed in similar ways if the school were much smaller or much larger? Without further research, there is no way to generalize safely from these discrete findings.

And so, I prefer to beg the question by advocating additional experimentation and by passing the responsibility for generalizing to

the intelligent reader. He can interpret these findings for himself. My only suggestion would be to keep in mind that much of the research in social sciences is based on the notion that human beings tend to develop reasonable ways of responding to the conditions of their environment. Some researchers extend this perspective and add, as Cusick[5] does, that "reasonable behavior for one normal human being in a situation is reasonable behavior for another normal human being given the same situation." Even accepting this perspective opens generalizations to criticism because of the lack of control over the definition of what constitutes the "same situation." In this report, therefore, the reader is left with the encouragement to extend inferences of his own, and he remains unguided in his effort beyond the contribution of the basic research.

However unsatisfactory this conclusion is, the researcher would point to the new developments in alternative and outdoor programs for older youth. Currently there is considerable interest in such programs, especially in those which provide wilderness experiences or special forms of behavioral counseling for the alienated, disaffected or troubled adolescent. The number of these programs is clearly growing and provides the opportunity for further experimentation and study. As further study provides more information, a clearer picture of the promise of such curricula will no doubt emerge. This study was designed to explore one such program, and to become the basis for additional inquiry.

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[5]Cusick, op. cit., p. 218.

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APPENDIX

January 10, 1973

Mr. Daniel Jeffers
Project Involve
Herman Melville High School
Stoneham, Rhode Island

Dear Mr. Jeffers:

I AM VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROJECT INVOLVE! Congratulations for the evident success of the program and your own originality and commitment. From careful study of two recently published reports describing the programs and students with which you work, I suspect that there are many similarities of purpose and feeling that underlie both your innovations and my own recent activities.

Two and a half years ago, I took leave from a successful career as a high school English teacher and coach to devote full time to graduate study in school curriculum. I was (and still am) confident that schools can use learning settings other than a traditional classroom to achieve humane educational results for their students. It appears that you are demonstrating that principle in an exciting manner.

If I can rely upon the reports in _Today's Education_ and _The New York Times_, your program is so very similar to some of the innovations I wish to initiate in my native Maryland that I could gain an immeasurably valuable experience by directly observing and participating in your activities for a period of time. Though such an experience would constitute a conclusion to my doctoral studies, I do not wish to collect data to test any specific hypothesis, to distribute questionnaires or interrupt in any way the activities that you have planned. Rather, I would like to simply observe in an intimate fashion what you and your students do. I am hoping that you might be persuaded to devise some role for me to play which would not disturb you but would still permit me to learn and experience the essential elements of Project Involve.

While I am confident that schools and students in Maryland will profit greatly in the near future by my working with you, perhaps if I can give some picture of my own background you might be able to construct some capacity which would allow me to make some contributions of help to you. I am twenty-nine and unmarried. I dislike some books and

most starlings but I respond positively to children, the outdoors and the active life. I received a double major in English and History at Hobart College and a M.A.T. in English at Columbia University the following year, 1967. After graduation, I worked for one year as an English teacher in an impoverished area high school in Washington, D.C. and for three years in a suburban high school in Baltimore. Each year that I taught, I developed a popular outdoor and outings club that operated on weekends and convinced me that all types and ages of children could learn and enjoy learning in the outdoors. I was a successful coach, active in school and faculty affairs and received both official and unofficial recognition for the various roles I played in school.

Outside of school life, simultaneous loves for learning about people, cultures and nature provide the key to understanding my activities. Formerly an Eagle Scout, currently active in the Sierra Club and the Outdoor Education Project of AAHPER, I've been fortunate to be able to continue to enjoy the outdoors, especially during the summers. I have a moderate amount of experience in backpacking and mountaineering extending back to my teenage years and continuing through this past summer when I attended an Outward Bound practicum in the Colorado mountains. A bass fishing guide for 2 years in Maryland, I extended my experiences by guiding for one summer and several vacations in the marshes and swamps in South Carolina, Virginia and Florida. For the past four summers and holidays, I've been a charter boat mate and captain, fishing the Gulf Stream from Maryland to Florida for marlin, tuna, bluefish and shark. I spent a year in the merchant marine prior to beginning graduate study, and have travelled through Europe and Central America. During the past two years, I have participated in several conferences, workshops and school camping programs which focus on establishing and developing relationships between the outdoors, the school and the community. Last summer I enjoyed two months visiting outdoor programs for schools and colleges located in the American wast and midwest.

In 1970, acceptance to graduate study with Dr. Julian Smith at Michigan State University provided me with the opportunity to unify my vocation with my avocational interests through outdoor education. Though my degree will be in school curriculum, my major emphasis has been on seeking ways to improve educational options for all ages, K through community, by offering out of classroom experiences. Your program seems to be meeting, in energetic fashion, some real needs common to adolescents in Connecticut, Maryland and elsewhere.

We in education need to know a lot more about the type of program that you are operating. I would like to help in that learning. In short, what I would like to do is:

1) I would like to come to your program and observe it intimately, in action, for three months this coming spring. I will be available from April 1 until July 1, at your convenience.

2) In order to justify my presence, I would like to assist you in any way you consider appropriate.

3) I would like to describe your program in a fashion that would be helpful to other people not familiar with it.

4) I would like to learn from you how to best implement such a program in other parts of the country.

I am left then, with a question for you to answer. Can we arrange to accomplish the above goals? I would greatly value the opportunity to be a participant observer of Project Involve as a culminating experience to my own studies.

I am looking forward to hearing from you!

Most sincerely,

Bill Martin
403 Erickson Hall

February 3, 1973

Mr. Bill Martin
403 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Bill:

Thank you so much for your enthusiastic letter of 10 January 1973, and please excuse my long silence in getting back to you--life around here has been absolutely frantic and to some extent the pace does become a little overbearing at times. Your resume of past experience is so damned exciting that I am very interested in the possibility of your getting involved here. I have already sent a letter stating my interest in you to Julian Smith.

In my letter to Mr. Smith, I requested that we have an opportunity to meet in discussion so that I might get to know you and you get to know me. I would also at this time want you to be able to question severely the nature of your experience with us to determine whether it's really what you want and worthwhile of the expenditure of time and energy. February is going to be a wild month with a winter camping survival program on the week of February 12, followed by a one week school vacation, at which time I will be out of town. We will have to concur by telephone the tail end of February to determine when, if possible, you can come to visit before we make further plans.

It's exciting to touch bases with other teachers who understand the nature of experiential education.

Kindest regards,

Daniel Jeffers
Project Involve

Outdoor Education Project
403 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
5 May 1973

Mr. Daniel Jeffers
Project Involve
Herman Melville High School
Stoneham, Rhode Island

Dear Dan:

THANK YOU, YOUR DELIGHTFUL FAMILY, SALLY AND DAN, AND YOUR STUDENTS FOR THEIR PARTS IN MAKING MY STAY SO ENJOYABLE AND EXCITING! I think that the publicity and media response to your program can only hint at the generous openness that I found during my two short days with all of you. I left reluctantly, but with an invigorating enthusiasm about what you and your students are doing and an intense hope that we can arrange for me to return for a longer and more contributing stay in the fall. I remember that you feel that there are many programs of equally outstanding worth operating in other parts of New England, but they would have to be very special to encourage and foster the same poise, excitement and sense of community evident in the students at PI. From my frame of reference in curriculum and outdoor education, I am inclined to view what you all have created as one of the most exciting things happening in secondary education.

Please forgive my delay in writing back to you. We have been quite busy for the last two weeks, planning and putting on our state workshop in outdoor education. It was held with great success last weekend and parts will be rerun this weekend for some undergraduate classes in the College of Education. Woven into our structure and programming were some of the same commitments to confluent and flexible planning that you and I talked about as being so important to producing a natural and exciting curriculum. It worked very well.

I have also been engaging in a fascinating little study within a local high school. While my purpose was to practice the methodology of participant observation, I tried to select a setting for study which would be relevant to my interests in schools and curriculum. And so, for the past two weeks, I have been a high school student, going from class to class, snatching a smoke behind the building, becoming a member of student social groups and in short discovering what school is like from a student's point of view. When I so often heard students complain that "We never do anything," I had before

thought they were speaking metaphorically. But, I see now that they are being quite literal. The only times that general interest is aroused and maintained is when the students are tangibly, manipulatively doing something. And those times are few and seldom capitalized upon. Most classes seem to operate for about six to eight students who out of politeness or genuine interest provide sufficient feedback for the teacher to continue in the same methodological approach. Meanwhile, those students excluded from this subtle consensual base remain peripheral to the class and mentally drift away or simply don't come to class. I could go on at length about the observations and conclusions which reinforce my belief that PI is so very important a development in secondary curriculum. But, I should get on with my proposal for you.

I hope that this doesn't become too formalized and theoretical, but some attention to theory seems important. We in education, faced on the one hand with increased opportunity to explore different and alternative methods of schooling, and, on the other hand, with the very real pressure for accountability, need to know a lot more about what happens to students, teachers and school organization when alternatives are adopted. One widely relied upon method of obtaining information about educational programs is to rely upon the standardized evaluations and tests which you already have some information about. Helpful as these indices are, they tend to focus on outcomes rather than processes and, I suspect, they have some difficulty dealing with the structural features and human interactions which, occurring over time, constitute the program itself. And, yet, it is these interactions and structural features which seem to be of great importance to PI. The shared perceptions, the common definitions, and the human interactions which are encouraged or restrained by the prevailing structural and organizational assumptions constitute the life of PI. And in concert these will be the factors which account for whatever results the standardized tests will reveal. Lacking an understanding of these dimensions, statistics, I think, will seem rather bareboned.

The best method that I know of to evaluate the factors employs the field observation methodology used extensively in sociology and anthropology and now becoming more fashionable in education. In brief, this methodology requires the researcher to become a participant observer within the subject of inquiry, to immerse himself in its frame of reference and social context. As participant, the researcher is present in the first hand to explore what is happening and to describe it, to pursue topics of significance and relevance as they develop and to explain the situation from the point of view of both the researcher and the subjects. Unlike statistical analysis, this methodology does not seek to limit the scope of its inquiry to the testing of predetermined hypotheses. Rather, its purposes tend to generate hypotheses and simultaneously gather the data with which to test them.

In using the methodology the researcher does try to provide some initial focus, however, to prevent ranging too far afield in his investigation. (Some researchers have never returned and instead have become completely assimilated into the social system they were studying!) And so, attempting to guard against prior restrictions which limit too greatly the scope of the study, I have generated a set of guiding questions which try to examine and describe what seems to be educationally important features of the PI experiment.

1) To explore and describe the formal and informal relationships among the participating teachers and students in PI.
2) To explore and describe the reward structure maintained by the participants of PI.
3) To explore and describe the organizational assumptions and characteristics of PI.
4) To explain how the formal and informal social relationships, the reward structure and the organizational characteristics are related to the behavior and perspective of the participants in PI.

Whereas some studies of schools, including the recent one I've been conducting for practice, have focused solely on the student perspective, I am proposing here to also include the staff and teacher perspective into the unit of analysis. After my two days' stay, I think that a failure to do so might overlook a vital ingredient of the common perspective. Doing this, too, gives us some further latitude in arranging for a role for me to play in the PI community. But, in trying to find such a role, we would have to exercise care to insure that I'm not significantly altering the nature of the program. I think the sociologists' rule of thumb cautions that he not study himself or his influence. Thus, the problem will be to gather information in such a way that the information itself is not subtly edited for me because of the role I am playing. But, I am confident that we can develop a workable position, that on the one hand would allow me to observe and interact, and on the other, would justify my presence. We can think further on this.

I hope that the bulk of the proposal is clear, though I've had to lapse into rather academic style in explaining it, but, that will be helpful for me. While drawing it together here, I am simultaneously preparing for the formal draft to my doctoral committee, which will receive it later this month. Naturally, I feel somewhat like a farmer trying to anticipate before the summer if the Lord will give him enough rain and sun to let his corn grow.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you. If there are more questions about my proposal or suggestions about my guide questions I'll be glad to answer them, hopefully more hastily than I've been in sending this. But, I wanted to be thoughtful in my preparation and I hope that I have been. Please send my regards to all.

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