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STUDENT BEHAVIOR PATTERNS IN
A DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES CLASSROOM

by

Pamela Kaye Gefke

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

I hereby recommend that this dissertation prepared under my direction by Pamela Kaye Gefke entitled STUDENT BEHAVIOR PATTERNS IN A DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES CLASSROOM be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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July 25, 1972
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Pam Gelfo

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ABSTRACT

This study focused upon the student behaviors observed when a college instructor attempted to facilitate a democratic learning process within her classroom. The investigator developed a categorical framework which was used to organize the study, collect the data, and present the findings. This framework included five categories: (1) climate, (2) control, (3) goal-setting, (4) communication, and (5) evaluation.

The investigator in this study, functioning as a participant observer, sought to facilitate democratic processes in a natural setting. Throughout one semester, she recorded the observed student behaviors in a daily journal. In order to check the accuracy of the recorded observations, the students were surveyed, in the fourth and 16th weeks of the semester, for their perceptions.

When the investigator attempted to facilitate the democratic learning process in her classroom, many of the 25 students were observed to change their behavior over a period of time. Many students moved from behaving in a traditional manner to behaving in a democratic manner.

Many of the 25 students introduced to the democratic process tended to shift their behavior at varying rates through at least three major phases. These phases included: (1) the Acclimating Phase; (2) the Readiness Phase; and (3) the Actualizing Phase.

According to the instructor's analysis, the first seven weeks in the semester constituted the Acclimating Phase, during which the students appeared to resist the teacher's democratic style of leadership. Within this seven week phase, the non-directive style of the democratic teacher seemed unexpected and produced initial "shock." Next, this unexpected teacher-student relationship was "tested" by the students. Finally, the non-directive, teacher-control issue was brought to the surface through the "confrontation" of two verbal sub-groups within the class.

The next two week period, weeks eight and nine, constituted another major phase; the Readiness Phase. This phase was characterized by student readiness to participate in the process of selecting, planning, fulfilling and evaluating their own learning experiences, on an interactive, informal basis.

The final six weeks, weeks 10 through 15, the Actualizing Phase, were characterized by student productivity in terms of individual and group-selected projects and student evaluation of same.

It was concluded that:

1. Throughout the course, certain student behaviors tended to emerge in sequential behavior patterns identified as:
 - a. An acclimating phase in which the students tended to experience shock, teacher-testing and teacher confrontation.
 - b. A readiness phase in which students appeared to be receptive to involvement in the democratic learning process.
 - c. An actualizing phase in which the students experienced productivity in self and group selected projects.

2. Initially, most students actively resisted participating in the democratic process.
3. As the process developed, some students adjusted readily to the democratic learning environment while others experienced varying degrees of difficulty in doing so.
4. During the semester, most students shifted from expecting that the teacher determine all learning experiences to an acceptance of the responsibility of determining their own learning experiences.
5. Finally, many of the students reported their intention to continue the self-selected and self-evaluated learning experiences after the course ended.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school philosophies generally include a statement which prescribes the preparation of students for participation in a democratic society. In addition, statements about understanding and participating in a democratic society are contained in most secondary school catalogues, syllabi, and instructors' manuals.

These school philosophies and materials, however, rarely suggest the processes and methods by which this goal of "democratizing" is to be accomplished (Cohen 1969: 160). As a result, few schools have moved from rhetoric to implementation in this regard.

Actually, in spite of the democratic goal advocated in many school statements, writers have observed that numerous schools are actually operated in very traditional, authoritarian, ways (Birenbaum 1969: 144; Holt 1970: 56). It has been suggested that the goal of educating for a democratic society, "cannot be achieved in autocratic atmospheres where all decisions are made by teachers and administrators while students are reduced to passive followers of the established patterns" (Combs 1966: 373).

To more closely align practice with philosophy, it has been suggested that democratic learning processes be implemented in the classroom (Glasser 1969: 15). The type classroom which might help to

achieve this democratic goal is one wherein the teacher strives to facilitate the democratic learning process. This classroom process involves each student in real problems of decision-making, independent action, and self-direction. It is a process that calls for student cooperation as he accepts the "major responsibility for his own learning" (Combs 1966: 373-374).

Few secondary school teachers are informed regarding the operationalizing of democratic learning process in classrooms. Equally few of these teachers are familiar with the student behavior patterns encountered when this process is used.

Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to seek the answer to the following question: In a college freshman composition class, where the instructor attempts to function as a facilitator of the democratic learning process, what student behaviors are observed?

Significance of the Problem

The recent Carnegie report revealed that there are few democratic (or open) classrooms to be found in the United States today. Additionally, the report recommended the "radical reordering" of classrooms to foster the democratic process approach (Stevens 1970: 1).

Silberman suggested that most teachers would be receptive to the use of democratic processes in their classrooms if they were given the encouragement and support necessary to operationalize it (Stevens 1970: 1). It was the intent of the investigator to assist in this

matter by focusing on some of the more significant student behavior patterns which occur when an instructor utilizes democratic classroom learning processes.

Assumptions Underlying the Problem

The following assumptions were made and have been arranged in three categories: the student, the learning environment, and the teacher.

The Student

1. The student is an active, curious, intrinsically motivated individual who learns readily that which is in line with his own goals and needs (Rogers 1969: 131).
2. The student tends to be motivated to learn when he has a positive self-concept and success experiences (LaBenne and Green 1969: 44).
3. The student's becoming an independent, creative, self-reliant learner is facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic and evaluation by others is minimized (Gibb 1967: 63).
4. The student, in making decisions about his life and its direction, participates responsibly when learning is a purposive, exploratory, imaginative and creative enterprise (Rogers 1969: 4).
5. The student's learning involves a change in his person, his perceived environment or the relationship between the two which is not necessarily observable (Bigge 1964: 108).

The Learning Environment

1. The democratic classroom learning environment fosters a learning process that is conducive to personal growth; an environment in which the student and teacher capacities are nourished and expressed rather than stifled (Rogers 1969: 304).

2. The democratic classroom learning environment includes an interactive flow of communications as well as an emergence of student and class control which arises out of the situation (Gibb 1967: 58).

The Teacher

1. The teacher's ability to foster the democratic learning process rests upon his teaching skills rather than his scholarly knowledge (Rogers 1969: 105).

2. The teacher who seeks to use democratic processes deals with the affective as well as the cognitive domain (D. Allen 1971: 72).

3. The teacher's attitudinal relationship with the learner affects the quantity and quality of what is learned (Perkins 1951: 119).

4. The teacher who seeks to use democratic processes, views his students as capable of handling freedom in a responsible, accountable manner (Combs 1966: 375).

5. The teacher who seeks to use democratic processes helps to identify the various needs and interests of his students and shares these interests with them (Combs 1966: 373).

6. The teacher who seeks to use democratic processes conducts his classes in ways that encourage self-direction and cooperation, thus

replacing the climate of fear with a climate of human understanding (Holt 1970: 30).

7. The teacher who seeks to use democratic processes evaluates himself continuously while withholding judgment of his students.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations obtained in this study:

1. It was descriptive in nature.
2. It involved a one semester class of heterogeneously grouped freshman composition students at a junior college level.
3. Its investigator was a freshman level junior college instructor who functioned as a participant observer.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used in this study:

1. Democratic Learning Process involves learner participation in the selection, formulation, fulfillment and evaluation of his learning experiences in an interactive atmosphere of equality and respect for each individual in that learning environment.
2. Learning Environment includes the social and psychological relationships which develop among students and teachers in a classroom setting.
3. Categorical Framework describes a set of conditions, used as frames of reference, against which student behaviors were observed. These conditions are more precisely defined as:

- a. Climate: The teacher-student interpersonal relationship (Gibb 1967: 58).
- b. Control: The dynamics of motivating (extrinsically or intrinsically) the group and its members (Gibb 1967: 59).
- c. Goal-Setting: The process of formulating objectives for or by the group and its members (Gibb 1967: 59).
- d. Communication: The flow of information within the classroom setting (Gibb 1967: 58).
- e. Evaluation: The dynamics of assessing the group members' learning experiences.

Organization of the Study

In this chapter the statement and the significance of the problem were detailed. In Chapter 2, specific concepts drawn from the social sciences are examined. These concepts are then employed as a categorical framework to (1) organize the investigation, (2) examine the data, and (3) present the findings.

In Chapter 3 the setting and background of the study are presented and the design of the study, including procedures, is described. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6 the data derived from an instructor journal and two student evaluations are presented and examined. Chapter 7 summarizes the findings of the study and presents the investigator's conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter the investigator presents a five category framework, derived from the social sciences. Literature related to each of the five categories is then reviewed. The framework and the literature are arranged as follows:

1. The categorical framework for studying groups is stated.
2. Within each of the five categories in this framework the literature on authoritarian and democratic leaders' assumptions, procedures and effects on group member behavior are reviewed.
3. Next, a review of the studies of autocratic and democratic leaders' effects on group member behavior are presented.
4. Finally, a summary of the behavioral concepts generated from the literature is presented.

The Categorical Framework

Sociological theory suggests that groups may be studied from the view of at least five categorical questions (Gibb 1967: 58).

What is the Climate in the group?

Who Controls the group and its members?

Who sets the Goals for the group and its members?

In what directions does the Communication flow in the group?

Who Evaluates the group and its members?

Climate

This section contains a review of the literature related to Climate and the "assumptions," "procedures," and "effects" of autocratic and democratic leadership styles.

Assumptions

The authoritarian leader usually assumes that he should keep the group members subordinate, dependent and inferior to himself and his leadership of the group (Gibb 1967: 58). He tends to assume that the group is inexperienced, untrained and/or unintelligent concerning the problem at hand (Kemp 1964c: 230). In addition, the authoritarian generally assumes that he should maintain social distance, command respect and be objective (Gibb 1967: 58). Basically, this type of leader assumes little responsibility concerning the functioning of the group (Kemp 1964b: 224).

On the other hand, the democratic leader-member relationship tends to be one of equality in contrast to the authoritarian's assumption of superiority. The democratic leader seems to make trust assumptions about the group members' motives and behaviors (Gibb 1967: 63). He assumes that each member is a responsible individual who carries out his tasks at a level commensurate with his own level of experience and growth (Gibb 1967: 62). In addition, the democratic leader tends to assume that each member should be encouraged to respect the thinking of every other group member (Kemp 1964b: 225).

Procedures

The authoritarian leader generally seeks to employ procedures whereby he leads, persuades and controls individual behavior (Gibb 1967: 58). This type of leader usually perpetuates a rigid, structured relationship (Bradford 1961: 26).

The democratic leader, on the other hand, strives to create a flexible informal situation; one that is conducive to freedom of expression and respect for each individual (Kemp 1964c: 230). Acting as a resource person, he attempts to aid in the growth and development of each member by facilitating the development of a setting wherein each member of the group is encouraged to grow in self-reliance, self-direction and decision-making skill (Kemp 1964a: 23).

Effects

Authoritarian leadership, with its usually strict controls, tends to create a climate of fear and hostility. These fears help to reinforce feelings of inadequacy and rejection (Gibb 1967: 60). In contrast, the open, informal, flexible climate created by the democratic leader tends to minimize group members' fears and hostilities (1967: 62). With such a leader-member relationship the group members set their own goals and assess their own development. They also participate in setting and achieving organizational objectives (Gibb 1967: 62-63). Member exploration, diversity and innovation often precipitate from such a climate. Additionally, in such a climate, the individual tends to develop more security in his interpersonal relationships (Bradford 1961: 27).

Studies Regarding Climate

Following is a review of some of the general and educational studies that deal specifically with the effects on Climate of authoritarian and democratic leadership styles.

A study by Preston and Heintz (1949: 345-355) comparing authoritarian and democratic leadership styles showed that the democratic leader created a positive climate wherein all members were encouraged to give their opinions. The authoritarian leaders (with their attention on the achievement of their own established goals), created a negative climate. The study concluded that the authoritarian approach was less effective than the democratic approach in changing the members' attitudes.

In industry, the effect of group climate on productivity was studied by Dickson (1939) and McGregor (1944: 55-63). In these studies the effects of a leader's negative attitude was insecure workers who eventually became antagonistic, rebellious, and less productive. When the plant leaders had a positive attitude, workers felt the leaders had an interest in them; and, even though the physical surroundings at the plant were made distasteful, the workers' productivity rose.

Several studies dealt with the authoritarian and democratic teaching styles' effects, in terms of climate, on observable student behaviors.

Perkins (1951: 115-119) concluded that it is the quality of the teacher-student relationship that influences the amount of learning that occurs in the classroom. When the student-teacher

relationship was group-centered the students were more objective and problem-centered. Stendler's (Stendler and Haines 1951: 173-197) studies on the effects of competitive climate concluded that students working together in cooperative groups displayed more positive behaviors than those in competitive groups. In fact, competition led to unfriendly negative behaviors and poor work spirit.

Ray (1961: 271-380) and Kipnis (1958: 173-180) concluded that participatory leadership created more behavior changes and more positive attitudes (Anderson and Kell 1954: 255-267).

Bills (1952: 313-320) conducted a study on the authoritarian and democratic leadership styles' effect on the transmission of course content. Bills' conclusion was that there was no significant difference between authoritarian and democratic classes with regard to the transmission of course content. He did note, however, that the informal democratic class had generated more trust and significantly more positive attitudes towards the course than the lecture group.

Control

In this section literature related to Control, and the assumptions, procedures, and effects of autocratic and democratic leadership style is reviewed.

Assumptions

An authoritarian leader ordinarily assumes that his decisions are superior to those of the group. He sees himself as responsible for influencing the group to accept his views and plans. If necessary

he will enforce his position by rewarding or punishing the members (Kemp 1964b: 223). He tends to assume that he should lead, supervise, and control the group members (Gibb 1967: 55).

The democratic leader ordinarily assumes that healthy group control will emerge spontaneously from the group processes as the need is perceived (Gibb 1967: 63). This leader tends to assume that his role is that of leader-member -- one who helps the group grow and work productively while sharing the control responsibility (Bradford 1961: 51). He assumes that the group members can reach solutions to the issues that they as a group select for discussion (Kemp 1964b: 223).

Procedures

The authoritarian leader tends to direct the group towards fixed goals. He exercises authority in securing compliance to his wishes and expects a high degree of conformity (Kemp 1964c: 230). Such a leader attempts to control the motivation and behavior of the group members as well as the procedures they follow (Gibb 1967: 59).

The democratic leader strives to facilitate the development of a situation in which he has no need to impose control (Gibb 1967: 63). This type of leader tries to encourage the development of controls within the group. This emergent leadership tends to continue as long as it functions to achieve group purposes (Hopkins 1964b: 60).

Effects

The strict controls often used by the authoritarian leader are a welcome, secure, structure for some individuals. Others reject this

structure as it seems to deny them the freedom to participate in making decisions. Such control often causes resistance, aggression, or alternately, passivity. The superior-inferior relationship, furthermore, tends to foster the members' dependency upon the leader. On the other hand, the democratic leader's process of helping Control emerge out of the interactive situation tends to encourage each group member to act on his own initiative, for he has the freedom of action (Bradford 1961: 27). This type of approach appears to encourage individual responsibility for the actions that follow his decisions (Bradford 1961: 28).

Studies Regarding Control

In their experiments on leadership styles, Kahn and Kats (1953) concluded that the most effective leader is the one who delegates control and helps to achieve those goals which are meaningful to the group.

Flanders' study (1951: 100-110) of student responses to authoritarian and democratic (teaching) styles in the classroom revealed that the directive, demanding, authoritarian, teacher elicited hostility, withdrawal, or apathy. The problem-centered, student-supportive, democratic, teacher, on the other hand, elicited student behaviors characterized by problem orientation and decreased anxiety. Flanders concluded that this group-centered environment was more conducive to learning.

Cogan (1958: 89-105) concluded that those democratically inclined teachers who included students in the decision-making process

tended to encourage increased individual and group productivity as compared to the authoritarian teacher who dominates decision-making.

Goal-Setting

This section contains a review of the literature related to Goal-Setting and the assumptions, procedures, and effects of autocratic and democratic leadership styles.

Assumptions

The authoritarian leader usually assumes that the problems, ideas, and plans should be chosen and presented to the group for their acceptance (Kemp 1964b:224). He assumes that the members will accept the levels of goals and aspirations set by the leader (1964b:223).

In contrast, the democratic leader generally assumes that each member of the group is capable of making decisions in relationship to his own goals and objectives (Kemp 1964c:230). He assumes, furthermore, that each member should accept the responsibility for individual and group goal-setting, decision-making, and for making improvements in group functioning (1964b:224).

Procedures

In authoritarian relationships, the individual often has little or no say about individual or group goals, purposes, and objectives or the procedures used to accomplish them (Hopkins 1964a:57). Individual and group program planning are managed by the leader (1964a:57). In addition, the authoritarian leader uses rewards and punishments

to motivate the members of the group toward the leader's goals (Gibb 1967: 59).

The democratic leader tends to participate in the cooperative planning of goals. He helps the members make judgments about the direction of their activities (Gibb 1967: 62). He helps each member to clarify his interests and plan his objectives, recognizing situations with "unfixed ends" (Gibb 1967: 63). In addition, this type of leader strives to promote group unity and organization around the group's own purposes and needs (Hopkins 1964b:60). The planning and deciding are handled by the group itself (1964b:60) with the result that the motivation of the members is intrinsic rather than extrinsic.

Effects

The various forms of extrinsic persuasion used by the authoritarian leader to direct the members toward his established goals often results in "apathy," "passivity," or "frenetic conformity" (Gibb 1967: 60).

The democratic leaders' encouragement of individual and group participation in goal-setting optimizes each member's self-determination and self-assessment. As this intrinsic motivation develops, the members explore their interests and capabilities, creating work that is fulfilling and satisfying (Gibb 1967: 64).

Studies Regarding Goal-Setting

Flanders and Havumaki (1960: 67-82) pointed out that the authoritarian teacher's dominance in goal-setting tended to create class resistance to behavior and attitude change. Bovard (1951:

398-405) and Rehage (1951: 111-115) conducted experiments that showed a positive modification of perception occurred when goal-setting was group-centered rather than teacher-centered. The group-centered experimental group had a better working relationship with the teacher and was superior to the control group in its ability to effectuate its plans.

Dawson (1960: 325) concluded that the use of group decision-making in goal-setting was more productive than the traditional approach. Deutsch's study (1949: 199-232), of competitive and cooperative college groups, indicated that those students participating in goal-setting in cooperative groups seemed to have greater concern for fellow group members and more quality productivity and discussions than the competitive groups.

Communication

This section contains a review of the literature related to communication and the assumptions, procedures, and effects of autocratic and democratic leadership styles.

Assumptions

The authoritarian leader usually assumes that communication should be closed. He tends to see it as the leader's function to initiate and control discussions (Kemp 1964b: 224).

The democratic leader usually assumes that the flow of communication should be open. Such a leader encourages each individual to communicate with other members of the group. He assumes that his

function includes a willingness to listen to, accept and clarify the communications of group members (Gibb 1967: 64).

Procedures

The authoritarian leader generally controls the flow of communication. Communications within the group are originated by the leader to the various members. Each member then reacts to the leader while seldom interacting with other members of the group (Hopkins 1964a: 57). The authoritarian leader tends to inform, initiate, control, discuss and make decisions. Questions and ideas from members of the group are presented directly to him (Kemp 1964c: 232).

The democratic leader tends to encourage free, open and spontaneous communication (Gibb 1967: 10). Such a leader encourages each member to participate when he is ready to do so. The leader listens to, questions, reacts, reflects, clarifies and synthesizes communications with the group (Kemp 1964c: 230). With this open flow of communications, the group seeks decisions based on the different contributions within the group. These contributions are then evaluated by the group in an effort to reach solutions which embody the best of each member's contributions (Bradford 1961: 27).

Effects

The authoritarian leadership practices tend to increase hostility and fear through the restricted flow of communications. The effect is to inhibit open communication (Gibb 1967: 58). In the open flow of communication characteristically used by the democratic

leader tends to encourage members to share information with others in the group. This operates to improve the decision-making processes within the group by providing information upon which to act (Gibb 1967: 63-64).

Studies Regarding Communication

Fox (1957: 279-289) concluded that the most effective leader was the one who encouraged maximum communication, as contrasted to the leader who imposes his ideas upon the group. Although this effective democratic style of communication consumed more time, it tended to result in more member acceptance of the group decisions with more changes in member attitudes and behaviors.

Cook's study (1945: 250-261) sought to discover ways of helping groups work together as self-directing teams. The teacher gave the class the decision-making power and helped them in making choices. When the project was completed Cook concluded that this class decision-making encouraged more spontaneous and open communication than the traditionally structured class.

Evaluation

This section contains a review of the literature related to Evaluation with the assumptions, procedures, and effects of autocratic and democratic leaders.

Assumptions

The authoritarian leader usually assumes that evaluation should be made by the leader (Kemp 1964b:225) As he perceives it,

his role is to appraise performance frequently, to give negative criticism and to reward good performance (Gibb 1967: 55). The democratic leader, on the other hand, tends to assume that as people grow they learn to assess their own potentials (Kemp 1964b: 225). He therefore tends to assume that his role is one of sharing opportunities with each group member to maximize self-determination and self-assessment (1964b: 224).

Procedures

The evaluation of the group and its members is usually made by the authoritarian leader. The success or failure of each individual is determined in terms of his conformity to the demands set by the leader (Hopkins 1964a: 57). Leader approval tends to be the incentive motivating the members. The evaluation of each member is extrinsically regulated by the leader's use of such success symbols as grades, social approval and/or status (Gibb 1967: 59). The democratic leader, on the other hand, facilitates the cooperative and continuous evaluation by the group of its own decisions and actions (Hopkins 1964b: 60).

Effects

The authoritarian leader's control of evaluation often encourages individual dependency and apathy. This type leader, determining the evaluation standards and assessing the individual's achievement of the leader-established goals, tends to afford the individual group member no access to redress. He finds himself more

or less at the mercy of the leader. In such a situation, the individual members work for extrinsic reward rather than the self-satisfaction of achieving personal goals (Gibb 1967: 59). This often may encourage individuals to become passive and susceptible to all sorts of external evaluations (1967: 59).

The democratic leader's encouragement of self-evaluation tends to stimulate each member to participate in the assessment of his own behavior on the basis of his progress toward personally selected goals (LaBenne and Greene 1969: 87). Through this process each member is free to strengthen his area of potential strength.

Studies Regarding Evaluation

A study regarding evaluation practices was made by Goldberg (1960: 274-283) who concluded that the most effective changes in student behavior occurred through group- and self-centered evaluation rather than through teacher-centered evaluation. A comparative study dealing directly with the effects on student behavior of democratic, and autocratic learning processes was conducted by Lewin, Lippit and White (1939). The results of their study were reported to demonstrate "the superiority of democratic procedures in the development of individual responsibility, satisfying social relationships, constructive and friendly channeling of aggression, maintenance of work interests, and the ability to continue work activities in the absence of teacher prodding" (1939: 271-299). Additionally, those students involved in the democratic learning process seemed to show "more constructive

group activity, more cooperation among the class members and greater opportunity for the development of self-management," as well as more ability in assessing their own learning experiences (LaBenne and Greene 1969: 104).

Categorical Framework: A Summary of
Behavioral Concepts

A categorical framework, generated from the literature reviewed in this chapter, was used in this study to collect, present, and analyze the data. This framework, together with its associated behavioral concepts, is presented below.

Climate: The teacher-student relationship.

The autocratic leader's style:

1. tends to encourage a negative teacher-student relationship with student fearfulness, hostility, anxiety and low trust;
2. tends to encourage students to behave in a formal, socially distant, rigid manner;
3. tends to encourage students to behave in a subordinate, inferior to the teacher, manner.

The democratic leader's style:

1. tends to encourage a positive teacher-student relationship with high trust and a minimum of student fearfulness, hostility and anxiety;

2. tends to encourage students to behave in an informal, socially amiable, flexible manner;
3. tends to encourage students to behave as though everyone in the learning environment, including the teacher, is equal.

Control: The dynamics of motivation within the class and its students.

1. The autocratic leader's style tends to encourage dependency of the students on the teacher for control.
2. The democratic leader's style tends to encourage individual and group control to emerge out of the situation with each student having freedom and responsibility of action.

Goal-Setting: The dynamics of formulating student objectives.

1. The autocratic leader's style tends to encourage student acquiescence and demand for teacher-established goals.
2. The democratic leader's style tends to encourage individuals and the group to select goals that are in line with their own needs and interests.

Communication: The direction of the flow of information.

1. The autocratic leader's style tends to encourage a two-way flow of communication from the teacher to the student, and the student to the teacher.
2. The democratic leader's style tends to encourage an open, spontaneous, member-to-member flow of communication.

Evaluation: The process of assessing students' learning experiences.

1. The autocratic leader's style tends to encourage student acquiescence to, and demand for, teacher appraisal based on the students' conformity to the teacher's standards.
2. The democratic leader's style tends to encourage student participation in a continuous personal assessment of his own behavior, based on progress toward self-selected goals.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, a description of the setting and an explanation of the procedures followed in this study are presented. Ironwood Community College (a pseudonym) was the setting for this investigation.

The Community

This investigation was conducted in a Southwestern community college which serves a county of 351,670 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1970: 3). The population of this county includes a diversity of ethnic groups. Retirement, tourism, mining, agriculture, light industry, and education are at the foundation of its economy. A military base is located at the edge of the county's largest city and figures importantly in its economy. A land grant university serves a pivotal function in the cultural and social life of this community.

The College

The community, because of its interest in a level of education between high school and the University, initiated the effort to establish Ironwood College. From its inception, Ironwood set out to be non-traditional in its approach to education. It deliberately avoided conventional academic organization and designed an organizational framework intended to provide maximum individual participation in the decision-making process.

The President of Ironwood College attempted to implement democracy in every facet of the college's functioning. He encouraged instructors to innovate; to organize their classes in a manner which would align classroom practice with the college's stated philosophy.

The Group Studied

In the fall of 1970 Ironwood's total enrollment was approximately 3,500 students, of which about 24 percent were Mexican-American, seven percent Black, three percent Indian, one percent Oriental, and 65 percent Anglo. Of this total population 25 students registered on a random basis for the investigator's first semester composition class. Of these 25 students approximately 30 percent were Mexican-American, eight percent Black, and 62 percent were Anglo. There were 13 males and 12 females with ages ranging from 17 to 32 years of age. Of these 25 students 22 completed the course. The other three dropped the course at mid-semester; two for financial reasons, and one because of transportation difficulties.

Procedures

The investigator in this study strove to facilitate democratic processes in a natural setting, a classroom. She functioned in this setting as a participant-observer. Throughout one semester, she recorded in a daily journal the student behaviors observed. This journal data was recorded according to the categorical framework described in Chapter 2. In order to check the accuracy of her observations, the students were surveyed in the fourth and sixteenth weeks

for their perceptions. Elaboration on each of these elements in the procedures follows.

First, the investigator in this study attempted to facilitate democratic processes in the classroom. Throughout the study she sought to function according to the assumptions stipulated in Chapter 1 of this study and the democratic procedures detailed in Chapter 2, thereby facilitating the development of a democratic learning environment. Her behavior included encouraging a positive teacher-student relationship and promoting an informal, trusting climate wherein students, as equals, participated in selecting, planning and evaluating their own learning experiences. She also sought to encourage open, spontaneous communications and the emergence of individual and group control.

Second, this study was conducted in a natural setting. An approach to research which offers great promise for education is "The Natural Experiment" wherein the experimenter carries on his investigation in the natural setting (Trachtman 1970: 124). In this type of study the investigator functions as a "translator" or describer of the events in the natural setting rather than "the contriver of events in the laboratory" (Barker 1965: 1-14). Such an approach to small group research in education might lead to a needed, more complete, understanding of the interaction and behavioral changes which occur in the classroom (Kemp 1964a: 83).

In spite of the urgent need to understand how students behave in established, functioning groups, few studies have been conducted

in natural settings. According to the 1966 McGrath and Altman publication, "Small Group Research: A Synthesis and Critique of the Field," only five percent of the 250 sample studies surveyed were conducted in a natural setting (McGrath and Altman 1966: 51). Natural setting studies, however, appear to have values that recommend them to the educational investigator (Kerlinger 1966: 383). The more realistic the research situation the "more valid are the generalizations" to other similar situations (Kerlinger 1966: 383). Another virtue of the "natural setting" type study is its appropriateness for studying "complex social influences, processes and change" (Kerlinger 1966: 384).

Thirdly, throughout this study the investigator acted as a participant-observer. There are at least two major assets associated with the participant-observer approach to data collection. First, "only as a participant does the observer feel the pressures operating in the situation, and . . . with a feeling for these pressures he can possibly understand how and why the other participants respond as they do" (Fox 1969: 513-514). Secondly, a unique advantage of this technique of observation "is the presumed frankness and honesty with which others will approach the participant observer and the accurate picture he will obtain of the research situation . . ." (Fox 1969: 514).

Next, functioning as a facilitator of democratic processes and a participant-observer in a natural setting, the investigator recorded the student behaviors observed in a daily journal. As there

appears to be a need in educational research for more of this sort of descriptive study conducted in a natural setting, there is also an apparent need for appropriate techniques which "will help the investigator describe the phenomenon as he observes it in the field" (Kemp 1964: 83). The use of such techniques in small group research is not fully developed and might be regarded as one of "the frontiers of small group research" (Mills 1967: 35). Progress in using such approaches within a small group setting depends heavily on "the development of systematic techniques for collection of empirical readings" (Mills 1967: 35).

An observational and recording technique which appears to have real potential for describing behavior in small groups is that of the participant-observer's anecdotal record (Downie 1958: 343). The type of daily journal instrument used for data collection in this study has been variously referred to in research literature as a participant-observer log or post-session log (Slater 1966), or behavioral diary or journal (Prescott 1957). This type of instrument has been used in the social sciences (Whyte 1955) and in psychiatric studies (Van Dalen and Meyer 1962: 205) for some time.

An asset of the investigator journal technique of recording the data is that the observations, recorded in a systematic or thematic manner, are ordinarily realistic and close to the original content (Kerlinger 1966: 549). Such a thematic approach was developed by the investigator and was referred to as a categorical framework.

The categorical framework, used by the investigator in this study for recording student behavior, was derived from the sociological theory reviewed in Chapter 2. This framework included: (1) Climate, (2) Control, (3) Goal-Setting, (4) Communication, and (5) Evaluation. Within this framework the instructor recorded and observed student behavior immediately following each fifty minute class which met two days a week for 16 weeks.

Finally, in order to check the accuracy of the observations recorded in the instructor journal in the fourth and 16th week the students were surveyed for their perceptions. The students, also functioning as participant-observers, reported their observations of: (1) their fellow student's behavior, (2) their own behavior, and (3) the investigator's behavior.

This "class-self-teacher" evaluation contained both open and forced-answer questions. It was constructed on the basis of the same categorical framework used by the investigator in the journal.

The rationale for using the open questions was to obtain qualitative data wherein the student answered in "his own words, structuring his own answer as he fit and answering at whatever length he desired" (Festinger and Katz 1953: 350). This type question was intended to give the students "an opportunity to reveal their motives or attitudes and to specify the background or provisional conditions upon which their answers were based" (Van Dalen and Meyer 1962: 303).

The forced-answer questions were designed to obtain quantitative data. These questions provided a mechanism for cross-checking

the investigator's observations on the specific issues in the categorical framework.

Examination of the Data

The descriptions of behavior and the verbal responses collected in the instructor journal were not open to immediate analysis as are numerical or yes-no questions. There was, however, "ample evidence to indicate that content analysis [of such responses and descriptions could] be accomplished reliably and validly . . ." (Fox 1969: 647).

First, the content unit was established. This unit was the number of students behaving in a particular manner during each class period. Next, for each of the journal entries recorded within the five categories of the categorical framework detailed in Chapter 2, a determination was made as to the number of students behaving as though they were participating in either a democratic or a traditional learning environment. This determination was made using the behavioral concepts summarized on page 21. Finally, for presentation purposes, the semester was divided into five time periods. Within each period, representative student behaviors were presented in a series of histograms.

The data from the teacher journal and the two student evaluations were presented within each of the five time periods in the following order: (1) representative journal excerpts, (2) histograms derived from the content analysis, (3) student evaluations for the fourth and 16th weeks, and (4) investigator's perceptions of the student behaviors.

Summary

This chapter dealt with the setting and procedures employed in this study. The community, the college and the group studied were described. The instruments for collecting data and the procedures were explained, and the data presentation and examination were discussed.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF DATA:

WEEKS ONE THROUGH THREE

The time period over which the data were collected was a 16 week semester, which for presentation purposes here was segmented into five chronological periods: weeks one through three, four through five, six through seven, eight through nine, and ten through 15. For each of these time periods excerpts from the instructor journal are presented. Following the presentation of journal data for each time period, a graphic depiction of observed student behavior is provided. Finally, the instructor-investigator supplies an analysis of this observed student behavior. After the first and last time periods only, data from student evaluations administered during the fourth and 16th weeks are presented and examined.

Journal Excerpts: Weeks One through Three

During this first three week time period most of the students seemed shocked by, and resistant toward, the teacher's attempts to share the control of the class with every student. Following are direct excerpts from the investigator's journal.

Climate

Journal: Week 2. "Many students who had been laughing in the halls donned a somber, silent mask as they took their seats. All but a

couple of students seemed uneasy and unsure of themselves. The chairs were arranged by the students as they entered, so that I was set apart from them. Members chose to sit on the floor rather than next to me. About five people kept staring at their watches, straining for class to end. Anxiety was variably expressed: fighting with pencils, excessive smoking, biting fingernails, and split ends, and squirming around in the desks."

"I sensed that most of the students were leery of my answers to their questions; they seemed not to accept the fact that I really meant what I said about our class. They behaved in a rigid, formal manner and strived to maintain distance between us."

Journal: Week 3. "Basically, most of the students, even in our third week now, still seemed tense, formal, unsure, and uneasy in this classroom situation. Similarly, many students seemed unaccepting, even resistant, to my position in the class. Some students still sought to maintain social distance by means of moving their chairs, calling me Miss Gefke, and asking directions of me. As soon as the bell sounded classtime, most everyone became quiet as they stared at me for 'the word.' When it was time to leave again, all eyes turned for my approval."

"It seems that all but two of the students were still leery of me, and did not trust me enough to drop their 'apple-polishing' masks and be themselves."

Control

Journal: Week 1. "Just before class I joked with some of the students in the hall. When we got into the classroom and they realized that I was the instructor, they were embarrassed. They began to act in a quite rigid fashion. I had introduced myself as Pam Gefke, but several of these people, as well as those other members of the class who addressed me, called me Miss Gefke."

"Throughout this first session, all eyes were on me. It seemed that all were waiting for me to tell them what to do, to give them some specific directions."

"All comments that day were directed towards me, with no attention to fellow students' questions, comments, or expressed desires. I felt as though most of the students were expecting me to behave like a traditional teacher, one who would direct them, tell them what to do, and assess how well they followed the directions. Most of the students seemed anxious to leave the classroom. One of them asked, 'Are you going to keep us the whole hour?'"

"When the class period ended, all eyes were on me for some sign of dismissal. I simply sat still. Finally, when two students stood up, one young man said to me, 'Is it OK to go, Miss Gefke?' at which point several other students snickered."

Journal: Week 3. "As on the first day, I was the focal point in class this day. The members seemed not to pay much attention to each other. It appeared that most of the students were waiting

for me to do 'an about face,' begin lecturing, giving assignments, testing and other such teacher behaviors. In fact, it seemed to me that many would be relieved if I behaved that way."

"Twice, when short side conversations cropped up about half of the class looked at me as if to say, 'Aren't you going to tell them to pay attention?' I felt as though they were expecting me to take charge and punish offenders."

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 1. "It seemed as though most of the students were waiting for me to direct them, waiting for me to tell them what they 'had to do' this semester. About half of the students asked such questions as: 'How much do we have to write in here?' 'What books do we have to read?' 'What happens if we don't come to class everyday?' 'What are we supposed to do in here?' 'Do we have to write a theme a week?' 'What are we supposed to write about?'"

Journal: Week 3. "Only a few of the students had made a list of the goals they set for themselves, so, we brain-stormed in class. Most of the group were hesitant to make suggestions, however. About six or seven people asked such questions as, 'What do you want us to do this semester?' or 'What do you want us to write about?' It seemed that most everyone still assumed that I was going to establish the objectives for their learning. It also

seemed that most everyone was stunned by the prospect of having to set up his own goals."

Communication

Journal: Week 1. "It appeared that only a few students had gotten the verbal messages that I was sending. Most class members seemed to be watching my facial expressions and actions more than they were hearing and accepting my responses to their questions."

"All questions and comments were directed toward me. When I would redirect questions to other students, the response was, 'I don't know,' shrugged shoulders, tension, fidgeting, and/or silence. There were several periods of silence when most of the students were uneasy. All questions were stiff and the students were very formal when asking them. Most of their questions sought clarification of instructor expectations during the semester."

Journal: Week 2. "As we were brainstorming for possible activities and topics for writing and discussion, there was much silence. It appears that most students expected me to inform them rather than consult with them. Specifically, many seemed to expect me to move around the room asking each person, one at a time, for his suggestions. There was, therefore, little verbalization or spontaneity, but rather about 85 percent of the class remained completely silent and noncommittal. Several of the vocal students seemed unsure as to how far they could go in terms of discussion, expression or argument. Most everyone raised his hand before speaking."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 1. "Recurrent questions included, 'How are you going to grade us?' and 'How much does attendance count on our grades?' The first question was asked approximately seven times the first day; the second question three times. Even after class, three students approached me with those same questions. There were also two people who asked me about 'the kinds of tests' I was going to give them."

"It seemed to me that most of this group was expecting the traditional routine of assignments and tests. It seemed that most students came to this class expecting that I would set their goals and then test and grade them."

Journal: Week 2. "As on last Wednesday, several students asked, 'How are you going to grade us?' expecting that I would assess their progress. Then, after brainstorming on students' individual interests and goals, one young lady asked, 'But how can you grade us on that?'"

"By the scowls and uneasiness of the majority of the students, it seemed that they were anxious at the prospect of evaluating their own learning. Some, too, may have been anxious in fear that I might be saying one thing now, but would test and grade them later."

Journal: Week 3. "Most of the class members acted as though they were still waiting for me to tell them what to do and how to do it, including evaluating them on what they had done."

"When asked to assess what had been accomplished this day, most of the students acted embarrassed as though they were unqualified to evaluate themselves. The class was trying to cover up its anxiety by giggles, jiggling feet, chewing pencils and watch-watching, all expressions of the ever present tension."

Summary of the Behaviors Recorded in the Journal

In terms of Climate, the behaviors observed during those first three weeks included; (1) a negative teacher-student relationship with anxious, fearful, low trust behaviors, as well as (2) formal, socially distant, and (3) subordinate behaviors.

The Control behaviors observed during these first three weeks included student verbal and non-verbal communications of expectancy that the teacher would "run" the class: direct, inform, set their goals, evaluate, and discipline the students.

The Goal-Setting behaviors observed during the first three weeks included student verbal and non-verbal communications of expectancy that the teacher would set up the objectives and standards for their learning experiences.

The Communication behaviors observed during the first three weeks included student expectation that the teacher would direct the flow of communications. There was very little spontaneous member-to-member interaction. Inadequate listening and repetition of the same questions about my expectations of them were among the behaviors observed during this period.

The Evaluation behaviors observed during the first three weeks included student queries about how the teacher would assess the progress of individuals and the class. Demand for the teacher's standard of appraisal was among the behaviors observed.

A graphic presentation of the behaviors recorded in the instructor journal for weeks one through three follows.

Graphic Examination of Student Behavior:
Weeks One through Three

The results of the analysis of the Instructor journal are presented graphically as follows:

In terms of climate, by the third week about 23 students were observed to behave as though they were participating in a traditional learning environment (Fig. 1). The behaviors observed included anxiety, fearfulness, low trust, formality and subordination. Two students were observed to be receptive to the democratic learning environment displaying trust and a minimum of anxiety and formality.

On the issue of control, by the third week approximately 23 students were observed to behave as though they were participating in a traditional learning environment, that is, expecting or demanding extrinsic, teacher controls. Two students were observed to be receptive to the democratic learning environment with its intrinsic and emergent controls.

By the third week, 20 students seemed to expect or demand that the teacher select their goals. Five students appeared to have begun the goal selection process.

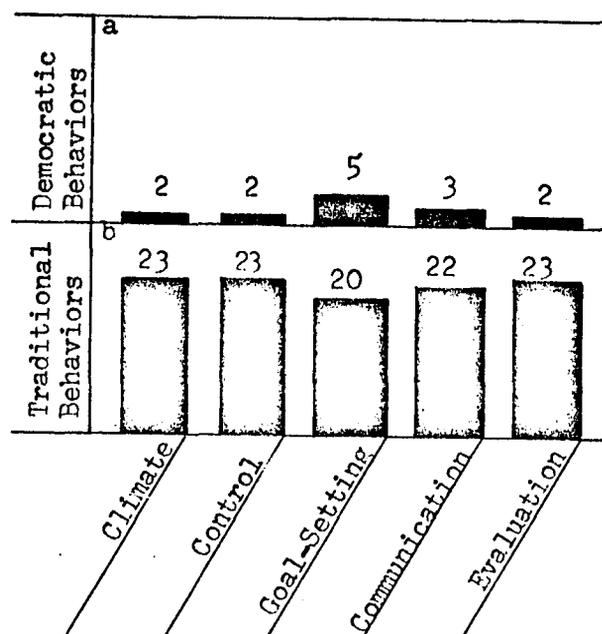


Figure 1. Student behaviors: week three.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic by the end of week three.

Concerning communications, by the third week 22 students seemed to expect or demand that the teacher control the flow of information. Three students seemed receptive to an open flow of information.

As regards evaluation, about 23 students appeared to expect or demand teacher controlled assessment of their learning experiences. Two students seemed receptive to a process of self-evaluation.

In an effort to check the accuracy of the instructor's recorded perceptions student behaviors during weeks one through three,

a student self-class-instructor evaluation was conducted. The responses to this evaluation follow.

Student Evaluation:
Weeks One through Three

At the beginning of the fourth and 16th weeks the class of 25 students participated in an (self-class-instructor) evaluation. Below are the results of the students' evaluation of the first three weeks. This evaluation contained: (1) 20 forced answer questions, the responses to which are presented first. These are followed by the responses to (2) the two open-ended questions.

Forced-Answer Questions

1. Before attending Ironwood College, have you ever been asked to participate in the selection, planning, and evaluation of your own learning experiences?

Yes - 2 No - 23
2. Is the teacher trying to make this class formal or informal?

Formal - 1 Informal - 24
3. Do you see most of the people in this class as acting formal or informal?

Formal - 25 Informal - 0
4. Do you see yourself as acting formal or informal?

Formal - 22 Informal - 3
5. Does the teacher try to dominate and control this class?

Yes - 0 No - 25
6. Do you see most of the people in this class expecting or as wanting the teacher to run the class?

Yes - 24 No - 1

something else and is one which understands that we are people and not numbers, and that grades are the most basic and stupid things that are used to judge a person as good and bad.

- G. I was scared stiff about taking this communication course. I felt I would be forced to write a lot, on things that wouldn't interest me.
- H. I expected the teacher to hang up a list of topics that were expected to be written on throughout the semester.
- I. I guess I expected an even more strict institution than high school. Something on the line of the U. of A. with a lot of lectures.
- J. I expected the instructor to tell us what to write and when. Every day I expected a new technique in writing and loads of homework every night. When I thought of communication I dreaded the thought of writing constantly. I didn't realize communications meant talking and other things.

Question: Describe your first reaction to Pam's question as to what <u>you</u> wanted to do in this class.
--

Student Responses:

- A. I was dumb-founded. Having been scared of what I was gonna have to do; I was just dumb-founded.
- B. I felt kind of scared and nervous and I couldn't think of a damn thing to answer you with.
- C. My first reaction was a little shocked only because I had no idea of what I wanted to do or what was expected of me.
- D. My first reaction was, "But I am here to learn, and she is here to tell me what to learn."
- E. I was really relieved and happy to hear her ask what we wanted to do in class. Immediately this took away a lot of the fears I had about taking a course like this.
- F. My first reaction was panic. I had no idea what I should learn so I didn't know what to tell her I wanted to learn, what I should learn meaning information I'd need for transfer to a 4 year college.

- G. I felt somewhat of a surprise, not really knowing how to accept the fact, sort of like when another person catches you off your guard.
- H. I felt confused and lost.
- I. I did not fully understand at first, I thought to myself you are supposed to tell me what you want me to do.
- J. I found it very hard to accept. After being channeled through so much bull all of my life. I found it very frightening to realize that someone was giving me the opportunity to explore the areas which I felt were important. It is a freedom which is very hard to accept.

Summary of Student Evaluations

In summary, the responses to the forced-answer questions revealed that 25 students observed that most of their fellow students seemed to behave in a formal manner (Fig. 2). Twenty-four students observed that most of their fellow students were apparently expecting or demanding that the teacher motivate individuals and the class. Twenty-five students noted that most of the class members seemed to be demanding or expecting the teacher to select their goals. Twenty students indicated that most of their fellow members were apparently wanting or expecting the teacher to direct the communications. Twenty-three students observed that most of the other students seemed to expect or demand evaluation by the teacher.

The student responses seemed to indicate that they were perceiving class members as behaving as if they were in a traditional learning environment (see listing of behavioral concepts, p. 21).

In terms of student expectations during weeks one through three, 100 percent of the students expected the teacher to: (1) indicate class goals, (2) control the class, (3) direct the communications, and (4) control the evaluation process. According to the

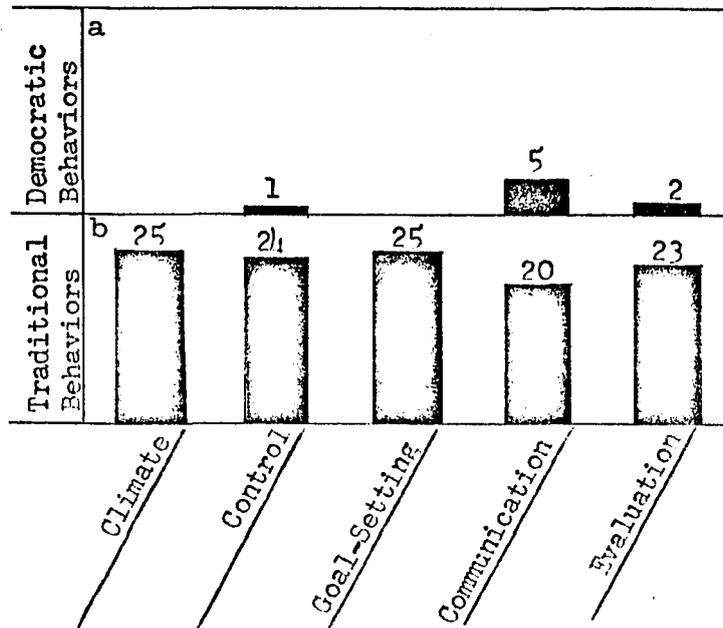


Figure 2. Student evaluations: week four.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers indicate the total number of students who observed most of their classmates as behaving in a democratic or traditional manner.

open-answer responses, many of the students were initially shocked by the teacher's unexpected behavior; shocked particularly by her attempts to encourage the emergence of individual and group control.

The instructor's analysis of the student behaviors observed during weeks one through three follows.

Instructor Analysis of Student Behaviors:
Weeks One through Three

Initially, nearly all of the students during this first three week period seemed "shocked" by the teacher's apparently unexpected behavior. Most were especially "shocked" by, and resistant to, the teacher's efforts to share control of the class with every individual. Nearly all of the students seemed to disbelieve the teacher's attempts to consult with them about what they wanted to do, how they wanted to go about doing it, and about their standards for grading.

This first three week period was characterized by student behaviors of anxiety, stereotyping of the teacher's role, inadequate listening, inadequate interaction, and demands for clarification of the teacher's expectations.

Basically, the climate was one of negative teacher-student relationships. Illustrations of such included anxiety and low trust as well as rigid, formal, subordinate behaviors. About 99 percent of the students tried to maintain distance from the teacher, either physically by moving their desks, or socially, by addressing her formally.

The expectation was that the teacher would, or should, control the class, set goals, test, grade and evaluate, direct the discussions and discipline the members of the class. It seemed that the majority of students expected to find a different sort of teacher. Student demands for teacher clarification of "what they had to do" and "how they would be graded," were prevalent. Thus, the expectation that the teacher would or should control both the goal-setting and evaluation processes.

Most of the communications during the first three weeks were directed to the teacher for her approval or comment. There was little or no spontaneous interaction, even when the teacher redirected questions to other members.

Inadequate listening was evident from the often repeated questions about the class. The teacher sensed that most of the students were so busy preparing to dread the course that instructor messages of assurance and encouragement to participate were being ignored.

Most of the students apparently entered the class expecting the teacher to behave in a certain fashion. When she failed to do so, most students were stunned by and resistant to her style. In sum, the teacher's style of striving to help control emerge out of the situation, with individual freedom and responsibility of action, was initially "shock"-producing. Interestingly, the student responses to the open-ended questions indicated that some students were internally coming to terms with the democratic style of the teacher. This internalization, however, had not yet been reflected in overt behavior.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF DATA:

WEEKS FOUR THROUGH SEVEN

In Chapter 4 the journal excerpts and student evaluation for the first time-period of the semester, weeks one through three, were presented and examined. In Chapter 5, journal excerpts for the next two time periods, weeks four and five, and weeks six and seven, are presented and examined.

With the exclusion of the student evaluation which was administered in the fourth and sixth weeks only, each of the next two time periods is presented in the same format as that in Chapter 4, which is: (1) the excerpts from the journal, (2) the graphic examination of the observed student behaviors, and (3) the instructor analysis of the student behaviors.

Journal Excerpts: Weeks Four and Five

During weeks four and five many of the students seemed to test the teacher in a variety of ways. In this time period, four subgroups were perceived by the investigator to emerge. In the following, excerpts from weeks four and five of the investigator's journal are presented.

Climate

Journal: Week 4. "When one young man called me "Pam" several students seemed uneasy; they giggled, perhaps due to the informality reflected in such an address."

Journal: Week 5. "Today, bits of anxiety were more openly expressed as was the resistance to the learning environment. The class seemed socially distant, one individual to the rest. It seemed as though many of the students still did not trust me or each other enough to open up and be themselves. It seemed, too, that many students were still trying to clarify where I stood and were trying to size me up to make certain they could trust me to continue being non-directive. Again, when one student called me "Pam," there was some snickering, and considerable uneasiness. Also, throughout this day's discussion, over three-fourths of the class, at one time or another, glanced at me for my reactions to the comments."

Control

Journal: Week 4. "In line with one of the suggested topics on our brainstorming list, I asked if anyone had read the article in the "Star" by Spiro Agnew. I had the article with me, so someone said, 'Read it to us.' I then asked if someone would read it to us and a young man volunteered to do so. The article concerned Agnew's claim that the Rock Music industry is run by those who deal in the illegal drug traffic. What followed was a discussion of the drug scene."

"Just as our discussion was about to start, a young man told me to make the girl next to him stop teasing and being noisy. My response was that I didn't feel that that was my position in the class. He then told her himself. I felt that he was testing me to see what my reaction would be. The rest of the class watched intently to mark my reaction. Then a second young man accused the first young man of acting like a first grader. Again, the class studied my reaction. Before the accusation could be extended, we began the discussion of drugs."

"Anxiety was differentially expressed in ways similar to those in the first few sessions. Many of the students would look at me before, during, and after comments were made about drugs, even though none of the comments were incriminating. Basically the comments were broad generalities. These glances seemed to be for the purpose of sizing up my approval or disapproval of the comments. It was as if most were waiting to see where I stood on the issue before they committed themselves to a stance."

Journal: Week 5. "Today, as class was beginning, two young ladies sitting off to one side of the group started carrying on a conversation in whispers. Every now and again they would titter, elbow each other, then look at me to see how I would react. It seemed as if they were daring me, seeing how much I would 'let them get away with.' I merely smiled at them. Others in the class then turned to me as if to say, 'Why don't you tell them to be quiet?'

Finally, one young man asked them to join the rest of the class. Another young man said, 'Yeh, what would you like to do in this class?'"

"The question as to what the girls would like to do led us into a discussion about the future of the class. During this time, four or five people became quite verbal on the issue of my role in the class. One girl said that she felt that we hadn't done anything in class yet and that she thought that I should take over, give assignments, and lecture. About four others clearly agreed with her, judging from their nods."

"A young man then blurted out, 'Wait a minute. Pam's trying to help us run the class and do our own thing. Now you want to blow it.' About five or six others nodded in agreement to his statement."

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 4. "I handed out an open syllabus, a list of days and dates with blank spaces for each day so that the students could reserve the day they wanted to share their creations with the class. I also distributed a one-page summary with answers to the most often asked questions about our tentative class format, which had not been amended by the group as yet. It included clarification concerning grading, goal selection, the student journal (a collection of their writing), class presentations as well as the general organization of the class. I asked the students to please keep these sheets in their journals."

"In the margins of this summary sheet, I had hand-written the titles of four poems. I mentioned to the class that some of us might be interested in minority group writers and that these four poems had been written by a Chicano, a Black, a Chinese, and an Indian writer. I added that I had several anthologies written by minority group members which I would gladly share with those interested."

"Throughout the semester thus far, I had been passing news articles around the class. This day in class I stapled these to a five foot sheet of butcher paper. Then two students tacked all of the newspaper clippings to the wall. In addition, I passed about the room copies of the Don Fabun's series including 'The Children of Change,' 'On Motivation,' 'You and Creativity,' and 'On Communication.' I also passed around various other pamphlets and books including Bierce's 'The Devil's Dictionary,' a copy of the text 'Montage,' as well as other provocative works."

"The news articles, too, were provocative, reflecting a wide range of interests from hot issues like pollution to cooler topics in Sinclair's humorous column. There were articles on riots, book reviews, TV agenda, film schedules, and the editorial page."

"Although the discussion on drugs was one of the goals established by the group, this day the interest level was not much higher than before. There was some displeasure displayed by several students concerning spending time in an English class talking about one of their own suggested topics, drugs. About

three fourths of the people seemed bored, some were yawning, one was reading a math book, and another was staring out the window."

Journal: Week 5. "It was apparent that many of the students were still waiting for me to tell them what to do while others, about 10, were already trying to pursue their own interests."

"The students' explanation of 'doing their own thing' may have been an attempt to see if I really could be trusted to be consistent in helping each student establish his own goals. As class was about to end, one student turned to me and asked, 'Do you really mean we can write about anything? How about feelings? Sometimes I feel good when I look at the stars. What would you say if I wrote about that?'"

Communication

Journal: Week 4. "About 20 percent of the class participated consistently in our discussion, another 30 percent seemed interested, while the balance of the class seemed somewhat disinterested. Even though the topic was group selected, there was little member-to-member interchange of communication. There were several periods of silence when approximately 90 percent of the group turned to me for comment, information, or approval of the student comments."

Journal: Week 5. "It seemed that two distinct groups with opposite points of view concerning my role in the class emerged today, one group expressing anxiety and resentment about my behavior as a leader, the other group defending me. The two small groups who

verbalized their concerns did so in a fairly touchy, anxiety-filled dialogue. The rest of the group looked on, often glancing at me for my reaction. Although the majority of the class was silent, one could interpret their facial and body expressions as supportive of one group or the other. They tended to be verbally non-committal and actually appeared embarrassed by a discussion of the teacher's behavior."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 4. "When I asked for an appraisal of the day's discussion on drugs, reactions were mixed. Five or six students thought it was most stimulating; 'The best class we've had,' said one of them. Another five or six nodded that it was 'OK.' One young man said, 'It was OK, but only a few people participated so we got bogged down.' Another few students indicated that it was all right, but it seemed to be just rapping. 'What's this got to do with English?' 'Aren't we supposed to be doing some grammar and stuff in here?' were several of the comments. The class turned to me for my response. The session ended before we could get student responses to these comments."

Journal: Week 5. "Although the students did not directly evaluate this session, it was still apparent that some expected me to test and grade them. One young lady turned to me today and said, 'Are we really going to grade ourselves in here?'"

"Just as the class was leaving, one young man put the question to the group. 'Does that mean that everybody wants Pam to give us assignments and tests and all that old stuff?' One person replied, 'Well . . . no, but we're not doing anything now!'"

"It appeared as though most of those who were pursuing their own interests still expected that I would eventually assess their performance. It could be that either the students didn't believe that they were to assess themselves or they were not sure how to."

Summary of the Student Behaviors:
Weeks Four and Five

The climate behaviors observed and recorded during weeks four and five were much like those recorded for weeks one through three; anxiety, low trust, considerable social rigidity, and a tendency toward subordination. In addition, weeks four and five were typified by continued student testing of the teacher-student relationship.

The control behaviors observed during weeks four and five were much like those recorded for the first three weeks. There was considerable expectancy expressed that the teacher would or should command and manipulate the classroom processes. Weeks four and five were characterized by student testing of the teacher's non-directive classroom posture.

The goal-setting behaviors observed and recorded during weeks four and five were similar to those recorded for the first three weeks, expressed as expectation and demand for teacher-established goals. In addition, weeks four and five were typified by the general testing

out of the teacher's stated position on the individual and group selection of goals.

The communication behaviors observed during weeks four and five included the verbalized expectation and demand for a teacher-directed flow of information, an inadequate listening and interaction pattern, and the emergence of two verbal sub-groups. Each sub-group defended or attacked the teacher's non-directive approach to controlling individuals and the group.

The behaviors observed and recorded during weeks four and five concerning evaluation were quite similar to those of the first three weeks. The expectation persisted that the teacher should appraise student performance. In addition, weeks four and five were typified by a general "sizing up" of the teacher concerning her position on group conducted evaluations.

A graphic presentation of the behaviors recorded in the instructor journal for weeks four and five follows.

Graphic Examination of Student Behavior:
Weeks Four and Five

In regard to climate, by the fifth week about 22 students were observed to behave as if they were participating in a traditional learning environment (Fig. 3). The behaviors observed included obliquely expressed anxiety, low trust, formality and submissiveness. Three students seemed receptive to the democratic learning environment, displaying trust and a minimum of anxiety, fear and subordination.

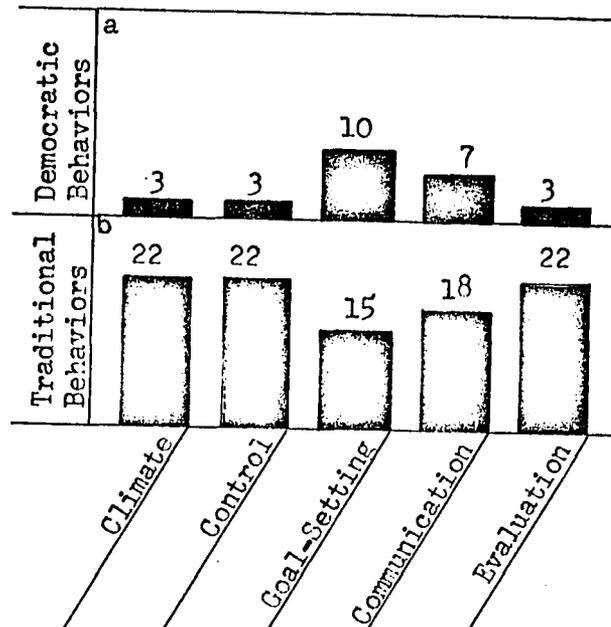


Figure 3. Student behaviors: week five.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic by the end of week five.

On the issue of control, by the fifth week about 22 students appeared to behave as if they expected or demanded teacher controls. Three students seemed receptive to individual and group controls.

In terms of goal-setting, by the fifth week about 15 students seemed to expect and demand that the teacher establish their goals. Some 10 students apparently had begun the goal-selection process.

In regards to communication, by the fifth week about 18 students appeared to expect or demand that the teacher control the flow of information, whereas about seven students seemed receptive to an open, spontaneous flow of information.

Concerning evaluation, by the fifth week about 22 students appeared to expect and demand that the teacher control the assessment of their learning experiences. Three students seemed receptive to a self-evaluation process.

The instructor analysis of the student behaviors observed during weeks four and five follows.

Instructor Analysis of Student Behaviors:
Weeks Four and Five

Closely coupled with the period of "initial shock" behaviors, weeks one through three, there seemed to be a period, weeks four and five, characterized by the general "testing" out of the teacher. The repertoire of student behaviors observed at this time moved from apparent attempts to gain the teacher's approval, to challenges of the teacher's position in the class. Throughout this testing period, the teacher's actions and reactions were watched intently by the group members.

In terms of climate, the students seemed to "test" out whether or not they could trust the teacher, trust her to practice what she had been saying and to be consistent in that practice. It appeared that the informality and equality of the teacher-student relationship was realized when the teacher was addressed by her first name. Some seemed embarrassed by such informality; others seemed unaffected, but most studied the teacher for her reaction.

The teacher's stance on the control issue was challenged by some during this two week testing period. It appeared that the

students were attempting to size up whether or not they could trust the teacher to behave in a manner consistent with her stated intentions of having group and individual selection of goals and self-evaluation procedures. Significantly, the instructor's expressed views on the individual and group responsibility for control was timidly challenged and her reactions were carefully noted.

Challenge on the control issue took the form of brief, non-forceful declarations of contentment or contempt concerning the teacher's non-directive posture in the classroom.

Through this verbalization of anxiety over the control issue, four subgroups of students became visible. One group, referred to here as the independents, verbally defended the teacher's position. A second group, the new-independents, remained silent but communicated by means of body language, an apparent agreement with the independents' position. A third group, the dependents, verbally expressed disapproval of the teacher's style of control, while a fourth group, the silent dependents, passively supported the dependents' point of view.

This period, weeks four and five, was a "sizing up" period in which the students seemed to test the teacher to see whether they could trust her. During this period some students "apple-polished," others seemed to behave in a fashion to gain the teacher's approval, and still others seemed to dare the teacher to discipline them. Throughout this period, the majority of the students kept a close watch on the teacher's reactions to the repertoire of "testing"

behaviors. By the end of this period, through verbalization concerning the teacher's non-directive posture, various subgroups became apparent.

Direct excerpts from the instructor journal for weeks six and seven follow.

Journal Excerpts:
Weeks Six and Seven

During weeks six and seven, the two verbal subgroups, each with a group of silent supporters, entered into a verbal confrontation over the teacher-control issue. Following are direct excerpts from the instructor's journal. All student names are pseudonyms.

Climate

Journal: Week 6. "Just before class was to start, I passed out a suggestion sheet, 'While Pursuing Our Needs and Interests,' which contained a list of the printed materials on a variety of topics. I had frequently mentioned (weeks one-six) that I would gladly share these materials with everyone. I added that I would also be delighted to discuss any of the items on the list, i.e., semantics, with individuals or the group whenever they requested. Finally, I announced again that I would like to give my presentation on 'Hints on How to Write an Effective Essay' whenever the bulk of the group wanted me to. At that point, Cecilia leaned toward me asking, 'What are we doing in this class anyway?' I put the question to the whole class."

"This session was rigid and filled with tension. Although the bulk of the class was still quite formal it seemed that some

students were beginning to trust me not to assume an authoritative stance. I also sensed that four or five students were beginning to shift their preferences toward the more democratic teacher behavior. These few seemed more at ease, more open, receptive and comfortable with the informal learning environment. These students also seemed comfortable with my not being their enemy, someone to resist, but rather as my being an ally, an equal."

Journal: Week 7. "The two verbal subgroups went back and forth on the issue of my non-directive style of leadership. This session was a bit less rigid than the last, but the bulk of the class still remained uncommunicative and stiff."

"It seemed to me that some students were content with my behavior. They seemed to indicate to the others that it might be all right to trust me as a helper, a co-learner."

"Those who did not approve of my behavior continued to remain aloof, in spite of the suggestions that I could be trusted. These students seemed leery of this style and this sort of learning situation. They sat the farthest away from me and preferred to address me as 'Miss Gefke' or 'the teacher.'"

"Although more people opened up, only six or seven people acted at ease in class. These same people were the ones who had selected their projects, and who addressed me as Pam. The rest of the group remained essentially distant and formal. These six or seven individuals appeared to have about that same number of silent supporters."

"Together, these students comprised a bit over half the class. They were in the process of establishing and pursuing their individual interests. A few in this group still, however, appeared to expect that I might eventually take over and direct the class. Basically, some in the class were receptive to my behavior, some were partially receptive, and others were resistant.

Control

Journal: Week 6. "When I put Cecilia's question, 'What are we doing in here?' to the group, Ned jumped in saying, 'There's a lot happening in this class if you'd take the opportunity to get involved.'"

Dick: 'Yeah, from the first day the teacher has given us all sorts of suggestions for things to do in here.'

Tina: 'Right, we're putting our writing in journals, planning presentations and some people have the book.'

Lena: 'I keep my journal up-to-date. The thing is to write about the things you do, the things you know about -- like your family or job.'

"Then I added that Cecilia was writing a children's story for an interracial book contest."

Ned: 'Wow, see, you're doing something!'

Cecilia: 'Well (hesitantly), but . . . I'm unsure about my writing and the teacher not telling us what to do makes me feel guilty -- like I'm not doing anything.'

Rodney: 'Yeh, we need the teacher to tell us what to do.'

"Ned, Lena, Tina, and Dick looked peeved and shook their heads while the rest of the class watched my reaction intently."

Rodney: 'The teacher should assign us magazine articles to read, then discuss them in class and have everyone write essays on them.'

Tina: 'Why don't you ask the class to do that someday, Rodney?'

Dick: 'Yeh, why don't you do that? It's not the teacher's fault we're not doing that.'

"The focal point of this interchange was my non-directive leadership approach to our class. About four students, Lena, Dick, Ned, and Tina, who had already started projects, defended my position. They revealed to the group their plans and progress. On the other hand, two students, Rodney and Cecilia, verbalized their frustration concerning my non-directive style."

"When I suggested that Cecilia and Rodney probably spoke for the rest of the class, approximately six of the quiet students nodded while about half a dozen shook their heads."

"Although only a few participated in the interchange, many of the other students seemed upset with what was being said."

Journal: Week 6. "Class opened with Ned asking Cecilia to explain to the class more about the book contest she was preparing to enter. My role, however, ended up as the focal point of class discussion."

Bert: 'I've been thinking about our last class and book; what are we doing in here? Nothing, right? Some discussions on drugs and slang, but what's that got to do with English? We should be handing in themes and stuff.'

Ned: 'OK, if you want to hand in themes go right ahead. Some people in here have already shown Pam lots of their writing and she discusses it with them. But look, we shouldn't all have to do themes if we're interested in something else.'

- Rudy: 'Right on. I'm trying poetry right now and I don't want to go back to high school stuff again. I got sick of the theme routine where the teacher tells you what to write on, then you hand it in and get it back all marked up. I didn't learn anything about writing from that.'
- Rodney: 'I'm with Bert; I think we need the teacher to give us assignments.'
- Tina: 'Bert, Pam's helping me with a letter to the editor about the college. That's got a lot more meaning for me than some old theme.'
- Dick: 'Yeh, you guys. I like being able to write about whatever I want to. I think the teacher's fine just the way she is. The trouble is you guys haven't taken the responsibility to do anything so you're trying to say that's her fault.'
- Bert: (mumbled) 'Well she is the teacher isn't she? What's she here for?'
- Rudy: 'Hey, you guys, if you want an assignment I'll give you an assignment. Write a theme about what you thought of your high school English classes.'

Journal: Week 7. "Miguel seemed fidgety and frustrated today so as class started I asked him what he'd like to discuss. 'Let's discuss something heavy,' he said, 'Or I'm leaving.' Cecilia then asked what he would like to discuss. The class moved their desks to focus on Miguel. 'Ignorance,' he answered. He then looked at several of the previously silent members and said, 'Let's talk about the ignorance of the people who don't want to get involved in discussions on controversial issues in this class.'"

Gerardo: (who had been quiet all semester) 'Listen, I'm not sure what to do in this class. Last year I went to a Junior College and got stuck in Remedial English. They told me what to do there -- like the teacher should tell us what to do here.'

- Miguel: 'Wow, but isn't that scary to think about? Are people going to tell you what to do all your life?'
- Ned: 'Yeh, Gerardo, a lot of us had trouble getting started in here but if Pam would have been telling us what to do, we never would have had a chance to make decisions about our projects.'
- Tim: 'Gerardo, come out in the hall for a second, I have an idea of what we can do.' (After about five minutes they returned exuberant. They'd decided to put together a slide show.)
- Cecilia: 'I know how Gerardo feels. I was in English X at the U. I hated it but there at least the teacher told you what to do.'
- Ned: 'Yea, but what do you want to do? You're already writing a story for the book contest.'
- Cecilia: 'I guess we should be writing essays or something.'
- Rudy: 'So do it. Pam has helped me a lot with some of the stuff I've written. She reads anything.'
- "About a dozen students looked at Cecilia and nodded as if to say, 'If you want to write themes, go ahead.'"
- Anna: 'This is the only class I can relax in. I get so nervous in my psych. class I make mistakes on the tests even though I know the answers.'
- Kathy: 'Me, too. It's nice to finally let your hair down and really learn something.'

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 6. Although only four students had revealed their personal objectives, about seven or eight other people appeared to support the student's statement that several in the group had projects. On the other hand, when Cecilia and Rodney expressed their frustration at the teacher for not giving them definite

goals to pursue, about seven or eight indicated satisfaction with the teacher's point of view."

"It seemed as though the quiet students did not intend to be verbally committal, but were in fact relieved that someone finally 'said it' in front of the teacher. As one student expressed it, 'I was lost, too, at first, but once I started my journal and a project I began to learn something. I'm doing fun stuff -- stuff like Tina said, that's got some meaning to me.'"

"Bert, Rodney and Cecilia asserted that they were waiting for me to tell them what to do. They also attributed their lack of productivity to my non-directive style of leadership in the class. Several of the uncommunicative students seemed to agree with this point of view."

"It seemed that these students were not familiar with the process of establishing one's own goals. They might not have been sure as to how to select or formulate objectives for their own learning experiences."

Journal: Week 7. "Today it appeared that at least one dozen students had projects well underway or were beginning them. These people with goals tried to encourage those without to make some decisions about what they wanted to do. The frustration level of those without goals seemed to indicate that they were still expecting me to select their goals for them. These few seemed to resist the experience of self-initiated goal-setting. They appeared stunned by the freedom to choose."

"As Tina said today, 'I didn't know what to do at first either. Nobody had ever asked me what I wanted to do before. I didn't really know what I wanted to do. It took me a while to settle down and ask myself what I was interested in. That's how I decided to write my letter to the editor. I've got something else going now, too.'"

Lena: 'Rodney, are you mad because you haven't done anything in this class yet?'

Rodney: 'Sure.'

Lena: 'And you're saying that because Pam's trying to help us to do what we want to do it's her fault you haven't done anything?'

Rodney: 'Well . . . (hesitantly), sort of.'

Communication

Journal: Week 6. "Today's interchange was the most spontaneous and self-revealing of any of our classes so far! The four vocal defenders of my leadership didn't glance at me for my approval to speak, but rather responded directly to Rodney and Cecilia's comments. This interchange operated to let us become better acquainted with these four people. It appeared that their true feelings were beginning to be displayed."

"Today Bert joined Cecilia and Rodney in their expressions of frustration and resistance towards my behavior. Also, Rodney joined Dick, Tina, Ned and Lena in their defense and clarification of my position."

"More people were beginning to venture out verbally. This helped us get to know each other as individuals. The exchange between the eight or nine people who talked was restrained, but more open and honest than so many of our past discussions. It also was quite spontaneous, although Rodney and Bert kept glancing at me before they would make any comment to the class. The others, however, just leaped in without checking for my approval."

"Some of the class was still quiet, except for an occasional comment like 'Right, I agree,' and body movements indicating agreement or disagreement.

Journal: Week 7. "More and more students revealed their feelings toward my style of leadership. Four people verbalized their anxiety and resentment toward me. About six of the quiet members agreed with them by gestures."

"In addition, there were about four or five of the silent class members who appeared not to want me to tell them what to do, but expected me to control this embarrassing discussion of the teacher."

"About five students stated that my style was 'just fine.' Nearly six of the silent class members seemed supportive of these points of view although they did not overtly commit themselves to them. Basically, less than one dozen students do the talking while the remainder of the class silently supports the differing views, views which seem polarized. More than one-half of the class, however, peeked at me for my reactions to the discussions. It appeared that, if we could work out this issue, and if my

behavior became generally acceptable, we would start moving, making decisions and becoming productive as a group."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 6. "From the comments today, it seemed that some students had been covertly assessing the goal-setting process, the productive level, and the dynamics of control in our class. Cecilia and Rodney blamed their apparent lack of goals and productivity on my non-direction. Dick, Tina, Ned and Lena asserted that the others should blame themselves, not the teacher who was offering assistance to everyone as he pursued his individual goals. These four seemed to value this opportunity to select and pursue their own interests, assisted by, rather than evaluated by the teacher."

"From the dialogue today, it appeared that several students have been giving our class situation and my role some serious thought. Ned's group expressed acceptance of the situation and my role and attempted to get the others to stop resisting it. This group also reacted favorably to the idea of my discussing their completed work with them rather than my simply marking up their papers."

"Those students who had projects and were keeping their journals have selected their goals and are now planning or completing them. These were to be the materials they evaluated. These people seemed receptive to the idea of assessing their own achievements. A few, however, still seemed to expect me to grade them. Those

without self-established goals implied that they expected me to evaluate them."

Journal: Week 7. About one half of the students who were pursuing their own interests seemed to be evaluating their experiences. Although some encountered difficulties, most of these contended that this was their problem. Several of the students, however, still expected me to ultimately evaluate them. The remainder of the group fully expected me to evaluate them."

A graphic presentation of the student behaviors observed during week six follows.

Graphic Examination of Student Behavior:
Weeks Six and Seven

In terms of climate, by the seventh week approximately 18 students were observed to behave as though they were participating in a traditional learning environment (Fig. 4). The behaviors noted included some verbalizing of anxiety, indicating a low trust, displaying formality and manifesting subservience. Seven students seemed receptive to the democratic learning environment verbalizing trust with a minimum of anxiety or formality.

In regards to control, by the seventh week about 15 students were observed to expect or demand that the teacher control their learning experiences. Ten students appeared to be receptive to the

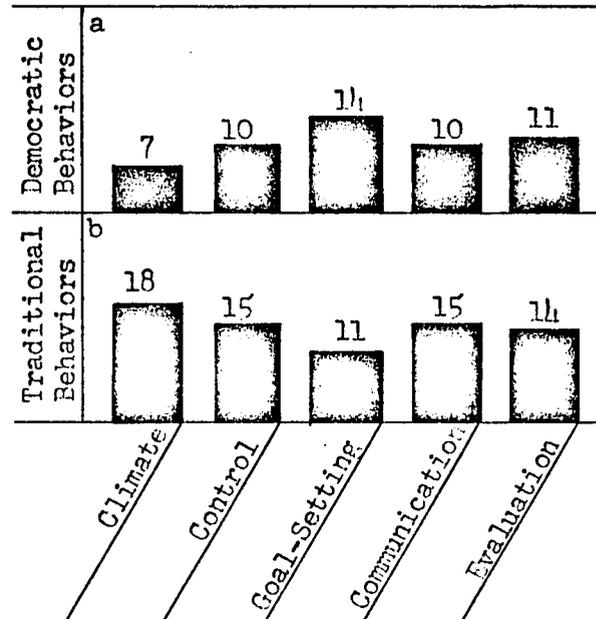


Figure 4. Student behaviors: week seven.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic by the end of week seven.

emergence of individual and group controls through democratic processes.

Concerning goal-setting, by the end of the seventh week approximately 11 students were expecting or demanding that the teacher provide goals for them. Fourteen students seemed to be involved in the process of goal-selection.

In terms of communications, by the seventh week 15 students were perceived to be expecting or demanding a teacher-channeled flow of information. Ten students appeared to be communicating spontaneously and openly.

In terms of evaluation, by the seventh week 14 students were observed to be expecting or demanding teacher assessment, while 11 students appeared to be involved in a process of self-evaluation.

The instructor analysis of the student behaviors observed during weeks six and seven follows.

Instructor Analysis of Student Behavior:
Weeks Six and Seven

Closely tied to the "testing" period, weeks four and five, was a period, weeks six and seven, which seemed to be characterized by student "confrontation" on the teacher-control issue. As the class entered this period, four subgroups were apparent.

The sixth and seventh week period appeared to be characterized by the verbal confrontation of the independents, those who supported the teacher's position, and the dependents, those who disapproved of the teacher's behavior. This confrontation took the form of open discussion regarding the teacher's non-directive posture in the class.

During this verbal confrontation, the independents tended to express their apparent approval of the teacher's attempt to encourage individual and group decision-making. This subgroup seemingly tried to explain the value of the teacher's position regarding goal-selection, evaluation, and the emergence of control. Through observable body language several silent members, the second subgroup, new independents, appeared to be supportive of this pro-teacher point of view.

The dependents, those apparently distressed with the teacher's behavior, confronted the independents on this issue. These students

articulated their feelings of frustration and anxiety. They seemed to attribute their own and the group's apparent lack of productivity to the teacher's laxity of control. This group also had a number of what appeared to be silent supporters, the fourth subgroup, "silent-dependents."

As more students articulated their views on this issue of control, the flow of communications seemed to become more open and spontaneous. Additionally, this interchange of opposing points of view seemed to help differentiate and identify one individual from another.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION AND EXAMINATION OF DATA:

WEEKS EIGHT THROUGH FIFTEEN

In Chapter 4 the journal excerpts and student evaluation for the first time period, weeks one through three, were presented and examined. In Chapter 5, the journal excerpts for weeks four and five, and six and seven were presented and examined. In Chapter 6 the data for the last two time periods, weeks eight and nine, and ten through fifteen, are presented and examined. Each of these time periods is presented in the same format as that used in Chapters 4 and 5, which was: (1) the excerpts from the journal, (2) the graphic examination of the observed student behaviors, (3) the student evaluation (in the final time period only), and (4) the instructor analysis of the student behaviors.

Journal Excerpts: Weeks Eight and Nine

During weeks eight and nine the focus of many students shifted from the teacher-control issue to attempts to function as a group and a readiness to be productive as individuals. Direct excerpts from the instructor's journal follow.

Climate

Journal: Week 8. "I asked the students, for next time, to please put in their journals an evaluative statement of what they had

done, were doing, and intended to do in our class. Then, after a long period of silence, Miguel suddenly stood up and walked out of the class. I followed him into the hall and asked if I could talk with him for a moment."

"What came out in our conversation was that he wanted to talk, to share ideas with the class, but he was shy because of his Mexican dialect. For the past few sessions, frustration had been building up in him because he got tired of waiting for the class to get involved; yet he didn't want to take over and lead the discussion for fear that someone might mock his dialect."

"While Miguel and I were in the hall, the rest of the class, on their own initiative, broke into small groups. By the end of our conversation, Miguel seemed to feel less frustrated and more ready to venture out with the class. Simply expressing his anxiety seemed to help."

"When we walked back into the room together I observed that those students who had projects were busy planning. These students seemed to be more at ease and acted as though they felt free to call on me for assistance. Some without projects seemed leery of me and tended to treat me in a rigid and formal manner. A few students were just beginning to refer to me as Pam. Some of the dependent students were clustered together when I walked in. Several of these people were doing homework while the others were simply rapping. These dependent students did not seem to be involved in productive, small group sessions. Their attitude seemed to be, 'Well, it's Pam's fault that I'm not working.'"

"When class ended, one of the previously quiet students came up and kneeled down by my desk. He handed me a piece of paper saying, 'It took me a long time to get this, but now I want you to see it.' The note read as follows:

When I was first scheduled for writting I was frightened because for one thing, I don't know how to spell very well, and sentence structure doesn't like me ether. I got here and found that I did't have to face these things: I could just slide by, but thats just no fun anymore. I would like to overcome my problems and never have any more to fear from writting.

"It seemed that Tim was now ready to trust me, that he was now ready after a long, battered affair with the language, to begin having real success patching up his writing skills."

Journal: Week 8. "Just as class was about to start a young man came up to me and spoke of his dislike for writing. 'I don't like to write,' he said, 'so if you don't give me an assignment I won't bother.' 'Do you write letters?' I asked. 'Yea.' 'Do you like to write letters?' 'Well -- sort of -- you know, once I got this letter from a girl friend of mine who lives on the Coast. Boy, it was so plain, so straight forward, I almost cried.'"

"I then seized the opportunity to talk about words and how words can affect one's behavior. By the end of our short visit this young man had decided to write something creative, something that would show others how he felt. He also stated his intention to polish up his essay writing."

"I reminded everyone to enter in their journals a statement of 'what they had done, were doing, and intended to do in our class.'"

Just then Cecilia strolled in beaming with pleasure. She came over and handed me a stack of themes and poems. 'Here,' she said, 'I'd like some comments.'

"When class started Phyllis observed,

'Sure a lot of people absent today.'

'Yea, and guess who they are,' added Tina. (Most of those absent were students observed to be dependents.)

'Speaking about that,' Ned began, 'I've been thinking about our last classes; seems like Rudy, Tina, and some of the rest of us are just running head-on into some of the others in here. We just squabble and never make plans as a whole class.'

Dick added, 'Right, let's call a cease fire and start spending class time working together.'

'OK,' Tina applauded. 'Let's not talk about it, let's do it. I've been wanting us to all go to a movie together. Anybody interested?'

'OK.' 'Sure.' 'Great.' 'Which one?' came the replies. 'Yeah, we can go and eat afterward,' someone added. A couple said they had to work so they wondered when we'd go."

"This group then proceeded to suggest some general plans. During this session I tried to blend into the group as a member. This was the most at ease, informal class we had had."

Journal: Week 9. As class was about to start, Lena, observed to be an independent, walked in and sat down. 'Hey, we missed you last time,' Tina said.

'Well,' Lena said, 'I kind of got fed up with this group; but I couldn't stay away. My curiosity got the better of me.'

'Yea, you missed a good class,' someone added.

"This day, Rodney, Bert, and a couple of the others I observed to be dependent students were again absent. About four of those absent last Wednesday were here today, almost as though they were taking turns. These four did not participate in our discussion, even though they were encouraged to. They were busy at other things including doing mathematics, reading a paper, and chatting. For those discussing the movie, the session was quite informal. More people seemed to be relaxing and seemed to be starting to feel comfortable with the informality of our classroom situation."

"For the benefit of those absent last time, I mentioned that the evaluation statement should be entered in the journals. As I did so, I handed Cecilia her themes saying, 'I really enjoyed several parts of both your essays and poetry. Let's sit down Friday and I'll point out your strengths.' She was elated, 'Phew, it makes me feel relieved to hear they're not terrible.'"

Journal: Week 9. A few minutes before class Andy came up to me, sat down, and asked if I had a second. He needed to talk with me. The next few minutes were hard on him as he expressed his anxiety, frustration, and resentment toward our class. He said that he was really having troubles with the class, that he didn't as yet have a project. 'But I do have these papers I want you to look at,' he said hesitantly."

"As I was reading a couple of them I saw his knees trembling, hands wringing, nervous fidgeting and twisting in his chair, and

glancing to the ceiling, all with a red face as if he was about to cry."

"'Nothing wrong with this,' I said casually. With a huge sigh he puffed, 'Well, it's how I feel. Pam, I'm one of those guys who needs to be told what to do. I've just been sitting around waiting for you to tell me what to do. I haven't done much of anything for this class. But I'm ready now. I've made the decision to do a lot of writing and learn about writing. Actually my main problem was that I didn't know where to start. So, a couple of days ago I got so upset I went to the library and got a stack of books on how other people get started writing.'"

"'Know how I wrote that?' he continued, pointing to the essay in my hand. 'Found an outline in one of those books and followed it. First, I wrote out all my ideas, categorized them, then just wrote the essay. Still have trouble knowing what to write about though.'"

"With that we chatted about his interests. After our brief consultation, Andy seemed much relieved and ready to start being productive."

"Just as class started, Phyllis said joyously, 'Before we even get started I've got to share something with all of you. I'm from the East Coast and a while ago I got really homesick. Pam suggested I write about it so I did. Let me tell you, it's really great to write out your feelings. It made me feel so much better to get it out, almost like talking to someone. Maybe this is silly, but if you haven't tried it, do. It helps me.'"

"Dick spoke up, 'Yea, and if you ever have to write technical reports, do what Pam suggested. I did. I went home one weekend, grabbed a cookbook, and made an apple pie. That night I sat down and wrote down the process I'd gone through. I wrote so that if someone would follow my instructions they could get the same end product.'"

"'How was it?' someone laughed. 'Well, I wrote an essay about it,' he answered. 'It had a delicious canned filling with a rotten homemade crust.' Everybody laughed."

"More and more students seemed to be dropping their masks and being themselves. They kid with me, confide in me, and seem to be free of the initial aloofness, treating me almost as a friend, not as a superior. Even so, slightly more than half a dozen students still treat me that way."

Control

Journal: Week 8. "While discussing the initial plans for the movie, some of the group planned to attend, it could be that we were more relaxed because most of those hostile to, or frustrated by me were absent. At least we were more at ease because the discussion wasn't that 'head-on' exchange which Ned had spoken of. Instead, we were making plans to carry out Tina's suggestion, and the group's accepted goal, of going to a movie. During this planning, no one person dominated the conversation. We all agreed. The project seemed appealing enough to lure everyone to participate in the planning."

Journal: Week 9. "Someone said to those who were absent the past few times, 'You guys missed some great classes. We decided to go to a movie and eat afterwards.'"

"'I can't go,' Rodney snapped, 'I work.' 'Me, too,' said another. 'How much does it cost?' asked a third. 'About three bucks,' was the answer. 'Can't afford it,' he grumbled."

"Some of those hostile toward me seemed unexcited by the prospect of going to a movie as a class. Others were curious about it, asking where, when, etc. Then Rudy interjected, 'Ned also pointed out last week that some of us guys are just arguing with some of you other guys, so we never get anywhere in here. Then Tina suggested the movie and we thought planning for that might get us together.' To this Rodney sneered, 'Well, I can't go so why waste my time planning for it?'"

"A long silence ensued. Then Lena said, 'Maybe there's something you'd like us all to do sometime.' Gerardo replied, 'I said let's go to the airport about the first week of class but nobody listened.'"

"Lena to Rodney, 'How about you?' 'Look,' he said, 'we've been through all of this before.' Then looking at me he stated, 'Bert and I want to work on something together. Can we go next door?'"

"'If you'd like to,' I replied. 'We'll be anxious to hear your plans.' As Bert was about to go out the door he said, 'Anybody want to join us?' at which two of the quiet, silent-dependent, students looked at me for my approval, then stood up and walked

out. When they left there were expressions of dismay, sighs, silence and shrugged shoulders."

"'We can go to my house for the pot-luck,' Rudy suggested breaking the silence and starting another planning session."

"Several students asked for my opinions about our plans. They sought opinions from each member of the group about this. I was not expected to direct or inform, but rather share my point of view with the others. As the salads, deserts, and transportation issues arose, various individuals lead the conversation. No one person dominated. Most everyone seemed to be interested in each person's ideas.

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 8. "In all, about 40 percent of the students were apparently without projects (about 11 people still expected me to give them assignments), while about 60 percent were selecting or had selected their goals"

Journal: Week 9. "It appeared that Tina's goal of trying to get the group together to work as a whole was partially accomplished. In this ninth week there seemed to be slightly over half a dozen students who expected me to give them assignments. The rest were at various stages in the goal-selection process.

Communication

Journal: Week 9. The discussion on Monday was member-centered. I was not expected to control the flow of information. Nearly

everyone in this planning group made verbal contributions throughout the class period."

"Most class members were very relaxed. They laughed and cracked jokes. Side conversations would arise only to have the parties rejoin the main discussion. These spontaneous asides didn't impede but, rather they supported our decision-making. Recurrent questions were about the time, place, and cost of the movie."

Journal: Week 9. (Wednesday) "Once the four dissident members had gone next door to discuss their plans the class seemed more at ease. As the planning unfolded, members conversed openly, spontaneously, and with good humor. Most everyone contributed comments to our discussion. Some class members who had been quiet spoke up."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 9. "It appeared that the seven or so students without projects were spending their energies blaming me for their non-productivity. One of these students, however, seemed receptive to self-evaluation. Of the 15 or so students with specific, self-established goals, all seemed receptive to accepting the responsibility for assessing their own learning experiences.

A graphic display of the behaviors recorded in the instructor journal during weeks eight and nine follows.

Graphic Examination of Student Behavior:
Weeks Eight and Nine

In terms of climate, by the end of the ninth week approximately eight students were observed to act out their anxiety, low trust and social distance (Fig. 5). About 14 students were observed as being receptive to and participating in the democratic learning environment, acting out their trust in an informal, equal, manner.

In regard to control, by the end of the ninth week approximately nine students were observed to be expecting or demanding that the teacher control their learning experiences. Approximately 13 students seemed receptive to the democratic emergence of individual and group control.

Concerning goal-setting, by the end of the ninth week seven students seemed to expect or demand that the teacher establish their goals. Fifteen students appeared to be involved, at various stages, in the process of goal selection.

In terms of communication, by the ninth week, six students were observed to be expecting or demanding that the teacher channel the flow of information in the classroom. Sixteen students seemed receptive to the spontaneous and open flow of communication.

With regard to evaluation, by the end of the ninth week six students seemed to expect or demand that the teacher assess their learning experiences, while 16 students seemed to be receptive to and participating in the process of self-evaluation.

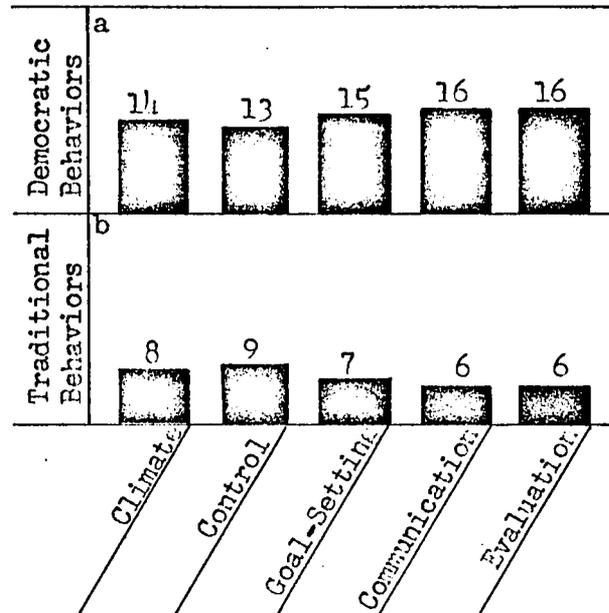


Figure 5. Student behaviors: week nine.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic by the end of week nine.

The instructor's analysis of the student behaviors observed during weeks eight and nine follows.

Instructor Analysis of Student Behavior:
Weeks Eight and Nine

During weeks eight and nine the direction of the student behavior patterns in class seemed to shift. The focus of the students' discussions during this period moved from the expectation and demand for teacher control to that of how the individual class members could work together as a group with emergent democratic control.

By the end of the ninth week period, it seemed that the first seven week period of the semester could be viewed as a major phase in student behavior in which the students tried to become acclimated to the teacher's style of leadership. This major "acclimating phase" could be seen as containing three subphases: initial shock, testing, and confrontation. Examination of the journal, through week seven, indicated that this major phase in student behavior patterns was characterized by student concern regarding the teacher control issue. The non-directive style of the teacher using democratic processes was apparently unexpected and "shock" producing. Eventually this unexpected teacher-student relationship was "tested" by the students. Finally, the control issue was surfaced in verbal "confrontation."

Following this major "acclimating phase" in weeks one through seven, there seemed to be another major phase: a "readiness phase" which seemed to occur during weeks eight and nine. During this period, the students shifted their attention from the teacher control issue to the issue of functioning as a group.

As the group entered this "readiness phase" the students seemed to fall into four subgroups: the independents; the new independents; the verbal dependents; and the silent dependents. In the first seven weeks the attempts of these subgroups to resolve the teacher control issue had been unsuccessful. It seemed that the teacher's non-directive posture increased the polarization of these subgroups.

In this "readiness phase" the independents, who attempted to clarify the teacher control issue in confrontation, seemed to realize that polarized arguing was non-productive. Some independents, therefore, appeared to try moving the groups' focus from the teacher control issue to a group control issue.

The dependents and the silent-dependents together with a couple of independents appeared to act out their anxiety by absence from class or by refusing to participate with the class.

Following are the journal excerpts and student evaluations of the last time period, weeks 10 through 15.

Journal Excerpts:
Weeks 10 through 15

During weeks 10 through 15, many students moved from preoccupation with efforts to work as a group and the individual readiness for productivity, to the selection, planning, fulfillment and evaluation of individual and group learning experiences. Direct excerpts from the instructor journal follow.

Climate

Journal: Week 10. "Just before class was to start, Andy came up to me and thrust a stack of papers at me saying, 'Your way is right! Freedom is the best way to learn.' Then Kathy, who had previously expressed her boredom with technical writing, the sort of writing she was called upon to do in her occupation, came into the room with a bag of chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies and announced, 'Guess what I decided to do? I'm going to write a play.'

Yes, I've always wanted to try it and by God, I might as well do it now.' After class we went to my office and I gave her a number of plays and materials about play writing."

"Next, Rudy and Ned stood up saying, 'May we have your attention? We're going next door to discuss the results of our high school survey. We'll be right back.' Just after they left Anna looked around the group saying, 'What did that scene in the airplane mean?' This led us into a discussion of the film we had seen the week before. Those people who did not go to the movie were silent and appeared to feel left out of the conversation. The rest of the group discussed their interpretations of the movie. I perceived that the group expected me to behave as a member of the group."

Control

Journal: Week 10. "No one person dominated our evaluation today. Many appeared to respect the differing opinions within the group. At one point Anna asked me for my opinion. When I explained what I thought, some agreed, some disagreed, and others said they'd never looked at it that way before. I then took the opportunity to speak briefly on the various "critical approaches" to literature, after which four or five students said they were going to read and analyze the book upon which the film we had seen was based."

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 10. "With a few minutes left in the session, Ned, Rudy, and Dick returned to class from next door saying, 'Is it OK with everyone if we make our presentation next time?' Cecilia immediately spoke up, 'And by the way, I'm putting together a poetry magazine. So get me a copy of your poems everyone.' 'I'd like to present a pictorial essay,' Phyllis interjected. 'Is next Monday OK with everyone?' Some class members assented, 'Sure!' 'And I can get my play together in about 10 days,' Kathy chimed. 'I've already got it almost all planned.'"

"'I've got a surprise presentation,' Tina added. 'Is it OK for me to have next Wednesday?' 'I'm still developing my film, so I'm not quite sure when I'll be ready,' Tim announced. 'I'll keep you posted.' Then someone added, 'Wait a second, Wednesday's a holiday, so let's move everything up a day.'"

"Gerardo then leaned toward me and asked if he could see me after class. It was then that he asked me if I could get the videotape machine for his presentation. 'When do you want it?' I asked. 'Just tell me a couple of days in advance and we'll set it up.' He wasn't certain when he'd be ready. He explained that his presentation was a series of skits that exemplify the rhetorical devices used in TV commercials."

"As he said, 'OK, I'll tell you when I'm ready,' I noticed Lena anxiously waiting to talk with me. After Gerardo left she came over and sat down, giving the appearance of being troubled. I asked her how things were going."

"Well,' she began, 'my project is a real success. I'm organizing a paperback book shop for down at the large room at the end of the hall but I've got a problem. I'm so upset. I've got a term paper to write for another class. I've never written one before. I don't even know what to do it on.' She proceeded to tell me that the paper was for a psychology class. 'The whole thing doesn't interest me a bit,' she continued. 'I've never done footnotes and all that stuff.'"

"We talked a while about her specific interest in psychology, then I said, 'This kind of paper is simple. We can work on it together. Let's go to my office so you can get some materials on how to put it together.' 'Wow, that's a load off my mind,' she sighed."

Communication

Journal: Week 10. "This day's discussion was open and spontaneous. Various points of view were presented by individuals while others clarified or elaborated the views. Nearly all of the students who had seen the film expressed themselves frequently throughout our 'interpretations' session."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 10. "About a dozen students participated in a discussion (evaluation) of what the film meant to them."

Journal Excerpts:
Week 11

Climate

Journal: Week 11. "Cecilia announced that she and Carolyn were working on the magazine together. They requested that all contributions be turned in as soon as possible. Next came inquiries by some people regarding the required length or subject of their contributions. Cecilia answered, 'We're open to anything.' Then Tina exclaimed, 'Guess what, group! My letter was in this morning's paper. Can I read it to you?' 'Sure,' came the reply. She read it, passed it around the class, then taped it to the makeshift bulletin board that we had put on our wall. We then proceeded to revert back to the polarizing issue of my teaching style in the class. Four students defended me while two others expressed their resentment of this style. Considerable tension was produced in this incident."

Control

Journal: Week 11. (Wednesday) "While Tina was taping her letter to the bulletin board, Rodney looked at me and asked, 'Is everybody supposed to present something?' 'It's up to the individual,' I answered. 'What if we don't, will it lower our grade?' 'That's up to you, Rodney, since you are evaluating yourself,' Rudy replied. Bert then looked at me and asked, 'How are you going to grade us anyway?'"

"'As I have pointed out from the first day, we are evaluating ourselves continually,' I replied. 'At the end of the semester you will designate the grade you feel you have achieved.' 'Yeah,' he retorted, 'but I haven't done much in here so I can't grade myself.'"

"'That's your problem,' Rudy observed. 'Some of us in here have, besides, we've all known all along that we're to be evaluating ourselves.' 'But some of us are going to the U. so we need a good grade. How are we supposed to grade ourselves when we haven't been made to do anything in here?' Rodney said looking at me."

"'Wow,' Ned exclaimed, 'That doesn't make sense. Pam has said all along that we are grading our own accomplishments at the end of the semester. When I realized she meant it, I decided to see what I could do. I'm the only one anyway who knows what I'm getting out of this class.'"

"'Yeah,' Phyllis added. 'For example, how could Pam grade me on my pictorial essay? How could she know all that I learned from it?' Rodney heatedly responded, 'That's why we should have been assigned themes.'"

"Lena joined the discussion, 'Listen, we're just going to go around and around if we get started on that again. If you guys want to write themes, do it.' 'We have,' both Rodney and Bert said. 'Did you show them to Pam?' Lena asked. 'Some of them,' Bert answered. 'What did she say?' Lena continued. 'She showed

me where I'd made some mistakes and explained why there were mistakes. So, I did the papers over and gave 'em to her again.'

'So,' Lena said, 'grade yourself on that.'

"'But she didn't put a grade on the paper,' Rodney replied.

'But what did you learn from it?' Ned asked."

"It seemed that we were back to the old issue of my non-directive classroom style. Those with goals defended me from those who seemed frustrated with me. Possibly this control issue had not been fully resolved for some -- merely surfaced."

"Those few, five or six, without projects were still anxious and resentful of my class behavior. These individuals were still upset that I had not set up the rules, standard, and rewards. The rest of the class, in varying degrees, supported the self-initiation and self-evaluation dynamics of our class. Those with self-selected goals, 15 or 16 people, seemed to accept my behavior. They attempted today to clarify and support my position."

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 11. "Those half dozen without projects appeared to blame their lack of productivity on me. Those with projects supported my style, which was allowing them to pursue their own interests: experiences that have meaning for them."

Communication

Journal: Week 11. (Wednesday) "The communication was like watching a tennis match. The pros and cons were presented in angry interchanges with accompanying shrugged shoulders, groans and sighs."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 11. "Those without projects were evaluating their classroom experience as frustrating and disappointing. They isolated me and my teaching style as the cause of this frustration. I wasn't the 'somebody to tell us what to do' type teacher they wanted. Those with projects evaluated my behavior as being beneficial to their learning processes, giving them the room to learn. Those in the process of goal selection, planning, or fulfillment appeared to be participating in a self-assessment of their accomplishments. The remaining half dozen students expected or demanded that the teacher evaluate them.

Journal Excerpts:
Week 12

Climate

Journal: Week 12. (Monday) "Rodney and some of the other dependent students were absent today. As class began, Tim announced that his slide show would be ready by Wednesday. Cecilia then asked the group if she could share her story, the contest entry, with the whole class. Cecilia had been consulting with me on this story for some time now."

"The class was much more casual this day than last Wednesday with its tension-producing confrontation on the control issue. When someone mentioned the absences, I sensed a rising frustration within the class over the old issue which kept us from attaining

harmony as an entire group. Once we got into our discussion about Cecilia's story, however, the group became relaxed and informal once more."

Control

Journal: Week 12. "Cecilia read us her story, then there was a discussion. She asked those who criticized particular portions of her story to elaborate or clarify their comments. I then pointed out the positive techniques Cecilia had used in terms of short story writing and gave a brief outline of the traditional short story devices. The class was receptive to this discussion. About five people said that they were going to try writing a short story in order to test out my suggestions."

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 12. (Monday) "Writing this short story was one of Cecilia's goals. She had selected, planned and, with a few touch-ups, was now about to send her story off to the contest."

Communication

Journal: Week 12. (Monday) "The communications directed by Cecilia were spontaneous and interactive in nature. Approximately 14 or 15 people commented on her writing. Several asked me for clarification and examples of my discussion concerning the various devices used by short story writers."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 12. (Monday) "Ultimately Cecilia's story would be evaluated by the audience she wrote it for, the contest judges. Indicative of Cecilia's movement toward self-evaluation was her acceptance of some of the student's criticisms and her defense against others. As a learning experience, this piece of writing introduced Cecilia to the dynamics of short story writing with the selection of the audience and subject."

Journal Excerpts:
Wednesday, Week 12

Climate

Journal: Week 12. "Tim presented his slide show. The class was very much at ease, jocular and open this day. I was apparently expected to act as a member of the group."

"Tim had his two projectors and a record player already set up when we entered the room. He had put the production together from scratch. It was a commentary on Tucson's pollution problem. He had gone out into the community and taken photos of the various kinds of pollution throughout the city. The dual screen visual was accompanied by an audio -- a rock tune, the lyrics of which supported his visual, pollution theme."

Control

Journal: Week 12. "The whole show presented by Tim took about 35 minutes. When it was over, everyone applauded his professional presentation. The last shot of the presentation was the symbolic

sprouting of a new sprig from a charred stump, implying 'There's hope!'"

"The class had many questions. 'Where do you get that shot?' 'How did you put it together?' 'Who's that record by?' they asked. Then Tim consulted the group. 'What did you think of it as a composition?' 'What do you mean?' someone asked. 'Well,' he began, 'when I first decided to do this slide show Pam showed me how to write an essay. I tried to use some of her suggestions in this show and I'd like to know how it was as a pictorial essay.' 'How do you write an essay?' someone asked. 'Have Pam tell you -- she'd do it better than I could,' Tim answered.

"At the request of the class, I gave my presentation of about seven minutes on how to write an effective essay. I had already shared this with about 14 individuals outside of class. When I finished, Lena said to Tim, 'You had an attention getter and your thesis presented in your first scenes. Then you developed that thesis and concluded with a neat comment about the future. I thought it was great.' Dick added, 'It had continuity too. I could follow just what you were saying.'"

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 12. "The slide show was a project Tim had selected, planned, produced, and now shared with the class. He then asked for an evaluation by the audience. I took this opportunity to ask Tim to share with us his evaluation of the experience."

Communication

Journal: Week 12. "Tim ran his show and opened up the discussion, then requested that I share my hints on how to write an essay. The questions were spontaneous. Ninety percent of the class participated in the discussion."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 12. "Tim's audience was pleased with the performance. Most criticisms regarding the photos, music, screen approach, and his use of an essay formula were positive. More importantly, Tim was able to confidently articulate the elements of essay writing as they applied in his pictorial essay. Just as the class was about to depart, Tina reminded us that her presentation would be Monday."

Journal Excerpts:Week 15Climate

Journal: Week 15. "Cecilia entered, her arms loaded with the magazines she and Carolyn had put together. She set them down saying, 'I'll be right back.' She returned five minutes later with a large cardboard box filled with beef and bean tamales, as well as some traditional Mexican pastries."

"The class had been very informal these last few weeks. Most of the people in the class now treated me like a fellow learner and a resource person. Most seemed to trust me. Only a couple

of students appeared to be anxious about or non-trusting of me. All but a couple addressed me as Pam."

Control

Journal: Week 15. "Cecilia proceeded to set up the plates and utensils, then told us to serve ourselves. 'Pick up a magazine, too. You can read while you munch,' she invited. We proceeded to eat and read poetry. We were a noisy group this day. We sounded like 'Ladies Aid.'"

"Everyone thanked Cecilia for her kind gesture. On this, our last day of regular classes, it seemed to me that about four students had spent the entire semester waiting for me to take over the class. The rest of the group seemed quite content to participate in controlling the class and their own learning experiences."

Goal-Setting

Journal: Week 15. "As the class was ending, I mentioned again that this was the last class period since we would be conducting self-evaluations in the next days before vacation. There was silence. A wave of melancholy seemed to sweep through the room. Ned said, 'Gee, I wish we were just starting.' Several agreed."

Gerardo: 'Yeh, I was just getting started.'

Phyllis: 'I just got started . . . but I'm going to write over Xmas. Pam, will you read it when we get back?'

Miguel: 'Thanks a lot. This is the first class I've ever had where I really learned something.'

Andy: 'My wife said to tell you thanks, Pam. You're the only person to ever get me interested in learning.'

Norm: 'I didn't do very much, a presentation, I mean, but I sure learned a lot. I feel like I'm just starting.'

Dorothy: 'It took me a while to catch on to what you were trying to do but it's really great. Next time I'll be able to start right off.'

"In this last session it appeared that all but about four students had participated to some degree in the self-selection of their goals."

Communication:

Journal: Week 15. "Communication was very open, spontaneous and interactive. Students were getting each other's addresses and phone numbers, saying 'sorry it's over,' 'nice knowing you,' 'see you next semester,' and expressing their feelings about our class."

"By this last session, all but about six students had been participating in a spontaneous member-member interaction."

Evaluation

Journal: Week 15. "In this final session, it appeared that all but about the four who had not pursued their own interests were receptive to self-assessment of their learning experiences."

Graphic Examination of Student Behaviors: Weeks 10 through 15

A graphic display of the behaviors recorded in the teacher journal follows.

By the 15th week, in terms of climate, two students were observed to behave as though they were participating in a traditional learning environment of anxiety, formality, low trust and subordination (Fig. 6). Twenty students seemed to be receptive to and participate in a democratic learning environment, displaying trust, informality and equality.

In terms of control, by the 16th week six students seemed to expect or demand that the teacher control their learning experiences. Sixteen students appeared to be receptive to and participating in the democratic emergence of individual and group controls.

With regard to goal-setting, by the 15th week four students seemed to expect or demand that the teacher select their goals. Eighteen students appeared to be at various points in the process of self-goal selection, planning or completing the chosen tasks.

Concerning communications, by the 15th week six students appeared to expect or demand that the instructor channel the flow of communications, whereas 16 students seemed receptive to and willing to participate in an open and spontaneous flow of communications.

By the 15th week, in terms of evaluation, about four students appeared to expect or demand that the teacher assess their learning experiences, whereas 18 students seemed to be participating in the assessment of their own learning experiences.

In an effort to check the accuracy of the teacher's recorded perception with regard to observable student behaviors, a student self-class-instructor evaluation was conducted.

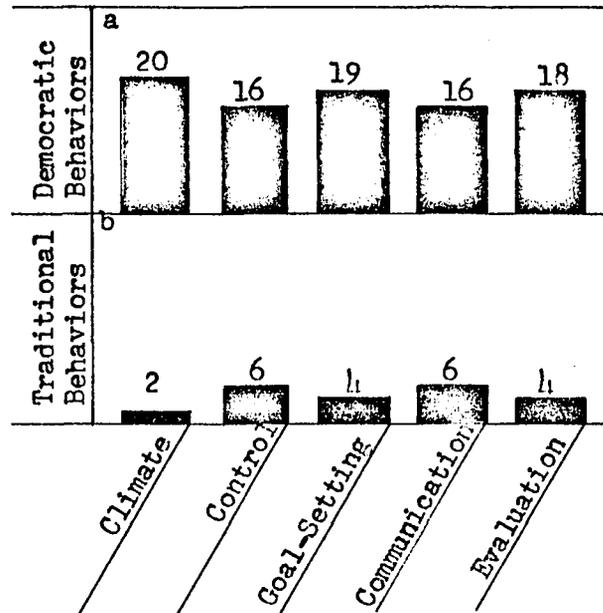


Figure 6. Student behaviors: week 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic by the end of week 15.

Student Evaluations:
Weeks 10 through 15

At the beginning of the fourth and 16th weeks, the class participated in an evaluation of the self-class-instructor type. Below the results of the 16th week evaluation are presented. This evaluation, which involved 22 students, contained 18 forced-answer questions, the responses to which are presented first. These are followed by the responses to an open-ended question.

Forced-Answer Questions

1. Before attending Ironwood College, had you ever been asked to participate in the selection, planning, and evaluation of your own learning experiences?
Yes - 2 No - 20
2. Did the teacher encourage our class to be formal or informal?
Formal - 0 Informal - 22
3. Do you see most of the people in our class now as acting formal or informal?
Formal - 1 Informal - 21
4. Do you see yourself as acting formal or informal?
Formal - 7 Informal - 15
5. Did the teacher try to dominate and control this class?
Yes - 0 No - 22
6. Do you see most of the people in this class now as expecting or wanting the teacher to run the class?
Yes - 1 No - 21
7. If we were to start the semester over today, would you want her to run the class?
Yes - 4 No - 19
8. Did the teacher set up your goals or try to help you select your own (underline or circle)?
Set them up - 0 Helped me select - 22
9. If we were to start the semester over today, do you feel that most of the people in the class would want or expect the teacher to set up their goals?
Yes - 3 No - 19
10. If we were to start over would you like her to set up your goals?
Yes - 4 No - 18

11. Did the teacher dominate the discussions or encourage everyone to participate?

Dominated - 0 Encouraged participation - 22

12. Were communications in this class open and spontaneous or limited and controlled?

Open and spontaneous - 20 Limited and controlled - 2

13. Do you see most of the people in this class as communicating openly and spontaneously.

Yes - 20 No - 2

14. Were you communicating openly and spontaneously?

Yes - 14 No - 8

15. Did the teacher test and grade you or encourage you to continuously evaluate yourself?

Tested - 0 Self - 22

16. Do you see most of the people in the class now as wanting or expecting her to grade them?

Yes - 3 No - 19

17. Do you want her to assess your achievements for this semester?

Yes - 3 No - 19

18. Do you want her to grade you?

Yes - 8 No - 14

Open-Ended Question

Question: Using your fourth week evaluation, restate your first reaction to Pam's asking what you wanted to do in this course. Then comment on how you feel about that now.

The students' initial responses to these questions were returned to them. In that which follows are representative samples of responses.

Student Responses:

- A. I was dumb-founded. Having been scared of what I was gonna have to do; I was just dumb-founded. After my dumbness wore out, I really felt relaxed to move in any direction in our class. Having gone to only structured classes before, I now feel that I am prepared to move easier in any other un-structured course. I am thankful for having an instructor who lets us move in any direction. I am sorry that some of my fellow classmates didn't move as easily as I did.
- B. I felt kind of scared and nervous and I couldn't think of a damn thing to answer you with. Now I feel that I'm just glad you did because it made us think for a change; it made us make decisions for our own sake. It made us do something that we were interested in and enjoyed, causing us to do better work.
- C. My first reaction was a little shocked only because I had no idea of what I wanted to do or what was expected of me. Now I'm sure I could easily tell anyone what I want to do in any of my classes. Like I said before, the first semester I think is the hardest because no one really knows what to expect.
- D. At first, I thought that the instructor was wrong. I was wrong.
- E. I was really relieved and happy to hear her ask what we wanted to do in the class. Immediately this took away a lot of the fears I had about taking a course like this. I honestly and sincerely hope that more communications teachers adopt this type of system in their classes. By eliminating my fears of writing I think I have developed a sense of confidence in my writing that has helped me tremendously. With this confidence I am not hesitant to begin writing about anything.
- F. My first reaction was panic; I had no idea what I should learn so I didn't know what to tell her I wanted to learn -- what I should learn meaning information I'd need for transfer to a four-year college. I think at this point, I've gained much and most importantly I find myself able to communicate in more ways than one.
- G. My first reaction was, 'But, I am here to learn, and she is here to tell me what to learn.' The way I feel now is I can't believe I ever thought that way. In here I was left free to work on what I thought would delight or benefit me most. If I know what I need, then nobody has to stuff things

down my throat that I don't need. Just let me go about my own way, with the aid of the teacher, and I'll work out my own problems.

- H. I was really shocked. I had never been exposed to this kind of classroom experience. I didn't react, perhaps I'm just beginning to react. At first I was really down on it, but, now I can see that it can really work. I gave you a few of my writings and getting them back without big red marks really meant a lot to me, it encouraged me to write more.
- I. I found it very hard to accept. After being channeled through so much bull all my life. I found it very frightening to realize that someone was giving me the opportunity to explore the areas of which I felt were important. It is a freedom that is very hard to accept. As for where my head is at now, I feel totally free. I can truly say I'm now starting to receive an education. Things seem more real to me in school and I can relate them to my everyday life.
- J. My first reaction was OK, I'll think about it, but as time passed it never got thought about. I was so used to being told what to do I didn't know what to do with freedom. I realize I took advantage of it. Now I know in future unstructured classes I will work on my own.
- K. My first reaction to Pam's asking the class what we wanted to do, was one of complete bewilderment. Never in any past writing class were we asked what we wanted to do -- we were always told. So when we were asked, it was quite unnerving.
- L. Having previous writing classes from the University of Arizona, I half expected Communications to be a cross between Dante's Hell and a concentration camp in Hitler's Germany, and I envisioned the instructor to be some hideous unspeakable horror, dredged up from the mind of a mad cartoonist.

From the depths of my subconscious, I envisioned the instructor to be clad in a skin tight black jump suit, brandishing a twelve foot long bull whip, screaming at the top of her lungs, what to think, what to write, and what to feel.

But from the third week up until now I have been gaining more and more self-confidence in my ability to communicate in written form. No longer am I self-conscious in my writing. Although I still need a lot more work and practice, I feel my writing ability has improved.

M. Good God, I was terrified, I had been to my other classes and heard them say the same thing, that we could choose and find relevance for ourselves, but always underneath the calm, under the mask, there was no mistaking the instructors knew what they wanted us to know. The confidence and trust that they tried to emit just didn't come through as loud and clear as their anxiousness, and apprehensive, and reservations about what we as students could do on our own. Not Pam, I knew she meant it and it scared the hell out of me; I knew immediately she wouldn't break down, that if I was going to learn, somewhere inside I would have to find a desire, a need, as it wouldn't happen because it was going to be my responsibility, my first, to learn.

When I entered the class, I expected to be given assignments and to be told exactly what to do to get an A. Now I realize that the easiest way to get an A is the fastest way to nothing. It took awhile for me to find that part of me still eager to learn. With a little confidence I slowly felt my way along the dark corridors of my mind. With the faith Pam had in me, I found my way out.

N. I was confused and lost. Trying to accomplish something in an unstructured class is extremely hard for me. When I am told what to do I do it, but I have great fun trying to get out of it. In a class where there's no freedom I try to fight for it but in a class of pure freedom I'm lost. But now I feel I have forced myself to do something and each day I force a little more and get a little more done. I did like our class. I've learned how to handle myself in freedom and to force myself to do things. For me it's the biggest accomplishment.

Summary of Student Evaluation:
Week 16

According to the forced-answer responses by the 15th week approximately 21 students observed that most of their fellow students seemed to be behaving in an informal manner. Twenty-one students observed that most of the others apparently did not want or expect the teacher to control the class (Fig. 7). Nineteen students indicated that most of their classmates apparently did not want or expect the teacher to select their goals. Twenty students noted that most

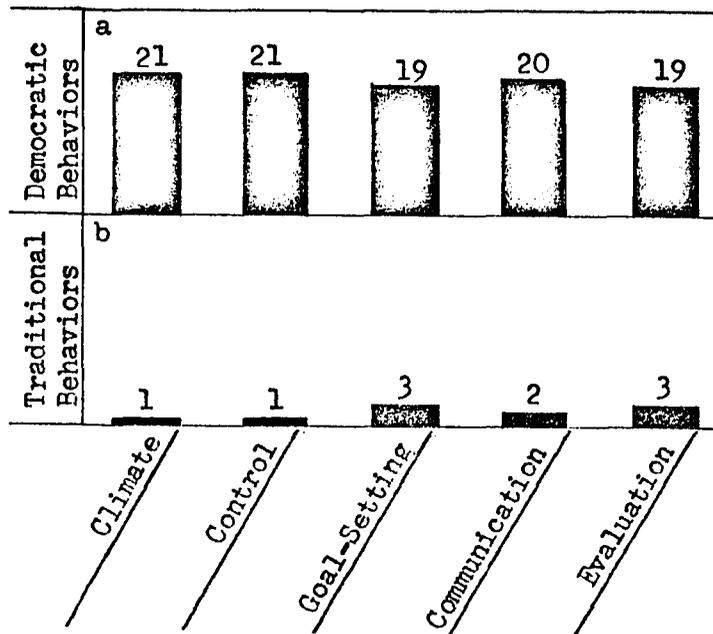


Figure 7. Student evaluation: week 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers indicate the total number of students who observed most of their classmates as behaving in a democratic or traditional manner.

of the class members seemed to be communicating in an open and spontaneous manner. Nineteen students observed that most of their fellow students appeared to not want or expect the teacher to assess their learning experiences.

By the end of the 15th week, according to the open-ended responses, many students felt more at ease; better able to select and pursue their own goals; better able to communicate openly; and better able to assess their own learning experiences.

The instructor analysis of the student behaviors follows.

Instructor Analysis of Student Behaviors:
Weeks 10 through 15

Closely following the "readiness phase" of weeks eight and nine was what appeared to be another major phase in the patterns of student behavior. This phase during weeks 10 through 15 might be called an "actualizing phase." During weeks 10 through 15 many students seemed to move from concern with functioning as a group to the actual selection, planning, fulfilling, and evaluating of their own learning experiences.

In this individual and group struggle to move from the teacher-control issue to individual and group productivity, many students appeared to become independents and new independents. When the semester ended, however, some few individuals still seemed to be dependents.

During the actualizing phase, there appeared to be two distinct types of behavior observed, one of actual productivity, the other self-evaluative expressions concerning the students' levels of competence and productivity. Some felt that they worked less than they should have or were capable of. The dependents blamed the teacher for this failure; the independents blamed themselves. Some noted that they achieved more than their original goals outlined. Others stated an intention to continue with new projects once the class was completed.

Considering both the teacher journal and the student evaluations, by the end of the 15th week, in terms of climate, many students were behaving in an informal manner with a minimum of anxiety in a

learning environment wherein everyone was considered an equal. In regard to control, many students were participating in controlling the class as the need arose. Similarly, many students were participating in the process of selecting, planning and pursuing their own goals. About three-fourths of the class was participating in an open, spontaneous flow of communications, while nearly all of the students were participating in a process of assessing their own performance based on their self-selected goals.

The group seemed to develop progressively through the acclimating, readiness, and actualizing phases, with the potential for frequent regression and vacillation, mainly due to the control issue, between these phases.

Individual movement through the acclimating, readiness, and actualizing phases seemed to be progressive. Once a student reached the point of being an independent he did not regress to being a dependent. Similarly, he rarely regressed from his own personal actualizing state once having reached that phase, to any of the previous phases or subphases.

Many students, who at the formation of the group were dependents, seemed to develop into independents. Some few of these students, however, apparently remained dependent throughout the group's existence. These students seemed to be arrested at various points within the acclimating and readiness phases. Even so, many of the dependents expressed the feeling, in the latter days of the semester, that if

they were to be in this democratic processes classroom situation again, they would be better able to take command of their learning experiences.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the student behaviors observed when the investigator attempted to facilitate a democratic learning process in her college freshman composition classroom. The study was conducted in a natural setting in which the investigator, functioning as a participant-observer, recorded the student behaviors she observed in an instructor journal. Twenty-five students registered at random for the instructor's course. This group comprised the population for the investigation.

The categorical framework developed and used in this study was derived from sociological theory. This framework included five elements: climate, control, goal-setting, communication, and evaluation. It was used to organize the study, collect the data and present the findings.

Summary of the Findings

According to the instructor's observations and analysis of the student behaviors, the group members seemed to move through three major phases including: (1) an acclimating phase; (2) a readiness phase; and (3) an actualizing phase.

In the seven weeks of the acclimating phase, the first three weeks of the semester appeared to be a period of an initial shock. This initial shock was characterized by student resistance of the teacher's style of leadership. It involved: (1) the students' expecting or demanding that the teacher control the processes of goal-selection, communication and evaluation; (2) the students' variably expressing formality, anxiety and subservience; (3) the students' recurrent demanding of clarification regarding the teacher's expectations; and (4) the students' inadequate listening and interacting.

Next, weeks four and five of the acclimating phase seemed to be a testing period. This testing was characterized by a general questioning of the teacher's stated position on climate, control, goal-setting, communications and evaluation issues; and by the emergence of four subgroups. One group of students, referred to as independents, supported the teacher's non-authoritarian style of teaching. A second vocal group, referred to as dependents, expressed its anxiety concerning the teacher's non-directive style. The vocal independents were accompanied by a group of silent, "new independent" supporters while the dependents were supported by a group of non-vocal, "silent-dependents."

Finally, weeks six and seven of the acclimating phase were considered to be a period of confrontation. This confrontation was characterized by overt, verbal challenges of the independents and dependents, on the issue of the teacher's non-directive classroom style. In summary, then, the first seven weeks of the semester

appeared to be an acclimating phase during which time the students seemed to make efforts to adjust to the democratic processes environment.

Weeks eight and nine of the semester constituted another major phase in student behavior; the readiness phase. This two week period was characterized by a number of students displaying their readiness to participate in the process of selecting, planning, completing and evaluating their learning experiences. During this period also, some of those students referred to as independents and new independents seemed to resolve the teacher-control issue. They then appeared to make efforts to help the group work together. Those referred to as dependents and silent-dependents, on the other hand, seemed to be at odds with the rest of the group on the teacher-control issue. By appearing not to participate, these students tended to inhibit total group cohesiveness.

Weeks ten through 15 constituted the last major phase of student behavior; the actualizing phase. This period was characterized by individual and group productivity in reaching self-selected goals; and by self-evaluative expressions concerning the level of productivity. In this productivity period, many students shifted their focus from trying to work as a group to the process of individual and group selection, formulation, completion and evaluation of their learning experiences. This actualizing tended to be accomplished in an informal, interactive climate with relationships of trust and respect. Finally, in the self-evaluation period the students expressed

feelings regarding their levels of competence and productivity. During this period, some students indicated that they had accomplished less than they should or could have. The dependents attributed this failure to the teacher's non-directive style, while the independents considered this their own responsibility. Several students indicated that they had accomplished considerably more than they had originally expected. Many students noted that they planned to continue their projects or start new projects once the course was completed.

The analysis of the instructor journal indicated that there was a definite shift in observed student behaviors throughout the semester. In terms of climate, at the outset of the semester two of the 25 students appeared to be behaving in a democratic manner (Fig. 8). By the end of the semester 20 of the 22 students remaining in the class were observed to be behaving in a democratic manner.

At the beginning of the semester, in terms of control, two of the 25 students appeared to be sharing in control of the class (Fig. 9). By the end of the semester, 16 of the 22 students in the class were perceived to be sharing in control of the class.

With regard to goal-setting, initially five of the 25 students appeared to be participating in the process of goal-selection (Fig. 10). By the end of the semester 18 of the 22 students appeared to have had participated in the process of individual goal-selection.

At the beginning of the semester, concerning communication, three of the 25 students seemed receptive to an open spontaneous flow of communications (Fig. 11). By the end of the 15th week, 16 of the 22 were participating in an open flow of communications.

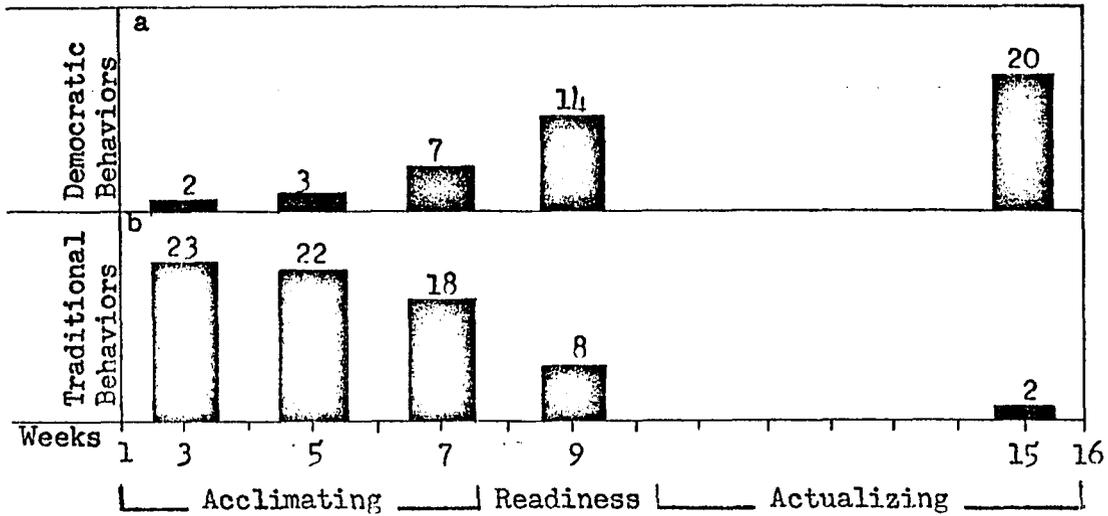


Figure 8. Climate: weeks one through 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic throughout the semester.

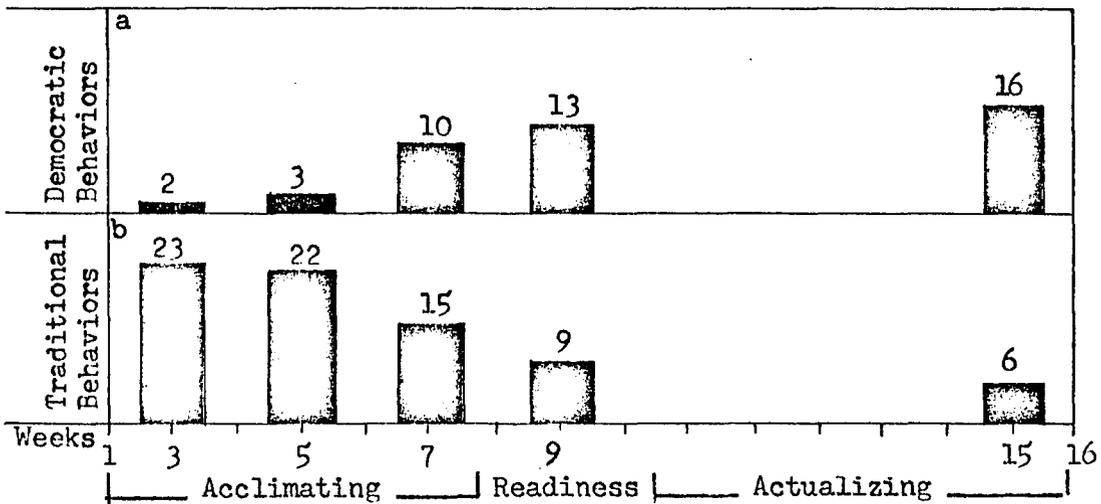


Figure 9. Control: weeks one through 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic throughout the semester.

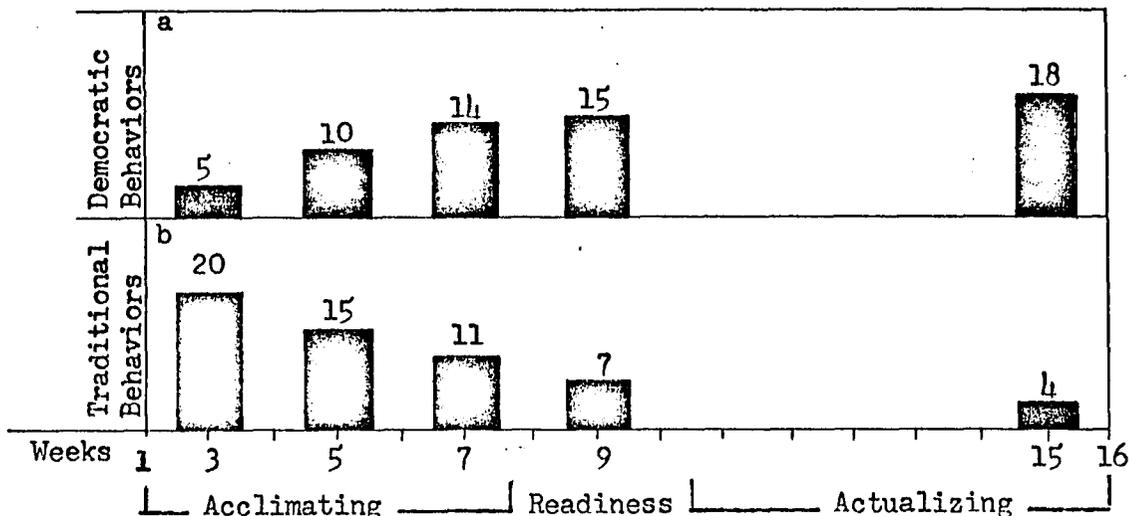


Figure 10. Goal-Setting: weeks one through 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic throughout the semester.

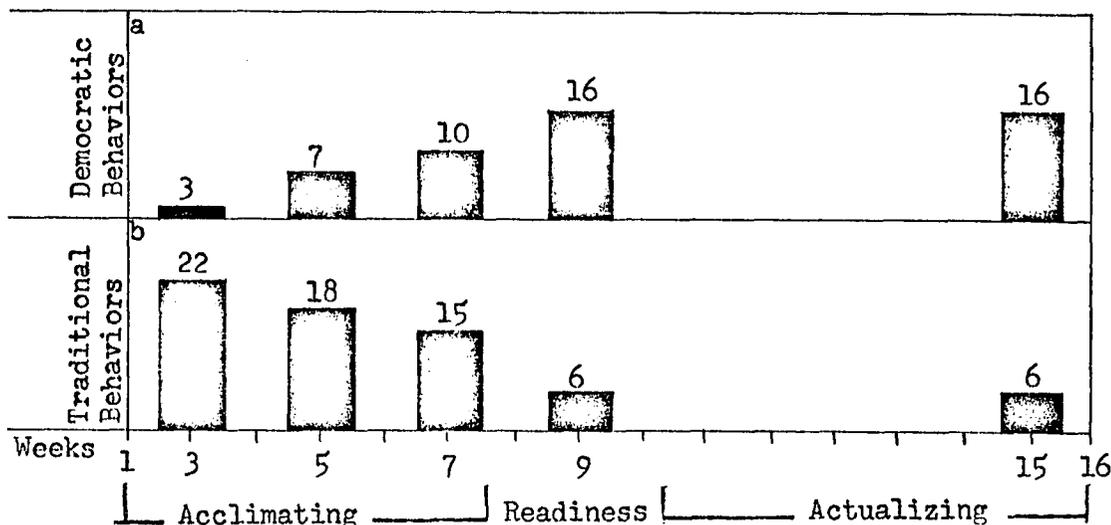


Figure 11. Communication: weeks one through 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic throughout the semester.

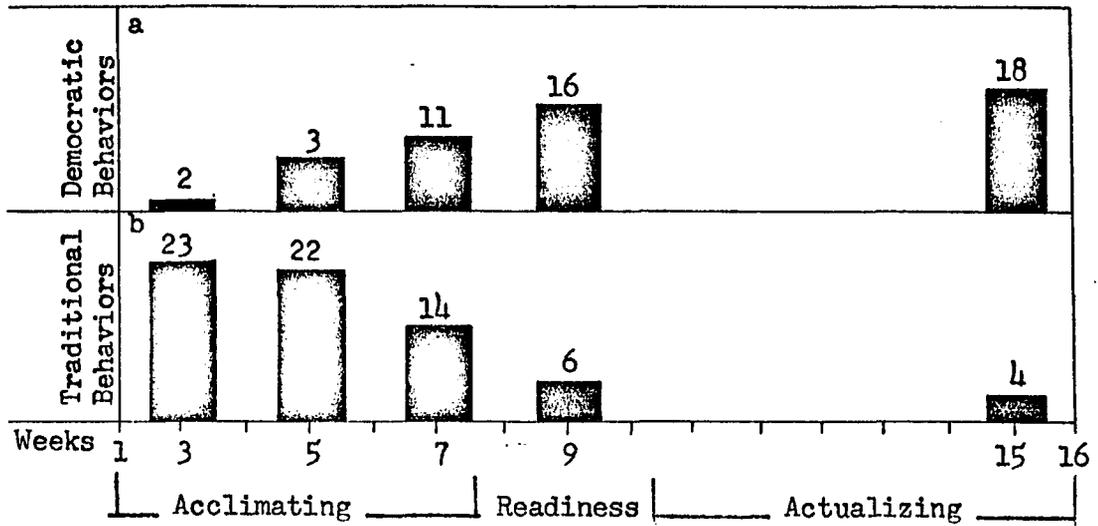


Figure 12. Evaluation: weeks one through 15.

a and b represent the traditional or democratic behaviors described in Chapter 2, and summarized on page 21.

The numbers represent the actual number of students whose behavior was observed as being traditional or democratic throughout the semester.

Concerning evaluation, at the beginning of the semester, two of the 25 students seemed receptive to a process of self-evaluation (Fig. 12). By the last week of class, 18 of the 22 students appeared to be participating in a process of continuous self-evaluation.

In an attempt to check the accuracy of the above teacher observations, the students' perceptions were secured at the beginning of the fourth and 16th weeks. The analysis of these responses indicated that a majority of the students perceived their fellow class members' behavior to have shifted from that of participating in a traditional learning environment to that of participating in a democratic learning environment.

According to the student evaluations of the first three weeks in the semester, one hundred percent of the students observed that most of their fellow students seemed to behave in a formal manner. Ninety-six percent observed that most of their classmates were apparently expecting or demanding that the teacher motivate individuals and the class. One hundred percent of the students noted that most of the class members seemed to be demanding or expecting that the teacher select their goals. Eighty percent of the group indicated that most of their classmates appeared to be demanding or expecting that the teacher direct the flow of information. In terms of evaluation, approximately ninety percent of the class members noted that their fellow students were demanding or expecting the teacher to assess their learning experiences.

According to the student evaluation responses of the 16th week, ninety-five percent of the students observed most of their classmates as behaving in a democratic manner. Ninety-five percent of the group indicated that, by the end of the semester, most of their classmates appeared to be controlling their own learning experiences. Eighty-six percent of the students, by the end of the semester, perceived their fellow students to be involved in the process of goal-selection. By the end of the semester, ninety-two percent of the group observed their classmates to be communicating in an open and spontaneous manner. With regard to evaluation, eighty-six percent of the students perceived their fellow students to be assessing their own learning experiences.

The results of the fourth and 16th week student evaluations seemed to confirm the findings of the instructor journal. These results tended to indicate that many of the 25 students introduced to the democratic processes classroom eventually shifted from behaving in a traditional manner to behaving in a democratic manner.

Conclusions

In this study, when the instructor attempted to facilitate democratic processes in the classroom, the students were observed to display certain behavior patterns:

1. Throughout the course, certain student behaviors tended to emerge in sequential behavior patterns identified as:
 - a. An acclimating phase in which the students tended to experience shock, teacher-testing and teacher confrontation.

- b. A readiness phase in which students appeared to be receptive to involvement in the democratic learning process.
- c. An actualizing phase in which the students experienced productivity in self and group selected projects.

2. Initially, most students actively resisted participating in the democratic process.

3. As the process developed, some students adjusted readily to the democratic learning environment while others experienced varying degrees of difficulty in doing so.

4. During the semester, most students shifted from expecting that the teacher determine all learning experiences to an acceptance of the responsibility of determining their own learning experiences.

5. Finally, many of the students reported their intention to continue the self-selected and self-evaluated learning experiences after the course ended.

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