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URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP IN CRISIS: A CASE STUDY.

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A series of educational seminars was held in New Haven, Connecticut by a group of two psychiatrists and eight principals. These meetings were organized following a community crisis over racial balancing of the public schools. It was felt that an inter-professional collaboration would be a fruitful means of finding educational solutions to psychological problems in the school setting. Described are the crisis in New Haven, and the organization, process, and nature of the co-professional meetings. Specific problems faced by urban principals are presented in a case study of the principalship: the administrative problems, decentralization and isolation, power and autonomy, professionalism, and professional role. Also discussed are the concept of limited goals for professional educators, their action orientation, and their knowledge of child development. (NH)

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URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP IN CRISIS

A CASE STUDY

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TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

This case study is based on meetings between the authors (one a psychoanalyst* and one a child psychiatrist**) and leading school principals in New Haven over a 1 1/2 year period. We have concluded that these meetings were useful to the principals and recommend our method for participation; yet, we do not choose to emphasize this point. Our purpose in this report is to contribute to understanding the urban principalship by describing what we learned in its broad social context and by focusing on those aspects pertinent to our professional knowledge and viewpoint. In participating in meetings with principals, we were alert to the complexities and limitations on applying our professional knowledge to another discipline and to an area (education) which transcends our focused interest and skills. Yet, given our limitations, we were able to apply our orientation and concepts to certain problems of the principals and to advocate that one aspect of our knowledge - namely, child development - be integrated into their professional equipment.

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It is appropriate to emphasize that these meetings grew out of - and were conducted in the context of an educational crisis. These are times of change and crisis with a constant interplay between the two: one growing out of and precipitating the other. In response to critical developments in the movement for racial equality, the New Haven Board of Education introduced a proposal to correct racial imbalance and improve the quality of education in its schools. This proposal precipitated a crisis involving the entire community in an acrid debate. Partly in response to the impact of this debate, New Haven psychiatrists were moved to an active interest in public schools, with the result that psychiatrists and school principals came to explore their mutual concerns over education. This collaboration was not focused on the racial balancing crisis alone, but rather on all the issues of public education.

CRISIS:

The context of this report is the eruption of a series of national crises over the past decade: crises of our cities, schools and racial problems. The City of New Haven (pop. 154,000), in the early 1960's, faced the serious problems of most American cities: deterioration of physical facilities, exodus of the middle class, commerce, and industry to the suburbs, and migration of Southern negroes into the central core. The so-called "Crisis in American Education" similarly affected its schools. This crisis was marked by the 1954 Supreme Court decision banning segregated education and the 1958 Russian Sputnik with its implicit challenge to the idea of overwhelming American Educational superiority.

The sources of the crisis lay: First, in economic factors which depleted the material and professional resources of our decentralized school system, as well as other local governmental agencies. Because

salaries were depressed at a time of expanding opportunity and prosperity elsewhere in the economy, gifted teachers were lost to other vocations. Dedicated teachers remained in the school system, but also because of the sheltered employment provided by a firm tenure program, too many remained who were timid or inept. Second, technological and cultural changes increased academic requirements for the labor market at all levels and reduced the demand for unskilled workers. Demands for academic qualifications for material success in our increasingly bureaucratized and technological society outstripped and perhaps compromised expanding opportunities to pursue the love of learning. Schools were challenged to offer an intensified and more specialized curriculum to a larger proportion of students at a time of population expansion. Schools were also challenged to provide meaningful educational programs for youth heretofore consigned to the unskilled labor market; or, failing to find a creative solution (7) to the "drop-out" problem, they were asked to find ways to contain in the school setting restless youth unmotivated for conventional education. Third, the movement for racial equality focused on the schools as a prime resource for correcting the injustices and consequences of Negro slavery and its post-emancipation sequelae. Schools were challenged to bring Negro youth into the mainstream of American life, just as they had done for generations of European immigrants. They were challenged to counteract actively the forces of prejudice, discrimination and segregation, as well as to devise programs of "compensatory education" for the "culturally deprived."

New Haven was uniquely suited, among American cities, to confront

its urban and educational crises. Its small size served to minimize the awesome bureaucratic and political tangles of the large cities. The presence of a prominent University in the central core provided stimulation and resources. Most significantly, a liberal and popular City Government had, since 1954, transformed the city into an exciting national pilot project for urban renewal. The City Redevelopment Agency, in 1957, initiated a long-term program for reconstruction and rejuvenation of physical facilities. The New Haven Board of Education, representing to the community the best of our liberal and educational traditions, initiated redevelopment of the school system. An ambitious school building program, geared to redevelopment as well as new educational concepts, went into effect in 1960. Community Progress, Inc., a semi-public corporation established in 1962, assumed responsibility for the human aspects of redevelopment. CPI has funneled ideas and funds into existing and newly created agencies for community development for the past 5 years, and the New Haven school system has been a central focus for its energies.

A SPECIFIC CRISIS:

In May, 1964, the Board of Education proposed a plan to correct racial imbalance in the schools to improve the quality of education. This plan involved a modest proposal to reduce de facto segregation by bussing children to paired schools. In an unusual experiment in grass-roots democracy, the Board of Education presented this proposal for community discussion at a series of open meetings throughout the city. These meetings evoked a shocking display of latent racial and social class tensions, which obscured the substantive issues in this admit-

tedly debatable plan and polarized public opinion into extreme positions for and against. In the face of extensive public opposition, the plan was finally implemented in a modified form. This was the first of a series of incidents where the Board of Education met substantial community opposition. While this "Racial-Balancing Crisis" appeared at the time to tear the community apart (4), it is difficult to evaluate its full significance. The community has accepted a degree of racial balancing, and the strong opposition has not been reflected in civic elections nor in real estate values. Certainly, the debate made the whole community fully aware of the "educational crisis" in all its aspects, and there is some hope that the awakened interest in education has led to increased public support for its schools.

In the aftermath of the "Racial-Balancing" debate, the Social Issues Committee of the New Haven-Middlesex Chapter, Connecticut District Branch, APA offered its services to the New Haven Principal's Club through the offices of the School Psychiatrist. The result was the formation of 5 voluntary discussion groups. Each group consisted of 1 or 2 psychiatrists and a group of 4-8 principals. These 5 groups came to involve 24 out of 38 New Haven Principals. This case study arose primarily from the authors' work with one of these groups.

METHOD:

These group meetings were clearly separated from the official school administration. They were entirely voluntary, without fee, and, in our case, conducted after school hours. The 8 principals who met with the authors were leaders in their professional community (7 received major promotions during the course of this study). The preparatory discussions

had not developed any clearly defined goals acceptable to us for this psychiatrist-educator collaboration. We (the authors) defined for ourselves two general goals: (1) To exploit the situation to inform ourselves about the principalship and the schools, and (2) to find out if we could apply our knowledge in a way useful to the principals.

The principal who developed these meetings had expected that we would "help the principals understand themselves better." It was never really made clear just how we were supposed to do this. Some principals wanted us to provide "group therapy" for their less competent colleagues whom they considered emotionally disturbed. We did not consider such an aim either proper or fruitful. Neither did we attempt to promote self-understanding through our customary clinical approach of a detailed study of inner experience. However, in terms of an effort to promote an examination of professional goals, methods, and motive, we believe we did make a contribution. That is to say, we conceived of our role in educational rather than therapeutic terms.

We chose to work together with one group, because each of us was relatively inexperienced¹ in group work, and we were apprehensive about and opposed to references to "group therapy" in the preparatory meetings.* Being mindful that an unstructured group does evoke characteristic "group dynamics", we observed the developing group process and dealt with it on occasion when necessary. Yet our method was in complete contrast to an approach to educational groups which emphasizes "group dynamics" over content. We were consistently concerned with substantive issues, and deliberately sought to establish the relevance and limitations of our expert knowledge to the issues concerning the principals. In this way, we did bring structure and focus to the meetings.

* We felt that two psychiatrists could better establish a level of discourse among themselves and the principals that would promote an educational seminar.

Accordingly, the meetings were planned in the form of a seminar of co-equal professionals from differing disciplines, meeting biweekly for 2 hour sessions. In order to emphasize our co-equal status, one principal was asked to moderate the discussion. There was no agenda, because we believed that an unstructured discussion would best promote a full survey of the educational and administrative issues confronting principals. Since the seminars covered all aspects of the principalship, our role differed from that of the traditional psychiatric consultant.

THE NATURE OF THE MEETINGS:

These group discussions served as the first formal evidence of a new spirit among New Haven principals. They also began to meet among themselves in other contexts to further their professional interests. The principals were essentially open, articulate, and eager for a friendly and mutually supportive collaboration. There were no silent members at any meeting. The atmosphere was good humored and spontaneous. There was evasiveness and antagonism, but it was expressed covertly through an undisciplined character to the meetings. The success of the seminars was insured by gradually focusing, in the group discussion, on this lack of discipline.* We attribute the interest in these meetings to the catalytic effect of the "educational crisis", to the fact that participation was voluntary and divorced from the school administration, to the select group of principals who participated, and to the educational format of the seminars which fostered mutual trust and provided focus.

* The undisciplined character of the meetings is discussed further in the section below on "Action Orientation".

The principals were indignant over the frustrations of their work, and were searching for new answers. With regard to the many new and experimental programs being introduced to the school system, they were sometimes enthusiastic but generally cautious; waiting to learn if they proved educationally sound. They appeared overwhelmed by the racial problems in their schools as well as the challenge to educators to deal with the effects of "cultural deprivation." Thus, they frequently turned to the convincing evidence that they did not discriminate against any race or social class, as if that fact were somehow an answer rather than a base line from which to proceed.

The principals did not come to seek help for personal psychological problems. While these meetings might have been conducted in a manner designed to elicit personal problems, we felt that any confidences so evoked would arise from the psychiatrist's method rather than the principal's motive.

The principals came to meet with us primarily because they wanted help with psychological problems in their schools. Somehow, at this point in time, they found it easier to deal with the human aspects of their work in psychological terms rather than the equally important, but complex and overwhelming, cultural, economic, administrative and educational vectors. Psychological problems seemed to them concrete, specific, and something one can grasp. It follows that they would turn to psychiatry (as medical psychology), rather than other equally knowledgeable disciplines, for specific guidance. There were differences in how we and the principals perceived our psychiatric role. One of these differences was an important point of tension in the group; the principals wanted psychiatric and therapeutic answers to certain school

problems, while we insisted that they find educational answers. We resisted assuming the role of experts in the school setting, demanding that the principals use us as consultants and themselves as experts in translating what we had to offer into educational terms. When principals and teachers do find educational answers to psychological problems in the school setting, they do not pre-empt the clinician's role. Rather, they clarify and enhance the consultative and therapeutic work of psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians with school children.

One of our most important contributions derived, not from our psychiatric expertise, but from the seminar format of the meetings which provided an opportunity for the principals to share ideas and information with each other as well as ourselves. Given the stresses of their situation, it was important for them to tell their story to respected professionals from another discipline. At first, our participation was more in the role of intelligent laymen seriously interested in schools. For example, one aspect of our contribution to a discussion of obtaining confessions of irregular activities from school children could have been more expertly discussed by an attorney. We were careful to distinguish our views and values as informed citizens from our expert knowledge, but we felt free to express both. We reacted promptly and actively to the content of the discussion, moderating our skill in the use of controlled responses to elicit fantasy, displacements and regression.

However, from the outset, our participation in the seminars reflected our clinical traditions in psychoanalysis and child psychiatry. We used our clinical skills in clarification and exploration to develop the dialogue. We insisted on exploring in detail any subject introduced.

We used a certain candor and directness, a reflective attitude, and a way of considering problems from different points of view; all of which derive from our clinical approach. Most significantly, we were constantly interested in motives. The principals became intrigued by our recurrent question, which was unfamiliar to them: "How did you come to do this?" Thus, we encouraged that reflection which takes place after the act and prepares one for the next spontaneous action - the post-hoc reflection implicit in our clinical traditions of supervision and case conferences.

Gradually, we began to make use of the substance of our psychiatric knowledge. Certain clinical concepts, such as limiting goals, setting limits, and consulting among colleagues could be applied to the principals' situation. We did offer specific guidance where it seemed appropriate; with regard to method (such as interviewing child and parent, preparing for referrals, communicating with consultants) as well as to understanding specific clinical problems (such as a case of school phobia). We came to recognize that our most important contribution in terms of content had not been anticipated or sought by the principals, namely, a knowledge of child development.

In the course of our meetings with the principals, we learned a great deal about the schools and principalship. Some of what we learned is presented in the following section.

Case Study of the Principalship

This case study is designed to illustrate significant problems confronting urban principals which may prove remediable in the years to come. While we have attempted to remain objective, we have also highlighted issues which merit our interest and concern. Our impressions do not apply to every principal in every situation, nor do they reflect an evaluation of any single principal. We are satisfied that our impressions are generally valid and reflect real issues which merit attention. There is good reason to believe that this case study, drawn from New Haven, raises issues pertinent to every urban community. Since this study was completed, nearly one year ago, we have continued to meet with the principals in an ongoing study of the issues raised in this report.

Administrative Problems of the School System:

A new superintendent had initiated a thorough overhaul and redirection of the New Haven School System. He resigned in favor of an appointment in a larger city, resulting in a prolonged and strained search for his successor. The period of this study coincided with the last months of his tenure and the one year term of an interim superintendent. During this time, considerable categorical aid from private and federal grants was introduced to meet the urgent needs of the inner city schools.* The system remained difficult to change. Unsuitable teachers and principals remained protected by a tenure system that resisted any challenges. Despite budgetary improvements,

* e.g. Gaining an impressive change in the teacher-pupil ratio, developing community schools, and introducing a variety of programs designed to meet the problems of "cultural deprivation."

the total system remained underfinanced; consequently understaffed and underserviced. The higher administrative staff was not large enough to coordinate effectively and supervise the program. The appointed Board of Education, as in other cities, had been forced to shift from being only a policy making body to concern itself with myriad burdensome administrative details. Not only did the political and social pressures of the "educational crisis" continue, but the sound measures introduced to resolve the crisis had the immediate effect of raising expectations and intensifying the pressures.

In this heated atmosphere, the system operated from crisis to crisis. Emergency situations were constantly erupting into secondary crises. These were precipitated either by factors inherent in the particular emergency or by attempts of the system to effect change. It appeared that the school system was better equipped to run from emergency to emergency than to deal effectively with the factors underlying the emergencies. An important source of this crisis atmosphere was the poor communication between and within all administrative levels. The school board and superintendent appeared to consider a "dynamic of ongoing dialogue, structured and spontaneous..." between administration and staff to be the least urgent of priorities (8). In fact, one might fruitfully study this school administration as an experiment in the selective minimizations of intrastaff consultation. One result was that the principals had little objective evidence of the administration's confidence in them or support for their role or function.

While the principals were functioning in a system that operated from "crisis to crisis", and felt alienated from and unsupported by their administration, they were charged with translating the ambitious goals

and programs of the system into the human interaction of the classroom. They often felt frustrated by their teaching staff. The teachers presented their share of complicated problems, not the least of which, from our observation, was the frequent lack of attunement between teacher and pupil at the child's level, the teacher was likely to react with frustration, apathy, depression, tantrums, or rage.

Decentralization and Isolation:

One main advantage of the School System had been its decentralized structure, so that each school was free to develop its own unique program. Unfortunately, with local autonomy, the principals also became isolated from each other. In contrast to the behavioral science tradition of consultation among colleagues, there was no effective forum in which principals could share their common concerns. Some principals had never even informally discussed matters of common interest with principals of similar schools. New principals had little opportunity to benefit from the knowledge of their experienced colleagues. They were particularly interested in the seminars with the psychiatrists because of the opportunity to discuss vital issues with senior principals. While the New Haven Principals Club had served for socializing and as a bargaining agent for bettering working conditions, its members were only beginning to organize to further professional goals. We believe that effective decentralization requires traditions and mechanisms for professional interchange. A situation of autonomy and isolation, which prevailed in the school system, leads to stagnation, repetition of errors, and unrealistic goals.

Power and Autonomy:

In contrast to a view of the principals as autonomous "chieftains"; they had little real power (8) - even less than might be expected given

the strictures of a large public bureaucracy. They had limited influence over hiring or firing teachers, curriculum organization, or the distribution of materials and services. This attrition of power was bad for morale, providing a realistic basis for a sense of helplessness. We heard of principals who reacted with passivity, "going by the book" in a caricature of bureaucratic efficiency, or even passive-obstruction. Even the assertive principals in our group showed the ill effects of this state of affairs. They were hampered by and resented a lack of authority to do their job properly. They tended to avoid direct and candid confrontations of controversial issues to avoid being placed in a vulnerable position. Some were hypersensitive to criticisms and political pressures, thus limiting important aspects of school-community collaboration. Most significantly, the lack of effective power stimulated resourceful principals to use indirect routes to exercise their authority. Call it charisma, moxie, or chutzpah; each principal, according to his own style managed to keep his school moving. All of them recognized the need to take risks - to "go out on a limb," in order to accomplish anything in the bureaucratic structure. Each principal was familiar with "putting on an act" to achieve his ends, so that the day's work sounded like an exercise in dramatics. They frequently found it necessary to coax, cajole, wheedle, feign anger, or scrounge. While one may respect the usefulness of dramatic ingenuity and other indirect expressions of resourcefulness in the arsenal of an administrator, the excessive use of such tactics can interfere with developing more direct and enduring applications of professional knowledge and authority. More significantly we found many instances where the backdoor exercise of authority was educationally unsound, depriving

the principal of opportunities to teach staff and pupils through clarifying the issues involved in a difficult situation.

Professionalism:

We asked the principals, in a speculative vein, what they thought of a rotating principalship, similar to rotating Department Chairmen in a University. They unanimously rejected the idea: "Once a teacher becomes a principal, he can never return to the classroom." This answer, emphasizing professional prestige and alienation from the classroom, really begged the significant questions: Does the principalship rest on the professional integration of a body of knowledge, skills, goals, and personal qualifications? Is there a link between education and administration which makes the principalship a unique profession?

The professional identity of principals has never been as well developed as in other fields, such as medicine or law (3). Training programs for school administrators have been disorganized (8). The experienced principals with whom we worked really knew more about school operations than they had formulated or could articulate. While they could organize together to advance their interests in tenure and pay, they were only beginning to join in promoting vital professional interests. They had, over the years, accepted erosion of their professional authority. They continued to protect colleagues who failed to meet their own standards.

The principals in our group were conscientious men and women; free of the pedantry and sophistry characteristic of overprofessionalism, and in tune with the day to day issues of school functions. They were informed about the nature and challenges of the "educational crisis",

and had technical mastery of a wide range of educational and administrative methods. Their orientation was pragmatic and their operational definition of education focused on vocational goals. We were impressed with their technical competence, but this was not enough to provide for an effective professionalism.

In our opinion, the lack of professionalism was demonstrated insofar as the relevance of a philosophy of education to the administration of schools was not made explicit. There was even a sense of an anti-intellectual atmosphere. The creation of an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and excitement in the school setting was submerged amid the urgent problems of a crisis ridden school system. Educational goals were often viewed as divorced from questions of morale and discipline.

Professional Role:

The principals were keenly aware of shifts in their role from the traditional and declining role of principal-teacher to the contemporary role of school administrator* and a newly emerging role of community leader**. Many yearned for the good old days of the principal-teacher, and wished they had more time to supervise their staffs in the classroom.*** Romanticizing the horse and buggy principal served to emphasize the principals' sense of alienation from the educational process in the rush of administrative chores. The development of community

* Particularly in the larger school.

** Evoked by the development of community schools.

*** Generalizing from our knowledge of clinical supervision, we could think of other means for supervising able teachers than breathing down their necks in the classrooms. Perhaps the old role of principal teacher, to the degree that it existed at all, was neither so satisfying nor so effective.

schools was appealing to some principals, because it offered them hope of returning to education at a new level in the role of community leaders devoted to involving families in the goals and values of learning. To a varying degree, the principal-administrators really were alienated from education; not because they were administrators but because they were forced to serve as clerk-receptionists. Frequently lacking adequate clerical staff and confronted with clumsy systems for procuring goods and services, their day could be filled with menial chores.*

We questioned rather than shared the school administrator's sense of alienation from education. Despite his lack of power, the principal sets the tone of his school. His role is crucial in establishing discipline and morale - the atmosphere in which learning can take place. Berkovitz (2) has described the regressive aspects of the school administrative situation, where the group interaction of the staff may take on the features of neurotic family interactions. Our observations have led us to conclude that such behavior is most likely to occur when school administration becomes divorced from educational goals and concepts. Discussions of administrative issues regularly led us back to the core of the learning process.

Almost any administrative problem could serve as a focus for discussion of a wide range of issues. The following provides some feeling for the character of the group discussion:

* The intricate problems involved in securing an adequate supply of toilet paper became a jesting symbol of this issue for our group.

A thoughtful and perceptive man, reported an incident concerning Albert, a 4th grader. Albert's father brought Principal A a pornographic note found among the boy's possessions. The father was distressed and asked if Albert should be sent to military school. Principal A minimized the significance of the note to the father. Earlier he would have shared the father's upset, and his change resulted from an earlier discussion in the group of the significance of similar behavior in another child. Principal A then informed us that Albert's teacher had found an identical pornographic note in a waste basket prior to the father's visit. The Principal, on receiving this pornography, had analyzed the handwriting and grammar. He deduced that Albert had not only written the note but had copied it from some other source. We were interested in why Principal A was so eager to detect the pornographer. The ensuing discussion continued an earlier discussion of principals' preoccupation with obtaining confessions from pupils suspected of wrongdoing. Among our serious concerns over the general practice of obtaining confessions and the means employed by principals to obtain them, we believed that the energies devoted to this detective work could be better employed to develop more effective and educational means to deal with such problems. The fact that Principal A had determined that Albert was not capable of composing the pornographic note, led us to discover that the principal knew that Albert had a learning problem more serious than his lapse into scatology. In fact, in recent months, this note was a rare, albeit unsubmitted, scholarly effort for Albert. The principal had already taken appropriate measures to assess the learning difficulty and begin remedial measures. Further inquiry led us to discover that the note brought by the father was obtained from Albert's private effects by his new step-

mother. The mother had died only 7 months before, and the father had just remarried an old friend. In discussing these new facts, all of the principals present told us that they pay little active attention to a child's loss through death or desertion. Specifically, they were not accustomed to look for evidence of depression and its associated interference with learning. Principal A had actually been responsive and sympathetic to Albert's loss, having sent toys to the home during the mourning period, and he was aware of a number of possible speculations about the significance of the father's early remarriage. While he had sized up the family very well, he had not developed a conceptual framework to connect his knowledge with Albert's learning problem or his recent interest in pornography. Principal A then told us that Albert was about to move to a nearby town. We were interested in how he would inform the principal of the new school of Albert's urgent problems. To our surprise, we learned that all principals present would consider it inappropriate to forward any personal information about this child to his new school. They held that communicating such information would prejudice the child and doom him to undervaluation. Principals were not accustomed to exchange personal information about children or their families with other schools or even with teachers within their school. They carried the concept of confidentiality to an extreme, explaining that they could not always trust their colleagues to make appropriate use of confidential information. They had no concept of gaining parents' consent to sharing important personal data. In accepting parents' confidences in an unprofessional way, the principals sometimes became participants in family intrigue rather

than professionals capable of assessing the significance of confidential information in the educational setting.

This example of Albert's pornography was typical of many incidents illustrating the relation of administrative practices to educational issues. Principal A was emotionally attuned to Albert's bereavement and imminent move to a new school; he was concerned with real disciplinary issues involved in pornography in the classroom; and he recognized his task as school administrator to respond to the father's manifest distress over the note. Yet, he was not prepared to relate these issues to each other or to establish their relevance to his most important concern; namely, Albert's poor academic achievement. Because of a lack of development and integration of their professional role, the principals were not accustomed to relate their administrative acts (such as discipline or family interviews) to educational issues.

Concept of Limited Goals:

Educators are asked to perform many functions which transcend and may even exceed the educational purpose of a school: i.e. to provide an environment in which learning may take place. For example, the schools are asked to meet needs of emotionally disturbed children, to serve as a focus for overcoming racial prejudice, to undo the effects of poverty and "cultural deprivation", to provide a program for children unmotivated for any existing educational setting, to deal with the problems of teenage unwed mothers, etc. Such expectations are appropriate. The public schools can and do serve the development of children in many ways beyond their primary academic focus, and the

tradition of experimentation in American education may well be employed to meet new goals. Yet, pressures on the educators to meet these expectations may take the form of strident and extreme demands or demands which contain inherent contradictions; often accompanied by a call for dramatic innovations and experimentation. Public, political, and professional demands on educators may vary from the sound to the irrational, but professional educators are obliged to pay attention to what motivates these demands and to try to translate them into sound educational practice. To be more concise, they need a concept of limited goals.

Because the principals did not have a concept of limited goals integrated within their professional equipment, they were not prepared to meet the new challenges placed on them. They were likely to attempt too much or too little. The principals were confronted with overwhelming public demands to correct extremely complicated problems, such as those presented by seriously emotionally disturbed children or children unmotivated for existing educational program. In both cases, they failed to delineate their goals. Consequently, they responded to the demands with inadequate educational programs. They also failed to reflect back to the community its responsibility for these children apart from education. Also in attempting to do too much and failing in the attempt, they tended to become unnecessarily discouraged and self-critical. Because they had not adequately defined their goals, they frequently failed to recognize and exploit their own sound practices.

Action - Orientation:

The principals showed an orientation toward action that interfered with reflective thinking and frequently led to premature resolutions of difficult problems. Principals work in a field of action, and their day is characterized by a succession of decisions involving a wide range of issues. Decisions must be made clearly and decisively in order to keep the administrative machinery moving. Pressures of work make it difficult to delay action, and a tendency to brood or ruminate can prove obstructive. The principals had intuitively developed, out of their rich experience, a range of patterns to deal with typical situations. They described some of these patterns in terms of "putting on an act", referring to a range of "tricks" and "gimmicks" employed to get the job done. Some of these tricks were manipulative shortcuts designed to avoid a direct confrontation of issues, while others were sensitive and wise practices which did get to "the heart of the matter." Because the principals thought of such measures as "tricks", actually sound practices lacked a quality of genuineness and were less likely to become enriched by reflective elaboration. The principals also had an arsenal of ready made answers to problems. These ready made answers were not at a level of sound "professional know-how", insofar as they were not accessible to elaboration, revision, and attunement to the unique aspects of each new situation.

Every influence on the principalship served to reinforce an action-orientation. The educational crisis, itself, represented a call to action, and challenged a pattern of years of inactivity. The whole school system was running from one secondary crisis to another. There

was a need to act to forestall or otherwise cope with the latest explosive situation, while it was difficult to direct attention to important issues which lacked such dramatic impact. There was a lack of the kinds of communication with the administrative hierarchy which serve to stimulate reflective thought. Because the principals did not really share in higher level decisions, they were not prepared to develop thoughtful implementations. Also, it was difficult for principals to delay action in any given situation, because they had no way of knowing if they would be supported by the higher administration. Their isolation from fellow principals also favored an action-orientation, because consultation among colleagues does tend to promote reflection and dissipate unnecessary feelings of urgency. The principal's lack of effective power, stimulating indirect or "back-door" exercise of authority, also favored expedient action. Their incomplete professionalism kept them overly sensitive to various pressures, less effective in promoting their long range educational goals, and thus overly ready to act. Lacking a concept of limited goals, they were limited in assessing the effectiveness of their actions. Finally there is reason to conclude that the principal's action-orientation was favored by the process for selecting them, because they were selected primarily for one quality; the capacity to assume command.

In exercising their executive responsibilities, the principals had to be free to act spontaneously, because many situations do not allow for careful deliberation. However, it is possible to examine and analyze an action after it is taken. The principals, as a group, were limited in their capacity to do this. Even in these meetings, it was

difficult for them to listen, to stick to the subject, or to reflect from different points of view. They frequently presented an affable but frustrating array of irrelevant or tangential remarks. Instead of a seminar, we were confronted with an undisciplined group; an ironic fact insofar as the group had focused on the subject of discipline in the school. Of course the reasons for this lack of reflection in the group were complex; partly stimulated by ambiguities in the goals and context of the meetings and reinforced by factors so diverse as (1) needs to maintain prudence and privacy in an unpredictable group situation, or (2) a general lack of experience in the seminar form of discussion. However, similar factors also operated within the school system itself, tending to reinforce an action orientation. In our meetings, the unreflective behavior in the group came to serve as an indirect expression of antagonisms and objections which they were, for whatever reasons, unable to express directly. They certainly were entitled to feel resentful, because we refused to conform to their expectations of our role and we frustrated them with many questions and few answers. The principals' undisciplined group behavior became a means to evade uncomfortable feelings toward us and to gloss over essential differences between us. We recognized that it was necessary to deal with this behavior in order to raise the discussion to the level of a seminar, to find a way to collaborate with them as experts from another discipline rather than as understanding laymen, and finally to explore the possibility that there was a relation between their undisciplined behavior in the group and their problems with discipline in the school. We focused on these factors consistently from the beginning, and a decisive change toward increasing order and focus followed a rather dramatic confrontation at the end of the first year. We concluded that

one aspect of the principals' difficulties in maintaining discipline in their schools was similar to their difficulty in the group; namely, they pursued a kind of action-orientation which favored easy answers and glossing over difficult conflicts in values and interests.

We concluded that the principals were relatively untrained in reflective discourse and were constrained to an unreflective action-orientation by the over-all professional and administrative organization of the principalship. Perhaps the action-orientation of certain principals could best be explained psychologically in terms of deeply rooted character traits (impulsiveness). Our assessment did not support such an explanation for this group of principals (although it was difficult to assess the role of intrapsychic factors, given our educational method and the clear external reinforcement of an action-orientation). Our observations do support, for practical consideration, that reflective attitudes can be cultivated through administrative changes and educational methods.

Knowledge of Child Development:

Principals and teachers have an enormous clinical experience from direct observation of children. Because they undervalue their own professional skills, this remains largely untapped. An integrated knowledge of child development could serve as an important basis for increased professionalism. Principals have a special opportunity to make longitudinal observations of children in that unique composite of groups we call a school. It was frustrating that the principals turned to psychiatrists as experts in matters of the application of child development to the school; an area in which they were actually better informed and should have been the experts.

The principals were aware of Gesell, some knew Erikson's "Eight Stages

of Man" and some had been exposed to a course in child psychology. However, their textbook knowledge was not integrated into their work in a way that achieved a functional view of child development. To put it differently, they lacked the tools (from their own education) to view the behavior of childhood as having origins in the phase-specific concerns of a developing personality.

So often there was a lack of awareness of the child's thinking and knowledge of his real world. In such instances, the child was treated as if he were too ignorant to understand and take part in matters that concerned and involved him. Unwittingly, he was patronized by the educator. The child could be bypassed in contacts with parents or treated as a reactive instrument rather than an active participant. Secrets were kept on all levels of the communication between educator, parent, child and consultant. For example: frequently, neither the child nor his parents were informed of impending psychological tests or consultation. The psychological consultant was used as a magical device without first involving the child and his family in discussions of the problems and concerns. Therefore, the opportunity to deal with the problem as a part of the child's education experience and to bring it into an educational context was missed (not to mention the ill effects of an unprepared psychological referral).

We reject the notion that principals do not have time to be responsive to the thinking of the child. This notion is used to defend an action-orientation, escape reflective obligations, and avoid the question of how principals may best allocate their limited time. The principals' action-orientation involved them in time consuming ineffective activi-

ties. Active restraint of the impulse to intervene is sometimes necessary in the application of principles of child development in order to allow the issues to unfold. A sense of urgency and the need to act blurs one's diagnostic skills. For example, principals often responded to overt aggressive behavior which seemed to require their immediate attention, ignoring the less apparent neurotic components of the problem. This resulted not only from an action-orientation, but also from a lack of acquaintance with principles of child development.

Because the principals were relatively unfamiliar with concepts of separation, deprivation, childhood sexuality and aggression, they were too often at a loss to deal effectively with problems of children. They tended to react to the manifest behavior (the restlessness, lack of concentration, masturbatory activity, dirty notes, and manipulative behavior) only as moral and training problems rather than as possibly reactive symptoms to stress. Nor were they accustomed to look for the sources of the stress in the current realities of the child's life: within himself, his family, his community, or school. Conversely, when a principal did recognize neurotic behavior, he would too readily pass it off to the psychiatrist, failing to exploit its educational implications.* Today, only in nursery school education is there a consistent attempt to deal with the child's problems in the educational context.

*With children known to be in psychiatric treatment, principals were often in conflict between desires to be included in on the treatment and, conversely, excessive fears of interfering. Sometimes they were distressed because they lacked information from the therapist which they did not need and should not have, while at other times they failed to obtain information that they did need. In attempting not to interfere in a child's therapy, sometimes the child was incited to act-out by a failure of the school authorities to set limits within their frame of reference.

Problems of an elementary school child and those of a high school adolescent were not always viewed as differing in nature and meaning. Dirty words from a 6 year old might arouse the same response as those uttered by a 12 year old. The principals' actions were rarely unkind, but they did not reflect an appreciation of the complex interplay between sexual and aggressive behavior, nor the differences in meaning and emphasis of these reactions at different ages. In their failure to recognize the regressive pull on the adult of the child's aggressive and sexualized behavior, principals and teachers could experience the behavior in personalized terms. Not infrequently, teachers reacted by retaliating at the child's level. More frequently, in order to avoid reacting on a personal level, the adult over-reacted; becoming defensive, punitive and restrictive, or even overly-permissive. This occurred especially, in concerns about discipline, where the tendency to act or "do something" was expressed most urgently. Once more, this may be the effect of a lack of tools to explore the meaning and origins of behavior.

The need to extract confessions, uncover lying, or prove the authorship of a dirty note, and to respond with punishment, was justified by some principals as the expression of an educational idea that this kind of confrontation builds moral character by the instillation of guilt or shame. This rationale used an oversimplified concept of the development of moral character and assumed too much responsibility for an issue which transcends educational goals. Insofar as the principals had not clearly defined their educator-administrator role, they tended to overextend themselves by trying to be all things in all situations:

directors of the child's physical, moral, emotional and intellectual development. While we agree that educators can contribute to children's moral development, a knowledge of the intricacies of child development would lead one to approach the problem with questions and reflective actions rather than answers and "righteous" actions. Overly ambitious goals to reform, made it difficult for some principals to focus on the problems of setting limits in the school situation and to provide a disciplinary atmosphere in which learning - including learning moral values - could take place. In cases where a principal lacked a concept of limited goals and was not clear about his educator-administrator role, he could be more readily coerced into participating with the child in a repetition of maladaptive family interactions. He then would miss exploiting the unique forces that education might bring to bear on the matter.

The problems of the school system, the principals' underdeveloped professionalism, the lack of a concept of limited goals, the action-orientation - all of these factors interfered with principals integrating a knowledge of children and their families into their professional equipment. On the other hand, an expert knowledge of child development would provide alternatives to an action-orientation as well as a sound basis for developing limited goals, would foster professionalism and provide tools for dealing with administrative issues. Such knowledge is achieved partly from experience, but there is also a substantive body of knowledge of children which can only be acquired by training. Because the principals were unaware of this body of knowledge, as a result of deficiencies in their training, they turned

to psychiatrists for answers which only they themselves could provide. Concepts of child development have been integrated into the training of nursery school teachers, and this integration should be expanded into the training of all educators. The subtleties of child development precludes adequate preparation at the undergraduate level and requires training in the practical setting of the school.*

The need to expand the professional training of teachers to include the insights of child psychology has been most evident in these dialogues. It has been evident that these sessions have had some impact on the principal members of the group. We have seen this reflected not only in different ways of attempting to deal with the problems, but in a change in the kinds of questions and problems referred to the group for discussion. Such collaborative dialogues as these, which we are aware are taking place across the country (1,2,5) may be important steps in finally integrating concepts of child development into education. In the long run, psychiatrist-educator meetings alone will not provide a working appreciation of the intimate interlocking of child development with education. Ongoing supervision and in-service training should be conducted by educators well grounded in these principles. Principals and other educational supervisors should be clinical experts in the educational aspects of child development, and should develop their own unique supervisory approaches, responsive to the needs of teachers in the exciting interaction of the classroom.

*Solnit (6), in this respect, has suggested that teachers begin their classwork in a phase similar to an internship.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the aftermath of a community crisis over racial balancing in public schools, New Haven principals and psychiatrists began to explore their mutual concerns over education under the auspices of their respective professional organizations. The authors, one a psychoanalyst and one a child psychiatrist, met for 1 1/2 years in biweekly meetings with a group of leaders among the principals. These meetings were in the form of an educational seminar between co-equal professionals from different disciplines. We succeeded in applying our professional knowledge to certain aspects of school administration in an unusually spontaneous atmosphere. We were alert to the limitations in applying our professional knowledge to an area that transcends our focused interests and skills. A quality of open collaboration at one level enable us to deal, at another level, with essential points of tension and disagreement between our respective disciplines. While the principals initially sought psychiatric answers to school problems, they came to recognize a need to find educational answers for psychological problems in the school setting.* We attribute the openness of these discussions to the impact of the "educational crisis", to the unique setting of the meetings (voluntary and separate from school administration), to the cooperation and open-mindedness of the principals, and to the educational format of the meetings which fostered mutual trust and provided focus.

*When principals find educational answers to psychological problems in the school setting, they enhance rather than preempt the role of psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians.

Because these discussions were candid and direct and covered all aspects of school administration, we had a unique opportunity to study the principalship. To summarize our findings and conclusions: The principals were not only under stress because of the pressures and challenges of a serious and complex "educational crisis" but they were hampered by certain administrative problems in the school system. The most significant factors in this respect, were a crisis atmosphere and a lack of communication between and within all administrative levels. The principals were isolated from each other and lacked effective power. Because of deficiencies in their training and professional organization, they had not achieved an adequate level of professionalism. Changes in educational practice and philosophy had left them confused in their professional role and somewhat alienated from the educational process. In meeting the challenges placed upon them, they lacked a concept of limited goals. These resourceful and able principals showed an action-orientation which interfered with their functioning optimally as educators. This action-orientation was evident in every aspect of their work, and appeared in the seminar in the form of an undisciplined quality to the meetings. This undisciplined behavior served for the covert expression of antagonisms and evasions, and provided us with a means for understanding and focus. We concluded that orientation toward action can be a means for escaping reflective obligations. An approach to this problem through educational measures and administrative changes seems appropriate, insofar as the avoidance of reflection derived partly from insufficiencies in training and was

reinforced by deficiencies in the organization of the school system.

An important byproduct was that these meetings provided an opportunity for principals to exchange views among themselves. We recognize that such group meetings could be conducted in a variety of ways and could be led by discussion leaders from disciplines other than psychiatry. When psychiatrists do collaborate with educators, we believe they should avoid imposing their views on educational issues in which they are not expert, but they should strive to relate their expert knowledge to substantive issues in the school. It is difficult to do this, unless the educators have a professionalized interest in human behavior at a level which permits them to translate psychiatric knowledge into educational terms.

Accordingly, we emphasize the principals' relative lack of knowledge of child development, as well as their difficulty in integrating, at a professional level, their extensive experience with children and their families. We concluded that, in order for principals to develop an effective professionalism, they should have an expert knowledge of the objects of their educational efforts - namely, of children. While we recognize a usefulness in meetings between psychiatrists and principals to further this goal, our meetings made us aware of the need for educators to integrate concepts of child development into their own training, supervision, and practices.

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