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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an experimental effort in a sociology class to learn about socialization and about oneself from personal experience. With the help of autobiographies and self-disclosure sessions, problematic and/or "irrational" areas of everyday life were examined. The distress engendered, and the accompanying emotion, were brought into special focus by each class member. These everyday experiences were considered in light of past experiences in the socialization process to which they seemed connected. The outcome of this effort, it was hypothesized, would lead to improvement in the lives of student participants. Self-reports of students themselves provided evidence in support of the hypothesis.

I

Although psychoanalytically oriented theories are popular among clinicians and some educators, they currently face formidable challenges from a series of new approaches to human growth and development. The new approaches offer the promise of understanding ourselves in ways that make higher levels of well-being more readily available, to larger numbers, within shorter time intervals, and with increased adaptability to the customs of highly technological, industrial societies.

One of these approaches to human well-being that has made some impact among educators has focused critical attention on the break-up, or separation, between the emotional and intellectual life. It argues that the emphasis on science and technology in our Western culture has led to a divorce of the intellect from emotions, and that their separation has disposed us to increasingly nonfunctional,

and disfunctional, adaptations (Brown, 1971; Brown, Phillips and Shapiro, 1976). Many of our social and personal problems such as crime and delinquency, divorce, and violence, it is argued, can be traced to this source. This approach seeks a confluence, or a putting back together again, of the intellectual and the emotional aspects of ourselves in the learning process, that is, in education. Such confluence, the assumptions argue, will be instrumental in the achievement of more healthy human adaptations. Basically, it is an aspect of this assumption that this paper addresses.[1]

The growing literature on clinical sociology has potential for modifying our theoretical and conceptual thinking and our practice of sociology in important ways. There are several new directions in this emphasis that are challenging and provocative: making sociological research and knowledge relevant to change; emphasizing Verstehen, intersubjectivity, and the subjective in human behavior; encouraging honesty and openness with research subjects, and inclusion of this as part of research methodology and reporting; taking into account the connection between one's research area, or issue, and its importance and meaning in the life experience of the investigator. While in some ways these directions are not totally new to the sociological enterprise, their inclusion in a disciplined emphasis should surely produce new thinking and important new modifications of our work and in our person. Although the current research was not conducted with the clinical sociological vision, as such, in mind, it is clear that many of my sociological concerns are the same as promoted in this emerging sociological specialty (*American Behavioral Scientist*, 1979; Berg and Smith, 1985; Swan, 1984).

The research described in this report is the result of an experimental effort to utilize the subjective life and intersubjectivity in a sociology class to learn about socialization and the self from personal experience.

For the past several years I have developed, refined, and utilized a teaching format based essentially on the same assumptions as the confluent idea. In this format, use is made of the socialization concept, which refers to the process of internalization of norms, values, and behavior patterns by individuals. This central idea in sociological and social-psychological thought has a direct bearing on group and individual behavior. Yet, the concept has not been sufficiently mined for its utility as a source of personal insight, understanding, and growth.

Promoting personal growth and development in academic settings has been the focus of a number of earlier efforts. The work of Jan Fritz (1979), a clinical sociologist, has important similarities to my own. Both efforts seek to engage students in the subject matter around central concepts of the discipline (socialization in my case and a range of concepts from introductory sociology in hers). We both attempt to bring the concepts into the meaningful, important, and problematic areas of student lives. While many academic courses accomplish this by the sheer force of the subject matter, such efforts as ours are by more

deliberate design. Sociology 183AB, an academic class in a major university, has been the focus of my work in this area.

Students in the class are expected to learn about themselves and their socialization through autobiographies and to relate past experience to current problematic aspects of their lives. As the distress surrounding past socialization is identified, discussed, and emotionally responded to, the theory suggests more effective functioning in the here-and-now. The outcome of classwork with this viewpoint should mean that things begin to improve in the lives of involved persons. Currently, this remains largely an assumption in need of documentation. One way of beginning to test this claim empirically in an academic environment is through self-reports of students who have been class participants. The following discussion is addressed to two primary assumptions on which the course rests, to a description of the course itself, and to reports of students who took the class. The implications of these findings will also be discussed.

II

Proposition 1: The learning and relearning that characterize the therapeutic process are also major goals and outcomes of formal education, especially in liberal, democratic educational and social systems.

Sociological attempts to explain the dynamics of early socialization and the rise of problematic behavior go back to the work of George H. Mead and the tradition now called symbolic interactionism. It emphasizes the importance of communication, cue-taking, and taking the role of the other as crucial for understanding cooperative social and interaction processes. We know, however, that this is but part of a more comprehensive picture. Underemphasized and sometimes missing from this view, is the realization that conflict, antagonism, and breakdown are ever-recurrent realities in social relations. Cue-missing is probably as extensive as accurate cue-taking. Even in contexts where participants appear cooperative, this may rest on unreasonable and debilitating constraint and dissatisfaction by one or more parties.

Symbolic interactionism does not fully encompass the conflictual and dissociative aspects of socialization. This is due to its failure to map the socially relevant analytic units of intrapsychic life, which I believe is based on its inadequate acknowledgement of repression and the unconscious as central dynamic features of the socialization process. On this issue, the clinical tradition offers clear and unambiguous testimony.

The work of most clinicians who use a distinctively therapeutic format, an artifice or special contrivance of primary relations, shows the importance of repression and the unconscious on intrapsychic process and constructs. At the same time, clinical work makes plain the association between intrapsychic life,

interpersonal relations and the social organizations and institutions of the society. These intrapsychic constructions (often submerged in the unconscious) and their relationship to one another, to individual behavior, and to the cultural and social patterns of the society (also often submerged in the unconscious) are brought into awareness in therapy. This awareness gives rise to new thoughts about oneself and one's world, thereby making more satisfactory personal adjustment possible. This appears to happen in spite of the lack of agreement among clinicians as to causation of such changes.

Of the several ways of understanding severely disjunctive, debilitating, or traumatic aspects of early socialization, some provide promising directions for further and sustained research (Freud, 1953; Goldberg, 1984; Gruntrip, 1973; Kernberg, 1976; Klein, 1975; Mahler et al., 1975; Segal, 1964). For example, Margaret Mahler has described how trauma may occur during the very early years of infant and toddler development as the new person emerges from symbiotic attachment to the mother toward "individuation." Freud emphasized the same early years but focused on erotogenic zones and the intrusion of "instinct" development into psychic life. For Kohut (Goldberg, 1984) the patterning that results from early instances of severe "empathic failure" is particularly pathogenic, giving rise to narcissism and borderline conditions.

The experience of Soc 183AB is assumed to have a corrective influence on such past trauma. Each class participant's increasing range of accurate information about him/herself and about past and present severely distressing experiences allows redefinitions to occur. These redefinitions give rise to a more integrated conception of oneself and of one's world view, or just as Dewey (1916) suggested. An associated emerging development is a decline of perceptual distortion in selected role-enactments, and a consequent increase in cooperation and satisfaction in social interaction with others in these selected areas.

The pioneering work of John Dewey on this problem is instructive. His writing has guided my understanding of what maximum growth and development mean. It was Dewey, perhaps more than any other American educator, who emphasized intelligence and its use in problem solving as essential and distinctive ingredients of the human condition. In his view, human beings utilize their psychic, organic, and social resources in a continual effort to remedy, correct, and improve themselves and their condition. This essential process is what distinguishes human from nonhuman enterprise. Knowledge of human nature, of proper upbringing, etc., are matters of vital importance in this thinking.

Intelligence employed for human betterment, Dewey stressed, permits us to come to grips with and resolve the conflicts among standards in many different aspects of everyday experience. The process of discovery and resolution of these inevitable conflicts and contradictions in our individual lives and in our cultural heritage is what the achievement of maximum individual growth means. In this way individual experience becomes more unified. In other words, for Dewey,

and consistent with the argument presented here, the construction, definition, evaluation, and redefinition of experience in the problematic areas of individual lives leads to personal growth and development. It is a process that brings greater unity to individual lives and consequently greater personal satisfaction. This process, argued Dewey, is a necessary core, or essential creed, of democratic social systems. In addition to the greater unity and satisfaction it brings to individual lives, the process is a democracy's primary antidote against the many and varied forms of authoritarianism and tyranny.

In *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey argued that education is a process of growth through the continuous reconstruction of experience. This growth process is cited as the supreme moral purpose of a democratic society rather than particular economic, political, or social creeds. This means that education must gear itself to helping maturing persons develop according to their own interests, needs, and purposeful activities. He also argued that persons are to be treated as ends rather than as means in the process, which requires having high regard for each person's capacity to develop his/her independent thinking. It also utilizes freely projected goals and means and experimentation with the construction and ordering of ways to achieve them.

Sociologically, the significant difference between traditional classroom learning and learning within the usual psychotherapeutic setting is the degree of social distance maintained in the two settings. Relations between participants in most traditional classrooms are what Cooley (1909) has referred to as "secondary relations," whereas a psychotherapeutic setting more closely approximates what he called "primary group relations."

The point here is that an effective therapeutic process can be seen as a particular variety of primary relations, and for a very important reason. The distinctively therapeutic work itself (which is client self-disclosure, client expression of painful emotion from past traumatic socialization experiences, and client redefinition of self and world) is facilitated by the very conditions that define primary relations. In impersonal, social settings, where secondary relations prevail (such as traditional classrooms) much more extensive social distance is maintained. Role prescriptions do not necessarily include a "we" feeling, or personal satisfaction, or any of the elements of primary group life.

Proposition 2: Sociology 183AB is a curriculum offering which promotes the development of important redefinitions of self and world by class participants, thus increasing their cooperativeness, satisfaction, and coping ability in interpersonal relations.

This is the primary proposition to which the following discussion is addressed. First, a brief description of the course itself.

III

A format was devised for Soc 183AB, drawing on elements of the gestalt approach, the ''confluent'' view referred to above, reevaluation counseling, and the use of socialization as a primary conceptual guide. It was expected that the first quarter of the two-quarter sequence would deal mainly with learning the conceptual and theoretical framework on which the course rests. Following is the course description, available to all students interested in the class:

> Sociology 183A is the first segment of a two-quarter sequence designed to explore in some detail the *socialization* process. In doing so we will learn the details of a format that has general applicability and can be used in a wide variety of social contexts to greatly improve the quality of our lives and those around us. This means increasing the zest for life and experience. It means increasing our ability to act intelligently and thoughtfully in a wide range of situations and with a wider range of other human beings. It also means increasing our ability to facilitate mutually satisfying and cooperative transactions and engagements with others involved in our everyday lives.
>
> Each class member will make a thoughtful and minute examination of his/her socialization history to date. Close attention will be paid to our agents of socialization (persons who were in charge of our upbringing) and what they taught us about who we are, about what is permissible and what is forbidden, and why. In addition to the content of the socialization process we will put great emphasis on its form—that is, on the manner (style) and emotional content of the process. Our objective will be to rediscover crucial past experiences that are thought to have some bearing on current problematic areas of our lives. This is, in effect, a disassembly of elements of past socialization and an assessment of how they have conditioned our current experience. The particularly distressing aspects of these elements will become the object of ''reevaluation'' and therefore change.

The first ten weeks of the academic year (one quarter) are devoted to mastery of the theory and format of the course, as well as to exploration of past socialization. There are usually 25–30 students in Soc 183A, about half of whom continue to the second quarter of the series. An attempt is made to keep class size smaller in the second quarter than in the first. No more than 12 students are hoped for during the second quarter, largely because of the increased intensity of the work involved and the consequent need for more time per person ''to work before the group.''

The course description for the second quarter, likewise available to all students interested in the class, is as follows:

> This quarter our emphasis will be on identification of patterns, both intermittent and chronic. Our goal will be to identify two or three patterns of our own and to develop some awareness of how these patterns propel us into irrational (unwanted, bothersome) behavior. This means determining where in our everyday lives the "irrationality" is to be found, what social circumstances provoke it, and how it may be linked with aspects of past socialization. An additional goal this quarter is to discover and begin implementation of directions *against* the patterns. Much of our class time will be used discovering ways of going against the patterns. In this way the undesirable patterns and the irrationality that they stabilize in our lives can be changed.
>
> The discovery and counteraction of irrational patterns can be highly rewarding in that, as we effectively achieve these goals, our lives can be expected to work better. This is based on the assumption that we are thus better able to recover our zest, our intelligence, and our basic cooperative disposition as the distress associated with these irrational patterns is diminished.
>
> Consequently, then, our weekly sessions should focus on current experience, especially *unsatisfactory* or *problematic* areas of this experience. Usually, such areas will not be difficult to determine because they are ordinarily "on top," along with many other things. Beginning your sessions with events, experiences (etc.) from the recent past may be a helpful way to start (after news and goods). This will usually lead to sensitive areas and to clues regarding internalized distress. As the distress is discharged the pattern holding it in place is broken down and progressively replaced by more appropriate behavior and ideation.
>
> Around mid-quarter it should be possible to begin to be *somewhat* articulate about what we are discovering as patterns. At this point we will begin to work on counterstrategy. That is, to work on ways by which we can construct new experiences in our environment(s) that do not permit the running of our lives by irrational patterns.
>
> Each of us should be able to find a direction and agenda for meaningful work within this general frame of reference.

A comment on the ethical issue of giving a course in an academic environment with therapeutic content is in order. The essence of this issue is the

freedom to choose or not choose the course and to withdraw participation without penalty. Soc 183AB is an elective, meaning that it is not a mandatory curriculum offering. The course content is fully described, with illustrative exercises, at the first class meeting to give students a full view of what is to come. The difference between this course and the more typical lecture format is emphasized. Those students who do not feel comfortable with the format described are urged not to take the course. These circumstances, I believe, militate against a student inadvertently and unknowingly becoming involved in Soc 183AB. It should be added that students are allowed to drop classes without penalty until well into the academic quarter.

A second point is that many traditional courses, consisting of the usual lecture-discussion format, have major emotional, cognitive, and therapeutic impact on students. This is true especially of courses that deal with heavily contradictory and controversial areas of our lives. Courses on the Viet Nam war, the oppression of women and ethnic minorities, and child abuse are examples. For many students, such courses arouse deep emotion, introduce new information, and touch the lives of students very personally. These courses often promote catharsis and a new integration of experience, qualities that an effective therapeutic experience also promotes. The major difference between such courses and Soc 183AB is that the personal meaning of problematic experience for individual students, as determined by the student, is primary in the latter. In addition, Soc 183AB involves a sharing of these meaningful, distress-producing experiences.

Class sessions, of which there are ten of 2½ hours duration, consisted of the following elements:

1. Some activity at the beginning of each class designed to deflect the preoccupations brought from the cares and concerns of a busy day

Sometimes we begin with a brief mini-session. This gives each person three minutes to talk openly with another class member about whatever is immediately on his or her mind. In each case this talk was to an attentive, interested listener.

2. Lecture and discussion on the theory and format of the class

Usually, there was a sharp focus on some selected aspect of the theory and/or format each week. Questions and general discussions usually followed. The socialization process as characterized in the text, how past internal distress is externalized, how one can become more effective as client and/or as counselor are examples.

3. Mini-sessions, or meeting in small groups of three or four persons

There was constant concern to make these classes cohesive and supportive of each person, thereby making it easier for the students to share and discuss problematic areas of experience. Mini-sessions were an important part of this. Usually there was an assignment of topics to be addressed in these small-group sessions, especially during the first few sessions of the academic year. For example, it is usually suggested that each student spend the first few sessions as client on the topic "what growing-up was like for me."

The following hand-out to the class is suggestive of the build-up of mutual support. It is a guideline given to each student and discussed at length in the class.

> The appropriate orientation to Soc 183 is nicely summed up in the following words of a former student to other class members:
>
> "I would like your attention. I would like your support, and I would like your good-will toward me as I review, analyze, dissect, and discuss the problems and issues of my life. I'll gladly give the same to you."
>
> More specifically, in Soc 183 we want to:
>
> —listen to one another with full attention
> —listen to one another without inappropriate challenge, contradiction, or objection
> —regularly validate one another as intelligent, capable, delightful human beings
> —express our deepest thoughts and secrets and our most painful recollections, knowing that they will be heard with respect, compassion, and kept in good confidence
> —know that nothing dwelt on in our work together will diminish our mutual admiration and respect, or thwart our very best effort to be mutually helpful to one another

4. Work before the group

Each person, usually voluntarily, was expected to come before the total group and talk about some aspect of his/her life considered problematic. This work before the group was normally supported and guided by the professor, who stood with each person working before the group, held the hand of the speaker, thus encouraging open and free expression. In this way class members were able to "get in touch with" important problematic areas of their lives. Expression of strong feelings and emotions associated with the subject of discussion was en-

couraged and, with few exceptions, achieved. This work always began with something new and good in one's life.

In order for each class member to have equal time before the group, which was an important rule, time limits had to be put on each speaker-participant. One of the important features of organization of these classes is striking a balance between the need for all to have some time before the group and the need for some to have a great deal of time to express their feelings and thoughts about damaged areas of their lives. The class was constantly short on time—never enough to allow each person full and complete time in work before the group. Yet it was expected that topics opened up in class would be continued in sessions outside class.

5. The ending circle

This final feature of the class started about 20 minutes before the end of each class. The entire class made a circle, with arms on each other's shoulders, and each member spoke to a common issue. The ending circle was designed to further increase the solidarity of the group—sometimes achieved by group members "validating" the person next to them. The ending circle was also meant to be supportive of each individual person. "Self-validations" were sometimes employed in the ending circle. The final event was the requirement that each class member have a minimum of three hugs prior to leaving class. There was no maximum number of hugs, and no refusals were allowed.

During the week interval between classes, class members were required to have a cocounseling session. Class members were paired for the entire ten weeks and each pair held 1½ hour sessions once a week as an assignment. One person was "client" for 45 minutes and then assumed the role of "counselor" for the additional time. In this way each person in the class had roughly 7½ hours of individual client time during the quarter. A good deal of class time was spent initially describing and illustrating the manner in which these sessions should be conducted. It was emphasized that the counselor role required attentive listening, good eye contact, supportive handholding where appropriate, but not taking away the client's initiative by interpretation and expression of opinion. The client role permitted and encouraged free expression of thoughts, feelings, and emotions regarding those issues that were "on top." As the class progressed, there was regular prompting and discussion of ways that each person could improve in the role of client and counselor.

Course grades in Soc 183A are based mainly on a mid-term and a final exam, although attendance and class participation are considered. The mid-term exam is an autobiography and is graded on a satisfactory-unsatisfactory basis. One requirement of the autobiography is to "describe and characterize the three most distressing experiences of your life." Normally, one of these experiences becomes the focus of attention in cocounseling throughout the quarter. Primary

criteria in evaluation of autobiographies is length and whether or not the paper reflects a serious effort to review one's life and specific important problem areas. The final exam is a rigorous three-hour in-class written paper on the theory and format of the class. In addition, students are asked to discuss the problem area they worked on, what they feel was achieved, and what important areas of their lives, if any, they feel need further work.

The second semester's (Soc 183B) grade is also based on a mid-term and final exam. The mid-term this semester normally centers around readings directed toward restimulation of emotions and experiences that most of us share. This is sometimes accomplished by use of novels. For example, *Child of Our Time* (1976) by Michael Del Castillo has been very useful in this regard. Students are required to write about those aspects of the novel that had particular meaning for them and why. In addition, the mid-term asks students to write on theoretical questions regarding the specific approach to socialization taken. The final exam is primarily based on a comparison of the theory and format used in Soc 183AB with other formats that might serve a similar purpose. One book found to be especially helpful is *Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer* (1977) by Kenneth Pelletier. Biofeedback and meditation are often selected by class members for this comparison.

While no formal measures of impact of the class on the understanding students have of their socialization experience were used, students were asked to indicate whether or not they felt there was improvement in areas of their lives on which they worked in the class. On the whole, students felt they benefitted from participation, and reported improved relationships with family and friends. More improvement was reported by students who took both semesters of the course than by those who took only the first semester. The proportion of students who reported improvement remained consistent over the years the course was given.

An additional bit of evidence in support of the meaningfulness of 183AB to student participants comes from formal university class evaluations. These evaluations are comparisons of any one course offering with: all other evaluated courses in the Sociology department for the same quarter; all other evaluated courses in the Sociology department over time; all other evaluated courses for the entire campus over time. Thirteen students handed in the evaluation form. It consists of 16 items, three of which are presented below as illustrative.

1. Taking everything into consideration, how much do you feel you have learned in this class?
2. Would you recommend this class to your friends as an elective?
3. What is the quality of student discussion of class materials in section meeting?

In most instances of comparison, the student response to Soc 183AB was much more favorable than to other courses.

The following descriptions are by students in Soc. 183A. They further demonstrate the workings of the class and its value to participants. These statements are responses to the following, an item to which all class members responded.

Discuss the major problem(s) worked on during the quarter and what you achieved through this work. Please be detailed in your discussion.

Statement #1:

The major problem I worked on this quarter was my mother's alcoholism. It has been (until this class) my best kept secret. I always viewed it as a reflection upon myself. As the child of an alcoholic I would grow up to be the same—at least that is what I believed the stereotype was. It made me different. It was something I went out of my way to hide and to deny.

I felt very confused towards my mom. My pattern of behavior towards her was (is) latent, perhaps purposely so. I felt angry that her work was meaningful enough to stay sober for, yet the family (me) was not. How could I understand her willingness, eagerness (?) to be drunk during my time with her? I was also very hurt. She is my mom and I love her, but I hate her at the same time. When she is not drunk I like being around her. I talk with her, go places with her, and enjoy her company. She is witty and very intelligent.

When she is drunk I view her as a different person. She is irritating, annoying, not worthy of my time or love. I feel like I am trying to punish her—yet my actions change even before I have a chance to think about them.

I always believed that I kept her alcoholism a secret to protect her, so no one would laugh at her, so nobody would say bad things about my mom. But I did them to protect myself! I didn't want to be pointed at and laughed at. I didn't want to be ostracized. It was her fault and I hated her for it.

Each time people commented on how alike she and I are, I always thought of it in negative terms. I didn't want to be like her. I hated her. I hated what she did to me and my life. I also blamed her for things that were none of her doing.

I have done a lot of shaking, mutilating of leaves (my session met on the lawn), and some crying over her and me. I know I still have a lot of crying to do, but I feel the control patterns are probably at work. My sessions were helpful in forcing me to understand my mom and to understand myself. Her drinking is nothing personal against me. She does love me. She and I are alike, something I think I am beginning to appreciate.

My work in the mini-sessions in class were more helpful than my sessions in the community. It was in the mini-sessions that I received the most effective counseling and that I feel like I effectively counseled others. It was in these mini-sessions that Diane finally broke my control pattern of "poise." She had me shake my arms and slouch. It worked and I cried. I "acted out" a talk with my mom, and instead of feeling tired afterwards (like I usually do when I cry) I felt better. I was content with what I had done.

I know I have more discharging and more understanding to do, but I feel I have a good start. My attitude toward my mother has changed. I am not a bad person because of her, and she is not bad either. Her chronic pattern has greatly affected me, but just being able to talk about it is a huge change. I have written quite a few autobiographies before, always nearly deleting my mother.

I'm not ashamed of her anymore. I'm not ashamed of myself either. I've begun to remember incidents of her drinking that I had no memories of in the past, and now I actually want to talk about them. So, as when I began this class I thought I had no unresolved problems to deal with, now I have a few. But I also have the knowledge of how to deal with them.

Statement #4:

I think I was shocked by how much I discharged through the reevaluation cocounseling method. I felt I had talked enough about my past distresses in life, but through this class I realized that I never did release all of the emotions bottled up inside me at the time the experiences took place. The three major problems I worked on were: 1) my brothers' drug addictions; 2) my parents' divorce; 3) my graduation and future.

Most of my time was spent talking about my brothers and why I think they turned to drugs and why it is so hard for them to get off the drugs. Why I spoke on this is because through their lives, in which the drugs have played a major part, they have continually disturbed my life, preventing it from being a stable life. There exists some resentment, but not much, since I can understand their behavior. Their behavior is a reaction (irrational one) to the way my father treated them. My father likes kids and has fun with them just so long as they're not his kids. I think he just does not know how to be a father and was unsure of himself. His lack of communication on top of his bad temper, which he took out on my brothers, has led both of my brothers to the feeling that he (my father) does not love them. I know this is not true, but my brothers do not. My older brother especially is affected by my father and turned to drugs as an escape.

My younger brother got into drugs by my older brother. For most of my life my brothers have been using drugs daily so that their actions are affected by these drugs. The need to support their habit also controls their actions. Their actions affect me. My family is always yelling at one another due to my brothers. My father refuses to communicate with them (he talks at them but never with them), and my sister, mom, and I have to try to straighten things out. I especially feel the need to work things out between my brothers and my dad because I want the family to be able to spend good quality time together before my parents die. The task of working things out between my brothers and my dad is difficult since both sides are stubborn. Anyways this subject was my main focus in the class.

The second one I worked on was my parents' divorce which I did not spend too much time on because I was more disturbed about the other two. My parents' divorce was probably one of the worst times of my life, because this was just an added problem in the household on top of things I mentioned earlier. The tension in the house was high the year my parents tried to work things out instead of getting a divorce. I was caught in between. Who likes to decide which parent they want to live with? No one, yet I knew I could not live with my father. My father wanted to keep the house, which meant that if I wanted to remain in the house, I would have to live with my dad. I did not want to move far from my school and my friends, not at this time in my life, so I feared my parents' decisions. Not only was this going on, but my mother shared her feelings of despair over the situation (divorce), so I felt sorry for her. My only thoughts at this time in my life (junior in high school) were how much I wanted to leave that house and go to college.

My third major problem was on the scared feeling I had as my college graduation neared. I hate trying to make plans years in advance, even months in advance, on my future because they can never be guaranteed to work out. I spent a lot of time in sessions discussing this problem and notice a difference in how I felt about this at the end of our counseling period. I no longer am worried to the extent I was about leaving college.

By talking out each of these problems, I discovered some latent patterns of mine that I never realized before (e.g., I cannot act rational when the yelling in my family takes place). I also liked having someone listen for once without interrupting me so they could speak. What I have achieved from this counseling process is a greater understanding of myself and what improvements I would like to make in my life. I have also learned to be a better listener, which

is an effective tool in developing relationships. I have enjoyed the work I have done through the reevaluation process and hope to use what I have gained in my future.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A description of an undergraduate sociology class has been presented. The theoretical assumptions on which the class was founded were discussed. Data on student response to the class supported the claim that it was viewed as a meaningful experience and helpful in the conduct of students' everyday lives. The data did not prove the theoretical assumptions; rather it supported them.

Soc 183AB was described as a class emphasizing learning from an experiential vantage point, that is, it takes the everyday socialization experiences (past and present) of each participant as the focus of analysis and understanding. It promotes assimilation of segmented or separated aspects of experience (or in Dewey's terms "resolution of the contradictions and conflicts of our lives and our culture") and the formation of new meanings, as new discoveries. These discoveries are seen as important in reconstruction of aspects of everyday experience, and make possible for each discoverer greater clairty and unity of experience. This kind of outcome is, I suggest, essentially the same as is sought by an effective therapeutic process. This means that therapy is not the exclusive province of medical doctors nor of those who carry on in the more orthodox tradition of the great Sigmund Freud in distinctively "clinical" contexts. Shorn of its cosmetic trappings, the therapeutic process may be seen as broadly, unevenly, and sporadically operating throughout the culture.

The various therapeutic approaches that tell of organization of the self and psychic life provide new and effective means by which relearning and new self-knowledge are becoming more widespread. Some of the new approaches to psychic organization carry a vision of it that is essentially compatible with the education or learning process as it occurs in formal educational institutions of the society. Pedagogy and therapy become one and the same in a manner consistent, I believe, with the outlook of John Dewey.

One of the major obstructions to operationalizing these views in the classroom has been the failure of educators to fully appreciate the need and opportunity for education on the self and in self-development. By this I do not mean education about self-development as an outside observer and describer of the process, but education in the promotion of personal growth and development. Education of the latter variety can make good use of the cumulative wisdom of the clinician and be an essential strength of "democratic" education as the Dewey tradition heartily would acknowledge. Yet, effective implementation of self-education as suggested here requires recognition of an essential distinction not made by Dewey.

Therapy, or education in self-development, differs from formal educational arrangements in requiring a fundamentally empathic environment. Formal education as a rule does not. Empathy as used here refers to an intersubjectivity between class participants. Intersubjectivity means a preoccupation and involvement with the subjective life of and by class participants for the purpose of understanding compartmentalized, repressed, and previously unconscious elements and how they affect current problematic life experiences. This process requires a degree of trust, confidence, safety, concern, and mutual respect that a typical classroom experience does not. That is, an environment of primary relations intelligently crafted. Furthermore, the goal in such an environment is an increasing awareness of one's own history of past experiences and development, and explanation of the importance of this history for present-time functioning. The emphasis on empathy renders classes designed to generate such an environment less amenable to the instrumental goals and timetables of educational establishments, especially those that array each student along a unidimensional scale of evaluation. Rather, the emphasis is on self-expression, self-disclosure, and redefinitions of past and present problematic reality (Ornstein, 1978). For each person this is a uniquely valid experience and an exciting analytic enterprise, not to be assessed, measured, or evaluated in light of the performance of others as happens in most traditional classrooms. Such classes require a special freedom from certain kinds of organizational imperatives, especially those that proclaim one participant's performance ''better'' than another on the basis of some standard criterion. The experience and analytic work in classes like Soc 183AB can be effectively engaged in by all participants, and the effort to do so is judged as an important and welcome gesture toward self-discovery and self-assessment.

NOTES

1. The author acknowledges his debt to Harvey Jackins, whose influence on his work can be detected throughout this paper.

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