PEOPLE AND LEARNING: A BELIEF SYSTEM

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
JANET KRULIK RUNYAN
1973

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

PEOPLE AND LEARNING: A Belief System

presented by

JANET KRULIK RUNYAN

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Education

Dale V. Adam

Major professor

Date April 27, 1973

K-147

N-021

ABSTRACT

PEOPLE AND LEARNING: A BELIEF SYSTEM

By

Janet Krulik Runyan

The learning process discussed herein is based upon specific beliefs about people and the way they meet their needs. Chief among these beliefs is one that says while people all share common thoughts and feelings, each person attempts to meet these needs in unique ways. People need, and deserve, enough freedom to "be" all of their uniqueness and they need many opportunities to explore and experience. This is the process of human learning and it can be exciting, challenging, and joyful.

Rules and regulations, competition and evaluation, and expectations, all severely limit or restrict a person's right to be himself, to act spontaneously, and to select his own learning experiences. No one can know what another person should do, or learn. Personal growth and learning experiences are most rewarding when "teachers" are facilitators of learning, helping each "student" to learn the things they are eager to learn, solve problems they wish they could solve, and answer questions they are curious about. This type of learning is defined by those who want to learn and facilitated by those who want to

share in such learning. Learning facilitators can help to provide such learning experiences by themselves becoming more open and more honest; by being accepting and supportive of all individual differences; by discarding expectations and manipulations; by sharing their dreams, their fears, their problems, and their feelings; by caring; by loving; by assisting and aiding rather than directing and forcing.

All of us need to express and share our feelings as well as our thoughts in order to experience both emotional and intellectual growth. The dependence and interdependence of the emotional and the intellectual is important to recognize. Our feelings and our emotions don't disappear just because they are ignored. Personal and interpersonal factors do influence learning and motivation. Our research tells us that this is so. But more research is needed using various conceptual and operational definitions including both comparative and longitudinal studies.

The activities, the feelings, and the behaviors of the people help to determine any environment. Environments that are conducive to exciting, joyful learning and personal growth allow for decision making <u>with</u> students where all opinions are encouraged, shared, and accepted. Such environments plan for and make use of feedback from all persons in that environment. They are stimuli-producing, focusing on self-directed learning.

They are non-threatening, conducive to the meeting of individual needs and self-actualization. They are warm, non-authoritarian, and supportive; non-competitive and informal; they foster respect and trust; subordinate-superior relationships cease; and, perhaps most important, they are open or unstructured. People will create their own learning environments if they feel free to do so. At the present time, the organizational and contextual environments of most schools seriously impede the creation of environments that are consistent with the type of learning described.

Learning programs compatible with the beliefs stated thus far are available and are being used in a few schools. Such programs include many options and strive to help people develop and understand both their intellect and their emotions. They provide opportunities for self-growth and development of <u>all</u> human potential. The approach is individualistic and creative with much less emphasis on content, knowledge, and essentials. Students generate and discover, laugh and cry, love and hug. People will create their own forms of learning and will take responsibility for their learning needs when we stop imposing structure from without and allow it to come from within.

PEOPLE AND LEARNING: A BELIEF SYSTEM

By

Janet Krulik Runyan

A THESIS

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education
and Curriculum

1973

To all persons who are trying to make a difference

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my guidance committee for their interest, support, and especially the freedom that was provided throughout my graduate work. Dale Allam is truly a facilitator of learning and a warm, accepting human being. Vince Salvo shares himself and his feelings with all who care and, by example, helps to facilitate change both personal and institutional. John Suehr helps to make change happen in the schools, but more importantly in people.

The support of my husband, Dave, means a great deal to me. . .he understands and he cares.

On Children

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of
  Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they
  belong not to you.
You may give them your love but
  not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not
  their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of
  tomorrow, which you cannot visit,
  not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
  but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries
  with yesterday. . .

Kahlil Gibran
The Prophet

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PREFACE

It is well to keep in mind that the model of science in general, inherited from the impersonal sciences of things, objects, animals, and part-processes, is limited and inadequate when we attempt to know and to understand whole and individual persons and cultures. It was primarily the physicists and the astronomers who created the subculture known as Science (including all its goals, methods, axiomatic values, concepts, languages, folk-ways, prejudices, selective blindnesses, hidden assumptions). This is an impersonal model, failing with the personal, the unique, the holistic.[1]

As Maslow tries to enlarge science by abstracting, integrating, and experiencing, so too, does this dissertation. Reliable insights into learning require that our empirical studies be based on varying conceptualizations of the learning process. Learning is experiencing. Our research must take into account the person who is doing the learning. Feelings and processes must be integrated with data and content. Roger Williams says:

> In dealing with people statistics should be used with care. A group of people is something like a collection of marbles of all sizes and compositions, and all colors of the rainbow. Try to 'average' these marbles and you come out with nonsense. You can average their color by mounting them on a

> circular disc and rotating it rapidly. The color comes back a dirty-gray. But there isn't a dirty-gray marble in the lot! People are as distinctive as marbles, and when we attempt to average them we come up with a dirty-gray 'man.' Averaging when applied in this careless way to people can be vicious for we are all unique specimens.[2]

Orthodox scientific investigations are the only methods used to study the learning process and this process will continue to move into an even more mechanistic, dehumanizing direction. A rediscovery of man and his human capacities, needs, and aspirations is occurring slowly in politics, industry, religion, education, and also in the psychological and social sciences. Our schools can be leaders in the restoration of humanly-based values. It is time to reconceptualize learning; to work with our students in a freer atmosphere, to allow students to choose their own learning experiences, and to offer both cognitive and non-cognitive school experiences. If these things are to happen, we need a change, not only in our conceptualizations, but in our perception and evaluation of familiar data as well. Dr. Philip Jackson, past chairman of the ASCD Elementary Education Council, said it well: "The field of education, in my opinion, does not need better tests and more sophisticated research designs nearly as badly as it needs new ways of looking at some of its oldest problems."[3]

INTRODUCTION

The main concern of this thesis is the individual, the person. It is about people learning together; about people meeting their own needs and helping others meet their needs. It is about human learning and the programs and environments that allow for such learning.

This is not an empirical study in the sense that specific variables are manipulated or measured. Suggestions for studies of this nature are offered. Nor is this a definitive study. It is the beliefs and feelings of the writer about people and learning based on personal experience, study, and research.

The "procedural methodology" makes use of research, theory, and practice relevant to behavioral change processes, education, sociology, psychology, and political science. This information is then applied to educational organization settings, programs, and individuals.

While there are many critics of today's schools, few are offering remedies, solutions, or programs although general suggestions, alternative models, and specific techniques are beginning to emerge. These represent real efforts toward reconceptualizations in education. Too many of these are modifications of existing practices that perpetuate either the structural or environmental status

quo. Many neglect underlying assumptions that are at best questionable and at the least undesirable. Making schools "relevant" and more "individualized" will not change the basic training process which is set up. Despite some new materials, innovative programs, and experimental teaching methods, many of today's schools often resemble the schools of the 1950's. Essentially the rules, the mistrust, the boredom have not changed. The sections that follow discuss differing belief systems regarding human behavior and learning. Some remedies, solutions, and programs based on specific beliefs about learning and people are offered. Hopefully, future empirical research studies will provide evidence in support of the substantive material and hypotheses contained herein.

In education, as in other endeavors, progress is measured by enumerating shortcomings and by drawing critical attention to failures. Education in this country has traditionally been in a state of crisis and perhaps this is a source of strength; creativity proceeds from the known to the unknown and crisis situations demand creativity. At the present time, we are living in a society where three revolutions have converged simultaneously; the industrial-scientific revolution, the communications revolution, and the educational revolution. These three revolutions have been responsible for jamming us together and bringing us into face-to-face contact, thus increasing the tension of daily living and raising our

level of expectations and demand for freedom and mobility. The crisis now in education calls for creative solutions.

Since we are a pluralistic nation of very different kinds of people, we have different values and beliefs, different life styles, different goals, and different aspirations. We may each learn best in very different environments. Some of us may learn best by having no structure, others may need a rigid structure. Some may not need a "teacher", others may need programmed materials or computer-assisted lessons, or just conventional classrooms. If the assumption that people learn best in different ways is correct, then we should work to provide as many learning options as possible. Such options provide the focus for much of this thesis.

The first section, "People, Learning, and the Schools", provides a discussion on learning: What is learning and what is involved in the process of learning? When does learning occur and how is it achieved? The role of the school and its effect on people and learning is considered. The relationship between learning and human needs, between learning and motivation, and the concept of human actualization are all explored. Research suggestions are offered.

The second section discusses environments that are compatible with the learning beliefs expressed in the first section. Within the context of the daily school setting the following factors are considered:

stimuli-producing environments, human behaviors, the physical structures and the decision making structures. The section closes by looking at the organizational environment of the school. This is a more academic discussion of educational decision making and the power relationships of persons in the school system, drawn mainly from organizational studies in sociology and political science.

The final section, "The Program", includes a brief, general discussion on program and curriculum choices. Focus then turns to the facilitation of learning including research findings on "leadership"; on learning to think and learning to feel with suggested options for each; on learning and T-Group theory, and on valuing. Underlying all of this is the concern that people's needs are met in a relevant, interesting, even exciting manner, and in a way that allows for self-growth.

SECTION I

PEOPLE, LEARNING AND SCHOOLS

> Every human being is of supreme value because his experience, which must be in some measure unique, gives him a unique view of reality: and the sum of such views is needed if mankind is ever to comprehend its destiny.
>
> Rebecca West,
> Black Lamb and Grey Falcon

Students. . .teachers. . .administrators. . .school board members. . .people. . .human beings, each unique. Each with special throughs and feelings. Each concerned with and interested in their experiences and the environment that affects them and is affected by them. Each of us trying to meet our personal needs in our own way. Each of us learning.

However learning is defined and regardless of how it is measured, it is the person who does the learning; the person who experiences, works, plays, shares, grows. What is learning and when does it occur? How is learning achieved? What is involved in learning? These questions are the concern of this section. Discussed also is the relationship of human needs and learning, human motivation, actualization for more satisfying living, and the role of the school as it related to all of these concerns.

About Human Learning

In Education and Ecstasy George Leonard says that no one can be rescued from learning; learning is what human life is.[4] Learning involves the acquisition of insights, skills, and knowledge; to learn is to change. Education is a process that changes the learner. Learning is living and life is an education. It is an illusion that the most important learning happens in school. All learning is important regardless of when and where it occurs. Learning in school does not occur differently than the way it does outside of school. Learning consists of much more than cognitive, intellectual input and output; it consists of finding out who you are and who you would like to become and why; of empathetic understanding, of spontaneous curiosity and originality. It consists of sharing with openness and honesty. . .a sharing of both ideas and feelings. All of these learnings can be facilitated by allowing students to grow and develop by following their positive instincts of curiosity, imagination, and self-fulfillment; by allowing for exploration, interpretation and analysis; by allowing for communication to and with themselves and with each other. The association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) says,

> Within the broad limits of good taste both students and teachers should be free to explore and test values without restraint or fear of criticism. . . Ethics, morality, human feeling and emotion need to be part of the curriculum if the school intends that teachers and classrooms will effect student behavior significantly.[5]

Dr. Dwight Allen, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, says that education consists of more than an additive acquisition of knowledge. We need to provide ways of opening up individual experiences; of providing more options so that different needs can be met in different ways. We need to treat students as scholars. Today, a child quickly learns that virtually everything he does will be evaluated in abstract, absolute terms: good and bad. Yet, there is no such thing as bad learning. Learning is learning. Bad learning simply means that the learning does not fit into the program. . .a program that has been defined before the student is even brought into it and one that rarely bends to accept the unique differences of human beings.[7]

There are different types of learning and different kinds of knowledge. There is academic knowledge that transcends experience and there is direct knowledge of the world gained only through personal experience. Some speak of cognitive as opposed to affective learning: cognitive, meaning conceptualizing or thinking; affective, meaning experiencing or feeling. Abraham Maslow discusses "experiential knowledge" and "spectator knowledge"; Maslow says that all of life must first be known experientially: "There is no substitute for experience, none at all. All the other paraphernalia of communication and of knowledge--words, levels, concepts, symbols, theories, formulas, sciences--all are useful only because people

already know experientially. The basic coin in the realm of knowing is direct, intimate, experiential knowing. Everything else can be likened to banks and bankers, to accounting systems and checks and paper money, which are useless unless there is real wealth to exchange. To manipulate, to accumulate, and to order."[8]

Neither the cognitive/conceptual knowing or affective/experiential learning is to be given priority. A complete human being, a psychologically healthy person, develops each as completely as possible. He will do this in his own way; he will meet his learning needs at the time and place of his choosing. He will, <u>if</u> given the freedom to do so.

It is a trap to dichotomize experiential knowledge and conceptual knowledge. They go hand in hand, complimenting each other. Yet, schools put heavy emphasis on the cognitive at the expense of the affective or experiential. Maslow contends that experiential knowledge is prior to verbal-conceptual knowledge, and that they are hierarchically integrated and need each other. Schools where both types of learning are encouraged, or allowed to occur, are exciting, rewarding places for all of the people fortunate enough to be there. How often are people in schools lost in the present, losing the past and future for the time being? Living totally in the here-and-now, immersed, concentrated, fascinated? These are some qualities of good learning experiences;

laid aside are words, analysis, dissecting, classifying, defining. To the extent that they intrude is the experience less "full". There is some pretty empty experiencing occurring in many schools today.

Growth is a concept that can serve as an example. Students are in school to grow. Unfortunately this growth is usually reserved for cognitive learnings, and for the students alone. Why not all persons growing together by experiencing together? And experiencing each other by sharing problems, hopes, fears. . .our feelings. Teachers and students together can overcome common fears and help each other over difficult changes. As personal problems are overcome, together, then we can become more truly interested in the world for its own sake.

A continuous development of the capacity for commitment and responsible decision-making is an important factor built into the learning concept. By insuring freedom of choice and multiple avenues of communication we can end the tradition of programming a passive child.[9] In order to promote responsibility for self growth, commitment, and learning, people must be given such opportunities. People who have their life programmed by others are not apt to be able to structure their own lives; the longer a person is denied this function, the longer it takes to learn to determine and meet his individual needs and to take the responsibility for his actions. Although very little research has been

done with students who are in "open" or "freed up" schools, it appears as though long periods of inertia is the rule rather than the exception. These students often seem excited at first, spending much time socializing and engaging in what seems like random activity. However, many rapidly become disenchanted and begin to yearn for the "normal" routine where they are pretty much told what to do and when to do it. This time seems to be a critical point and it is at this point that we can facilitate learning by encouraging the student to determine his own needs and goals. More will be said about this later on. This is the kind of learning that so few people are ever given the opportunity to experience. Much, much research needs to be done in "open" schools. A truly open school permits learning situations where very little structure is provided for the students, and what structure is provided is done with those persons affected. Data does indicate more positive attitudes on the part of students when they are given increased responsibility for their learning activities.[10] In other research with students in "open" environments, many of them encompassed the traditional book learning definition with interpersonal relationships and self insight; most of the students who were interviewed said that there was a period of adjustment for them and after that adjustment they became much happier.[11]

Research conducted during the adjustment period which may be as long as one year or more, is likely to

indicate low scores on self-concept, achievement, and other factors being influenced by the transition from a structured to an unstructured learning situation. This indeed may be the case in a comparative study of sixth grade students in an "open" room and those in a "departmentalized" room. Achievement and self concept was lower in the open room than in the more traditional room.[12] Until more schools experiment with less structured learning programs and environments, research efforts are greatly hampered.[13]

John Holt feels that young children tend to learn better than grownups and better than they themselves will when they are older. In short, says Holt, children have a style of learning that fits their condition, and which they use naturally and well until we train them out of it; only a few children in school ever become good at learning in the way we try to make them learn. Most of them get humiliated, frightened, and discouraged. They use their minds, not to learn, but to get out of doing the things we tell them to do to make them learn. The children who use such strategies are prevented by them from growing into the human beings they might have become. This is the real failure that takes place in school; hardly any children escape. School must become a place in which <u>all</u> children grow, not just in size, not even in knowledge, but in curiosity, courage, confidence, independence, resourcefulness, resilience, patience,

competence and understanding. What teachers and learners both need to know is, first, that vivid, vital, pleasurable experiences are the easiest to remember, and secondly, that memory works best when unforced. Memory is not a mule that can be made to walk by beating it. When we are anxious and afraid we think badly and even perceive badly, or not at all. When we make children afraid we stop learning dead in its tracks.[14] In far too many of our schools today our children are afraid, and even if they are not afraid, they seldom "delight" in learning.

Holt goes on to say that children learn to speak before they get to school. They do this by patient and persistent experiment; by trying many thousands of times to make sounds, syllables, and words; by comparing their own sounds to sounds made by people around them, and by gradually bringing their own sounds closer to the others. Above all, by being willing to do things wrong even while trying their best to do them right. What would happen if we tried to teach speaking to children? Most likely, before they got very far, children would become baffled, discouraged, humiliated, and fearful, and would quit trying to do what we asked them. If, outside of our classes, they lived a normal infants life, many of them would probably ignore our "teaching" and learn to speak on their own. If not, if our control of their lives was complete (the dream of far too many educators), they would take refuge in deliberate failure and silence, as so many of them do when the subject is reading.[15]

The most serious challenge that our whole educational system faces is meeting and providing for each learner's needs. All types of learnings need to be facilitated and students need to be allowed to select what they feel fits them best. This is Organic Learning Theory and it attempts to free people to grow by encouraging stimuli-producing environments. According to Dale Alam, Secondary Education and Curriculum Professor at Michigan State University, Organic Learning Theory supports the concept of alternative environments within the school setting. Even these alternatives are meaningless if perceived as undesirable by the learner; if, once selected by the student, the teacher proceeds to establish goals, reject feedback, and, in effect reduce stimuli to control the learning option.[16]

A learners needs are human needs. If these needs are not met by the schools, we face the alternative that our educational system will essentially collapse. When schools begin to meet the needs of the people they serve, that part of a persons life education will become the joy, even adventure, that it more often is outside of school.

Implicit throughout this thesis is the belief that every person has certain needs, that these needs can best be met in certain ways, and that different people meet their needs in different ways. Again and again this theme will resound. Most people can effectively meet their own needs if allowed to do so. If they can not, then programs

to facilitate the meeting of individual needs are necessary. These needs and the ways they can be met concern every person called "educator" and every person involved in the educational process. We need to help our students determine and effectively meet their own needs. This is learning. Until a person can effectively meet her or his own needs, other learning suffers.

By definition then, the educational process of people consists of learning by working, sharing, growing, alone and together. Experiencing is learning and is necessary for growth to occur. A person cannot learn or grow until he is free to provide his own structure and meet his own needs in his own way. The reality of an institution exists in the experiences of the persons who comprise it.

Human Needs[17]

Some progress has been made in the study of characteristics which comprise the human personality. Experimental psychology has contributed knowledge about motivation, learning, frustration and conflict; child psychology has contributed experimental and observational studies on the development of personality characteristics; psychological testing, or psychometrics, has contributed techniques for the measurement of personality characteristics; psychiatry has contributed the insights of

psychoanalytic and other theories of personality. In time, these areas of inquiry may bring a more complete understanding of the structure and dynamics of personality.

At the present time there is no one general theory of personality. Freud's theory emphasized biological drives and needs. Most other theories place somewhat greater emphasis on social factors. Alfred Adler emphasizes a drive or striving for superiority. Karen Horney makes basic anxiety the central concept of her theory. According to Horney, the child learns ways of dealing with anxiety; these, in turn, form a pattern of "neurotic needs." Another theorist, Henry Murray, has an even longer list of needs than Horney. Murray's needs were arrived at in a different way: he distinguished twenty-eight needs based on a representative sample of fifty-one young men. These needs include affiliation, aggression, play, achievement, autonomy, and order, each varying in strength from person to person.

Abraham Maslow's self-actualization is a multiple-factor theory positing five levels of needs arranged in a hierarchy from lower to higher levels. They are: physiological needs such as hunger and thirst; safety needs, such as security, stability, and order; belonging-ness and love needs such as need for affection, affiliation, and identification; esteem needs such as prestige, success, and self-respect; need for self-actualization. The order of listing these needs is

significant in two ways. This is the order in which such needs tend to appear in the normal development of the person. It is also the order in which they need to be satisfied. If earlier needs are not satisfied, the person never gets around to doing much about the later needs. Those in an "affluent" society, on the other hand, will manage to satisfy the needs lower in the hierarchy and in many cases be preoccupied with the need for self-actualization.

The need for self-actualization refers to the need to develop the full potentialities of the person. Naturally, the meaning of this need varies from person to person, for each has different potentialities. For some, it means achievement in literary or scientific fields; for other, it means leadership in politics or the community; for still others, it means merely living one's own life fully without being unduly restrained by social conventions.

Trait theory, espoused by Gordon Allport, assumes a multiplicity of needs that are never quite the same from one individual to the next. It may be distinquished from other theories in two important respects. One is the concept of the uniqueness of personality; the other is the concept of functional autonomy of motives. In the course of development, each person acquires motives as part of satisfying other motives. An example of the

functional autonomy concept is the poor boy who earned his first pennies to ward off hungar and discomfort but continues to work day and night at amassing a large fortune long after he has acquired enough money to meet his physical needs.

Theories which stress social factors in development include Eric Fromm's "escape from freedom", Harry Sullivan's crucial interpersonal situation, Erik Erickson's ego integrity search with its' eight stages.

Certainly learning plays a major role in the development of the characteristics which differentiate personalities. Complex motives are learned and these motives are important characteristics of personality. In addition, abilities, attitudes, and interests are shaped by reinforcement. R. D. Laing, psychiatrist and physician, says:

> We will find no intelligibility in behavior if we see it as an inessential phase in an essentially inhuman process. We have had accounts of men as animals, men as machines, men as biochemical complexes with certain ways of their own, but there remains the greatest difficulty in achieving a human understanding of man in human terms.[18]

Everett Shostrom has developed a Personal Orientation Inventory measuring self-actualization. In the P.O.I. Manuel Shostrom says:

> In considering the relative importance of past, present, or future experience it has been said that Freud's system of therapy focuses primarily on the past; that is, psychoanalysis uses the past experiences of an individual as primary in determining his present adjustment to life. Psychoanalysis is sometimes referred to as an archeological

> expedition into the individual's history with the emphasis on 'having been'.[19]

Some psychologists feel that delving into the past serves the purpose of finding "causes" (and thus excuses) for the present situation.

In a similar manner it may be said that Adlerian psychology, with its emphasis on goals for the individual, stresses a future orientation with emphasis on "becoming." This orientation aggravates the usual tendency to try always to be a step ahead of actuality. Thus, people who "live for the future" never catch up with the events for which they have prepared and never reap the fruits of their sowing. Their rehearsal for even the most unimportant situation may rob them of the ability to act spontaneously when it arrives. Existential and Gestalt therapists, in contradiction to the Freudian or Adlerian, emphasize a here-and-now or "being" orientation to living, and stress the here-and-now as the significant variable for therapeutic work.

From the foregoing discussion one factor stands out and that is that different individuals have many differing needs and attempt to meet those needs in a variety of ways. The only way that the school, or any institution or person can help meet human needs is to provide options and allow the individual freedom to choose from those options. These options must include more than the traditional cognitive or factual subject

matter. Instead of imparting predetermined chunks of knowledge and acceptance of the status quo, learning environments and programs must be created that will allow students to explore such things as social and political change, human existence, freedom, creativity, and community. Along with reading, writing, and arithmetic, the student may select self-exploration, interpersonal and human communication skills, explorations for leisure time and for cybernation, without conformity and structure for all. Emotional maturation becomes part of the educational process by a continuous concern from kindergarten to the university for making self-knowledge part of the curriculum, recognizing the emotional or affective side of humans and providing opportunities for growth in this important area. A persons freedom is the right to know what he feels. In the words of William Schutz,

> We have succeeded only in creating a generation of young people who are unable to distinguish thoughts from feelings, and unable to express feelings even when they recognize them. They are unable to distinguish between their own wants and what their wants ought to be.[20]

In short, we are "training" more and more young people to be unable to recognize and meet their needs. People need to feel, recognize, understand, and articulate <u>all</u> of the things that go on inside them. If children are to have freedom to know what they feel, they must be encouraged and helped to attend to their forbidden thoughts,

and to put them into words; to talk out loud about love and hate, jealousy, fear, curiosity about the body, and family relationships.

Earlier it was stated that if children are to learn, or experience, they must feel safe. Maslow discusses this safety need, saying that in general only a child who feels safe dares to grow and experience. He can't be pushed ahead, because the ungratified safety needs will remain forever underground, always calling for satisfaction.[21] How can we know when the child feels safe enough to dare to choose a new behavior or new experience? Only the child knows whether he feels safe and by his choices he tells us the right moment when his courage outweighs his fear. We often know little or nothing about the fears and insecurities of people in schools. . .not the students, the teachers, the custodians, administrators, or school board. How many children sit in classes, fearful of questioning? How many young people go through high school and perhaps graduate without sharing that fear, whatever it's cause? With our competitive educational models, disciplined behavior expectations and rigid schedules, it is hard to imagine a safe, reassuring, supportive atmosphere. Is the person in school accepted, trusted, respected? Are educational situations permissive, admiring, praising, gratifying, non-threatening, non-valuing, and non-comparing? Is gentleness, love, and understanding conspicuous by its presence? Most of these

question statements are answerable only in the negative. People can't be forced to grow and no one can prefer it for them. When people gather together each must be accepted respectfully, trusted, and helped to grow. We must trust and love each other allowing freedom for each to learn.

Human Actualization

Schools must help people become more autonomous, more spontaneous, more confident. Maslow's self-actualizing person is one who is more fully-functioning and lives a more enriched life than does the average person. Such an individual is seen as developing and utilizing all of his unique capabilities, or potentialities, free of the inhibitions and emotional turmoil of those less self-actualized. The self-actualized person appears to live more fully in the here-and-now. He is able to tie the past and the future to the present in meaningful continuity. He appears to be less burdened by guilts, regrets and resentments from the past than is the non-self-actualized person and his aspirations are tied meaningfully to present working goals. He has faith in the future without rigid or over-idealistic goals. Carl Roger's writings, along with those of Everett Shostrom reflect the same idea.[22]

Another dimension of self-actualization is inner directedness and outer directedness. The source of

direction for the individual can be inner in the sense that he is guided by internal motivations rather than external influences. The inner-directed person appears to have incorporated principles and character traits started by parental influences and latter on influenced further by other authority figures. The outer-directed person appears to have been motivated to develop a radar system to receive signals from a far wider circle than just parents. There is danger that the outer-directed person may become over-sensitive to "others" opinions in matters of external conformity. Approval by others becomes, for him, the highest goal. Manipulation in the form of pleasing others and insuring constant acceptance becomes his primary method of relating. At present, schools encourage and reward this latter process. Not only is it necessary to please the "teacher" but current behavior modification techniques such as operant conditioning through positive reinforcement greatly increase outer-directedness.

The support orientation of self-actualizing persons tends to lie between that of the extreme other-directed and the extreme inner-directed person. He can be characterized as having more of an autonomous self-supportive, or being-orientation. Whereas he is other-directed in that he must, to a degree, be sensitive to people's approval, affection, and good will, the source

of his actions is essentially inner-directed. He is free, but his freedom is not gained by being a rebel or pushing against others and fighting them. He transcends complete inner-directedness by critical assimilation and creative expansion of his earlier principles of living. He discovers a mode of living which gives him confidence.

Personal growth toward self-actualization thus may be said to involve development of inner-directedness of support, but in addition it is seen to involve development of time competency. The healthy individual is one who lives primarily in the present. Living fully in the moment, or the present, does not require concern for support or sustenance. To say, "I am adequate now", rather than "I was adequate once", or "I will be adequate again", is self-validating and self-justifying.

What has all this to do with school? Plenty! This kind of human growth is learned. Students and teachers can share with each other their feelings about their growth in these important areas, helping each other determine self-actualization. Is this not "achievement?" Shostrom discusses other self-actualizing values such as feeling reactivity, self-regard, self-acceptance, synergy, awareness, capacity for intimate contact, and acceptance of aggression. These are human concerns. . .human learning for human understanding. When are "educators" going to show concern for these learnings? As schools move toward

"performance contracting", "assessment", and "behavior modification" techniques, human education becomes even less of a reality; human needs are met even less effectively than in the past. Contracting does not encourage a person to actualize; it holds him to a future behavior and/or task that has been planned at some past time, often by someone else. Feelings and circumstnaces change. If the contract allows for these changes why have a contract at all? Behavior modification techniques, i.e., positive reinforcement such as M&M's, is simply external control and severely limits a persons ability to recognize his own needs, as well as preventing actualization. Assessment is a measuring of the worth of the person. We need to help all students feel a sense of self worth and this is not accomplished by the use of competitive, valuing behavior or techniques.

The schools are doomed to the failure of producing citizens who are poorly equipped and poorly prepared to help solve the highly complex problems, technical and social,of the twenty-first century, or even their own personal problems, as long as they continue to use performance contracting, assessment, and behavior modification techniques.

Human Motivation

Earlier, motivation was discussed in connection with self-actualization. What causes a person to do

things. . .to speak, to write, to run, to play, to work? In short, what motivates a person? What causes them to respond, and to respond in the way that they do? Do we respond a certain way because we feel like doing so, because we expect desirable rewards for doing so, or a combination of both?

B. F. Skinner believes that behavior can be explained in terms of "causes" or conditions which lie beyond or outside of the individual; it should be possible to produce behavior according to plan simply by arranging the proper conditions.[23] Skinner's Stimulus-Response Theory makes use of reinforcement and conditioning in the learning process; behavior is directed by stimuli from the environment. A person selects one response instead of another because of the particular combination of prior conditioning and present physiological drives which are operating at the moment of action. Stimulus-Response Theory maintains that anyone can learn anything of which he is capable if he will allow himself to be put through the pattern of activity necessary for conditioning to take place. Most behavior modification and operant conditioning programs found in the schools today are based on Skinnerian Theory.

Men such as Carl Rogers and Arthur Combs disagree with the notion that the individual is no more than a link between a series of complex causes and their inevitable and predetermined effects.[24] They believe that

people's behavior is a function of their perceptions, that perceptions lie inside of people, and cannot be dealt with directly. Abraham Maslow and Everett Shostrom would, of course, agree with Rogers and Combs. Recent research can also be interpreted as support for this view of human motivation: George Mayeske found that a student's self-concept of ability accounts for the greatest variance in his school achievement.[25] James Coleman found a pupil attitude factor, which appears to have a stronger relationship to achievement than do all of the "school" factors together; this factor is the extent to which an individual feels that he has some control over his own destiny.[26] Wilbur Brookover says,

> One's self-conceptions about his role as a student indicates to the individual whether he ought to learn certain things, where he can learn those things, and if he feels that he can learn them, when and where to learn them. . .recent research by the authors and their associates shows that self-concept of academic ability is significantly correlated with school achievement. Self-concept accounts for a significant portion of achievement independent of measured intelligence, socio-economic status, educational aspirations, and the expectations of family, friends, and teachers.[27]

When the meanings that govern people's behavior are seen as lying inside them, our own behavior in working with them becomes facilitative; assisting and aiding replaces directing or forcing. Or, to state the point differently, if we believe that behavior is a function of the forces exerted on people, then the methods we will use in working with them will have to do with attempting

to control the forces acting upon people. Shostrom calls these latter methods manipulative behavior, and Combs says that people who are dealt with in this manner tend to become dependent upon the people who are manipulating them. It also means the person or people who are doing the controlling or manipulating must know where people should go in order to know how to try and get them there. No one can know where another person should go.

Thus, with regard to human motivation, it is the contention here that people learn more and in a more enjoyable manner if they are allowed to determine their own needs and choose their own experiences in their own way. When people are free to learn they will find their own best ways. Learning to experience and learning to experience the freedom to be one's self is human learning for human understanding; in order to fully experience, to become Maslow's self-actualizing person who meets needs effectively, we must allow these needs to come from within that person, not impose them from without upon him. Instead of educating children to lose themselves, limiting experiences, controlling the lives of others, let's help them to be aware of their feelings and their bodies, to expand their awareness by providing experiences and the freedom necessary to enjoy these experiences. Skinner talks about freedom and control of men, but these two terms are mutually exclusive and show an inverse relationship;

i.e., the more control there is the less freedom there can be. This approach is fundamentally a dictatorial approach. It is a strange thing, says Arthur Combs, that it is the most used method of dealing with people in our society, despite the fact that we pride ourselves on living in a democracy and abhorring dictatorships.[28]

If we wish to avoid dependent relationships and manipulative behaviors, it is necessary for us to find ways of helping, facilitating, aiding, people, rather than attempting to direct, force, or coerce them; we help people develop faith in their own dignity and integrity, and accept the responsibilities for their own behavior. This approach is consistent with the basic democratic idea that when men are free they can find their own best ways.

The Public Schools

Schools today do not allow people to effectively meet their needs. The rule rather than the exception, is the school where adults make all of the important decisions, set up all the important rules, regulate the time and responsibilities of the students. The person somehow gets lost in a maze of scheduling, rules, and regulations. Seldom do students venture to inquire about what they can hope to learn or whether they can have a say in what will be studied. Academic freedom is almost completely disregarded. The student is kept in

slavery to his master. What freedom has the student to decide what is worth learning and doing and saying in pursuit of an education? When Johnny doesn't do well in school the focus is on Johnny: "What is wrong with Johnny?" meaning Johnny's presumed ability, capacity, or behavior. Seldom is the question, "What is wrong with the school?" We build into a school a design to make certain children don't learn and we perpetuate that design. Goethe said that if you want students to become great scholars you must begin by dealing with them as though they are already great scholars. As an example of how students are treated in school, Edgar Friedenberg compares adolescents to nineteenth-century colonial peoples:

> Adolescents are among the last social groups in the world to be given the full nineteenth-century colonial treatment. . .administrators. . .prefer to study the young with a view to understanding them, not for their own sake, but in order to learn how to induce them to abandon their barbarism and assimilate the folkways of normal adult life. . .like the best of missionaries, he is sympathetic and understanding toward the people he is sent to work with, and aware and critical of the larger society he represents. But fundamentally he accepts it, and often does not really question its basic values or its right to send him to wean the young from savagery.[29]

Postman and Weingartner base their entire book about schools and teaching on the thesis that change, contant, accelerated, ubiquitous, is the most striking characteristic of the world we live in and that our educational system has not yet recognized this fact.[30] Schools must be a place where adolescents examine the sources of their pain and conflict and think its meaning

through, using their continuing experience of life to help them build better social arrangements in their turn. Freidenberg says that the school requires the kind of conformity that abandons the experience of the individual in order to usurp a tradition to which he does not belong and to express a view of life foreign to his experience and, on his lips, phony. For an adult this is self-destructive; for an adolescent it is the more pitiful and tragic, because the self that is abandoned is still immanent and further growth requires that it be nurtured and continuously clarified and redefined.[31] The school can be a place where both students and teachers learn about themselves. . .their feelings, their behaviors. It can be a place where the deepest concerns, doubts, fears, and sorrows are shared with other human beings, along with joy, happiness, success, and love. It can be such a place; it seldom is. Two sociology professors in California maintain that our educational system is set-up so as to make meaningful learning almost impossible:

> If it were our heinous design to create a situation in which 'learners' would be deliberately prevented from getting excited about ideas, from forming 'communities' of learners who get caught up in creating and thinking and trying to work out the puzzles of life together; if we wanted to make sure that everybody would remain constantly pre-occupied with extrinsic rewards, busywork, routines, and bureaucratic maze-running; if we wanted to make learning a 'grind' where you're always on trial and must, for survival in the system, learn to pretend to know and hide your real questions; if we wanted people to be continuously coerced into writing down, listening to and memorizing what they haven't

> asked about, don't care about, and know is unrelated to their lives; if we wanted to make absolutely sure that all of the learning that might incidentally take place be fragmented in the extreme so that students have little chance of ever putting things together; if we wanted to assure the appearance of tranquility while we keep passion, excitement, and spontaneity stiffled; if these were our explicit goals, then we would come up with a system just like the one we have now.[32]

Walk around a school and listen. Is there a sound of eager involvement? Passionate debate about issues of life? People getting excited about their latest discoveries? People trying to figure out how to best live their lives and what things are worth giving themselves to? People considering the relevance of larger events in the world to their own experiences? People sharing joy and love? These activities are conspicuous by their absence in the majority of schools. Education today takes no account of the fundamental fact that significant learning takes place only when people have emotional involvement. . .when they are really caught up in the adventure of learning. Self-appropriated learning is the only kind that has much meaning. It is the learning that people actually build their lives on. People can learn incredibly fast when they are excited about something. The present structure with its pat programs and regimentation tries to stuff learning into artificial, emotionally dead routines.

The ordinary person is a shriveled, deseccated fragment of what a person can be:

> As adults, we have forgotten most of our childhood; not only its contents but its flavor; as men of the world we hardly know of the existence of the inner world; we barely remember our dreams, and make little sense of them when we do; as for our bodies, we retain just sufficient proprioceptive sensations to coordinate our movements and to ensure the minimal requirements for biosocial survival. . .to register fatigue, signals for food, sex, defecation, sleep; beyond that, little or nothing. Our capacity to think, except in the service of what we are dangerously deluded in supposing is our self-interest and in conformity with common sense, is pitifully limited; our capacity even to see, hear, touch, taste and smell is so shrouded in veils of mystification that an intensive discipline of unlearning is necessary for <u>anyone</u> before one can begin to experience the world afresh with innocence, truth and love.[33]

In a conference sponsored by the National Student Association, the discussion focused on the need to redefine a good education for today's youth. The participating students concluded that any viable definition should embrace at least these three elements: (1) Relevance to a world of rapid social change; (2) commitment to the individual as the sine qua non of value in the educational process; and (3) readiness of the educational system to explore diverse and changing needs of the current student population in order to meet the very different developmental opportunites many of these students require.[34]

Social Class and Achievement

Regardless of the relationship between social class characteristics (social and economic factors, beliefs and values) and achievement, class does appear to be an important factor in terms of <u>who</u> gets educated, <u>where</u> they receive their education, and <u>how</u> they receive

it. These factors, in turn, are important in determining the type of occupation open to an individual and the amount of remuneration he can expect to receive for his work. The success of students in school is found to be directly related to their class background in virtually all studies.

Strodtbeck[35] emphasized the social and cultural motivational sources of academic achievement in his study of Jewish and Italian high school students. His findings suggest the motivational significance of group differences in family interaction, particularly power relations in the socialization process and value orientations toward achievement. Similarly, Parsons,[36] Kahl,[37] and others have underlined the importance of social class membership as a major determinant of the occupational aspirations and achievement of youth. They have emphasized class-related differentials in the socialization of children and the consequences of such differences for the attitudes of youth toward academic achievement, occupational aspirations, and plans for college education.

Mayeski concluded that the social and economic status of the students consistently related to school outcomes:

> For both students and teachers, the American educational system reflects the structure of American society. It therefore tends to perpetuate and even further increase the differential learning experiences that students bring to the educational setting by virtue of their birth.[38]

Minority pupils, except for orientals, have far less conviction than whites that they can affect their own environment. Whatever may be the combination of non-school factors which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and non-verbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it. The findings of the United States Commission on Civil Rights support those of the Coleman Report regarding the extent of racial isolation and extent of disparity in educational achievement between Black and White children.[39]

What this research tells us is simply that the schools are providing different learning experiences for different people, based on some form of stratified grouping arrangement. These grouping arrangements in turn are based upon factors other than the needs of the students as determined by consultation with them. What interests them? What do they want to learn about? Not only are students with different backgrounds (class differences) being sorted and grouped regardless of their interests or their feelings, they are subjected to evaluation techniques to measure their "achievement." A student is evaluated and his achievement measured regardless of whether he wants to be where he is or doing what he "must" do. No wonder many people leave school feeling that they have no control over their own destiny.

When social class composition was held constant in other research, the factor most crucial in affecting school achievement was the school climate, or academic norms. The expectation of the teachers accounts for high or low achievement: the more prevalent the emphasis by the staff and student bodies of high schools on the importance of such matters as intellectualism and achievement, the higher the achievement level of individual students, regardless of their personal or socioeconomic characteristics.[40] As long as a person must be evaluated in competitive environments, he will try to perform as he feels the evaluator wants him to. Once again, a practice that leads to other-directedness and pleasing others, regardless of inner needs or wishes.

Stratification Within the Schools

Emphasis in the schools is on identifying and selecting students rather than on efforts to cultivate the appropriate social climates or environments which would be harmonious with the needs of each. In molding children to a stratified society, the school engages in continuous sorting and selecting of students; rating, ranking, and separating them into various quality groups. Children from higher social strata usually enter the "higher" quality groups and those from lower strata the "lower" quality ones. School decisions about a child's ability will greatly influence the kind and quality of

education he receives, as well as his future life, including whether he goes to college, the jobs he will get, and his feelings about himself and others.

The chief official instruments used for sorting students into homogeneous or ability groups are standardized tests and teacher judgments. Unofficial factors often enter the selection decision, such as parental intervention, a child's behavior, or quotas in each grouping. Project Talent[47] reports that 54 percent of high schools had homogeneous groupings and 49 percent had tracks in the early 1960's.

Another part of the school stratification process is the "normal curve of distribution," a statistical extrapolation that has been erroneously interpreted by some educators to mean that a certain proportion of students must be "failures," another percentage "near misses," and on up to "honors." Most upper-income parents do not tolerate a system in which administrators expect that teachers will grade on a curve from honors to failure. The common assumption that 10 or 20 percent of students must fail according to the iron law of statistics and the demands of secondary and higher education that students must thereby be ranked and only a certain proportion given "A's," "B's," etc., is more than suspect as a means of educating and dealing justly with students.

Placing responsibility for the failure of students, especially those from low-income families outside of the school occurs daily. This is done by pointing to the "limited native intelligence" of the disadvantaged along with "cultural deprivation" factors.[42]

Critics claim that I.Q. tests are biased in favor of the language and training of upper-strata children and do not measure native ability. They further claim that these tests label students, retard the progress of many, and provide a rationale for the failure of schools. They do not even attempt to measure creative ability, motivation, curiosity, persistence, industry, and capacity for sustained effort.

The total impression transmitted to many educators by the concept "cultural deprivation" is that the "rejected," "disadvantaged," or "deprived" child is handicapped, not by school or society, but by their own culture and behavior, and that he is so different and "crippled" that he cannot be expected to achieve as others do. Many cultural differences, however significant they may be to school achievement, are adaptive responses to social realities and inequities, and are hardly under the unaided control of the family culture. Persuasive longitudinal studies on the effect of preschool education on later performance are lacking and some contrary evidence points to the repeated finding that the "deprived" enter kindergarten

as the intellectual equal of other children but regress steadily as they continue in school starting in about the third or fourth grade.[43] This would tend to indicate that the problem is in the school rather than the preschool years spent at home.

At any rate, the term "cultural deprivation," says Kenneth Clark, masks the fact that these are human beings who are "deliberately and chronically victimized by the larger society in general, and by educational institutions specifically. . ." Clark suggests that one of the things we should do is:

> get rid of our guilt-determined sentimentalism and over-solicitousness in the actual education process. Let us approach these children in terms of educational requirements, standards, and demands, as if they were human beings and not lepers. Let us not teach these children as if they were different, as if one had to be specifically careful how you teach them to read.[44]

Perhaps the most striking attribute of the disadvantaged, or culturally deprived, that needs positive attention in the school is a sense of powerlessness. Feelings of powerlessness among the disadvantaged inhibit knowledge and occur even more frequently than among white, middle class students.

When the schools can begin to meet the intellectual and emotional needs of people; when cooperation replaces competition; when options are offered that interest everyone; when people trust and respect each other; then terms like cultural deprivation, I.Q., achievement, and groupings will seldom be heard, much less practiced.

The basic contention underlying the discussion thus far is: the schools function importantly in the operation of the system of statuses and social class of the society in which they exist; education is the main instrument for upward mobility and will become increasingly more so in the future; and, finally, social mobility, social change, and education are closely related.[45] The society stratifies its members and offers to various strata widely variant material and status rewards. The school is part of the society's stratification system to the extent that it prepares students for a "place" in society like that occupied by their parents. Thus, the schools function importantly in the operation of the system of statuses and social class and most available evidence indicates that the role of the schools in this respect will take on added significance in the coming years.

About Research

Educational research to date has grown from various dimensions and indicators based on either the stimulus-response conditioning and reinforcement theory, or the role and interactionist theory. Operationalized dimensions of variables that reflect these theories can seldom provide support for different theoretical orientations. When propositions outside the framework of conventional theories are tested, applying differing conceptualizations of

variables such as school achievement, learning, etc., than we can better evaluate all theories and construct new ones or build onto present theories. No theory can predict something that isn't contained within the theory; no support for alternative learning procedures can be forthcoming until research is conducted using non-traditional operational definitions. For example, if learning is defined as self-actualizing, or as experiencing, and achievement were to be measured in terms of self growth, what would our research data show? If achievement is defined by the student instead of the school, what differences in learning and attitude would occur?

All factors affecting achievement and attitudes are impossible to control, no matter what conceptualizations are used. Components of attitude formation and identification are questionable.[46] It is nearly impossible to separate the effects of the various factors thought to influence school outcomes, however these factors are defined and operationalized: social class composition, school climate and other body variables, pupil programs and policies, facilities, school personnel, expenditures, etc. None of our analyses can tell us in any <u>specific</u> way how much of a change will occur in certain school outcomes if certain school resource inputs are systemically altered.[47] Students' feelings about their school experiences are one of our best indicators of the kinds of learning taking place. Yet they are ignored.

Recent research data reveal an impressive array of emotional and interpersonal accompaniments to teaching and learning; some can be traced to the teacher and role uncertainty; others from the different pressures exerted on the teacher by students with different expectations, desires, and personality styles. Still others stemmed from changes in the interpersonal situation in the classroom over time.[48] Other data indicate more positive attitudes on the part of students when they were given increased responsibility for their learning activities.[49] As already mentioned, there is some data that show lower achievement and self concept among students when they are placed in an open space learning situation with freedom for exploration; when people are taken from an environment where their life-pattern has been structured for them by others, and placed in situations where they are given little or no direction, they usually can not function well in providing for their own needs. The transitional period can be one of discomfort and uncertainty. Our attention will return to this important area of concern when the discussion centers upon "Leadership Effects" in the last section.

Research is needed to study the effects of moving from a highly structured learning situation into a less structured or free setting. Any research done with students who are in a less structured setting then they have been used to, must take into account this important

intervening variable. It can mask the effect of relationships between any other variables and can, in fact, explain the reason for low achievement as well as low self-concept. Also, when using terms like achievement, performance, and learning, keep in mind that in a learning situation where structure is provided these terms are usually defined and measured by significant others such as teachers or parents. In a truly open or free learning situation they must be defined and measured by the individual who is "achieving" or who is "learning." In other words, if a person is free to learn, only that person can judge whether he is learning. He may be failing miserably when measured by traditional criteria, yet be learning a great deal. And the reverse is true also; one may be a very "high achiever," yet be learning very little.

Comparative research is needed that looks at the process called learning in both structured and non-structured school situations. Is learning more pleasurable in less structured situations? Are these experiences more easy to remember and does memory work best when unenforced? How well do students "perform" in a required subject compared to the same subject when that subject is selected and desired by the student? How do the feelings of the students in each group compare? How can human beings meet their needs most effectively and what effect does this have on their learning? In what type of learning setting

do students feel most safe and what has a feeling of safety to do with a students learning? What is the relation between trust, acceptance, and learning? What about creativity and initiative--are they best fostered in the less structured situations as hypothesized in this paper?

What relationship is there between self-actualizing (as Rogers and Shostrom use the term in our earlier discussion) and learning? Do people have to learn to be free; i.e. to recognize their own needs and attempt to satisfy those needs? Are inner-directed people better able to satisfy their needs than other-directed people are?

What role do emotional and interpersonal factors play on learning? Do such factors inhibit or enhance intellectual goals and cognitive efforts?

These are but a few of the areas that need investigating by our researchers. These concepts need to be given operational definitions and investigating procedures using different conceptualizations. Data collected in this manner may give us much clearer evidence in support of the contentions stated in this thesis.

Summary

Human learning is defined as the process by which a person acquires insights, skills, and knowledge. The process involves experiencing, so learning may be defined

as experiencing. There are cognitive experiences and there are emotional or affective experiences. Literature on human motivation tells us that people learn more and in a more enjoyable manner if they are allowed to determine their own needs and to choose their own experiences in their own way. When people are free to learn they will find their own best ways.

The schools can best help each person to meet his or her needs by offering many options, both cognitive and affective, in an atmosphere free from fear and anxiety where people feel safe enough to attempt new experiences and behaviors. Each person can be helped to function more fully, to become more autonomous, more confident. When learning is viewed in this manner our own behavior in working with students becomes facilitative, assisting and aiding replace directing and forcing. The very least the school can do is help to make learning experiences more enjoyable, more exciting, and more meaningful to students than it now is in most schools.

The following sections discuss in more detail environments and programs that are compatible with the beliefs about learning expressed thus far.

SECTION II

THE ENVIRONMENT

> Develop a climate in the system in which the focus is not upon teaching, but on the facilitation of self-directed learning.
>
> Carl Rogers

The Environment of the School Day

A recent description of one school's environment reads:

> On a typical day, a visitor to The School would be impressed by its friendly, warm atmosphere. There is a sense of community. The record player is on and people are talking. In the art room, several people are watching a demonstration on the potter's wheel, and two students are developing film in the dark room. Paintings and charcoal drawings on the walls brighten the room.[50]

The environment described above is that of an alternative school that expects to be fully certified shortly by the Michigan Board of Education. The philosophy of this school is to provide a noncompetitive, informal environment which will encourage people to learn and grow in their individual and unique ways and at their own speed. The School encourages students to enroll who feel that they can function in an atmosphere that calls for considerable decision making regarding their own growth.

This is one example of an environment that is consistent with the beliefs about learning that have been expressed. It is a non-threatening environment conducive to the meeting of individual, human needs and facilitative of self-actualization and decision making. It is a warm, open, and supportive type of environment where people feel free to express their emotions as well as their opinions. When environments are supportive and people feel accepted and secure, they become less defensive and communication becomes more honest and more valid. Overt defense reactions such as disruptive, attention-seeking actions, daydreaming, regression, projection, apathy, cheating, rationalizations, etc., will be lessened. Usually these defensive reactions take place in a climate where people have no other outlet for frustrations.

Processes external to us affect all of our experiences. Factors in our environment play upon our senses in ways that are both conscious and unconscious. Empirical research indicates that the school climate, or environment, has a significant effect on learning.[51] The non-competitive, informal environment of the school described is not the environment found in most schools today. Most frequently bells signal the interruption of any exciting learning that may be occurring, jolting people out of the present moment, ready or not. Leisurely

conversation, a few alone moments, or relaxation of any type between classes is impossible because the next bell will ring shortly and that means a certain place at a certain time for all. Behavior is further controlled due to the presence of hall monitors and regulations for moving to and from classes. Competition is usually evident through the display of "A" papers and other academic and athletic achievements. If a "teacher" and "student" are talking, most often the former is talking to the latter, not with him. And most probably the "teacher" is showing little concern for the students feelings. Interactions between students and teachers are seldom spontaneously warm and friendly with the two people sharing a bit of themselves and their feelings that day.

Visitors in the usual school are often viewed suspiciously with their freedom to move around the school severely curtailed. Often tags or stickers are issued by the "office." When environments are informal and warm, all persons are always welcome; a visitor becomes a friend and the title and/or credentials he holds is of little significance.

The artificial environment found in the usual classroom is different from any preschool or postschool environment that the student is likely to encounter. Consider, for example, the following:

> One can still find schools in which children are expected to act as robots who have surrendered full control of their every action to an all-powerful teacher. They are supposed to sit ramrod stiff in tomblike silence, ready to spring into obedient action at the command of the adult who sits enthroned at the front of the room.[52]

This type of environment may do irrepairable harm to the emotions and self-esteem of the people who must endure it. Readl and Wattenburg say that such a concept of discipline is harmful and can be defended only by strenously ignoring a mass of scientific evidence.

The Environment and Learning

What are specific characteristics of an environment? An environment consists of any external stimuli that affects the senses: the smells, sounds, sights, tastes, and touch or feel. It consists of the feelings of the various people and of the activities in which these people are engaged. It consists of the physical building structures and the feelings generated by those structures. It is the effect created by each of these separate factors as well as the effect created by their interaction. The environment can either meet personal needs and attempt to fulfill them or it can deny that these needs exist.

Behavioristic learning theory attempts to control learning by reducing stimuli. Stimuli producing environments attempt to free people to grow, to perceive alternatives. Dale Alam, mentioned earlier, says that all

learning stems from stimuli, and considering all the stimuli available to, and created by individuals, how can schools continue to believe that they can reduce the stimuli to the point that learning can be controlled. Dale continues:

> The greatest need facing school people today is for us all to become more accepting of differences. Though differences have always existed, the school effort has been to reward similarities. . .an attempt to create similarities does several damaging things: it reduces teacher and administrator growth, precludes establishing alternatives, necessitates heavy rules and enforcement, and fails to support change.[53]

Such environments do not meet personal needs, are not stimuli producing, and greatly inhibit personal growth. Such beliefs are supported further:

> Most commonly, schools have measured their 'success' in terms of whether or not their clients (students) have been willing to yield to the norms which have been established and which are imposed. Idealistic statements to the contrary, schools have not prized diversity, nor is decision making a function they have been willing to permit as a prime characteristic of the human condition in a democracy. In such situations, learning has become an ability to manipulate or recall cognitive knowledge in what may appropriately be described as a presentation-replication or authority-listener syndrome. Affective approaches, or approaches aimed at creativity have been haphazard and, all too often, the school has stated affective objectives but failed to plan for their achievement and assessment or evaluation. Affective, individualistic, and creative approaches have been suppressed by calls for knowledge, content, and essentials.[54]

Environments that reward differences and uniqueness are those that are left "open" or "unstructured;" they allow for individual freedom and they allow for different needs to be met in different ways. They aid

everyone to discover his uniqueness, assist in developing this uniqueness, and facilitate the sharing of such uniqueness. How are such environments created?

The first step is a commitment to the type of learning process described thus far: learning that is defined by those who want to learn and facilitated by those who want to help and share in such learning. Carl Rogers says that he has come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning. Rogers "significant learning" is stated in the form of specific behaviors. They include:

> The person comes to see himself differently.
> He accepts himself and his feelings more fully.
> He becomes more self-confident and self-directing.
> He becomes more the person he would like to be.
> He becomes more flexible, less rigid, in his perceptions.
> He adopts more realistic goals for himself.
> He behaves in a more mature fashion.
> He becomes more open to the evidence, both of what is going on outside of himself and of what is going on inside of himself.[55]

With beliefs such as these stated by Rogers, and commitment to open or unstructured environments, programs such as those to be described later become possible and can be explored.

External stimuli consisting of unlimited sights, sounds, smells, and tastes are brought into the learning environment, or the learners venture forth to experience what they wish. For example, a person wants to listen to rock music (or jazz, classical, blues, etc.), so such

music is brought into that persons learning environment in any way possible. Perhaps some people want to experience the solitude of a walk through the snow or the soft sound of a flowing stream; or the crackle of a campfire, or the majesty of a mountain. Some may wish to experience the taste of Chinese, or Italian food, perhaps even cook their own. Each person will create their own ways of experiencing including sensory experiences if they are in an environment that encourages and stimulates them to do so. . .one that makes use of external stimuli. How about incense or candles burning on occasion? Music or recorded environmental sounds? Posters of nature? Pictures of people and their emotions? External sensory stimuli facilitates learning if it meets the learners needs. Consider the following:

> Those individuals who consider that the prime road to advancement of culture and knowledge consists in unswerving application to study and competition among students might well ponder the circumstances of one of the most important scientific discoveries of all time made by one of the most creative men who has ever lived. I refer to Isaac Newton. . .and the discovery of gravitation. The discovery took place under a tree. At the time he was sitting idly in his mother's garden. He was not at Cambridge, was removed from traditional learning, because in that year, 1665, the plague had broken out in southern England. The University of Cambridge was closed for eighteen months. We know from Newton's account, told in his old age, what his state of mind was at the time of his discovery. He described himself as in an eager, boyish mood. 'I was,' he said, 'in the prime of my age for invention.' An eager, boyish mood in a young man not at school but idling in a garden led to a great scientific advance.[56]

Where does the physical structure fit and what are its affects? Buildings and designs, textures and colors, can help create an atmosphere of warmth or coldness; of distance or closeness; of harshness or softness; of rigidity or flexibility. People can create their own atmosphere even if the structures are undesirable to them. A few people painting and decorating, creating pillows, chairs. . .anything that can be exhilerating and satisfying to them. Let's allow people to help create their own environments regardless of existing structures.

Obviously, the program affects the environment. The activities that occur and the way they occur are part of the environment. Are "teachers" interacting with "students" in such a way that each listens to the other in an accepting, feeling, manner? Are students opinions and wishes heard, shared, and facilitated? Closed, authoritarian environments condemn most learners to continuing criticism, sarcasm, discouragement, and failure so that self-confidence, aspiration, and a healthy self-concept are destroyed. An open, non-authoritarian atmosphere can be conducive to learner initiative and creativity, encouraging the learning of attitudes of self-confidence, originality, self-reliance, enterprise, and independence.[57] This is learning at its best and the kinds of learning experiences that people need if they are to live and function in the world of today and tomorrow. The activities, the feelings, and the behaviors

of the people are very important in determining the atmosphere that will prevail.

Trust is a fundamental necessity for an optimum learning situation. Mutual trust and mutual respect go hand in hand. Only in an atmosphere of trust and respect can people feel free to reveal their deepest thoughts and feelings, and only when these thoughts and feelings are expressed can people learn or change.

> The proper relationship in a democratic atmosphere requires mutual respect and trust, and a sense of equality which is independent of individual differences of knowledge, information, abilities, and position. A teacher, or learning facilitator, with respect for each child, who treats him with dignity and friendliness, may induce him to accept the order and regulations necessary for any social function. . .children want to respect their teachers and want to be respected too.[58]

Data from a trust survey show that 49 per cent of the teenagers questioned said that they did not trust adults, and 17 per cent were undecided.[59] We are trying to facilitate learning of students and over half of these people don't even trust us! Data from another study reveal that we have communicated a sense of personal failure to our students; the longer we have them, the less favorable things seem to be. Regardless of achievement, the students who remain in school feel they are doing inadequate work and their teachers make them feel "not good enough."[60] Environments that produce these feelings must change if students are to grow in a healthy manner both socially and emotionally. The only way to

create a healthier environment for learning is through the development of closer, more trusting relationships of all the people. Those persons who are characterized by self-trust, openness, and trust in others, will, by their behavior, help others to learn the same. These are the people we need in the schools to facilitate learning. Such behaviors also lead to a climate of acceptance where the atmosphere is warm and secure. Interactions in this type of environment will be characterized by a lack of moralistic or judgmental attitudes: an atmosphere where people feel free and secure to speak frankly, and where they are able to listen with understanding and lack of defensiveness; an atmosphere which enhances a person's worth, no matter what his faults. With these elements present, a truly accepting climate can be said to exist.[61] Such a climate attempts to convert hostility and suspicion toward others into trust, love, and awareness of other's dignity as fellow human beings. It maximizes the opportunities for the individual to gain self-acceptance.

What effect does the decision-making structure have upon the environment? Who makes decisions, and how they are made affects a learning environment as much or more than any other one factor. There can be plenty of external stimuli, a warm, supportive, emotional atmosphere with plenty of program options; the physical environment can be pleasant and desirable to those people present. But if the type and style of decision making is not

conducive to an open, free learning environment, than all other factors are meaningless. The only type of decision making that is consistent with the learning beliefs presented involves all who are to be affected by the decision. Only those persons doing the experiencing, can decide what they need and how to go about meeting those needs. Decisions made for people by people who have no direct contact with them are destructive to the person and to learning. There must be communication, a sharing of feelings where each listens to the other. Decisions must not be imposed from without but must come from within. Only then can teachers and administrators refrain from feeling responsibility for decisions they have made for others. And only then can students begin to take their own responsibility for decision making. This is learning and the type of learning that all people can experience if they are allowed to do so. The decision makers, the administration, and the faculty, can help provide this type of learning atmosphere.

Traditionally, administrators have been more concerned with putting out the brush fires which develop on a day-to-day, and even minute-to-minute basis then with planning long range approaches to human interaction. The art and science of administration, like the art and science of teaching and living, could become a continuous process of growth. Instead of calling for the knowledge,content, and essentials, referred to earlier, decision-makers can

use a more affective, individualistic, and creative approach.

Open Schools[62]

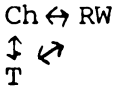
Open Schools attempt to meet human needs in human ways. Such schools are organized around the needs of learners and their interests. Basic is the need for students to be themselves here and now, to create and to love, to face adversity, to behave responsibly, to be human. Such schools attempt to provide an environment that allows the learner to grow by taking responsibility for personal decisions and by offering many learning options that include both intellectual and emotional learning. Open environments are more informal, supportive, and flexible. These schools integrate knowledge, skills, appreciation, and understanding; traditional schools divide these dimensions into various kinds of subject matter. In open schools, teachers and learners can learn together; the teacher can function as a facilitator of learning including his own learning as well as the learning of others. The noise level is higher, the atmosphere is relaxed, there is a sense of fun in learning and the teachers may not be recognizable. Parents and other adults frequently participate, and the outside environment is integral to the life of the school. Books are frequently written by the students and all persons have a broader range of learning alternatives. Open schools are concerned

with the so-called "basic skills" and with so much more. Reading is important, but only equal to listening, feeling, touching, seeing, and smelling. Open schools increase the opportunities for personalization of learning. Many people are committing themselves to education where the environment is open, dropping authoritarian models of behavior.

Ronald Barth offers an "open" model of education.[63] This model is consistent with our discussion of Open Schools, enhancing the latter concept. Barth's model is based on the assumption that knowledge is unique to each individual and that a child learns from the direct personal explorations of his environment. Barth offers his model as an alternative to the traditional model which he calls the "transmission of knowledge" model, based on assumptions that all children must have a certain amount and kind of factual information transmitted by a teacher. Barth diagrams the "transmission of knowledge" model as K→C→A→S, where "K" represents all accumulated knowledge, "C" curriculum or the selections from "K" that are considered essential and appropriate for children of different ages to know; "A" represents the agent, usually a teacher, who transmits the curriculum or the selections from "K" that are considered essential; "S" represents the students who "learn" the selected curriculum. According to Barth, this model of education, with its many built-in assumptions,

leads to student resentment and hostility, fragmentation of experience and knowledge, and debilitating anxieties.

Barth's "open" model emphasizes the creation of a psychological climate in which the child will feel free to be curious, free to make mistakes and learn from them, free from judgmental evaluation, free to learn from his environment, his fellow students, his "teacher," and from his experience. In this open model, diagrammed as



learning occurs during the interaction between the child (Ch) and the real world (RW). The teachers place (T) is somewhere outside the learning process, a facilitator of learning. The facilitator is asking entirely different kinds of questions than the teacher. Instead of the traditional questions such as:

> "What do I think would be good for the student to learn at his particular age and at his level of competence?"
> "What does the state require him to learn?"
> "How can I provide the proper curriculum?"
> "How can I motivate him to absorb this curriculum?"
> "How can I best teach him?"
> "How can I best evaluate him?"

the questions become:

> "What things puzzle you?"
> "What are you curious about?"
> "What issues concern you?"
> "What problems do you wish you could solve?"

When the student has the answers to these questions, the teacher asks:

> "Now how can I find the resources which would help my students learn in ways that would provide answers to the things that concern them?"
> "How could I help them to learn the things they are eager to learn?"

The "Open Model" presented here leads to the type of learning environment found in "Open Schools" and one that is conducive to the type of learning described earlier.

Open schools have been evaluated with traditional assessment instruments and students do as well as those from traditional schools, but they also learn and grow in ways that aren't even being "assessed" or "evaluated:" critical thinking, independence in learning and growing, trust, ability to solve problems. Students from open schools show more interest and enjoyment of school, better attendence, and more positive attitudes toward teachers. Open schools can help develop a society that is more open, individualistic, participatory, and trustful with more open political and social institutions.

What Needs to Be Done

It is impossible to separate the environment from the program, because the latter plays such an important part in helping to create the environment. Here, the program is subjected to a more general treatment with specific and greatly elaborated program recommendations covered in the last section.

Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner place the teachers and their attitudes in the center of any significant innovation in education: "The beliefs, feelings, and assumptions of teachers are the air of a learning environment; they determine the quality of life within it. Some of the assumptions held by many teachers today include:

1. The more "content" a person "knows," the better teacher he is.
2. That "content" is best "imparted" via a "course of study."
3. That "content" is best kept "pure" by departmentalizing instruction.
4. That "content" has a "logical structure" or "logical sequence" that dictates how the "content" should be "imparted."
5. That bigger schools are better than smaller schools.
6. That smaller classes are better than bigger classes.
7. That "homogeneous groupings (with students "grouped" on the basis of some real or fancied similarity) makes the learning of subjects more efficient.
8. That classes must be held for "periods" of about an hour in length, five days a week, for about 15 weeks in order for a "course" in a "subject" to happen.[64]

There is no evidence to support any of these assumptions; indeed, there is massive evidence to refute them. Learning environments such as those described in this section cannot be achieved as long as the people in our schools adhere to assumptions such as these.

A list of proposals that attempt to change radically the nature of the existing school environment and that are designed to change the perceptions of teachers now functioning in the school might include the following:

1. Declare a five-year moratorium on the use of all textbooks.

2. Have "English" teachers "teach" Math, Math teachers English, Social Studies teachers Science, Science teachers Art, and so on.

3. Transfer all the elementary school teachers to high school and vice versa.

4. Require every teacher who thinks he knows his "subject" well to write a book on it.

5. Dissolve all "subjects," "courses," and especially "course requirements."

6. Limit each teacher to three declarative sentences per class and fifteen interrogatives.

7. Prohibit teachers from asking any questions they already know the answers to.

8. Declare a moratorium on all tests and grades.

9. Require all teachers to undergo some form of psychotherapy as part of their in-service training.

10. Classify teachers according to their ability and make the lists public.

11. Require all teachers to take a test prepared by the students on what the students know.

12. Make every class an elective and withhold a teacher's monthly check if his students do not show any interest in going to next month's classes.

13. Require every teacher to take a one-year leave of absence every fourth year to work in some "field" other than education.

14. Require each teacher to provide some sort of evidence that he or she has had a loving relationship with at least one other human being.

15. Require that all the graffiti accumulated in the school toilets be reproduced on large paper and hung in the school halls.

16. There should be a general prohibition against the use of the following words and phrases: teach, syllabus, covering ground, I.Q., makeup, test, disadvantaged, gifted, accelerated, enhancement, course, grade, score, human nature, dumb, college material, and administrative necessity.[65]

Such proposals as these are a few among many possibilities that can help create an environment that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to function with their old assumptions about learning. They would, if enacted, probably cause anxiety among the students because we would not "teach" them. They would be forced to look at their own largely unexamined beliefs and assumptions. In so doing, they can begin to feel a deeper emotional involvement in their own learning because

whatever they produce is going to represent a uniqueness about themselves. They can begin to explore beliefs that are contradictory to those they have held and to develop a belief system of their own. People learn more from what they generate and discover than from what someone else hands out and pours in.

Other significant changes in the learning environment would alter the subordinate-superordinate relationship between the students and the adults as well as focusing the student's attention upon the "here-and-now" instead of on the "then and there."[66]

The subordinate-superordinate relationship creates a dependency relationship where the student depends almost completely upon an authority figure for what the rest of society considers prerogatives of the individual. The loss of such prerogatives as going to the washroom, talking with another person, and choosing to participate in a particular experience are only some of the examples of the degree of independence the adolescent must forfeit when he attends school. Environments such as these make it impossible for people to grow psychologically.

Focusing students attention on the "then and there" places emphasis mainly on ideas and experiences from the past. Placing equal emphasis on the "here-and-now" allows students to focus on emotional and intellectual matters of concern and relevency to them at the moment.

Greater emphasis must be placed upon collecting and using feedback. Feedback is information shared by individuals and organizations about the relevency and effectiveness of exhibited behaviors. Direct feedback is immediate and is shared by both the sender and the receiver. Indirect feedback is delayed and anonymous, and is often obtained through the use of pencil and paper instruments. Both types can be helpful. What people say or feel about the school environment will need to become as important a consideration as what is done. Schools need to become open systems of communication instead of the characteristic bureaucracy with its hierarchial patterns of authority and control. The prime objective of the supervisory process would focus on facilitating growth with equal emphasis on both effective and cognitive efforts. The creation of effective feedback mechanisms enhances learning; in giving or receiving feedback, the goal is to help individuals become more productive as they become more aware of their internal values, the way in which others perceive their behavior, and the possible consequences of their actions. Feedback, both direct and indirect, can be used for teacher and administrator growth, for more effective community, and for "classroom" learning.

Systematic collection of attitudinal data from the community, from students, and from teachers can easily provide the administrator with an expanded base for

meaningful decision making. Decisions can be more clearly articulated as developmental, experimental, or temporary. T-Group theory and practices can be considered as a way to employ and provide for wider use of direct methods of collecting and using feedback.

Summary

By way of summary, then, let us say that an environment where people can experience learning in a growthful manner is nonthreatening and allows for the facilitation of both cognitive and affective needs. The learning facilitators are warm, open, and accepting individuals who make decisions with people, not for them; and, they are interested in their own self growth as well as the growth of their students. Many external stimuli and options are available, and the physical structures help create warmth, closeness, and flexibility. Subordinate-superordinate relationships cease to exist, focus is more with the "here-and-now," and effective provisions are made for adequate feedback from all persons.

The Organizational Environment of the School

The viability of school systems to meet demands and adapt to change is seriously questioned. Unless, and until, those concerned with educational goals and practices see this enterprise as one of problem-solving, of creative solutions, of continuing innovation, the

concept of human education for human needs will never become a reality.

Social scientists have only recently begun the systematic study of educational decision-making and the power relationships of persons in the urban school system. The accumulated evidence indicates a basic sickness in the school structure: the total environment of the system prevents progress and changes that would meet new situations and serve new populations. Most of the research exploring dimensions of change in the educational system indicates that existing structural, behavioral, and attitudinal mechanisms act as impediments or inhibitors against change far more often than as facilitators of change.[67] As different cleavage lines within the society emerge, as resource allocation differs, as components of class, status, and power change, corresponding changes in educational practices may occur. Or, better yet, the educational institutions may provide the impetus and accelerate such changes in the larger society.

Robert Merton, a well-known sociologist who has focused much of his academic efforts on the study of formal organizations, says that,

> The bureaucratic structure exerts a constant pressure upon officials to be methodical, prudent, disciplined. If a bureaucracy is to operate successfully, it must attain a high degree of reliability of behavior, an unusual degree of conformity with prescribed patterns of action. . . but this very emphasis leads to a transference of the sentiments from the <u>aims</u> of the organization

> onto the particular details of behavior required by the rules. Adherence to the rules, originally conceived as a means, becomes transformed into an end in itself.[68]

Another student of organizational behavior, Michael Crozier, states that in any kind of organization there is a constant pressure to escape from reality. Centralization is one of the ways to achieve this escape, completely impersonal rules are another. Difficulties with the "customers," poor communication with and unsatisfactory adjustment to the environment, difficulties in achieving a task, and other goal-related difficulties, cannot and will not lead to greater flexibility within the system.[69]

As a result of these factors characteristic of organizational environments, the following behaviors are noted in the field of education:

1. School administrators and personnel will often agree on abstract or operational goals when conditions either internal or external to the system seem to indicate change; this behavior will be observed least when the change is perceived as incremental and most when the change approaches the innovative.

2. The need for control and regulation, especially when uncertainty threatens, will appear in the form of ritualist attitudes and formal regulations leading to patterns of conformity and rigidity both attitudinally, often under the guise of professionalism, and structurally by centralization.

3. Loyalty to the organization (and routine) will occur at the expense of organizational aims and purposes; i.e., goal displacement and subsequent difficulties in the task environment.

4. Since there are few obvious criteria of performance in the schools, they will turn to indirect symbols of achievement to earn public acclaim such as national merit scholars and number of graduates who continue with their educations.

A few examples drawn from studies of educational institutions indicate support for the above examples. Support for Merton's contention that bureaucrats will show "ritualistic" attitudes,[70] and Dror's observation that under conditions of high-rate change it is easier to agree on abstract goals,[71] is provided by Robert Crain in his study of desegregation.[72] Crain found that the education profession and many individual superintendents responded to politically-tinged conflicts in three ways: (1) by narrowing their frame of reference so that they can silence critics by refusing responsibility for the issue; (2) by trading low priority values such as freedom of curriculum reform; and (3) by developing the claim that expertise is required to make school decisions, so that critics can be ignored.

Education has traditionally been characterized by: isolation from the larger socio-political environment; centralization employed to deal with decisions of

an increasingly sensitive political nature; professionalism; permanence; tradition; and significant resources. Many of these standards are based on values unrelated to demands or need in the school environment.[73] Recruitment into the educational system is structured and restricted due to professionalism and centralization. This restricts the scope of schools search for administrative abilities and intensified differences between the "professionals" and lay people in the administrative process.[74] This leads to impersonality, lack of communication, and further centralization.

Evidence that recruitment is structured and limited in public education is provided by two situations: when returned Peace Corps volunteers have been introduced into a school as student teachers, the discomfort of the established staff created an intolerable strain, and the experiment was abandoned.[75] A second example of similar nature has occurred when under-prepared personnel have been used as subprofessionals and aides in the schools as part of the New Careers for the Poor Programs (Office of Economic Opportunity).[76]

The professionalism of teachers acts as an inhibitor to change because they are unable to assimilate changes which disrupt the beliefs by which they structure their roles. James Thompson states that when an organization incorporates large numbers of professionals, the tendency is for them to insist that decision premises be

set only by professionals; he states further that if performance in discretionary jobs is evaluated in terms of adherence to rules, individuals in those jobs are discouraged from exercising discretion which would reduce their scores on such criteria.[77] Both of these factors serve to further inhibit change in educational institutions and such practices perpetuates subordinate-superordinant relationships, poor communication between people, discourages creativity, and effectively prevents a learning environment that is facilitative of peoples needs. The people cannot trust each other in such an environment and openness and support are non-existant.

The nonprofessional groups involved in education such as parent-teacher associations, civic groups, and specialized education-oriented interest groups are all generally supportive of existing systems and reinforce their counterparts in the school system. Thus, behavioral rigidity, agreement on abstract goals, control and regulation through centralization and impersonal rules is perpetuated further. Patricia Sexton writes in The American School, that among participants in the schools communication system, which is almost unexplored, are lay boards, private and governmental groups, schools of education, administration, educational organizations, plus teachers, students, and parents. Sexton says further that:

> The more obvious communication deficiencies have been, between central administration and lower administration, among teachers, from students to those above, between low-income parents and all school personnel. . .it has its most serious consequence in organizational inertia and atrophy.[78]

Thus, the poor communication system, both internally and externally, serves as a further impediment to change in the schools, and leads to poor human relations networks. These and other difficulties are utilized by individuals and groups for improving their position in the power struggles within the organization, thus generating new pressures for impersonality and centralization.[79]

Educational programs were the first and remained the most essential components of the Community Action endeavors, referred to earlier and discussed by Marris and Rein in Dilemmas of Social Reform.[80] These authors confess to the fragmentary and roughly classified statistical nature of the experiments but some of their impressions are worth noting. The crucial task was to change the perceptions of teachers, instructors, administrators, and employees, and to restore pupils' confidence in themselves: new reading techniques, more sensitive counselling, more imaginative curricula, reorganization of the grade structure, and more thorough knowledge of the culture of the neighborhood on the part of the teacher. These reforms were to be instituted in cooperation with the school system, and carried out by the teachers themselves. Even where the problems were handled most

sensitively, the program encountered resistance on the part of some of the teachers and it was found that extensive orientation of both old and new staff was essential with the various innovations. A much more thorough and necessary accounting of the various factors involved cannot be related here. The classroom innovations which were successfully put into practice concerned techniques, while those which tackled the teachers' preconceptions more directly evoked a poor response. Robert Dentler, reviewing and comparing the educational programs of four of the projects argues that the work of the action programs in the domain of public education cannot be called innovative but more like an inventory of means for exporting the decent American suburban public school into the inner city areas.[81] The projects helped the schools to develop educational methods already widely accepted in the teaching profession, provided that the changes were tackfully introduced, and everyone was prepared. If they tried more challenging innovation, which questioned the teachers' basic assumptions, the schools might not give them a fair test. It was found that:

> Institutions would not, in practice, commit themselves either to the sacrifices of autonomy implied by the project's structure, or to its innovative spirit. . .(the schools) participation seems often to have been merely defensive. To have rejected a grant, and refused its cooperation in a progressive community venture, would have incited a public opinion already critical of school performance. But it did not at heart believe that shortcomings sprang from unimaginative administration and

> insensitive teaching; it preferred to lay the blame on inadequate resources. To the school system, the projects were a fund-raising resource, whose independent views on education practice were a tiresome impertinence, directing money into peripheral experiments.[82]

Marris and Rein sum up their observations by saying that "more radical reforms would have to turn to strategies less dependent on the cooperation of practicing teachers."[83] Where a more aggressive approach (the exercise of power and pressure) was used the resulting incidents suggested that the school system was not prepared to tolerate criticism; if the challenge came from professional services which depended upon the schools' cooperation it would be quashed; if it came through public protest, it provoked an equally public reaction. These findings by Marris and Rein support our earlier hypotheses drawn from the bureaucratic literature.

Studies done on the issue of school desegregation provide further evidence of the schools resistance to change.[84] Usdan maintains that the insulation and isolation of educators from politics instinctively cause them to shy away from controversial and volatile social issues and that the suppression of overt conflict and the removal of publicly sensitive or controversial issues becomes of prime importance to boards of education; he also feels that school boards are conservative institutions dedicated to preserving the status quo and transmitting the values of contemporary society to the young.

Based on all of these studies, the following can be expected:

1. Extensive orientation of all staff is essential for any innovation.

2. Innovations in an educational system will be successfully put into practice if directed toward technique while those which tackle the teachers preconceptions will evoke a poor response.

3. The attitudes of school board members toward the issue is one of the most important factors in determining the eventual outcome, and most boards will be conservative and dedicated to preserving the status quo.

4. Major changes in educational institutions will be least likely to occur in large cities with well-established political machines and the ideology of the civic elite will affect acceptance of such changes both in determining the cities position as well as that of the school board.

5. The success of civil rights and other minority groups in bringing about educational changes will have little effect on the implementation of such changes.

Thus, variables that have been found to relate to change at both the individual and organizational level do not predominate in the school system. Much more research is needed. Few students of complex organizations and public administration have directed their research

efforts toward educational institutions. Sociologists have stressed stratification in the schools when doing their research. For the most part political scientists have done exploratory studies. Data indicates that only as the educational system experiences stress, strain, and dysfunction, will any change occur. It seems likely that the schools will depart from traditional concerns and programs only when strain occurs, when individuals capable of producing new ideas are present, and when the organizational pattern maximizes flexibility and opens lines of communication. At present, the environment of the school system prevents progress and changes that would meet new situations and serve new populations. It cannot be said that many of the people concerned with educational goals and practices see the enterprise as one of creative solutions and continuing innovation. As "teaching" moves more toward "facilitated learning" and when beliefs similar to those expressed here become more acceptable, then learning environments, both organizational and contextual, will change.

SECTION III

THE PROGRAM

> If we treat human beings merely as objects to be controlled, instead of persons to be released for growth, we may become partners to dehumanization.
>
> Arthur G. Wirth, Chairman John Dewey Society

What is. . .What Could Be

In a Peanut's carton Lucy is telling a friend that she learned something in school that day: she signed up for folk guitar, computer programming, stained glass art, shoemaking, and a natural foods workshop. She got spelling, history, arithmetic, and two study periods. Her friend replied, "So what did you learn?" Lucy answers, "I learned that what you sign up for and what you get are two different things."[85]

A listing of public schools that provide for student's needs by allowing for curriculum choices would be impressive. Many, many schools throughout the United States have put together some very fine programs and are experimenting with different learning experiences. Public schools in over thirty states have already complimented their conventional program by creating Montessori Schools, Drop-Out Schools, Multi-Cultural Schools, Learning Centers, Free Schools. . .and on and on. Berkeley, California

has over 1/3 of its student body participating in 24 alternative public schools. In Seattle, Washington, over 5% of the public school students have chosen to enroll in over 30 alternative public schools. Much the same thing has been happening in Philadelphia, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Madison, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Boston, Ann Arbor, New York, and on across the country.[86]

The development of options in public education has been slow and steady work, for success has demanded the reeducation of many boards of education, parents and administrators. At present public school options are still small indeed. With the exception of a half-dozen school districts that have developed clusters of diverse options, few public schools have more than one option, and too often it involves only a few students. Such schools are often under attack from their colleagues in conventional programs, from conservative school boards, and from insecure administrators. At best they can only be called a beginning, but it is a beginning that holds promise of the day when all American yough may be able to select learning experiences from a wide variety of educational options both in public school and without, and from the cradle to the grave. The program, or curriculum, discussed in this section is one that can help to meet every students mental and emotional needs in ways selected by that student; it is concerned with the ways people relate to each other around different forms of learning; it is about people making the

best use they know of all their capacities, alone and together.

This section does not deal with learning to fulfill others expectations and pleasing those in authority; it is not about age, grade, and credential differentials; it does not talk about individualized instruction where differences are assumed and programs created to make certain that predictions are correct; it is not about labelling, classifying, and degrading children. There are too many beautiful things about a human being to give him a label, grade his performance, and cast him aside.

A serious rethinking of broad goals by educators with far greater student participation is heard from researchers and theorists alike. Students are demanding such changes. Relevant curriculum change with a close examination of familial-societal values and factual behavior is necessary. In some recent peace research Paul Smoker says that maximization of choices can be thought of as characteristic of an emergent peace system and that an essential component of peace is the continuous creation of new and more desirable social states.[87] This dynamic definition of peace is quite different than the old one of peace as absence of violence. Maximization of variance and mutual aid (human, animal, biological, and social) also agrees with recent cybernetic theories that point to centralized control as inefficient. Smoker maintains that a crisis is symptomatic of a war system

where the crisis is the narrowing of perception of alternatives. The implications of such research for educational programs seems obvious.

Snell and Gail Putney, two psychologists, say: "As developed in the usual curriculum, the life-adjustment emphasis becomes instruction in techniques of adjustment to conventional patterns. The child learns how to appeal to a date or how to conduct a meeting; he learns nothing of himself. The typical teacher is not trained to know himself and can hardly lead others to self-knowledge."[88] Curriculum emphasis today revolves mainly around fitting in, getting ahead, and pleasing others. Learning programs impart predetermined chunks of knowledge and acceptance of the status quo. We need to help develop people who can cope effectively with change; it isn't enough to educate for today. We have to think about what the world is going to be like in thirty years and educate for thirty years hence and forty years hence and a hundred years hence. The world today for the first grader is not going to be his world in thirty years. Look at how <u>our</u> world has changed, say, in the last ten, even five, years! No wonder we are confused and up tight and anxious: we were not prepared to deal with the world in which we are living. And we are not allowing our students to prepare. The relationships between students and teachers is seldom based on trust and openness. Without trust, communication suffers and with poor communication experiencing and sharing together will not occur and learning suffers.

The remainder of this section focuses on the facilitation of learning: on mental or cognitive learning experiences that help develop thinking capacities, and on emotional or affective learning experiences that help develop feeling or emotional capacities. There is an interdependence between emotional and intellectual learning. When we "think" we are, at the same time "emoting." The fact that teachers exclude the emotions from their lessons does not mean that those processes are unaffected by what the teacher does. It is important to remember this interdependence even though "thinking" and "feeling" are considered here in separate sections. We apply critical thinking techniques to matters that are largely in the affective domain and our emotions seriously affect our thinking. Psychologist Gerald Egan maintains that fuller interpersonal living is not ordinarily one of the fruits of eight, twelve, or sixteen years of formal education.[89] A well-integrated person is one who is comfortable with both his mental and emotional states and who has developed and understands both.

Emphasis throughout is given to the improvement of trust and communication between people, program options that can provide people the opportunities for self-growth and allow for explorations of the self and development of the human potential that we all have.

Facilitating Learning

Ten teen-agers in New York City, meeting with a group of 150 teachers maintained that there was an "almost total" lack of communication between teen-agers and adults. "The teachers don't want to communicate with us," said one 18-year-old. "But they should. A long talk is much more effective than just taking a failing student aside and saying, 'You have two 65's and three 40's, and it looks bad for you.' Another boy, 15, complained that the only time he heard his principal's voice was over his school's loud speaker system. When one of the students said that a lot of the trouble comes from a lack of love between students and teachers, one of the teachers shouted back, "It's not my job to love my pupils, it's my job to teach them." The students complained about methods of discipline and racial discrimination. Some of the teachers in the audience walked out.[90]

In youth conferences dealing with education and in thousands of schools students are demanding greater say in all phases of their school learning. The number of students seeking alternative learning experiences outside of the public school system increases each day and numbers in the millions. Each year more students and more teachers become drop-outs; drop-outs from a public institution that exists to serve their learning needs but instead forces them to adjust to standards, timelines, and rules of morality and conduct that is, to them, degrading, dehumanizing, and unnecessary.

Where does all this leave our present-day classroom teacher? And our teachers-in-training? The teachers who get up and walk out of meetings such as the one described and those who fail each day to effectively communicate with their students are probably useless for facilitating learning experiences. It might take a lifetime for anyone to create the conditions that would permit these teachers to modify their perceptions. A person grows when he is exposed to inconsistencies in his values and his patterns of action, and, from his own identification of needs, can be helped to develop new patterns which integrate values and behaviors.[91]

The major source of teachers for the type of learning experiences that meets people's needs and facilitates learning must come from the institutions that are now training prospective teachers. These institutions must help future facilitators of learning with their interpersonal growth, by helping them become aware of their inconsistencies. In-service training for teachers already certified can do the same. The supervisory process in schools can focus upon facilitating teacher growth by conducting regular attitudinal and value-related studies. Measurement of student feedback on classroom climate and prccess-oriented discussions of the feedback could be held between students, teachers, and the supervisor or administrator. Teacher performance could also be evaluated by using systematic feedback collection and evaluation

procedures. But this must all be done within an environment of trust, acceptance, and openness if it is to be growthful. The material and information contained under "Learning to Think" and "Learning to Feel" provides guidelines for all persons to experience learning in different ways than has been traditional. Students may begin to find school less distasteful as their teachers try to become facilitators of learning and, at the same time, allow themselves the experience of growth by learning to think and learning to feel. Growing along with our students is the one best way to facilitate their learning. It is hard and it can be painful but it is also joyful and the only way to truly experience together. Those of us who were most "successful" by conventional school standards will have the most difficult time. We have to unlearn what we learned best: to sit quietly, to accept without question whatever nonsense was inflicted upon us, to ventriliquize on demand with a high degree of fidelity, to go down only on the down staircase, to speak only on signal from the teachers, and so on. As we undertake inquiry into our own largely unexamined beliefs and assumptions we can facilitate such learning with our students. Just as the beliefs, feelings, and assumptions of teachers are the air of the learning environment and determine the quality of life within it, so too, are they the air of the program and so, too, do they determine the quality of the program.

The Effects of Leadership on People

There is a wide variety of research studies of various kinds and types which all point to the conclusion that the type of leadership called "democratic" or "participative" results in higher satisfaction among the participants than the kind of leadership called "autocratic" or "directive."[92] Delegating tasks to subordinates so that they may carry them out in their own way was facilitative of performance, and having concern for the subordinate as a human being increased performance.[93]

Much of the research that looks at such factors as leadership, environments, motivation, achievement and work performance, and organizational change comes from industrial and organizational psychology. Much of this work has relevant applications to education. So also does the work done with group dynamics and small groups by sociologists and psychologists.

The classic experimental study by White and Lippitt shows clearly that the different patterns of leadership style resulted in distinctive kinds of behavior among group members. Both group solidarity and group productivity differed markedly, and a characteristic emotional atmosphere developed in each group.[94] White and Lippitt examined the effects upon individual and group behavior of three variations in social atmosphere labeled, "democratic," "authoritarian," and "Laissez faire."

It was found that autocracy can create much hostility and agression, plus discontent that does not appear on the surface. There was more dependence and less individuality in autocracy. On the other hand, in the democratic situation, where all policies were a matter of group discussion with decisions encouraged and assisted by the leader, there was more groupmindedness and friendliness; work motivation was stronger, and originality was greater with less critical discontent.

The laissez-faire leadership resulted in behaviors consistent with the thesis presented here; i.e. that with complete freedom for group or individual decisions and complete nonparticipation of the leader, aggressive actions were frequent, there was more information asking and more work directions, more group-minded suggestions, more play-minded and more work-minded conversation, less work done. Laissez-faire was less organized, less efficient, and definitely less satisfying. In our first section where "learning" was discussed it was stated that achievement and self-concept is lowered when people move from situations of high structure to one of less structure. This is a period of some insecurity when the participants do not function well in providing for their own needs. One possible hypothesis regarding this phenomena would state that until people learn how to meet their needs in a manner that is satisfying and rewarding to them, insecurity, uncertainty, and discomfort will

persist. Resulting behaviors of random activity, agression, withdrawal, etc., may be due to frustrations caused by introduction to the new, open learning environment. During this adjustment period the role played by the learning facilitator may be very crucial. The facilitator can help people meet necessary needs by working with them, moving along the spectrum of democratic to laissez-faire.

When Carl Rogers used his non-directive methodology in a course, the class was not prepared for such a totally unstructured approach. They were perplexed and frustrated and demanded that Rogers play the role assigned to him by custom and tradition: to set forth in authoritative language what was right and wrong, what was good and bad. Everyone looked to Rogers but Rogers looked to everyone else, receiving every contribution with attention and regard. Hard, frustrating sessions followed; students spoke at random, saying whatever came into their heads. It all seemed chaotic, aimless, a waste of time; lacking in continuity and direction. By the fifth session something happened. Students spoke to one another, by-passed Rogers, wanted to be heard and asked to be heard. The group changed from a halting, stammering, self-conscious group to an interacting group, a brand new cohesive unit, carrying on discussion and thinking. Rogers joined in but his role became merged with the group; the group was important, the center, the base of operation, not the instructor. It took four sessions before the class

began to provide the content, to speak up, to share, to agree and to disagree, and to become closer.[95]

Much more research is needed in the area of leadership styles and effects and on unstructured or open environments. How do these factors relate to learning and the meeting of human needs? What effect, if any, do these, as well as other factors, have on cognitive learning? On emotional learning? On personal growth?

Learning to Think

Thinking may be understood as a method of inquiry which is directed toward understanding; thinking may help us to see the alternatives which are relevant and to help us anticipate a variety of consequences associated with alternatives. Thinking is a cognitive process which makes use of our minds.

Learning is most significant when we are caught up in the adventure of learning, when we are involved because we are interested. In Jonathan Livingston Seagull Richard Bach says that the most important thing in living is to reach out and touch perfection in that which we most love to do.[96] This is learning at its ultimate. The age or I.Q. of a person is not a determinant of learning ability. If a person truly wants to learn something he will do so even against tremendous odds as many biographies, autobiographies, and case histories indicate. To be sure, we can learn information that has little meaning

to us but it is not vital, joyful learning; we are seldom moved to get very deep into learning about something that has no interest or relevance to us and if we are forced into such situations we soon come to resist all learning experiences imposed upon us. The majority of students today use their minds as noted earlier; not to learn but to get out of doing the things we tell them to do to make them learn. Instead of increasing the capacity of the student to determine and meet his own learning needs we decrease it. Schools, in dealing with pre-processed information and not raw reality, effectively prevent students from naming their experiences, environment, or existence and thereby students are prevented from finding and putting meaning into their life. "Knowledge," or cognitive information is not the original substance. It is processed data. Already someone else has tampered with it; someone observed it (or made it up); recognized a pattern or imposed order on it; attached significance (found meaning in) to a particular pattern and disregarded others; translated the significance into an imprecise code called language, and called the result "knowledge." For example, the teacher is talking or something is written on the blackboard, or on a sheet of paper, or printed in a book. This is not the real world the student is seeing or hearing, but rather a translation, an algebra of the real world, simplified and fragmentized with much left out.[97]

The only legitimate objective in "teaching" is that the student and teacher shall be changed in such a way as to transcend mere intellectualizing and to become a better, more fulfilled person. William Schutz says that we want something to happen to students which inculcates a joy of life they can carry out of the classroom and into life; he defines "joy" as that feeling that comes from the fulfillment of one's potential.[98] According to Schutz, joy requires a vital, alive body, self-contentment, productive and satisfying relations with others, and a successful relation to society.

Everett Shostrum believes that only when man can give in to his natural rhythmic expression of strength and weakness, aggression and love, positive and negative feelings, will he then become actualizing. Only when people share feelings with trust, openness, honesty, and mutual acceptance can there be joy in learning, and a working together toward actualization. The traditional classroom where the teacher leads and the students respond and where emphasis is on coercive cognitive learnings can never produce joy in learning nor self-actualization. Nor can love between humans exist in such an atmosphere. Love has to spring spontaneously from within and it is in no way amenable to any form of inner or outer force. Love and coercion can never go together. But love cannot be forced on anyone; it can be awakened through love itself. Love is essentially self-communicative. Those who do not have

it catch it from those who have it. . .[99] Only when teachers become facilitators of learning and begin to love themselves and others can growthful and joyful learning occur and be shared.

If we are going to put people together in a place called "school" then let's allow them all, students and teachers alike, to share learning experiences in ways that meet their unique, individual ways. If a student wants to learn about natural foods, or folk guitar, or shoe-making, there will undoubtedly be others who share this interest; others who may have experiences in these areas and want to share them. Or others who just want to learn these things also. And if just one person is interested he needs the freedom to pursue his interest in ways selected by him. If people are left free to learn they will learn what is interesting and appealing to them, or whatever they feel they need. Surely they would learn to read, and spell, and do math, and write, just as they learn to speak, because they need to know these things; whatever interest they wish to pursue would be at least partially dependent on reading or writing, on math or some other basic skill. This would happen if we allowed people to be free to learn from the beginning. Once structured learning is placed upon people they become dependent on that structure. The more structure there is, the more rules and regulations, the less responsible the

student can become for determining or choosing his needs and the behaviors that will satisfy those needs. By the time our students get to high school a great many of them are unable to work toward their own goals because they can't even identify goals for themselves. The teachers goals and the schools goals are the ones that count, and most of our students have learned to meet these expectations well; they have not learned to meet their own learning needs or to take responsibility for these needs.

We can help facilitate learning that is relevant, interesting, and exciting by <u>listening</u> to students, and having them share their interests with us; by asking them such questions as: "If you could do what you most want to, what would you do?" What worries you the most? What makes you happy? Or, what do you enjoy doing that you seldom share with others? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Of course such types of questions require trust and openness. People must truly communicate with each other in order to carry on discussions of this nature. . .discussions that help facilitate the recognition and meeting of needs. Effective cognitive learning cannot occur without such communication.

We can also facilitate relevant, interesting, and exciting learning by providing many options from which the learner may choose. There are innumerable ways in which a person can learn about something that interests him and there are innumerable things that interest people.

We can help to provide both the learning options and ways to experience these options. At the present time many people, especially students, are interested in political and social change, human existence, community, creativity, and freedom. Many of these concepts are not presently dealt with in curriculums, and, if they are included, they are most often treated in a way that is bland, that seldom questions, that ignores reality.

> The ever-alert suppliers of educational materials have responded to the heady chorus of demands for 'relevence' with a glittering array of books, workbooks, games, posters, casettes, and filmstrips designed to seduce students into believing that now at last school will give meaning to their lives. These materials are no more relevent to the central theme of our students' lives than were the leftover third-grade readers or the games of spelling baseball which they have replaced.[100]

Furthermore, many well-meaning teachers, seeking to reach out to the students, employ their song, the stories of their tribulations, their idiom (which is not our idiom) as a vehicle for inculcating the same dreary morals and meaningless lessons which we and they customarily believe to constitute education.

How much emphasis we place on the school syllabus and lesson plans. One of the biggest disadvantages of lesson plans is that they perpetuate learnings that are prescribed by someone else at some time prior to the time they are to be used. Too many things intervene between the time a "lesson" is "planned" and the time it is "taught." The students are excited about, or interested in, some

other phenomena; another teacher is called upon to substitute using someone else's lesson, a lesson that may be of little interest to either student or teacher at this point. But the lesson plan must be followed in order for school to go on! Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner have some comments appropos to all of this:

> A syllabus not only prescribes what story lines you must learn (the War of 1912 in the sixth grade, chromosomes in the eleventh, South America in the ninth), it also prescribes the order in which skills must be learned (spelling on Monday, grammar on Tuesday, vocabulary on Wednesday). This is called the 'sequential curriculum' and one has to visit the Ford Motor plant in Detroit in order to understand fully the assumptions on which it is based. In fact, the similarities between mass production industries and most existing school environments are striking: five-day week, seven-hour day, one hour for lunch, careful division of labor for both teachers and students, a high premium on conformity and a corresponding suspicion of originality (or any deviant behavior), and most significantly, the administration's concern for product rather than process. But the larger point is that the sequential curriculum is inadequate because students are not sequential; most significant learning processes do not occur in linear, compartmentalized sequences.
>
> When the words 'teach' and 'teaching' are simply subtracted from the operational lexicon along with 'course of study' and 'covering ground,' a dramatic difference in behavior results. Then remarks are made in which the student rather than the subject is central. One must be centrally concerned with the hearts and minds of learners. No competent learner ever says to himself, 'In trying to solve this problem, I will read two books (not less than 20 pages, with a minimum of 15 footnotes. . .' The only place one finds such 'standards' is in a school syllabus. They do not exist in natural, human learning situations, since they have nothing to do with the conditions of learning--with what the learner needs to be and to do in order to learn about learning, or indeed about anything.[101]

If we are interested in helping people to learn and answer such questions as, "What is it that this organism needs without which he cannot thrive?", it is impossible to come up with the answer "The three R's." The emotional and intellectual realities of the human condition dictate the need to know how to learn as well as other needs such as communication and relationships with other people, a workable concept of self and freedom. Any curriculum designed around these needs centers around the structure of the learner and his learning needs and less around the structure of the subject. Unless an inquiry is perceived as relevent by the learner, no significant learning will take place. In order to know what is relevent to our students, or any other person, we must communicate our sincere desire to find this out and then listen carefully! If we are successful and find out, then together with our students, programs can be planned. The person must be the most important factor; not age, not values, not credentials, not experience. The young and old, rich and poor, black, yellow, red, and white, must work together to achieve open communication, trust, and learning. This means working together to utilize each persons unique capabilities or potentialities. It means telling each other of our loyalties, no longer being competitors. It means going through heavy changes, knowing where we are headed, impatient to be there, losing ground, being afraid, feeling the support of those working with us. It means

wanting to give others our very best, sharing our best with them, knowing they know in ways we can only sense, feeling futile as guides and models, giving support when we can.[102]

When learning and the environment was discussed earlier a list of assumptions commonly held by teachers was offered. These assumptions are also held by students because they have been "taught" to believe this way. We must help our students unlearn much of what they "know"; in order to help students recognize the fact that most of their deeply internalized assumptions about education are based on misinformation rather than information we might begin by providing them with a set of beliefs in direct contradiction to those they hold. One of the most dramatic comes from a highly personal statement found in Becoming a Person by Carl Rogers:

1. "My experience has been that I cannot teach another person how to teach."

2. "It seems to me that anything that can be taught to another is relatively inconsequential, and has little or no significant influence on behavior."

3. "I realize increasingly that I am only interested in learnings which significantly influence behavior."

4. "I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning."

5. "Such self-discoverd learning, truth that has been personally appropriated and assimilated in experience, cannot be directly communicated to another."

in the form of program options can be provided that will help develop and strengthen a person's feelings. Understanding feelings and developing better behavioral tools to deal with people are definitely, if not positively, related to how well students learn cognitive material such as algebra or history and use it to cope with their environmental relations and social living.[105] The more accepting a person is of himself and others, the more highly motivated he becomes to learn, the more open to risk exploring experiences, the more aware of learning opportunities, and the more able to evaluate and criticize what he is learning and has learned.[106]

We cannot learn to feel if we are told what to feel or how we are feeling, or if our feelings are denied. When this happens we close up our feelings, hiding them, and soon we come to distrust our feelings and ourselves. To help a person learn it is necessary to try and find out why they want to learn, what they want to learn, and how they want to learn. People will share this with us if they like us, if they trust us, and if we care about them because we like them. Few and far between are the schools that provide learning options that people desire in an atmosphere of openness, trust, and caring. James Herndon illustrates this when he says,

> A teacher comes into the teachers' room and says happily, 'I had the greatest lesson today!' and goes on to tell the other envious teachers what it was that they hadn't thought of themselves and says, 'the kids were all so excited!'[107]

Herndon goes on to say that the teacher has forgotten that the kids have to be there; that perhaps the grand lesson was merely more tolerable than the usual lesson; that perhaps the kids would have rejected both lessons if they could. And, most importantly, Herndon says,

> As long as you threaten people in school, you can't tell whether or not they really want to do what you are proposing that they do; you can't tell if they are inspired by it; you can't tell if they learn anything from it; you can't tell if they would keep on doing it if you weren't threatening them. You cannot tell. You cannot tell if the kids want to come to your class or not. That is why the school cannot learn anything about its students. Why famous psychologists can successfully threaten pigeons into batting ping-pong balls with their wings, but can never learn anything about pigeons.[108]

And that is why the schools are impeding learning experiences rather than facilitating them. Especially impeded are experiences that help people to feel.

It is impossible to deal with issues on a purely intellectual level even when concerted efforts are made to do so. Emotions, that is, our feelings, are always with us and, if recognized and developed, greatly enhance both living and learning. Knowing what we are feeling and learning to enjoy those feelings makes for fuller, more effective living on both the personal and interpersonal level. The schools have traditionally dealt with cognitive or mental learning processes to the exclusion of the affective or emotional learning processes. Emotions are present and can be recognized but they are usually ignored or stifled. There is evidence to suggest that

formal education has failed to serve the function of unfettering human potentiality.[109] For example, creativity among students, far from being encouraged is often discouraged or repressed. Gerald Egan, who has already been mentioned, says that the general failure of education as a vehicle of putting people in growthful contact with one another is seen as one of the main reasons for the spread of the encounter group phenomenon in contemporary society; and Egan says:

> Full, interpersonal living depends upon a person's ability to involve himself effectively, even creatively, with others, but this does not just happen, nor is it the result of a 'gift' of creativity in human relationships. People have to learn how to interact with others. But until recently, children (and adults) have not been taught how to involve themselves with others. Children spend an enormous amount of their school time doing things next to, instead of with each other. Our society teems with this kind of 'parallel' learning just as it does with 'parellel' living. Therefore, it is essential, from the earliest years of education, to find ways of putting people into more effective human contact with one another. . .human relations learning is perhaps the most important kind of learning, but it is the most neglected. Perhaps it is presumed that such learning occurs naturally outside the classroom situation. Most often it does not; therefore, the majority of persons reach adulthood without being self-actualized on an interpersonal level.[110]

Carl Rogers says that it is becoming increasingly common in our culture for each of us to believe that every other person must feel and think and believe the same as I do. Children or parents or spouses are seldom permitted

> to feel differently than we do about particular issues or problems. On a national scale we cannot permit another nation to think or feel differently than we do. Yet the right of each individual to utilize his experience in his own way and to discover his own meanings in it is one of the most priceless potentialities of live.[111]

Options for personal and interpersonal growth on the affective level need to be made available to students in our schools. And these program options can be growthful and helpful only if such learning is facilitated by personnel who have gone and are going through this kind of growth themselves, or are at least trying to do so.

Options for Personal Growth

There are many ways to humanize education and to make our educational system an exciting voyage of discovery for warm, living persons; to bring feelings into the learning process and learning into the process of being a feeling human being. We don't start with the kids, we start with <u>us</u>: the adult men and women known as teachers, principals, and superintendents. <u>We</u> have further to go and harder work than our students have in learning to feel, to self-disclose and trust, to show and share our warmth and our strengths along with our anger and our weaknesses; in learning not to be the authority and rule-maker. We can only give away what we have. If we have warmth and love, caring and concern, we can give it by sharing it. There are people who do this, but there are not many and there are not enough.

Let's provide program options that can help us all, "students" and "teachers," to explore our senses and share our feelings; options that can provide human growth experiences. What would such a program be like? First of all, anyone could "take" any "course"; there would be few restrictions, and each person would select what they would like to do. Perhaps there could be daily sign-ups where the "teachers" offer to share a particular interest with all others who might care to participate on that day. Or, perhaps anyone who desires to be the "learning facilitator" may do so, offering whatever it is that he desires.

There are schools around the country that are doing this or something similar.[112] The Lulu Walker Elementary School in Tuscon, Arizona allows its students to sign for the program of the following day on the afternoon of the day before; a computer does the programming during the night. Many schools have "open" classrooms or "flexible programs." The Cleveland Heights High School has a flexible program with an open classroom where a community of teachers and students attempt to find the best way for each individual to learn. Students seek their own level and rate of learning, choosing and developing courses that most interest them. Now in its third year, the East Hill Elementary School is an open enrollment, free school in the Ithaca, New York Public School system.

Student-centered, unstructured methods are used at this school. The supplies and staff are very limited, with older children assisting the younger ones. The planned organization of this school by subject areas encourages the students to work with each other and to work through their own interests and abilities. Paraprofessional and volunteer help are welcome. The "School Within a School" (S.W.S.) at the Kinewa Middle School in Okemos, Michigan is a voluntary alternative learning program offered to everyone who would like to experience this kind of environment. Each student in S.W.S. functions in an "open" environment and the program relies heavily on each individual's curiosity, needs, abilities, and uniqueness as a person. The students plan their own learning program. They may socialize, play chess, watch TV, read, study, work on projects, and receive individual instruction from a learning facilitator, or attend seminars given daily on various content areas. The facilitators and resource people give the students stimulus, encouragement, praise, and criticism. Students help each other. No dress code is imposed, and the students may eat snacks and chew gum. Experience with this program indicates it promotes self control and personal responsibility.

The above examples are just a few of the many innovations being tried today; innovations that help provide learning experiences for individual needs designed <u>with</u> the people involved.

Program selections included under our options for personal growth might begin with a "class" or "course" on "love." The "course content" can include the sharing and experiencing of tenderness, compassion, caring, and loving, as well as reading about these concepts. Source materials might include books like Erich Fromm's, The Art of Loving.[113] The lastest edition of Paul Samuelson's economic textbook has a chapter called "Love and Economics." It's a beautiful chapter. In his introduction, Samuelson says, "I know my colleagues at Harvard are going to say I have lost my mind, but for their benefit I want them to know that I have just found it."[114]

Who is the emotionally sick person? The person who adjusts to a sick society or the person who refuses to do so? This course on "Love" might want to look at the London psychiatrist, R. D. Laing and his book, The Politics of Experience: Laing has done exciting work with emotionally disturbed children. He treats them as if they are well and creative and they are well and creative. Laing says, as part of his philosophy, "We think much less than what we know! We know much less than what we love; we love much less than what there is; and to this promise extent, we are much less than what we are."[115] This sounds similar to what a recent contributor the The New Schools Exchange Newsletter wrote: "But if we need all the love we can get, and hunger, too, always for growth in our lives, then we had better make our learning a part

of our loving."[116] A course on "Love" could deal with all of this, plus so much more.

Another course option might be "The Uniqueness of the Individual" where all that is unique in each person is developed and shared. Imagine what it would be like if people said to each other, "It's good that you're unique; it's good that you're different. Show me your differences so that maybe I can learn from them."

How about a "Festival of Life" where any person can share anything that is meaningful to him and all who care to share: paintings, pottery, films, candle-making, photography, meditation. Of course the participants in such a festival choose their own regulations or structure and there are no bells ringing, no time schedules, no hall monitors monitoring.

Other options might include psychodrama, body and sensory relaxation, T-Groups, micro-labs, humanistic games, and Gestalt Awareness Techniques. These types of options provide for human growth experiences emphasizing the affective; our emotions, our senses, our feelings. Brief descriptions of each of these activities or experiences follow.[117]

The major goal in psychodrama is the ability to become spontaneous; that is, to make new perceptions of old situations or at least reorganize old cognitive patterns so that new and more adequate responses are

facilitated. Dr. J. L. Moreno originated psychodrama over 50 years ago by allowing children to act out their problems spontaneously. And psychodrama is an "acting out." Variations of psychodrama have application to the humanistic classroom.

Body relaxation emphasizes body movement for the achievement of the individuals potential for more heightened feeling, pleasure, and greater self-awareness. A person must be in contact with his body if he is to be in contact with his feelings and emotions. Various approaches are used by different persons. Some of the most familiar names associated with a specific approach are Dr. Ida Roff, Bernie Gunther, and Alexander Lowen.

T-Grouping is undoubtedly the most significant and by far the most frequent organizationally used method for achieving the goals of decreased anxiety, more satisfactory interpersonal competence, and self insight. T-Grouping offers one of the simpliest and easiest methods of learning about personal growth. A more complete discussion of T-Grouping in the schools follows shortly.

The micro-lab is a smorgasbord of laboratory experiences including verbal and non-verbal activities. Micro-lab activities can be used with very large numbers of people in contrast, say, to T-Groups or psychodrama! Feelings, honesty, and the "here-and-now" are emphasized in Micro-lab activities.

There are many humanistic games and techniques that can be used and are being used in school today. Gerald Weinstein and his associates at the University of Massachusetts Center for Humanistic Education have developed and tested many effective techniques in the classroom. These exercises allow children to expand their openness into new areas, to fantacize openly, to be creative and have fun doing it all. James Sacco and Michael Burton, of the same Center, also have developed humanistic activities such as theatre, listening, writing, song, and intellectual games.

Gestalt Awareness Techniques stress the integrated, whole man rather than a split or half-man. They are useful in helping all persons achieve greater self-awareness and sensitivity to their own feelings. Included are such activities as "here-and-now" statements of feelings, noticing resistances to such statements, listening and concentrating, and sharpening body senses such as breathing, relaxation, stretching, etc. Gestalt Awareness Techniques have considerable application to the classroom situation and can also be useful in assisting teachers, or learning facilitators, to achieve greater self-awareness and sensitivity to their students. In Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, Frederick Perls discusses the techniques of Gestalt.[118]

Many of the options described above are called by different names, or the techniques vary slightly, depending on the person doing the exercises. There are also techniques

such as transactional analysis that have applications for people in schools. Persons interested in any of these options can easily find the techniques and styles best suited to their needs. Helping to develop a humanistic approach to education is not as easy as obtaining a new curriculum guide and trying it out in the classroom but it is more exciting and infinitely more rewarding. The Center for Humanistic Education, just mentioned, has developed a block of instruction which uses the student himself as the content for the course. Dr. Weinstein and his associates at the Center have developed techniques and exercises that are particularly effective in humanistic education. The point these men and women especially wish to make is that humanistic education techniques and games can be integrated into every kind of classroom.

Masha Rudman's Learning Theatre, also at the Center, helps enable all persons, teachers and students, to live and feel their learning. Dr. Rudman begins a description of her project by saying:

> Creative, concerned, and perceptive teachers have always recognized that different children learn from and respond to the same stimulus in very different ways. These teachers have attempted to vary their teaching styles in order to reach as many students as possible. They have encouraged their students to report on their learning in as interesting and effective a manner as possible. They have always recognized that the student learns more from what he generates and discovers than from what the teacher hands out and pours in.

Dr. Rudman concludes with:

> If we are to accept the responsibility of institutionalizing growth in today's society we must be courageous enough to discard all of our preconceptions about the current institution of education, especially those that dictate the notions of 'classes,' 'teachers,' and the stereotyped in-take-regurgitation process called learning. Education today can be a box: sometimes its walls are 'flexible,' interchangeable, movable, but the confines of the box remain. Into this box we insert curricula, administrators, teachers, and students. Each of these components is separate, integral, to itself, and unequal in value or position compared to the others. If the box is shaken, the components might get jarred and bounce against each other, but the box is generally positioned so that it is immovable. Sometimes other components are added, but always in the context of the box. The Learning Theater does not merely open the box, but throws it away.[119]

Learning and T-Groups

A great deal has been written about the application of T-Group learning for school change. T-Groups have been used as a laboratory method of learning for seminar teachers, as a vehicle for teacher, administrator and student change, for conflict resolution, for improved decision making, and for other concerns such as personal growth, openness, trust, acceptance, and feedback. A fairly large amount of research has been done on T-Groups and their processes using various dimensions and indicators. Much of this research appears in the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science. Psychology Today also carries this research and related articles.

T-Groups, Sensitivity Groups, or Encounter Groups are laboratory experiences in learning in which group members study their own behavior and interactions. T-Group members are participating in the formation of a small society by instantly feeding back what they learn about intra-personal and inter-personal relationships in forming that society. Dr. John Suehr describes T-Groups as unique among human development programs in that immediate behavior is the subject for analysis and forms the basis for learning; "Briefly, it is a relatively unstructured group in which the data for learning are not outside the individual learners and their experience, but are their actions and reactions as they work to create a learning group."[120] Group members become sensitive to all members needs and point this out honestly, not with the idea of tearing down but by supporting others to help them move and become more self-actualizing. Certain core interactions that take place are self-disclosure, expression of feeling, support, confrontation, self-examination, and inevitable various tendencies to flee the work of the group.

A T-Group, just as a class or any group of persons, will be of most value to those participating if they are allowed to set and move toward their own goals. T-Groups often perform the function of learning how to learn and learning how to become more effective in giving and receiving help. Because of more open and accurate communications, T-Groups can also perform the function of greater

self-understanding, greater sensitivity to other "selves," greater understanding of the roles of group members, and greater conflict resolution.

When people get together out of a sincere desire to experience self-growth and a willingness to share this experience with others; and when support, trust, and caring are obvious by their presense; than a T-Group can provide opportunities that are not to be found elsewhere. The opportunity to share human emotion, encounter other persons in a growthful way; in short, to experience fuller interpersonal living, is seldom provided to persons in this society. The schools can provide these experiences by offering T-Groups for those who may be interested.

Research shows that T-Group participants often have a deep conviction that the experience was important and significant in their lives; that changes may occur in the way they view themselves and others, and that personal or occupational crises requiring major decisions get resolved. Participants often say they are more open and honest, more intimate and accepting of others, more self aware and aware of others, more spontaneous, confident and talkative.[121] Five general areas of potential change thought to be relevant to the encounter group experience include: (1) the persons values; (2) the persons attitude toward encounter type experiences; (3) the person's behavior as reflected in the way he copes with his problems

and relationships; (4) aspects of the person's self-view such as self-esteem and self-image; (5) the person's view of others. Whether a participant identifies with the group, whether he likes it, his role in the group, and whether the group likes him are all relevent to the outcome according to this research. It was also found that group members who like their groups, who participated actively, and who are valued by other group members learned more; marginal or deviant members tended to have negative outcomes.

Leadership behavior was examined in this same research. The most effective leaders, from the participants view, were high in caring (friendship, love, support, praise, affection); moderate in giving meaning to experiences members undergo; and moderate in the amount of stimulation and their executive behavior.

T-Groups cannot, and should not, be expected to produce magical, lasting change. They can "provide opportunities for human beings to explore and express themselves." Educators need to be aware of the implications of T-Group research and of the possibilities for T-Groups in the schools.

People and Values

Each person takes his experiences and discovers his own meanings; similar experiences may lead to different meanings to different people. These meanings may be held

as values or part of a person's belief system. Here, values could be defined as those elements that show how a person has decided to use his life. Current practices with values in the classroom generally involves either a moralistic telling or an exposure of children to the "right" atmosphere. Not enough use is made of techniques which directly and intensely involve students and show respect for their values, whatever they may be. Students and teachers can enhance their own personal growth by identifying and clarifying their values. They can also begin to recognize what affect, if any, their values and beliefs have on their behaviors. Carl Rogers believes that the individual, with values mostly introjected, held as fixed concepts rarely examined or tested, is the picture of most of us. Rogers says:

> By taking over the conceptions of others as our own, we lose contact with the potential wisdom of our functioning, and lose confidence in ourselves. Since these value constructs are often sharply at variance with what is going on in our own experiencing, we have in a very basic way divorced ourselves from ourselves,and this accounts for much of modern strain and insecurity. This fundamental discrepancy between the individual's concept and what he actually experiences, between the intellectual structure of his values and the valuing process going on unrecognized within--this is a part of the fundamental estrangement of modern man from himself.[122]

When people can share their views and feelings about values and beliefs, communication becomes more open and honest, thus more effective. Each person can learn to respect anothers values and even admire that person,

while, at the same time rejecting for themselves particular values that are important to that other person. Lessons have been developed that can help with the development of values, the acceptance of differing values, and values clarification techniques. Dr. Sidney Simon, formerly of Temple University but presently with the University of Massachusetts School of Education, has developed classroom exercises and experiences which lead toward the development of values. Simon will ask his students to list the five most important things in which they believe. Eventually he will have them test these values against a set of criteria which he believes are a fair measure for values. Simon has several exercises which force students to think about priorities. These and many other values activities and exercises are discussed in his book, Values and Teaching.[123]

A learning facilitator will demonstrate personal and professional concern in planning value analysis and value education as legitimate inclusions in existing classroom experiences. Values help to make individuals and groups more human. Values are not facts, concepts, or skills. Personal values are primary factors in explaining human behavior such as decision making and judgment. An integrative set of personal values is as important for living as any fact or skill. Students need the opportunity to live by their value system, not that of the teachers, the administrators, nor the school boards. And, they need

opportunities to share and clarify their values with all of the people with whom they interact, not with just their peers. They need to feel accepted while they are sharing their values. Such activity can lead to value changes which is part of personal growth, as well as a resolution of personal problems and anxiety resulting from value inconsistencies.

Conclusion

Before bringing to a close this discussion on the school program, a few thoughts seem appropriate. If one way seems right for some of us in this complicated world, that doesn't make other ways wrong. We each have our own right and wrong ways. We each have to deal with our own realities by using our own prescriptions, hoping that they are healthy and correct. Let's share our experiences and learn from this sharing but let's not prescribe for anyone but ourselves. People will create their own programs, their own forms of learning. The number of faculty and the materials available really does not matter. What do I need in order to learn simple math? I need someone who knows math, has a little patience, a place to meet, and time. How about 2 o'clock at my house? Your apartment? The library? People will create their own forms of learning such as classes, schools, one to one, two learners without a teacher, small groups, if they can get to the tools of learning easily enough. When people are allowed to

take responsibility for their learning needs they are also learning to take responsibility for their own life. The more options available, the more people can meet their needs. The more we structure learning, the fewer the needs that are met. Schedules, rules, bells, grades and grading, requirements, certification and credentials. . .all limit the ability of the person to meet his own learning needs in his own way. Any person can best meet their emotional and intellectual needs when they can choose from a variety of program options, where their choices reflect their own values.

The discussion in this section has looked at learning activities outside of those found in traditional school programs. Some learning options, both intellectual and emotional, have been presented. These options attempt to meet people's needs and allow for self growth that is relevant, interesting, and exciting to the persons involved. Trust, communication, and caring are important in order for people to relate to each other effectively. Suggestions have been offered for learning and growth in these important areas.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

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