The Effects of Community Building Group Process Intervention Technique on Reading Performance Among Inmates in a Medium Security Prison.

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The effects of community building group process intervention technique on reading performance among inmates in a medium security prison

Roberts, Robert Earl, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991

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THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNITY-BUILDING GROUP-PROCESS INTERVENTION TECHNIQUE ON READING PERFORMANCE AMONG INMATES IN A MEDIUM SECURITY PRISON

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

A substantial body of research has shown that when students work together in groups and are rewarded based on the learning of all the group members, they achieve consistently more than students who are in traditionally taught classes. The goal of this project was to test the effects of an innovative group process intervention technique on reading performance among a population of incarcerated adult males in a medium security prison in Louisiana. This model, referred to as "Community Building" (CBGP), has been utilized among other ways as an intervention technique to resolve organizational/personnel problems in private, business, university, and government settings. It can involve groups of 40 - 60 participants. The research goal was to test its efficacy as an educational tool in teaching reading in an adult education program.

The research design, which can be classified as a pretest-posttest comparison-group experimental design, called for three groups of inmates randomly assigned to the following conditions: (a) Experimental group - CBGP and SRA Reading Program; (b) Control group #1 -
SRA Reading Program only; (c) Control group #2 - untreated.

The dependent variable was reading performance according to three sets of scores on the Gates-MacGinitie (GM) reading test. The independent variables consisted of the CBGP intervention and the reading program as outlined above.

Analysis-of-variance statistical technique was used to test the hypothesis (at .05 level of statistical significance) that mean GM-gain scores would be significantly greater for the experimental group than the two control groups. Analyses of the data supported the effectiveness of the community-building intervention technique on the reading program.
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INTRODUCTION

The primary signs of psychological maturity and health in today’s society involve more than one’s ability to individuate and survive life’s crises without dependence on another. Indeed a rough but accurate indicator is the degree to which individuals allow themselves to know how important others are to them and thus develop their skills to enter into cooperative, loving, interdependent relationships.

Individualism so permeates today’s society that social connections tend not to be formed, or, if formed, soon unravel. Some group-process models, i.e. Community-Building (Peck, 1987), present a forum which facilitates development of skills needed for building human relationships and the ability to make compromises necessary to live more intimately with other persons. This process which leads to what Peck calls community occurs to a greater or lesser degree whenever people gather. At times, it evolves profoundly in spite of social obstacles which commonly conflict with it. Most often, however, groups allow themselves to be overwhelmed by these obstacles and become lost in the search for community. To the extent to which this
process can be facilitated, the struggle for community can be served by those with experience and ability to offer guidance to a group which has "lost its way."

This document explores the pathways of community through theory and experimentation. Chapter I presents the overview of an experimental methodology designed to adapt Peck's model of community-building to a prison environment and examine its effects on a literacy program. Chapter II presents a review of literature which explores; (a) the venerable debate of community versus individualism; and, (b) the efficacy of group-process as an educational tool. Chapter III examines the methodology of the experimental design operationalized at Dixon Correctional Institute in Jackson, Louisiana. Chapter IV presents analyses of data generated by reading scores and other variables in the sample population. Chapter V offers a summary of the research at Dixon Correctional Institute, conclusions from analysis of the data, a final discussion of community, and implications of the research.

There is no attempt to state how all of the required conditions for community might come into existence, nor to predict that they will occur. The
objective of the analysis is to show that unless certain specifications are realized, community and/or group cohesiveness will not occur. Nor is it claimed that the conditions noted will suffice; only that they are indispensable.
CHAPTER I
OVERVIEW

Background

A substantial body of research has been developed over the last two decades on cooperative learning methods, in which students work in small heterogeneous learning groups (Slavin, 1987). In more than 50 field experiments of four to thirty weeks duration, Slavin (1983a, 1983b) established that when students work together in groups and are rewarded based on the learning of all group members, they achieve consistently more than students in traditionally taught classes.

The groups in the cooperative learning model have typically been small (8 to 12 members), as is also the case in group therapy programs such as those being offered by corrections systems. However, during the past several years, Peck (1987) has developed a group process model referred to as "Community-Building" that can involve up to 60 participants. Peck's approach has been used as an intervention technique to resolve organizational/personnel problems in private business, university, and government settings.
No empirical evidence has been published of the community-building group-process model (CBGP) being used as an educational intervention technique, but according to its developer, it has strong potential in the adult education field -- particularly in recalcitrant populations.

Hence, the specific goals of this dissertation research project are; (a) to adapt the Peck CBGP model to a prison environment; and, (b) to experimentally test its efficacy as an educational tool in teaching reading in an adult literacy program.

Overview of the Community Building Model

Participants gather or are gathered together in a circle for two or three eight-hour days having in mind a single goal or commitment -- to become a "true community" (Peck, 1987, p. 59). The workshop is entirely experiential; that is, the members of the group do not receive instructions on how to become a community or how to behave in a community. Peck's reasoning is that passive learning, while easy, is almost invariably shallow; experiential learning, on the other hand, although demanding, is infinitely more
profound and rewarding. In accordance with the community-building model, only a few "ground rules" regarding communication and commitment are offered by workshop leaders:

(a) Each participant is responsible for the success of the task.
(b) Participants should voice their displeasure with the group-process and share these feelings with the entire group, not to individuals during the breaks.
(c) The group must commit to "hang in" through periods of anxiety, frustration, doubt, anger, depression and even despair, which may be expected on the way to community.
(d) The group must be committed to confidentiality.
(e) Other procedural norms are established by the two workshop facilitators such as punctuality, the wearing of name tags, and stating one's name prior to speaking.
(f) Participants are told by the two workshop facilitators that two of the greatest barriers to communication are speaking when one is not moved
to do so and failing to speak when one is so moved.

As prescribed by the Peck model a story, "The Rabbi's Gift," is read to the circle of participants. This is followed by three minutes of silence and the community-building process begins.

Though each group is unique, a pattern of progressive and essential stages in the community-building process is identifiable:

(a) Pseudo-community

This is characterized by politeness, avoidance of overt disagreement, denying individual differences, beliefs that a "community" already exists, an indifference/resistance to the goal of building a community, and lack of assertion of feelings. These feelings are often anger and paranoia about being there (non-voluntarily) or genuine curiosity and hopeful interest, as well as fear and confusion.

(b) Chaos

In this stage, open conflict can be quite apparent with attempts to "heal and convert" others into adopting a particular way of thinking. To end the chaos, some groups will attempt to organize into
subgroups or structured discussion which is incompatible with developing community.

(c) Emptiness

This stage is the bridge to community. Emptiness refers to the difficult task of letting go of one's barriers to community. These are commonly such things as expectations and preconceptions of the group, prejudices, the need to fix or control the group, or to appear to "have it all together." The experience of recognizing and letting go of these barriers is that of a group death.

(d) Community

Once the group has completed the task of emptiness, it enters community. It is during this stage that the dynamics of the group change. Characteristics such as the expression of and respect for individual differences, shared leadership, spontaneity, quietness, joy, commitment to embracing painful realities, and the ability to begin thinking about the health of the group as a whole can emerge.

The weekly maintenance groups that follow are intended to be long-term communities in which inmates
can come to further experience the healing effects of community.

The Problem of Illiteracy

According to Adult Reception and Diagnostic Center (ARDC) records, 91% of all prison recidivists studied were high school drop-outs and 42% read below the seventh grade level. The rate of illiteracy is approximately 29% according to current ARDC records. While the state correctional system offers reading programs, they have had little success in reducing these rates.

At Dixon Correctional Institution (DCI), the Laubach reading program typifies the effort against illiteracy throughout the corrections system. The program uses inmate tutors and offers inmates the opportunity not only to increase their reading skills, but also to enter the GED program. In spite of these opportunities, participation in the project is low and the drop-out rate is high. Preliminary interviews with inmates and prison administration suggest a reason; they indicate a belief system in which revealing one's "weaknesses" in the prison setting can and does
increase one's risk of being mentally and physically abused by other inmates and by security personnel. According to those interviewed, illiteracy ranks high on the scale of such "weaknesses."

Reading programs in prisons have existed for some time; however, research of literature reveals none which has tested the effects of a group-process intervention technique on improving literacy in a prison community.

**Importance of the Study**

"Each member of a genuine community shares equal responsibility for achieving and maintaining community" (Peck, 1987). Acceptance of this responsibility requires that each participant learn and apply the concepts of inclusivity, commitment, and consensus.

Commitment, in terms of community as defined by Peck, is "the willingness to coexist by learning to transcend individual differences" (Peck, 1987, p. 62). In transcending individual differences, community routinely goes beyond the concepts of democracy in which the majority rules and the needs of minorities are often not met. In the vocabulary of this
transcendence, we thus far have only one word: consensus. "Decisions in genuine community are arrived at through consensus, in a process that is not unlike a community of jurors, for whom consensual decision making is mandated" (Peck, 1987, p.63).

Community, according to Peck, also facilitates dedication to reality and self-examination or contemplation, which "enhances awareness of the world outside oneself, the world inside oneself, and the relationship between the two" (Peck, 1987, p. 65).

Peck also describes community as "a place where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed and with wisdom as well as grace" (Peck, 1987, p. 71).

Lastly, a community is a group of "all leaders" (Peck, 1987, p. 72). This situation develops as compulsive leaders, often for the first time in their lives, feel free in community *not* to lead. And the customarily shy and reserved feel free to step forth with their latent gifts of leadership.

This researcher suggests, therefore, (a) that if community, as Peck describes it, is possible among a recalcitrant population such as prison inmates,
participants would have to learn and practice the preceding concepts, and (b) that these concepts should serve as motivation in a self-improvement program such as a project to combat illiteracy. Establishing the concepts of community-building in a self-improvement program would not only benefit individuals in the target population but also potentially reduce the state's 75% rate of inmate recidivism.

The Dixon Correctional Institute Literacy Project

It was decided to test the model at Dixon Correctional Institute (DCI) in Jackson, Louisiana, and to examine its effect on improving reading skills. DCI was chosen over other state prisons for the following reasons: (1) inmates live in dormitories of 50-60; (2) it has a known illiteracy problem; (3) educational motivation is low; (4) a negative subculture of educational norms prevails as well as deficit of appropriate interpersonal relations and "community".
Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to determine whether significant differences in reading scores would occur among the community reading (treatment) group, the group which receives the reading program only, and the untreated group.

Hypotheses

The study considered the general hypothesis that a Community Building Group Process (CBGP) intervention technique would create an appropriate psychosocial environment that would significantly enhance reading performance among prison inmates.

The null hypotheses state that there is no statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the two control groups at the 0.05 level of confidence on the mean Gates – MacGinitie gain scores for: (a) vocabulary, (b) reading comprehension, and (c) overall performance.
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Statistically, the three null hypotheses are stated as follows:

a. $H_0$: Vocabulary $X_e = X_{c1} = X_{c2}$

b. $H_0$: Comprehension $X_e = X_{c1} = X_{c2}$

c. $H_0$: Overall Score $X_e = X_{c1} = X_{c2}$; where,

- $H_0$ = the null hypothesis
- $X_e$ = the gain scores in the experimental group
- $X_{c1}$ = the gain scores in control group 1
- $X_{c2}$ = the gain scores in control group 2.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research, illiteracy, also termed functional illiteracy, is defined in terms of reading level and is set at any level below fifth-grade reading ability.

Community according to Peck cannot be defined. "Those who have experienced it agree that words are not sufficient to describe what happens when a group enters community" (Peck, 1987, p. 334). Peck offers, however, some characteristics of "genuine community". According to the author, community is characterized by the expression and respect of individual differences (Peck, 1987). It is realistic and multidimensional. Each member is free to express his or her own facet of reality. It is contemplative and introspective. Its
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members are progressively learning to be empty of the need to convert others to their own way of thinking thus avoiding individual differences; and, hence are progressively learning to be responsive to the spirit of community. They speak only when they feel moved to do so, and they are silent when feeling stilled. A community is also characterized by spontaneity and shared leadership (Peck, 1987). Certain of its members, who usually would be very active and perhaps take over and lead a group meeting, feel free to sit back and not lead. On the other hand, those who perhaps have never been leaders of a group will in a community feel free to express themselves, their ideas and wants.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the following factors:

A. The sample population at DCI consisted of approximately 150 male inmates who lived in three randomly selected dormitories. Individual assignments to dormitories were by random selection.

B. Testing was done before and after the program, using the Gates - MacGinitie Reading Test for
vocabulary, comprehension, and overall scores. Analysis considered the mean gain in score for each group in vocabulary, comprehension, and overall scores.

C. The Community-Building Group-Process (CBGP) intervention technique consisted of a two and a half day intensive workshop, initially (two eight-hour days and one four-hour day) followed by weekly two-hour sessions for maintaining and enhancing the sense or depth of community.

D. The reading material consisted of programmed material, from Scientific Research Associates (SRA), suitable for individual study and/or peer instruction.

E. The reading program consisted of a ninety-minute reading session each week with encouragement to read during periods of free time.

F. The time period for the study was limited to seven weeks.

Methodology

The study, described in more detail in Chapter III, tested the general hypothesis that a Community-Building Group-Process (CBGP) intervention
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A technique would significantly enhance reading performance among prison inmates.

The research design can be classified as a pretest-posttest comparison-group experimental design. The design calls for three groups (dormitories) of inmates randomly assigned by dormitory to the following conditions:

Dormitory 7 - Experimental Group: Community-Building Group-Process (CBGP) and SRA Reading Program

Dormitory A - Control Group #1: SRA Reading Program Only

Dormitory B - Control Group #2: Untreated

As outlined above, the experimental group was subject to the CBGP intervention technique and the SRA Reading program. Control Group #1 was subject to the SRA reading program only, and Control Group #2 remained untreated. All three groups were pretested and posttested for reading ability with the Gates —
MacGinitie Reading Test. The time frame was seven weeks.

Variables

Dependent Variable: Reading performance was measured according to three sets of scores on the Gates-MacGinitie test: Grade Equivalent (GE) and Extended Scale Scores (ESS) for (a) vocabulary, (b) comprehension and (c) overall performance.

Independent Variables: The two major independent variables consisted of the CBGP intervention and the SRA reading program as outlined in the methodology section above.

Analysis

Analysis-of-Variance statistical technique was used to test the hypothesis that mean Gates-MacGinitie gain scores would be significantly greater for the experimental group than for either of the two control groups. The variations in reading achievement according to certain background variables such as age, race, education, and criminal offense were also analyzed, though random selection to groups was
expected to minimize the influence of these variables. The hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of statistical significance.

Procedure

The procedure for the implementation of the two main independent variables, the CBGP intervention and the SRA reading program, was as follows:

(1) Community-Building Group-Process (CBGP) (Experimental group only). The treatment group first received the group-process intervention, a two-and-one-half day intensive community-building workshop. The group's task during this time was to develop high levels of trust, communication, and cohesion characteristic of what Peck terms "emptiness and community" (1987, p. 94). This workshop was followed by weekly on-going sessions. For the first three weeks, attendance was required; however, inmates were informed after this time that the program would from then on become voluntary.

(2) SRA reading program (experimental group and control group #1). The form of cooperative learning on which the reading program was based was developed by Slavin and his colleagues at Johns-Hopkins University.
(Stevens, Slavin, Farnish & Madden, 1987); a cycle of activities is common to all cooperative learning programs developed at Johns-Hopkins. This cycle was adapted as follows:

1. Teacher instruction
2. Team practices
3. Individual assessments
4. Recognition by group

A more detailed description of this cycle of activities is developed in Chapter III on Methodology.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters: Chapter I presents an overview of the experimental methodology designed to adapt Peck's model of Community-Building to a prison environment and to examine its effects on a literacy program. Chapter II presents a review of literature which explores (a) the venerable debate of community versus individualism and (b) the efficacy of group-process as an educational tool. Chapter III examines the methodology of the experimental design. Chapter IV presents analyses of data generated by reading scores and other variables in the sample
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population such as age, race, education and number of felony convictions. Chapter V offers a summary of the research at Dixon Correctional Institute, conclusions from analysis of the data, a final discussion of community, and implications of the research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Community and Individualism

"Rugged American individualism" (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 92) has been ingrained in our society since its beginnings (Etzioni, 1987). It has become so ingrained that today social connections tend not to be formed, or, if formed, soon unravel. French social philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville (1805) described this process in Democracy in America, written while touring this country in the 1830's. He offers a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between character and society in America. His description presents what he calls habits of the heart or characteristics that constitute the American culture. One of the characteristics he admired the most in this country was what he was to call "rugged American individualism." He clearly warned, however, that unless Americans learned to balance their individualism with other habits, "that the society would become fragmented and the people socially isolated thereby undermining the conditions of freedom" (1969, p. 287).
Robert Bellah et al., in *Habits of the Heart* (1985), examine the American individualism that de Tocqueville described. To Bellah and his collaborators, it is individualism, not equality, that has characterized American history and culture. Both analysts express the concern that American individualism could grow cancerous — "that it may be destroying those social integuments that de Tocqueville saw as moderating its more destructive potentialities, that it may be threatening the survival of freedom itself" (p. iv).

The loss of integration and social connectedness discussed by Bellah has also been written about extensively by M. Scott Peck (1987) in *The Different Drum*. The term used by Peck for these social connections is "community" (p. 25). It is a term whose meaning, like many others, has become distorted over time. As Peck says,

We tend to speak of our hometowns as communities.
Or of the churches in our towns as communities.
Our hometowns may well be geographical collections of human beings with tax and political structures in common, but precious little else relates them
to each other. Towns are not, in any meaningful sense of the word, communities. And sight unseen, on the basis of my experience with many Christian churches in this country, I can be fairly confident that each of the churches in your hometown is not likely to be much of a community either (p. 25).

Some speak of community in terms of the "good old days" when people cooperated with each other and worked together for the common good. It is unclear, according to Peck (1987), whether these people really enjoyed the fruits of community, or whether what some long for is nothing more than an imaginary "golden age" that never existed.

Dewey, in The Public and Its Problems spoke of community in terms of the common good.

The ties of community and democracy are close: Wherever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it, and where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it is a good shared by all,
there is in so far a community. The clear consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications, constitutes the idea of democracy (1927, p. 149).

Peck on Pseudo-Community

Most of what is called community today is what Peck would term "pseudo-community." Probably everyone has experienced the phenomenon: shallow conversation, or party talk. Whatever the term, pseudo-community has one basic pretense and that is the denial of individual differences. For instance, its members may pretend or act as if "they all have the same belief in Jesus Christ, or the same understanding of the Russians, or perhaps even the same life history" (Peck, 1987, p. 89).

"One of the basic characteristics of pseudocommunity is speaking in generalities" (Peck, 1987). As an example of a conversation in a pseudo-community, one might make such a broad statement as "Divorce is a miserable experience"; whereas, in a community, one might make this an "I" or "My" statement such as "My divorce was a miserable experience for me."
According to Peck, this version leaves the door open for someone else to differ without contradicting: "I'm glad you put it that way, because my divorce was the best thing that has happened to me in the last twenty years" (Peck, 1987, p. 90).

Other examples of speaking in generalities in pseudo-community would be, "One has to trust one's instincts" or "We need to trust that our parents did the best job they could," or "Once you've found God, you don't have to be afraid any more," or "Jesus saves us from our sins" (Peck, 1987, p. 89). A basic characteristic of pseudo-community that Peck describes is that members will allow such blanket statements to be made without comment; or perhaps they will agree with them; or, they might even praise them as if there were some kind of universal truth about them (Peck, 1987).

The basic premise of pseudo-community is avoidance (at all costs) of confrontation or conflict (Peck, 1987). Everyone maintains a "nice" attitude and no one "steps on anyone's toes." It is the easiest and most sure way to avoid realizing one's individual
differences and the possibility of not "fitting into the norm" where one is sure to be accepted and loved.

Community, on the other hand, is characterized by the expression and respect of individual differences (Peck, 1987). It is realistic and multidimensional; each member is free to express his or her own facet of reality. It is contemplative and introspective; its members are progressively learning to be empty of the need to convert others to their own way of thinking thus avoiding individual differences; and, hence are progressively learning to be responsive to the spirit of community. They speak only when they feel moved to do so, and they are silent when feeling stilled. A community is also characterized by spontaneity and shared leadership (Peck, 1987). Certain of its members, who usually would be very active and perhaps take over and lead a group meeting, feel free to sit back and not lead. On the other hand, those who perhaps have never been leaders of a group will in a community feel free to express themselves, their ideas and wants.

A community, according to Dewey (1927), does not just happen when or because someone wants or decided
they need it. Community must instead be developed along a passage which is often painful and chaotic; and, then it must be carefully nurtured in order to exist more than momentarily.

Stages of Community

The passage that leads towards becoming a community consistently occurs in stages. In Peck's community-building process these stages are: pseudo-community, chaos, emptying, and community. The first stage of pseudo-community ends when individual differences begin to develop. In the second stage of chaos, members of the group attempt to obliterate individual differences.

Chaos centers around well intentioned but misguided attempts to heal and convert—that is, convert another into one's own way of thinking/perceiving things, thus eliminating individual differences and at the same time validating one's own way of thinking, perceiving, or living (Peck, 1987).

At first, chaos can be as boring as pseudo-community, but eventually, members begin to bring forth and press their agendas, their prejudices,
and their preconceived ideas as to what this community should be like. Chaos then becomes unpleasant, and it is not uncommon then for the group to turn on the leaders of the workshop blaming them for the squabbling and citing them for ineffective leadership. Because of this squabbling, it may also seem to the observer that the group has degenerated into chaos. So, it is important in understanding group-process to know that stages such as chaos are necessary for groups to work through in order to achieve the final goal(s) of the group and no stages may be avoided. Therefore, chaos is preferable to pseudo-community. At this point in the process, the group has three choices the first two of which may be obvious to the group. One is to become "stuck" in chaos and end the process there. Another is to revert to pseudo-community, which is what many groups and organizations do instead of breaking up when chaos becomes too painful and the group as a whole seems unwilling to make the third choice which is "emptying."

The stage of emptiness is perhaps the most important while at the same time the most difficult and painful, for it involves the "letting go" not only of
the need to heal and convert as mentioned before, but often of the all too comfortable ideology, theology, or solutions. Letting go leaves group members vulnerable to the darkness of the unknown, to confusion, and to the mystery of whatever is going to happen next. According to Peck (1987), such sacrifice hurts because it is a kind of death, the kind of death that is necessary for better life. "But even when an individual realizes this necessity intellectually, such dying is still a fearsome adventure into the unknown. And many group members during the stage of emptiness often seem almost paralyzed between fear and hope, because they will incorrectly think and feel about emptiness not in terms of making room for something new in their lives but in terms of "nothingness or annihilation" (Peck, 1987, p. 100).

As a group moves into emptiness, some members will begin to stop acting as if they were completely "okay" and really "have it all together" and they will begin to reflect on those things they need to empty themselves of (Peck, 1987, p. 102). In some workshops the group follows fairly rapidly those who have begun the process of emptying. In others, there will remain
resistance until someone might ask the group leader if there is no way into community except through emptiness and the answer is always, "No."

When the stage of emptiness is completed, the group enters community. A peaceful quietness bathes the room. When someone breaks the silence, he or she is speaking eloquently from deep inside. The group listens intently. When the person has finished, there is silence. No one responds, yet the person does not feel ignored—just listened to. Slowly, out of the silence, another member begins to speak—again very personally, very deeply, about himself. He is not trying to heal or convert the first person. The subject is himself. The silence returns. As others speak, there will eventually be a response to a previous speaker but it will be an appropriate story or poem which is offered and received as a gift.

One might wonder at this point, once community has been reached, "What happens next?" Where do we go from here? The answer to that lies in the overall purpose for which the group has come together in the first place. Some groups are problem-solving committees such as corporate boards or city councils who have been in
chaos for some time over certain issues or decisions (Peck, 1987). Some have heard of these community-building workshops and have decided to see how becoming a community would affect their chaotic stalemate. Some groups have come together to form an on-going community which will continue meeting after the workshop, perhaps once a month. Continuing Community will not be an easy task. Over an extended period of time, many complex decisions will have to be made. Occasionally the group will fall back into chaos or possibly even into pseudo-community. This transition of role causes many communities to fail.

Still other groups of people will gather simply for the experience of community and will often attend another workshop to repeat the experience. There are many purposes of community--planning a campaign, healing a division within a congregation, engineering a merger, for example--but every community has one common task and that is reconciling to its death, or closing. "It is characteristic of a true community that it will squarely confront realities. It is also a characteristic that it will do so as gently and respectfully as possible" (Peck, 1987, p. 132). Every
model of group-process emphasizes the importance of proper closing at the final meeting of a group that has experienced the intimacy and cohesion such as is found in "community" (Peck, 1987). Therefore, in the complete process of community-building, there are two deaths a member must suffer--that death of emptiness or emptying, and the death of the community itself. The willingness to go through these deaths and the fact that there are those who continue to build and live in community with others is an extraordinary testament to the human spirit.

Group process can take many forms and can be applied appropriately in many fields of human endeavor. The application of group-process to education is developed in subsequent sections of this chapter. Group Process, however, has considerable destructive potential. A discussion of these negative potentialities follows.

Group Process: Destructive Potentialities

In his search for the "great community" (1927), Dewey believed that each individual must have a responsible share according to capacity in forming the
activities of the groups to which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain. The community must in turn liberate the potentialities of its members in harmony with the interest and goods which are common.

Since every individual is a member of many groups, this specification cannot be fulfilled except when different groups interact flexibly and fully in connection with other groups. A member of a robber band may express his powers in a way consonant with belonging to that group and be directed by the interest common to its members. But he does so only at the cost of repression of those of his potentialities which can be realized only through membership in other groups. The robber band cannot interact flexibly with other groups; it can act only through isolating itself. It must prevent the operation of all interests save those which circumscribe it in its separateness (pp. 147-148).

According to Peck (1987), the vast majority of groups are not particularly healing, just as they are not "genuine communities" (p. 51). For example, the
T-group experience was a part of the "sensitivity group movement" that swept this country in the sixties and early seventies. The sensitivity group movement has largely died out. One of the reasons for its death, according to Peck (1987), is that a great many people found their sensitivity group experiences profoundly unpleasant. "There is little doubt that the leaders of the movement were struggling toward experiences of community. However, in the name of 'sensitivity' confrontation was more encouraged than love. Frequently, that confrontation was vicious" (p. 51).

Group process can and does have destructive potential. What is known in the field of dynamic group psychotherapy as one of its "major curative factors" (Greve, 1988) is group pressure. For example, pressure to participate may develop covertly or overtly as participation becomes a group norm. Silent or less participative group members may feel pressure or even be pressured by other members to adhere to this group norm. This kind of pressure is common to most any type of group whether or not it has become in the words of Peck (1987) a genuine community, a "mature, working, integrative group" as defined by Yalom (1985) and
Levine (1979). Teachers in schools, security personnel in prisons are two examples of those who have a history of using group pressure to punish entire groups when it is apparent that only one member of the group has committed an infraction of the rules. Basic military training often uses the same method of group pressure to achieve conformity or unquestioning acceptance of authority in the training of soldiers. Similarly, college/university fraternities and sororities have been known to use tactics of humiliation and degradation as common initiation rites into their groups. Certain religious groups characterized by rigid beliefs and practices may rely on group pressure such as shunning to elicit conformity to such practices as baptism. Possibly group pressure was a significant factor in 1979 when the followers of Jim Jones committed mass-suicide in the Jonestown, Guyana, incident.

Questions of the negative side of group-process also involve a process known as "enemy formation."

Groups that would not otherwise become a community or become cohesive, frequently do so in response to a threat or crisis: a tragedy, a natural
disaster, an enemy attack, or war. This defense is hardly to be decried when the threat is genuine. The problem exists when this instinctive response of cohesiveness to threat is manufactured. The process of enemy formation occurs when a group that has lost the spirit of community attempts to regain it by creating a threat—an enemy—that otherwise would not exist (Peck, 1987, p. 162).

Peck qualifies enemy formation as the most devastating of all human behavior. Malamud (1966) described the phenomenon with the treatment of Jews in Czarist Russia. The example best known, however, is that of Nazi Germany, where the Hitler regime achieved an extraordinary cohesiveness among the majority of Germans by instilling hatred against a minority, the Jews.

But it is a common, widespread phenomenon of which any culture can be guilty. Peck cites President Lyndon B. Johnson, who apparently inspired "cohesive support in Congress for his policies in Vietnam by manufacturing a fictitious attack against American

While enemy formation may appear to enhance the functioning of a group, Peck implies that it is actually a symptom of community decay and death. "In fact, the group has ceased to be a genuine community. It becomes progressively exclusive rather than inclusive. It has become 'we against them'" (Peck, 1987, p. 164).

Another result of enemy formation is that the imaginary enemy it creates becomes a real one. The Holocaust, for instance, eventually gave birth to militant, military Zionism. The Gulf of Tonkin "incident" ultimately solidified militant communism in Vietnam. Therefore, Peck concludes that "enemy formation is invariably a self-fulfilling prophecy" (1987, p. 163).

In its purest form, group process can be positive, purposeful, and even therapeutic or it can be detrimental and harmful. There exist, therefore, the moral factors described earlier in the discussion on community which insist that humans are more than abstract individuals and that social, spiritual,
political, and economic issues are all part of what gives a cohesive group wholeness and integrity. It is integrity which separates the creative side of group-process from its "shadow." Group process can benefit our classrooms when the teachers, leaders, facilitators, are themselves whole and integrative.

Group Process as a Pedagogical Instrument

John Dewey was one of the more influential characters in bringing education to its current status of research and thinking about group processes. Dewey (1930) emphasized the social aspects of learning and the role of schools for training students in problem solving and democratic, rational living. He argued that if children were to learn to live democratically, they would have to experience the living process of democracy itself in the classroom. Life in the classroom, according to Dewey, should be a democracy in microcosm. It should represent democracy, not only in the way that students learn to make choices and carry out projects collaboratively, but also in the way they learn to relate to the people around them. This process entails being taught directly to empathize with
others to "respect the rights of others, and to work together rationally" (Dewey, 1930, p. 152).

Kurt Lewin was influential among empirical researchers and practitioners of group dynamics. A third contributor was Jacob Mareno, whose efforts touch many areas of thought in education. His most significant contributions to the classroom were the development of methods of sociometry and role-playing. Both Lewin and Mareno stress the collection of significant data to support the philosophical work of Dewey, and both introduce the practical and pro-active techniques still used in contemporary education for improving classroom group processes (Allport, 1955).

Bradford, as well as Gibb and Benne (1964) (co-founders of the National Training Laboratory), focused on the direct application of group research to improve personal learning and organizational processes and was significant in the changing trends of public education in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A survey study of group work educators done by Euster (1979) reported that a large number of students continued to be attracted to group-process and group-work methods classes in the late 1970s. The focus of these groups,
however, was on individual and personal group goals rather than the understanding of interpersonal relations or applying the concepts of social change. Love (1981) defined the nominal group process as a method of soliciting ideas and constructive input from experts with differing backgrounds and perceptions. Group process has gone through several innovations, including, according to Crist (1972), development of sensitivity training (T-groups), role playing and simulation, cooperation through group methods, curriculum projects integrating new approaches, group-process as an approach to teacher sensitivity, team teaching, and training teachers for new roles. Other important works relevant to the T-Group were produced by Bradford, et al. (1964); Schein and Bennis (1965); Dyer (1972, 1977); Leiberman, Yalom, and Miles (1973); Benne et al. (1975); Golembiewski and Blumberg (1970, 1977); Porter (1974); and Smith (1980). General patterns occur in all aspects of building effective task-oriented groups, according to Moore and Blair (1982). They list time management, firmness or flexibility in pursuing goals, and awareness of how human systems work as the main patterns observable. A
number of contributions on organizational group processes that included applied studies were also related to the development of T-Group technology (March & Simon, 1958; Likert, 1961; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Argyris, 1972; Likert & Likert, 1976; and Dyer, 1977). Until the mid-1950s, most of the actions taken involving group-processes were carried out primarily in industry, social agencies, and governments; however the empirical contributions of Withall (1951), Thelen (1960), Miles (1981), and Grolund (1959) were notable exceptions. Withall's (1951) measuring techniques for social-emotional climate had a strong influence on the application of group dynamics to classroom life.

Group process is also used in teaching oral communication skills in conjunction with writing in a technical-writing curriculum, according to Goldstein (1980). These skills are taught through a team writing project in which students interact with each other through the composing process. The instructor must be trained to intervene to enhance the group process. The Wilton Public Schools in Connecticut (1976) suggested that group-process be used in teaching English at the
According to Wolf (1975), studies of early childhood education show that lifelong attitudes and values of the democratic process can be provided to children through the modeling of their teacher/caregiver. Usually these values can be taught through involving the child, as young as three or four, in shared decision making and consensual group governance on levels appropriate for the child's state of development. For example, if the children make plans for a classroom activity, they can help generate ideas, do joint planning, and air diverse thoughts, as they move toward a consensual resolution under the guidance of their trained teacher/caregiver.

Studies done by Yandell (1970) indicate that the school could be the environment and unit of change for more effective resolution of conflict. All participants in the study identified a greater ease with the presence of conflict, after working through conflict situations using a group-process method.

Group process is also used in bilingual language instruction. According to Sancho (1972), when children
with varied language abilities, backgrounds, and academic skills are grouped together, the children are exposed to one another's language in a bilingual setting which encourages and reinforces both languages equally.

According to Daniels (1971), another approach for teaching about conflict and conflict resolution is a task-oriented model. He describes using student groups for problem solving, involving identification of the issue or problem by the whole class, identification of the concepts or facets of the problem by sub-groups, and then generalization. Through this process they participate actively in concept and idea development and see conflict and conflict resolution demonstrated within the group process itself.

The development of group-process skills is seen as one critical aim for high school level courses according to the Director of Curriculum, Ontario (Canada) Department of Education (1971). Hugenberg and O'Neill (1987) describe a group-process exercise for determining issues that students perceive to be of current importance, from which the students choose topics on which to speak.
Group process is also known to be crucial in the management of drug/alcohol abuse programs. The National Center for Alcohol Education of Arlington, Virginia, (1978) suggests that group process is one of the critical skills for administrators of alcohol programs. Among several ideas for application of group process methods for social studies teachers, as brought out by Sander (1972), Gilbert Wrenn recommends careful attention to group-process and group tolerance of deviant ideas. Keith Davis, as cited in Sander (1972), sees moral development as being the desired focus of much of social studies and suggests using small discussion groups for probing moral dilemmas.

Any comprehensive educational curriculum planned to accommodate an interdisciplinary approach must also include the area of mental health. According to the Ontario Department of Education (1971), this area is often explored through group-process seminars, such as sensitivity sessions, structuring of a viable group, personal and interpersonal awareness, and interdependence in problem solving. Other published works on classroom group dynamics and school setting include Thelan's *Education for the Human Quest* (1960),
Miles' *Learning to Work in Groups* (1981), and Grolund's *Sociometry in the Classroom* (1959).

Slavin (1987, April) has researched classroom program designs for elementary school students at risk for learning problems. Two categories of programs emerged as particularly effective: continuous progress and cooperative learning. In a previous monograph, Slavin (1982) presented descriptions of six extensively researched and widely used cooperative learning methods and discussed research on the effects of cooperative learning. The term "cooperative-learning" refers to instructional methods in which students of all levels of performance work together in small groups toward a common goal. The essential feature of cooperative learning is that the success of one student helps other students to be successful. The six methods are as follows: (a) Student teams achievement divisions, (b) Teams-games-tournaments, (c) Team-assisted individualization, (d) Jigsaw, (e) Learning together, and (f) Group investigation. Some methods are highly structured with well-specified group tasks and group rewards, while others give more autonomy to students and have fewer specified group rewards. Some of these
methods are used almost exclusively in social studies, and one is designed only for mathematics. Several can be used in all subject areas. All grade levels were presented in the study. In a second edition of this monograph, Slavin (1987) reviewed research regarding the effectiveness of cooperative learning methods which indicated that when the classroom is structured in a way that allows students to work cooperatively on learning tasks, students benefit academically as well as socially. The greatest strength of cooperative learning methods, according to Slavin (1987), is the wide range of positive outcomes that have been found inexpensive and easy to implement. Teachers needed minimal training to use these techniques. The widespread and growing use of cooperative learning techniques demonstrates that, in addition to their effectiveness, they are practical and attractive to teachers.

"Whole-Language" classrooms described by Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1988) are characterized by children working collaboratively on a common interest or goal and may appear noisy and busy. The researchers state, "A visit to a whole language classroom reveals a more
home-like environment. Bathtubs are filled with pillows where children curl up with their favorite books" (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988, p. 409). The focus of such reading material in the "whole-language" model is on what is relevant to the reader and, therefore, gives relevance to the classroom.

Teacher Training in Group Processes

Group process training has been included in teacher training packages used by the National Institute of Education (1974) since the mid-1970s. The Stanford University School of Education in California (1970) developed a program for instructional team training which included the development of group-process problem-solving protocol materials, for use in instructional teams, differentiated by teaching role and responsibility. Euster (1979) reported that problems facing group work educators include lack of methodological specificity in group work, knowledge explosion in group methods, and poorly developed group work courses.

Not all content lends itself to the group-process methods equally well. A case in point was reported by
Stephens and Romberg (1983) when they studied the Developing Mathematical Processes (DMP) program to see to what extent it had been successful in classrooms in which it had been observed. The intent was to create a pedagogy in which children would be active in creating and testing their math knowledge through an inquiry approach requiring exploration, investigation, choice, and judgment. What was discovered was that teachers preferred to interact directly with students through group process and so reduced the discussion and collaboration among the students. Acker and Gordon (1986) examined the opinions of educators and students who were asked to evaluate the use of a "group video" in a television communication class. Students found the technology easy to use and the group process valuable for examining the components of a news story. Educators found the group approach more consistent, a better use of class time, and a more efficient use of financial resources when contrasted with individualized instruction. The consensus of the survey was that small group and individualized approaches must be combined to optimize the educational process.
Videotaping group process and replay of the tape were used in "Course Teams" at Deakin University in Australia, according to Kemmis (1979). These teams were engaged in using symmetrical communication, which is characterized by mutual recognition of team members as persons accepted and appreciated for their common striving for understanding and consensus. A videotape of the discussion was played back until a communication blockage was identified by the group and then stopped for further group discussion. Focusing on the participants in the taped "block," and then broadening out into the whole group led to strategies for preventing the block and for overcoming its immediate effects.

Group Process in the Classroom: Glasser Method

One of the more important works addressing the problems of inner-city schools discusses a group-process model developed by William Glasser (1977) in his book *Schools Without Failure*. In this book he gives detailed descriptions of the classroom meeting in which the teacher leads a whole class in non-judgmental discussion about what is important and relevant to
them. As cited by Brandt (1988), Glasser advocates the use of learning teams and group-process methods to help students discover and define their own needs and explore alternative choices for satisfying them. He describes three types of classroom meetings: the social-problem-solving meeting, concerned with the students' social behavior in school; the open-ended meeting, concerned with intellectually important subjects, and the educational-diagnostic meeting, concerned with how well the students understand the concepts of the curriculum.

According to Glasser, many social problems of school itself, some of which lead to discipline of the students, are best approached through the use of each class as a problem-solving group with each teacher as group leader. As group leader, the teacher goes through essentially the same processes as those of the faculty meeting—"attempting to solve individual and group educational problems of the classroom and the school" (Glasser, 1977, p. 122).
The Problem-Solving Classroom Meeting

According to Glasser (1977), each class should be a working, problem-solving unit in which each student has both individual and group responsibilities. Responsibility for learning and for behaving so that learning is fostered can be shared among the entire class in the following process:

By discussing group and individual problems, the students and teacher can usually solve their problems within the classroom. If children learn to participate in a problem-solving group when they enter school and continue to do so with a variety of teachers throughout the six years of elementary school, they learn that the world is not a mysterious and sometimes hostile and frightening place where they have little control over what happens to them. They learn rather that, although the world may be difficult and that it may at times appear hostile and mysterious, they can use their brains individually and as a group to solve the problems of living in their school world (Glasser, 1977, pp. 122-123).
The teachers and children, according to Kelly (1974), who participate in this style of classroom discussion are encouraged to experience their own feelings, to understand others, and to engage in democratic problem-solving activities. In addition to students learning to solve problems, there is also, according to Glasser, a gain in scholastic achievement. Peck (1987), in his book on community-building, states that one of the primary results of the establishment of community is the apparent successful trends in the subsequent behavior of its members. This gain has also been described by Gordon (quoted in 1977) in his detailed review of the Coleman report:

In addition to the school characteristics which were shown to be related to pupil achievement, Coleman found a pupil characteristic which appears to have a stronger relationship to achievement than all the school factors combined. The extent to which a pupil feels he has control over his own destiny is strongly related to achievement. This feeling of potency is less prevalent among Negro students, but where it is present their
achievement is higher than that of white pupils who lack that conviction (p. 123).

Glasser found that because there is no systematic effort to teach social problem solving, "children find that problems which arise in getting along with each other in school are difficult to solve" (Glasser, 1977, p. 123).

Given little help, children tend to evade problems, to lie their way out of situations, to depend upon others to solve their problems, or just to give up. None of these courses of action is good preparation for life. The social problem-solving meeting can help children learn better ways (Glasser, 1977, pp. 123-124).

Glasser (1977) suggests that all problems relative to the class as a group and to any individual in the class are eligible for discussion in the social problem-solving meeting whether presented by the students themselves or by the teacher. In addition to school problems, problems that the child has at home are also eligible for discussion if the child wishes to bring them up. Though airing of problems at home may seem foreign to some adults, children, according to
Glasser (1977), do not think that discussing their problems openly is as difficult as adults seem to think. It should be emphasized that "the discussion of these problem-solving meetings should always be directed towards solving problems and should never include punishment or finding fault" (Glasser, 1977, p. 126). For instance, a solution may include the discovery in a meeting that a child who has been stealing has done so because he is lonely, hungry, or jealous and revealing appropriate avenues to solving these problems.

When meetings are conducted in this way, children learn to think in terms of a solution—the only constructive way to handle any problems—instead of the typical adult's way soon learned by school children—fault finding and punishment. The pseudo-solution of problems through fault finding is one of the most worthless pursuits continually to occupy all segments of our society (Glasser, 1977, p. 129).

Children learn through problem solving in such groups how to avoid trouble in school and sometimes at home although it is the rare home where children are
encouraged to solve problems by discussing and planning (Glasser, 1977). If they learn to do so in school, however, the knowledge will prove of value in all aspects of their lives. Although social problem solving meetings often deal with behavior problems, "many other subjects can be discussed, such as friendship, loneliness, vocational choice, and part-time work" (Glasser, 1977, p. 129). To examine how this is done, two additional kinds of classroom meetings designed by Glasser are discussed.

The Open-Ended Classroom Meeting

Of the three types of class meetings mentioned by Glasser, the open-ended classroom meeting is "by far the most useful" (Glasser, 1977, p. 134). The more it is used, the more relevance can be added to the classroom. Glasser (1977) states,

In the open-ended meetings, the children are asked to discuss any thought-provoking question related to their lives, questions that may also be related to the curriculum of the classroom. The difference between an open-ended meeting and ordinary class discussion is that in the former
the teacher is specifically not looking for factual answers. She is trying to stimulate children to think and to relate what they know to the subject being discussed (pp. 134-135).

One value of the open-ended meeting is to provide an opportunity to use new approaches. Children are stimulated by new approaches (as adults are) and become just as bored with sameness as adults. According to Glasser, the open-ended meeting may have to be related to the curriculum by the teacher in lower grades where as the class can make the connection with older students. "Having a thoughtful, relevant discussion on any subject, however, is more valuable than forcing a connection to the curriculum" (1977, p. 138).

The Educational Diagnostic Classroom Meeting

"A third type of class meeting, the educational-diagnostic, is always directly related to what the class is studying. These meetings can be used by the teacher to get a quick evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching procedures in the class" (Glasser, 1977, p. 138).
Glasser (1977) uses an example involving an eighth grade class where he was disappointed to find that the students, despite studying the Constitution for a semester and a half, seemed to know very little about it. "Although they had studied its clauses and many of them could recite certain sections from memory, the students had a non-thinking view of the Constitution" (p. 139). Even before the meeting, Glasser doubted that the students understood the relationship of the Constitution to them as individuals or to the community. To test his opinion, he was given a bright class for the meeting. The questions he asked might be considered unfair to some educators, but he did get a discussion going, and the audience learned that the students had some extremely unconstitutional ideas about the Constitution.

It is most important, according to Glasser (1977), in the educational diagnostic meeting as in any other of the two types previously discussed, that the leader should not incorporate value judgment into the discussion. The students should feel free to voice their opinions and conclusions in any way they see fit. As a result, the teacher learns points of weakness that
require additional instruction by the teacher and additional study and discussion by the class. In memory education, an approach in which discussions probing understanding rarely occur, students may get answers right on tests and still have no working, living knowledge of something as important as the Constitution and its importance to them. Unless the teacher takes a completely non-judgmental attitude, however, he or she will never discover these distortions. Cueing to the teacher's judgments, students see no reasons to discuss their own ideas and opinions (Glasser, 1977).

Research on Glasser Method

Glasser's School Without Failure program has been systematically applied and evaluated in at least three areas of the United States (Neff & Ahlstrom, 1978; Purl & Dawson, 1973; Masters, 1975; Masters & Laverty, 1974; Masters & Laverty, 1975). In 1970-71, seminars based on Glasser's concept were taught at selected schools interested in implementing this program. In 1971, a consortium was formed to implement the program in a total of eleven elementary schools, nine public and two

For the New Castle School District (Pennsylvania), in a controlled two-year experiment, ten elementary schools were paired for size, socioeconomic status, and past pupil achievement. In the first year, one school of each pair was randomly selected to begin the SWF Teaching Training and program implementation. In the second year, both schools of the pair implemented the program and trained teachers in Glasser's methods.

Data were collected and analyzed at the beginning and end of Year 1 and at the end of Year 2 to ascertain whether stronger changes were produced in Year 1 or 2, and how the schools which had implemented the program for two years were different from traditional schools (Masters & Laverty, 1975). Year 1 results indicated the program's major impact was on the teachers, with little impact shown on the achievement of pupils in the SWF or control schools (Masters & Laverty, 1975).
positive difference was noted in the SWF school's primary and intermediate students' attitudes toward school attendance, willingness to do difficult school work, and understanding the importance of doing assignments and learning in general as was the reduced number of pupils referred to the principals for disciplinary reasons in the SWF schools (Masters & Laverty, 1975).

A variety of instruments was created for use in these evaluations. They included questionnaires for teachers evaluating their attitudes toward child-centered education and discipline, and toward the need to understand the pupil's behavior (Lindgren & Patton, 1974); a Philosophy of Glasser Questionnaire, developed and administered to teachers in the spring of Year 1 and 2 (Masters & Laverty, 1974, Philosophy of Glasser Questionnaire); questionnaires for the students (from grades K-6) on their attitudes toward the teaching style (Merwin & DiVesta, 1974) and toward school in general (Masters & Laverty, 1974, School Attitude Scale), their acceptance of others in their peer group and their acceptance of the ideas of others in the classroom (Masters & Laverty, 1974, Acceptance of
Others). These attitudes were evaluated through asking the students questions about their classmates: Which ones would be the most fun to do an activity with? Which students usually had the best ideas? (Masters & Laverty, 1974, Philosophy of Glasser Questionnaire). The questionnaires for the younger children (K-3) used such devices as a face response form and asked first graders only those questions which they could be expected to understand (Masters & Laverty, 1974, Philosophy of Glasser Questionnaire). A separate testing instrument, the Pennsylvania Educational Quality Assessment Attitude Toward School, was given to Grades 4-6 (Pennsylvania State Department of Education, 1974).

Other evaluations (Masters, 1973; Jensen, 1973) recorded similar findings. Although no significant differences were found between SWF school pupils' attitudes and control school pupils' attitudes towards school in general, in the western Pennsylvania consortium SWF school pupils were found to have more positive attitudes than control school pupils on items related to objectives of the SWF program (Masters,
In general, the teachers felt the classroom meetings were effective (Masters, 1973). In Madison, Wisconsin, field research was conducted to determine the teacher attitude about this new approach (Jensen, 1973). Responses to the written questionnaires completed by teachers, principals and students at the elementary schools which participated in the Glasser concept seminars (1970-71) indicated that the seminar program had positive effects on students and teachers. Students were more responsible for their own behavior, expressed themselves better, and listened to and respected others' opinions more. Student-teacher communication in the classroom improved, and teachers became more aware of students' needs and were better able to handle their own discipline problems (Purl & Dawson, 1973).

An assessment of the SWF Program implemented in several schools in a midwestern metropolitan school district analyzed three variables: student outcomes, classroom characteristics in a SWF Program, and school characteristics of a SWF Program school. The classroom characteristic results found a positive correlation between the SWF program and both cognitive and
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affective outcomes. Several of the school characteristics were also associated with a positive impact on student outcomes. It was concluded that SWF programs were likely to have a favorable impact on student outcomes (Neff & Ahlstrom, 1978).

After four years of operating on the Glasser plan in the Palo Alto, California, Unified School District, according to Keepes (1973), the school staff is noticeably committed to creating a success-oriented experience for the students.

The question now seems appropriate: what other contributions can we expect from group-process and how can group-process apply to the classroom?

Additional Classroom Benefits

First of all "classroom group meetings can offer troubled students the possibility of hope by listening to the experiences of others" (Yalom, 1985, p. 6). Groups invariably contain individuals who are at different points along a coping-collapse continuum. In classroom meetings, these troubled students potentially have continual contact with group members who have had problems very similar to their own and have coped with
them more effectively. Skilled teachers can exploit this factor judiciously by periodically calling attention to the improvement that some students have made.

Secondly, "many young people suffer the disquieting thought that they are unique in their anguish and frustration, that they alone have certain frightening or unacceptable problems, thoughts, impulses, and fantasies" (Yalom, 1985, p. 7). There is a core of truth in this notion since many children have had an unusual constellation of life's stress and are periodically flooded by material that is usually unconscious. A person's sense of uniqueness in his/her suffering is often heightened by social isolation; because of interpersonal difficulties, opportunities for frank and candid consensual validation in a functional family relationship are often not available to children. In any group setting, the disconfirmation of a child or adolescent's feelings of uniqueness in his/her suffering is a powerful source of relief. Hearing classmates disclose concerns similar to their own, group members have reported feeling more in touch with the world and describe the process as a "welcome
to the human race" experience (Yalom, 1985, p. 7). Simply put, the phenomenon finds expression in the cliche, "We are all in the same boat," or, perhaps more cynically, "Misery loves company." However interpreted, there is no human deed or thought that is fully outside the experience of other people.

A third benefit of classroom meetings can be the "imparting of information" (Yalom, 1985, p. 9). There is a need to be judicious about this because, generally speaking, people—young and old alike—do not highly value didactic information or unsought advice. However, teachers and/or classmates may occasionally have the opportunity to help students understand that these students are not crazy by simply telling them so.

Fourth, "there is a strong potential for altruism among members of a group" (Yalom, 1985, p. 13). Classroom groups can offer students the opportunity to receive through giving, not only as part of the reciprocal giving-receiving sequence, but also from the intrinsic act of giving. Particularly among poor inner city children, many are demoralized and others possess a deep sense of having nothing of value to offer others. They have long considered themselves as
burdens, and the experience of finding that they can be of importance to others is refreshing and boosts self-esteem, and, of course, student/peers can be enormously helpful to one another in the group process. They offer support, reassurance, suggestions, and insights, in the sharing of similar problems. Not infrequently, a group member will listen and absorb observations from another member far more readily than from a teacher or counselor, for instance. Yalom believes, "To many students, counselors and teachers remain the paid professional; but the other members can be counted on for spontaneous and truthful reactions and feedback" (Yalom, 1985, p. 14). Group members looking back over the course of their experience in a group invariably credit other members as having been important in their improvement—if not for deliberate support and advice, then at least for having been there and permitted members to gain self-knowledge through their relationship.

A fifth potential contribution of group process to curriculum is the "corrective recapitulation of the primary family group" (Yalom, 1985, p. 16). Without exception, there are children in all schools with the
history of a highly unsatisfactory experience in their first and most important group—the family group. The classroom group can resemble a family in many aspects. Depending on a child's assumptive world, shaped to a large degree by early family experience, one interacts with teachers, counselors and other members as one may have interacted with parents and siblings. "The most important potential here," Yalom states, "is not just that early familial conflicts can be relived, but that they can be relived correctly" (1985, p. 16). Often this interaction may only entail listening to a child's experience; however, for quite a majority of students, being actively listened to is a rare and healing experience.

Group process in the classroom has a high potential for the "development of socializing techniques" (Yalom, 1985, p. 16). Social learning—the development of basic social skills—is a therapeutic factor that operates in all types of groups although the nature of the skills taught and the explicitness of the process vary greatly, depending on the type of group. Some groups may explicitly emphasize the development of social skills. Role playing may be
employed for students to learn to approach prospective
employers for a job or for adolescent boys to learn to
invite a girl to a dance. In a dynamic group, with
ground rules encouraging open feedback, students may
"attain considerable information about maladaptive
social behavior" (Yalom, 1985, p. 16). A student may,
for example, learn about a disconcerting tendency to
avoid looking at a person with whom he or she is
conversing; or about others' impressions of his/her
haughty, regal attitudes or about a variety of other
social habits which, unbeknownst to the student, have
been undermining his or her social relationships. For
individuals lacking interpersonal relationships, group
process often represents the first opportunity for
accurate interpersonal feedback.

Eventually, as students gain more and more
experience in groups over the years, they will more
frequently than not "acquire highly sophisticated
social skills: they become attuned to the process; they
have learned how to be helpfully responsive to others;
they have acquired methods of conflict resolution; they
are less likely to be judgmental, and more capable of
experiencing and expressing accurate empathy" (Yalom,
Students in the experience of group process also learn through imitative behavior. According to Yalom, "Pipe-smoking therapists often beget pipe-smoking patients" (Yalom, 1985, p. 17). In groups, the imitative process is more diffuse as students may model themselves upon aspects of other group members. In a classroom group it would not be uncommon for a student to benefit by observing the behavior of another student with a similar problem constellation. Even if specific imitative behavior is short-lived, it may function to help the individual "unfreeze" by experimenting with new behavior. In fact, it would not be uncommon for a student to try on bits and pieces of other people, and then relinquish them as ill fitting. This process may have solid therapeutic impact; finding out who we are not is progress toward finding out who we are.

The group process which can be facilitated through the three types of class meetings described can work in many institutions to provide a stable bridge across that gap between school and life. There are difficulties, however, as with any process. Besides
the all-too-common resistance to change, the letting go of what is familiar in our lives, there are specific obstacles to group-process completing its path to maturity. These obstacles must initially be recognized by the teacher or leader in any type of group. "Eventually, in a mature working group," Yalom states, "the members themselves have learned to recognize these obstacles and deal with them appropriately as a group" (1985, p. 366).

Obstacles To Group Process

As in Peck's model of community, a classroom can become a group of leaders, and that role for the teacher can then be diminished. This model suggests the first potential obstacle—a teacher who does not want to relinquish leadership.

There will be other obstacles to group-process from the members and leader alike. At times, for instance, a "monopolistic member" talks a lot but says very little (Yalom, 1985). In the beginning stages of group, this type of member can be highly valued by other members, too shy to participate. Group hostility, however, will usually follow this behavior
which needs confronting before he or she "turns off" the group or becomes the group's scapegoat (Yalom, 1985, p. 377). Story tellers are valued at first for similar reasons but also should be confronted to speak in the "here and now" instead of the "there and then." There are also the "interrogators" who focus on others in order to avoid their own issues and "advice givers" who share the safe motives and also avoid their own feelings (Yalom, 1985, pp. 376-377).

One of the most common obstacles to the process in groups and most important for the leader to watch out for is "scapegoating" (Levine, 1979, p. 120), particularly common to immature groups. Its potential for interruption of the group process can have long-lasting effects. The scapegoat may not in the future feel safe nor will others when they realize they could be next. Teachers must always be alert to protect their group members from this phenomenon. A simple method is to ask the class as a group, "What do you think is happening now?"
Competition

Probably the greatest of all obstacles to group process, the obstacle most commonly found in schools, and the obstacle most embedded in our system of education is competition. Despite all talk about good sportsmanship, competition is incompatible with group process. According to Rubin (1980), "Its rewards and goals are immediate and short lived, and self glorifying which guarantees virtual exclusion of self-realization" (p. 36).

It destroys the inner sense of autonomy and stability and is also destructive to real communication and to outside relationships. Despite protestations and reassurances about "friendly competition," antagonists are not friendly. The "feeling good" that competitors say comes from competition is based on someone else's feeling bad (Rubin, 1980, p. 36).

Rubin (1980) describes his own medical school experience in Lausanne, Switzerland, as a non-competitive system. Two series of examinations—one in basic science, eighteen months after admission and the other after studies were completed—determined
qualification for graduation. Students were allowed to postpone these examinations as long as they felt necessary. To pass, students were required to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the material. The atmosphere was described by Rubin as totally "benevolent" and without the presence of any coercion or intimidation whatsoever. There was no curve, and the students were not graded relative to each other. The Swiss students, according to Rubin, exhibited great camaraderie, helping each other in grasping and integrating the material. As graduates of a highly competitive system, Rubin and his fellow American students suffered a kind of culture shock. "Few of us could believe that medical school could be such a straightforward, non-competitive activity, and that we would be required to learn only the material we were told to learn" (1980, p. 38). As stimulation addicts, the American students found themselves forming competitive cliques keeping secret from others the ready availability of course notebooks. Bets were made as to who would and who would not get through. People tried to convince others that they would never get through and should return home. Former friends who
came to Switzerland together stopped talking to each other because they now saw each other as competitors.

The Swiss went on as they always did. The Americans did also. They had recreated American competition in Switzerland. Some of them became so panicked and depressed that they packed up and went home, giving up their life's desire forever (Rubin, 1980, p. 39).

Rubin speculates about the role of hysterical competition in several suicides that occurred among American students.

Rubin also cites in this book an experience of his son, now a psychiatrist, while taking a microbiology examination in his premedical curriculum. He realized that most of the students were making sure that the microscopes that they had used were out of focus before passing on to succeeding specimens—to make it more difficult for their "colleagues" taking the exam. "What effect," asks Rubin (1980), "can this kind of cutthroat competition to get into medical school and to stay there have on our future medical practitioners?" (p. 41).
Where cooperation among students and interpersonal relationships are concerned, competition has a powerful fragmenting effect. "It causes us to be preoccupied with fragmented single areas, rather than with integration and wholeness" (Rubin, 1980, p. 41).

Competitors almost inevitably become specialists, limiting the area of their endeavors and concentrating all their energy in the pursuit of one goal in order to beat the competition. Thus, the big "successes" in our culture are usually successful in their given areas but fail in many others (Rubin, 1980, p. 40).

In curriculum, grades emphasize competition and because in competition there can only be a limited number of winners, grades emphasize failure more than success. According to Glasser (1977), failure is the basis of almost all school problems. He therefore recommends a system of reporting student's progress that totally eliminates failure. He suggests that no student ever at any time be labeled a failure, or led to believe he is a failure through the use of a grading system:
There is nothing radical about not labeling people as failures. In the armed forces, in athletics, in the arts, and in fact in most jobs, simple or complex, total failure is rarely of concern. Rather, we concern ourselves with levels of success; almost everyone succeeds to some degree in any job. Only in school are we so definitely labeled failure (p. 96).

Some teachers, according to Glasser (1977), maintain that not giving low grades or failing grades to the slower students is unfair to more intelligent students. There might be validity to this argument if it could be shown that better students would feel harmed if schools did not downgrade or fail their lower classmates, however, Glasser does not feel this contention can be demonstrated (p. 98).

The reliance on competition through the leverage of grades to motivate students exposes the greatest weakness of our educational system and emphasizes its own failure to have learned how to reach all types of intelligence. According to Glasser (1977), memorizing facts and feeding them back on one-question, one-answer tests, utilizes the weakest function of the brain, yet
we reward it with our highest grades. Those whose primary intelligence functions in other ways do not do well on such purely objective tests and are labeled as less intelligent, average or failures. It is doubtful that many students or parents have ever been happy receiving a "C." Supposedly "C" represents average, but in the intense competitive environment created in our schools, being average is equivalent to being a failure. Thus Americans now have a nation of schools educating a few winners and leaving behind masses of failures/losers.

It has been established by Rubin (1980) that satisfaction from winning in competition is short-lived. Since memorization is the weakest function of the brain, it would follow that satisfaction from scoring high on strictly objective tests is also very short-lived.

With any segment of the population, satisfaction from problem solving through the "utilization of one's own type of thinking" is much longer lived (Glasser, 1975, p. 39). The concepts of competition and grading are so ingrained in our schools they will certainly be
the most difficult aspects of our educational system to change or eliminate, if indeed this is ever possible.

Tracking

Tracking, a more recently developed obstacle to group-process in the classroom, will probably be as difficult to eliminate. In community-building, exclusivity is its "greatest enemy" (Peck, 1987). In education, the most common form of exclusivity is tracking.

Tracking, as observed by Rist and others, has a devastating effect on those labeled under-achievers (Rist, 1970). If schools can functionally make students retarded by calling them that, and treating them in certain ways, then do schools make students gifted or non-gifted by the same process?

Rosenthal and Jacobsen's (1968) work on the self-fulfilling prophecy and the subsequent discussions of ethical issues it engendered is a good indication of the powerful moral issues raised by providing exceptional treatment to and expecting exceptional behavior from a small subset of students.
According to Glasser (1977), tracking is bad not only because of its effect upon students; it also has an insidious and destructive effect upon teachers:

Where children are grouped by ability, teachers often do not appreciate and may even resent the effort of a low-track student who tries to improve. From the teacher's standpoint, it is almost as if a low-tracked, supposedly unmotivated student has no business changing his ways (p. 82).

This disturbing fact was among the findings of a research study of "self-fulfilling prophecy" in education, done over several years at an elementary school located in a predominantly lower-class neighborhood in the South San Francisco area (Glasser, 1977).

The investigators selected at random about five students in each class. After giving all the students tests purportedly designed to predict academic blooming, they casually told the teachers that, on the basis of these tests, the selected students were very likely to spurt rapidly ahead. The designated students actually had no more potential for moving ahead than did any other
students, but the teachers did not know this. The results were remarkable. The designated students did in fact make great intellectual gains, both on an absolute basis and in comparison with the other (control) students (Glasser, 1977, pp. 82-83). Because nothing else was changed, Glasser assumes that teacher attitude in some way was able to fulfill this totally unsubstantiated prophecy.

Not only did the designated students move ahead, but the improved teacher attitude, perhaps caused by the good news that there were several children with high academic potential in a usually uninspiring class, positively affected the non-designated children, who also made significant intellectual gains. This study strongly points to the need to include in teacher training some insight into the marked effect teachers have upon students" (p. 83). Here the teacher's belief that some students had high potential was important (Glasser, 1977, p. 83).

Researchers have documented the extent to which identification and labeling occur not in a vacuum, but, rather, are socio-political acts which have their roots
in economic, social and political realities and have effects which go far beyond the consequences for any given labeled individual. As Sapon-Shevin (1987) reported,

Gifted programs have been accused of being introduced within poor, ineffectual school districts in order to stem white flight and to keep the support of wealthier parents for the impoverished schools. Many parents who would have removed their children (and their support) to private schools have been persuaded to keep their children (and their support) within public schools, and have been told, indirectly, 'don't worry, we'll put your child in a gifted program,' thus changing the constellation of classmates with whom their children will interact" (p. 45).

Sapon-Shevin (1989), in her essay on tracking, sought to understand the extent to which labeling a child as gifted constitutes a process of selection and sorting which leads to the differential allocation of educational societal resources. And more broadly, the essay considered the expense to which this process
reproduces existing forms of race and class hierarchies and contributes to societal inequities.

In her study of a gifted program in a small midwestern town, Sapon-Shevin (1989) pointed out not only the inequities of the selection process but the fragmenting effect it had on the group-process of the classroom from which the "gifted" were intermittently removed; the devastating effects on the self-esteem of the "non-gifted children"; and the equally detrimental effects on their teachers who asked, "If it takes a special person to work with those kids then what are we?" (p. 45). Glasser and Sapon-Shevin both concluded, that first the construction of an official school category of "giftedness" alters the ways in which teachers talk about and see their students and their differences and that the identification and labeling process resulted in psychological detachment and distancing between teachers and students and teachers and parents.

Apple (1979) writes that classroom social structure must be understood as both the product of symbolic context and material circumstances. This observation would imply that the implications and
consequences of the labeling process go far beyond our valuing of different people in different ways. Students who are labeled and provided with segregated programming are also provided with different knowledge. This process has been well documented in the area of special education; students labeled as "retarded" are marginalized politically and economically, and their futures largely shaped by their school definition and treatment. Gifted programs also constitute differential allocation of resources and knowledge. According to Sapon-Shevin (1989), "Gifted programs provide perhaps the most blatant example of differential resource allocation, in fact, the ultimate tracking system" (p. 45).
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Gaining Access to Setting

Permission to conduct the research in a Louisiana prison was first obtained from the Secretary of the State Department of Corrections. The Secretary's support was also received in obtaining through the Federal Job Training Partnership Act a grant which focuses among other job-related problems on the importance of literacy in decreasing the risk of disqualification for employment.

Permission was obtained from the Warden at Dixon Correctional Institute with whom problems of logistics as well as security had to be considered. Administrative and security personnel at the facility expressed doubt and concern about the project. They explained that many programs to help inmates had been tested at DCI and none had been effective. With the exception of the warden and deputy warden, the initial cooperation received was more a result of decree than enthusiasm. Their apprehension centered primarily on safety and security. For instance, as the community-building model requires confidentiality,
there could be no security personnel in the room with the two co-leaders and the 50 inmates involved. Allowing any number of inmates to form into a cohesive group is considered by prison officials an extreme security risk. They maintain that such cohesion increases the possibility of groups organizing into strikes, demonstrations, and even riots. It soon became apparent that support for the program would be strengthened if key personnel at DCI could become more familiar with the community-building model. A three-day community-building workshop was held at the Louisiana State Police Training Academy involving department heads from DCI and Department of Corrections headquarters. Of the numerous encounters which developed during the workshop, a crucial and long-standing dispute was resolved between several participants from DCI. Most participants became fervently supportive of the project as a result of the three-day effort, with some offering personal involvement.
Description of the Sample

Dixon Correctional Institute was chosen as the site for this research for several reasons, but primarily for its demographics. The facility is arranged in two separate units on a single compound. Inmates live in dormitories housing approximately 50 in each. This group size is ideal for the Community Building intervention technique (Peck, 1987, p. 126). Inmates are assigned to these dormitories by random selection. Dormitories A, B, and 7 were also chosen by random selection. Each held a population of 50 male adults, approximately 80% black. Of these, approximately 90% were of medium-security status and were incarcerated for a variety of offenses ranging from drug use to burglary to bank robbery to murder. Of these crimes, approximately 80% had some relation to substance abuse.

The Community Building Process

The three dormitories which comprised the treatment group and the two control groups were chosen at random from the remainder of the seventeen dormitories at the main compound. Of these, dormitory 7 was chosen, again
at random, as the experimental or treatment group to receive the CBGP intervention technique and the SRA reading program. Dormitory A would comprise control group #1 receiving the SRA reading program only. Dormitory B, as control group #2, would remain untreated.

Each group was tested separately with Level D, Form 1 of the Gates - MacGinitie Reading Test to establish initial levels of reading ability. Five inmates from dormitory 7, four inmates from dormitory A, and five inmates from dormitory B scored below the qualifying scale for Level D. Level B, Form 1 was administered to these inmates, completing baseline reading performances for all participants.

Those tested were cooperative with a few exceptions in each group. Most seemed to struggle to do well on the test though there was clear resentment that the test was mandatory. Those who required re-testing with the Level "B" test apparently felt embarrassment and anxiety that their low reading ability might be revealed to their peers. Much care was taken to keep all scores confidential.
The experimental design was not revealed to any of the three groups. This concealment was crucial to the integrity of the research. Dormitories were sufficiently isolated from each other to prevent information being exchanged. As none of the inmates knew what the project was about, none became aware of the experiment design with regards to treatment/control status.

The setting for the workshop was the prison visitors center which is located in a central activities area between the two separate units where dormitories are located. The center provided adequate seclusion from other prison activities, furthering the integrity of the research.

The treatment phase began with a two and one-half day community-building workshop for the inmates of dormitory 7. Sixty chairs were situated in a circle for the 58 participants and two co-leaders. As the inmates entered the room, some were openly hostile about being told they had to attend whatever this was. They complained angrily and asked if they could leave. They were told by the leaders that this was their work assignment for the next three days. To inmates, this
means compliance or isolation in the cell block, though it has never been the intent of the researcher to allow the isolation alternative. Once all were seated, the group norms were announced as follows:

(a) That each participant was responsible for the task.

(b) That each participant should voice his displeasure (if significant) with the group process, and share these feelings with the entire group, not to individuals during breaks.

(c) That true community is inclusive and that exclusivity is its worst enemy.

(d) That the group must make a commitment to "hang in" through periods of anxiety, frustration, doubt, anger, depression, and even despair.

(e) That they must commit themselves to confidentiality.

(f) That they would be punctual, wear nametags, state their name when they speak, and not smoke.

(g) Finally, that community has to do with learning how to communicate, and that two of the greatest barriers to communication are to speak when not moved to do so and to fail to speak when so moved.
As the Community Building model prescribes, the story, "The Rabbi's Gift" was read by one of the leaders. Following this, the other leader announced that there would then be three minutes of silence. At the end of this time, the group was told it could begin the process of building community. What followed then was about another half hour of silence. The silence was broken by a few members "testing the waters" with some profanity and evolved into more explicit anger and paranoia about why they were there and why the leaders were there. They resentfully accused the two leaders of numerous exploitations such as: (a) using the inmates as "Guinea Pigs"; (b) "analyzing them"; and (c) "wasting their time and taxpayers' money." One inmate sitting next to a workshop leader aggressively demanded to know: (a) "what the (profanity) he was doing there (b) if he was being paid to be there, and (c) how much. He then asserted his mistrust for the leader and advised that the leader not ever trust him.

The stages that groups typically go through to reach "true community" (Peck, 1985) are discussed in detail in Chapter II. They are: (a) pseudo-community, (b) chaos, (c) emptiness, and (d) community. For the
Community Building Workshop with dormitory 7, the stages of the process remained consistent. The boring period of pseudo-community promptly shifted into the frustrating period of chaos where the group remained until well into the afternoon of the second day. Many of the issues raised were petty and the language of most arguments was not unlike that of a group of siblings. Where male sibling behavior is present, however, violence is always a potential. Therefore, as the stage of chaos developed further, it became apparently uncomfortable and embarrassing to some while frightening to others. So, the group began to try to escape the discomfort by vacillating back and forth between a boring pseudocommunity and a "preachy" chaos. For instance, there were many blanket statements such as, "We've all made mistakes and we need to help each other," or, "We should all turn to the Lord and accept Him as our savior." Typical of pseudocommunity, there were no verbal objections from the group to these statements. As this was not a group which knew how to communicate verbally, their boredom and displeasure with pseudocommunity was acted out in body language. In trying to find comfort, participants would shift
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their bodies around, or would hide their faces with hats, hoods, or sunglasses, while others would sleep or avoid the action in other passive ways. There were groans and gestures of disgust, frustration, depression and despair.

Chaos was typified in the group by preaching at an individual who had attempted disclosure of something personal. For instance, when someone would talk about a personal problem or painful period in his life, someone else or others would begin telling him what they had done to solve their problems and advise the same solution. By trying to heal or convert someone else to their own way of thinking, members of the group could (a) avoid feeling their own pain which the person disclosing had reminded them of, (b) avoid focusing on themselves and their own "wounds" by focusing on another, (c) feed the desire of someone who wanted to be the center of attention and (d) discourage others from disclosure or speaking personally for fear of becoming the center of attention, or concern that others would preach at them.

In pseudocommunity, therefore, individual differences were denied or avoided through "we"
statements. In chaos, individual differences were exposed, but they were uncomfortable or unaccepted; so, participants attempted to obliterate them and return to pseudocommunity through preaching and converting others to their own beliefs.

During the afternoon of the second day, one of the participants made a general statement about the group that did not go unchallenged. He said, "We all are responsible for our being here; we made the mistakes; our parents are not responsible; they were good to us and we betrayed them."

Another participant said, "You know, that may be true for you, but let me tell you something. From the time I was six years old, my father would beat me so bad I couldn't go to school for several days sometimes. He'd be drunk and get pissed off and go out and cut a section of garden hose to beat me with...and that hose would be so hard in the winter."

The way this person rolled his head back and from one side to the other as he said, "...so hard...," will probably never be forgotten by this researcher.

He continued, with tears in his eyes, "And, you know, I used to ask myself 'why is he doing this?' I
never understood that. And when he was finished, he'd throw me out of the house and I'd stay out there 'til he passed out and my mother would let me back in. Every year when the leaves began to turn, I knew it was time to steal a blanket out of the house and hide it in the dog house so I wouldn't freeze before my mother'd let me back in.

And, you know, I know I did wrong to wind up in here. I took those drugs and I sold drugs to get more. But somehow I think my father had something to do with that."

As this man spoke, no one shifted around or slept or interrupted. Every eye was fixed on the person speaking. When he was finished, there was total silence. No one attempted to fix him and yet it was obvious he was not being ignored. When another participant spoke, the subject was himself.

He said, "I don't even know who my real father is. I had a step-father for a while. And, you know, he told my momma that she couldn't feed my brother and me; 'cause he paid for the food and we weren't his (responsibility). So, momma'd sneak us in the back door and feed us out of cookin' spoon when he wasn't
lookin'. Later on momma gave us to my grandmother; but she died and we went to live with my auntie. Then she gave me to my uncle. He didn't want me; so eventually I just left."

There was silence again; and tears. The group had clearly entered the stage of emptiness. Some had emptied themselves of the need to heal or convert others to their own way of living. Others were empty of prejudices and preconceptions of what the group should be about. Still others were empty of the need to appear to "have it all together" and would reveal their own "brokeness."

Another inmate told of his father's physical abuse of him and his mother. He told of being able to recognize the squeal of the brakes on his father's truck from three blocks away. That was when he would run out the back door of his house. He went on to say that the sheriff came to his house several times, "but he and my father used to be best friends. And my father was the town hero. He'd pitched in the major leagues for a couple of years. So, finally, one day when I was sixteen, I thought he was gonna kill my mom and I shot him."
As the stage of emptiness continued, the group "entered community." Individual differences no longer seemed to matter and members began to discover ways in which they were not different. For instance, they were all "wounded" and had "scars" from the past. They all wanted to feel safe and warm and loved. They all wanted to make some sense out of their lives or maybe just the next minute in their lives.

As the process continued someone would occasionally share a humorous story about himself and there would be much laughter. But it was a soft laughter and never at the expense of someone else. By the end of the second day, the group had become remarkably cohesive and the sense of community was, as Peck describes, "palpable" (p. 103, 1985).

The inmate, who the day before had so emphatically expressed his mistrust toward the leader seated next to him, stood and hugged him. This sense of community became more profound during the activities of the third day and in the weekly two-hour community sessions that continued throughout the program. Inmates began to report a lower level of stress in their dormitory after the second day of the workshop. They expressed
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pleasure at knowing each other's names and some things about certain members. Others began to use the term "family" to describe the feeling they had within the group. There remained, however, considerable discontent over the program's mandatory requirement of attendance. The matter became so unrelenting that the group leaders decided after the second week that this policy should be changed. When the members of the group were told after the second week they could leave the program if they so desired, only two did so.

Meanwhile, the seven-week SRA Reading Program described above was underway. At the end of this period, all three dormitories were re-tested at their appropriate levels with a second form of the Gates-MacGinitie instrument. Chapter IV discusses the findings and analyses of the data.

Assessment Instrument

To test for participants' initial and post-treatment reading performance levels, the Gates-MacGinitie test was chosen for its high coefficient of reliability and low standard error of measurement. Once the raw scores were recorded, they were converted
into Extended Scale Scores (ESS). This scale was developed by the authors of the test so that a student's or a group's progress in reading could be followed over a period of time on a single scale. In other words, the ESS scale was developed specifically to measure growth in achievement. It is equally appropriate for measuring achievement growth of individuals and of groups. Because this scale measures reading achievement in equal units, a difference of fifty ESS units, for instance, represents the same difference all along the scale. Since the ESS units represent equal units of achievement, growth increments at different points on the scale can be compared. Also, growth in achievement of a group can be compared with the growth of other groups, even if the level of achievement is not the same to begin with. Grade equivalent (GE) scores are given in the findings to show differences between groups. However, they are not valid for analysis as mean-gain scores.

SRA Reading Program

The reading materials selected for the project, mostly from Scientific Research Associates, were
primarily programmed materials designed for students working individually or in groups rather than in traditional teacher/student relationships. As approximately 80% of participants in the project were black, it was deemed appropriate to use several culturally based programs such as SRA's "We are Black" series.

The reading program consisted of one ninety-minute reading session per week. During the session, participants read together in groups of four to six. The researcher set up heterogeneous reading groups so that each had a full range of reading abilities among its six members. Participants were allowed to check reading materials out of the project's "library" and were encouraged to spend time reading each day or whenever possible. The inmates actually had very little time for reading beyond the planned reading sessions. The enduring notion that prison inmates have nothing but time on their hands would lead most to assume that there should have been plenty of time for outside reading. At DCI, where inmates are sentenced to hard labor, they are worked very hard under conditions that are often difficult and sometimes
humiliating. Many develop complex weekly schedules with activities such as laundry, educational programs, blood plasma program, Narcotics Anonymous and Alcohol Anonymous, and religious programs.

Specific data on how much outside reading took place was unobtainable. However, inmates, mostly from the treatment group (dormitory 7), reported reading within the dormitory especially where those with lower reading abilities needed help.

Procedure

The procedure for the implementation of the two main independent variables, the Community-Building Group-Process (CBGP) intervention and the SRA reading program, was as follows:

(1) CBGP (Experimental group only) - The treatment group first received the group-process intervention, a two-and-one-half day intensive community-building workshop. The group's task during this time was to achieve a high level of trust, communication, and cohesion characteristic of what Peck (1987) terms "community." This workshop was to be followed by weekly on-going sessions. Attendance was
required for the first two weeks; however, the program became voluntary after this time.

(2) SRA reading program (experimental group and control group #1) - The reading program was based on a model of cooperative learning developed at Johns-Hopkins University (Slavin, 1986). According to Stevens, Madden, Slavin, and Farnish (1987), there is a cycle of activities that underlies all of the cooperative learning programs developed at Johns-Hopkins:

1. Teacher instruction
2. Team Practice
3. Individual Assessments
4. Group Recognition

This cycle was adapted as follows:

1. Teacher instruction. Initial instruction was given at the first reading session to both groups on (a) the use of the programmed material, and (b) the way the material would be used in the reading groups.

2. Team practice. Using SRA practice materials, inmates worked in mixed-ability learning teams. Depending on the contents being studied, they worked on
Methodology

items and checked answers with each other, drilled each other, discussed and reached common answers, and so on.

3. Individual Assessments. At the end of the seven-week period, inmates were individually assessed on their learning of the skills contained in the lessons with a second form of the G-M instrument. Raw scores were computed to compose average gains in vocabulary, comprehension, and overall scores on the ESS scale.

4. Inmates received individual certificates of achievement for participation and other awards by group for average gains in overall ESS scores.

The rationale behind this basic cycle of activities was to give inmates an incentive to do a good job helping their teammates learn. The expected contribution of community was that inmates would be motivated to take responsibility for enhancing other's achievement as well as their own. If more literate inmates provided others with elaborated explanations of
concepts or skills, they themselves would gain in achievement (Dansereau, 1985; Webb, 1985).

The first reading sessions for both reading groups by arranging participants into groups of five or six. Within each group, there was at least one member with severe reading difficulties and one who had scored very high on the *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test*. They were then given instruction on how to use the programmed reading material. They were asked to help the members of each group who had difficulties with reading material, using the appropriate materials provided. Later on, in each session, they could progress to more difficult material but they were instructed to strive toward group reading at all times.

Within the community group, there were members who seemed to become instant reading instructors with the material provided. If Dansereau and Webb (1985) were correct, the reading skills of both "teacher and student" should improve. So, it would seem, should the self-esteem of both.

The control group from dormitory A was a fragmented and non-communicative group as dormitory 7 had been before their community-building experience.
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The mistrust within this group prevented those participants with reading difficulties from revealing that fact and asking for help. They also resisted the other group-reading activities throughout the seven-week period.

Treatment of Data

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical technique was used to test the general hypothesis that mean or average Gates-MacGinitie gain scores would be significantly greater for the experimental group than the two control groups. The variations in reading achievement according to certain background variables such as age, race, education and number of felony convictions was also analyzed. The hypothesis was tested at the conventional .05 level of statistical significance.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Following the initial testing of participants in the treatment group and the two control groups, the experimental design was operationalized for a period of seven weeks. Care was taken that dormitories A and 7 received identical reading programs and were not aware of the experimental design. Control group #2, the inmates of dormitory B, received no further treatment during this time. By the end of the seven-week experimental period each group had suffered considerable population mortality for several reasons; (a) Some inmates reached their normal release dates during the experimental period; (b) Some were able to obtain parole or pardon during this period; (c) Some were transferred to other facilities; (d) Some advanced to minimum security status and were transferred to another compound; (e) Some were reassigned to different jobs which precluded their participation, i.e., all-night jobs.

It should be noted that on the security officer level of prison operation, it has traditionally been a policy to observe closely for inmates becoming
acquainted in numbers large enough to become a "group." This cohesion is considered to be a security risk; and, when it is seen to occur, the inmates involved are moved to other dormitories, other units, or even different compounds. It is not appropriate to conclude that this policy played a part in the population mortality of the three dormitories involved in this experimental design. However, there was overt anxiety and opposition in some cases within lower security officer ranks to the basis of the experimental design involving the formation of cohesive inmate groups. Were it not for the confidence and support from the three wardens and other key personnel at DCI, this research would have been impossible to operationalize.
SAMPLE POPULATION

The overall description of the three groups is indicated in Table I. Described are the means, standard deviations and ranges for age, education and convictions, and percentages for race. Education indicates the self-reported grade level completed by each individual in the study. "Convictions" represents the total number of felony convictions for each. "Race" only indicates black or white as there were no other races represented in any of the three dormitories. As one can see, the average participant was almost 30 years of age, with a reported tenth-grade education, and two felony convictions.

TABLE I
SAMPLE POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>(6.6)</td>
<td>19-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convictions</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to race, the sample population consisted of 83% Blacks and 17% Whites.
FINDINGS

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FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RACE, BY GROUP

As stated previously, the goal of the study was to test the general hypothesis that mean or average G-M gain scores would be significantly greater for the experimental group than in the two control groups. However, the variations in reading achievement according to background variables such as age, race, education and number of convictions were also analyzed. Table II illustrates the final racial composition of each of the three dormitories at the time they were post-tested with the G-M instrument. Chi-square analysis presented no statistically significant difference among the groups with regard to race.

TABLE II
FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RACE, BY GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th></th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control-1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control-2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Freq. = Frequency
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR AGE AND GRADE LEVEL, BY GROUP

The entire experimental population is represented in Table III which summarizes the means and standard deviations for age and reported grade level by group. Grade levels shown are those self-reported by inmates and represent the level of formal education they claim to have completed. One must keep in mind that illiteracy represents within this stratum of society a personal weakness, and that revealing such a deficit can and does place an inmate at risk for being humiliated or otherwise physically and mentally abused. Therefore these self reported levels might be expected to be higher than actual levels.

One-way analysis of variance presented no statistically significant difference between the "community" group and the two control groups with regard to age or education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Reported Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30.4 (8.3)</td>
<td>10.8 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control-1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28.7 (5.1)</td>
<td>10.7 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control-2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30.6 (5.9)</td>
<td>11.1 (1.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FELONY CONVICTION RATES: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION, BY GROUP

The Louisiana State Department of Corrections classifies and categorizes inmates in many ways for many reasons. For instance, a person who has been convicted for grand theft auto is categorized in such a way that he will not likely become a trustee; or at least if he is, his job will not be washing cars.

The corrections department classification of frequency of felony convictions was controlled for in the design of this experiment. Table IV summarizes felony convictions rates and frequency distribution by group for the entire experimental population. Column 1 shows the number of convictions while the following three columns present the number of inmates in each group with the corresponding frequency at left. For instance, the community group had eleven "first offenders" while the control group #2 had thirteen "second offenders." One-way analysis of variance presented no statistically significant difference among the three groups with regard to the number of felony convictions of inmate participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Convictions</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Control-1</th>
<th>Control-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GATES-MACGINITIE PRETEST OBSERVATIONS OF THE THREE GROUPS COMBINED

Pretest observations of the three groups on the Gates-MacGinitie (G-M) Reading Test combined are shown in Table V. Raw scores for this table have been converted into grade equivalent (GE) and extended scale scores (ESS) for vocabulary, reading comprehension, and overall performance. The values indicated represent the means and standard deviations for each category. Preliminary analysis revealed no statistically significant difference among groups on pretest scores with regard to the three major criterion variables.

**TABLE V**

GATES-MACGINITIE PRETEST OBSERVATIONS OF THE THREE GROUPS COMBINED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>6.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>519.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPREHENSION</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>508.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>513.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANALYSIS

The following tables summarize the effect(s) of the two major independent variables on reading performance. Gains in reading achievement were measured according to three sets of scores on the G-M test: Grade Equivalent (GE) and extended scale scores (ESS) for (a) vocabulary, (b) comprehension, and (c) overall performance.

MEAN GAINS FOR VOCABULARY, COMPREHENSION AND OVERALL GATES-MACGINITIE SCORES, BY GRADE EQUIVALENT (GE) AND EXTENDED SCALE SCORES (ESS), BY GROUP

Table VI presents the mean gains for the three categories mentioned above on the GE and ESS scales by group. For the purpose of statistical analysis, however, only the ESS scale was utilized to compare growth in achievement of the treatment group with the growth of the other two groups.

Grade equivalents are given to offer terms more familiar to the average reader. They could not be used in the analysis of the data, however, because of the lack of adult norms being established by the authors of the G-M instrument. Table VI indicates that the mean gain scores in all three categories (vocabulary,
comprehension, and overall) and on both scales (Grade Equivalent and Extended Scale Scores) appear greater for the treatment (community) group than for either of the two control groups. On the GE scale, dormitory 7 (the treatment group) gained over one grade equivalent as a group in the seven weeks of the reading course. Dormitories "A" and "B" indicate gains in vocabulary only. Their average scores for comprehension and overall presented no gains.

TABLE VI

MEAN GAINS FOR VOCABULARY, COMPREHENSION AND OVERALL GATES-MACGINITIE SCORES, BY GRADE EQUIVALENT (GE) AND EXTENDED SCALE SCORES (ESS), BY GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary-Grade Equiv.</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabularv - ESS</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension-Grade Equiv.</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension-ESS</td>
<td>28.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall-Grade Equiv.</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall-ESS</td>
<td>23.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR OVERALL GRADE EQUIVALENT (GE) GATES-MACGINITIE SCORES, BY GROUP

A summary of pretest, post-test average Grade Equivalent scores and average gain scores for grade equivalents is presented in Table VII. Each of the mean scores is categorized by group, with standard deviations for each in parentheses. Though these scores are not valid for the purpose of analysis, a different trend between the experimental group and the two control groups is evident. For instance, the "community" group averaged a 1.04 grade equivalent gain during the seven week period. Though control group #1 received the same reading program, they posted no gains on the Grade Equivalence scale nor were gains posted for control group #2.
TABLE VII

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR OVERALL GRADE EQUIVALENT (GE) GATES-MACGINITIE SCORES, BY GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest GE means</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>(2.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest GE means</td>
<td>6.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>(2.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE gain means</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>(1.15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS

PRETEST AND POSTTEST MEANS FOR OVERALL GATES–MACGINITIE EXTENDED SCALE SCORES (ESS), BY GROUP

Table VIII summarizes the means and standard deviations for overall G-M Extended Scale Scores (ESS) by group. It presents in column one the three categories of ESS scores: (a) pretest average ESS scores, (b) posttest average ESS scores, and, (c) the average ESS gain.

The data for "ESS gain means" represent the key indicator of reading progress in all three groups. This data shows that gains for the community group appear to be significantly higher than for the other two groups. The community gained 23.93 units on the ESS scale compared to -0.62 and -5.31 for control groups #1 and #2, respectively.

Specific analysis of the data and discussion of the hypotheses are summarized in Table IX.
### TABLE VIII

PRETEST AND POSTTEST MEANS FOR OVERALL GATES-MACGINITIE EXTENDED SCALE SCORES (ESS), BY GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Control-1</th>
<th>Control-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest ESS means</td>
<td>506.13</td>
<td>509.17</td>
<td>528.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>(65.44)</td>
<td>(84.62)</td>
<td>(49.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest ESS means</td>
<td>530.05</td>
<td>508.55</td>
<td>523.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>(68.30)</td>
<td>(75.62)</td>
<td>(57.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS gain means</td>
<td>23.93</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
<td>-5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>(24.82)</td>
<td>(24.41)</td>
<td>(25.66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATA FOR TWO LEVELS OF ANALYSIS: ANOVA FOR THREE GROUPS & T-TEST FOR THE TWO READING GROUPS

Table IX summarizes the mean gains on the ESS scale for vocabulary, comprehension, and overall scores by group. For instance, in vocabulary, the table shows a gain of 19.67 for the treatment (community) group, 2.88 for control group #1, and 4.73 for control group #2. In general, the table indicates that the community group had higher gains in all three categories than either of the other two groups. A discussion of the way these results relate to the research hypotheses follows on two levels of analysis: (a) analysis of variance for all three groups involved in the experiment and (b) a t-test analysis of the scores from the two groups which received the SRA reading program.

TABLE IX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>Community (Dorm 7)</th>
<th>Control-1 (Dorm A)</th>
<th>Control-2 (Dorm B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESS Vocabulary</td>
<td>19.67</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS Comprehension</td>
<td>28.19</td>
<td>-6.73</td>
<td>-11.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS Overall</td>
<td>23.93</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
<td>-5.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Variance

A one-way analysis of variance of ESS gain scores in Table IX revealed significant differences between groups. Relating the significance to the stated hypotheses resulted in the following:

(a) Ho₁: Vocabulary: The null hypothesis of no difference at $p > 0.05$ is accepted ($F=2.84; \text{df}=2,88; p>F=0.0638$).

(b) Ho₂: Reading Comprehension: The null hypothesis of no difference at $p > 0.05$ is rejected ($F=8.33; \text{df}=2,88; p>F=0.0005$).

(c) Ho₃: Overall Scores: The null hypothesis of no difference at $p > 0.05$ is rejected ($F=11.90; \text{df}=2,88; p>F=0.0001$).

One-way Analysis of Variance: Dormitories 7,A,B (Community, Control-1, Control-2) (refer to Table IX)

H1. ESS Voc $\quad (F=2.84; \text{df}=2,88; p>F=0.0638)$
H2. ESS Comp $\quad (F=8.33; \text{df}=2,88; p>F=0.0005)$
H3. ESS Overall $\quad (F=11.90; \text{df}=2,88; p>F=0.0001)$

t-test

Given the experimental design, it is logical to compare the experimental group and control group #1 independently with t-test analysis as these two groups
both received the SRA reading program and third group remained untreated throughout the experiment. The summary of mean gains in Table IX confirm the t-test analysis that a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level exists between the two "SRA reading groups" in all three categories. Therefore:

(a) $H_{01}$: Vocabulary: The null hypothesis of no difference at $p > 0.05$ is rejected ($t=2.05; \ df=63; \ p=0.0436$)

(b) $H_{02}$: Reading Comprehension: The null hypothesis of no difference at $p > 0.05$ is rejected ($t=3.45; \ df=63; \ p=0.0011$).

(c) $H_{03}$: Overall Scores: The null hypothesis of no difference at $p > 0.05$ is rejected ($t=4.02; \ df=63; \ p=0.0002$).

t-test Dormitories 7 vs A only (refer to Table IX)

H1. ESS Voc $(t=2.05; \ df=63; \ p=0.0436)$
H2. ESS Comp $(t=3.45; \ df=63; \ p=0.0011)$
H3. ESS Overall $(t=4.02; \ df=63; \ p=0.0002)$

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FINDINGS

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THE EFFECTS OF GROUP ON OVERALL ESS, CONTROLLING FOR RACE, EDUCATION, AGE AND NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS: TWO GROUP MODEL (ONE-WAY ANOVA - COMMUNITY VS CONTROL-1).

The final analysis consisted of a multiple regression analysis of the independent effects of selected independent variables on overall ESS gains controlling for race, education, age and number of convictions. These variables are operationalized as follows:

(a) Group: Community Group = 1, Control Group = 0
(b) Race: Black = 1, White = 0
(c) Education: self-reported years of school completed
(d) Age: years of age
(e) Convictions: number of felony convictions.

The analysis confirmed that none of the independent variables had a statistically significant independent effect except for Group: (F=3.54; df=5,55; p>F=0.0076).
TABLE X

THE EFFECTS OF GROUP ON OVERALL ESS, CONTROLLING FOR RACE, EDUCATION, AGE AND NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS: TWO GROUP MODEL (ONE-WAY ANOVA - COMMUNITY VS CONTROL-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>P&gt;F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.66</td>
<td>0.0008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.1621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.7897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.8960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convictions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.4286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(F=3.54; df=5,55; p>F=0.0076)

In tables II, III and IV, analyses of the data presented no statistically significant difference between the experimental (community) group and the two control groups with regard to age, education, race, and number of felony convictions.

In the one-way analysis of variance of ESS gain scores, the null hypothesis regarding vocabulary could not be rejected in that the results (p>F = 0.0638) only approached significance. However, at the 0.05 level of significance, the data did not support the null hypothesis for comprehension or overall performance on
the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Therefore $H_{0_2}$ and $H_{0_3}$ were rejected.

In t-test analysis, a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level was shown between the two groups which received the reading program. The experimental (community) group clearly out-gained control #1 in all three categories (vocabulary, comprehension, and overall gain). Therefore, all three of the null hypotheses were rejected.

Multiple regression analysis of the independent effect of selected independent variables (age, race, reported grade levels, number of felony convictions, and group) confirmed no statistically significant independent effect except for group.

Generally, the analyses of the data supported the effectiveness of the Community-Building Group-Process intervention technique on the reading program.
Summary

A substantial body of research has shown that when students work together in groups and are rewarded based on the learning of all the group members, they achieve consistently more than students who are in traditionally taught classes. The main goal of the DCI research project was to test the effects of an innovative group-process intervention technique on reading performance among a population of incarcerated adult males in a medium-security prison in Louisiana. This model, referred to as "Community Building" (CBGP), has been used among other applications as an intervention technique to resolve organizational/personnel problems in private, business, university, and government settings. It can involve groups of up to 60 participants. The research goal was to test its efficacy as an educational tool in an adult-education program.

The research design, a classical pretest-posttest comparison-group experimental design, called for three
groups of inmates randomly assigned to the following conditions: (a) Experimental group - CBGP and SRA Reading Program; (b) Control group #1 - SRA Reading Program only; (c) Control group #2 - untreated.

The dependent variable was reading performance according to three sets of scores (vocabulary, comprehension and overall) on the Gates-MacGinitie (GM) reading test. The independent variables consisted of the CBGP intervention and the SRA reading program as outlined above.

Analysis-of-variance statistical technique was used to test the research hypothesis (at 0.05 level of statistical significance) that mean GM-gain scores would be significantly greater for the experimental group than the two control groups.

Conclusions

This experiment was developed out of the centuries-old debate of community vs. individualism. In this debate, the researcher agrees with deTocqueville and others who argue that "rugged American individualism" has marched so inexorably through our history that it now tends to destroy the
social integuments (i.e. community) that moderate its more destructive potentialities. The rediscovery of the experience of community and its effects on social environment led to the general hypothesis of this study that achievement in a reading program would be greater in a group which had become a "genuine community" (Peck, 1987) than in one which had not.

The difficulty in interpreting the data of such a study often stems from its complexity. Though this was a relatively simple group-comparison design, a number of intrinsic variables could have affected the observed results. In the analysis of the data, however, the factors of age, race, level of education, and number of convictions were interpreted and found to have no statistical significance in the results.

Analysis of the data obtained in the experiment support the effectiveness of Peck's community-building model in producing significantly higher gain scores for the treatment group. This was not surprising given the environment which developed in the treatment group once it had taken on the characteristics of community. Security officers, for instance, reported that for the first time in their careers, they were seeing inmates
carry on meaningful conversations. This was apparently a new phenomenon in dormitory 7 (the community group) where the pervasive atmosphere, until the time of this experiment, had been one of fear and mistrust. They also reported a reduction in rule infractions and an absence of physical violence since the time of the community-building workshop. As levels of trust increased within the group, inmates with the most severe problems in reading apparently sensed that it was safe to reveal this deficiency and asked for help. Interaction developed in ways other than that which approached a teacher/student relationship. For instance, as inmates became better acquainted, some would discover that their families (mostly poor) lived close to each other and could car-pool to the prison on visitors' day. This discovery reportedly facilitated some visits that would otherwise have not occurred. Others reported the beginnings of a reconciliation with their families. In general, inmates and security personnel alike reported a lower level of stress within the everyday environment of dormitory 7.

The outcome of the experimental data along with collateral indicators such as increased visitations
offer certain implications for future research. However, a final summarization of the debate which inspired this project, and a discussion of community in education precedes that.

Discussion

The world community according to Robert Bellah et al. (1985), is becoming increasingly interdependent. People do not like this fact, that they depend on other people, or that what people do in other parts of the world can have effects on their lives. For instance, if the Japanese sold their securities tomorrow, they would drive down the value of U.S. stocks, and of course, if people do not buy Japanese goods, Japan will suffer the greatest depression in their history. It works both ways. But the critical question is, how can people give this interdependence—which is so obvious in connection with everything they do—a moral meaning?

The answer to this problem is the rediscovery of "community." Americans are and have been throughout most of their history a very individually oriented country. For this researcher, that orientation is
preferred to the community-oriented societies of the Soviets or the Chinese.

But somehow, Americans have developed a peculiar idea of what an individual is, what individual pleasure is, what individual purpose is. Americans tend to see everything in terms of personal autonomy—in terms not only of "my rights under the law," but also in terms of pleasure and privilege. Americans have trained a whole generation or more to think in terms of the isolated "I." But the human being is not like an amoeba. Human beings are much more like coral—interconnected. Human beings cannot survive without each other.

This research has used Peck's model of community to illustrate one of the ways Americans can bring this inescapable interconnectedness or interdependence into some kind of coherence so that there can be a greater understanding of it and so that it might have more positive meaning for everyone.

The patterns of group behavior such as those illustrated by Peck's community-building model and its stages of development have shown that there is a process by which people can and do learn the concepts of community.
Community in Education

As intimacy, mature dignity, and integrity represent the final phase of Erickson's (1959) schema in the development of the individual, they also represent the highest mystical and holistic form of group functioning. The potential for the use of group-process in the classroom has been discussed by many authors but perhaps was best illustrated by Glasser's three types of classroom meetings. The difficulties of allowing Glasser's style of ambiguity and freedom illustrate some of the obstacles to this process. Other obstacles such as competition (Rubin), competitive grading (Glasser), and tracking (Sapon-Shevin) so embedded in traditional instructional models demonstrate that these complex issues may never be resolved.

Cuban (1989), however, described some school faculties and program administrators who have successfully made substantial changes in classrooms. By "successful," Cuban (1989) means schools that "motivate at-risk students to complete school, that
increase students' desire to learn, and that build self-esteem and enhance academic performance" (p. 799).

Cuban (1989) further described certain "features" of such classrooms which have appeared repeatedly in the research literature and which coincide with "practitioners' wisdom about what works with at-risk students" (p. 799). Among these features, he mentions the following: (a) face-to-face contact cultivating enduring, rather than passing, relationships between young and old; (b) teacher camaraderie developed from shared commitment, personal and cultural knowledge about their students, and a willingness to learn from failure; (c) few, if any, distinctions made among students where ability grouping is uncommon or non-existent; (d) classroom communities where the school, program, or classroom becomes a kind of extended family and where achievement and caring for one another are both important. According to Cuban (1989), "A sense of belonging to a group -- in effect, a different culture -- is created as a means of increasing self-esteem and achievement" (p. 800).

An effort to re-design the graded school toward a community model is probably essential for at-risk
populations. For with most students, only two places exist where they can gain a successful experience of community and learn to follow the essential pathways to intimacy and integrity. These places are the home and the school. If the home is successful, the student might succeed despite the school, but this "if" is too big to rely upon. Adults must ensure that the student's major experience in growing up, the most constant and important factor in his life, school, provides within it the two necessary pathways: a chance to give and receive love and a chance to become educated facilitating self-worth. In the context of classroom, love can best be thought of as social responsibility. When we do not learn to be responsible to each other, to care for each other, and to help each other, not only for the sake of others but for their own sakes, love becomes a weak and limited concept. Perhaps through the further development of classroom group-process models in the classroom such as "Whole Language" and "Cooperative Learning," schools and corrections systems alike can offer higher levels of problem solving skills as well as the hope of
relatedness and opportunity to gain independence, not at the expense of intimacy but through intimacy.

Implications of the Research

What this experiment has demonstrated is that given an appropriate psychological environment, the inmates of dormitory 7 with access to an appropriate learning vehicle improved in reading skills. In particular, the experimental data demonstrate that measures of skills such as reading comprehension and reading vocabulary were affected by the community-building technique.

As the researcher randomly selected the sample from the experimentally accessible population, the findings can be generalized to the larger group. To generalize further to the entire incarcerated population of Louisiana is perhaps inappropriate, particularly with maximum-security inmates. However, the total group of subjects to whom the conclusions should apply would include medium- and minimum-security inmates at any correctional institution in Louisiana with demographics similar to those at DCI. This target population would constitute approximately ninety
percent of the state's incarcerated population or about 11,000 men.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this first study suggest that the overall approach has promise as a means of improving the outcomes of reading programs. From the perspective of "community" and its effects on achievement in reading, this approach requires replication, refinement, and intensification. For instance, the experimental group gained one grade equivalent while there were no gains in the other groups. But, the reading groups only met for ninety-minute sessions, once a week for seven weeks. How much gain would be possible if the number of reading sessions was tripled?

Collateral indicators such as increased visitation, decreased violence, and greater attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings within the experimental group suggest future research on the effects of community-building in the prison environment. One could study the effects of a CBGP on (a) currently in-place "boot camp" programs, (b) addictions programs, (c) pre-release programs,
(d) education programs, (e) studies in prison management, and (f) recidivism. Furthermore, the research could be extended into the areas of juvenile corrections, women's corrections, and inner-city, at-risk high-school populations.

Much of what has been learned here is of significance. However, as the first program of its kind, it had some unavoidable limitations such as (a) the lack of experience in corrections with the CBGP model, (b) the lack of support from security personnel, and (c) population mortality which limited the ultimate size of the sample. Future research which can overcome these and other such obstacles will provide more generalizable results.
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VITA

Dr. Robert E. Roberts completed his undergraduate studies at Louisiana Polytechnic University, and his Doctorate of Dental Surgery at Loyola University of New Orleans. Following his graduation in 1968, he spent three years in Europe while serving in the Armed Forces. He was then in the private practice of General Dentistry from 1973 through 1989. During this time he completed a Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Combining his training in dentistry and psychology, he conducted extensive research in the field of the psychosocial aspects of headaches and Temporomandibular Joint Pain Dysfunction Syndrome. Since 1985, he has lectured at numerous mental health and dental conferences throughout the United States and Europe on the subject of his research. Presently, he is a doctoral candidate at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with a major field of study in Curriculum and Instruction.
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Major Field: EDUCATION

Title of Dissertation: THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNITY-BUILDING GROUP-PROCESS INTERVENTION TECHNIQUE ON READING PERFORMANCE AMONG INMATES IN A MEDIUM SECURITY PRISON

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination: APRIL 10, 1991