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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the conflicts between and the inequities inherent in practically all present day social systems and suggests strategies for building a socially supportive environment. The study focuses on the practical implications of the nature-nurture controversy and contends that greater attention must be given to extrinsic factors in development and learning. Areas of ecological balance or personal-politico-social homeostasis and the problems involved therein are treated. Emphasis is laid on the regression noted in the implementation of programs to satisfy basic human rights and needs. In the context of the present state of political development in this country, abandonment of parliamentary democracy and movement toward realization of a truly pluralistic society is strongly advocated. In the attainment of the latter objective, a rededication to the purposes and goals of education is suggested, stressing on assisting the student in his development, refining that development, and preparing him to live a satisfying life; basic changes in the concept of the school's physical structure by decentralization into homes, farms, store fronts, etc. and by creating educational parks, shifts in staff to attune to the concept of individualization, and the building up of basic skills and self concept toward achieving affective, social cognitive, and political competence are recommended for reaching these educational goals. (RJ)

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BUILDING A SOCIALLY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

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JUNE 1970

Man has existed on earth for millions of years. Until recently most of us have assumed that man will somehow continue to exist; however our attention is increasingly called to the possibility that what the destructive forces of the natural environment have been unable to do in the contest between man and nature, man-made changes in the physical environment may quickly do. We now come face to face with the possibility that without radical shifts in man's relation to his physical environment, man may be destroyed by the pollutant-induced changes in that environment. What may not be as clearly recognized in these days of emphasis on correcting the pollution of the physical environment, is the equally urgent need to correct and prevent further pollution of the social or spiritual environment. The advanced technology of modern communications has created a condition in which the contradictions of complexed social orders, the atrocities of interpersonal, intertribal, and international conflicts, the inequities inherent in practically all of our social systems, as well as the richness of our cultural and technical accomplishments constantly bombard the human spirit with relentless assault and stimulation. Human beings, accustomed to far simpler social environments, have reacted to these inputs with habituation or adaptation. As these inputs increase in complexity and intensity the process of habituation is likely to accelerate and the processes of adaptation must become more complex. Some observers see these processes reflected today in growing insensitivity to social and moral indignation or shock, increasing insulation and isolation in personal-social interchange, alienation from the concepts, institutions and affiliations which heretofore have provided stabilizing points of reference, and disaffection or less of a sense of faith in nature, in society, in authority figures, or in oneself as continuing influential forces.

These adaptations are probably enabling man to exist in a progressively threatening environment. They may also, however, be the mechanisms of his extinction, since adaptive behavior at one stage of development may be counter-adaptive at another. Reptiles once started on a course of evolutionary adaptation. They gained in number and complexity of protective structures until as dinosaurs, they dominated the earth and the sea. But the adaptive armour developed in order to survive the rigors of that pre-mammalian period became too heavy a superstructure to be supported by the accessible environmental resources. Or to put it differently, the dinosaur may have become extinct because his adaptation to one aspect of the environment precluded his effective utilization of another aspect of the environment which was an essential source of sustenance. Similarly, the protective adaptation of the human personality to the rigors of the increasingly polluted social environment may result in the isolation of man from essential sources of support for his personal and spiritual survival.

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What seems then as essential to the continued development and survival of man is a concern with reciprocal adaptation. Man's survival will increasingly depend on man's capacity to adapt to his changing environment as well as on his ability to adapt the environment to his special needs. It is the latter half of this proposition that in part distinguishes between man and such animals as dinosaurs. Man is capable of conceptualizing his environmental requirements and planning the modification of his environment to meet those requirements. However, man may be unnecessarily limited in his pursuit of this process by his self-doubt, i.e.,disaffection,or by mistaken concepts of enyironmental and developmental plasticity born of chauvinistic pollutants in the social environment.

The investigations by Jensen of the hereditability of intelligence recently published in the Harvard Educational Review have reintroduced into the public eye the bias in support of a predeterminist recalcitrant view of behavioral development in man. Jensen's essay, as I'm sure you are all aware, has aroused a proliferation of refutations and rebuttals stemming from a humanistic rejection of the racist implications of his assertions as well as from a scientific concern with the inadequacies of the research and methodology on which his report was based. The nature-nurture or heredity-environment controversy is far from dead, however. There are at least three reasons why the issue keeps cropping up. First, we are simply not able to provide a definitive answer to the question. Second, while Jensen's work is open to methodological criticism, the explanations advanced by environmentalists have generally been equally sloppy. Third, it is clear to most of us who are involved in this area of study that a dichotomous approach to this problem is fallacious. Even the view which gives a certain percentage of influence to one or the other is misrepresentative of the dialectical interaction between genetic and environmental forces in behavioral development.

What concerns us here, however, are the practical implications of the two positions. The dominance of the conception of intelligence as genetically determined has led us to place a tremendous emphasis on intrinsic factors in predicting performance. It has become too easy to say that a student is not performing adequately because of a lack of intelligence, or, equally disastrous, from a lack of motivation or because the potential is not there. Our estimations of capacity have grown out of our knowledge of how people with similar characteristics have performed in the past. But this is an obvious tautology, since, at least as concerning behavior, we can only judge capacity through performance. Thus, we are in effect saying that because this individual or other individuals "like him" have performed in a certain way in the past, they are "determined" to do so in the future. Such estimates say nothing about future performance under changed environmental conditions.

It is my opinion, and I'm glad to say that of a number of others, that greater attention must be given to extrinsic factors in development and learning. Most obviously, since at present we are only able to manipulate the environment and can do nothing to change genetic structure, it would be well to concentrate where we do have the power to effect change. Viewed from this standpoint, the task of the educator is to set the goal of performance at a level of competence and then to manipulate environmental interactions so that performance can more likely reach that level. This requires that we recognize that there is a reciprocal interpenetration between whatever is given in the organism and whatever is given in the environment, that the environment is increasingly subject to change by man and that the organism (man) is continually subject to change by the environment. The interaction of the two produces or fails to produce involvement, which in turn influences performance. When environmental encounters are structured to complement the needs of the organism, the environment is considered supportive and optimal development is more likely to be achieved.

We have noted that man, more than any other creature, has the power to change his environment to suit his own needs, and thus is not limited, like lower animals, to changing only himself to ensure his survival. Keeping in mind this need for reciprocal modification, what, then, are the dimensions of the relationship between the individual and his environment which are essential for continued adaptation and development? What is required is a complex balance, which must be maintained in three essential areas. The first dimension involves the balance between congruency and incongruency, which must be maintained in such a manner that the organism and environment are "at home" with each other, yet still in a state of sufficient tension that the relationship and its components do not become static. Thus it is necessary to maintain enough incongruency between man and his environment to ensure this minimum tension, but always at the risk of an incongruency so great as to be confusing, frustrating, disruptive, and potentially destructive.

In what might be called the constancy-change dimension, the nature of man's interaction or experience with his environment must be sufficiently stable or consistent to allow for orientation of self with objects and phenomena, yet at the same time must maintain a certain level of and capacity for change so as to keep the system dynamic, and to support a perception and acceptance of change as an essential existential process. This state, which I choose to call dynamic-constancy, thus provides for change while at the same time providing logic and stability on which the organism can depend. A central task of human intelligence in dealing with change is to recognize its many features. There exists at all times a minimum requirement of regular but modest amounts of change, which may occur without

dissonance and may allow for easy adaptation. However, there are certain times when radical change may be required as necessary for the development of some phenomena. This degree of change may be necessary to dislodge a recalcitrant force or to re-energize a moribund system. The problem, of course, is to recognize the circumstances that call for which kind or what degree of change.

A third dimension involves the collective-idosyncratic-needs balance, which we seek when we deal with the problems of recognizing, allowing for, and respecting individuality within the context of the essential requirements of group survival. Obviously, it is not beneficial to either the individual or the society if he is developed in such a way that his needs are no longer compatible with the survival of the group. On the other hand, group life is threatened and certainly will not be enriched if no provisions are made for the idiosyncratic needs and interests of the individuals comprising it.

It is easy enough to discuss theoretically the need for these three areas of ecological balance or personal-politico-social homeostasis but obviously we must face at once the very real problems involved in serious application of this discussion. There are, of course, problems of strategy. How will we learn to know the proper time for a deliberate shift in one or all of these conditions of balance? Even if we are equipped to judge such need accurately, we must then be able to juggle and manipulate all the complex forces working on any given situation at any given time.

But even before we can begin to deal with these strategic considerations which, we must surely realize, are not beyond the scope of human intelligence and resources, we run head-on into what is at this time a much more troublesome problem: the problem of the value commitments upon which judgements and strategies are based. It is man's blessing and his burden that he has the capacity to direct his efforts toward goals other than or beyond mere survival. These goals are inseparable from his values. Certainly by this ability man ranks as superior to lower creatures, but at the same time he has the awesome capacity to direct and dictate his own destruction by mistaken choice in these values. Even if he avoids this extreme, his choice and ordering of these goals may well result in a style of life which is no better (and some would argue WORSE) than mere survival. We cannot avoid facing this fact as we examine the quality of man's condition today, for we find that the values which seem essential to the process of reciprocal adaptation in the maintenance of politico-social homeostasis are most conspicuous in present-day society by their absence. It seems clear that there are certain of these values which must be operative at the individual and at the group level as a first step toward harmony and balance between man and his environment.

Most people suppose themselves to believe in the primacy of what are commonly called "human values." We all know on a rather molar level what we consider human values to be. Many of us have been taught rote versions of them in religious settings. But, particularly during times when such values do not seem exemplified in many of our daily experiences, it seems important not to speak simply on an ideational level, but rather to seek out a more specific and practical definition of the term.

I think we can first say that human values stand opposed to such alternatives as conquest through violence, war or the development of technological and military prowess for power or for prestige. This opposition is in the form of one simple, very basic human value: peace. And I mean not only national and international peace, but also interpersonal peace, peace within each individual. It is probably safe to say that these successive levels are interrelated and interdependent. In that case, the important question may be, toward which levels shall the preponderance of our energies be directed? It is my feeling that because of the interpenetration of the various spheres of human existence, total and lasting international peace can probably not be effected before a large proportion of the world's citizens find some kind of internal and interpersonal peace. Peace, whether it be individual, interpersonal, or intergroup, involves the non-violent reconciliation of competing forces. Militaristically imposed peace on the international level as well as court injunctive or police-enforced pacification on the domestic front, are paralleled by the equally tenuous peace imposed when external forces rather than value commitments dominate an individual in his actions. Neither of the former two leads to true peace, since in both cases the dissonant forces are not truly reconciled; rather they are repressed or suppressed, or in some cases even exterminated--with the concomitant loss to the remaining individuals or parts. I think it is clear from personality theory, as well as politico-social history, that autocratic rule on any level cannot be an effective method for achieving harmony or peace.

Few people would deny that human values also imply the priority of adequate education, food, health care and housing for all citizens before other goals such as military preparedness, space exploration or improved intercontinental travel. Human values imply the necessity for pollution control and the elimination of urban blight rather than such immoral, nationalistic and jingoistic follies as our involvement in the war on Vietnam. A second condition characteristic of a commitment to "human values" involves political power and economic security for all men. Can it ever be really justified that even one citizen is made to feel powerless by conditions such as economic insecurity, wretched living conditions, or an unresponsive political system which is too involved with power of other kinds even to heed his voice, much less to adapt itself to his needs? Before we can bring about universal application

of any set of "higher human values," we must make sure that the basic needs of life are met for every person. It is worse than folly to ask a man to be human if his basic existence as a living animal is in doubt or if his sense of power to influence decisions concerning his life has been destroyed.

Our country has made a number of sketchy moves in this direction, from the earliest social security legislation to the more recent War on Poverty, and the present concern for hunger; from the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights to the Emancipation Proclamation and the various civil rights laws and court decisions. However, as I'm sure we all know, even today some U.S. citizens live as indentured slaves, a quarter of our nation's population lives in poverty, and unemployment runs as high as 35% among nonwhite males in some of our major cities; and today legislation threatens to be enacted which will effectively remove even those few guarantees which have come to exist that every citizen shall have a vote and an equal opportunity to an education, regardless of race or social position. At the national level, it is painfully clear that little more than lip service is currently being paid to satisfying these very basic human needs and rights.

Perhaps a country can only begin by concerning itself with the needs of its own people. But I think it necessary to add here that, particularly as concerning the United States with its combination of enormous resources, productive potential and dominance as a world power, future goals must be related not only to its own citizens but to the world at large. I think we must face the probability that until some floor level of economic security is established in every country throughout the world, conspicuous inequalities and deprivations will inevitably lead to international conflict.

Thus a crucial problem we have is to deal with the bald fact that there is common profession of belief in this kind of bare minimum of equality, and at the same time general failure to muster whatever energies and small sacrifices are necessary to attain this basic level of human decency in the distribution of privilege.

But let us assume that we somehow attain this minimum level of fulfillment: adequate food and living conditions for all, and the equal political participation we've been professing to have since the eighteenth century. Is this kind of democracy all we need for the full realization of human values?

Only a few days ago a female member of the John Birch Society, participating in a late-night television talk-show, was asked to define democracy. In a democracy, she explained, if 51% of the citizens decide to do so, they may shoot the other 49%!

Of course I do not believe this definition to be widely advocated, but I believe it is symbolic of an attitudinal danger we must consider very carefully--that tyranny of the majority that we were warned against by some of our founding fathers two hundred years ago. As our society becomes increasingly more complex and varied, we must come to a full appreciation of democratic pluralism. We have today a greatly varied society with tremendous value conflicts, and as we are currently functioning, proponents of one set of values not only have the temporary advantage over proponents of other value systems, but in addition that dominant value system is flexible enough and corrupt enough to accommodate the exploitation and, ultimately, the destruction of other value systems and their proponents. I suggest that we examine for a moment the histories of Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Black Panthers. As each moved from ethnocentric and nationalistic positions toward identification with the pluralistic and humanistic concerns of peace groups and groups working for political and economic redistribution of power, they were destroyed. When Dr. King threw his support to the struggles for peace and economic justice,he was murdered. When Brother Malcolm began to advocate intercolonial and international cooperation to eliminate colonization, to advocate peace and to bring together the interests of the poor with other minority groups he was murdered. As the Panthers move to ally themselves with the radical left and to advocate a united effort against those who advocate war, racial discrimination and economic exploitation, J. Edgar Hoover--chief spokesman for our national police force--declares the Panthers the greatest internal threat to the nation and appears to have signalled the concerted effort to destroy the organization. In less than nine months practically the entire leadership of the group has been either arrested, murdered, or driven into exile.

Perhaps we have arrived at a stage in our political development where we must stop talking about parliamentary democracy as our goal and start moving toward the realization of a truly pluralistic society. This means moving away from the concept of the melting pot, where group differences are seen as something to be overcome, to be dissolved until we have one stereotypic amalgamation known as "the American." Even those who find this concept desirable must surely realize that in the United States of today it is no longer appropriate or even possible.

In a pluralistic society, the goal is an integration of admittedly different parts, an orchestration in which the several groups, large or small, share parity of status, and are brought together in ways which accommodate and complement, not threaten or annihilate, each other. Coexistence and tolerance are facts of life, understood and practiced without a second thought because respect for styles of life is a prevalent value. The unique contribution of each of these parts is not lost, though not always distinguishable in the thrust of a society which is working, in varied ways, toward common purposes.

This shift from parliamentary democracy to pluralistic democracy will require radical changes in attitude for citizens of even the most democratic countries. It means learning tolerance not only for different ethnic groups, cultural groups, national groups, economic groups, and age groups, but for different ideas, goals, commitments, and life styles. It means, if groups of all sizes are to be given parity of status, a shift toward participatory rather than representative democracy, so that everyone really will be represented or active in government; and toward consensus rather than majority rule, so that minority interests can be dealt with, not just expressed. It means that all must learn to practice nonviolent reconciliation through persuasion rather than forced accommodation through violent confrontation. It requires certainly voluntary limitations on personal freedom to prevent the kinds of "legal" exploitation of human and natural resources which are practiced today. It means a shift in the traditional relationship between property rights and human rights to give primacy to human rights. All these shifts require an almost revolutionary effort before they can be brought about successfully, for they require those two changes most difficult of all to effect: a change in monolithic social systems, and a change in human attitudes.

Still another needed value shift is so closely related to the problems of pluralism that it might even be in danger of being lost in the shuffle. This is the resolution of the conflict between collective and individual rights. How far can we stretch our freedoms without impinging on the freedom of others? U.S. nationals have always given blind admiration and loyalty to a kind of individual freedom which frequently results in legalized exploitation and abuse of others. We have adulated man's freedom to exploit in the name of "individuality," or "free enterprise." These labels are often used as justifications of a man's freedom to pursue his own interests without regard for the cost to anyone else. The disproportionate use of the world's resources by the United States is a significant example of the results of this attitude operating uncurbed on an international scale. So is the outrageous economic inequality which is found within our country and between this country and other nations of the world. So is the current state of our natural resources about which we are just now, belatedly, beginning to worry. It is clear that we must decide very carefully to what extent an individual's freedom must be limited for the collective good. The delicacy of such a decision is frightening, but the present state of the world shows us all too clearly what the consequences can be if we fail to act and to act wisely.

We have seen, also, the consequences of such a broad definition of the collective good that self-development and self-expression are sacrificed to it needlessly. Too often a conflict is seen between individuality and collective rights, a threat is seen where none exists. Too often it seems an inevitable characteristic of human nature to feel threatened when an individual dare to be radically different outside the sanction of some group. We preach individuality, but we have very

narrow concepts of self-development: we demand a certain kind of school, a certain kind of college; we feel we must flock to admire a certain kind of art, or to attend a certain kind of theatre. We respect, basically, only a certain kind of lifestyle; alternatives are immediately considered suspect. We must realize that we cannot really have individual freedom and self-development until we cultivate sincere respect for differences.

It may be that this last value area, respect for self-development and self-expression, is the best starting point for the educational role with respect to these value changes. We can start here by defining equality of educational opportunity as a floor for everyone and an unlimited ceiling—and then we can start looking very critically for the places where we pres -tly do have ceilings. We must realize that this process may well result in amplified differences, and we must be aware of the crucial importance of finding better ways to evaluate ability--for fear of the former and carelessness in the latter are responsible for many of the ceilings we presently have. If educational systems can be brought to institutionalize just this value, we may see the needed shifts in other value areas which will make for a healthier adaptation of man and environment, starting us into a cycle of healthier development and environment and more effective education.

What we need, then, is a rededication to the purposes and goals of education. We must look at what we are doing and failing to do, and suit our actions and commitments to a higher ideal. The purpose of education is not simply to instill knowledge, to train students, or to prepare them to earn a living; why should we be in the absurd position of having to stop and convince ourselves that the purpose of education is to educate? And education is a process of assisting the student in his development, of refining that development, of preparing him to live a satisfying life.

If we are to aim for individuality in this education process, obviously our educational strategies will have to be more flexible. However, this flexibility does not mean that there are not certain goals to be kept in mind. We will want to help each student toward the development of effective communication skills and attitudes. Since man increasingly depends upon symbols and concepts to orient himself, to move about, and to control himself and his environment, it is essential that we enable young people to use with facility the symbols and languages of the cultures in which they exist. What this essentially means is the traditional "basics"--reading, writing, and arithmetic, so to speak, as well as bilingual skills, where required. The "three R's" imply the important dual nature of this communication: the student should be enabled not only to express his own thoughts and needs, but to receive effectively communications from others.

There is another dimension to this concern for communications skills: not only should we exert our efforts to make sure that the student acquires the capacity to utilize the instruments of communication; we should be concerned with planting the desire and need to express oneself and the need to be receptive of the expressions of others and the world outside the self. We must help students to develop for themselves the attitudes which facilitate and compel human expression and human responsivity to others and to environmental input.

A vital goal will be to foster attitudes and skills of inquiry. If we examine it honestly, we will find that education today tends to stifle, not encourage this type of attitude. Skills related to this aspect involve problem identification and definition, and problem solving strategies. Increasingly, we recognize that problems remain unresolved or pursued incorrectly because the essence of the problem has not been formulated in a way that makes it answerable. Especially in the societies of today, a major educational need is to develop the skill or capacity for bringing order and system to stimulus situations characterized by chaos and confusion. In such situations as patterns and incongruencies are recognized and separated, the nature of the problem becomes more clear. Students need to be helped to perceive this confusion not as insoluble conglomerates, but as calls to inquiry.

Having identified and defined the problem, we will want to help students move from mastery of problem solving techniques to competence in development of problem solving strategies. For example, development of skill in the use of algebraic techniques to solve specific arithmetic problems is not as important a goal as the development of competence in logic as a style in problem solving strategy.

This attitude of inquiry, however, with all its concomitant skills, is not enough. One needs to perceive oneself as a self-directed and responsible action agent as well as an inquirer. Increasingly man is going to depend upon mentation as opposed to physical manipulation as a means for managing his environment, so that his perception of himself as an action agent requires a kind of bifocal view of action as mental as well as physical activity. Inquiry will be seen as purposeful and creative, and creativity will be acknowledged in the management of symbols equally with the management of objects and people.

Having developed into a self-directed and motivated inquirer, and having learned to perceive this process as creative activity, the next step for the student is to develop into an effective processer of information. As information about self as well as environment multiplies, the problem becomes the management of all this information, rather than the mastery of it. For even if one thought it desirable

to achieve encyclopedic mastery of all this information, it would hardly be possible. Consequently, the task is to learn how to process it in a manageable way as an instrumentality for problem solving, as well as for communication.

Admitting the vast complexity of knowledge and problem situations in the world today suggests, but provides no answers for, the most critical unsolved problem: man's capacity to relate to other men. With the growing complexities of advanced and crowded societies, the relationships between individuals and groups and the management of collective production and collective waste become essential to the survival of man. We are not far away from the point where the material survival of man is solved or soluble. But now the urgent problem is his spiritual survival. The disadvantaged people of the future will not be economically poor; they will be the ones who are incapable of social coping, who cannot use themselves in meaningful and satisfying ways with other people.

Finally, we must ask toward what goals all of these activities are directed. In a period, should we ever be able to reach one, where the survival, relative happiness, the development, and the welfare of all individuals in the society become the focus of the political commitment of that society, there is no more overriding value than humanism. Property rights, individual rights, institutional rights, all must come to play an instrumental role to advance, rather than retard, human rights. The school of today can make clear its commitment to the goal of this type of society, and can show faith in all of its students as the most powerful instruments for working toward that goal.

What sort of an institution is it which can best work in these directions? It can be defined, in broadest terms, as one which utilizes its environment so that the school becomes a learning community and the community becomes the school. In the early days of this nation, before education was so widely available, Ben Franklin thought of the school as the place where certain formal learning occurred, however it was in the community and through participation in the affairs of the community that education occurred. Educational experiences can occur in the super market, the lawyer's office, the local hospital. Education occurs in reading the press, in political activity, in community service. When all community activities are seen as having this educational potential, the school can play a mediating, coordinating, and interpretive role as the students sample the lessons to be learned.

This plan suggests some basic changes in the concept of the school's physical structure. The key idea is flexibility, and perhaps for the future we should declare a moratorium on the construction of all large school buildings, possibly all school buildings. Whole new attitudes toward school could be built by

decentralizing into homes, farms, apartment buildings, store fronts, parks, camps. Where buildings are created they should be concentrated in educational parks with units small enough so that youngsters and their parents may positively identify with the learning center, although perhaps large enough to maintain a mix of communities of cultural, economic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as a variety of faculty, and supporting resources. There may be some advantages to the educational park, but we must plan for small units in it. A possible organizational model might be a 5,000 pupil educational park divided into units of 500 pupils.

The organizational administration of such an institution should be based on certain principles which are notably lacking in today's schools. I mean by this participatory democracy, freedom, a humanistic approach to authority and discipline, and an effective leadership concerned with educational and conceptual issues, not merely administrative problems. The major authority for policy in the schools should be in the hands of parents, students, and faculty in various proportions, depending on the age of the students. In junior and senior high schools, students and faculty should have major control; parents and faculty should share this function in the grade schools. At the junior and high school levels, discipline should be handled by students, with some guidance from faculty. In general, parents and community should be <u>actually</u>, not just nominally, involved in decision making.

The staff of these schools should be in many ways different than what we have today. Having lived through a time when I was preoccupied with the technical competence of staff, I have come to give that a secondary importance to personal competence. The academic achievement and ability of a teacher are not as important as personal qualities or humanistic characteristics such as the capacity to empathize, to use oneself in the development of another, to understand and interpret knowledge and experience in the light of the youngster's experiences. We must seek our teachers among people who view themselves as movers of the society, changers and controllers of the environment, not simply possessors and purveyors of information.

To accomplish this shift in staff, we must turn to the communities themselves, realizing that formal academic credentials are not always needed, that politico-social competence can be an equally valuable asset. Community acceptance is an important credential: Susan Smith may be the woman in the community most people turn to for help with problems; hasn't she passed the colloquial or practical test of competence? Indigenous people can help youngsters perceive and express themselves as controllers of their own destinies. What better source of instruction can a child have than people from his own background who are in fact successfully coping with the exigencies of difficult environments?

This is not to suggest, of course, that the school does not need people who are masters of the accumulated knowledge and skills of the society. A variety of talents can be utilized to give the broadest possible educational experience. Having placed these kinds of human resources in the school, we must help them function as facilitaters of development rather than directors of development. It should be their task and their desire to fade into the background and let the youngsters discover for and distinguish themselves, to be there when needed to help, and primarily to serve as models, but to play an active part as little as possible. They will, of course, have to be people who have faith in the potential for development of the youngsters they work with, who see themselves not as determinants of a product, but as facilitaters of a developmental process.

One other staff member is worthy of a moment's consideration here: a sort of ombudsman, concerned with quality control of the educational process, who can take an overview of the effectiveness of the school's program and act as pupil advocate to ensure the best possible education for all. It may well be that this position within the school structure should be balanced by a similar ombudsman who operates independently of the educational system, who could focus on the individual problems and progress of each student and cooperate with school staff to produce a more effective educational experience for the pupils with whom he is concerned.

With these changes in staff and teaching will come changes in curriculum. One of the most important concepts to be explored is individualization. It should be noted that education as a group process probably emerged out of economic need, that is, large numbers of learners and few teachers. Learning, which is the critical process in education, is essentially an individual process which grouping sometimes facilitates and sometimes retards. Our knowledge of the contributions that grouping patterns can make to learning was derived from the experience of grouping, rather than growing out of some theory of how people learn. We came to the grouping of youngsters as a means of providing education to large numbers of young people, utilizing physical and human resources better. In the future, when we talk about education we have to talk about the manner in which characteristics and needs of a particular learner are complemented by the characteristics of specific learning situations. Since the effective environment, the receptor function, and integrative capacities of individuals are known to be idiosyncratic, effective educational strategies must be developed in relation to these particular characteristics. Some may function in much the same way and can be grouped, but grouping should flow from an individually determined need, rather than learning experience flowing from a grouping need.

In order for the school to develop the capacity and discharge its responsibility for individualization in educational design and delivery systems, pupil assessment must emphasize qualitative pupil appraisal in which the descriptive quality of function becomes the focus rather than the numeric quantity of function. The appraisal process must be one which results in data which can be used to prescribe the educational intervention rather than to predict the educational outcome. Quantitative approaches to assessment may have been reasonably appropriate to earlier sorting functions in education when the task was to identify those children most likely to succeed in relatively static educational treatments. The qualitative appraisal is more appropriate to the school's concern for stimulating, nurturing, and ensuring that development does in fact occur.

In such an individualized approach to learning, evaluation takes on an expanded function. We will not only be concerned with assessment, and the position of individuals in relation to the group; we are even more concerned with task and criterion mastery, where the purpose of evaluation is to determine the extent to which and the manner in which each individual has mastered the prescribed learning tasks. The individual and his criteria become the standard against which he is judged. When his performance meets the designated criteria, he becomes eligible for certification as having mastered a particular unit of learning. If relative position, or ranking, becomes an important consideration, perhaps this function should be taken over by another institution, as it seems to bear no relevant relation to the learning process. If a pupil knows how to solve an arithmetic problem with a tolerable amount of wasted time and effort, does it matter whether he does it with more grace or speed than do others?

We have already noted an educational goal of special relevance to curriculum when we talked about the importance of stressing problem solving strategies rather than specific techniques. This implies that curriculum will focus on process as opposed to content. The content of lessons, whatever form they may take, will serve as vehicle for "learning how to learn" and how to control symbols, information sources, and reasoning processes through which we formulate and solve problems.

The immediate and demonstrable effects toward which these efforts will be bent are best described as the development of certain types of attitudes, skill, and competence. The educator, of course, hopes that his efforts will elicit in the student an attitude of respect for knowledge and skill as instruments for doing something with the environment. However, despite this eternal preoccupation with how to motivate the child, behavioral science research and theory have established the fact that the behavior of all living things is characterized by a phenomenon best described as intrinsic motivation. That is, all living organisms are attracted to features of the environment which are mildly stimulating and

are in congruence with past experiences or the current state of the organism, while they are repelled by strong and abrasive sources of stimulation and environmental forces that are dissonant or incongruous; for example, when a drop of sweetened water is placed in close proximity to an amoeba, that organism moves toward this mildly stimulating substance and incorporates it, but a similar drop of relatively concentrated saline evokes the opposite response. Moving up the phylogenetic ladder, we find that when mice are confronted with a set of alternative mazes, they will consistently choose to explore that maze which is slightly more complex, rather than one to which they are accustomed, or one which is radically different or much more complex than what they are used to. In the same way, programmed instruction works successfully because youngsters tend to move spontaneously from one task to the next when they are presented in a sequence which permits an easy and natural flow from a lower level of complexity to a slightly higher but related level.

The task of curriculum is to harness this natural affective force in the behavior of youngsters and to help it to become reflected in a respect for knowledge and skill as the instruments to be utilized in the expression of this intrinsic motivating force. This makes it necessary to avoid learning experiences that either destroy the flow of this intrinsic motivation or distort it or guide it away from the essential developmental tasks. Important as other aspects of the teaching-learning process may be, the attitudinal aspect may be the most critical and the one most under the control of significant adults. From the Coleman data, we find that of all the factors investigated by him and determined to be related to school achievement, attitude toward self as a learner and influencer of one's future stood second only to family background in accounting for variation in achievement levels.

Following hard on attitude as a concern in curriculum is the building of the basic skills. Systematic perception and organization of environmental inputs, investigation and control of these inputs, as well as predictions with respect to them require that the organism have a group of organized responses to the environment. To respond to each encounter as if it were an original encounter is inefficient and counter-productive to cognitive and technical environmental control. These systems of organized responses are what we call skills. By using them, we shortcut the problem of responding to a situation each time by having to work out a new strategy.

It is our task then to help each student become an individual who is attitudinally oriented to the environment as a phenomenon to be engaged, understood, and controlled, and who has in addition a body of skills which he can use to perceive, understand, and control. He is now prepared to engage in the activity of

environmental manipulation, to get involved in action, in contact with things or with symbols of things. This is where competence enters. We can define this concept as the synthesis of attitudes and skills expressed through environmental interactions to result in the identification and systemization of environmental inputs, the generalization to broader categories of stimuli, and the inference of associations and relationships leading to conceptualization. Attitudes and skills, thus, are the foundations; the goal is competence, which may be expressed in a variety of ways. The first is affective competence, which is the ability to feel, to be appreciative and confident of self, to be self-directed. This type is closely associated with social competence, which is the ability to use oneself effectively in relation to other people and things. We also can distinguish cognitive competence, defining it as the ability to recognize and to conceptualize. Finally, there is political competence, which is the ability to use oneself and one's group members in social situations for the purpose of getting what one needs from the system.

I think it is important to examine this last area of competence, and to make its achievement a separate goal--politicalization. It may be that this process is best achieved through the kinds of activities we now call "extra-curricular," but its importance should rank it equally with any other aspect of the curriculum. For a potential citizen to be a competent, powerful, and wise member of the political and social system is surely a more crucial consideration than for him to have mastered the scanning of a Shakespearian sonnet, the laws of physics, or the ways of solid geometry. This competence can be developed by the encouragement of the kinds of student activities in which students have a real stake, which they originate and which they direct themselves. "Student power" should cease to be a phrase which puts a glaze of panic over the eyes of school administrators; it should come to be a major educational tool. The school years are the best time for students to learn the ways of power, how it can be used to advantage, and even misused. This is an area where models from the community can be especially well utilized. Students should be encouraged to become involved not only in school activities but in projects of real significance within the larger community. The role of the school in the development of this competence is a very significant one, since it is one of the first institutions with which the students come in contact. While cooperating with the students in every possible way, the school should not allow itself to become totally effaced, or to ignore its beneficial role as a sort of benign adversary in the process of change. There is a distinction between institutional stability and institutional rigidity and recalcitrance, and this distinction is important for students to learn from their experiences with their school. The goal should be a stable atmosphere in which reason prevails, and is expected to prevail. It is in the best interests of the students to learn early that certain kinds of environmental-institutional

strengths are necessary to the stability of the society and also that certain qualities of strength must come to characterize new institutional patterns before they will be effective substitutes.

The concerned educator will have before him a monumental task if he is to keep in mind all these goals. But through all the efforts involved in bringing these ideas to fruition, there is still another crucial problem. This problem might be described as the maintenance of a climate for learning to be the person "me" at the same time as learning to be the person I can become. This means helping students to accept themselves as they are, but at the same time helping them to examine the possibility of becoming something more and something different. The high hopes of the educator must never mean that the student is not treated as a person desirable and worthy just as he is. We are always in the process of becoming, and this is most dramatically true in the case of students; but it can never be beneficial to anyone to be treated as mere potential. On the other hand, too static a view of the student at hand should be rejected, for it results in the kind of attitude frequently found in too many of our ghetto schools today: "once a slum child from a poor school, always a slum child from a poor school." Our estimates of what these children can become are critically inadequate.

Perhaps the best tactic the teacher can use is to constantly ask himself, "what is this child on his way to becoming and how can I help him get there?" Once this view is firmly accepted and established, a number of problems related to the educational experience will be more easily solved. It will be understood that those experiences which are not somehow related to the student and what he is becoming are simply not relevant. It will become a justifiable rule that the relevance of such experiences must be established; if a student cannot be convinced that a certain thing is relevant for him, the chances are good that that experience really is not relevant.

This faith in the judgement of the student brings us back to an essential characteristic of the supportive environment. In order for the student himself to have this much faith in himself, all the necessary supportive aspects must be incorporated into his effective environment, those aspects of the environment of which he is aware and to which he is responsive. We are not operating in a vacuum; the environment must be engaged if we are to modify or change it, and the student must be involved with it if it is to function to provide support. However, in our zeal to provide this supportive environment, we must not overrule the youngster's own wisdom about what is or is not supportive. If the relevance of some aspect of the supportive environment cannot be made clear to him, then almost by definition, it is not so supportive. If, for example,

a decision is made to exclude "unauthorized persons" from the school building, and included in this category are certain people whose exclusion seems unfair or repressive to the students, the climate for learning is at least as disrupted by their resentment at the rule as it could be by the presence of those persons the school is trying to exclude.

This sort of problem is illustrative of the delicacy of reciprocal adaptation. If we are so busy tring to protect the structure in which learning occurs that we sacrifice the spirit of learning, then we have failed to practice reciprocity, the eternal principle for the interaction of organism and environment. In all our undertakings, educational, social, or political, we must learn the lesson of this principle, and refuse, no matter how great the temptation, to allow our desire for an "orderly" environment to cause us to sacrifice the spirit of respect for human flexibility, human ingenuity and human sensitivity.

But can schools do all of these things and can they do them independently of the social and political environments in which they as institutions exist? I think not. Joseph K. Hart has said:

> The democratic problem in education is not primarily a problem of training children. It is a problem of making a community in which children cannot help growing up to be democratic, intelligent, disciplined to freedom, reverent to the goods of life--eager to share in the tasks of the age. A school cannot produce this result. Nothing but a community can do so.

Hart's words are particularly relevant today when in the U.S.A. and in too many nations of the world economic exploitation, selfish pursuit of privilege, repressive police and judicial power, and ethnic, racial and religious discrimination operate to frustrate and preclude the development of the democratic-pluralistic community. Despite the pacific nature of this beautiful conference center in which we are meeting, we cannot forget that we have convened in California, a state whose political leadership is representative of the new spirit of conservatism and repression which threatens the U.S.A. and which is committed to preventing the birth of the kind of community or environment I have discussed.

Increasingly, under these conditions, as professional educators we must see our roles as twofold--responsible for the conduct and leadership of formal education and responsible, as professionals who are also citizens, for insuring that such communities (environments) do come to exist.

As an educator-citizen, I continue to pursue my scholarly activities, continue to teach my students, but I also join with the dispossessed, the discriminated against, the poor, the young, and my black brothers in raising the clenched fist--symbol of protest--symbol of determination to build a new and better community--a more supportive environment.

All power to the people! and I add power to all peoples! All power to the people!