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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the impact of the hidden curriculum on students. The hidden curriculum refers to the social relations and school climate of the schools. Two theories are presented as the basis for studying the relationship between school climate and students' social beliefs and actions. The generalization theory states that students view the school as a small version of society, and that they transfer their political and social beliefs developed in school to the outside world as well. The congruence theory is based on the relationship between what students are directly taught in classes and what they learn indirectly through interaction with the school authority structure. The bulk of the paper reviews more than 30 research studies about the relationship between school political climate and student attitudes and behavior. Results include the following: (1) in schools with high degrees of student participation in governance, students had high levels of political efficacy and trust, (2) teachers' support of student involvement in school affairs and school climate is related to political efficacy, (3) open classroom climate appears to foster positive political attitudes, and a closed climate is associated with negative attitudes, and (4) participation in school discussions and debates is related to higher levels of civic competence. Although some studies did not find such positive relationships, it is apparent that school and classroom climate are correlates of student political attitudes. Social studies educators should be especially aware of this when they plan course content, discussion of controversial issues, and political participation projects. (AV)

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Social Education by Example: A Social Organizational Perspective on Student Learning

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Students learn on their own, and from a variety of other sources: textbooks, peers, parents, teachers, and media. But they also learn from the social contexts of schools. This paper . 11 examine research perspectives on such learning.

Several authors have referred to a "hidden curriculum" in schools. Giroux and Penna (1979) contrast this latent curriculum with the manifest school curriculum, which is the "...explicit cognitive and affective goals of formal instruction" (p. 22). They describe the hidden curriculum as the "...unstated norms, values and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content as well as the social relations of schools and classroom life" (p. 22). For purposes of the present analysis, the second part of the description--social relations of school and classroom life--is of central interest.

Theoretical Aspects of the Social Organizational Perspective

Researchers investigating this perspective use much different theories than those concerned with other aspects of school learning. The variables studied are also quite different. The varirbles and theories of social organizational learning research will be described in this section.

Outcome variables. Rather than being concerned with factual learning or intellectual skill acquisition, this perspective focuses on beliefs and

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actions as learning outcomes. Beliefs might be convictions about the truth of particular ideas; or attitudes, which are more generalized and enduring predispositions toward objects or ideas. Examples of relevant attitudes are trust in political organization, and confidence in one's ability to influence decision-making. The beliefs can also be labelled as values, especially, when they are central to the "core" of a person's belief structure, and refer to valuable means to or end states of existance, such as justice, love, or peace. Actions studied in such research refer mainly to social activity which characterizes how students relate to one another, to adults, and to parts of the social structures within which they exist. Examples include cooperation, competition, compliance, and use of influence in decision-making.

Social Context Variables. What kind of variables are taken to influence these social beliefs and actions? They will be referred to as school social context variables, and include two levels--the classroom and the school as a whole. Classroom climate is a construct used to denote the degree to which the classroom situation allows students freedom of expression and the ability to have a say in the way that the classroom is structured. This climate, in turn, is influenced both by the teacher and by the school's administrative rules and personnel, especially the principal and his or her expectations for teachers. What this boils down to are these questions: What is the basis for authority in the classroom; who wields and/or shares the authority; and how is the authority used?

The classroom is a very salient organization setting upon which to focus research because students spend most of their school time in classes. However, the school organizational climate and structure is also of interest to the researchers. Because of its mainly bureaucratic nature, it is a potentially

important hierarchical model from which students can learn about some aspects of authority, participation, and decision-making. The degree to which students are free to participate in small groups and in school decision-making is one feature of school climate that is studied as an influencing variable. Similarly, the extent to which students can make and change school rules and administrative patterns can affect students' social learning.

Theories of Learning from School Social Contexts

How does learning and change in social beliefs and behavior occur as a function of school social contexts? Two theories explain this connection: The generalization theory and the congruence theory.

The generalization theory is based on the simple idea that students view the school as a small version of society as a whole. They develop beliefs and practice behavior patterns in school that are generalized to their beliefs and actions outside of school. For example, if they believe that it is beneficial to obey rules in school, and they actually conform to school rules, they might also believe in and obey society's laws in general. Or, students might find that it is not possible to influence a school rule, and this conclusion might be generalized so that the students believe that they also cannot influence political decisions in the wider society.

The congruence theory can also explain connections between school social context variables and student social learning. With this theory, the important feature is the relationship between overt messages being communicated to students about such phenomena as the nature of participation in decision-making and authority/power relationships, and the perceptions by the students of what role they actually have in the school environment. Let us suppose

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that students are told by school authorities that they can influence such school rules as those governing smoking, off campus privileges, or how school concession money is spent. At the same time the students, when they attempt to exert influence in these matters, find that the principal or school board ignores their ideas and activities, and make the decisions independent of student input. This would be an incongruent situation, and according to the congruence theory, students would "learn" negative attitudes such as disinterest in decision-making, distruct of authorities, and lack of confidence in their own political influence. Congruent situations would "teach" positive versions of the corresponding attitudes.

It is interesting to note that the congruence phenomenon, if it is valid, is a link in a more complex chain. Social and political forces outside the school certainly attempt to determine how schools contribute to the political socialization process. State legislatures, for example, enact statutes requiring the study of history and government in hopes that citizen support of the political system will result. But the way in which schools are structured and operated, also influenced by the same outside forces, might undermine the goals of future citizen support, if the good citizen messages of the mandated curriculum conflict with the examples provided by the school's hidden curriculum.

The two theories are not competing as much as they are complementary. Suppose students are taught in government or civics class that citizen participation in politics can have an influence in the political decisions and policies that are formulated by leaders. They learn that voting, communication with representatives, and participation in interest group activities are ways in which this influence can be used. So far we are referring to the manifest curriculum, and theories discussed :fore--psychological learning theories, for

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example--can explain the acquisition of this knowledge. But now let us suppose further that a group of students mobilizes wide support for the purchase, with student council funds, of two vending machines which dispense ice for drinks in the cafeteria. They vote for student council representatives who support this idea, and they communicate with student council members, teachers, the principal and school board members. Reaction is uniformly positive, until the idea is vetoed by the school board. Although the money has been raised, the idea is stopped. (This example is a real one.)

Several outcomes can result. First, although students are taught in class that political decisions are made in a participatory system, they discover that some of these decisions are actually made in an authoritarian and arbitrary way, and within a hierarchical, bureaucratic structure which tends not to respond to bottom-to-top communication and influence. The generalization theory would predict that it is the latter picture of politics that students would tend to learn and use, not the former one "learned" in class. The congruence theory would predict that the students would have more negative political attitudes as a result of the incongruence between the two political "pictures" that are presented in school.

In a very real sense, we are talking about social education by example. "Believe as I say, not as I do," is the message. In school situations characterized by many examples of incongruencies, it is not likely that students will heed that message. Instead, they will generalize their resulting negative beliefs to the wider political and social sphere. The impotent student council becomes the city council or the state legislature. Their frustration and disinterest in school affairs becomes later voter apathy, a lack of awareness, and perhaps political cynicism and alienation.

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These theories are based on a notion of learning by example, but are not the same as social learning theories in the sense that Bandura (1977) describes them. Social learning theory depends upon identification with or imitation of individual role models. The present theories depend upon "examples" in the sense that situations and processes are examples. A participant school system, in which students do have influence in decision-making, or a classroom in which students can freely express their opinions on controversial matters, are positive "examples" which students heed in the present theories.

Research Examples of the Social Organizational Learning Perspective

At the school level, there have been several studies which have investigated the relationship between school political climate and student attitudes and behavi[illegible] All such studies are obviously correlational, not experimental, and ca[illegible]ims cannot be made. Nevertheless, some fairly consistent findings do emerge t[illegible] support the hypothesis that such a relationship--causal or not--does exist.

Ehman and Gillespie (1975), studying thirteen schools, Siegel (1977), studying five schools, and Metzger and Barr (1978), who studied two schools, classified schools into four organizational categories--elite, bureaucratic, coalitional, and participant. They found positive relationships, so that the more participant the school, the higher the students' political efficacy, trust, and social integration. (It should be noted that Lamperes and Penna (1978) criticize the organizational categories used in these studies.) Wittes (1972) analyzed ten schools according to four different power categories--diffuse, local control, centralized, and differentiated. He found that the more differentiated the power in schools, the higher the sense of personal control. This relationship is mediated by students' integration with their peer group, however.

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Several have studied the school authority structure without categorizing it into types, but rather characterizing it as authoritarian (or closed, or custodial) and democratic (or open, or humanistic). This general "school climate" construct has been related to student political orientations by Rafaledes and Hoy (1971) and Hoy (1971), (45 schools), who found less alienation in open schools, by Waring (1974), (28 schools), who found that teachers' support of student involvement in school affairs and school climate is related to political efficacy, and by Jennings (1974) and Levenson (1972), (97 schools), who found higher efficacy, trust, civic tolerance and participatory orientation for various indicators of school climate. Merelman (1971), (two schools), found that school input variables, which included student decision-making, were related to support for democratic norms on a number of dimensions and to political information, but are not related to political participation. Davis (1974), (two schools), found that in authoritarian schools, activist students used confrontational tactics to effect changes, while in permissive schools activist students used negotiation tactics in carrying out their political actions. Thus, school climate might be related to political behavior as well as political attitudes.

There is some contrary evidence, however. Grossman (1974), (nine schools), found that in closed school climates, students were more likely to tolerate dissent. Arkley (1973), (14 schools), asserted that elementary school organizational climate is not related to attachment to the political community, political efficacy, or other beliefs about the meaning of democracy, permanance of law and appropriate responses to wrong police actions.

It is a general weakness across all of these studies that no explicit theoretical approach is used. Neither the generalization theory nor the

congruence theory--nor any other well-developed theory--supports the interpretation of findings in these studies. Before we can proceed further into such inquiry theoretical development is crucial.

Overall, however, the evidence is fairly convincing that there may be relationships between school organizational and governance climate and student political attitudes and behavior. If students attend carefully to school governance patterns as cues to what the larger political world holds for them, then it is reasonable to expect some effects on students' attitudes depending on what they see going on around them in school.

The classroom level also seems to provide "examples" for student social learning. The construct "classroom climate" is often used in research on this point. Classroom climate refers to how teaching is carried out. When students have an opportunity to engage freely in making suggestions for structuring the classroom environment, and when they have opportunities to discuss all sides of controversial topics, the classroom climate is deemed to be "open." When these conditions do not prevail, and when the teacher uses authoritarian classroom tactics, it is considered "closed."

Open classroom climate has been found to foster a range of positive political attitudes, and a closed climate is associated with negative attitudes. Torney, et al. (1975) analyzed their national sample of 9, 13 and 17 year olds to determine the effects of specific civic education practices on political attitudes and beliefs. Several conclusions result from this analysis. First,

> The use of printed drill in class, the stress on factual aspects of the subject matter, and the engagement of the students in various patriotic rituals (such as flag raising

> ceremonies) have, if anything, a counter-productive effect in civic education. (p. 19)

But they go on to assert that

> On the whole, the results showed that specific classroom practices were less important than what is often called the "classroom climate"; more knowledgeable, less authoritarian, and more interested students came from schools where they were encouraged to have free discussion and to express their opinion in class. But students who have reported having frequent political discussions with teachers were not necessarily more democratic in their attitudes. (p. 18)

Some specific factors appearing to be related to low authoritarianism were 1) encouragement of independence of opinion expression; 2) infrequent participation in patriotic rituals; 3) emphasis on Non-Western cultures in social studies classes; 4) infrequent use of printed drill; and 5) willingness of teachers to discuss sensitive issues in class. These same factors appear to be related to student participation in political discussions, both in and out of school. It was only classroom climate, however, that appeared related in a positive way to all of the desired civic outcomes under study.

Grossman (1974) reports results both confirming and conflicting with these generalizations. He studied nine San Francisco area high schools, and of the school factors that were related to tolerance of dissent, the most important were 1) perception of student freedom to express views in class; 2) closed school environment; 3) strict school rules; and 4) number of courses taken in which controversial issues were often discussed.

It has also been found that classroom climate has differential effects on black as compared to white high school students. Black students appear to have positive attitude changes with more exposure to controversial issues classes with an open, rather than a closed, classroom climate (Ehman, 1969).

Ehman (1970, 1972) reported a two-year longitudinal study of 14 high school social studies teachers and 100 students. He observed that a very low proportion of classroom verbal interaction is spent in a "normative" mode during lessons involving discussions of controversial issues. (This "normative" mode refers to teachers and students expressing opinions and judgments, rather than factual statements.) But for those classrooms in which above average proportions of time are spent in the normative mode, students are likely to have lower political cynicism but not higher political efficacy. In another report of this study (Ehman, 1972), it was found that the number of semesters of social studies classes taken was positively related to increases in political efficacy, as was exposure to discussion of controversial issues. These findings, then, support those of Grossman and, to a certain extent, those of Torney, et al.

In a different thirteen-school, two year longitudinal study of classroom climate effects, Ehman (forthcoming) found very consistent positive effects of open class climate variables on political trust, social integration, and political interest, and negative effects on political efficacy. The three climate indicators in this study were 1) frequency of controversial issues exposure; 2) range of viewpoints encouraged by teacher; and 3) openness of student opinion expression.

Other recent evidence supporting this idea has emerged from a secondary analysis of the 1976 National Assessment social studies and citizenship data.

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Mullis (1979) performed a regression analysis in which it was shown that school effects were substantial predictors of both political knowledge and attitudes (valuing constitutional rights, respect for others' opinions, and willingness to participate politically) of seventeen year old students. A classroom climate indicator--the frequency of student centered discussions--is one such predictor of these political attitudes.

Almond and Verba (1963) also found that remembered participation in school discussions and debates is related to higher levels of civic competence. Levenson (1972) found that in classrooms whose teachers reported frequent political discussions in class, students were more likely to define good citizens in participatory terms. Allman-Snyder et al. (1975), in studying elementary classrooms, found that in open vs. closed classrooms students were more likely to find democratic solutions to conflict situations. Glenn (1972), also studying elementary school students, established that positive feelings about classroom participation were related to higher sense of political efficacy. The highest correlations in this study were between efficacy and students' "feeling free to say what they want in class." Student classroom verbal initiations have been correlated with increased political efficacy and decreased cynicism (Ponder and Button, 1975). Dillon and Grout (1976) found decreased alienation with open classroom climate, as indicated by both teacher and observer data on openness of students to initiate learning activities and control classroom structure. Hawley (1976) and Hawley and Cunningham (1975), in their preliminary reports, also found a positive linkage between the classroom climate variables and student political attitudes.

Long and Long (1975) cast some doubt on this picture, however. In their 1971 study of 588 high school students in Illinois, they found a low negative relationship between amount of discussion of controversial issues and political

cynicism. Vaillancourt (1972) supports, in part, the earlier evidence, however, by finding a positive relationship between efficacy and student perceptions of teacher openmindedness, one ingredient of classroom climate. She failed to find a relationship between amount of controversial issues discussion and political efficacy, however. Baughman (1975) and Meixel and Haller (1973) also have reported studies that find no effects of classroom climate indicators.

Although there are a few contradictory studies, it is impressive that the evidence from a variety of studies lines up solidly in support of classroom climate as a potent correlate of student political attitudes. The different studies use different indicators of this rather vague construct, but the relationships show remarkable consistency. Open classroom climate generally is related to higher political efficacy and trust, and lower political cynicism and alienation--to more democratic attitudes. The near uniformity of the findings, given the diversity in conceptualization and measurement, points to a very promising area for future research, and certainly suggests the need for confirmatory experimental work.

The theoretical bases used to interpret the findings of these several studies again seem either thin or non-existant. Ehman (forthcoming) does forward the consistency theory as helping to explain the findings from his longitudinal study, but it is admitted that this is mainly the use of post hoc theorizing, rather than basing the original conceptualization on an explicit theory.

Use of the Social Organizational Learning Perspectives in the Study of Social Studies Education

This perspective is important for the study of social education. We must be as sensitive to the unintended outcomes of school experiences as to those

that we plan. In subjects such as mathematics and science, there is little reason for concern that unplanned school experiences will somehow contradict what is learned in those classrooms. But for social studies, quite the contrary is true. Giroux and Penna (1979) warn social studies curriculum developers that the hidden curriculum has "...capacity for undermining the goals of social education" (p. 23).

Researchers need to do more work in describing the hidden curriculum, and to use more sophisticated methods of testing hypotheses about the relationships discussed above. At the school level, experimentation is not practically possible, and correlational studies will have to be the rule. But better description of social organization attributes in schools can lead to better understanding of the relationships, even though we must depend on expost facto studies. So far we have used very gross measures of school climate in such studies, and better conceptualization and measurement will contribute significantly to our understanding of what school climate factors are most important for student social learning.

It is at the classroom level that the most interesting new research can take place. It appears that there are influential variables over which social studies teachers have control. How they conduct discussion of controversial issues at the secondary level, for example, seems to be one key to student attitudes about politics. Investigating a wider range of potential variables amenable to teacher control, and replicating existing findings, should be of priority in research in this area. Longitudinal research presents the greatest challenge. To find effects over significant periods of time--especially into adult years, is of major importance, and also of major difficulty. The Almond and Verba (1963) conclusion that remembered school experiences shaped adult attitudes is an intriguing one, but badly needs longitudinal verification.

Research in this area should also be aimed at a wider range of outcome variables. Rather than political attitudes and behavior, a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena could be gained through studying such social learning outcomes as the way students respond to rewards, to evaluations of their work, to cooperative and competitive task situations, and so forth. Both the generalization and congruence theories could be used to analyze relationships involving these social outcomes, and they would increase the breadth of our knowledge about the hidden curriculum as a whole. Even though these outcomes are more general than those usually thought of as objects of social studies curriculum, nevertheless they seem very pertinent for a general theory of social education.

One needed feature of future research is the use of a theory base. It has already been pointed out that nearly all studies in this arena lack such a base. Until some theoretical guidance for research is used, findings will have little explanatory power, and summing them up into generalizations is difficult. The two theories proposed in this paper may or may not be used in this way. But theoretical development and use is an important research need.

Of central methodological concern are the issue of independent observation and the proper unit of analysis. Up to this point, most studies have relied upon student perceptions as the data source for measuring school or classroom climate. But it is also student data, in the form of beliefs and behavior, that is being related to the climate variables. Because the data sources are not independent, obviously, a "built in" correlation exists in such data, and some relationships "discovered" by researchers may be artifacts of that condition. The obvious solution is to gather school and/or classroom climate data independently from students, preferably through the use of trained and objective observers.

The unit of analysis chosen in organizational climate studies provides a perplexing analytic problem. Conceptually, if it is the school or classroom that is having an impact on student beliefs and actions, then the unit of analysis should be the school or classroom, not the individual student. The analogy is in teacher effectiveness research, where researchers have agreed that it is misleading to analyze data at the individual student level in correlational studies. Instead, they aggregate data to the classroom level, and then analyze for teacher (or classroom) effects. It appears that this should also be the choice for the present kind of esearch, even though needed sample sizes are difficult to achieve for such analysis.

Conclusion

It might be as important how we teach as what we teach, when considering social beliefs and behavior. This idea is an important one, and needs more investigation. The theories underlying the idea need further development. The two theories described in this paper are not so much explicit inventions by researchers as they are observations about how to explain a variety of research findings already reported. Theoretical work will lead to better description and measurement of phenomena, as well as explanation of pertinent relationships. Compared to the other three approaches discussed in this symposium, the social organizational approach appears to have equal promise in terms of importance for social education, but also has the least developed theoretical base and the thinnest empirical findings.

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