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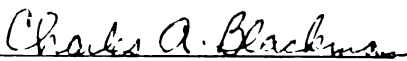
ARTICULATING A RATIONALE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BASED ON PRINCIPLES
OF EARLY ADOLESCENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

presented by

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ARTICULATING A RATIONALE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF EARLY ADOLESCENT
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

By

Donald J. Clark II

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

ARTICULATING A RATIONALE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF EARLY ADOLESCENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

By

Donald J. Clark II

A rationale for the Middle School was developed, based on principles of growth and development and developmental characteristics of emerging adolescents (ages 11-12 to 14-15). Emerging adolescent development in the areas of intellect and identity formation was discussed, based on the respective theories of Piaget, Erikson, and their contemporaries. This discussion was followed by an examination of the educational philosophies of Dewey and Greene. These educational philosophers focused on the importance of the process of human interaction and experiential learning. Close attention was given to Greene's concept of "public space" and Dewey's concept of "acting as a member of unity."

The developmental theories of Erikson and Piaget were then interrelated with key philosophical concepts of Greene and Dewey to create a proposed rationale for Middle School education based on these principles and concepts. Ways were then considered in which a Middle School program, based on the concepts of "public space" and "acting as

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a member of unity," could be generated so as to facilitate the processes of identity formation and cognitive development in early adolescents.

Based on this rationale, the following five strands were generated that may be used as guidelines in making curricular decisions at the Middle School level.

Strand One--Personality development
Strand Two--Cognitive development
Strand Three--Social development
Strand Four--Physical development
Strand Five--Self-esteem development

These strands are different from developmental tasks of adolescence (as listed by Havighurst et al.) in that they establish a value base for making curricular decisions as opposed to describing developmental processes.

In conclusion, consideration was given to possible implications such a rationale may have for the stimulation/support/facilitation of human growth and development over the entire human life span.

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A project such as this is impossible to complete without the help and support of others. First, a special thank-you needs to be given to Dr. Charles Blackman, my advisor for the past seven years. His wisdom, insight, and guidance kept me moving forward to achieve this goal. I look forward to our continuing dialogue. To Dr. Louise Sause, professor emeritus and committee member, I can only say that her sensitivity to the issues I was wrestling with provided me with a boundless source of enthusiasm from which I was able to draw. I would also like to thank Drs. Ben Bohnhorst, George Ferree, and Keith Anderson for the time they invested in serving on my committee.

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The final acknowledgments have to go to my parents and my spouse. My mother and father, Don and Betty Clark, have provided me a lifetime of unconditional support and nonjudgmental love, two qualities that I have endeavored to carry into the classroom with me. And finally, to the most important person in my life and the person whose

name should be on this dissertation with mine--the primary source of my strength, my spouse, Kimberly. Dissertations are not completed without a great deal of sacrifice, and in a marriage that sacrifice is multiplied by two. She never complained, and I always found strength in the selfless love she brings to our marriage. I could not have done it without her.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

In 1980 testimony before a Congressional Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, Lipsitz (1980a) made the following remark:

Early adolescence is a time of growth and change unique in human experience. The paucity of programs appropriately serving young adolescents, the small number of professionals and policy-setters knowledgeable about and dedicated to their welfare, the small number of training programs for future professionals, the inadequate dialogue about this age group, all point to our confusion, fears, and dislike. (p. 1)

This testimony suggests that the study of early adolescent growth and development and educational programs to facilitate that growth and development are important issues in our times. "Young adolescents are noted for questioning who they are supposed to be. One of the hardest questions for adults to answer is what it is they want adolescents to be able to do" (1980b, p. 25). Defining what adults want adolescents to do and how they should do it is perhaps only part of the question. Another part of the question may be that adults have to decide why adolescents should do anything. If these adults are educators charged with the responsibility of educating the emerging adolescent, response to the "why?" question becomes important.

According to Ward (1983), curriculum is the concern for decisions about "what should be taught, why, to whom and under what conditions." Any decisions regarding curriculum need to include asking the question "why?." This "why?" question can be discussed on two levels: theoretically and philosophically. In the case of early adolescent development and educative programs, the theoretical "why?" may be addressed by examining the growing body of research in the developmental areas unique to emerging adolescents. Addressing the philosophical "why?," including the pursuit of value bases necessary to focus research and program development, is urgently needed in our times. According to MacDonald (1975), "the basic phenomenon that underlies all activity is the existence of human interest that precedes and channels the activity of curriculum thinking" (p. 289). The establishment of a philosophy isolates those "human interests" so they may be articulated in the form of a rationale. This rationale evolves into a concern for the values and ideals that are going to give direction to a specific curriculum. Philosophers since Plato have told educators that curriculum is more than a sequential order of units, courses, and programs. Serious considerations of curriculum need to include the fundamental questions of value, belief, and loyalty.

Referring back to Lipsitz (p. 1), it may be that a current lack of awareness of the need for a deeper understanding of early adolescence and of programs to facilitate growth and development may "point to our confusion, fears, and dislike." This confusion, fear, and dislike may result from a lack of purpose and direction. This lack of

purpose and direction could be caused by lack of clearly articulated answers to the question "Why?."

Statement of the Problem

Can a rationale be developed encompassing principles of adolescent growth and development that will provide a value base for Middle School curriculum development? Lipsitz (1980b) reported that "two areas of confusion and ignorance converge: confusion about the purposes of schooling for young adolescents and ignorance about early adolescence as a critical developmental stage in the life span" (p. 124). Literature on early adolescent growth and development and Middle School programs can already provide a theoretical basis for establishing a curriculum which facilitates growth and development. The purpose of this dissertation is to further clarify a rationale, which includes principles of growth and development, to support a Middle School curriculum. In doing so the following questions are posed:

1. Why the need for a rationale supporting Middle School curriculum?
2. How will such a rationale encompass the developmental needs of early adolescents?
3. How may this rationale be applied to the construction of Middle School curriculum?
4. Does this rationale have any implications for an individual's entire life-span?

The nature of the problem appears to reside in the fact that too few educators, currently practicing in the field, are able to identify a clear rationale to support a Middle School. Hertling and Getz (1971) reported that a curriculum must exist that considers all aspects of the requirements of the early adolescent. Such a school would build its curriculum around the developmental needs of this age group. However, Alexander and Kealy (1969) found that program descriptions for schools housing this age group reflected little concern for the existence of this type of curriculum. Furthermore, a 1980 survey conducted in Michigan by Marlowe (1980) found that superintendents and presidents of boards of education were unclear when it came to describing programs that promote growth and development in early adolescence. Closer to home, the writer of this dissertation has found a number of his teaching colleagues seemingly unsure with regard to the relationship between the developmental characteristics of early adolescent youth and classroom practices. It is inferred that this confusion is not a result of negligence. Rather it is inferred that this confusion is due in part to an inability to identify clearly a rationale which may support the Middle School. The attempt is made in this dissertation to offer such a rationale.

The central question of this dissertation is: How may a rationale be articulated which is capable of generating curricular guidelines that may be used to facilitate the growth and development of early adolescents?

Design of the Study

This is a descriptive and analytic dissertation. A background is presented using key portions of the current research on intellectual development and identity formation of young adolescents. Drawing on key concepts of selected educational philosophers, and this writer's own experiences for the past 13 years as a teacher of young adolescents, the information presented in the following two chapters is analyzed in order to discover values and ideals which may serve to underlie Middle School curriculum. Using these values, beliefs, and developmental theories, a rationale for Middle School education is then articulated. This rationale is then applied to the development of guidelines that may be used in the construction of Middle School curriculum. A discussion of the possible relevancy such a rationale may have for the stimulation/support/facilitation of human growth and development over the entire human life-span concludes this dissertation.

Review of Related Literature

Literature is reviewed from three areas: (a) research in early adolescent cognitive development and identity formation, (b) educational philosophy, and (c) aesthetic education. This literature is used as a source throughout the dissertation from which to generate an analysis and discussion leading to a Middle School rationale. It also serves as a foundation from which to begin to consider such a rationale.

Definitions

In the context of the dissertation, the following definitions apply.

Transescent youth--Children in the age group 11-12 to 14-15.

Early adolescence, transescence, emerging adolescence--A developmental period that involves children in the age group 11-12 to 14-15.

Middle school--A school for early adolescents where curricular decisions are based on the developmental characteristics of this age group.

Philosophy of growth and development--A philosophy that supports a curriculum emphasizing the unique developmental qualities of each child.

Limitations

1. The overview of early adolescent development is focused on cognitive development and identity formation. Other areas of development such as physical, emotional, and moral development are not specifically discussed.

2. The presentation of aesthetic education in Chapter IV is not intended to be a definitive discussion of formal aesthetic philosophy. Nevertheless, the key concepts of this approach appear to be especially pertinent to a rationale of the sort attempted here.

3. The growth and development literature referred to in Chapter II is limited to the works of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and their contemporaries.

4. The discussion of Middle School rationale is not intended to be the only possible Middle School rationale. It is meant only to be reflections on one possible way to articulate such a rationale. However, the guidelines generated here may promise to be productive in practice. This is the intention and hope.

CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY FORMATION AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENTS

Limitations have been placed on the scope of the following overview of research in early adolescent growth and development. Two considerations were taken into account: the purpose for which the overview is intended and the many components of adolescent growth and development. This overview is intended to be used as a basis from which a discussion of a Middle School rationale may depart.

The two areas of focus are intellectual development and psychosocial development. Other areas of development obviously exist (e.g., fine and gross motor development, development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics, neurological development, moral development, and language development), but their omission from this discussion does not mean they are not important. They are important too, and schools are concerned with all aspects of the growing individual. However, this overview focuses primarily on cognitive and psychosocial development. The age group studied is early adolescence. This group includes all those individuals between the ages of 11-12 and 14-15.

Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

Many writers have indicated various "tasks" that individuals must accomplish as they pass through adolescence. Erikson (1968) described this age as a crisis period. He clarified this by explaining that crisis, in the context of human development, does not mean impending catastrophe. It is now being accepted "as designating a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (p. 16). This view was supported by Abramowitz and Peterson (1984), Schulenberg et al. (1984), and Stefanko (1984), who conducted research into whether or not adolescence was viewed by young people as being disruptive and upsetting. Their findings failed to support the proposal that young people are in a generally tumultuous state during adolescence.

Many authors have described these crucial moments and the differentiation that must take place as a result. The descriptions of these turning points, or tasks, by various authors have certain similarities. Havighurst (1952) listed ten developmental tasks.

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with agemates of both sexes.
2. Achieving a masculine and feminine social role
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.
5. Achieving assurance of economic independence.
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.
7. Preparing for marriage and family life.
8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.
9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.
10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior.

Havighurst went on to explain that

a developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by society, and difficulty with later tasks. (p. 2)

Hill (1980) provided more definition to adolescent tasks. He called them changes and broke them down into primary and secondary changes. The secondary changes are results of the primary changes taking place.

PRIMARY CHANGES

biological
intellectual
social definition--personality development

SECONDARY CHANGES

1. Transforming childhood social bonds to parents to bonds acceptable between parents and their adult children.
2. Extending self-initiated activity and confidence in it to wider behavioral realms.
3. Transforming social roles and gender identity to incorporate sexual activity with others.
4. Transforming acquaintanceships into friendships; deepening and broadening capacities for self-disclosure, affective perspective-taking, altruism.
5. Focusing industry and ambition into channels that are future-oriented and realistic.
6. Transforming images of self to accommodate primary and secondary changes; coordinating images to attain a self-theory that incorporates uniqueness and continuity through time.

Hill continued by explaining that "the typical changes of adolescence tend to be gradual, building on what is already there and preparing the young person for the next period in life" (p. 13).

Lipsitz (1980) used some other descriptors as she identified the psychological tasks of early adolescence.

1. The exploration of one's uniqueness as an individual and an appreciation of one's relatedness to other human beings.
2. The detachment from parents, with extremes of ambivalence caused by changing loyalties, continuing emotional attachments, and strivings toward emotional and physical independence.
3. A drive for a sense of competence and achievement in activities to which there is commitment for short periods of time.
4. The capacity to sustain emotionally supportive relationships.
5. A shift toward thinking abstractly, generalizing, thinking about thinking, appreciating an ideology, etc.

She continued by reporting that "the psychological tasks of early adolescence reflect a continuum of events during a crucial period that is part of the life span" (p. 13). She was alluding here not only to Erikson's definition of "crisis," but also to the fact that development is a process.

An additional listing of adolescent developmental tasks was developed by Shannon (1983):

1. achievement of maturity
2. acquisition of a stable identity
3. an emancipation from parents
4. a decision on a program for fulfilling military service requirements (some adolescents)
5. marital choice
6. occupational choice

Hill's description of "building upon what is already there" and Lipsitz's explanation of a "continuum of events" highlight the commonalities of these various developmental lists. They are all built on what has developed and transpired before adolescence; they affect the course of adolescent growth and development; and they will dictate the nature of an individual's adult life.

Furthermore, the process described is always changing and developing: at its best it is a process of increasing differentiation, and it becomes ever more inclusive as the individual grows aware of a widening circle of others significant to him, from the maternal person to "mankind." (Erickson, 1968, p. 23)

The following discussion begins with a description of cognitive development and identity formation in transescent youth. For the purpose of this overview the focus is on the stage described by Erikson as the search for identity versus that of role confusion. This stage covers the period of growth from ages 11 to 18. The early years of that stage (11 to 15) are the years encompassed by the Middle School.

The theoretical base for this discussion is found in the work done by Piaget on cognitive development and by Erikson in the field of identity formation.

Psychosocial Development

Erikson's (1950, 1968) theory of psychosocial development is based on what he called the "Eight Ages of Man." Erikson (1968) believed that man develops according to the epigenetic principle. This principle states that

anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole. (p. 92)

Psychosocial development, or the development of personality, follows a series of stages, each stage building on the preceding stage and including the result of that preceding stage in further development.

Personality, therefore, can be said to develop according to steps predetermined in the human organism's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with a widening radius of significant individuals and institutions. (p. 93)

Erikson (1968) theorized that the establishment of one's ego identity is a major life task. A clearly perceived ego identity provides the basis from which decisions such as vocational choice, or family and personal ideologies are made. According to Erikson, adolescence is a period when a person comes to know who he/she is, what he/she believes in and values, and what one wants to accomplish and get out of life.

After coming to terms with a new kind of body, with new potentialities for feeling and acting, and rearranging his or her self-image accordingly, the adolescent must confront a whole new constellation of meanings in the life-space. The young adolescent [in particular] is concerned about who and what he or she is. (Church & Stone, 1975, p. 420)

Adams and Montemayor (1983) analyzed eight articles that appeared in the Journal of Early Adolescence. According to these editors, these articles reflected the most up-to-date thinking in the area of identity formation as it begins to take place in adolescence. Adams and Montemayor concluded their review of these articles by stating that, based on the information reported by their authors, "the study of identity formation during early adolescence is best seen as a precursor or early foundation for later identity formation" (pp. 199-200). All developmental periods in the life of a human being are crucial because their successful completion provides the framework for later successes in future developmental stages. Successful completion

of the developmental tasks of early adolescence as an indicator of identity formation appears to be no exception.

Marcia (1980, 1983), building on the work of Erikson, has done extensive study in the area of identity formation in early adolescence. His writing has dealt with the main ego-development tasks of early adolescence, the effect of a relatively unstructured social milieu on the accomplishment of those tasks, and the individual prerequisites in early adolescence for successful identity development in later adolescence. In his view, early adolescence is a period of upheaval and disorganization. The individual's body is changing, the capability of one's thinking skills is expanding, and relationships with peers and parents are taking on new meaning. "The task of adolescence is to turn this imposed differentness into adaptive differentiation, individuation, and ego identity" (1983, p. 216). The degree to which this task is successfully accomplished will determine the strength of the individual ego.

The development of a healthy ego, according to Marcia, is the "shift of inner sanctioning structures from the superego to the ego ideal" (p. 216). The superego in the young child is the internalization of the parents' reward and punishment system. This internalized parent suits the young child well because it gives the growing child some autonomy. It establishes within the child a sense of

law and order. . . . This principle apportions to each his privileges and his limitations, his obligations and his rights. A sense of rightful dignity and lawful independence on the part of adults around him gives to the child of good will the confident

expectation that the kind of autonomy fostered in childhood will not lead to undue doubt or shame in later life. (Erikson, 1950, p. 254)

This "confident expectation" is important in the stages preceding the stage of identity versus that of role confusion (adolescence). According to Marcia, these internalized principles of law and order become increasingly inappropriate and unrealistic as one begins to move away from the age at which they were formed.

The child grows up, but the superego does not. At adolescence, the push of pubertal changes initiates a destructuring process whereby this anachronistic mechanism is threatened. Sexual and cognitive changes confront the ego with new needs and perceptions. The beliefs and behavior of the "good" latency girl and boy are not, and should not be, sufficient to enable successful navigation into the grown-up world. From the perspective of the maintenance of self-esteem, a conflict ensues between obedience and mastery. (Marcia, 1983, p. 217)

The changes that are occurring in the adolescent's body and mind require new modes of behavior. The principles needed to guide and order this behavior are not to be found in the parentally developed superego. New ways of thinking allow the adolescent to develop his/her own ideologies by which to bring order to this "imposed differentness."

At adolescence, then, a true conscience begins to be formed whereas during childhood conscience is still external to the child's personal values and beliefs. . . . It is only toward the end of childhood and the onset of adolescence, when young people formulate their own rules, that these rules begin to internally regulate behavior. (Elkind, 1981, p. 84)

The development of these ideologies requires experimentation and exploration. Marcia (1983) described three components that need to be present in early adolescence if identity formation is to occur successfully:

Confidence in parental support--this refers to early adolescents' basic trust that, as they spend themselves in experiments in autonomy, they will not over draw their emotional capital with their parents.

A sense of industry--industry requires commitment and contributes a solid beginning to adolescence since it represents an achievement primarily of late childhood and is the last ego skill to become consolidated before the individual embarks on this new period.

Self-reflective approach to the future--this variable refers to one's inward-turning assessment of oneself and the subsequent turning-outward of that assessment in construing alternative, realistic futures.

Marcia proposed that these three components are hierarchically arranged. If closely examined it is seen that these three components parallel Erikson's (1968) stages of development.

The adolescent looks most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in, which also means men and ideas in whose service it would seem worthwhile to prove oneself trustworthy [TRUST].

The adolescent now looks for an opportunity to decide with free assent on one of the available or unavoidable avenues of duty and service, and at the same time is mortally afraid of being forced into activities in which he would feel exposed to ridicule or self-doubt [AUTONOMY].

The adolescent's willingness to put his trust in those peers and leading, or misleading, elders who will give imaginative, if not illusory, scope to his aspirations [INITIATIVE].

The choice of an occupation assumes a significance beyond the question of remuneration and status. (pp. 128-29)

Marcia (1983) concluded his article by saying that "no attachment, no meaningful exploration and experimentation; no meaningful exploration and experimentation, no subsequent commitment; no commitment, no identity" (p. 221). Based on Erikson it could be said no trust, no

autonomy; no autonomy, no initiative; no initiative, no industry; and no industry, no identity.

Related to the foregoing discussion, four modes of decision making that may occur during the early formation of the identity were first described by Erikson (1968) and later expanded and clarified by Marcia (1966), Archer and Waterman (1983), and Elkind (1984). These four modes are the result of the varying degrees of parental support, industry (commitment), and self-reflective approach to the future. Elkind (1984) divided these four modes into two methodologies. Identity diffusion and foreclosure are the result of substitution; moratorium and identity achievement are the result of integration.

Adolescents in identity diffusion have made no commitment, nor are they attempting to arrive at a commitment in any given area. Some early adolescents may demonstrate knowledge in a particular area, but demonstrate no personal investment. Others may appear verbally committed, but have no thought about the meaning of that commitment in their lives. Individuals in the foreclosure mode are not questioning alternatives, but do have a commitment they will strongly defend.

Quite often this narrow commitment is a result of parental values being forced on a child. A 14-year-old boy plans on being a lawyer. Any other possible alternatives presented to him are undesirable; in fact, he feels they are "beneath" him. In conference with his father over what is considered an unacceptable grade in his family (a C+), the teacher is told that Bob will never be able to get into law school

if he has C+'s on his report card. In eighth grade this boy's career choice has already been made by his parents and internalized by him.

Individuals in moratorium are in the process of actively seeking information in order to select from among alternatives. They are searching for information to make a decision in the future. "The moratorium initiates activity to resolve this question, perhaps by reading, talking to friends, teachers, clergy, or reflecting on which feels more personally expressive" (Archer & Waterman, 1983, p. 205). Identity achievers have experienced moratorium and have made a commitment that they are currently implementing or anticipate implementing in the near future.

Elkind (1984) went on to expand these four modes of identity formation and then to provide a warning to society if young adolescents are not helped to choose an integrative method of ego development.

These two different kinds of growth [four modes] account for the two quite different types of teenagers we see. Teenagers who have acquired an integrated sense of identity are able to postpone immediate gratification in order to attain long-range goals. They are future-oriented and inner-directed. In contrast, teenagers who have grown by substitution and have only a patchwork self are less able to postpone immediate gratification. They are present-oriented and other-directed, easily influenced by others. By encouraging teenagers to choose growth by substitution and the development of a patchwork self, contemporary society has rendered teenagers more vulnerable to stress and denied them the full development of their personality and character. (p. 17)

Cognitive Development

A basic principle of development is that development in one area does not occur in a vacuum. Although it is possible to discuss

different components of development (language, personality, physical, cognitive), it is important to remember that all components of development are interactional, each area affecting the others and vice versa. Although the focus of this chapter is on personality and cognitive development, it must not be forgotten that these areas are affecting and being affected by other developing areas of the organism as well as the surrounding environment in which the organism is living. Although most educators are aware of the interactive process of development and the effect of the different environments in which the child lives, public education deals most directly with the areas of cognitive and personality development.

In beginning a discussion of cognitive development it is important to remember this interactive principle. Identity formation is directly affected by and is a result of changes taking place in the cognitive skills of the individual. Early adolescents are in the process of leaving the cognitive stage of concrete operations and entering the stage of formal operations. "At adolescence a true conscience begins to be formed whereas during childhood conscience is still external to the child's personal values and beliefs" (Elkind, 1981, p. 84). It is this transition that makes possible the development of identity.

The late Jean Piaget demonstrated that it is not until the teen years that young people are capable of constructing theories. And it is not unreasonable to characterize identity as a theory of oneself. Forming an identity, like building a theory, is a creative endeavor that takes much time and concentrated effort. (Elkind, 1984, p. 9)

According to Piaget and Inhelder (1985), "the adolescent is the individual who begins to build 'systems' or 'theories' in the largest sense of the term" (p. 339). This is because, as Baker (1982) reported, "new interpretive modes are called forth; the previously established and adequate interpretive models are likely to give way as new ways of seeing, thinking, acting, and planning are required" (p. 168). Since the adolescent is now able to perceive the intricate complexities of the world around and within him/her, this is a logical assumption.

At the age of 11-12 years a child begins to enter the stage of formal operations. It is at this stage that the child is able to begin thinking about the thought processes themselves. "Young adolescents become able to observe themselves thinking" (Lipsitz, 1980, p. 17). Instead of relying on empirical data (concrete operations), it is now possible to construct ideologies, mental operations that consider all contingencies, that incorporate and consider the thoughts and ideas of others. He/she can now deal with information across the barriers of space and time in probabilistic terms and is free to reconstruct reality.

The most distinctive property of formal thought is this reversal of direction between reality and possibility; instead of deriving a rudimentary type of theory from the empirical data, as is done in concrete inferences, formal thought begins with a theoretical synthesis implying that certain relations are necessary and thus proceeds in the opposite direction. (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958, p. 251)

This shift from concrete to formal operations could be paraphrased by saying that in concrete operations "I am what I am" and in formal

operations "I may be what ever I think I can become." As an emerging adolescent begins to perceive the differences between who he/she thinks he/she is in relation to what he/she thinks others perceive him/her as being, the individual begins to develop a unique sense of his/her unique identity. The adolescent is becoming a hypothesizing, system-building organism.

In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. (Erikson, 1968, p. 22)

Children at this age are now able to conceive of possibilities outside of their immediate environments. In so stating it is important to remember that

the environment . . . is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy. (Dewey, 1938, p. 44)

Possibilities outside an individual's immediate environment include the possible environments being constructed in another individual's mind.

Cognitive development in early adolescence then is the movement away from the empirical and toward the ideological. Eson and Walmsley (1980) and Elkind (1981) described a transitional period between concrete and formal operations. During this period the child develops an awareness that it is possible to think about thinking (Eson & Walmsley), and this growing awareness leads to the emergence

of adolescent egocentrism (Elkind). The child is aware that it is possible to think about thinking, but is unable to "differentiate between the objects toward which the thoughts of others are directed and those which are the focus of this own concern" (Elkind, 1981, p. 91).

In the discussion of identity development, it was said that new ways of thinking allow the adolescent to develop his/her own ideologies by which to bring order to this "imposed differentness." By combining this developmentally imposed differentness with the egocentrism of early adolescence the child is unable to "differentiate between what others are thinking about and his own mental pre-occupations, he assumes that other people are as obsessed with his behavior and appearance as he is himself" (p. 91). Elkind called this the creation of the imaginary audience.

For the first time, the adolescent can take himself as an object, evaluate himself from the perspective of other people with respect to personality, intelligence and appearance. The adolescent's self-consciousness about himself is simply a manifestation of this new capacity for introspection. (p. 102)

The development of ideologies and the use of them in structuring his/her life is a result of the young adolescent's new-found ability to think about possibilities outside of his/her immediate environment. These ideals begin to reshape the individual's superego, moving it from the internalized parent of early childhood to the individualized ideals and values that will define a unique identity. Damon and Hart (1982) described this as the development of the "concept of self." They said that

the concept of self provides one with an understanding of one's differentiation from others in society. In this way, it establishes the cognitive basis for one's identity as a unique individual and for one's special position, status and role within the social network. (p. 843)

Identity Formation and Cognitive Development:
The Relationship

According to Elkind (1984), the goal of adolescence is

An integrated sense of identity . . . bringing together into a working whole a set of attitudes, values, and habits that can serve both self and society. The attainment of such a sense of identity is accompanied by a feeling of self-esteem, of liking and respecting oneself, and being liked and respected by others. (pp. 164-65)

In a discussion of early adolescence it is necessary to focus on the formation of ideologies to come to an understanding of the cognitive process that will lead to the development of the "integrated sense of identity" described by Elkind.

For the first time in a child's life he/she is able to conceive and think about an idea. An idea is a proposition that may or may not have consequences for the individual and/or the environment. The young adolescent is now able to form an idea and cognitively test it by reflecting it on to self and others. This includes forming the idea of "self." Due to the inexperience and lack of development of formal operational thought, the child as yet does not know how to decenter him/herself from this reflective process; the child is unable to "differentiate between the objects toward which the thoughts of others are directed and those which are the focus of his own concern" (Elkind, 1981, p. 91). The formation of peer groups

works to promote the decentering process. In the peer group the child is experiencing the phenomenon of the imaginary audience, which is the assumption that everyone around him/her is concerned about the same thing he/she is concerned with (Roodin, 1983), and at the same time trying out his/her theories and discovering their weaknesses by sharing ideas (White, 1977). Young adolescents use the peer group as a mirror in order to have an ongoing picture of their development. By gazing into this mirror, individuals are able to decide whether or not they like what they see and whether or not they choose to change.

This testing gives adolescents an opportunity to "differentiate adequately between their preoccupations and those of others, and at the same time to integrate their sense of reality with that of others" (Lipsitz, 1980, p. 18). This time of testing new ideas and behaviors is what Erikson (1968) called moratorium. It is the time when youths are experiencing the identity consciousness of an identity crisis and are exploring, but have not yet arrived at, their own self-defined commitments. They are searching for more information in order to select from among alternatives (to beliefs, values, actions). They are looking to make a decision in the near future. It is this process of exploration that will lead to identity formation. This process of exploration would not be possible if the child did not possess the ability to contemplate and reflect on alternatives based on values and ideals. This connection between exploration in order to define identity and the ability to do this exploring in relationship to

values and beliefs is an example of the connection between identity formation and cognitive development.

Adolescence is a time when an individual integrates his/her past experiences with goals and plans for the future. The manner in which this integration takes place and the direction in which this integration leads the individual will determine not only the nature of the identity formed, but also the quality of life to be lived. Dewey (1938) said that "the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 35). As the young adolescent contemplates his/her childhood past and reflects on his/her future goals and ideals, that individual will be looking to society for guidance and understanding. At the same time, society will be looking to its future members for reaffirmation or re-evaluation of its currently cherished goals and ideals. These goals and values of society are reflected in its schools, and it is there that emerging adolescents may have an opportunity to experience the social experimentation and acquire the knowledge necessary for a successful moratorium period and ultimate identity formation.

Summary

The discussion began with a description of cognitive development and identity formation in transescent youth. For the purpose of this overview, the focus was on the stage described by Erikson as the search for identity versus that of role confusion.

This stage covers the period of growth from ages 11 to 18. The early years of that stage (11 to 15) are the years currently encompassed by the Middle School.

The theoretical base for the above discussion emerged from the work initiated by Piaget on cognitive development and by Erikson in the field of identity formation. It was shown that identity formation in adolescence is a result of the shift taking place from the concrete operations of childhood to the formal operations of adulthood and requires the successful completion of several tasks. This period of identity formation was described by Erikson as being a crisis period, a turning point. During this crisis period the ideal state for the adolescent to be in is one of moratorium, a concept developed by Erikson. During moratorium the youth is searching, questioning, trying out options; he/she is actively seeking information in order to select from among alternatives. Following the period of moratorium is the period of identity achievement. According to Erikson, the establishment of one's ego identity is a major life task. A clearly perceived ego identity provides the basis from which such decisions as vocational choice, family, and personal ideologies are made. An individual comes to know who he/she is, what he/she believes in and values, and what one wants to accomplish and get out of life during this growth period called adolescence.

A basic principle of development is that development in one area does not occur in a vacuum. Identity formation is directly affected by and is a result of changes taking place in the cognitive

skills of the individual. Early adolescents are in the process of leaving the cognitive stage of concrete operations and entering the stage of formal operations. As the child begins entering the stage of formal operations, he/she is able to begin thinking about the thought processes themselves. Instead of relying on empirical data (concrete operations), it is now possible to construct ideologies, mental operations that consider all contingencies, that incorporate and consider the thoughts and ideas of others. The adolescent is becoming a hypothesizing, system-building organism. In the early period of adolescence, the child is aware that it is possible to think about thinking, but is unable to "differentiate between the objects toward which the thoughts of others are directed and those which are the focus of his own concern" (Elkind, 1981, p. 91). Children assume that their peers are as obsessed with their behavior as they are themselves. This is the early adolescent characteristic known as the imaginary audience, a concept developed by Elkind.

The young adolescent is now able to form an idea and cognitively test it by reflecting it onto self and others. This begins with the "imaginary audience." The imaginary audience exists because the child becomes aware that others are capable of having ideas and, from the perspective of the young adolescent, these ideas have to do with him/her. This usually occurs as the child begins to make the transition from concrete thinking to formal thinking which allows the individual to reflect on such abstract concepts as "self."

The egocentricity of the imaginary audience allows the child to begin forming this idea of "self."

Adolescence is a time when an individual integrates past experiences with his/her goals and plans for the future. The manner in which this integration takes place and the direction in which this integration leads the individual will determine not only the nature of the identity formed, but also the quality of life to be lived.

An optimal sense of identity is experienced merely as a sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of "knowing where one is going," and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count. (Erikson, 1968, p. 165)

As the young adolescent contemplates his/her childhood past and reflects on his/her future goals and ideals, that individual will be looking to society for guidance and understanding. At the same time society will be looking to its future members for re-affirmation or re-evaluation of its currently cherished goals and ideals. These goals and values of society are reflected in its schools, and it is there that emerging adolescents may have an opportunity to experience the social experimentation and acquire the knowledge necessary for a successful moratorium period and ultimate identity formation.

CHAPTER III

MIDDLE SCHOOLS: A RATIONALE

Cognitive development and identity formation in the early adolescent were discussed in the previous chapter. The primary purpose of that chapter was to describe the transition that is taking place between concrete and formal operations, and the formation of an identity unique to the individual. Individuals in this period of adolescence (11-12 to 14-15) are often referred to as transescent youth or youth in transition because of the changes that are taking place, not only cognitively and psychosocially, but also physically, emotionally, sexually, and socially. With the onset of puberty it seems that normal, happy children turn into complete strangers in the eyes of their parents. Elementary and high school teachers are often heard to say, "That teacher is crazy! He/she teaches middle school children and likes it!" Johnson (1986) described his son, the middle school youngster, this way:

Faster than a speeding bullet--racing the bell to English class; more powerful than a locomotive--crushing 35 math problems into two and one-half spaces; able to leap cafeteria chairs in a single bound.

Who is this young man who inhabits the halls of our middle school bedecked in football shirt, faded jeans, and Nikes, who one moment blossoms into a macho sophisticate and the next moment wilts behind tear-filled eyes?

. . . The signs of transescence pervade his home. To mirror the noisy hallways of school, there is his son's bedroom which

quakes to the beat of a rock group called REO Speedwagon. To mirror the school's cluttered lockers, there is his son's bed, a degenerate scene of dishevelment housing a menagerie of stuffed animals which retreat to the closet when a friend spends the night. (p. 20)

These developing human beings, caught between childhood and adulthood, are a collection of conflicting behaviors and feelings as they try to sort out and identify who they are and where they are going developmentally. Their uniqueness as an age group requires an educational setting that can best accommodate and facilitate this transition.

One of the pioneers of the Middle School movement was Donald Eichhorn. It was his contention that a new kind of school was needed to reflect the realities of contemporary youth. According to Brazee (1982), since 1830, "primarily because of better nutrition, children have matured four months earlier with every passing decade" (p. 31). This earlier maturation has created areas of conflict for the teenager of the 1980s. Even though they are reaching physical maturity at an earlier age, society has not been able to clarify for itself just how interaction between adults and young adolescents is to develop. Elkind (1981) made this point by explaining: "We harass our children with some of the emotional-intellectual-social demands of adulthood yet at the same time we treat them--often ostentatiously--as mere children" (p. 25). It could be inferred that because adults see children looking more adultlike, they believe their response to children should be more as equals.

One reason these interactional waters may be so muddy is that coupled with earlier maturation has come a rapidly changing American

culture and society. No cultural observer could deny that there have been marked changes during the last 60 years beginning with World War I, to placing a man on the moon, and finally the transformation from a technological society to an information society. These series of events have resulted in such phenomena as

Rapid changes in social values, women's liberation, the exploding divorce rate, the sense, not often verbalized, that we are all going to die in a nuclear holocaust anyway, so "what the hell, have a good time." (Elkind, 1981, p. 13)

The mass media and their effect on American youth immediately come to mind. As Stevenson (1980) reported,

Symbols and symbolic actions may be experienced as real events with real people, or they may be experienced as fantasy, as when one watches television or reads a novel. It is widely held that the diffusion of such symbols through the mass media has caused many social and psychological malfunctions. This may or may not be true, but there is no question that changes in the technologies of communication result in cultural changes. A new medium of communication provides a new way of perceiving reality. (p. 75)

Teenagers of the 1980s have grown up with mass media, particularly the electronic media. Elkind (1981) reported that the media

increasingly portrays young people as precocious and presents them in more or less explicit sexual or manipulative situations. Such portrayals force children to think they should act grown up before they are ready. (p. 10)

Has American public education adequately adapted to these changes in order to give students the skills necessary to become productive members of society? Green (1971) thought not.

Curriculum, from the learner's standpoint, ordinarily represents little more than an arrangement of subjects, a structure of socially prescribed knowledge, or a complex system of meanings which may or may not fall within his grasp. Rarely does it signify possibility for him as an existing person, mainly concerned with making sense of his own life-world. Rarely does it promise occasions for ordering the materials of that world, for imposing

configurations by means of experiences and perspectives made available for personally conducted cognitive action. (p. 299)

Mearns in 1929 was writing about the regressives and their proposed school program that was simply a hark-back to their own admittedly hated school regimen.

One course of study for all, because we shall cease to be Americans, they rationalize, unless our school-posessions are exactly alike; a hard course at that, because one's pedagogy must not be "soft"; jammed with facts to be committed to memory, because the world is lost, they reason, unless each child knows (verbally!) all that ever happened in the world. To them [the regressives] the business of education is not to save a child but to stuff him. (p. 105)

It is not necessary to refer just to educational theorists and philosophers to decide whether schools, and in this case Middle Schools, are keeping pace with society. Lipsitz (1983) delivered testimony before the Crisis Intervention Task Force of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. She quoted the following statistics:

--suicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers. During the 1980's, teenagers have experienced the fastest growing suicide rate of any age group.

--one-third of the young people will work at a fast-food restaurant when they are teenagers.

--in 1978 the birthrate per 1,000 women under age eighteen was 52.4

--the death rate among mothers from complications during pregnancy and child birth is 13% greater for 15- to 19-yearolds than for women in their twenties

--by age 13, one girl in 50 has had sexual intercourse, by age 14, one in ten, and by age 15, one in five

--27.5% of 15- to 18-yearolds are lifetime drug users

--in 1978 seventh-grade boys in junior high schools were the most victimized by crime

--65% of juvenile offenders are 15- to 17-yearolds, 25% are only 12- to 14-yearolds

--all types of delinquency were most prevalent among eighth and ninth graders

--20% of all people treated for depression are under 18 years of age. By age 18, 16% of the population will have needed mental health service

--2,000,000 young people run away yearly

--adolescents aged 13-18 were abused twice as often as younger children

After contemplating these statistics, is it possible to doubt Greene's remark that "rarely does it [education] signify possibility for him as an existing person, mainly concerned with making sense of his own life-world"?

Hertling and Getz (1971) reported that a curriculum must exist that considers all aspects of the requirements of the early adolescent. Such a school would build its curriculum around the developmental needs of this age group. However, Alexander and Kealy (1969) found that program descriptions for schools housing this age group reflected little concern for the existence of this type of curriculum. In a 1980 survey conducted in Michigan, Marlowe (1980) found that superintendents and presidents of boards of education were ambivalent when it came to describing programs that promote growth and development in early adolescence. Closer to home, the writer of this

dissertation has found some confusion on the part of his teaching colleagues with regard to the relationship between the developmental characteristics of early adolescent youth and classroom practices. It is inferred that this confusion is not a result of negligence, but a result of not identifying a rationale to guide them in their roles as teachers of young adolescents.

Tye wrote his book The Junior High: School in Search of a Mission in 1985. It was based on the I/D/E/A project that collected information from elementary, junior high/middle schools, and high schools during the late 1970s and early 1980s. This project was called "A Study of Schooling," and the generalizations of this research were presented in Goodlad's book A Place Called School. Tye was a part of that project, and in his book he looked specifically at the current state of junior high/middle school education in the United States. His book was based on a number of assumptions, and the final one captured the substance of Greene's and Mearns's comments and related them specifically to the Middle School.

What happens in school is related to the greater society except that the school usually lags quite far behind the society. For example, in a time of rapid changes in work and leisure time activities, the school is still viewed as and still operates as an institution which prepares people for the world of work. The learning and practice of skills, the exploration of interests and abilities, and the development of aptitudes have intrinsic value for the early adolescent. They should not be confused with preparation for work or education for careers. (p. 8)

According to MacDonald (1978), Dewey said that "educational philosophy is the essence of all philosophy because it is 'the study of how to have a world.' Curriculum theory, conceived in this light

[whether it be elementary, middle school, or high school], is the essence of educational theory because it is the study of how to have a learning environment" (p. 51). Middle Schools, since their initial beginning in the 1960s, have begun to build curriculums that are concerned with helping the young adolescent "make sense of his own life-world." These curriculums should be based on philosophies that embody the values and beliefs of growth and development. It could be said that Middle School philosophies would not only be concerned with "the study of how to have a world," but also with the study of how to form an identify.

The following discussion takes place in three parts: first, to discover a basis on which to develop a rationale; second, to begin to reflect on a possible Middle School rationale based on the principles of growth and development, including proposal and examination of some process strands that emerge from that rationale and could provide a base for a Middle School curriculum; and third, to discuss the implications of such a rationale over the entire life-span.

Middle Schools: In Search of a Rationale

To begin considering a rationale for Middle School education, attention can be turned to the writings of John Dewey and, more recently, to the work done by Maxine Greene. Dewey wrote voluminously on the relationship between schools and society. He believed the schools were the place where "all that society has accomplished for itself is put . . . at the disposal of its future members" (1943,

p. 6). (Note carefully that he did not say "transmitted" to its future members.) It is here the glimmer of a rationale begins to emerge. If one begins to consider educational institutions as depositories of the common experiences that have shaped society, and if these depositories serve as supply reservoirs from which students may draw ingredients to be used in constructing their own experiences, then education can be viewed as a means of facilitating the growth of society. As students construct their own individual experiences in the process of building their lives they are also becoming active members of society.

Society need not be considered a stagnant organism concerned only with its survival in the past and present. Dewey's concern lay in the fact that education up to 1900 had been an operation based on the transmittal of societal artifacts to the next generation who were to care for them until they were passed to subsequent generations. Dewey envisioned a process of interaction with the past and present whereby a transformation involving the individual and his environment took place. This transformation was a creational experience that affected both the individual and the environment; neither was the same as before the interaction. In the experience of the interaction, Dewey saw the growth of the individual and the concurrent growth of society because of the individual's involvement with it.

Greene (1982) offered some contemporary insight into the role of the individual in a society. She spoke of that role in terms of "public space." "The public space . . . is defined by principles that

enable diverse human beings to act in common and to be recognized for what they do" (pp. 6-7). The "acting in common" is the growth-producing aspect that will move society into the future. Acting in common is a means of social interaction, producing new experiences which transform the individuals involved. This is a direct link back to Dewey (1938), who said, "the principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process. This quality is realized in the degree in which individuals form a community group" (p. 5).

Why not just be concerned with the growth of the individual void of any sense of social connectedness? Why is this public space, this community group necessary? Based on what Dewey said about the social nature of the learning process, one may draw the conclusion that for growth to take place, interaction with other human beings cannot be avoided. It is through the experience of interaction with other persons that new ideas, new perspectives, and new understandings are generated. Growth is the sense of continuity that is established in the progression of experiences. It is the continual sharing of experiences with other human beings that optimizes this process. If this sharing does not take place, if "experience is treated as if it were something which goes on exclusively inside an individual's body and mind to be held there until the next experience" (p. 39), the richness and growth that come from the sharing experience may be missed because human interaction never took place. A person interacting with only the nonhuman aspects of his/her world may be

unable to interpret the experience in any other frame of reference but his/her own. It is worth repeating that the result of an experience is that it transforms both the individual and the environment which includes all of humankind.

The answer to the second question dealing with the necessity for public space grows out of the answer to the first question. A group of individuals may see the same tree, but all see it from a perspective based on their own individual experiential histories. It is through sharing those individual perspectives that a true common meaning can be generated for that tree. Greene (1982) felt such common experiences and their implications for the classroom are primary.

For one thing we have learned . . . that in effective classrooms young people are moved to choose to learn. When they take their own initiatives and when they care about what they are doing, they are likely to go in search of meanings, to begin learning to learn. . . . They are most likely to pose the questions with which learning begins when they feel themselves to be speaking to others, speaking in the first person to those who are different from themselves. When they can articulate what they have to say against the background of their own biographies, they may well be in a position to listen to others—and be listened to—if those others are also speaking for themselves. (p. 7)

Mearns (1929) also understood the importance of sharing.

All this vast search for learning is brought into everyone's experience by the process of what we call sharing. Sharing of this sort is a powerful form of learning, because all the members learn eventually what each child or each group has been investigating separately. The magic catalyst of eager desire and feeling-of-worthwhileness make that learning stick. (p. 244)

According to Dewey (1938), "only when development in a particular line conduces to continuing growth does it answer to the criterion as education as growing" (p. 36). It could follow, then,

that a purpose of education is to facilitate an ever-increasing sphere of interactions between an individual and his/her environment. These interactions could serve to define for the individual the nature of his/her own being in relation to his/her world. Schools can provide the basis for those interactions through a controlled environment that teaches children how to have growth-producing experiences. By helping students learn how to interact with their environment so they may have growth-producing experiences, teachers are helping them learn how to learn.

Martin (1981) would

begin with a conception of liberal education as the development of a person, add to it an analysis of the concept of a person in which mind and body are inseparable, mix in the value judgment that the purpose of a liberal education ought to be to develop us as persons and not simply as minds. (p. 54)

The "development of persons" requires human interaction, human interaction that does not deny an individual's involvement with other human beings. This involvement and concurrent interaction, both guided and free, is the process that education can serve through facilitation. By providing students with an understanding of the process of interaction with the environment and helping students realize that such interaction is an important means of growth, Middle Schools will have begun to realize a purpose. All facets of this process require a perspective that permits students to see their interrelatedness as they contribute to the process of education: learning how to learn to grow.

View From the Middle School

What are the implications for Middle Schools when education is viewed as a process to be evaluated according to qualitative standards? What might the relationship be between the process of growth and development and the educational process? Human growth and development is a process. Based on an understanding of emerging adolescent growth and development as discussed in Chapter II, it is possible to begin to grasp the importance of, and develop an orientation toward, Middle School education that is based on process.

To quickly review, adolescence is a unique period in the growth process. It is so unique in fact that Hill (1980) admitted that "what we know about adolescence as social and behavioral scientists and clinicians is slim and scattered compared to what we know about early childhood" (p. 2). What these scientists and clinicians do agree on is the tremendous amount of change that is occurring in the human being socially, psychologically, and physically (Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1958; Kett, 1977). These changes are part of an ongoing process concerning those issues, not a series of events leading to some culminating event or way of perceiving the world that marks the end of adolescence. Hill (1980) was quoted earlier as saying that "the typical changes of adolescence tend to be gradual, building on what is already there and preparing the young person for the next period in life" (p. 13).

Erikson (1968) spoke of adolescence as that period when one is searching for his/her identity, trying to discover what his/her

relationship is with society. During this growth period, "they [adolescents] need, above all, a moratorium for the integration of the identity elements ascribed in the foregoing stages" (p. 128).

Adolescents need time to practice relationships with society as they clarify their own identities. The amount of success they achieve in this clarification process may determine whether or not they end up a statistic in a report before a House subcommittee. (See pages 32-33.)

One program that applies Erikson's work in personality development takes place in an eighth-grade social studies class in the Bangor Township Schools in Bay City, Michigan. Once a week, 34 eighth graders spend the morning working in preschools, elementary schools, and nursing homes. The students work person-to-person. They read to the elderly, write letters for them, help them with simple exercise programs, talk with them, and listen to them. They play with pre-schoolers and lead them through games that use letters, numbers, and color words. In the elementary schools, they help prepare learning materials and tutor youngsters who are learning and developing new skills.

The rationale for this program was based on Erikson's notion that adolescents are asking two basic questions: Who am I? What can I do to help others; to become a member of society? As young people begin to find constructive answers to these questions, they begin to grow.

This is an example of the qualitative application of a concept of the learning process based on an understanding of growth and development. Students in this program are using skills already acquired over previous years. As they use them in new situations (application), they are called on to rearrange those skills, or some aspect of those skills, to meet the needs of the environment in which they are working (analysis). As they work with individuals outside of the school setting, the students are involved in planning and implementing activities based on their previous knowledge base (synthesis) and then asked to share their observations and judgments about those experiences (evaluation). This particular program is mentioned here as a concrete example of curriculum designed to lead students through the process of learning. Students are led to broaden their understanding of previously acquired knowledge as it affects their integration with the world that surrounds them.

According to Dewey (1897),

The only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs. (p. 78)

Although Dewey wrote this with concern for education in general, it may also apply to identifying a purpose of the Middle School. For growth and development to occur in the adolescent, it is important that he/she be involved in social situations that require functioning as a contributing group member. It might then be logical to assume that Middle School is not the place for a great deal of individual

"seat work." Middle School is the place where the primary setting for learning should be social interaction.

Through the process of social interaction, students are called on to define their roles in relation to the other people around them. This is the moratorium experience Erikson spoke of. This is the creation of "public space" Greene referred to. This is the "acting as a member of unity" Dewey wrote about in his "Pedagogical Creed." It is during this period of definition when students begin to integrate their past experiences as they develop their individual personalities in relation to what it means to be a member of society. Part of the definition of this societal role is based on the ability to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their previous knowledge as the students experience it in interaction with the world around them.

As students function in the higher levels of the cognitive domain they will, out of necessity, be required to accumulate more information as they continue to interact with their environment in ever-increasing degrees of sophistication. This is when learning is taking place. A purpose of education is to prepare students to interact in those ever-widening circles. In preparation, students need to be given opportunities to experience the environment as they are guided in ways that allow them to acquire the information necessary for effective growth-producing interactions. This is process and purpose in education. Growth in this process will not be measured by the quantity of the experience consumed, but by the quality of the interaction as it is experienced. Put another way, the

value of the educational experience will be measured by the degree to which the learning process enables an individual to have growth-producing interactions with his/her environment over an entire lifetime.

In reference to Greene and Dewey, a Middle School rationale based on the preceding premise would provide a value base from which curriculum decisions could be made, facilitating the creation of public space for the sharing of individual biographies and thus encouraging individuals to act as members of unity. Such a rationale would support the uniqueness of each individual while at the same time capitalizing on the diversity of the population involved to generate common purposes or ideals. "Democracy must present its adolescents with ideals which can be shared by young people of many backgrounds" (Erikson, 1968, p. 133). By coming together in the public space, individuals would be able to identify collectively the ideals Erikson referred to. One of those ideals would hopefully be the continuous development of a deeper understanding of self and the connectedness of self to others. As a result, the young adolescent as future adult will have begun to establish a value base that will enable him/her to become a productive, contributing member of society.

Middle School Program and Rationale

Earlier, the statement was made by this writer that "as students construct their own individual experiences in the process of building their lives they are also becoming active members of

society." It is important to consider the context within which this entire process of development is taking place. While students are becoming active members of society they are at the same time being influenced by that society. The entire social/political/economic context in which adolescents are developing is the context that has presumably created the circumstances resulting in the statistics reported earlier by Lipsitz. Since development is a lifelong process, it is also important to remember that parents and teachers are experiencing development; these individuals are also affected by the society of which they are a part.

Dewey wrote in 1930 that

it would be difficult to find in history an epoch as lacking in solid and assured objects of belief and approved ends of action as is the present. . . . Individuals vibrate between a past that is intellectually too empty to give stability and a present that is too diversely crowded and chaotic to afford balance or direction to ideas and emotion. (p. 598)

Dewey's words are as meaningful now as they were five decades ago. It is now the 1980s; children entering school next year (1987) will be the graduating class of 2000. They are currently living within a society that is faced with the same diversity Dewey was describing in 1930. Naisbitt (1982), in his book Megatrends, described today's "Baskin-Robbins" society:

Advertisers are forced to direct products to perhaps a million clusters of people who are themselves far more individualistic and who have a wide range of choices in today's world. . . . The either/or choices in the basic areas of family and work have exploded into a multitude of highly individual arrangements and lifestyles. But the basic idea of multiple-option society has spilled over into other important areas of our lives: religion, the arts, music, food, entertainment, and finally in the extent to

which cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity are now celebrated in America.

. . . The diversity in American households of the 1980's has become a Rubik's cube of complexity. And like Rubik's cube, the chances of getting it back to its original state are practically nil. (pp. 332-33)

Naisbitt also said that, as society leaves the industrial age and enters the information age, the problem is not going to be the creation of new knowledge, but in deciding which knowledge to select.

Adolescents in the process of forming an identity are in the process of making choices. Following from Naisbitt, it might be logical to suggest that along with the importance of questioning during the moratorium period also comes the importance of having an idea of which questions to ask. The ability of teachers and parents to successfully guide adolescents through the social/political/economic milieu that makes up society (even as the parents and teachers are themselves trying to find meaning in their own lives against the backdrop of this milieu) will partially determine the quality of the identity formation the young adolescent is beginning.

According to Dewey (1938), "the only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worthwhile" (p. 61). Whitehead (1967) added to this by writing:

What education has to impart is an intimate sense for the power of ideas, for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas, together with a particular body of knowledge which has peculiar reference to the life of the being possessing it. (pp. 11-12)

Adolescents in moratorium are asking the questions that will permit them to acquire a body of knowledge that has peculiar reference to their lives. How students develop the freedom described by Dewey so they may acquire the particular body of knowledge described by Whitehead, all within the social/political/economic context of American society, is one of the considerations discussed in this chapter.

In previous discussion the continuous process of human growth and development at the emerging adolescent stage was presented. Based on this information, it follows that the Middle School should be designed to complement and facilitate this development. How does Middle School education "guide students in ways that allow them to acquire the information necessary for effective, growth-producing, interactions?" Five strands are examined in the following section. These strands are intended to be used as guides in making curricular decisions at the Middle School. An importance of these strands is that, while they must operate within a social/political/economic context, they may be used to assist educators in curriculum development. It is hoped that this process will facilitate the young adolescent's ability to ask the questions of moratorium that permit clarification of the specific knowledge needed by the individual asking the questions.

The strands emerged from the following process. (See Figure 1.) First the social-psychological and intellectual development processes were discussed. This discussion included an examination of

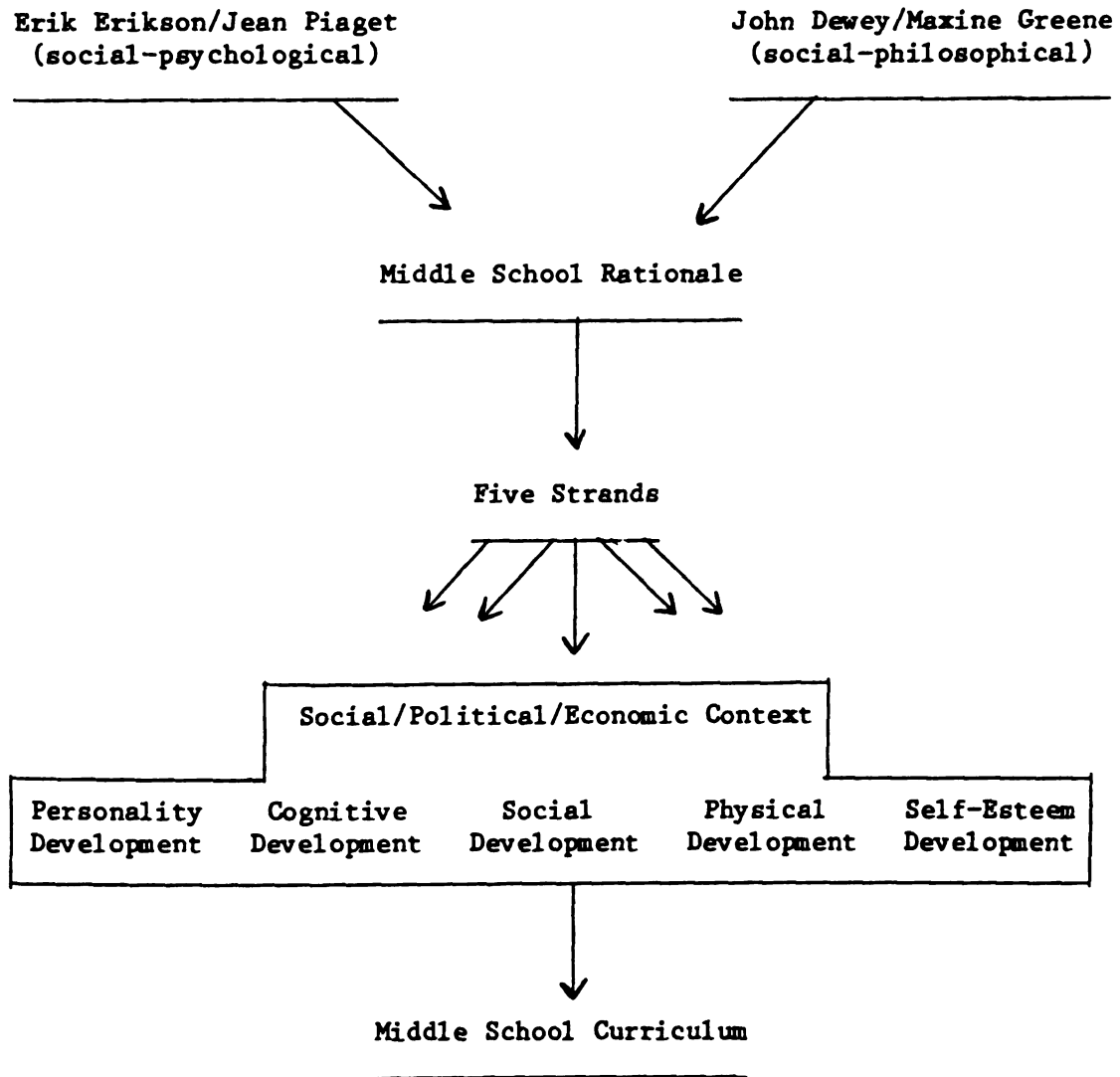


Figure 1: Five strands intended for use as guides in making curricular decisions at the Middle School.

the relationship that exists between the two processes. Next the educational philosophies of Dewey and Greene were discussed in order to clarify a social-philosophic base that would complement developmental theory. Drawing from the social-psychological and social-philosophic discussions, a rationale for Middle School was developed. The five strands that emerge from this rationale reflect an attempt at providing a series of guides that may be used in helping the emerging adolescent develop his/her whole being within the social/political/economic context that surrounds him/her. These five strands are a synthesis of the characteristics of early adolescent growth and development and an emerging Middle School rationale.

Strand One--Personality Development

Transescents are involved in the transitional process of moving from concrete to formal operations. This presents a conflict to young people as they are faced with the new ability to comprehend their uniqueness as individuals.

The child grows up, but the superego does not. At adolescence, the push of pubertal changes initiates a destructuring process whereby this anachronistic mechanism is threatened. Sexual and cognitive changes confront the ego with new needs and perceptions. The beliefs and behavior of the "good" latency girl and boy are not, and should not be, sufficient to enable successful navigation into the grown-up world. From the perspective of the maintenance of self-esteem, a conflict ensues between obedience and mastery. (Marcia, 1983, p. 217)

This new comprehension is foreign to the young person who as a child defined his/her being in relation to his/her parents. As a result of this new way of thinking, emerging adolescents are extremely egocentric. This egocentricity causes the individual to be extremely

sensitive to the thoughts and actions of others. A guidance program sensitive to the process generated by the shift to formal operations, and the resulting egocentricity and concomitant emotional reaction associated with it, will provide the transescent with opportunities to begin decentering him/herself from the identity-formation process.

Use of this strand might create guidance programs that would include both group and individual guidance services for all students. One way this could be accomplished is for students to be assigned to a "homeroom group" when they enter middle school and to remain with that group for the entire three years. This group would not be intended to be used for administrative convenience (morning announcements, attendance, locker clean out). The emphasis here would be on home, providing the security and emotional support that is usually associated with homes. This group would also serve as an island of "safety" for the child. It would be an emotionally supportive environment for young teenagers to wrestle with pressing social issues that arise as they struggle with their emerging identities. The homeroom teacher would not only provide guidance and counseling, but would also act as an ombudsman on the child's behalf. He/she would also be an individual who is able to provide constructive criticism, guidance, and emotional support in a nongraded setting.

Strand Two--Cognitive Development

The process of shifting from concrete to formal operations is not a uniformly occurring phenomenon.

Children progress from the concrete operational to the formal operational stages of intellectual development at approximately the age of eleven or twelve. The word "approximate" is a critical one, for not all youngsters reach this highest level during the ages of eleven to twelve. Depending on the kinds of experiences and environment a child is raised in, the actual chronological age when he/she attains the formal operational level of cognitive growth can differ by a number of years, perhaps three or more. (Smith, 1981, p. 25)

The extreme diversity of this age group is partially caused by each individual's unique developmental timetable and experiential background. Many youths are unable at age 12 or 13 to comprehend and work with ideas in a purely cognitive fashion as they are presented in textbooks. These students still need opportunities to learn by the manipulation of concrete materials. A subject area that is taught purely "by the book" is negligent to the democratic principles upon which American education is based. In Middle Schools where a philosophy of growth and development is embraced, multi-materials, alternative teaching methods, and flexible scheduling will be used to allow students to use their individual strengths as learners to make a smooth transition from childhood and concrete operations to adulthood and formal operations.

Use of this strand would encourage students to work and share in small groups. By doing this, students would be exposed to other ways of thinking about or manipulating a particular experience. The focus of different cognitive skills is moved away from the individual and concentrated on solving a group problem or completing a group project. By adding to this the availability of multi-materials, students learning from each other, and unique approaches to solving

problems, students will have begun to acquire the skills necessary to function creatively in Greene's public space.

Strand Three--Social Development

Socially, the young adolescent is experiencing the formation of new relationships with the individuals and institutions that surround him/her. These new relationships take on meaning because they reflect definition of gender, individual responsibility, and a growing sense of purpose as a member of society.

After coming to terms with a new kind of body, with new potentialities for feeling and acting, and rearranging his or her self-image accordingly, the adolescent must confront a whole new constellation of meanings in the life-space. The young adolescent [in particular] is concerned about who and what he or she is. (Church & Stone, 1975, p. 420)

Middle School programs that facilitate social development will provide individuals with opportunities to practice their newly developing social skills in the context of activities designed to promote group, as opposed to individual, interaction. Emphasizing group interaction enables young adolescents to become aware of and manage their growing sense of sexuality without providing the pressure brought on by their own egocentricity. Group activities also allow the individual to experience his/her own ability to contribute to a group goal, thereby developing a sense of responsibility to the individuals in the group. Middle School programs that facilitate social development will also give students opportunities for working in the community as a means of increasing the awareness of the individual's connectedness to society in general.

For possible application of this strand, see the description of the Human Services Program in "View From the Middle School" on pages 41-42.

Strand Four--Physical Development

With the onset of puberty, an individual's body begins to change rapidly. This change is often very unsettling to the young adolescent. The period from the beginning to the end of physical change in adolescence may vary from as little as 18 months for one person to as much as six years for another.

Among the most important--and most ignored--characteristics of puberty are normal but immense variations from individual to individual in the time of its onset, its duration, and its termination. (Hill, 1980, pp. 15-17)

Middle Schools concerned with facilitating this process will offer programs that educate the child in terms of what is happening to his/her body. These are courses that take a holistic approach to helping the child comprehend the entire developmental process as it is being currently experienced.

Application of this strand would see the development of courses that focus on such topics as sex education, diet, hygiene, primary and secondary sexual changes, exercise, and the increasing need for sleep. Physical education classes would focus on helping young adolescents regain control of their muscles. Quite often, because of the rapid growth spurts that occur, young people, who only a couple of years ago felt in control of their bodies, now find themselves rather clumsy and uncoordinated. Physical activities would

be stressed that are noncompetitive, but instead instruct the students in various recreational options.

Strand Five--Self-Esteem Development

As discussed in Chapter II, the egocentric young adolescent creates for him/herself the "imaginary audience."

In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. (Erikson, 1968, p. 22)

If a hair is out of place, everybody must know it. If a young male has yet to grow pubic hair, all the other boys in gym class are aware of it. If a student gives a wrong answer in class, that child believes he/she will always and forever be labeled a "dummy" by peers. If there is any area of development that cuts across all others, it is the development of self-esteem or the degree to which an individual values her/himself. What makes this strand even more important to consider is the statistic reported earlier in this chapter regarding teenage suicide. Elkind (1984) also reported on teenage suicide in his book All Grown Up and No Place to Go:

In 1977 almost five thousand young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four committed suicide. This was an increase of 131 percent from 1961 to 1975. Over the past two and a half decades, suicides have increased dramatically for younger age groups. For ten-to-fourteen-year-olds the increase has been 166 percent; for fifteen-to-nineteen-year-olds, 192 percent, and for the twenty-to-twenty-four-year-olds, 194 percent.

. . . [These statistics] are testimony to the increase in stress confronting today's teenagers. (pp. 188-89)

Elkind reported, however, that stress can be managed if a person is able

to bring together into a working whole a set of attitudes, values, and habits that can serve both self and society. The attainment of such a sense of identity is accompanied by a feeling of self-esteem, of liking and respecting oneself and being liked and respected by others. (pp. 164-65)

In applying this strand dealing with self-esteem development, it would be well to remember the importance of protecting and encouraging the growth of a student's self-esteem. This is perhaps the most important process because its effects are felt throughout the entire developmental process.

When applied in classroom settings, discussions between students should be the norm more than the exception. Before volunteering an answer, a child may need to talk with others to seek consensual validation. This allows the child an opportunity to "try out" and clarify his/her answer with friends before volunteering it to the entire class. Giving students many options to choose their best learning style(s) will allow the child to capitalize on her/his strengths. Teachers avoid singling out a child for criticism in front of a class or betraying a child's confidence. Planned social experiences avoid the stigma generated by peer pressure for boyfriend-girlfriend relationships. By avoiding competitive activities in physical education classes, the emphasis is not placed on who is or is not a "jock" or a "nerd."

To the degree that a Middle School incorporates these strands, to that degree is it beginning to operate based on a philosophy of

process. This philosophy of process will encourage young people to come together in the public space developed by Greene. When students come together to share and acquire personal meaning, they are given the opportunity to confront the values and meanings held by others as they unravel the question of who and what they are.

To the degree that these strands are emphasized and encouraged to unfold naturally through the facilitation of a sound Middle School program, to that degree will the young adolescent begin to be allowed to experience the exploratory nature of the moratorium period Erikson said is crucial to identity formation. Due to the wide extremes in development among early adolescent youngsters, a curriculum emphasizing the various developmental processes is an important choice to make. A rationale that is based on the process of growth and development will give the Middle School a value base from which to design a curriculum that could recognize the unique developmental needs of each emerging adolescent.

This Middle School rationale is based on the principles of growth and development that were presented in Chapter II. Those principles of development and developmental tasks represent conversion of resistance and tensions into a movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close representing phases of life

in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it--either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed. If the gap between organism and environment is too wide, the creature dies. If its activity is not enhanced by temporary alienation, it merely subsists. Life grows when a

temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives. (Dewey, 1934, p. 14)

The "phases of life" and the "falling out of step" described by Dewey are similar to Erikson's definition of crisis. According to Erikson (1968),

crisis is being accepted as designating a necessary turning point, a crucial moment when development must move one way or another, marshaling the sources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation. (p. 16)

Human beings involved in identity formation and development of personality do so by moving from one crisis to another. As these crises, or problematic encounters, are resolved growth occurs. A problematic encounter with some aspect of the environment generates, in varying degrees, the resistance and tension that can become the inception of an intrinsically satisfying experience. It is the emotional phase that serves as an indicator of the nature of the experience, feeling and sensing the different ingredients as an integral experience. As growth occurs a person has the opportunity to experience the creation of some new dimension to personal identity. This new dimension is the heightened awareness of the relationship between the "style of one's individuality" and "one's meaning for significant others in the immediate community" (Erikson, 1968, p. 50).

The development of a Middle School rationale based on process generates new ways of conceptualizing the meaning of education for life. Education for life now provides the individual with the power to construct a way of being that has intrinsic value.

Discussion of the implications for conceiving a Middle School rationale in this manner occurs in the following section. This discussion begins with an examination of the relationship between the educational process and the process of growth and development. This relationship is developed using the writings of Dewey and Greene in the areas of aesthetics and aesthetic education. The chapter concludes with a description of some of those qualities that may be present in a person who is building an intrinsically satisfying life and the way those qualities may empower the lifelong learner.

In this discussion the term "aesthetic" is used to describe the act of constructing a life that is intrinsically satisfying to the individual. An intrinsically satisfying life could result from an individual internalizing the rationale and resulting process described in the two preceding sections. This is because such a rationale would allow an individual to see new meanings in life, create new dimensions of feeling, and, as a result, make better emotional contact with the realities of life, both natural and artistic. This improved contact with the realities of life will hopefully enhance the individual's ability to function as a member of unity, to be connected to other human beings for a common purpose.

Middle School Rationale: Implications for a Quality Life

Deeper and broader levels of argumentation can be formulated from a process-based rationale: (a) deeper, in the sense that beneath concerns for successful identity formation and concerns for effective

intellectual development lie concerns for the fundamental quality of one's life; and (b) broader, in the sense that beyond the intrinsic quality of the early adolescent's particular individual life in his/her middle school experiences, there stretches out into late adolescence and full adulthood the unfolding quality of the person's life which grows out of the individual's resolution of his/her identity crisis. If an educational philosophy is to be true to the principles of human growth and development, it cannot escape process. As schools begin to facilitate a curriculum based on a philosophy of growth and development, it may be important to consider the effects such a curriculum would have over an entire life-span. What would be the implications for a human being as he/she moves past adolescence and into and through the remainder of the lifelong developmental process? The emerging adolescent is beginning to take control of his/her life. The kind of life they construct for themselves presumably will be a function of how they form their identity. The quality of their school life will influence their quality of life in the future.

To this point, all discussions have revolved around a Middle School rationale and related programs based on human growth and development. As educators discuss the importance of child development and its relationship to school learning, they many times speak of development in terms of readiness skills, ability levels, and maturation needed for this or that subject area. While discussions of this type are important and carry with them a high degree of legitimacy,

they often fall short of describing the interactional process that takes place between human development and school learning. It is usual to discuss the effects of school learning on development and vice-versa. Child development is usually used to establish curriculum guidelines that conform with particular developmental characteristics at certain age levels. For example, characteristics of early adolescent development (11-15 years) were used to establish the conceptual framework that provided the basis for Middle Schools.

In many instances, the junior high schools failed to meet the needs and interests of the "in-between-agers." Insufficient consideration was given to the extreme variabilities found within the age group as well as to the need for learning experiences that expedite the transition from the skill development and general education orientation of the elementary school to the specialized educational function of the senior high. Increased attention to the social and cultural influences affecting the learner, to changing maturation patterns, and to new concepts about the learning process are needed. (Kindred et al., 1981, pp. 1-2)

The educational process is often looked at as something apart from, but affected by, the developmental process.

Instead of viewing the educational process and child development as related but unique entities, there is a philosophical orientation that is built on the combined qualities of each process.

Aesthetic education views growth and development as a process of "life creation." Human beings are involved in aesthetic education on a daily basis because they are seeking to define themselves in relation to their own beings and their surrounding environments. One of the primary tasks of adolescence is the definition of self or what Erikson (1968) called "ego identity."

Ego identity then, in its subjective aspect, is the awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods, the style of one's individuality, and that this style coincides with the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for significant others in the immediate community. (p. 50)

By turning to the writing of Dewey and Greene in the area of aesthetic education, it is possible to see how both the educational process and development are subsumed and embraced by viewing life as an aesthetic process.

For Dewey (1934), the main task of aesthetics is to restore continuity between art and "the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized sufferings" (p. 3). However, the experience he is speaking of is to be a unique experience and, as such, must fulfill some rigid requirements. These requirements fall into two categories: the properties of the experience itself and the qualities of the subjective reaction of the person having the experience.

An (Dewey's underlining) experience is marked by the pattern of inception, development, and consummation. Also noted is the interconnection of means and ends. The means-ends continuum has an emotional counterpart in that no conscious awareness exists of the discrete phases the individual passes through while living the experience. Dewey made this clear by saying, "the existence of this unity is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts" (p. 37). In introducing the "quality that pervades," Dewey was taking us into the subjective reaction. This pervasive quality can be described

as that which causes attention to move in a unified direction instead of wandering. Mearns (1925) explained its effect on children this way:

Everyone is conscious of the curious personal phenomena, not easily explained, by which art comes into being. It is accompanied by elation, by an almost unnatural feeling of well-being; fatigue disappears; enormous quantities of labor can be accomplished; one can work for hours without a demand for rest, or even for food or sleep. Young people know all about this characteristic of the vital energy; their lives are rich in the experience of its ways; therefore they can talk about it with understanding. . . . Children are in the main still artists, while adults have too often ceased to be. (p. 4)

It is by virtue of being pervasive that quality can exercise control over experience, and whenever the development of an experience is found to be controlled through reference to quality, that experience is predominantly aesthetic in nature.

One import of Dewey's aesthetic theory for education can be seen in that component mentioned earlier as "pervasive quality." It is the phenomenon that causes the individual to focus on the quality and process of the interaction. As the student interacts with the environment, he will be pulled through the experience by its pervasive quality, making the deposit (see page 64) an even more powerful link. That link will be powerful because it will have altered the affective qualities of the individual: "it tells something to [individuals] about the nature of their own experience of the world: . . . it presents the world in a new experience which they undergo" (Dewey, 1934, p. 83). An aesthetic experience in Dewey's philosophy allows an individual to see new meanings in life, create new dimensions of feeling, and, as a result, make better emotional contact with the

realities of life, both natural and artistic. This increased emotional contact benefits Dewey's (1963) belief that "all human experience is ultimately social: that it involves contact and communication" (p. 38). Experience is ultimately social because it is through this medium that a wealth of interactions take place and through aesthetic education this interaction is enriched.

One quality of Dewey's (1934) theory of aesthetics that needs further discussion is his concept of consummation. Experiences

are dominantly intellectual or practical, rather than distinctly aesthetic, because of the interest and purpose that initiate and control them. In an intellectual experience, the conclusion has value on its own account. . . . In a work of art there is no single, self-sufficient deposit. (p. 55)

This phenomenon could raise some misgivings because one of the important ingredients of an experience is called to mind—the fact that, for an experience to be considered growth producing, it must adhere to the principle of continuity, which says that

every experience both takes up something from those [experiences] which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those [experiences] which come after. . . . Every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them. (1938, p. 35)

Dewey (1934) spoke of the "inception, development, and consummation" of an aesthetic experience and the "quality that pervades" as the unifying factor within the experience. In his construct of experience, Dewey spoke of interaction and continuity. Inception, development, and consummation describe the process of the interaction in an aesthetic experience. By indicating that an

aesthetic experience leaves "no single self-sufficient deposit," Dewey was not saying that the organism has not been changed, but instead that the end product of an aesthetic experience is not a "truth . . . that can be used in its independent entirety as factor and guide in other inquiries" (p. 55).

That which distinguishes an experience as aesthetic [and signifies its quality] is conversion of resistance and tensions, of excitations that in themselves are temptations to diversion, into a movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close" (p. 56)

This conversion of resistance and tensions into a movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close represents a phase of life

in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it—either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed. If the gap between the organism and environment is too wide, the creature dies. If its activity is not enhanced by temporary alienation, it merely subsists. Life grows when a temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives. (Dewey, 1934, p. 14)

Most experiences have the potential to be aesthetic, including the growth and development of an individual person.

The "phases of life" and the "falling out of step" described by Dewey are similar to Erikson's definition (discussed earlier) of crisis. According to Erikson (1968),

crisis is being accepted as designating a necessary turning point, a crucial moment when development must move one way or another, marshaling the resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation. (p. 16)

Human beings involved in identity formation and development of personality do so by moving from one crisis to another. As these

crises, or problematic encounters, are resolved growth occurs. As growth occurs a person has the opportunity to experience the creation of some new dimension to his/her identity. This new dimension is the heightened awareness of the relationship between the "style of one's individuality" and "one's meaning for significant others in the immediate community" (p. 50).

A problematic encounter with some aspect of the environment generates, in varying degrees, the resistance and tension that can become the inception of an aesthetic experience. It is the emotional phase, the pervasive quality, that serves as an indicator as to the nature of the experience, feeling and sensing the different ingredients as an integral experience. A person's internal conditions (the style of one's individuality) and the environmental objective conditions (one's meaning for significant others in the immediate community) take on new meaning.

Experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. . . . Because experience is fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ. Even in rudimentary forms, it contains the promise of that delightful perception which is aesthetic experience. (Dewey, 1934, p. 19)

Rogers (1962) described the person who is open to experiencing the complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events, who is living an aesthetic life, as a fully functioning person. He found such a person

to be a human being in flow, in process, rather than having achieved some state.

. . . Such a person is sensitively open to all of his experience—sensitive to what is going on in his environment, sensitive to other individuals with whom he is in relationship, and sensitive perhaps most of all to the feelings, reactions, and emergent meanings which he discovers in himself.

. . . Such a person experiences in the present, with immediacy. He is able to live in his feelings and reactions of the moment.

. . . Such a person is trustingly able to permit his total organism to function freely in all its complexity in selecting, from the multitude of possibilities, that behavior which in this moment of time will be most generally and genuinely satisfying.

. . . Such a person is a creative person. With his sensitive openness to his world, and his trust of his own ability to form new relationships with his environment, he is the type of person from whom creative products and creative living emerge. (pp. 31-32)

For education to be of value, it should have meaning for the individual involved in the process. This meaning results from the relationship between the "doing and undergoing" of the experience. The scope and content of the relations measure the significant content of an experience (Dewey, 1934, p. 44). This significant content gives the experience its qualitative substance, thereby clarifying the individual's interactive relationship with his/her environment. By ignoring the affective quality of an experience, educators may deprive a child the right to acquire the subjective meaning of the interaction and, without that meaning, the experience has little value in the facilitation of the growing process.

An experience that is meaningful is so because it provides the momentum leading to encounters with the environment that are conducive to further growth. "Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward or into"

(Dewey, 1938, p. 38). Aesthetic experiences can provide the meaning and meaning will provide the discriminatory element, based on past experiences, that will ensure that growth is in a positive direction.

Greene (1981) said that

to be at the center of reality, seeing it, is to grasp what surrounds from one's own center and in so grasping, to be conscious of one's own consciousness. It is in this sense that the . . . aesthetic domain brings us in touch with our authentic visions, allows us--as unique individuals--to be. (pp. 138-390)

This "grasping what surrounds from one's own center" is a means of ordering one's world, a means of increasing one's awareness of one's being in-the-world. It is in this sense that humans experience some of the tensions between "is" and "ought." It is the conflict between the "oughts" of experiential interaction (the social constructs of society and culture) and the "is" of existential choice (the individual choice to define subjectively one's own existence). Greene started at this point of conflict to discuss aesthetic education based on the idea that the felt-value base necessary to choose to be conscious of heightened emotional contact with other people lies in the nature of the aesthetic experience.

Greene (1971) referred to continual reconstruction in bringing meaning to literature. It can be posited that bringing meaning to life requires reconstruction also. Reconstruction is a Deweyan principle that is a direct result of the interaction inherent in an experience. Fundamental to the aesthetic experience is the psychological principle of tension-release. That principle was discussed earlier and described by Dewey as the conversion of resistance and tensions into a

movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close. Reconstruction results when the interaction with a particular aspect of the environment (in Greene's case a work of literature) creates tension between the internal conditions of the organism and the objective conditions of the environment. To convert that tension and draw the experience to an inclusive and fulfilling close, the individual must not only reconstruct his/her internal conditions but also restructure that aspect of the environment which created the tension. This does not mean that the individual only changes his internal perspective of the environment, but also, as a result of that interaction, the environment (the world) comes to have new meaning also.

This meaning is a result of the individual's struggle to define experience against the existentialist backdrop of baselessness. This interactive process enables the individual to order his/her world, to achieve his/her own form of excellence, and to commit him/herself to the common good. This commitment to the common good is important if the individual is to have every possibility available to give meaning to his/her life and to his/her life in-the-world. Stated another way, "to speak of existential meaning is to relate the attainment of meaning to an individual's particular project and standpoint, to conceive it in terms of concrete, human relations to others and to the world' (Greene, 1973, p. 173).

We have learned that . . . young people are moved to choose to learn. . . . They are most likely to pose the questions with which learning begins when they feel themselves to be speaking to others, speaking in the first person to others who are different from themselves. When they can articulate what they have to say against the background of their own biographies, they may well be

in position to listen to others--and be listened to--if those others are also speaking for themselves. (Greene, 1982, p. 7)

One might well substitute in Greene's quotation the word becomings for "biographies." If educators view life as a work of art in the process of being created, recreated, structured, and restructured, then they are on the verge of being able to discuss human growth and development from the vantage point of the aesthetician. Indeed, all people may become artists and aestheticians if they choose to create their lives artistically.

Read (1958) explained growth as the "adjustment of the subjective feelings and emotions to the objective world, and that the quality of thought and understanding, and all the variations of personality and character, depend to a large extent on the success or precision of this adjustment" (p. 7). This is not dissimilar to Dewey's (1938) concept of growth as continuity of experiences which he concluded by saying "[the individual] has rendered himself more sensitive and responsive to certain conditions, and relatively immune to those things about him that would have been stimuli if he had made another choice" (p. 37). Therefore, it could be said that it is through the aesthetic that the subjective qualities of an experience are realized. This subjective quality, the affect, determines an individual's orientation to attend to the experience as a unified whole. This is the "quality that pervades" described by Dewey. As individuals attend they are "caught up" within the interaction and lose their selves as they experience the world-in-them. As they lose their selves they discover their freedom to act as a "member of unity,

to emerge from [their] original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive of [their selves] from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which [they] belong" (Dewey, 1897, p. 78). It is through this process, stated Read (1958), that

the education of those senses upon which consciousness, and ultimately the intelligence and judgment of the human individual, are based. It is only in so far as these senses are brought into harmonious and habitual relationship with the external world that an integrated personality is built up. (p. 7)

For education to be conceived aesthetically, it should focus its attention on process. Process presupposes some sort of form. Form is the result of the interaction of various elements to create a symbolic concept. Langer (1942), in discussing symbolic concepts in art, said that

the only characteristic that a picture must have in order to be a picture of a certain thing is an arrangement of elements analogous to the arrangement of salient visual elements in the object. A representation of a rabbit must have long ears; a man must feature arms and legs. (p. 70)

The symbolic concept of the educative process is a discursive representation of the growing process and as such is capable of projecting a formulation of the verb "to grow." Langer went on to say that "the limits of thought are not so much set from outside, by the fullness or poverty of experiences that meet the mind, as from within, by the power of conception, the wealth of formulative notions with which the mind meets experiences" (p. 8). These formulative notions that individuals use to meet new experiences are the result of their symbolization of those elements analogous to wholeness.

The wealth of these formulative notions, if they are analogous to wholeness, propel the individual into interactions with his/her environment in search of those experiences that can be considered aesthetic. That is, the individual will be in pursuit of those experiences that, through their consummation, enable him/her to function as a "member of unity" and by functioning as a member of unity to experience wholeness-the-form. By conceiving education as a process to be "lived," educators are informing the sensibilities of the individual by engaging him/her in the process of growth. Read (1958) described this process as follows:

Thus the world—the whole environment, nature and society—"educates" man: it draws out his powers, allows him to respond to and be convinced by the world. What we call education, conscious and willed, means the selection of a feasible world by the individual—means to give the directing to a selection of the world made under the guidance of the teacher. (p. 287)

Central to the philosophies of aesthetic education and child development is the importance of the individual and environment, and the aesthetic process. The environment provides the "other" with which the individual interacts. It provides one source, the other being the individual, for causation of tension with which the individual must wrestle to bring the experience to a fulfilling close. The environment provides, in Dewey's case, a background against which to validate and authenticate aesthetic feelings. For Greene (1982), it was the "public space." "The public space . . . is defined by principles that enable diverse human beings to act in common and to be recognized for what they do" (pp. 6-7). She viewed the environment (the public space) as that arena where people interact subjectively

and objectively as they examine and restructure their own **becomings**, not in terms of validating or authenticating, but in terms of judging their own construct of **self-in-the-world**.

If viewed in the mirror of aesthetic education and the educative process, a reflection of environment is seen that is constantly in flux. The energy for that movement is supplied by individuals qua individuals creating their existence in an unfolding process of creation of self. Individuals are constantly involved in the educative process Read described as "selection of a feasible world," and the "worlds" they are selecting from are constantly changing. Because of this, human beings are constantly involved in the process of self creation to convert the feeling of "being out-of-step" with the environment to a sense of oneness with the environment.

Both aesthetic education and child development support the aesthetic process of inception, development, and consummation. Inception in all cases has to do with the awareness of being out of sync with the environment. Development and consummation, however, are viewed with slight variations in each case. This is due to the different concepts of the environment. Dewey viewed development as a process of becoming integrated with the environment and consummation occurring when, through the process of interaction, both the environment and the individual have been changed as a result of a clearer (perhaps new) meaning of the individual and the environment. In an article quoted earlier, Greene stated that when "[students] articulate what they have to say against the background of their own biographies,

they may well be in a position to listen to others—and be listened to—if those others are also speaking for themselves." She opened the door for interaction to take place without specifying that as a result of that interaction the individual and the environment take on new meaning. The freedom to choose is not relieved, but if the person chooses to do so he/she may articulate deeply felt values against the backdrop of the deeply felt values of others. This will allow the individual to experience a continuity of feelings without needing validation and authentication. By having the experience of continuity, an individual will simultaneously be conscious of I am a human being among others AND I am a human becoming.

Returning to the mirror of aesthetic education and the educative process, the aesthetic process is viewed as one filled with choices: the choice of whether or not to experience the tension of unresolve; the choice of whether or not to search for a fulfilling experiential end; the choice of whether or not to share deeply felt values in order to experience the continuity of "becoming"; and the choice of whether or not to find new meaning, for individual selves and the world, through interaction. By making these choices, students have an opportunity to

learn how to carry on inquiry with others: how to offer opinions, criticize and defend them; question, argue, and rethink ideas in a community of thought. They learn how to discriminate among the welter of facts and to organize them within an overarching conceptual scheme. Their thinking, in fact, becomes more comprehensive as they see how to overcome objections or sticking points and to account for more material. The conflicting and combining of

opinion through which this takes place, moreover, is experienced as an aesthetic process when the class forms a community of inquiry. (Kupfer, 1983, p. 5)

It follows then that the nature of the process involved, the role of the individual, and the role played by the environment are central to any individual or collective discussion of aesthetic education, growth and development, or curriculum.

Greene, by encouraging students to articulate what they have to say against the background of their own biographies, provides the opportunity for individuals to come together and share their unique ideals of the world, not with the purpose of solidifying one best ideal, but with the purpose of understanding and appreciating their own unique selves. The aesthetic experience in Greene's conception is a means of allowing patterns and relationships to come clear. This clearness is a result of intense perception and feeling coupled with understanding that operates in both parts of the experience, the individual and the environment. In the process of creating him/herself, the individual has a deep understanding of the reason(s) for his/her choice which results from a deeply felt value. In the process of pursuing the common good, he/she is aware of the affective connectedness of all human beings. Learners empowered with this sense of connectedness with self and others may find themselves asking questions never before considered. Greene (1981) stated that

they [students] may find themselves posing questions from their own locations and in the light of the existence they themselves are living, which they are themselves discovering to be warranted, to be true. . . . And it is those who can ask their own questions, ask them in person, who are the ones ready to learn how to learn. (p. 141)

It may follow that three cause-effect qualities seem to emerge:

Only as the student chooses this way of becoming can he/she achieve a continuity of identity and a continuity of knowing.

Only through the aesthetic experience of deeply felt values can he/she make those choices in a meaningful way.

Only as the student experiences the emotional connectedness with other human beings can he/she understand and work for the common good.

This balance of self-discovery, "I am a human becoming," and how that individual is connected to the common good, "I am a human being among others," may be the connection between aesthetic education and child development. This view encourages students to become aware of themselves and their environments; to question, to feel, to grow in all aspects of their existence. Aesthetic education is able to sensitize individuals to ever-increasing spheres of interactions between themselves and others and between themselves and their environments. These interactions will serve to begin to define for individuals the nature of their own beings in relation to their individual worlds.

Summary

A purpose of Middle School education that may be considered is the facilitation of an ever-increasing sphere of interactions between an individual and his/her environment. These interactions will serve to define for the individual the nature of his/her own being in relation to his/her world. Schools provide a basis for those interactions through a controlled environment that teaches children how to have

growth-producing experiences. Education may be considered as the implementation of a process of growth and development that continues an entire lifetime. The public school experience provides children with an opportunity to learn the process of interacting with the environment to facilitate their continuous growth.

The Middle School years are a time when the developmental process is moving rapidly. Educators working with youth of this age must be particularly concerned with this process. For growth and development to occur in the adolescent, it is important that he/she be involved in social situations that require functioning as a contributing group member. It would follow that Middle School is not the place for a great deal of individual "seat work." Middle School is the place where the primary setting for learning should be social interaction, for it is only in this setting that one may find the creation of Greene's public space. This is also the setting that will allow students to act, in Dewey's terms, as members of unity. Through the process of social interaction, students are called upon to define their roles in relation to the other people around them. It is during this period of definition when students begin to integrate their past experiences as they develop their individual personalities in relation to what it means to be a member of society. Part of the definition of this societal role will be based on the ability to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their previous knowledge as the students experience it in interactions with the world around them.

As students function in the higher levels of the cognitive domain they will, out of necessity, be required to accumulate more information as they continue to interact with their environment in ever-increasing degrees of sophistication. This is when learning is taking place. Therefore, a purpose of Middle School education should be to prepare students to interact in those ever-widening circles. In preparation, students need to be given opportunities to experience the environment as they are guided in ways that allow them to acquire the information necessary for effective, growth-producing interactions.

Using this rationale, a Middle School focuses on five strands. These strands were the result of a synthesis involving the developmental theories of Erikson and Piaget and the social-philosophic writings of Dewey and Greene. Bringing the social-psychological theories together with the social-philosophic theories led to the development of a Middle School rationale. Based on that rationale, five strands were created that brought together the characteristics of early adolescent growth and development and an emerging Middle School rationale:

1. Personality Development
2. Cognitive Development
3. Social Development
4. Physical Development
5. Self-Esteem Development

Although none of these strands exists independently of the others, just as one area of development does not occur in a vacuum, it is still possible to discuss these strands independently. It is also important to note that these five strands do not operate independently

of the social/political/economic context of society. However, it is hoped that these strands would allow the young adolescent to develop his/her identity with an understanding of the context in which this identity formation is taking place. To the degree that a Middle School uses these strands, to that degree it may be considered to be operating based on a rationale of quality of process. To the degree that these strands are emphasized and encouraged to unfold naturally through the facilitation of a sound Middle School program, to that degree it is hoped that young adolescents will be allowed to experience the exploratory nature of the moratorium period Erikson said is crucial to identity formation. Such a rationale based on the process of growth and development begins to give the Middle School a value base from which to design a curriculum that recognizes the unique developmental needs of each emerging adolescent as well as setting the stage for an intrinsically satisfying adult life.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation was to develop a rationale for the Middle School based on principles of growth and development, specifically developmental characteristics of emerging adolescence. The discussion began with a description of cognitive development and identity formation in transescent youth. For the purpose of that overview, the focus was on the stage described by Erikson as the search for identity versus that of role confusion. This stage covers the period of growth from ages 11 to 18. The early years of that stage (11 to 15) are the years encompassed by the Middle School.

The theoretical base for that discussion emerged from the work done by Jean Piaget on cognitive development and by Erik Erikson in the field of identity formation. It was shown that identity formation in adolescence is a result of the shift taking place from the concrete operations of childhood to the formal operations of adulthood and requires the successful completion of several tasks. This period of identity formation was described by Erikson as being a crisis period, a turning point. During this crisis period the ideal state for the adolescent to be in is one of moratorium. During moratorium, youth is

searching, questioning, trying out options; he/she is actively seeking information in order to select from among alternatives. Following the period of moratorium is the period of identity achievement. Erikson theorized that the establishment of one's ego identity is a major life task. A clearly perceived ego identity provides the basis from which such decisions as vocational choice, family, and personal ideologies are made. Thus, adolescence is a period when an individual comes to know who he/she is, what he/she believes in and values, and what one wants to accomplish and get out of life.

A basic principle is that development in one area does not occur in a vacuum. Identity formation is directly affected by and is a result of changes taking place in the cognitive skills of the individual. Early adolescents are in the process of leaving the cognitive stage of concrete operations and entering the stage of formal operations. As the child begins entering the stage of formal operations, he/she is able to begin thinking about the thought processes themselves. Instead of relying on empirical data (concrete operations), it is now possible to construct ideologies, mental operations that consider all contingencies, that incorporate and consider the thoughts and ideas of others. The adolescent is becoming a hypothesizing, system-building organism. In the early period of adolescence, the child is aware that it is possible to think about thinking, but is unable to "differentiate between the objects toward which the thoughts of others are directed and those which are the focus of his own concern" (Elkind, 1981, p. 91). Children assume that their peers are

as obsessed with their behavior as they are themselves. This is the early adolescent characteristic known as the imaginary audience.

For the first time in a child's life, he/she is able to conceive and think about an idea. The young adolescent is now able to form an idea and cognitively test it by reflecting it on to self and others. This includes forming the idea of "self." Adolescence is a time when an individual integrates his/her past experiences with goals and plans for the future. The manner in which this integration takes place and the direction in which this integration leads the individual will determine not only the nature of the identity formed, but also the quality of life to be lived. A young adolescent will be looking to society for guidance and understanding as he/she contemplates his/her childhood past and reflects on his/her future goals and ideals. At the same time, society will be looking to its future members for reaffirmation or re-evaluation of its currently cherished goals and ideals. Many goals and values of society are reflected in its schools, and it is there that emerging adolescents may have an opportunity to experience the social experimentation that will lead to the acquisition of knowledge necessary for a successful moratorium period and ultimate identity formation.

Central to any discussion of curriculum is the rationale on which that curriculum is based. For the development of a Middle School it is helpful to have a rationale that reflects the principles of human growth and development and promotes the uniqueness of individuals.

Before reflecting on a rationale to support the Middle School, it was necessary to discuss a basis for a philosophy of education. This involved a discussion of education as the implementation of a process of growth and development that continues an entire lifetime. This public school experience provides children with an opportunity to learn the process of interacting with the environment to facilitate their continuous growth.

The Middle School years are a time when the developmental process is moving rapidly. For growth and development to occur in the adolescent it is important that he/she be involved in social situations that require functioning as a contributing group member. Through the process of social interaction, students are called upon to define their roles in relation to the other people around them. It is during this period of definition when students begin to integrate their past experiences as they develop their individual personalities in relation to what it means to be a member of society. It may be that part of the definition of this societal role will be based on the ability to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their previous knowledge as the students experience it in interactions with the world around them.

As students function in the higher levels of the cognitive domain, they may, out of necessity, be required to accumulate more information as they continue to interact with their environment in ever-increasing degrees of sophistication. This is when learning is hopefully taking place. A purpose of education is to prepare students

to interact in those ever-widening circles. In preparation, students need to be given opportunities to experience the environment as they are guided in ways that allow them to acquire the information necessary for effective, growth-producing interactions.

Using this rationale, a Middle School could focus on five strands from which curricular decisions would emerge. It is important to remember that the young adolescent forms his/her identity by interacting with the environment. This environment consists of the other people interacting within a social/political/economic context. These strands do not function independently of this context, but instead serve the young adolescent by providing him/her with guidelines that may be used to facilitate social interaction within the social/political/economic fabric of society. The strands listed below may provide educators with a means of making curricular decisions that provide opportunities for young adolescents to ask the questions so important during Erikson's moratorium period of identity formation.

1. Personality Development
2. Cognitive Development
3. Social Development
4. Physical Development
5. Self-Esteem Development

A Middle School that embraces these strands may be considered to be operating based on a rationale supported by the process of growth and development. To the degree that these strands are emphasized and encouraged to unfold naturally through the facilitation of a sound Middle School program, to that degree it is hoped the young adolescent

may be allowed to experience the exploratory nature of the moratorium period Erikson said is crucial to identity formation. Such a rationale based on the process of growth and development may give the Middle School a value base from which to design a curriculum that recognizes the unique developmental needs of each emerging adolescent.

Conclusions

The problem for this study arose from the fact that few educators, currently practicing in the field, appear able to provide a clear rationale to support a Middle School. The purpose, then, became the discussion and development of a rationale that could encompass the principles of adolescent growth and development in order to provide a rationale for Middle School curriculum development. The key question was whether or not a rationale for the Middle School could be developed that would support curricular guidelines facilitating the growth and development of early adolescents. As a result, a rationale was developed that led to five strands that could be used in the construction of Middle School curriculum. These five strands emerged from the application of a Middle School rationale to the principles of adolescent growth and development in the areas of intellectual development and identity formation. Using these five strands, programs and instructional practices were suggested that reflected the Middle School rationale developed in this dissertation.

This rationale is based on the facilitation of developmental processes that enable emerging adolescents to come together in Greene's public space for the purpose of examining their own values and beliefs

in the reflection of the values and beliefs of others. In so doing, youth is given an opportunity to ask the questions necessary to provide successful passage through the moratorium period described by Erikson. This entire experience confirms the importance of Dewey's concept of acting as a member of unity. As the individual begins to interact across the public space with the values and beliefs of others, he/she will begin to view him/herself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he/she belongs. This perspective will provide the basis upon which the individual will begin to build an identity that will be in a continuous state of development. By so doing, the individual will have discovered the answer to Dewey's (1938) question: "How shall the [forever] young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?" (p. 23). And, it might be added, for a promising future.

One of the "myths" Combs (1979) explored in his book Myths in Education is the myth that knowledge is stable. He wrote:

The society of the future must be created "on the spot" by the citizens living in those times. The educational system required to prepare youth for such responsibilities will need to be very different from that we have known. Its objectives must shift from emphases upon subject matter, techniques, and answers to emphases upon the production of **adaptable, problem-solving persons** who are capable of highly intelligent behavior. . . . If we cannot clearly define the future, our only alternative is to prepare young people as best we can to deal with any problem they may find when they get there. (p. 79)

It will be important for these individuals to have developed identities that permit and encourage interaction with other human beings, not

because of need, but because of desire. For many people the future holds great promise: the promise for new answers to old questions and the promise of answers to questions that have not even been considered. Adults who work with young adolescents are working with the individuals who are going to be responsible for asking those questions and finding the answers. The questions these young people ask and the answers they will accept will, in part, depend on the kinds of persons they are.

Many middle school children are asking those questions now. They are asking them of one another, and they are asking them of the adults who play important roles in their young lives. One of the very important questions they are asking right now is, "Who am I?" The answers they are able to explore will determine how they resolve their next question: "Who will I become?" Early adolescence and the Middle School years play a crucial role in providing answers to those questions. Identities are beginning to be formed, a process that will continue an entire lifetime. The manner in which those identities are created and the relationships formed with others along the way will determine the future of our society. If Combs is right and the society of the future will be formed "on the spot" by the citizens living in those times, Middle School educators need to examine what it is they are currently doing by asking whether or not students are being prepared intellectually, psychologically, and philosophically to assume such a responsibility. In closing, consider these words from Gardner (1981):

. . . A functioning social system . . . is a living, changing thing, liable to decay and disintegration as well as to

revitalizing and reinforcement, and never any better than the generation that holds it in trust. . . . Men and women who understand this truth and accept its implications will be well fitted to renew the moral order—and to renew society as well. . . . This will strike some as a burdensome responsibility, but it will summon others to greatness. (p. 127)

Suggestions for Further Research and Reflection

In the entire scope and sequence of the history of education, Middle School and early adolescence as a unique period of development could be considered infants. Middle School as a curriculum built on principles of early adolescent growth and development has only been a part of education since the middle 1960s. It was at that time that educators began to realize that there was a need for special attention to be given to the portion of adolescence known as transescence. The newness of these two areas is evident when looking through the list of ERIC descriptors. ERIC lists research for middle grades (4-6) and secondary education (7-12). Individuals researching emerging adolescence will have to sift through the references listed under child development (ages 7-11) or adolescent development (ages 12-18). In fact, Lipsitz (1980) reported to a Congressional committee that

because of the lack of attention paid to this age group and the lack of prestige associated with working with it, "early adolescence" is a nonentity, a non-field. Gaining information about it is agonizing. Statistics are reported in terms of aggregate age groups like "12-24," "17 and under," or "secondary school age," terms that mask what is happening to the younger adolescent population. Policy-setters as well as researchers and administrators must have access to better disaggregated data if we are to design policies and programs that are appropriate to the needs of young adolescents. (p. 12)

The development of this Middle School rationale and its use in constructing guidelines to be used in Middle School curriculum construction needs to be researched in application. What follows are several suggested areas of study that could begin to add to a currently limited, but very crucial, body of research.

1. Philosophic issues--A comprehensive rationale needs to be developed that will be able to provide a value base from which to make curricular decisions. This process has been started in this dissertation, but there is much to be done. How should other components such as family, society, and teacher-student relationships be considered when looking at Middle School curriculum? Because of the nature of identity formation that begins with early adolescence and continues for the remainder of an individual's lifetime, should such a rationale be expanded to include the entire life span of a human being? Is aesthetic education a viable foundation on which to base a rationale of Middle School education?

2. Viability of Middle Schools--Middle Schools that follow a true Middle School concept are moving away from traditional schooling for early adolescents. Is this a viable alternative? How realistic is it to advocate this form of schooling as being optimum for this age group? If schools are a reflection of the society in which they exist, do Middle Schools adhere to this principle?

3. Middle School students entering high school--Children who have a Middle School experience should emerge as independent learners. Is this a logical assumption? If it is, what effect will this have on

high school education? Is there any reason to believe that the principles of Middle School education should not apply to High School education as well? Is this possible in light of the current wave of reforms for secondary education?

4. Guidance and instructional programs--Guidance and instructional programs are a major component of Middle Schools. What are the foundations upon which quality programs can be designed to facilitate the needs of the emerging adolescent? What would these programs look like? What teaching methodologies work best with early adolescents? Is there a "best" way? What role does subject matter play in the development of cognitive skills and identity formation? How should the young adolescent be evaluated--on acquisition of knowledge or development of process?

5. Adolescent acquisition of knowledge--Due to the diverse nature of this early adolescent population, it is important to know how these individuals interact with their individual environments to acquire knowledge. Since they are not operating completely in concrete operations or formal operations, what are the processes involved in a postconcrete stage or preformal operational stage. Do these "sub" stages even exist? To what extent can the learning environment be "manipulated" to provide maximum use of that environment by the student?

6. Teacher education--Current research indicates that, due to the transitional nature of the early adolescent cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally, teachers who interact with these

students need a specialized education in these areas. What information do Middle School teachers need to know about emerging adolescents? Would experiences in early adolescent psychology be more valuable than courses in specific subject areas? Should there be opportunities for experiences in teaching methodologies that best facilitate early adolescent learning? In fact, is there a teaching "personality" that is best suited to working with early adolescents?

These suggestions only begin to scratch the surface of early adolescent research and Middle School education. At this time the field is "wide open" in terms of its need for pertinent data regarding early adolescence and Middle School education.

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