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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PREVENTIVE PEER MENTORING PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS: GROUNDED THEORY AT WORK

By

Leslea Peirson

Honours Bachelor of Arts, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1991

Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Psychology

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the Master of Arts degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

1993

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Canada

From the pain come the dream

From the dream come the vision

From the vision come the people

And from the people come the power

From this power come the change

Peter Gabriel, 1992

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This space has been reserved to recognize those people who contributed to the research and who supported me through the process of this project; there are many.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I describe the beginning stages of a process for improving the well-being of students in a secondary school community. In the first section I describe the social context of the project. Next, I outline the values and principles that served to inform the research and action. I then review the relevant literature on consultation in educational settings and examine various prevention programs that have been introduced into schools, focusing primarily on those programs/changes that increase social support. Following the review I present the research and action goals of the present project which were to examine change as it occurs at Galt Collegiate Institute (GCI) and to provide recommendations for proceeding with the development, implementation, and evaluation of a peer mentoring program for all students in the school community. To accomplish my objectives I organized one in-person interview and five focus groups to afford the GCI community an opportunity to relate their experiences with, and opinions about, change at GCI. Using a framework derived from the relevant literature on change in schools, I conducted a qualitative comparative analysis on the data collected from the various stakeholder groups. The findings and discussion are presented in the form of a grounded theory and a set of recommendations. The grounded theory is intended to inform change within schools in general, and GCI in particular. Typically, for new programs or changes to be successful, the school community must take ownership of the process and content of a change, and attention must be given to human issues (e.g., recognition for one's efforts) and proper implementation. The recommendations for proceeding with the mentorship program at GCI are organized according to six phases: design, planning, commencement/implementation, interim/implementation, closure/implementation, and planning anew. Prior to concluding, I

identify some limitations of the study and relate some of my experiences as a consultant in a school setting. Finally, I end by summarizing the main contributions of this work.

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Social Context of Research and Action

This thesis is about change in schools. More specifically, this thesis is concerned with the formulation of a grounded theory of change in schools, and with the development of a primary prevention program involving a mentoring strategy for high school students. The origin of this project dates back to 1987 when Heads of Guidance for Cambridge, Ontario, secondary schools met to discuss possible strategies for the prevention of youth suicide. During the six year span since this first meeting, various individuals and groups have been involved in assessing and addressing depression and suicide ideation experienced by students at Galt Collegiate Institute (GCI) in Cambridge.

In April 1992 I was invited to join four other people involved with the setting in a panel discussion concerning the development of the intervention over the first five years. What follows (in italics) is a summary of our presentation that was written for the proceedings of the fifth Prevention Congress (Nelson, Prilleltensky, Chris, Somerville, & Peirson, 1992) . I have made a few minor changes to the text, and have included details of developments subsequent to the conference presentation.

Concerns about students experiencing depression, suicide ideation, and, in a few instances, suicide attempts prompted guidance counsellors of GCI to collaborate with the local Canadian Mental Health Association branch to submit a proposal for funding a suicide prevention program. This proposal was not funded, in part because there was insufficient documentation of needs in the school. Students and faculty from Wilfrid Laurier University's (WLU) Community Psychology program became involved at this point to assist the school in conducting a needs assessment and in planning a prevention program.

In conducting the assessment and in planning the program, a process of "reframing" the issues occurred. First, the focus of the assessment shifted away from an emphasis on suicide to an examination of key risk and protective factors that are related to suicide. This alternative conceptual model included the factors of youth stress, social support, coping skills, and depression.

Second, whereas the initial proposal called for the implementation of a suicide education and awareness program in the school, we questioned the value of such a model. Such programs tend to emphasize secondary prevention, rather than primary prevention. Also, not only is there no research evidence regarding the effectiveness of such programs, a study by Shaffer et al. (1990) that was published during the course of our consultation found that suicide education and awareness programs can have deleterious effects on high school students who have previously attempted suicide. Alternatively, we proposed a primary prevention model that would seek to decrease risk factors, youth stress and hassles, and to increase protective factors, social support and coping skills. These were the key factors examined in the needs assessment model.

Third, in view of limited possibilities for new funding for a primary prevention program, we began to examine ways in which the school could implement a program with its existing resources. This last aspect of reframing marked a shift away from "wishful thinking" for outside assistance to an emphasis on "self-sufficiency" and "ownership" on the part of the GCI community for changing the social environment of the school.

During the 1990-91 school year Jill Somerville, a student from WLU's Community Psychology program, conducted a multi-method needs and resources assessment (see Somerville, 1991). A survey of 210 GCI students showed that peer hassles were directly related to depression

and negative affect, while social support and coping skills were inversely related to depression and negative affect. Moreover, girls reported more peer hassles, depression, and negative affect than boys, but girls also reported seeking and receiving more social support than boys. Finally, older students (ages 16-18) reported more hassles, depression, and negative affect and less support than younger students (ages 13-15). Key informant interviews with workers in helping services in the community and focus group interviews with students converged with the survey findings in suggesting the need for a high school intervention program aimed at providing support and developing coping and stress management skills. The survey results showing age and gender differences suggest that an intervention program should begin during the first year and continue throughout students' high school careers to prevent stress and the erosion of support and that any program should pay particular attention to the issues facing girls in their adolescent development.

The review of existing programs, the reconceptualization of the issues, and the results of the assessment were used to plan for a pilot intervention program in the high school. Based on the reconceptualization of the problem described above, it was decided that the most efficacious way to design a primary prevention program would be through a committee with representatives from all the constituencies of the GCI population. Members of the Community Psychology program met in September 1991 with a guidance counsellor to organize the committee.

The STEP Committee as it has come to be called, was struck with representatives from students, teachers, extras (outside consultants from Wilfrid Laurier and the local school board), and parents. The main mandate of the committee is to provide directions and recommendations for beneficial changes in the school. As such, the committee adopts a long-term view of the

problems, recognizing that certain changes will come about slowly. In order to reduce stress and promote well-being, the group identified short-term and long-term goals. Some short-term priorities included: (a) improving the physical appearance of the building, (b) acknowledging teachers' work and efforts, and (c) increasing students' input into course design and method of teaching. Among the long-term priorities were: (a) the need to set up a mentorship system for all students (the focus of the present project), (b) create a support network among students, teachers, and parents, (c) develop more alternative programs for students who experience difficulties, and (d) establish a "common lunch" where students could socialize. During the 1991-92 academic year the committee began to address some of the short-term goals and approached the administration with suggestions on how to pursue the long-term objectives.

An informal evaluation of the processes and work of the STEP Committee revealed three primary foci of concern for the Committee's work during the 1992-93 school year: (a) broadening the base of participation to involve more members of the GCI community in planning, implementing, and maintaining changes, (b) generating strategies for improved networking among parents, students, and school personnel, and (c) developing a structure for the mentorship program.

The STEP Committee resumed in October 1992 with myself and a guidance counsellor facilitating meetings. The 1992-93 Committee was comprised of one student from the Peer Helping class (there were initially three students but only one of them stayed in the Committee), two parents, one teacher (a second teacher was involved in several meetings, but due to personal reasons this person withdrew from the Committee), one guidance counsellor, one consultant from the Board of Education, and two consultants from the community psychology program at

Wilfrid Laurier (Isaac Prilleltensky and myself). In response to the evaluation results described above, the 92-93 STEP Committee worked to encourage participation and input from the different groups within the school community. We also devoted some time to discussing strategies for improving communication between parents, students, and the school. Furthermore, the present project which is intended to prepare the groundwork for a peer mentoring program demonstrates that the 92-93 STEP Committee was attending to the third concern expressed in the 1991-92 Committee evaluation.

While the 1992-93 STEP Committee shared the previous Committee's vision of an improved school climate and improved well-being for all members of the GCI's community, there was an important difference in the way the two Committees approached their work. The first STEP Committee tended to operate more as a working committee than a steering committee. Although we accomplished some important work, the responsibility for initiating change and "doing the change work" remained mostly within our small group of 10 to 12 people. As many of us pointed out in our evaluation of the Committee, we needed to branch out and involve the wider GCI community in a collective effort at making beneficial changes in the school. There are many groups, classes, organizations, teams, clubs, individuals, etc., that could be approached with ideas for change. Rather than individuals from the STEP Committee accepting primary responsibility for "doing the work", the plan was to energize those groups, classes, etc., that possessed the resources for change, to actually implement change. Consequently, the structure of the 1992-93 Committee was modified to accommodate the above concern. The 92-93 STEP Committee worked as a steering committee that existed to explore and define priority issues that need to be addressed within the GCI community. Furthermore, it

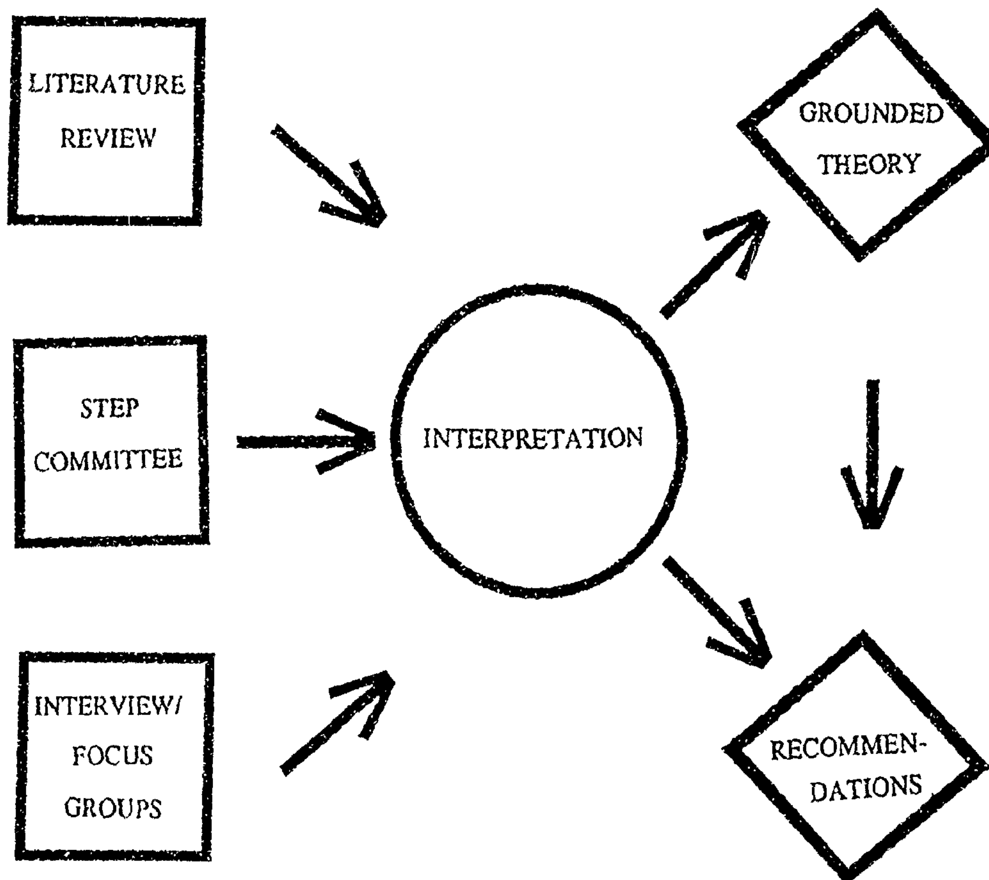
attempted to link up the various resources within the school that would best be able to implement successful changes.

One of my primary contributions to the STEP Committee, and the focus of this document, is an examination of how to launch a successful mentorship program at GCI. The project I describe here is about what lies between ideas and specifics. In other words, the STEP Committee generated an idea for a mentorship program, and I have been involved in laying the *groundwork* for later stages of planning the program's specifics. In laying the groundwork, I attempted to gather information about how successful and unsuccessful changes have been made at GCI, with particular emphasis on those changes involving supportive relationships. I expect that access to such information will better equip planners to design the specific components of a mentoring program.

Consistent with community psychology's "dual commitment to *understanding and action* [italics added]" (Vincent & Trickett, 1983, p. 68), I intend to generate a grounded theory for making successful changes, especially those involving social support, in secondary schools. I also intend to generate a "blueprint for action" which will consolidate information regarding: (a) how changes are made within GCI, (b) the relevant literature, and (c) my experiences as a consultant and member of the STEP Committee. Essentially, this "blueprint for action" will provide recommendations for proceeding with designing, implementing, and evaluating a school wide, peer mentoring program for students at GCI. In short, the grounded theory responds to the commitment to understanding, and the recommendations uphold the commitment to action. Together, understanding and action may be derived from an interpretation of the three sources of information, namely, the literature, the STEP Committee, and the interview/focus group

participants. Figure 1 provides a schematic representation of the research process.

Figure 1. Schematic representation of the research process.



Values and Concepts Guiding Research and Action

The mentorship project was guided by an empowerment agenda, that is, the project's values, concepts, and intervention strategies served to facilitate and "enhance the possibilities for people [in the GCI community] to control their own lives" (Rappaport, 1981, p. 22) as well as their environment.

Values Framework

The research and action of the present project were oriented by the three principal values of empowerment, namely, self-determination, distributive justice, and collaboration and democratic participation (Prilleltensky, in press).

Self-determination. Self-determination refers to a person's (or institution's) capacity to choose one's own path in life, that is, to control one's actions (Prilleltensky, in press). GCI has already identified a problem within its community, specifically, high levels of student stress and low levels of social support and coping skills; conditions which have been linked to depression, suicide ideation and suicide attempts. Although GCI may not be responsible for creating these adverse conditions, the school community has decided to be accountable for finding solutions and improving the well-being of the student body and other stakeholder groups in the school. As an example, the envisioned mentorship program will strive to create structures for support to respond to the need for more social support among GCI students.

Distributive justice. "Distributive justice is the value invoked to guide the fair and equitable allocation of burdens and resources in society" (Prilleltensky, in press, p. 13). In accordance with its primary preventive philosophy, the envisioned mentorship program would strive to disburse support among all students, not just those identified as high risk youth.

Furthermore, the anticipated structure of the mentorship program, whereby students are enlisted to disseminate help to one another, seems to allocate resources and burdens more fairly across the school community. Typically, students receive help and support from a handful of "experts" and a small number of sympathetic teachers. Consequently when we are talking about 1500 students, the need for support clearly outweighs the availability of resources. However, when responsibility is disseminated across the 1500 students, support giving becomes a more manageable and equitable task.

Collaboration and democratic participation. "The belief in the inherent capacity of individuals to select their goals and defend their interests is recognized in the value of democracy....A commitment to treating persons fairly, equitably, and with respect demands that a collaborative approach be used" (Prilleltensky, in press, p. 14). Input on the groundwork stage of the mentorship program was sought from each of the primary stakeholder groups in the school (i.e., students, parents, administration, and teaching and support staff). Furthermore, the STEP Committee, with its multi-stakeholder composition, acted in the capacity of an advisory board for the project.

Conceptual Framework

In this section I provide a conceptual framework that informed the research and action of the present project. This framework consists of the ecological principles originally stated by Trickett, Kelly, and Todd (1972) and recast by Nelson (1983), who also discussed the importance of multiple levels of analysis. First, I will describe the ecological approach to consultation which embraces four primary principles: interdependence, cycling of resources, adaptation, and succession. Each of these four principles contributes significantly to the

development of preventive interventions in school settings.

Interdependence. The principle of interdependence emphasizes the reality that all parts of a system are connected through a series of interrelationships, when one part of the system experiences change, all other parts are influenced and become subject to change (Nelson, 1983). Nelson suggests that iatrogenic difficulties may be created when an intervention is targeted at a specific part of the school system, failing to consider unintended consequences that may radiate through the interconnected parts of the system, potentially creating havoc in the school. The consultant may avoid such problems if she or he takes the time to examine not only each part of the system, but also how each part relates to each other part of the system. Sarason (1982) refers to this process as "observing and understanding the school culture" (p. 37). In fact, Sarason (1982) suggests that true understanding of the school can only occur if the consultant looks at how the school system affects and is affected by the larger ecological system which includes all major social institutions (e.g., health and welfare, justice, government). He states, "[t]he more sensitive you become to this complicated embeddedness [of systems], the more you realize how many different 'systems' have to change if the change you seek in the schools can be successfully introduced and maintained" (p. 11). It would seem, then, that one of the consultant's major tasks when working with schools is to examine the "big picture."

Cycling of resources. The principle of cycling of resources "refers to how resources are defined, distributed and used in a system" (Nelson, 1983, p. 387). Typically, the school's "resource cycle is involutional and defines the same tasks in the same ways over time, and it views specified people with identical past experiences as the primary candidates for these roles" (Trickett, Kelly, & Todd, 1972, p. 383). Such strict roles place limits and burdens on the

school's resources, thereby affecting the quality and amount of help-giving available for members of the school community. Reminiscent of Albee's (1959) prediction, Cowen and his associates state, "[it is] clear...that [professional] resources [will] not increase significantly in the future. Thus our prime challenge [is] to develop alternative uses of scarce resources that [will] have greater impact and a more socially utilitarian payoff for the many" (1975, p. 16). One way to increase the school's resources would be to have school professionals train other members of the school community, or the wider community to provide the necessary services.

Adaptation. The principle of adaptation focuses on the fit between individuals and their surroundings (Nelson, 1983). Typically this fit is asymmetrical, in that individuals are expected to conform to the demands of their environments. Under the traditional model of intervention, when a student does not successfully adjust to the demands of the school routine, she/he is labelled "deficient" and attempts are made to "fix" the child. As Nelson points out, this strategy of intervention can have serious iatrogenic effects. Consequently, consultants should consider using a systems approach when intervening in schools. The systems-model would focus on altering the school's environment to create structures that serve the members of the school's community, rather than forcing people to adopt pre-cast roles that suit the structures of the school.

Succession. The principle of succession emphasizes the reality that all systems are in a constant state of flux (Nelson, 1983). According to this principle it is important to consider not only the short-term effects of intervention, but also the long-term implications of introducing a change into the school environment. An examination of the history of the school, as well as how past efforts at change were introduced, may help consultants predict the course of the school's

evolution. These predictions may contribute to the design of a flexible intervention that will be able to address the changing needs of the school community.

Multiple levels of analysis. Beyond considering the ecological principles, Nelson (1983) advises consultants to contemplate the various levels on which preventive interventions may be introduced within a school. At the individual and small group levels, the consultant may apply the traditional approach and provide direct treatment to "dysfunctional" students or introduce person-centred preventive education programs. At the organizational level the consultant will be involved in altering the school's environment and redistributing its resources to better meet the needs of the students, teachers, administrators, etc. At the social/community level the consultant will be involved in redistributing power within the members of the school's community, for example, giving parents more opportunities for direct input into the operation of the school. Sarason (1990) argues that change in schools cannot occur if power issues at the social/community level are not addressed. He states, "[s]chools will remain intractable to desired reform as long as we avoid confronting (among other things) their existing power relationships" (p. 5). Several factors, including the availability of resources and an expected time frame, may influence consultants to analyze a problem and intervene at any one or all of the above levels.

Intervention Framework

The intervention framework incorporates four basic principles that informed the research and action involved in the mentorship program. In accordance with the reframing that occurred as a result of the needs assessment, with the literature on effective consultation (see below), and with the philosophy of empowerment, the STEP Committee is guided by the following principles (originally included in the STEP summary that accompanied the agenda for the Committee

meeting on November 10, 1992):

1. *Maximum input and democratic process*: Input would be sought from all the stakeholders at the school. students, teachers, parents, administrators, clerical and other support staff. Their participation would not only enrich the content of interventions, but would also enhance their commitment to them and improve the school atmosphere. Everyone affected should have a say regarding new programs.

2. *Self-sufficiency*: The literature and experience suggest that many school programs depend heavily on outsiders. Once these agents withdraw from the setting, interventions stop. Consequently, we would strive to create programs that are owned and operated by the school.

3. *Structural changes*: In contrast to most prevention programs, which tend to be person-centred and therefore less beneficial in the long-term, our programs would attempt to restructure psychosocial conditions of the school environment. Improving the climate of the school, for instance, and reducing stressful events, would have an enduring impact.

4. *Benefits to everyone concerned*: Educational and mental-health programs frequently benefit one segment of the school (e.g., students), to the detriment of others. A program for students sometimes means more work for teachers. Parents are usually neglected at the high-school level. We reason that if a program is to succeed, everyone's needs should be taken into consideration.

As a STEP initiative, the mentorship program would strive to retain these guiding principles of intervention.

Interaction of Frameworks

Implementing the present project involved a synthesis of the values, conceptual, and

intervention frameworks. One example to demonstrate the interaction of the three frameworks is as follows: The Committee's principle of maximum input and democratic participation arises at the juncture of the ecological principle of interdependence and the value of collaboration and democratic participation. Since we are working from a systems perspective we recognize that all parts of the school community are interconnected. Hence, we understand that a peer mentoring program geared toward one group within the school will affect all other groups that make up the GCI community. Therefore, to help prevent potential negative consequences of intervention, and to increase input, our methodology afforded each group an opportunity to share their opinions, ideas, and experiences, and ultimately to define a program that will suit their needs.

Literature Review

In this section of the document I provide a review of the relevant literature on change, prevention, and social support in the context of schools. I have divided this review into two segments to facilitate the organization of information. The first part of the review focuses on the *processes* of school-based change, whereas the second part centres around the *content* of school-based preventive interventions.

Change in Schools: A Focus on Process

According to Rappaport (1981), "human social systems for living are paradoxical in nature" (p. 1). So too, I would suggest, are the efforts to change these systems. The conventional wisdom with regards to social change is that:

> [It] does not come about easily. That statement applies to agencies, institutions, and communities as well as to how mental health services are packaged and delivered. Rooted structures and practices die hard, and the barriers to genuine change are profound. Indeed, when one stops to think about all the necessary preconditions for translating knowledge into constructive social change, the real miracle is that it ever happens. (Cowen, Davidson, & Gesten, 1980, p. 36)

Hence, it seems logical to assume there would be minimal desire or encouragement for the reform of social systems. Not so. The paradox of social change is revealed in Sarason's (1982) observation that, "ours has long been a society in which *all* of its major institutions have been under pressure to change" (p. 45, italics in original). One social institution that experiences both resistance and pressure to change is the school. With regards to resistance, schools:

> like almost all other complex traditional social organizations,...will accommodate in ways

> that require little or no change. This is not to say that the accommodation is insincere or deliberately cosmetic but rather that the strength of the status quo -- its underlying axioms, its pattern of power relationships, its sense of tradition and therefore what seems right, natural, and proper -- almost automatically rules out options for change in that status quo. (Sarason, 1990, p. 35)

Despite the imperious power of the status quo, numerous voices continue to call for reform, restructuring, and improvement of our schools (Brickley & Westerberg, 1990, Deal, 1990, Grube, Cram, & Melchior, 1988; Miles & Louis, 1990; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Vickery, 1990; Welsh, 1986). Thus it seems that the school is caught in a difficult dilemma. As a traditional institution the school supports the status quo and therefore resists change. Yet, as an institution devoted to the *advancement of education*, it must accept and contribute to *advances in education*, which involves making changes not only *to* the system (first-order changes), but also *of* the system (second-order changes). It is obvious which of these positions with regard to change has been chosen in the past, but what about the future? In my opinion, consultants and school personnel should think seriously about change and its value to the educational system. More effort should be directed at shaping schools into what they can be, instead of preserving the conventional structures of the past.

Indeed, there are numerous models that have been used to define the dynamics of school intervention. To contrast and compare the community-model employed in the present project, I will describe first the traditional approach followed by a description of the organizational development model of school consultation. Finally, I will review the community oriented approach.

The traditional approach to school consultation. School consultation in the traditional sense involves a formalized, one-way relationship between "a school psychologist as consultant, a teacher as consultee, and a student of the teacher as client" (Medway, 1982, p. 422). The dynamics of this relationship are grounded in the medical model of consultation. Typically, a teacher will contact the school psychologist for assistance with a student who has been identified as exhibiting problem behaviour. The psychologist generally will then conduct an assessment of the child, produce a clinical diagnosis, and provide recommendations for treatment, which tend to involve ready-made solutions (Bond & Compas, 1989; Claiborn & Cohen, 1973). Typically the primary focus of traditional school interventions is on student outcomes (e.g., an improvement in the student's behaviour) (Felner & Felner, 1989; Weinstein et al., 1991).

While the conventional approach may have proven successful in many cases, I would like to point out three distinct weaknesses of this consultation model. First, school psychologists who promote the conventional model of consultation adopt a secondary or tertiary prevention stance. In other words, these psychologists advocate a reactive approach to solving problems, responding only after a child has been identified as experiencing difficulty. Second, the traditional model sometimes "hold[s] children responsible for the causes of and solutions for their own problems" (Bond & Compas, 1989, p. 8), therefore the locus of change rests entirely within the student. According to Ryan (1971), this approach would be considered a form of victim-blaming. Finally, programs/changes initiated under the traditional expert model generally do not last, and are rarely institutionalized within the school community (Clabby & Elias, 1990; Commins, 1986).

Organizational development consultation in schools. Unlike the traditional model which typically involves the "expert" treatment of individual students, the organizational development

(OD) approach targets classrooms or entire schools in an attempt to create change or initiate renewal on a systems level. "Attempting to change the school as a system to reduce the problems and promote the adaptation of the entire student population," says Nelson "represents a move into the arena of primary prevention" (1983, p. 399). In an earlier review of the literature, Fullan, Miles and Taylor (1980) draw attention to the diversity in both definition and application of OD in schools. Considering the variation in definitions and descriptions of OD provided by Cherniss (1976), Dworkin and Dworkin (1975), Gallessich (1974), Jason, Durlak and Holton-Walker (1984), Keys (1979), Nelson (1983), Reschly (1976), and Schmuck, Runkel and Langmeyer (1969) among others, Fullan (1980) and his associates do well in their attempt to furnish a working definition of school-based organizational development. Their interpretation of OD is as follows:

> Organization development in school districts is a coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement, focusing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms or structures, using behavioral science concepts. The goals of OD include improving *both* the quality of life of individuals as well as organizational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues. (p. 135)

Acting as facilitators, models, catalysts, and external change agents (Gallessich, 1974; Nelson, 1983; Reschly, 1976) OD consultants strive to promote change and improvement in numerous aspects of school organization including: power equalization (Bartunek & Keys, 1982; Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1985), goal agreement (Keys & Bartunek, 1979; Reschly, 1976), school climate (Gottfredson, 1984; Nelson, 1983; Trickett & Moos, 1973) and interpersonal

communication (Gallessich, 1974, Reschly, 1976). Some of the intervention techniques employed by OD consultants are group facilitation and process observation, survey feedback, laboratory training, team-building, program planning, and evaluation (Gallessich, 1974; Nelson, 1983; Reschly, 1976).

Having reviewed some of the literature, I would agree with Nelson's (1983) idea that OD interventions tend to focus on enhancing the skills of school personnel on the premise that an "improvement in faculty group functioning can lead to improvements in classroom functioning which, in turn, can have beneficial outcomes for individual teachers and students " (p. 414). Some authors (Keys, 1979; Schmuck, 1968; Schmuck et al., 1969) have reported significant positive changes in classrooms and schools due, at least in part, to the impact of OD interventions. Indeed, such researchers deserve credit for their efforts to promote school change on a organizational as opposed to person-centred level.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of OD, this approach to school consultation is not without criticism. Three of the most significant reservations I encountered regarding OD as an approach to school change are as follows. First, Walton and Warwick (1973) doubt the motives behind some OD interventions, asserting OD's connection to industrial psychology, a paradigm which typically favours the managerial or administrative perspective over that of the collective organization. Second, Reschly (1976) questions the expected ripple effects of OD interventions asking "Do the enhanced interpersonal relationships and organizational processes actually improve the school experience of children?" (p. 111). The final criticism is submitted in light of Sarason's (1990) assertion that "no major educational problem is only a 'within system' problem -- that is, arising in and comprehensible only in terms of an encapsulated school

culture" (p. 35). Based on the literature I reviewed, the OD model does seem to approach school problems as "within system" problems, and I did not get the impression OD interventions consider the macrosocial and macrosociopolitical perspectives Sarason deems critical to the success of educational reform.

Community-oriented approach to school consultation. Alternative to the practices of traditional school consultants, but kindred to OD strategies, is the approach supported by a community orientation. According to Plas (1986) "the orienting principle common to all who write about and practice community psychology is a commitment to the belief that social systems have an important influence on the behavior and quality of life of each individual person" (p. 25). Consequently, problems are not viewed from a "narrow, intrapsychic model of behavior disturbance" (Carroll, Bell, Minor, & Brecher, 1973, p. 110), but rather are viewed as a result of inappropriate matches between people and their environments. Centring the locus of disorder outside of the student allows the focus of preventive interventions to shift from end point conditions to the "mechanisms and processes from which disorder and competence result" (Felner & Felner, 1989). This shift provides less opportunity for victim-blaming as individual children are not considered to be responsible for causing the problem. Furthermore, a community-oriented approach to school consultation advances more opportunities for students, teachers, and parents, among others, to become involved in changing their environments.

Essentially, community-oriented approaches promote primary and sometimes secondary preventive interventions that proactively respond to problems. Unlike the traditional model in which consultants are considered to be the "experts", community consultants serve as catalysts, facilitators, and/or models (Gallessich, 1974; Reschly, 1976). These "alternative" consultants

typically engage in a collaborative process with members of the school community, considering multiple levels of analysis (e.g., school policy, values, climate, actions), helping the school community create solutions that suit its unique needs while taking into account the available resources. Moreover, the community model of school consultation attends to the four principles of intervention described earlier, namely, maximum input and democratic process, self-sufficiency, structural change, and benefits to everyone. Heeding these precepts facilitates the process whereby schools come to institutionalize new programs/changes (Clabby & Elias, 1990; Commins, 1986).

For some readers this alternative approach to school consultation may be unfamiliar although it appears reminiscent of some forms of organizational development consultation. The novelty of the community-oriented approach is understandable considering "there have been relatively few system-oriented school change programs" (Weinstein et al., 1991, p. 338). However, for the interested reader, a few accounts of school-based, community-oriented interventions have been published (see Cherniss, Trickett, D'Antonio, & Tracy, 1982; Comer, 1980; Felner, Ginter, & Primavera, 1982; Holtzman, 1992; Trickett, 1991; Weinstein et al., 1991).

Factors that facilitate or limit change in schools. According to Vincent and Trickett (1983) community-oriented consultants are "commit[ed] to understanding and action" (p. 68). For me, the organization of this statement is critical to the consultation process, in that, as consultants we are to understand *before* we act. Researchers must engage in their own preventive interventions, prior to consulting with a setting, in order to prepare for some of the obstacles that may arise to frustrate, restrict, or even prohibit change from occurring within an institution.

However, Cowen et al.'s assertion that "[s]ocial change does not come about easily" (1980, p. 36), also intimates that consultants must seek out and identify the factors that will facilitate the process of change. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that researchers should consult the relevant literature, before embarking on any investigation, for it is through these publications that colleagues share valuable insight, wisdom, guidance, and warning based on experience. The wise researcher will pause to at least consider, if not heed the advice of her or his forerunners.

My own search of the literature on prevention, schools, and change revealed many examples of, and warnings about specific factors that serve to facilitate or limit change within and of schools. For instance, while reviewing the literature, I noticed a recurrent message that appears to be more of a warning than a simple piece of advice. Seasoned scholars and consultants (Altman, 1993; Cherniss, 1991; Cherniss et al., 1982; Cullen, 1993; Curl, 1993; Felner, Jason, Moritsugu, & Farber, 1983; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Linney, 1989; O'Neill & Trickett, 1982; Sarason, 1982, 1990) agree that any attempt at intervention within a school or other institution must be accompanied, or better still be preceded by an examination and understanding of the ecology and culture of the setting. According to Cherniss et al. (1982),

> effective action requires intensive study of the setting. Specifically, a consultant who wants to catalyze organizational change must first examine the organization's structure, power distributions, norms, and traditions. Premature action -- action initiated before one understands the social milieu -- is unlikely to accomplish its goals. (p. 140)

Similarly, both Sarason (1982, 1990) and O'Neill and Trickett (1982) associate the failure of research and reform with consultants' indifference or neglect for the culture of their research environments. According to Linney (1989), it is in the consultant's best interest to investigate

the ecology and culture of the school setting. She states, "[w]ith this ecological perspective, some of the most serious threats to validity can be anticipated and planned for in the design and implementation of research on preventive intervention" (p. 53). I would add that familiarization with a school's culture is also an effective means for identifying supportive resources within the setting.

Based on the literature, I compiled a list of various factors that facilitate or limit change (see Table 1). (An abridged version of Table 1 appears in a latter section of the document as a framework for analyzing the information gathered in the present research.) As a point of clarification, facilitative factors are organizational or situational dynamics that should be present for a particular program or change to be successful. Conversely, limiting factors are organizational or situational dynamics that appear to interfere with the successful design, implementation, and/or evaluation of a particular program or change. The antithetic approach I have used to organize the literature is reminiscent of Kurt Lewin's force field analysis (refer to Cartwright, 1951).

As the reader will note, the references listed for the facilitative factors are often more plentiful than for limiting factors. Furthermore, I have not given references for all of the limiting factors. Authors sometimes do not explicitly stipulate limiting factors when describing new programs or change, but one can deduce them based on the descriptions provided of the positive or facilitative factors. For example, Battistich, Elias, and Branden-Muller (1992), Comer (1980), Cullen (1993) and Elias and Weisberg (1990) among others, emphasize the importance of evaluating new programs and change within schools. Hence, I can infer that a lack of evaluation would not contribute to the success of programs or change. I would surmise that this reporting

imbalance between facilitative and limiting factors results from authors being more inclined to report what went well with their projects than what did not.

Table 1

Factors that Facilitate or Limit Change in Schools

FACILITATIVE FACTORS	LIMITING FACTORS
1. **stakeholders have sense of ownership for new programs/change** (Ayers et al., 1993; Battistich et al., 1992; Commins, 1986; Dimock, 1992; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Rice & Rogers, 1980; Sarason, 1992)	1. **stakeholders do not have a sense of ownership for new programs/change** (Comer, 1980; Horton, 1993)
2. **there is an identified need for a new program/change** (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)	2. **little or no identified need for a new program/change** (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)
3. **impetus for new programs/change comes from within the setting** (Apter, 1973; Medway, 1975; Mulhall, Felner, Brand, & Sartain, 1993; Weinstein et al., 1991)	3. **impetus for new programs/change is external to the setting** (Apter, 1973; Comer, 1980; Elias & Branden, 1988; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Medway, 1975; Sarason, 1990)

4. there is consensus among stakeholders as to the purpose(s), goal(s), component(s), etc. of new programs/change (Holtzman, 1992; Reschly, 1976)	4. conflicting agendas among stakeholders as to the purpose(s), goal(s), component(s), etc. of new programs/change (Cherniss, 1991; Comer, 1980; Kline & Snow, 1993; Linney, 1989)
5. new programs/change are the result of a collaborative venture among stakeholders (Apter, 1973; Ayers et al., 1993; Comer, 1980; Commins, 1986; Cullen, 1993; DeCharmes, 1973; Dimock, 1992; Felner, Phillips, DuBois, & Lease, 1991; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Holtzman, 1992; Kline & Snow, 1993; Linney, 1989; Sarason, 1982; Weinstein et al., 1991)	5. stakeholder input is not requested, rather new programs/change are laid-on (Apter, 1973; Cherniss et al., 1982; Comer, 1980; DeCharmes, 1973)

6. stakeholders demonstrate commitment to new programs/change (Battistich et al., 1992; Comer, 1980; Curl, 1993; DeCharmes, 1973; Dimock, 1992; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Kline & Snow, 1993; Kobalski, 1990; Linney, 1989; Mulhall et al., 1993; Sarason, 1982)	**6. stakeholders are uncommitted to new programs/change** (Comer, 1980, DeCharmes, 1973)
7. attention is given to the process and content of developing, implementing, and evaluating new programs/change (Altman, 1993; Cherniss, 1991; Elias, 1985 as cited in Commins 1986; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Horton, 1993; Sarason, 1982; Weinstein et al., 1991)	**7. attention is given only to the content of new programs/change** (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)
8. new programs/changes are tailored to meet the unique needs of the setting (Commins, 1986; Rice & Rogers, 1980; Weinstein et al., 1991)	**8. new programs/changes are prefabricated and generic to many settings** (Apter, 1973; Commins, 1986; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)
9. open-mind and receptive to new programs and/or change (Cherniss, 1978; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)	**9. closed-mind, fear, and resistance toward new programs and/or change** (Horton, 1993; Rubenstein, 1973)

10. **the purpose(s) and goal(s) of new programs/change are stated clearly** (Cullen, 1993; Curl, 1993; Dimock, 1992; Elias & Weissberg, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Kobalski, 1990)	10. **ambiguity concerning the purpose(s) and/or goal(s) of new programs/change** (Comer, 1980; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)
11. **development and existence of trust between and among stakeholder groups and consultants** (Ayers et al., 1993; Cherniss, 1978; Cherniss et al., 1982; Comer, 1980; Dimock, 1992; Trickett, 1991)	11. **mistrust**
12. **sufficient resources are available to design, implement, and evaluate new programs/change** (Alpert, 1982; Apter, 1973; Cherniss et al., 1982; Cullen, 1993; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Holtzman, 1992; Sarason, 1982)	12. **insufficient resources are available to design, implement, and evaluate new programs/change** (Cherniss et al., 1982; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Posovac & Cary, 1980; Sarason, 1982)

13. **proper training is given to individuals who are implementing new programs/change** (Battistich et al., 1992; Cullen, 1993; Elias & Weissberg, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)	13. **improper or no training is given to individuals who are implementing new programs/change** (Kline & Snow, 1993)
14. **active administrative support for new programs/change** (Alpert, 1982; Berkowitz, 1973; Cherniss, 1991; Comer, 1980; Commins, 1986; Curl, 1993; Dimock, 1992; Elias & Weissberg, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Kobalski, 1990)	14. **lack of administrative support for new programs/change** (Cherniss et al., 1982; Commins, 1986; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)
15. **recognizing participants' efforts** (Connolly, 1991; Cullen, 1993; Curl, 1993; Trickett, 1991)	15. **not recognizing participants' efforts** (Trickett, 1991)
16. **paraprofessional roles are valued and are utilized** (Claiborn & Cohen, 1973; Danish, 1993; Sarason, 1982; Weinstein et al., 1991)	16. **territorial professionals govern new programs/change** (Holtzman, 1992; McManus, 1986; Medway, 1975; Rubenstein, 1973; Sarason, 1982)

17. ample time is given to planning new programs/change (Comer, 1980; Cullen, 1993; Dimock, 1992; Holtzman, 1992)	**17. insufficient or no time is allocated for planning new programs/change** (Rossi & Freeman, 1985)
18. pilot tests of new programs/change (Commins, 1986; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)	**18. no pilot tests of new programs/change** (Rossi & Freeman, 1985)
19. new programs/change are evaluated (Battistich et al., 1992; Comer, 1980; Cullen, 1993; Elias & Weissberg, 1990; Holtzman, 1992; Kobalski, 1990; LEAP, 1992)	**19. new programs/change are not evaluated**
20. stakeholders are patient and understand change occurs slowly (Alpert, 1982; Battistich et al., 1992; Brand et al., 1993; Comer, 1980; Cullen, 1993; Felner, Mulhall, Brand, & Sartain, 1993; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Holtzman, 1992; Sarason, 1982; Trickett, 1991)	**20. stakeholders are impatient and opt for quick-fixes** (Comer, 1980; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991)

21. programs/changes are built-in to the daily life of the setting (Battistich et al., 1992; Elias & Branden, 1988; Elias & Clabby, 1988; Holtzman, 1992; LEAP, 1992; Medway, 1975; Pransky, 1991; Trickett, 1991)	21. programs/changes are added-on to the daily life of the setting (Curl, 1993; Holtzman, 1992)
22. consideration is given to how new programs/changes will affect other aspects of the setting (ecological perspective) (Alpert, 1982; Dimock, 1992; Felner et al., 1993; Linney, 1989; O'Neill & Trickett, 1982)	22. new programs/changes are treated as isolated projects (Battistich et al., 1992)
23. new programs/changes are coordinated (Altman, 1993; Curl, 1993; Medway, 1975)	23. little or no coordination for new programs/change (Apter, 1973; Medway, 1975)
24. recognizing the limits of what a setting can do (Altman, 1993; Comer, 1980; Sarason, 1990; Trickett, 1991)	24. not recognizing that settings have limits (Sarason, 1990)

25. **efforts to understand a setting's culture** (Altman, 1993; Cherniss et al., 1982; Cullen, 1993; Curl, 1993; Dimock, 1992; Felner et al., 1983; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Linney, 1989; O'Neill & Trickett, 1982; Sarason, 1982, 1990)	25. **ignoring a setting's culture** (Berkowitz, 1973; Cherniss et al., 1982; Sarason, 1982, 1990)

The information presented in Table 1 by no means exhausts the list of factors that facilitate or limit change within or of schools. Prior to searching the literature and conducting the present research I generated my own list of factors I thought would have an effect on the success of change. Although many of the factors I had listed were supported by the literature, several were not. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that the following factors may impact both the process and outcome of change. Influences having a facilitative effect on change include. (a) paid personnel to coordinate change and/or run programs, (b) maintaining reasonable role expectations for participants at all levels of change, (c) receiving support from peers for one's efforts, and (d) welcoming conflict as a way of gaining new insights and perspectives. Conversely, I think efforts at change might be limited. (a) by relying on volunteers to coordinate change and run programs, (b) by adopting unsuitable expectations that lead to role overload and eventual burnout, (c) when participants do not feel supported by their peers, and (d) when conflict turns into angry confrontation between participants.

Change in Schools: A Focus on Content

This segment of the review contains several pieces of information related to the content

of school based prevention programs. Under the heading "Prevention Definitions" I attempt to define various factors that influence the purpose and design of preventive interventions. Next, I discuss the introduction of preventive interventions in schools as a means of addressing problems experienced by school-aged children and adolescents. I then review research that suggests that increasing social support is an effective approach to prevention. Finally, I examine mentoring, a specific form of social support that has been provided in school settings.

Prevention definitions. Simply stating that one is engaged in planning or implementing a prevention program may raise more questions than answers. Preventive interventions may take many forms, but their specific nature is defined by combining different qualities and quantities of the following dimensions: purpose, time, focus, participant involvement, and consultant role.

Purpose. According to Albee's equational definition of prevention, well being increases as a result of a reduction in deficits (e.g., organic factors, stress, exploitation), and an enhancement of strengths (e.g., coping skills, self esteem, supports) (Commission on the Prevention of Mental-Emotional Disabilities, 1987, p. 199). Many prevention programs focus on either reducing a specific deficit or enhancing a particular strength. However, if the equation is correct, it appears that well-being is increased most when deficits are reduced *and* strengths are enhanced.

Time. Preventive interventions are classified as one of: primary, secondary, or tertiary. Primary prevention is a proactive approach, that is, it seeks to reduce the incidence (number of new cases in the population) of a problem or disorder. Primary prevention may be associated with health promotion strategies such as "Participaction," a program that uses a series of media campaigns to encourage people to adopt a healthier, more active lifestyle. On the other hand,

both secondary and tertiary preventive interventions are reactive approaches, intervening only after a problem or disorder has developed and/or after a population at-risk has been identified. Secondary preventive interventions attempt to reduce the prevalence (number of cases at any one time) of a problem or disorder through early identification and treatment. An example of a secondary preventive strategy is a parenting course in a disadvantaged area. Tertiary preventive interventions focus on reducing the severity of injury or discomfort experienced as a result of some problem or disorder. Rehabilitation programs (e.g., physical therapy for accident victims) that seek to improve the quality of life are an example of tertiary prevention techniques (Nelson, 1988; Pransky, 1991).

Focus. The focus of an intervention indicates the particular population that will receive attention. High-risk prevention programs target individuals, families, neighborhoods, etc., that show evidence of being vulnerable to particular problems or disorders. The stressors that place individuals, etc., at-risk are not expected under normal circumstances (e.g., drug addiction, divorce, toxic waste, earthquakes). Milestone interventions target individuals who are passing through a life-stage associated with higher risk for developing problems and/or disorders. These life-stages represent transitions that most people are expected to experience (e.g , entering high school, marriage, birth of first child). Community-wide preventive interventions, on the other hand, attempt to build resistance to various problems and/or disorders in all members of an organization, municipality, or society in general, rather than in specific individuals. For example, some cities add fluoride to water in order to reduce or prevent the incidence of dental caries in residents (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger, & Wandersman, 1984; Nelson, 1988).

Participant involvement. Interventions require different degrees of involvement from

their participants. In my view, preventive interventions should require active participation. Educational interventions involve participants in the role of passive recipients of information. However, experiential/interpersonal interventions require participants to take an active, and hopefully empowering role in the prevention process. Research confirms the positive effects of one's involvement in the solution of personal problems (Prilleltensky, in press).

Consultant role. The role of the consultant will differ depending on the level of analysis used to define and approach a particular problem. A consultant practicing within the medical model provides tertiary preventive measures such as diagnosis, therapy, and referral to individuals and small groups (e.g., families). Community mental health consultants also intervene at the individual and small group levels. However, these professionals are involved in secondary preventive efforts which include early identification, supervision, and program planning and evaluation. Organization development consultants engage in primary prevention at the organization/program level providing services such as organizational diagnosis, group process facilitation, and program planning and evaluation. Finally, consultants working at community and societal levels act as systems critics, advocates, policy analysts, and researchers to promote social change through primary prevention (Nelson, 1983).

Overview of school-based prevention projects. The role of the school has changed over the years. No longer is it simply an academic institution that exists solely to teach children to read, write, and solve arithmetic equations. More and more non-academic services are being provided by schools including vocational training, nutritional programs, cultural integration, career planning, social activities, psychological counselling, athletic programs, sex education, and substance abuse prevention. Accordingly, society holds the educational system responsible

for more than just the intellectual development of children. Schools have also become responsible for promoting children's physical health, socialization, and psychological well-being. For a long time, children who showed signs of maladjustment (e.g., withdrawal from peers, depression, aggressive behaviour) were labelled as dysfunctional and were treated on an individual basis by recognized professionals. Indeed, even today numerous children are singled out and referred to the school psychologist for assessment and counselling. However, in recent years a major change has occurred with regards to how schools address the many problems that confront children and adolescents. This major change actually represents a shift in focus from the medical model which prescribes tertiary preventive measures, to the community psychology paradigm which promotes primary prevention and health promotion. Many schools, now faced with the reality of Albee's (1959) prediction of a shortage of professional mental health resources, have turned their efforts toward primary prevention. Primary preventive interventions encourage schools to access a wide variety of resources (e.g., curriculum, teachers, students, school policy) to reach large numbers of students who are not yet experiencing significant difficulties.

Schools present an ideal setting for implementing primary preventive interventions. Several authors (Cowen et al., 1975; Linney, 1989; Pransky, 1991) point out the simple logic behind delivering prevention strategies within the school. All children are required, by law, to attend school. Therefore, "[t]he school system provides a place of ready access to large numbers of children where they are essentially a captive audience" (Linney, 1989, p. 50) for six hours a day, five days a week for a period of about twelve years. Beyond providing large groups of students for mass oriented programs, schools possess most, if not all the resources (materials

and personnel) required for developing, implementing, and maintaining effective primary prevention programs. Cowen (1982) provides support for the notion that primary preventive interventions complement the school system and vice versa. He states, "there is a natural symbiosis among primary prevention programming, young children, and the schools" (p. 59).

Prevention activities have been introduced in countless schools across North America to address a multitude of issues, for example, enhancing prosocial values (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984; Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, & Battistich, 1988), reducing aggressive behaviour (Hawkins, von Cleve, & Catalano, 1991), increasing AIDS awareness (Gilchrist, 1990; Richwald, Friedland, & Morisky, 1989; Sy, Richter, & Copello, 1989), reducing the incidence of school drop-out (Eggert, Seyl, & Nicholas, 1990; Hargraves, 1986, Reyes & Jason, 1991), improving social problem-solving skills (Elias, et al., 1986, Nerad, 1989; Spivack & Shure, 1989), reducing the incidence of suicide (Herbert, 1989; Ryerson, 1990; Sattem, 1990), reducing teen-age pregnancies (Allen, Philliber, & Hoggson, 1990), and preventing substance abuse (Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Tortu, & Botvin, 1990; Pentz et al., 1990; Ringwalt, Ennett, & Holt, 1991). After reviewing the relevant literature, it becomes clear that many of the programs delivered at the elementary school level focus on developing children's prosocial values, enhancing their personal and social skills, and increasing their problem solving abilities, whereas interventions targeting youth at the secondary school level tend to emphasize resistance to peer pressure, enhancement of social support, and an increase in awareness around issues such as sexuality, substance abuse, suicide, and dating violence.

As members of the American Psychological Association's Board of Professional Affairs Task Force on Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention Alternatives in Psychology, Price and

his associates (1988) reviewed approximately 300 prevention efforts in a search for model programs. Applying selection criteria the Task Force narrowed down this array of interventions to fourteen "innovative, well-documented 'model' programs, exemplifying the categories of promotion, prevention, and emergent intervention alternatives" (Price, Cowen, Lorion, & Ramos-McKay, 1988, p. 2). Among these 14 programs were five interventions targeted at children and youth, four of which were involved, in some way, with a school setting.

The Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving Intervention (Shure & Spivack, 1988) is a school-based mass-oriented program designed to provide children with the skills to resolve typical interpersonal problems, to consider consequences, and to think of alternative responses, thereby reducing the incidence of "impulsive mistakes, frustration, aggressive behavior, or evasion of problems by withdrawal" (Shure & Spivack, 1988, p. 70). Rotheram-Borus' (1988) Assertiveness Training with Children Program incorporates "didactic teaching regarding the components of assertiveness, presentation of problem situations, group problem solving, and behavioral rehearsal and feedback on performance" (p. 86) to achieve the primary objectives of the intervention, specifically "to increase assertiveness, reduce the number of behavior problems, and hopefully find generalization to peer popularity and achievement" (p. 86). The Life Skills Training (LST) program described by Botvin and Tortu (1988) is a psychoeducational strategy designed to prevent substance abuse in junior high school students. LST class sessions cover five major components (knowledge and information, decision-making, self-directed behaviour change, coping with anxiety, and social skills) that are intended to educate students about how to resist social pressures to smoke, drink, and take drugs, as well as enhance their general personal and social skills.

The fourth program, outlined by Felner and Adan (1988), concerns the School Transitional Environment Project (STEP), an intervention designed to ease the anxiety experienced by students making the transition from junior high to high school. I will go into further detail about this social support program in the following section which deals specifically with social support as prevention in schools.

The four programs mentioned above are some of the better known prevention programs designed and implemented for school-based populations.

Social support as prevention in schools.

> [Social support]...has been variously addressed in terms of social bonds..., social networks..., meaningful social contact..., availability of confidants..., and human companionship.... Though these concepts are hardly identical, they share a focus upon what many regard as a core human requirement...the experience of being supported by others. (Turner, 1981, p. 358)

When individuals believe they are being supported by others they are more able to cope with the stresses of daily living and the impact of significant life crises (Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982). The stress buffering hypothesis suggests that high levels of social support can act to diminish negative effects resulting from high levels of distress caused by extended exposure to daily hassles or unexpected tragedies (Nelson, 1988). The literature is replete with research studies providing evidence that social support is an important factor in reducing the severity of discomfort experienced as a result of distress, injury, or disorder (Galanter, 1986; Gordon & Zrull, 1991; Klass, 1991; La Grand, 1991; Levi, 1990; Norberry, 1986; Shkilnyk, 1983; Waxler-Morrison, Hislop, Mears, & Kan, 1991; Wolchik, Ruelman, Braver, & Sandler,

1989). There are additional studies that support the health promoting aspects of social support, suggesting that involvement in socially supportive relationships enhances individual well-being and general adjustment (Nelson, 1990; Walls & Zant, 1991; Winefield, Winefield, & Tiggemann, 1992).

In addition to daily hassles and life crises, major life transitions may be accompanied by significant increases in stress in some individuals (Felner, Primavera, & Cauce, 1981). According to Hirsch (1979, 1980), a principal determinant in successful adjustment during major life changes is the presence of a strong natural social network. This relationship between support systems and coping with life changes was utilized by Felner and his colleagues in one of the most well known school-based, primary prevention programs designed to coincide with a major life transition, the School Transitional Environment Project (described earlier as one of the model programs identified by Price et al., 1988).

School Transitional Environment Project (Felner et al., 1982). Felner and his associates designed and implemented a multi-element system-oriented primary prevention program for incoming grade nine students to ease their transition from junior high to senior high school. The goal of the School Transitional Environment Project (STEP) was to reduce the confusion and problems experienced by students upon entering what is generally a significantly larger school environment. The plan for achieving such a goal included two principal elements: "(a) restructuring of the role of homeroom teachers; [and], (b) reorganizing the regularities of the school environment to reduce the flux of the social setting confronting the student" (Felner et al., 1982, pp. 280 281). The roles of participating homeroom teachers were modified to include responsibilities such as providing guidance and individual counselling around both academic and

personal matters as well as maintaining communication with students' families. Redefining homeroom teachers' roles allowed students to interact with one main person for the duration of the school year. Class composition was restructured so that students moved with a consistent group of peers for their four primary academic courses. By making changes to maintain core groups of students, Felner and his colleagues hoped to facilitate and enhance both peer support and a sense of belonging. In order to decrease students' confusion, the distance between the four primary course classrooms was reduced so that STEP students travelled shorter distances around the school. Upon completion of grade nine, STEP participants had higher grades, fewer absences, reported more positive self-concepts, and "perceived the school environment as more stable, well-organized, involving, and supportive" (Felner et al., 1988, p.117) than a group of control students.

"Team Approach Makes Grade 9 Less Stressful" (Van Alphen, 1992). The demonstrated success of the School Transitional Environment Project appears to have convinced personnel in other high schools of the value of the program. An article appearing in the Kitchener Waterloo Record (Van Alphen, 1992, May 21), entitled "Team approach makes Grade 9 less stressful," describes a new program in a local high school that bears a striking resemblance to the project designed by Felner and his colleagues. The program that was to be implemented in September 1992 at Resurrection Catholic Secondary School has been designed to ease the transition from elementary school to high school for incoming grade 9 students. Van Alphen (1992) provides a brief description of the content of the new program.

> Resurrection is one of the leading high schools in Waterloo Region where Grade 9s will be divided into teams. Team members will spend their mornings together for the whole

year studying English, math, history and religion. Their afternoon subjects will be on the semester system. The four teachers involved with each team will share a common planning time, allowing their teaching to become more interdisciplinary. Grade 9 students will also all share the same lunch period, giving them time during the day to see their friends.

It will be interesting to see what kind of effects Resurrection's program will have on its students, teachers, and the overall school climate. I think it will also be interesting to see if Resurrection's decision to implement a systems-oriented program will have any effect on how other schools in the area approach preventive interventions. In fact, I have heard though the "unofficial" grapevine that GCI has been investigating this type of system as a possibility for its students.

Mentoring programs as preventive social support in schools. Mentoring is a difficult concept to define, as many authors have discovered. However, in an attempt to operationalize mentoring, researchers have used various terms, including: helping, tutoring (Riessman, 1990), teaching, advising, sponsoring (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978), role modelling (Hamilton & Darling, 1989), counselling, facilitating, nurturing (Haensly & Edlind, 1986), guiding, motivating, protecting, communicating (Appel & Trail, 1986), coaching, and friendship (Taylor, 1986). Each of these terms describes a part of the mentoring process and/or relationship, but even presented together, they only convey a partial portrait of what mentoring is all about. Hence, it seems each individual is left to create her or his own vision of mentoring.

Traditionally, "mentoring" referred to a supportive one-to-one relationship that developed between an older, more experienced individual (the mentor) and a younger, less experienced individual (the mentee), but which remained independent from the mentee's natural support

network. However, in recent years, the practice of mentoring has been modified to include more diversity in the mentoring relationship. Maton and Matlock (1991) briefly recount the transition from the traditional model of mentoring to the more current variant.

> When mentoring first began appearing in the literature it usually referred to an adult to adult relationship in the work place. Next, mentoring was used to describe adult mentoring of youth in the hopes of providing a supportive adult role model who would encourage students to remain in school or behave in more socially acceptable ways. The use of mentoring has now been expanded to include programs of older youth mentoring somewhat younger ones. The idea is for youth to assist and support each other. (p. 4)

The available literature suggests that mentoring relationships have typically been initiated in the contexts of business and industry (Dreher & Ash, 1990, Fagenson, 1989; Zey, 1988), higher education (Cosgrove, 1986; Erkert & Mokros, 1984; Wilde & Schau, 1991), and gifted children (Beard & Densem, 1986; Edlind & Haensly, 1985, Runions & Smyth, 1985). However, additional studies show that mentoring is now being used as an intervention strategy for a myriad of problems [e.g., school drop-out (Maton & Matlock, 1991; Maton & Seibert, 1992, Maton, Seibert, & DeHaven, 1992)] and stressful life circumstances [e.g., young motherhood (Rhodes, Ebert, & Fischer, 1992).

While many attempts at mentoring are successful, there are two criticisms that can be made of the conventional mentoring relationship. First, despite the benefits derived from being involved in mentoring relationships, few people actually engage in this experience (Levinson et al., 1978). Second, mentoring relationships are typically asymmetrical exchanges with mentors on the giving end, and mentees on the receiving end. The question here is who is benefiting

more from the relationship, the mentee, or the mentor? Undoubtedly the mentee benefits from the support and resources provided by the mentor, but she/he does not share in the positive experience of giving help. In fact, Riessman (1990) would argue that traditional mentoring relationships create significant iatrogenic difficulties for the individual in the mentee role. He states that:

> the reci ent of help [the mentee] is automatically deprived of the benefits accruing to the helper [the mentor]: increased status and self-esteem, the so called "helpers [sic] high" (Luks, 1981), and all the specific helping mechanisms involved in learning through teaching and the helper therapy principle....(p. 222)

Having made this statement, Riessman suggests that the helping process (or mentoring process) be restructured to allow more people to experience the benefits of giving help. He provides an illustration of his recommendation which is particularly relevant to the context of the school:

> college seniors tutor (and mentor) first-year college students who tutor high school tenth graders, who in turn tutor junior high school students, who tutor sixth-grade elementary school children, who tutor third-grade students, and on and on. This would be a system-wide process in which help giving is expanded geometrically, with the possibility of a synergistically emerging helping ethos. (p. 223)

Not only does Riessman's model promote the helper therapy principle by giving each person the opportunity to mentor, as well as to be mentored, it also addresses my first criticism that opportunities to become involved in mentoring relationships are offered to only a small number of people. Furthermore, by considering students in the role of mentors, Riessman responds to the shortage of professional resources predicted by Albee (1959).

Below I provide brief descriptions of three mentoring programs that have been tried in schools. The first two programs are secondary preventive interventions that were designed to keep high-risk students from dropping out of school. The third program I describe adopts a primary prevention stance and focuses on easing the transition to middle school and reducing the likelihood of later drop out.

Student Mentor Program (Lanier, 1986; Richardson, 1986). The Student Mentor Program (SMP) is a secondary preventive intervention that was initiated by the City University of New York (CUNY) and the Board of Education of New York City in an attempt to address a 45% drop out rate for high school students in New York City (Lanier, 1986). The SMP begins with the pairing of a college and a high school that work together to introduce and maintain a successful mentoring process. One such pairing occurred between Bronx Community College (BCC) and Bronx Regional High School (BRHS) (Lanier, 1986; Richardson, 1986). Students from BCC were matched with youth from BRHS who were experiencing academic difficulties, attendance problems and/or low motivation, thus placing these students at risk for dropping out of high school. The matching process involved each college student delivering a three minute oral profile of herself or himself to prospective mentees, who later indicated to the high school and college coordinators their choice for a mentor (Richardson, 1986). Throughout the mentoring experience, "[t]he college-student mentor serve[d] as a big brother or big sister, buddy, friend, counselor, and role model to the mentee in a non authority centered relationship" (Richardson, 1986, p. 39). College students were prepared for their role as mentors through participation in a mentoring course, the format of which varied from college to college. While most of the mentoring activities were intended to motivate mentees to graduate from high school

and consider a future in college, the SMP also encouraged mentor-mentee pairs to attend various social and cultural activities sponsored by CUNY and by the City of New York (Lanier, 1986). Richardson, the SMP coordinator at BCC attests the success of the program. She states:

> Success has been measured by a change in attitude of mentees, improved mentee attendance records, and the fact that some former mentees have graduated from high school and are presently taking college courses at Bronx Community College. Success has also been measured by the fact that a waiting list of high school students desiring to be mentored now exists, and parents of mentees are giving positive feedback and have requested other siblings to be placed in the Student Mentor Program. There is also growth and a feeling of accomplishment on the part of the mentor who in many ways identifies with the mentee, especially in the decision-making process regarding secondary and higher education. (1986, p. 42)

Care for a Kid Program (Connolly, 1991). The Care for a Kid Program (CKP) is a secondary preventive strategy that was designed nine years ago in an attempt to reduce the incidence of drop out at Grand River Collegiate Institute (GRCI) in Kitchener, Ontario. In 1991 there were approximately 50 teachers at GRCI who were involved in one-to-one mentoring relationships with youth considered to be at-risk for dropping out of school. Students were identified as being at-risk if they exhibited at least two of the following problems: (a) shortage of academic credits, (b) poor attendance, and (c) poor grades. Once identified, students were approached about participating in the CKP. The teacher-student pairs work individually on short-term goals that help to keep the student in school. For example, teacher-mentors may encourage their mentees to acquire at least some of their academic credits, but not pressure them to pass

all of their courses, the rationale being that a student enroled in eight courses who receives five credits is more likely to return to school than a student who is enroled in eight courses but passes none of them. Another important element of the CKP is the "connective stuff" that goes on between mentors and mentees. "Connective stuff" can be any number of small things done at the discretion of the teacher that lets the student know someone at school cares about them. For example, a teacher might go out of his or her way on the weekend to buy their groceries at the supermarket where their mentee works as a cashier. Regardless of the specific activities, the basic idea behind the program is for the mentors and mentees to build positive relationships

Canton Mentoring Program (Maton & Matlock, 1991). According to Maton and Matlock (1991) "increased isolation and reduced support from friends and school staff" (p. 3) following the shift from elementary to middle school (or middle school to high school for that matter), combined with the "normal physical and emotional changes of adolescence....may result in children mentally dropping out of school long before they actually do so physically" (p. 3). Hence, primary preventive, milestone interventions would be appropriate to help students make the transition from elementary school to middle school and provide a proactive response to high school drop out rates. An evaluation of the first year of the Canton Middle School Peer Mentoring Program (CMP) demonstrates the potential value of interventions based on student to student mentoring systems.

The Canton Peer Mentoring Program was first implemented during the 1990/1991 school year at Canton Middle School in East Baltimore, Maryland.

Eighth graders were utilized as mentors to incoming sixth graders. Within the context of a middle school, it was assumed that 8th graders are the more experienced and older

students. In this program the identified role of the mentor was to monitor and assist the 6th grader in the transition to middle school. The guiding idea was that the relationship would foster a feeling of belonging, result in a reduction in isolation, and provide a way to detect emerging student problems early. Ultimately, the hope is that by providing this intervention early in the middle school experience dropping out of school later will be averted. (pp. 4-5)

Maton and Matlock (1991) provide a brief summary of CMP components.

The program included training for 7th graders...in the philosophy of mentoring relationships, such as responsible academic and social behavior. As 8th graders most of these students were paired with incoming 6th graders. These pairs were assigned to one 45 minute class per week together. The class chosen was "Advisory Class." Class topics focused on both social and academic advisory issues. Mentors were encouraged to foster the relationship outside of the structured class time on their own. Additional activities in community service and with community leaders were included for the pairs. (p. 5)

The evaluation of the CMP sought to determine if mentors and mentees differed from a group of non-participating students (at the same school, the same year) on a number of dimensions, such as. attendance, promotion status, grades, and experience in Advisory Class. Results indicate that 6th grade mentees attended, on average, nine more days of school during the 90 91 school year than did 6th graders who were not assigned a mentor. Furthermore, mentees reported the "someone, other than the teacher was there to help me [during Mentoring Advisory Class]" (p. 13) more often than 6th grade control students who attended Regular Advisory Class. However, the mentees and their comparison group did not differ significantly

on either promotion status or grades. Few differences were noted between grade 8 mentors and their grade 8 non-participating counterparts. Maton and Matlock report somewhat higher, though non-significant, attendance rates for mentors over non-mentors. Promotion and grade differences between the two groups of grade 8 students were also insignificant. However, when asked about their experiences in Advisory Class, mentors, more than control students, reported giving *regular* help to the *same* student.

Although the first year evaluation data did not show substantive effects of CMP on participating students, the authors (Maton & Matlock, 1991) along with Canton Middle School personnel were encouraged by the results. The benefits of CMP are expected to emerge over time, especially as 6th grade mentees advance to the position of 8th grade mentors.

The SMP, CKP, and CMP are only a few examples of the many different preventive mentoring programs that have been implemented in educational settings. Unfortunately, preventive mentoring in schools is a new area of research and there are very few programs described in the literature. However, there are indications that research in this area is growing (Maton & Matlock, 1991; Maton & Seibert, 1992; Maton et al., 1992; Rhodes, 1993).

This literature review, together with the social context and the values, conceptual, and intervention frameworks have informed the particular nature of the present project, to which I now turn.

Research and Action Objectives

As stated earlier, community-oriented researchers are dually committed to understanding and action (Vincent & Trickett, 1983). Therefore, my first research priority was to understand how successful changes are facilitated within the unique culture of GCI, and my second priority was to recommend steps for taking action to develop, implement, and evaluate the prospective peer mentoring program. Organizing my project in such a manner allowed me to provide a link between relevant literature on changes in schools, a grounded theory of change specifically within GCI, and proposed action for making change(s) of GCI.

In summary, the main *research questions* I wished to explore were as follows:

1. What factors facilitate(d) structural changes of GCI (changes in general, and more specifically with regards to social support)?

2. What factors limit(ed) structural changes of GCI (changes in general, and more specifically with regards to social support)?

3. What factors might facilitate the implementation of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI?

4. What factors might limit the implementation of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI?

My intention was to look at specific relationships within the data. These relationships included: (a) how the GCI community perceived changes of the school, (b) how each stakeholder group (students, teaching and support staff, administration, parents, and STEP) perceived changes of the school, (c) how the various stakeholder groups differed and concurred on their perceptions of change in the school, (d) how the GCI community would approach the

development and implementation of a mentoring program, (e) how each stakeholder group would approach the development and implementation of a mentoring program, and (f) how the various stakeholder groups differed and concurred on how to approach the development and implementation of a mentoring program.

My primary *action goal* was to derive a set of recommendations that will provide a strategy for proceeding (or not proceeding) with the development and eventual implementation and evaluation of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI.

Methodology

As I stated earlier, the primary purpose of this project was to collect information about how changes are made in the school, information which could be used in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students. Hence, this project was an example of *generative research*, which, according to Lorion (1983) "...involves the accumulation and analysis of information necessary for the subsequent development of prevention programs. Findings from such research should serve as guides which define, direct, and/or correct the implementation and evaluation of the intervention..." (p. 258). Generative research projects, such as the one described here, may sometimes be referred to as *formative evaluations* (Patton, 1986). Formative evaluations are initiated with the goal of "increasing the success of subsequent intervention efforts and their evaluation" (Rossi & Freeman, 1985). Thus, like the present project, these evaluations tend to be "action-oriented" rather than "conclusion-oriented" (Patton, 1986, p. 66).

In the first part of this section, I summarize the process of the project using a combination of Grinnell's (1970) four-phase consultation model and Patton's (1990) three stage model of fieldwork as a framework. In the second part I outline the research strategies, which include a description of the project participants, facilitators, and materials used in gathering information. Finally, I summarize the ethical considerations dictated by this project.

Research Process

Pre-entry phase. The pre-entry phase involved the preparation work I had to do to become familiar with the various issues related to this project. Much of my preparation involved reading articles and books that dealt with schools, change, consultation, prevention, social

support, and mentorship. I started reviewing the literature when I began my practicum in October 1991, and I am still finding new and interesting resources. It seems reasonable to suggest that community-oriented research begins with a process of familiarizing oneself with a setting, but actually getting to know and understand the setting is a process that continues throughout the entire investigation.

Entry phase. The entry phase of this project began when I became involved in organizing the STEP Committee in fall 1991. Two important things have happened over the course of the last two years. First, I spent time at GCI, getting to know the members of the Committee and demonstrating an interest in improving the well-being of the GCI community. I feel confident that a trusting relationship has developed between myself and the guidance counsellor (my key contact at the school), between myself and the other members of STEP, and between myself and the school community. Building positive relationships is an important part of the consultation process as trust is often a key to successful intervention. The second important thing that happened was my decision that I could not act on the Committee's original plan, which was for me to develop the specific mentoring program as my thesis project. After some discussion, the mentorship project was redefined, and the process backed up so that the present project involved an examination of how to create a successful program that would suit GCI, rather than spending a year developing a program that may or may not mesh with the unique culture of the school.

Work phase. The work phase of this project involved several stages. The first step was to gather information about how changes have been made in the school. The strategies I used to collect this information included focus groups, an informal in person interview, and archival

information. I describe these strategies in more detail in the following section. The second step was to transcribe all the data collected during the focus group sessions and the in-person interview, after which I asked volunteers from the participant groups to review and validate the content of the session transcripts. The third step was to analyze the collected data. The fourth step was to combine the data with relevant contributions from the literature to generate a grounded theory about making successful changes at GCI, specifically with regards to the development of a successful peer mentoring program. The final step in the work phase was to consolidate all the above information into a clear set of recommendations concerning the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating a mentorship program.

Separation phase. The final phase of this particular project (not the overall project of creating a mentorship program) involved bringing the inquiry to a close, and separating myself from the project, and the setting. The first step in providing closure to this investigation involved giving feedback to the participants about the project. I provide a summary of the feedback process in a later section (see "Nature of Feedback to Participants" under the heading "Ethics"). The second step involved separating myself from the project as well as from the STEP Committee. Disengaging myself from the project involved making a clear statement to the STEP Committee that, upon completion of my thesis, I will have fulfilled my responsibilities for laying the groundwork for a mentorship program at GCI. Nevertheless, work is expected to continue on this project as an undergraduate thesis student from Wilfrid Laurier has decided to help the school to design and hopefully implement a peer support program during the 93-94 school year. The final step in the separation process was for me to withdraw from the Committee, and thus the setting. As simple as this might sound, I believe this last phase was crucial to the continued

existence of STEP and the future of the mentorship program. For the last two years I have played a pivotal role in the life of the Committee: establishing STEP, organizing and facilitating meetings, recording and later typing up minutes of meetings, occasionally representing STEP at school functions or other committees' meetings, and, in the case of this project, contributing to one of STEP's primary initiatives. Since I was not able to guarantee my return to STEP in fall '93, it was necessary for the Committee to consider viable leadership and organizational options. As such, a large part of the final 92-93 STEP meeting included making plans for the 93-94 Committee.

Research Strategies

Consistent with STEP's guiding principles, it is paramount that all changes and programs initiated at GCI be self-sustaining and have an enduring impact. Since each school has its own unique culture, each school also has its own distinct response to change. Each time I reflect on the uniqueness of schools and the prospect of developing new programs and effecting change I am reminded of an old saying that warns us that people who fail to learn from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them. Therefore, to create an effective, self-sustainable, and enduring peer mentoring program, an essential first step was to examine past efforts to change GCI, paying particular attention to the various factors that either facilitated or limited successful change. In my opinion, one of the best ways of gathering information about past change at GCI was to ask people who belong to the school's community to share with me their experiences of change within the setting. To provide a forum for members of the school's community to relate their experiences, thoughts, opinions, and ideas about change at GCI, I organized several focus group sessions and conducted one in-person interview.

The participants and how they were recruited. Earlier, in my review of the literature I discussed the ecological principle of interdependence (Trickett, Kelly, & Todd, 1972). This axiom emphasizes the reality that all parts of a system are connected through a series of interrelationships, and when one part of the system experiences change, all other parts are influenced and become subject to change (Nelson, 1983). Such reasoning demands the participation and input of all units within a system throughout the entire process of change, beginning with the initial idea and continuing at least until implemented changes have been successfully evaluated. Thus, any program introduced within the school, regardless of the intended recipients, will have an impact on all other groups who share the setting. It is, therefore, with conscious motivation that this study included participation from all groups within the GCI community. Table 2 provides an overview of the project participants.

Table 2

Overview of Project Participants

Focus Group #	Stakeholder Group	Number of Women	Number of Men
1	Parents	3	1
2	Teaching/Support Staff	4	0
3	Student Group #1	5	2
4	Student Group #2	4	5
5	STEP Committee	3	3
In-Person Interview	Administration	0	1

Parents represent an important group within any school community, yet their input is often overlooked when decisions are made concerning their child(ren)'s school. In order to ensure that parents were given an occasion to express their ideas about and experiences with changes at GCI, I organized a focus group. To solicit parents' participation I attended a meeting of the GCI Parent Advisory Committee (similar to a PTA Committee) at which I announced the focus group session. This forum provided a small but unquestionably informed and involved group of parents. I also placed an announcement in the local newspaper to notify other parents about the session (see Appendix A) A total of four parents (three mothers, one father) attended this evening session.

I organized a second focus group as a means of soliciting input from GCI's teaching and support staff. I made a brief presentation at a staff meeting in which I described the project and invited staff members to participate in a discussion session that would be held during one of the two lunch periods. There were some teaching and support staff who did not attend the staff meeting. Therefore, to ensure the invitation was extended to these people I had notices posted about the focus group in appropriate locations around the school (see Appendix B). A group of four women representing both teaching and support staff participated in this session.

To gather information about change from the students' perspective, I originally intended to organize one focus group session for approximately 6-10 senior level students (grades 11 through OAC). I decided specifically upon senior students as opposed to junior students because I wanted to ensure that participating students would have had the opportunity to become familiar with GCI and experience some of the changes that have occurred at the school. I thought perhaps a few teachers might consent to allow a couple students from their class to participate in a focus

group instead of attending class. However, one teacher was willing to allow an entire class to participate in a discussion instead of holding a regular period. I visited the class the week prior to the focus groups to introduce myself and the project, to ask the students' permission to conduct the groups, and to distribute information letters and consent forms for them and their parents. On the day of the session I randomly divided those students who attended class into two discussion groups, one with seven students (student group #1: five women, two men) and one with nine students (student group #2: four women, five men).

A fifth focus group was organized to give members of the STEP Committee an opportunity to share their experiences with change at GCI and their ideas for developing a peer mentoring program for students. Although I accepted primary responsibility for facilitating the present project, the peer mentoring program was a STEP initiative, thus it was important to include input from STEP members in this, and all stages of program creation. Six members of the Committee [three women (myself included), three men] devoted one meeting to the peer mentoring project by participating in a focus group session.

It was also important to find out about change from the administrative perspective. Therefore, I conducted an in-person interview with an administrator of GCI.

Facilitators. Researchers' characteristics (e.g., gender, age, race) can influence how projects are conducted, participants respond, data are interpreted, and findings are conveyed. Hence, I think it is important to provide a brief description of myself as well as the individuals who assisted me in conducting the focus group sessions.

I am a 24-year-old caucasian woman. I was born in Canada and have lived most of my life in Waterloo County. As my thesis demonstrates I am interested in primary prevention, and

through this project I have acquired an interest promoting structural change in school systems. Some of my other interests include women's issues and corrections. Past experiences have allowed me to explore these latter two interests, so I opted to work with GCI in order to learn about and experience something new.

My thesis advisor (Isaac) and three of my classmates helped with the group discussions. Isaac assisted me with the STEP Committee focus group by recording comments and co-facilitating the discussion. Like myself, Isaac has been a member of STEP since its inception in 1991. His role on the Committee has been that of an outside consultant. An Indonesian woman in her early 30s took notes during the parents' session. A 25-year-old Black woman helped by recording comments given by participants in the teaching and support staff group. This second woman also facilitated one of the student sessions. A third classmate, a caucasian man in his late 20s, took semi-verbatim notes of the second student focus group discussion.

I am not sure how, or if, certain researcher-characteristics influenced this project. However, I will put forward the hypothesis that the student participants were more receptive because of the youthfulness of the facilitators (i.e., my two assistants and I were students and we all looked young, therefore the GCI students may have found it easier to relate to us and may have been more willing to participate in the discussions).

Interview guide for focus groups and in-person interview. Each of the five focus groups and the one in-person interview followed an interview guide (see Appendix C). The interview guide questions were derived from the literature I reviewed on school consultation, school change, and prevention. These questions attempted to elicit and reveal participants' perspectives and insights regarding changes of the school, and more specifically, regarding the development

of a supportive peer mentoring program for the students of GCI. I asked participants to recall and describe distinctive factors that they believe were instrumental in either facilitating or limiting the successful development and implementation of programs and/or changes in GCI. As the literature demonstrates, administrative support can have substantial influence over the success of a program or change (Cherniss, 1991; Comer, 1980). Therefore, I also asked the administrator to consider and describe various factors that should be incorporated within a peer mentoring program in order for such a project to secure backing from GCI administration and from the board of education. To provide closure to each focus group and to the in-person interview I included a question that asked participants to share their thoughts on both the process and content of the sessions, and to provide suggestions for improving the process and/or the content. (Unfortunately, because of time constraints, this last question was not asked of parents and students in group #2. I did, however, suggest that interested individuals relay their feedback regarding the content and process of their session via a phone call, a letter, or a message attached to their returned session transcript.) Finally, to facilitate exchange, each participant was given a discussion guide (see Appendix D) containing the main questions to be addressed during the session.

Archival materials. I reviewed documentation available from sources within GCI (e.g., yearbooks, STEP Committee minutes) and through the Waterloo County Board of Education library.

My observations/experiences. What I have observed and experienced through participating as a member of the STEP Committee and attending various GCI events has also shaped the process of the research and the content of this document. Many of my

chairperson/facilitator roles (e.g., setting agendas, organizing meeting minutes, committee "homework") have provided opportunities for reflection on the project and have helped me to formalize some of my thoughts.

Ethics

Estimate of the risks and benefits of the research. The primary possible risk involved in conducting this investigation was a breach of confidentiality and anonymity. In order to protect these, steps were taken to preserve anonymity (see section titled "Procedures to Ensure Confidentiality of Information"). A second risk might have involved iatrogenic consequences of an intervention pre-fabricated by an outside consultant/researcher who was not connected to the setting and/or who was interested only in a personal research agenda (Apter, 1973; Elias & Branden, 1988; Medway, 1975; Sarason, 1990). In the case of this project, I originally considered myself an outside consultant/researcher. However, I had been involved with GCI for a year and a half before collecting data for this project and I believe that I had developed both connection and commitment to the school. Furthermore, this project was driven and endorsed by GCI's STEP Committee. Therefore I did not consider it to be an external or intrusive intervention.

I believe there is a number of benefits that will result from conducting this research project. First, I would suggest that this project will benefit not only a peer mentoring program but also many other programs and/or changes that may be initiated at the school. This project focused on building a foundation for subsequent development, implementation, and evaluation of a peer mentoring program for students at GCI through an examination of the processes and dynamics of change within the setting. In my opinion, the general information complied about

change will likely serve as essential groundwork (or pre-work) for future attempts to implement programs or other changes at GCI. Second, the work presented here is part of the initial stages of creating an important prevention program that will help reduce students' (and perhaps teaching and support staff's, administrators', and parents') stress while at the same time improving their coping skills and support networks. Finally, I believe documenting the efforts to create change in GCI may provide an important contribution to the literature on prevention in the schools.

Plan for obtaining informed consent. I prepared two introductory letter/consent form packages, one that was distributed to all focus group participants and one that was given to the administrator (see Appendices E and F, respectively). The cover letters described the purpose and general procedure of each session. The relevant ethical considerations that needed to be extended to each participant were included in the letters. On the consent forms I asked each participant to indicate her/his willingness to. (a) participate in a discussion session, (b) have the session tape recorded, and (c) review a transcript of their particular session. In addition, I asked participants to indicate how they would like to receive feedback about the project.

According to ethical standards, all students under the age of 18 must have the signed permission of either a parent or guardian to participate as a member of the students' focus group. Therefore, the additional ethical requirements were also included in the focus group introductory letter and consent form.

Procedures to ensure confidentiality of information. I did several things in order to increase participants' comfort levels and to preserve the anonymity of their comments. First, the focus groups and in-person interview were organized as single stakeholder discussions on the

premise that participants would feel more at ease talking about some of the issues with their peers than in the company of other stakeholder groups. Second, I asked participants to consent to having their session tape recorded with the condition that all tapes would be erased about one month later, after the transcripts were complete. At least one person did not want his/her session to be recorded. Consequently, I asked one of my classmates to take semi-verbatim notes of this discussion. Third, every participant was given the opportunity to review a transcript of their session (see Appendices E and F) to ensure that I had recorded people's comments accurately, completely, and fairly. Furthermore, in the letter I attached to each transcript I also asked participants to indicate any comments or personal information that they did not want included in my thesis or any other documents derived from this project (see Appendix G). Of the 31 participants, 25 said they would be willing to review a transcript of their session. I received a total of 13 revised and/or simply returned copies (one revised transcript came from the facilitator of student group #1 who was not counted as one of the 31 participants). I also talked with a few volunteers who explained that they did not return their copies to me because they did not think it was necessary to add or delete anything from the transcripts. Hence, all changes, omissions, and additions to the raw data were based on the comments of the 13 volunteers who returned their transcripts. Fourth, in the letter accompanying the feedback package (see Appendices H and I respectively), I reminded participants that I would be using some quotes from the sessions to highlight the results and gave people the opportunity to make additional changes to their comments. Finally, I also advised participants in the feedback letter that I would not use their names nor would I use any quotes I thought might identify the speaker.

Nature of feedback to participants. I included a feedback request section on the consent

forms that asked each participant how she/he would like to receive information, if at all (refer back to Appendices E and F). Most people requested feedback in the form of a letter. However, a number of people indicated they would like to take part in an information session. Two participants said they did not wish to receive feedback. Only one person did not check any of the feedback possibilities listed on the consent form.

Since the high school year ends in mid-June I targeted the end of May/beginning of June as a feedback deadline. However, as the end of May approached I realized that I would not have a completed, detailed analysis of the information to share with the participants. Consequently, I put together a feedback package that included: (a) a description of the participants, (b) a statement of the project's purpose, (c) a brief overview of the information shared during the five discussion groups and one in person interview, and (d) some preliminary recommendations about how to proceed with designing, implementing, and evaluating a peer support program for students at GCI (see Appendix H). All of the participants, except the two who did not wish feedback, received a copy of this summary.

Attached to each feedback summary was a personalized cover letter in which I thanked participants for their involvement, reminded people that I would be using quotes from the various sessions, described the contents of the feedback package, and informed participants that I would be holding an information session for anyone who wished to find out more about the project (see Appendix I).

Despite participants' initial interest in attending an information session about the project, no one showed up and only one person contacted me to arrange an alternate time. Although I tried to make the session accessible by holding it at the school over the two lunch periods, as

well as offering to make alternate arrangements for people who were unable to attend, I was not surprised by the lack of attendance. Clearly, the end of the school year is a very busy time for all members of the school community, thus attending the feedback session may not have been a high priority for many participants. Also, it may be that the feedback package sent to participants contained enough information to meet everyone's needs.

Analysis

Framework for Data Analysis

To provide a framework for making sense of the information collected in this investigation I used the list of factors that facilitate or limit change which was introduced in the literature review (see Table 1). An abridged version of the original list is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Abridged List of Factors that Facilitate or Limit Change in Schools

FACILITATIVE FACTORS	LIMITING FACTORS
1. sense of ownership	1. little/no sense of ownership
2. identified need	2. little/no need
3. internal impetus for change	3. external impetus for change
4. consensus of agenda	4. conflicting agendas
5. collaboration	5. laid-on
6. committed stakeholders	6. uncommitted stakeholders
7. process and content	7. content only
8. tailored to setting	8. prefabricated/generic
9. open-mind	9. closed-mind
10. clear purpose and goals	10. ambiguous purpose and/or goals

11. trust	11. mistrust
12. sufficient resources	12. insufficient resources
13. proper training	13. improper/no training
14. active administrative support	14. little/no administrative support
15. recognizing effort	15. not recognizing effort
16. paraprofessionals	16. experts only
17. ample planning	17. insufficient/no planning
18. pilot program	18. no pilot program
19. evaluation	19. no evaluation
20. patience	20. quick-fix
21. built-in	21. added-on
22. ecological perspective	22. isolated projects
23. coordination	23. little/no coordination
24. recognize school's limits	24. not recognizing school's limits
25. understanding culture	25. ignoring culture

Procedure

In general the procedures I used to analyze the information I gathered from participants

are congruent with the qualitative methods advanced by Patton (1986), Kirby and McKenna (1989), and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

To consolidate the 165 pages of raw data gathered during the interview and focus groups, I first read through the transcript of each session and extracted important quotes and/or ideas which I transferred to appropriately indexed cue cards. I then used the factors that facilitate and limit change described above as a framework to identify categories within the data presented on each card. In total, 29 categories emerged each housing a pair of factors, one typically considered to facilitate change (f) and the other to limit change (l) [e.g., (f) open mind, and (l) closed mind, in reference to the setting's receptivity to change]. To better conceptualize such considerable amounts of data I devised a colour-coded qualitative comparative analysis.

Qualitative comparative analysis. The term qualitative comparative analysis simply describes a way of organizing data. For the purposes of this project, the data were arranged within a structured matrix. The six stakeholder groups (parents, teaching/support staff, student group #1, student group #2, adminstration, STEP) were placed along the *X* axis, while the six main interview/focus-group questions[1] (i.e., What facilitates general change within the school? What limits general change within the school? What facilitates social support efforts within the school? What limits social support efforts within the school? What would facilitate a mentorship program? What would limit a mentorship program?) were listed along the *Y* axis. The facilitative and limiting factors generated in each discussion were represented in the appropriate cells and

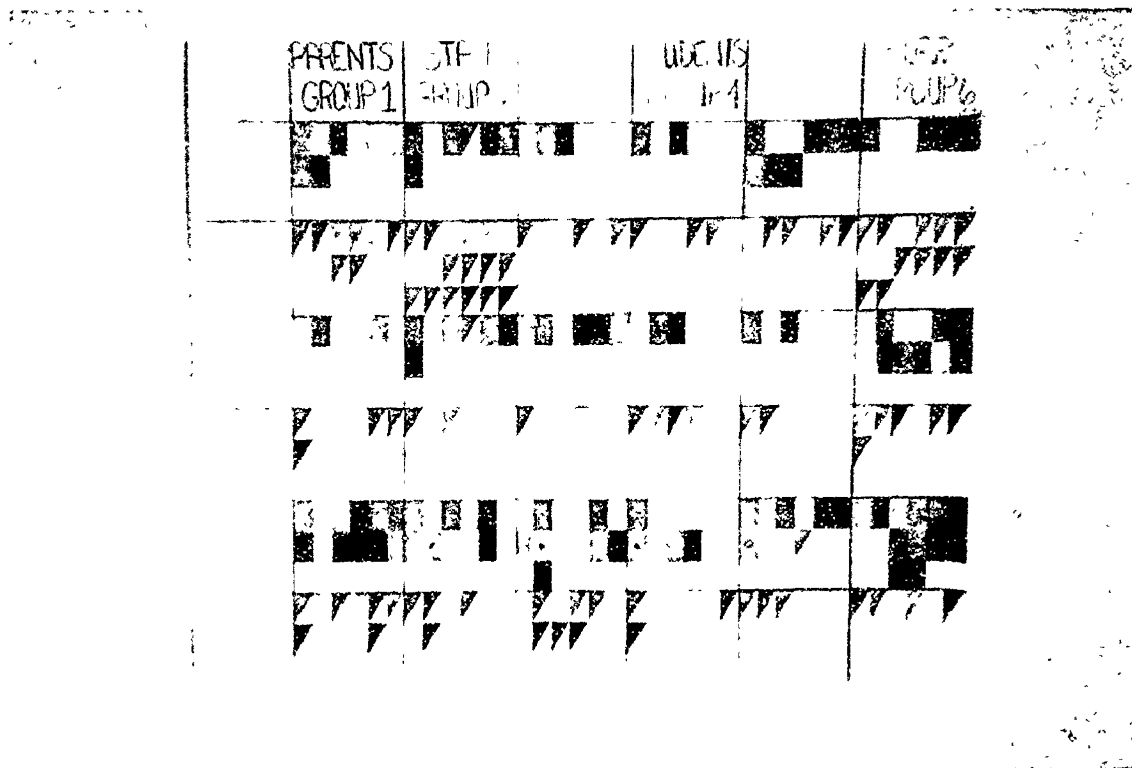
[1]The administrator was asked an additional question concerning the necessary components to be incorporated in a mentorship program to secure moral and material support from administration. The response to this question was not included in the qualitative comparative analysis.

formed the substance of the matrix. (Refer to Appendix J for a schematic representation of the qualitative comparative analysis.) This arrangement allowed me to examine the data according to the six terms I defined when outlining my primary research questions (see section called "The Purpose of this Project").

Each of the 29 category pairs was assigned a particular colour. For every pair the factor usually indicated as facilitative was represented by a full rectangular box of colour, whereas the factor typically associated with limiting change was demarcated by a diagonal half of a rectangular box (see Appendix K for a list of the category pairs and colours). Whenever a stakeholder group made reference to a factor (facilitative or limiting) in response to one of the six questions, the corresponding colour symbol was reproduced in the appropriate cell which had been divided into 18 rectangular segments. For example if the parent group said having an open mind to new ideas was something that facilitated change then a full dark green rectangle would appear in the top left cell of the chart. While the original matrix appeared on one large piece of paper (see Figure 2, next page), I have separated the cells and reproduced them on several pages in the appendices (see Appendix L).

With all the data concentrated on a single piece of paper, it was easy to determine which categories and/or factors were identified most often, which groups identified more factors, which groups differed and/or concurred on their perceptions of change, and it was easy to begin visualizing how change occurs at GCI. Nonetheless, it was apparent that 29 category pairs were too many to deal with, so I further combined these categories into three major themes that related to designing, implementing, and evaluating effective, successful programs and change in schools, GCI in particular.

Figure 2. Photograph of the original qualitative comparative analysis.



The next stage in my analysis was to return to the cue cards and transcripts and select quotes which best described each theme or its component category pairs.

Finally, I integrated information from this project with information from the literature to. (a) build a grounded theory for successful change in secondary schools, and (b) derive a set of recommendations for proceeding with a peer mentoring program at GCI.

Establishing Trustworthiness and Validating Conclusions

"Establishing trustworthiness" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and validating conclusions are methods that may be used to check the accuracy, validity, and reliability of acquired information. Throughout this project I took precautions to ensure the "trustworthiness" of the

data I collected. First, I have been involved with the setting over a prolonged period of time which has given me the opportunity to foster relationships with several people at the school. Moreover, through my role as a STEP Committee member I believe I have become, in a way, a contributing member of the GCI community. Consequently, I came to view my position as that of an inside-outside consultant rather than strictly and outside-consultant. The second safeguard I took was to engage the STEP Committee, with its multi-stakeholder membership, as an advisory board. As described earlier, the third precaution I observed was to ask participants to review, and where necessary revise their group's transcript. The final preventive measure I adopted was to arrange an information session as a forum for participants to respond to my findings.

Findings and Discussion

I have decided to present and discuss the results of this investigation in the form of a grounded theory and an action plan. I will begin with the big picture, that is, a general theory for successful change in secondary schools. Narrowing my focus, I then present several factors that are important to consider when creating and maintaining successful social support programs in high schools. Finally, on a more concrete level I provide recommendations for proceeding with the peer support or mentorship program for students at GCI.

One of my goals was to examine how the various stakeholder groups within the school differ and concur on their perceptions of and suggestions for change. While each of the stakeholder groups provided valuable insights, all 29 categories (see Appendix K for a complete list of categories) were mentioned by at least three of the groups. It appears that the different groups within the GCI community tend to agree on what works and does not work at the school. This consistency between groups is illustrated by the repetition of colours in the qualitative comparative analysis (see Appendix L). For example, stakeholder response (dark pink), collaboration (mauve), communication (yellow), availability of resources (yellow-brown), and need for program/change (red) are some of the categories/colours that appear across all six groups. In light of these observations, unless I draw attention to specific distinctions between or within stakeholder groups, I will be discussing change from the standpoint of the collective GCI community.

Before continuing with this section, I think it is important to note that not all the factors listed in the analytic framework (see Tables 1 and 3) were mentioned during the in-person interview and focus group sessions (e.g., ample/no planning time, recognizing/not recognizing

the limits of the setting). At the same time, participants did raise some issues that I did not come across in my search of the literature (i.e., community response, role expectations, time commitments, timing of interventions, continuity, peer support, and voluntary/mandatory participation). Thus, these seven factors should be regarded as contributions to the relevant literature. To respect the knowledge and experiences of others (i.e., other authors) as well as the participants in this investigation, I have not discounted any factor, whatever the source (i.e., solely in the literature, only within the data collected in this study, or in both sources). In other words, I considered all knowledge gained throughout the course of this project when generating the theory and the blueprint for action.

Grounded Theory for Successful Change in Secondary Schools

Based on the literature summarized in Table 1, the information gathered in this investigation, and my experiences as a consultant at GCI, I have been able to induce three principal components of successful change in secondary schools. The three components, which I describe below, are: community[2] ownership; attention to human factors; and proper implementation, which can be broken down into what I call hardware and software. For the purpose of clarity, when delivering the grounded theory I explain first the various factors that comprise a component, then I indicate the source(s) of the information. However, before expounding on each of the three components I present an outline that orients the reader to the overall theory.

[2]When I write "community," I am referring to the community of GCI which includes students, teaching and support staff, administrators, and parents.

Overview of grounded theory for successful change in secondary schools.

I. Community Ownership
   1. identifying need
   2. internal impetus for change
   3. consensus of agenda
   4. stakeholder collaboration, commitment, and participation
   5. attending to process and content
   6. tailoring programs/changes to setting

II. Attention to Human Factors
   1. promoting an open-mind toward change
   2. communicating appropriately
      a. language
      b. clarity
      c. interpreters
      d. advertising/promotion
      e. channels for information sharing
   3. establishing trust
   4. sufficient human resources
      a. time
      b. energy
      c. skills
   5. suitable training
   6. peer support for participation
   7. recognizing effort

III. Proper Implementation
   1. Hardware
      a. people
      b. material resources/funds
      c. planning sessions
      d. training programs
      e. pilot programs
      f. evaluations
   2. Software
      a. long-term view of change
      b. good timing
      c. ecological perspective
      d. open communication

Community ownership. For programs and change to be considered successful, community members must come to see them as *their* programs and *their* changes (for reference

see facilitative factor #1, Table 1). Building or creating this ownership involves. (a) identifying need, (b) an internal impetus for change, (c) consensus of agenda, (d) stakeholder collaboration, commitment, and participation, (e) attending to the process as well as to the content of new programs/change, and (f) tailoring new programs/change to mesh with the unique culture of the setting.

Community ownership for a program/change is more likely to develop if stakeholders believe there is a **genuine need for such a program/change** (see facilitative factor #2, Table 1). For example, according to several interview/focus group participants the Care for a Kid program, which I described in the literature review, was implemented this past year at GCI with much success. Part of the success of this program has been attributed to the staff's recognition that high-risk students need to be given added support. As a participant in the STEP Committee focus group stated, "I think awareness of the need for it [the Care for a Kid program] is something that really helps the program....We got a wonderful response from our staff for the Care for a Kid program."

Beyond identifying need, schools must consider whether they can and/or should respond with relevant programs/change. Questions school communities need to ask are. Is there a need? Are there resources in the community that are already meeting this need? Are we the most appropriate resource to respond to the need? Does meeting this need fall within our mandate? Are there more pressing needs within our school that should be dealt with and given resources first? My understanding is that when a need is present and the relevance of new programs/change is identified, and when the community believes a response is within its jurisdiction and stakeholders feel comfortable and confident responding to the need, then there

will be more opportunity for control and ownership on the part of the community to take the requisite steps to create the necessary programs/change.

In general, change is more successful when it is **internally driven**, that is, when members of the immediate school community press for change (see facilitative factor #3, Table 1). I think part of the success of change-from-within is due, not only to the fact that these changes are the outcome of stakeholders' ideas, but also to the collaborative nature of these projects. Stakeholders get involved because it is a program/change *they* think is needed and *they* want. A notable example of successful change-from-within at GCI is the annual Grade 9 Barbecue. Each year before the fall semester begins, the Parent Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the school, hosts a barbecue for all incoming grade nines. This well received event gives new students an opportunity to get to know their school and their teachers, as well as to renew and discover friendships in a fun, informal atmosphere (information taken from the parent and STEP Committee focus groups). According to a STEP Committee member, "a lot of [the parent involvement in Grade 9 orientation] has to do with the [fact that] parents felt what they [thought] was needed was listened to and acted upon, and they became involved in it...*like they owned it.*"

On the flipside, legislated change that does not conform to the needs and/or wants of the school community may be implemented but probably will not flourish or be considered successful (see limiting factor #3, Table 1). An example of this type of situation surfaces with the current destreaming directive. The contention regarding this latest educational reform can be detected in one teaching/support staff person's comment:

I think things are just moving too fast and it's too frustrating....They [the Ministry] don't

ask anybody their opinion. Like we said, 'okay, we'll let it [destreaming] go into effect, and then maybe the next year do it,'....Well, it's going to be done this September whether you're ready or not."

Under such duress, it may be that some teaching/support staff who have not internalized the need for such change or who have other priorities will "do just enough to get by and say, 'there, I did it'" (quote taken from the interview with a school administrator). However, it should be noted that there are certain circumstances under which an externally driven change may be warranted or desirable.

Community ownership is fostered when there is **consensus among stakeholder groups** as to the purpose(s), goal(s), and components of new programs/change (see facilitative factor #4, Table 1). Groups must work together toward a common end. As the principle of interdependence emphasizes, if one group or members of a group in the school object(s) to any aspect of a program/change, other groups and possibly the program/change will be (negatively) affected. To illustrate my point I will refer to the Peer Helping program at GCI. Peer Helping is a credit course which places senior level students in a low-intensity counselling role. Each of the groups I conducted an interview or focus group with identified Peer Helping as an important social support resource for students. However, there were a few comments to the effect that some teaching/support staff do not share the sentiments of their fellow community members. I have selected two comments that may help to highlight this conflict and point to some obstacles hindering successful program implementation. The first remark is from a teaching/support staff person. She states, "the best thing for students is probably peer counselling. Now some teachers really hate it, they won't even let the kids go...." The second comment, made by a STEP

Committee Member, reads:

> some of the staff, they didn't look at it [Peer Helping] too well. They just thought...it's a waste of time and it's an interruption to my class....there are some teachers who, I think, just weren't giving out the Peer Helping appointment forms....They didn't see it as something that the school needed."

Evidently, if people do not take ownership for a program/change and believe it is *theirs*, then they will not go out of their way to uphold it (see limiting factor #1, Table 1). Admittedly, consensus is not easily achieved. However, I think it may be expedited if attention is given to the factors addressed next, namely stakeholder collaboration, commitment, and participation.

The importance of **stakeholder collaboration, commitment, and participation** for successful school programs/changes is often emphasized in the literature, as demonstrated by the long list of authors referenced under facilitative factors #5 and #6 in Table 1. Referring to the qualitative comparative analysis (see Appendix L), it is evident that members of the GCI community also associate stakeholder collaboration, commitment, and participation with successful school programs/changes. (Collaboration, represented in the qualitative comparative analysis by mauve coloured boxes, is discussed by each of the six stakeholder groups. The importance of stakeholder commitment, depicted by dark purple boxes, is mentioned by all but one of the stakeholder groups, namely, student group #1.) While all factors contributing to community ownership are interdependent, I believe there is a powerful relationship between these three variables. When people share their ideas, give input, and contribute to the development of a new program/change they have invested some of themselves in the process. Therefore, they may be more committed to implementing and participating in the

program/change, and making sure that it works.

Every group interviewed in this investigation identified the importance of **collaboration**. The programs/changes participants considered most successful were the ones that responded to their concerns and incorporated their recommendations. For example,

> something that really helped the change to semesters [at GCI] was that a lot of staff had input into that decision. There were a lot of discussion groups and staff were able to go out to other schools and...bring back information....they felt it was their decision, it wasn't something laid-on. (statement made by a STEP Committee member)

One can appreciate the resentment groups felt when their thoughts and opinions were not sought in the face of significant school change (see limiting factor #5, Table 1). The indignation of one teaching/support staff person is clear in the following statement. "I think...a lot of members of the staff feel that we're the front lines and we're not stupid, and so we should have had input into this whole destreaming question. We should have been asked for our suggestions." Clearly, for stakeholders to take ownership and believe a program/change is *theirs*, they must be able to recognize in it some of themselves: their ideas, their beliefs, their expectations.

Securing **stakeholder commitment** is a necessary condition for ownership and the continued existence of a program/change (see facilitative factor #6, Table 1). The logic behind this statement is simple; people who do not believe in or feel accountable to a specific program/change will not carry it out. If uncommitted constituents are forced to undertake a program or change, they will find ways to sabotage its success (see limiting factor #6, Table 1). For example, a recent change at GCI involved switching from a single lunch period to two lunch periods. The change was a response to the need for more science labs, the result, however, was

a loss of something the school community really valued, namely, a common social time. It was obvious through my discussions with the various stakeholder groups that this change has become a point of contention for many students, parents, and members of the teaching and support staff. Some students who are not committed to the change have responded with silent insurrection; skipping classes to have lunch with friends, or not returning to school for last period if they have second lunch (information taken from the two student focus groups). The question then, is how to encourage commitment. As I stated earlier, I think one of the best ways to secure commitment from people in the school community is to respond to their needs and include them in the process of creating new programs/change. I am supported in this assertion by a comment taken from the interview with the administrator. He states,

> if people do not believe that 'yes, this [change] is really worthwhile,' then they are going to just do enough to get by and say, 'there, I did it.' Whereas, if they firmly believe in it, and firmly believe that 'yes, although there may be risk involved and extra work involved we believe in this,' then they are more likely to carry it out. I think we fairly clearly demonstrated that the more people have a part in a decision, the more committed they are to in fact making sure that it works.

In my opinion, promoting, and perhaps requiring, **stakeholder participation** in *all* aspects (from creation to evaluation) of introducing change into the school setting also engenders ownership and helps to sustain a program/change over the long-term. As members of the school community participate in the process they: (a) learn the skills involved in developing programs/change, (b) perform and often master the routine requirements of a program/change, and (c) develop techniques for evaluating the success of their efforts. In short, stakeholder

participation is about building competencies (Altman, 1993). A reliable indication of ownership is revealed when a program/change continues to run smoothly after the *experts* have gone. Through their participation the school community knows both how and why the program/change was created. They possess the necessary skills to operate and manage the program/change. They know how to evaluate and modify the program/change when it no longer meets their current needs. What's more, the school community now has the knowledge and ability to repeat this process when new problems or issues arise. Each of these accomplishments is possible because the community took responsibility and ownership over the change; it was theirs to control.

I have already alluded to the importance of **attending to process** when fostering community ownership (see facilitative factor #7, Table 1). Ownership doesn't simply happen, just as a program/change doesn't simply happen. Ownership, like change, develops over time as people establish trust, share their visions, plan for change, set programs in motion, and work together to solve problems. The destreaming issue once again provides a fitting example. In this instance, the destreaming campaign demonstrates how neglecting process, or at least stakeholders' perceptions that process has been neglected, can hinder the successful implementation of a change. From what I have observed/heard over the last year the content of the destreaming initiative has been addressed. However, from the comments of some focus group participants, it appears that teaching and support staff members are not prepared to implement this change. According to one staff person, "there were an awful lot of intermediary steps [in introducing destreaming], instead they [the Ministry] go from 'Plan A' to 'Plan Z' without consulting us." The problem of initiating destreaming into high schools was also examined in the STEP Committee focus group. The comments of two STEP participants reveal the essence

of this discussion.

Participant #1. "Destreaming has to be complete by September '94, and there is certainly talk about de-semestering grade 9. So, there are some big changes coming."

Participant #2: "And not much time to work them out either...."

Participant #1: "No. No. And that's very stressful too. The teachers aren't really prepared. They haven't been inserviced to deal with mixed classes and that's what they'll be dealing with in September."

It seems prudent at this point to repeat the wise words of a GCI administrator who said, "how you do something is frequently more important than what you do."

Tailoring programs/change, the final variable I listed as contributing to community ownership (see facilitative factor #8, Table 1), combines process and content. Shaping the content of programs/change to respond to the specific and perhaps unique needs of the school requires an understanding of the setting's culture and is best accomplished in partnership with the school community. A corollary of implementing tailored programs/change, as opposed to pre-fabricated or generic programs/change, is that stakeholders are better able to make use of them and assume a stake in their succession. Members of the teaching/support staff focus group expressed concern that staff are frequently asked to join committees to give input on change, yet their advice is often ignored. As one staff person put it,

> It seems to me that we're asked to join committees on every conceivable topic....And people sign up for these things and they put in hours of time. And then you have the feeling, somehow, something that had been pre-decided before the whole committee process was put in place, still is instituted.

A specific example of a "tailoring process gone awry" was shared by a teaching/support staff participant. Reflecting on the recent renovation of the school building this staff member remarked,

> I spent a very long time planning my new space, which wasn't going to be one of my favourite spaces in the first place, but it was the one I was to get. I planned all this room so that it would really work...and it [my work] had been totally disregarded. No one had ever spoken to any person who had been part of that planning process.... They'd just gone ahead and done it. And here we are now living with stuff that we thought we'd solved at some point through a planning process.

Tailoring programs to meet the needs of consumers was also addressed by both groups of students. Specifically, the two student groups indicated that the content of a mentorship program should be varied, and the different pairs of students should be allowed to choose the activities that best meet their needs. In short, it appears that accepting ownership for a program/change is easier if it is "made to order."

All six factors contributing to community ownership were described within the literature. Likewise, each of the above mentioned factors was addressed by the interview/focus group participants. However, for whatever reason (e.g., the interview/focus group sessions were not long enough to allow participants to discuss all the factors they think impact change at GCI, facilitators did not prompt participants sufficiently, participants did not think to mention certain factors that do impact change, or participants did not think certain factors have any impact on change at GCI) some stakeholder groups did not discuss one or more of the six community ownership factors. Specifically, parents did not touch on the subject of internal or external

impetus for change. Student group #1 did not talk about stakeholder commitment. Finally, the administrator did not speak to the need for consensus of agenda or for tailoring programs to fit the school's unique culture.

Attention to human factors. The success of a program or change depends heavily on the individual and collective response of participants. In short, stakeholders can "make or break" a new program/change. There are a number of ways to encourage a positive response from community members when new programs/changes are introduced. Some of these approaches are as follows. (a) promoting an open mind towards change, (b) communicating appropriately, (c) establishing trust, (d) ensuring sufficient *human* resources (e.g., time, energy, skills), (e) providing suitable training, (f) advocating peer support for program participants, and (g) recognizing effort.

One of the first indications of success lies in a school community's willingness to adopt and implement new programs/changes. Clearly those stakeholders that exhibit an **open-mind or receptivity to innovative ideas** are more likely to accept something new (see facilitative factor #9, Table 1). Conversely, when stakeholders feel threatened by, or are ambivalent to change, there is less chance that a program/change will be successful (see limiting factor #9, Table 1). To illustrate this point I will reiterate a previous example. The comments of several focus group participants suggest that some teachers are not receptive to the Peer Helping program. According to one participant, this group of teachers does not perceive Peer Helping to be a legitimate program, they see it as "a waste of time...[or] an interruption to [their] class" (remark made by a STEP Committee participant). Participants also voiced suspicions that some teachers were "not giving out Peer Helping appointment forms," (STEP participant's comment) or else these

teachers "weren't even letting the kids go [to appointments]" (teaching/support staff participant's statement). Thus, the key is to find ways of promoting receptivity within the community and helping stakeholders to feel comfortable with new programs/change. To be sure, acceptance of a program/change will not happen overnight; people need to be wooed. Winning over a community takes hard work and involves many of the components I will describe below, including: communication, trust, commitment, support, recognition, and participation.

Stakeholders cannot be expected to support a program/change if they do not understand it; hence the need for **appropriate communication** (see facilitative factor #10, Table 1). The fundamental importance of proper communication was repeatedly conveyed in all the sessions conducted with GCI stakeholders. The discussions about communication centred around a number of issues, including: (a) **language**, (b) **clarity**, (c) **interpreters**, (d) **advertising/promotion**, and (e) **channels through which information is shared**. Information must be presented at a level that can be understood by all members of the school community. For example, the language used to describe a program/change to a group of administrators would likely be inappropriate for a student assembly. Furthermore, as all interview/focus group participants (except parents) mentioned, the expressions used in connection with a program/change must be "in." In other words, expressions cannot be out dated, stigmatizing, complex, etc. When I asked students about the mentorship program they immediately informed me that the term "mentor" was "too sophisticated," and the alternative I suggested ("buddy") was, according to one student, "hurting," meaning she/he did not like this term.

Clarity about the purpose, roles, expectations, and benefits of a program/change was of concern to participants in the interview/focus-group sessions. People want to know *why* a

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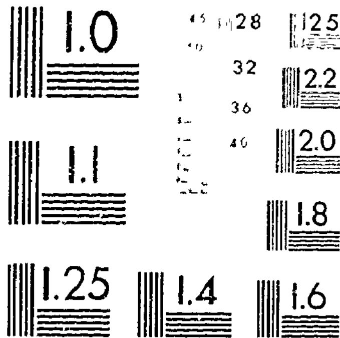


program/change is being introduced. When I asked students in group #2 what kind of information students would want if some type of buddy system was going to be implemented at GCI, the group agreed that students "would need an explanation." They would "want to know why it was being started." Stakeholders also want specific details about the roles they will be asked to assume, especially with regards to boundaries. The Care for a Kid program at GCI distinctly illustrates the importance of the last point. This program was implemented a few years ago with limited success. The fact that teachers "weren't quite sure what their role was," was identified by one respondent as a shortcoming of the first attempt at Care for a Kid. Consequently, when the program was reinstated this past year (92-93) teachers were given a lot more information. Respondents thougnt people also want to know how a program/change will affect them on a day-to-day basis. For example, the administrator I interviewed said that some of the staff's anxiety about the destreaming initiative stems from a difficulty in identifying for them how the change will impact their classroom routines. Finally, people want to know how a program/change will benefit them; a what's-in-it-for-me clarification. A student in group #1 emphasized the importance of this issue. She/He stated, "if you offer something, the first question they're [the students] going to ask is what's in it for me?"

The people who convey information about a program/change, or interpreters as I call them, are instrumental in promoting new programs/change or in fomenting tension. Interpreters must be approachable, articulate, knowledgeable, and energizing. Someone who has shown an interest in a program/change may be turned off by an interpreter who is remote, condescending, uninformed, or simply boring. Students thought their peers would make good interpreters since they can be trusted, are accessible, and "can relate at the same level."

To increase awareness about programs/changes, they must be advertised or promoted within the school environment. Whatever medium is chosen for advertisement (e.g., posters, morning announcements, assemblies), the message must be expressed in such a way as to elicit a favourable response from all stakeholder groups. That is, it must be accurate, concise, and use appropriate language. Moreover, these advertisements should be numerous and conspicuous in order to reach everyone in the school community. When students in group #1 were asked about Grassroots, a group that tries to counter racism and promote multiculturalism at GCI, several of them replied that they had "never heard of it." Although some students said that there are Grassroots' "banners on the walls," the group agreed that "there's not enough information or promotion [of this organization]."

The final component of communication I would like to discuss pertains to the channels through which information is shared. Many of the respondents thought general assemblies, parents' nights, and the GCI newsletter (*The Gazette*) were appropriate and reliable means of conveying information. Although students emphatically opposed the new computerized "phoner" that calls home if a student was absent or to relate general information about school events (e.g., report card distribution dates), the parents I spoke with thought it was "an excellent idea" and "a good way for the school to let parents know that their children are not in class." Inasmuch as respondents were interested in receiving information, they were also eager to give on-going feedback about programs/changes. As one STEP Committee member put it, "there has to be a place to voice concerns." One-way communication is no longer acceptable. The school community wants dialogue, two way communication. An example of two-way communication in action at GCI is the Parents Advisory Committee (PAC). The focus group parents maintained

that PAC is a reliable resource for "finding out what is going on in the school." The parents also said PAC provides them with a forum for sharing their suggestions for change at GCI, such as their idea for organizing a Grade 9 Barbecue to help students feel comfortable in their new school. Furthermore, as I have observed, PAC serves as an medium through which the school can ask parents their opinions on prospective changes. At one of the PAC meetings I attended parents were asked to give feedback on the new computerized phone system. On another occasion, parents were asked to comment on new styles of report cards being considered by school personnel. Unfortunately, as the focus group parents recognize, only a small percentage of GCI parents take advantage of the forum provided by PAC. In short, stakeholders have something to say; they want a channel through which to say it, and, they want someone to listen.

The numerous examples of communication presented above are not intended to elevate this factor's status over others; rather they are intended to illustrate the broad implications of communicating appropriately or communicating poorly when introducing programs/changes into the school community.

Establishing trust between and among stakeholder groups and consultants is of critical importance when attempting to elicit positive community response to a new program/change (see facilitative factor #11, Table 1). Trust and openness are the cornerstones of mutual respect which must be present between all parties if stakeholders are to feel appreciated and know that their contributions are valued. However, my experience has been that trust is also the key to acquiring accurate information. When people trust one another they are more likely to share unflattering details. Uncovering past mistakes and revealing a school's weaknesses are just as important as identifying its strengths when planning for and anticipating a new program/change. Furthermore,

in a climate of trust there are more opportunities for open discussion about varying perceptions of new programs/change.

Programs/changes typically depend on human resources, that is, the time, energy, and skills of the people involved. What is important to note, however, is that *successful* programs/changes meet, but do not exceed the resources that the school community can realistically contribute (see facilitative factor #12, Table 1). Schools are busy places. Activities run well before classes begin each morning and then on into the evening. People can only be involved in so many activities before they experience role-overload which can lead to burnout. New programs/changes should require a reasonable time commitment from participants. By reasonable, I mean participation in a program/change should not impinge on other aspects of school life, to do so may create unnecessary stress. For example, several focus groups, parents and students in particular, voiced concerns that asking OAC students to find the time and energy to mentor another student, in addition to their homework, sports, part-time jobs, etc., would create stress. I think this is an important consideration given the fact that many programs/changes are designed and implemented to help reduce people's stress and improve well-being.

More than respecting stakeholders' time, programs/changes must recognize their abilities. People should not be required to perform tasks and accept responsibilities that are beyond their capabilities. When stakeholders are expected to do more than they are prepared for or capable of, they may become frustrated, feel inadequate, experience failure, and ultimately resist or oppose the program/change. For example, the Care for a Kid program was tried a few years ago "with a mixed degree of success" (quote taken from the interview with an administrator). One

factor thought to have limited the success of the first attempt at Care for a Kid was a lack of training for staff participants (information taken from STEP Committee focus group). According to a STEP participant, this lack of training or information-giving left "some staff floundering." Fortunately, as the administrator pointed out, "there are successes that come out of the difficulties," and we learn from past mistakes. Due in part to an increase in information given to staff, the Care for a Kid program was reinstated this past year with greater success (information from STEP Committee focus group).

When new programs/changes are introduced in a school, stakeholder groups are often required to assume new roles, perform different tasks, and/or demonstrate new skills. As such, for people to successfully fulfil these responsibilities they must be given **sufficient and appropriate training** (see facilitative factor #13, Table 1). If people are not properly prepared they may feel uncomfortable with and unsure about their role within a program/change. These are feelings that can easily be picked up and adopted by other program participants and stakeholder groups. Considering the sentiments conveyed during the teaching/support staff focus group, I think it will be interesting to see what effects the destreaming reform will have on teachers and accordingly on students. My impressions are that the teaching and support staff do not think they have been adequately prepared for this monumental change, yet they will be expected to proceed, "ready or not." If the staff is not ready, how can the students be ready when they take their cues from their teachers? Tantamount to uncertainty is inability. If people have not acquired the necessary skills or do not know how to go about their duties, it is more than likely the program/change will not be carried out accurately or responsibly. In my opinion then, a little training goes a long way towards the success of a program/change.

For people to take interest and actively engage in a program/change they must feel **supported by their peers** and other members of the school community. If people believe they may be ridiculed, stigmatized, ostracized, or simply not respected by their peers, supervisors, colleagues, pupils, etc. for taking part in a program/change, or if they have already experienced some of these repercussions, then they will be less inclined to put themselves on the line for the sake of a program/change. I think peer support can be encouraged through proper communication as described above, and through inviting participation from all stakeholder groups. To abate any misgivings or misconceptions that give rise to conflict or indifference, it is important that *everyone* is made aware of and understands the purpose, goals, implications, and benefits of a program/change. Furthermore, as noted by participants in the interview/focus group sessions, people who feel left out or are left out of a process often react negatively; consider the cynical response of staff and particularly students to the change from one lunch period to two. Thus to promote support for those individuals directly involved in a program/change, each group in the school should be afforded an opportunity to shape and mobilize the program/change.

Beyond feeling supported, **people need to be rewarded** for their efforts. Stakeholders will respond more positively to a program/change if they know their contributions and efforts are appreciated (see facilitative factor #15, Table 1). Recognition can be given in many forms; a simple "great job" from a peer or more formal acknowledgments such as luncheons or special mention during assemblies. Students in group #2 seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of a "reward" for participating in a peer mentoring program. Their favourite idea appeared to be a year-end trip for mentors and mentees to Canada's Wonderland.

Like community ownership, "human factors" affecting change in schools were addressed both in the literature and by interview/focus group participants. However, in this instance, the literature only dealt with six of the seven listed factors. I did not find reference to the need for peer support for participation in the literature. I also found that other authors did not examine the communication factor in as much detail as I have provided above. Again, there was some variation in the content of the interview and focus group discussions. Receptivity to change was not mentioned by the teaching/support staff participants or by either of the two student groups. The question of trust was considered by all stakeholder groups, except the administrator and STEP Committee participants. The administrator did not specifically address the issue of training program participants. Parents and students in group #2 did not focus on peer support for participation in programs/changes. Lastly, neither the parents, nor students in group #2, nor the administrator discussed recognition for program participants.

Proper implementation.

1. *Hardware*. Hardware refers to the more tangible resources that are needed to create and maintain new programs and change. These resources include. (a) people, (b) adequate funds and other material resources, (c) planning sessions, (d) training programs (e) pilot programs, and (f) evaluations.

By all accounts, it seems that **people** represent the most important resource available to programs/changes. Nothing (of substance, that is) happens without people to create, design, implement, coordinate, evaluate, and participate in programs/change.

Many programs/changes require **funding** (or a reallocation of funds) **and material resources** (see facilitative factor #12, Table 1). It is important that funding authorization and the

acquisition of needed materials occurs *before* a program/change is implemented.

To provide the school community with opportunities to collaborate on the development of appropriate interventions, **planning sessions** should be organized, advertised, and conducted (see facilitative factors #7 and #17, Table 1).

To prepare stakeholders for their roles, tasks, and responsibilities, **training programs** must be conducted prior to implementing new programs/changes (see facilitative factor #13, Table 1). "Refresher" sessions should be offered periodically to review responsibilities and to update and energize participants.

Pilot programs should be conducted and evaluated prior to full implementation of programs/changes (see facilitative factor #18, Table 1). A trial run of a program/change will help to identify any weaknesses or "bugs" that should be eradicated prior to large-scale implementation. Furthermore, positive evaluations of pilot programs can lend credibility to new programs/changes and may generate additional support from the school community.

Evaluations must be conducted to ensure and maintain a program's/change's accountability and responsiveness to the school community (see facilitative factor #19, Table 1). When possible, evaluations should incorporate formal (e.g., surveys) and informal (e.g., casual conversations with participants) methods and they should occur on an on-going, interim, and year-end basis.

All six "hardware" considerations listed above have been addressed by previous authors. With a few exceptions, the interview/focus group participants also discussed the six factors related to hardware. The exceptions are as follows. First, the importance of proper planning was emphasized primarily by the administrator in response to the extra question posed to this person

(the additional question was: What necessary components would have to be incorporated into a student mentoring program for it to receive both moral and material support from GCI administration and at the Board level?). Second, as mentioned in the "attention to human factors" section, the administrator did not comment on training for program participants. Third, the participants in the parent focus group were the only stakeholders who did not talk about piloting new programs/changes. Finally, neither the teaching/support staff participants nor the two groups of students said anything about evaluating programs/changes.

2. *Software*. Software refers to the more intangible details that need to be addressed to ensure smooth running of programs/change. Programs and changes may be more successful if they incorporate the following components: (a) a long-term view of change, (b) good timing, (c) espousal of an ecological perspective, and (d) open communication.

When the school community adopts a **long-term view of problems** and understands that change often comes about slowly stakeholders are more likely to take the necessary time and energy to develop programs that will respond to both their needs and their environment (see facilitative factor #20, Table 1), as opposed to accepting pre-fabricated, "quick-fix" solutions that promise to correct problems now (see limiting factor #20, Table 1).

Good timing is another important software consideration. *When* a program/change takes place (e.g., beginning of school year, end of semester, during class, outside school hours) can have a significant impact on stakeholders' response. For example, a serious concern of the parents and teaching and support staff I spoke with was that their children/students were having to miss classes to participate in school activities, especially sports. When sports or other activities conflict with class time, teachers become unhappy. Students, too, are affected. They

can "really get burned" (teaching/support staff person's words) because they repeatedly miss the same class; more homework has to be done in the evenings; and some students even have to forfeit their athletic involvement because they cannot afford the time away from class. Alternatively, parents and staff were quite receptive to the idea of building a mentoring program into the regular routine of the school. My impression was that the participating school personnel and parents alike, thought that providing social support to adolescents was an important task and supportive programs should be introduced as an integral part of the school day. Extending homeroom (though not the school day) and running activities during the lunch period when students report having nothing to do were two options suggested by participants.

When planning, implementing, and evaluating new programs/changes consideration should be given to how they affect existing aspects of the school; in other words, **being alert to ripple effects** (see facilitative factor #22, Table 1). Sometimes programs/changes have positive effects on other facets of school life (e.g., a new program brings into the school resources that can be utilized by other programs; a change in one part of the school produces an increase in efficiency in another department). Other times, negative repercussions can be the result of introducing a new program/change (e.g., initiating a change to benefit one stakeholder group means more work for another stakeholder group). Two different examples of change at GCI serve to illustrate how altering one dynamic of the school's culture influences others. First, a change that affected GCI staff was the construction of a new staff dining room during renovations to the school building. While the extra space may have been necessary due to a large staff population, the teaching/support staff who participated in the focus group agreed that this addition has instilled division between staff (i.e., some staff members eat in the new dining

room, some in the staff room, others in their offices). Where staff once used to mingle and communicate with one another during their lunch breaks, they have now, as one staff person put it, "cocooned." The second example of reverberating change involves the switch from a continuing pre-9:00am homeroom (i.e., the same students were together before classes from grade 9 through grade 12) and colourhouses (i.e., the student body was divided into four groups each represented by a colour) to second period class homeroom (which varies in student composition from semester to semester) and the elimination of colourhouses (information given by teaching/support staff, students in group #1, and STEP Committee participants). Again, the change was made for valid reasons, but primarily because

> the teachers had no control. There were no sanctions if the kids didn't go, and a lot of kids just stopped going to homeroom....The teachers felt that if they taught those kids, then they'd have some more control over them being there on time; over them being there at all. (quote taken from STEP Committee focus group session)

Despite the positive effects of this shift in homeroom format, several groups (teaching/support staff, student group #1, STEP) suggested that the change has had several negative impacts. First, teaching/support staff reported that the change in homerooms has produced a reduction in school spirit and intraschool competition. One staff person said that once the colourhouse system was eliminated school spirit "went downhill." Another staff person followed by saying,

> They can't have competitions because we used to have blue house, red house, gold house, and [white house], and like junior blues were 9s and 10s. Well now you can't separate them. You can't do the grade 9s against the grade 10s; males against females You can't do that.

Second, members of the teaching/support staff and STEP Committee focus groups agree that doing away with colourhouses resulted in the suspension of supportive relationships between teacher-mentors and their students and among colourhouse peers. One staff person said,

> I found that teachers could be a real catalyst in the homeform. Like I always said my homeform would be the best. And I would say 'I want you out there,' and they [the students] would come. Not [all teachers] would do that, and some wouldn't even read the announcements, but there were enough doing it that I see the change in the homeform system as an unfortunate change.

The comments of a STEP Committee participant add to the concerns of the staff person. She/He stated,

> I think there were two significant adults that the kids have lost because of [the elimination of colourhouses], and that was the homeroom teacher, if the homeroom teacher was willing to be more than just a person who took attendance, and the counsellor.

Third, according to students in group #1, since homeroom has been moved to second period the school day has become unorganized (i.e., the first part of the school day is over before announcements are made about the day's events). Finally, scattered counselling and administrative caseloads were described by a STEP Committee participant as a negative ripple effect of the elimination of colourhouses. Prior to the change counsellors and administrators were assigned to specific colourhouses, after the change they were assigned a certain part of the alphabet. Consequently, whereas counsellors and administrators used to be able to see their kids in a group, now their caseloads are spread throughout the building and their students do not

come together as a group. One thing is certain, whatever the change, program planners, implementors, and evaluators must establish "safety measures" to accommodate potential spin offs.

The final software consideration I will mention is the importance of **open communication.** Since I addressed, at lengtn, the significance of proper communication in the section on "human issues," I will resign myself to emphasizing the need for providing opportunities for community exchange regarding programs/changes.

The "software" factors described above were derived, once more, from the literature and from the information gathered from GCI stakeholders. The impact of timing on the success of a program/change was the only software consideration I did not find reference to in the relevant literature. On the other hand, references to the timing of a program/change were made by all six stakeholder groups. The importance of open communication was also emphasized in each of the interview/focus group sessions. However, the time-frame of programs/changes (i.e., long term or short-term) was not considered by either group of students. Moreover, unlike the five other stakeholder groups, the administrator did not make reference to any ecological impacts, or ripple effects, of previous programs/changes at GCI.

The theory I have presented above reveals the complex nature of change in secondary schools. Clearly, there is no one factor that is responsible for the success or failure of a change/program; rather there are a multitude of interdependent variables affecting change Consultants and stakeholders alike should strive, in practice not just in theory, to increase those factors that support creation, implementation, and evaluation of programs/change and reduce or buffer those factors believed to operate against effective programs/change. The best advice I can

offer is for people to use this theory as a guideline, not as a law, when introducing new programs/changes with the understanding that each program/change is as unique at the setting which adopts it.

Blueprint for Action: A Peer Support Program for Students at GCI

As I stated earlier, my primary action goal for this project was to derive a set of recommendations that will provide a framework for proceeding with the design and eventual implementation and evaluation of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI. However, before proceeding with the recommendations I will elaborate on a number of factors that interview/focus group participants thought should be given special attention when considering social support programs. These factors include: (a) engaging paraprofessionals, (b) proper training for helpers, (c) trust, and (d) continuity.

Help-giving cannot and should not always be the business of professionals (see limiting and facilitative factors #16, Table 1). For one thing, based on Albee's (1959) prediction of a shortage of professionals, the smattering of so-called "experts" assigned to a school cannot realistically provide support to each and every student; their time is generally consumed by a small number of high risk students who *actively* demonstrate their need for support. More people need to be involved in the help-giving process, but not necessarily teachers. Students and parents represent two of the largest, yet most underutilized, stakeholder groups in the school community. **Mutual-aid** was recommended by many participants in the present study, particularly students and parents. A number of students quickly asserted that their peers could meet most of their support needs, perhaps better than an "expert." One student reported that "kids don't want to talk to adults all the time." There was also evidence in the group discussions that students are

somewhat suspicious of teachers or "professional" helpers because they (teachers and professionals) presumably "talk too much" and "rumours get spread." The preference for many of the students seemed to be to seek support from their friends because "it's informal," and because friends "can be trusted," "are available," and "can relate to you at the same level." On the other hand, when I first asked parents about social support efforts geared towards their group, they seemed thrown and somewhat perplexed by my question (Social support for parents? What's that?) However, after a lengthy discussion the parent participants agreed that support groups for parents of adolescents would provide a valuable resource. One parent communicated the need for increased parent-to-parent support in her/his statement that "there needs to be some kind of forum for parents to know that they're not alone; that [the problems they experience with their teens] are very common."

Focus group participants emphasized the need for help-givers to be given **proper training** for their roles. Whether paraprofessionals or experts, helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities, as well as the limits of what they can give to their relationships. Sometimes help-givers can find themselves in a situation they simply cannot deal with or that they require some additional support to handle. To better equip helpers for these situations, participants in student group #2 and the STEP focus group suggested that help-givers be trained "to know what kind of help is available and how to find it" (student's comment). Training sessions should be conducted with members of the school community prior to engaging in more formal supportive relationships and refresher/update sessions should be offered periodically throughout the year My impression was that students respect programs wherein participants are properly trained for their roles. Students in group #1 seemed to be impressed with the organization and pre work that

goes into preparing Peer Helpers.

Trust was described by several stakeholder groups as an essential element of supportive relationships. For people to feel comfortable with one another, enough so that they can share their problems no less their victories, they must first develop trust. The parents I spoke with agreed that gaining an adolescent's confidence is by no means an easy feat; their trust is rarely given freely. Furthermore, parents agreed with a fellow participant who stated, "I think it takes a long time for a kid to establish trust."

The parent, teaching/support staff, and STEP Committee participants seemed to agree that establishing trust may be facilitated, in part, by maintaining the **continuity** of supportive relationships. Moreover, across the six stakeholder groups, participants seemed to concurr in their regard of supportive relationships as **long-term partnerships** that should extend at least a full school year (i.e., September to June).

In the following pages I present numerous suggestions for proceeding with the mentorship program (printed in bold italics) that are derived from the grounded theory, information gathered from the interview/focus group participants, the relevant literature, my observations/experiences, as well as from some preliminary planning meetings of the STEP Committee. Where appropriate I elaborate on the recommendations (normal font) and propose ways of implementing them (italics). For each phase I have suggested a possible time frame. Table 4 provides an abridged summary of the recommendations.

I chose to present the recommendations in a practice-oriented way, that is, in terms of a time-ordered action plan. However, there are other ways the recommendations could have been arranged. For instance, I could have arranged the suggestions for action according to the key

components of the grounded theory for change. Following this example, the recommendations would have flowed from the three main components of the theory, namely, community ownership, attention to human factors, and proper implementation.

Table 4

Recommendations for Proceeding with the Peer Mentoring Program

Phase 1: Design Considerations (October '93 - March '94)
1. All groups within the GCI community should be involved in planning the program.
2. Administrative support for the mentorship program must be demonstrated.
3. The vision of a school-wide primary prevention program must be retained.
4. The program must be considered a long-term initiative that is implemented in phases.
5. There should be an individual whose job is to coordinate the program.
6. OAC level students could be asked to assist with program coordination.
7. A pilot or trial version of the program should be conducted.
8. The program design must include an evaluation component.
9. The program should be implemented as part of the school routine.
10. Consideration must be given to existing aspects of the school.
11. Provisions must be made for on-going community dialogue about the program.
12. Sufficient resources must be available to meet the needs of the program.
13. Participation should be voluntary in the short-term.
14. Participation should involve a one year commitment (i.e., two semesters).
15. Participants' roles should be explicitly defined.
16. Information about the program must be understood by all stakeholder groups.
17. Mentor/mentee relationships should involve a one-to-one pairing.
18. The mentor should be two grades ahead of the mentee.
19. Mentors and mentees should be of the same gender.
20. Multiple methods of matching students should be considered.
21. The mentorship program should be designed to be fun.
Phase 2: Planning (April '94 - August '94)

1. The GCI community must be informed about all aspects of the mentorship program. 2. The mentorship program should be advertised or promoted within the school. 3. Someone must assume responsibility for coordinating the mentorship program. 4. The grade 12 (future OAC facilitators) students should be identified. 5. Mentors and mentees should be identified. 6. Information should be gathered from participants to facilitate matching participants. 7. The coordinator should establish at least preliminary pairings of mentors and mentees. 8. Prospective mentors and OAC facilitators should receive training about the program. 9. The initial mentor/mentee meeting should be organized. 10. An information letter should be mailed home during the latter part of the summer.
Phase 3: Implementation: Commencement Stage (September '94 - November '94)
1. The initial mentor/mentee meeting takes place. 2. There should be regular contact between mentor/mentee pairs, within mentorship groups, and within mentor support circles. 3. The coordinator should be making preparations for the interim evaluation.
Phase 4: Implementation: Interim Stage (December '94 - February '95)
1. An interim evaluation should be conducted. 2. The coordinator should make adjustments to the program based on interim evaluation. 3. A "welcome back" event should be organized for all program participants.
Phase 5: Implementation: Closure Stage (March '95 - June '95)
1. The program coordinator should prepare for the year-end evaluation. 2. Mentors and OAC facilitators should receive training for closing relationships. 3. A year-end evaluation must be conducted. 4. A special event should be held to celebrate the efforts of all participants.
Phase 6: Planning Anew (May '95 - August '95)
1. The program should be revised based on evaluations and input given during the year. 2. The coordinator should begin preparing for next year's program (return to Phase 2).

Phase 1. Design Considerations. The next stage of the mentorship program, following this groundwork project, involves designing the program.

Estimated Duration: 6 months (October 1993 to March 1994)

1. All groups within the GCI community should be involved in planning a mentorship program (this recommendation extends to implementation and evaluation of the program).

This recommendation for a collaborative process flows from both the literature and the comments of the interview/focus group participants. Personally, I would take this suggestion one step further and insist that designing, implementing, and evaluating a mentorship program must not proceed unless there are substantial, conscientious contributions from the school community The mentorship concept was originally conceived as a self-sustaining program that would utilize resources already present within the school. Such a program cannot perpetually depend on outside resources and consultants; therefore, community members must become involved to learn about, participate in, commit to, and take ownership for a program they will eventually have to run themselves.

I suggest a mentorship program advisory board be established which would include membership from the various stakeholder groups within the school (this may or may not be the STEP Committee). Sharing information with the larger school community and obtaining their input and direction may be facilitated by accessing various stakeholder organizations and events (e.g., Parent Advisory Committee meetings, parents' nights, Students' Council meetings, staff meetings, GCI newsletter). Consultants assisting with the mentorship program must remember to work with the school community; not above it; not for it.

2. Administrative support for the mentorship program must be demonstrated (this recommendation extends to all other phases).

Administrators have a lot of influence over what does and does not happen at their schools. Just as students take their cues from teachers, teaching and support staff members take their cues from administrators. If there does not appear to be "support from the top," then other stakeholder groups will be less likely to support and/or participate in the mentorship program.

When I asked one administrator to identify the grounds on which administrative backing is given to programs/changes she/he stated that for them, the key element was:

> do I think there is a benefit for the students that we can't achieve in some other way that may be less costly or more effective, or whatever. My focus always has to be that we try to do what we think is best for the students in this school.

When I asked this person if she/he had any final comments, she/he responded "I really think it can work, but I think...we do have to work at it." Other administrators have also shown some interest in the program (at least informally); asking on occasion about the progress of this project. Beyond the administration of GCI, there appears to be "support from the top" from another source: the Ministry of Education. I may be stretching inferences by suggesting the Ministry is in favour of the proposed mentorship program for GCI, but I was informed by the administrator I interviewed that, "one of the things the Ministry is saying to us [i.e., secondary schools] is 'you shall have a mentoring program.' They're basically saying that somebody in the school has to take responsibility for knowing the kids in grade 9." Not exactly the same program, but a similar attempt at support.

I think there are several ways to maintain administrative support for the mentorship program, namely: (a) seek administrators' input and advice, (b) provide administrators with regular updates about the program's progress, and (c) "do your homework," i.e., think things through and do some planning before approaching administrators with a proposal.

3. The vision of a school-wide primary prevention program must be retained.

The emphasis on primary prevention stems from the reframing process described in the social context section of this document. Educational/awareness raising programs or interventions

that single out high-risk youth were repudiated for accentuating a secondary preventive stance; in other words these were reactive rather than proactive responses to the problem of youth suicide and depression. The alternative model that was adopted by the STEP Committee is one that seeks to decrease risk factors, youth stress and hassles, and to increase protective factors, social support and coping skills, of *all* students in the GCI community. In the case of the mentorship program I have suggested starting small with a pilot program and phasing in the intervention over a number of years (see design considerations #7 and #4 respectively). This beginning does not reflect primary prevention; however, in time the program would demonstrate a truly proactive response to the problem of youth suicide and depression. Though a school wide program of this nature may be difficult to envision, it is not impossible, and it would be a shame if the school arrested the program's evolution to keep it small for easy management or to service only those students who *actively* demonstrate a need for additional support.

To preserve the primary prevention objective, I advise "starting small, but thinking big." I think as each phase of the program is implemented it should be placed in the context of the larger picture, namely a school-wide program.

4. The program must be considered a long-term initiative that should be implemented in stages over a number of years.

Rather than providing short-term support to adolescents confronting major life crises, the mentorship program would strive to provide youth with constant support throughout their high school years as they experience crises, minor hassles, transitions, as well as triumphs and successes. Large-scale structural changes, like the envisioned mentorship program, generally cannot be implemented overnight, and typically, not even in a year. It takes time for a school

community to accept, integrate, and institutionalize a program/change. It may be easier for GCI to adopt the mentorship program if it is introduced in stages. One parent's comment seems to reflect the attitude of most interview/focus group participants. She/He stated

> that it would be better phasing it [the mentorship program] in, instead of saying wholus-bolus, all right next year everybody in the school is going to do this. I think you start with your 9s and say, okay this year we're just going to do our Grade 9s and then next year we expand it to the 10s, and so our 9s come on board and our 10s stay on board.

From the beginning, the school community must be advised about the long-term nature of the program in order to avoid inappropriate expectations. I anticipate it will take a minimum of five years before the program is fully implemented. A pilot program should be conducted during the first year. If the pilot proves successful, the grade 9 class should be matched with grade 11 mentors. Each successive year, the next class of students would become involved in the program.

5. There should be an individual whose job is to coordinate the program.

Programs cannot and do not run on their own. Someone must be responsible for making sure programs/changes are carried out and that they are carried out properly. In terms of the mentorship program, the coordinator should be someone from the immediate school community. In other words, this person should have daily contact with the school and the program, not be a "sometimes-visitor." The coordinator would perform a number of functions in relation to the program, including. (a) acting as a liaison to the school community, (b) training mentors and OAC facilitators, (c) overseeing the matching process, (d) planning events, (e) administering evaluations, (f) dealing with problems, and (g) attending to managerial responsibilities such as

necessary paperwork. Moreover, this person should be accessible in both personality (i.e., well-liked, approachable) and locality (i.e., office space is provided in a convenient location within the school building), and she/he should be available to participants and other community members during school hours. Finally, coordinating the mentorship program should not become an "extra" responsibility for a staff member. If someone is expected to take on this position out of the goodness of her/his heart, or they are coerced into accepting responsibility there is more chance that she/he may not be the right person for the job or she/he may lose interest in the program, become occupied with other priorities, suffer burnout, and/or do only half the job. The job of mentorship program coordinator should be a paid position (i.e., part of the person's job description) wherein a regular part of the person's day is spent attending to program needs. I think it is reasonable to assume this job would require a half-time position, for example mornings from Monday to Friday.

6. OAC level students could be asked to assist with program coordination.

"Fifteen hundred kids with one coordinator?" As the parent who presented this question realized, coordinating a school-wide mentorship program will be no small task, especially for one individual. Again, however, the school community is not without resources to contend with this obstacle. OAC students could be asked to assist with the program, facilitating small group discussions and lending support to mentors. After a few years OAC students will be ideal candidates for these roles since, as one parent put it, "they've grown up with the program and can offer some hints to the mentors." However, during several focus groups a concern was raised that "the mentor program doesn't become one more source of stress for the kids." OACs are very busy students, thus for them, as well as the coordinator, assisting with the program

should not be an "extra" responsibility. If helping coordinate the program could be contrived as part of their daily routine, OACs might be more willing, and more able to assist.

One possible strategy for encouraging OAC involvement in the program would be to give students academic credit for their participation. Small group facilitation and supporting mentors could be offered as a practicum for OAC students in Peer Helping or other related courses.

7. A pilot or trial version of the program should be conducted before the program is implemented on a large-scale.

When introducing a significant program/change into a setting, a small-scale version should be attempted first. A trial run of the mentorship program will help to identify aspects of the program that should be revised prior to full implementation. Moreover, if the evaluation of the pilot program shows favourable results, the comprehensive mentorship program may gain more credibility and more support from the school community.

The first run of the mentorship program could involve approximately 50 interested students (25 Grade 9s, 25 Grade 11s). Each participating grade 9 student would be matched with a grade 11 student who would then act as their mentor. Seven or eight OAC students could be recruited to facilitate group discussions with three to four mentor/mentee pairs and to provide additional support for three to four mentors. Just prior to commencing the pilot program, baseline information should be collected from the participants as well as from a control group, i.e., students not taking part in the program. The same information should be re-collected at the end of the school year to determine whether there has been a change in students' coping/well-being that may be attributed to the mentorship program. On-going and a year-end evaluation of the pilot version should also provide insight as to how to revise/improve the program for

implementation on a wider scale the following September.

8. The program design must include an evaluation component.

We cannot assume that the mentorship program will effect the expected results (i.e., an improvement in student well-being); nor can we assume that the program does not warrant refinement. We must ask participants as well as members of other stakeholder groups about their experiences with the mentorship program and elicit their suggestions for improvement. This input should be sought throughout the implementation process, but particularly during an interim assessment and a year-end evaluation. Questions need to be asked mid-way through the year so revisions can be made in time to benefit the participants making the suggestions. The year end review should be used to make necessary improvements to the program intended for the following year.

9. The program should be implemented as part of the school routine, not as an "extra" activity.

The need for a built-in program is not unique to the coordinator and the OAC facilitators. Mentors and mentees also must not be asked to accept the mentorship program as an add-on responsibility. Students and parents alike voiced concerns about the already busy schedules of many students. The students who took part in the focus group sessions seemed to agree that their peers would be willing to participate in the mentorship program as long as it did not involve a major time commitment and especially as long as it did not mean an extension to the school day. Hence, however the school community comes to define the mentoring relationship, it must be doable within the stakeholders' regular routines.

10. Consideration must be given to how the mentorship program will affect (positively

and/or negatively) existing aspects of the school.

When planning, implementing, and evaluating the mentorship program attention should be given to how it affects existing aspects of the school. If the mentorship program has a negative impact on other programs or groups of people (e.g., increasing work load), then it is possible the mentorship program along with its participants will experience backlash of some nature. On the other hand, if the mentorship program has a positive impact on other programs or groups (e.g., reducing work-load or increasing effectiveness), then the program is more likely to gain the support and commitment of the school community.

One of the best ways to find out about the impact of a program is simply to ask people. Stakeholders from the various groups within the school community as well as the different organizations/clubs should be asked to give input into the design, implementation, and especially the evaluation of the mentorship program.

11. Provisions must be made for on-going community dialogue about the program, (i.e., there must be a channel through which information can be conveyed to all stakeholders and input can be received from same during all phases of the mentorship program).

Whether it's information going out about program events or concerns being voiced about the program's design, parents, students, teachers, support staff, and administrators need reliable, accessible channels through which to communicate about the mentorship program.

There are numerous ways of maintaining contact with stakeholders, some of which include. (a) phone calls, letters, and/or visits to or from the program coordinator; (b) a secure, centrally located suggestion box that is checked regularly by the program coordinator; (c) one or more visible bulletin boards and/or message boards, and (d) a section in the GCI newsletter.

12. Sufficient resources must be available to meet the needs of the program.

Although the mentorship program would make extensive use of existing school resources (i.e., the students), there still will be a need for some funds and materials. For instance, the coordinator will need some space within the school building; the necessary record keeping will require stationary, or better yet, access to a computer; and any special events should include some form of refreshment. While I am aware of the current funding restraints and I understand that a program should not and cannot exceed what the school can realistically contribute, I still believe the program needs a coordinator and that this person needs to be paid for her/his time and effort. Rather than hiring someone new for this position I think an existing staff person's job description could be redefined to include the role of program coordinator.

At this point in time, I suggest the school rededicate some of 's resources so that a current staff person, probably a guidance counsellor, could assume the role of program coordinator on a half-time basis. Some of the other resources I mentioned should already be available within the school (e.g., space, computers). As for extra money for special events, why not recruit mentor/mentee pairs to cooperatively organize fund raisers (e.g., bake sales, candy grams, raffles, air bands, car washes, etc.)?

13. Participation should be voluntary in the short-term with the long-term expectation that the program will be school-wide.

While the envisioned mentorship program involves the participation of all students, school-wide, I was informed by interview/focus group participants that this would be a difficult goal to achieve. There were concerns that: "some students might not accept having a mentor" (STEP participant); "not everybody's going to be interested in doing it" (Student, group #1);

"OAC students are too busy, they should have the choice of doing it or not" (Student, group #1); "the older students wouldn't do it" (Student, group #2); "it wouldn't be a good idea to involve everybody in the school, people would just goof off" (Student, group #2); "there are many, many people for whom this program wouldn't be at all necessary" (teaching/support staff person), and "you can't just assume that everybody can be the helper, or that everyone needs the help" (teaching/support staff person). To respond to these concerns, I would recommend that the program be implemented on a voluntary basis, at least until it becomes a respected activity within the school community. At the same time, I think people need to be educated about the purpose and benefits of primary prevention. More precisely, people need to hear the message that the mentorship program is not intended to provide help to high-risk individuals in particular, but rather its mission is to disseminate support to all students under the pretext that we can all do more for one another and benefit ourselves at the same time.

14. Participation should involve a one year commitment (i.e., two semesters).

There are a few reasons for recommending a one year commitment from participants. First, it takes a while for people to get to know one another. Second, mentors/mentees need time to establish rapport and trust, key elements of supportive relationships. Finally, it is important that the mentoring relationships be in effect during potentially stressful transitions (e.g., January exams, shifting to a new semester).

15. Participants' roles should be explicitly defined.

Participants need to know exactly what they are supposed to do (and what they are not supposed to do), and if they are not given instructions regarding how to perform their role, they should at least be given some guidelines. Furthermore, to avoid confusion and

misunderstandings, each person should understand the roles of other participants in the program. For example, while it is important for mentors to be clear about their responsibilities and the limits of their position, it is equally important for mentees to be informed about what they should and should not expect from their mentors.

There are a number of ways to convey role information to participants and the wider school community. Verbal explanations can be given: (a) when recruiting OAC facilitators, mentors, and mentees; (b) during facilitator and mentor training sessions, (c) at the initial meeting of mentors and mentees; and (d) informally throughout the year. Written descriptions of the participants' roles should be included in an information letter sent to participants and their parents, and they should also appear in a program manual that could be produced and distributed to all participants and other stakeholder groups in the school.

16. Information about the program should be conveyed using language and terminology that is acceptable to and can be understood by all stakeholder groups (this recommendation extends to all phases of the mentorship program).

As I observed during the focus group sessions, the terms used to communicate about the mentorship program will have considerable influence over the community's response. Generally language must be "with it" or "in." As I mentioned earlier, the stakeholders I spoke with were not enthusiastic about the words "mentor," "mentee," or "mentorship," and there seemed to be some disparity over the term "buddy" (i.e., teaching/support staff thought buddy would be an appropriate term but the students said it was "hurting"). However, since there did not seem to be agreement on any one term, and since no one came up with more suitable expressions I have continued to use "mentor," "mentee," and "mentorship" for the purposes of this document.

Clearly the community must collaborate to arrive at an appropriate vocabulary for describing the mentorship program.

17. Mentor/mentee relationships should involve a one-to-one pairing.

Generally, participants in the interview/focus group sessions agreed that the supportive relationships should occur on a one-to-one basis. There was some discussion around support clusters (i.e., a small group of students who support one another), but this arrangement was usually suggested as an extension of the pairings. When I asked a group of students whether it would be better to match people up one-to-one or to have groups, one person responded, "I think it could be both; groups of one-to-one buddies could get together after school maybe once a week." The original vision of the mentorship program sees all students involved in two one-to-one relationships; one in which they give support and one in which they receive support. Under these conditions the GCI student body would become an interconnected "web of support" (Saulnier, 1982) in that eventually, everyone would be a mentor and have a mentor.

18. The mentor should be two grades ahead of the mentee (i.e., a grade 11 student would be paired with a grade 9 student).

The consensus among focus group participants was that there must be more than one grade difference between mentors and mentees (e.g., not pairing a grade 10 student with a grade 11 student); but this gap should not be too large (e.g., Grade 9s with OACs). The preference seemed to be for a two-grade gap between students which would see Grade 9s paired with Grade 11s, Grade 10s paired with Grade 12s, and so on. A two-grade model should allow for some maturational and experiential differences between mentors and mentees, yet the age difference should still be close enough that the older student can understand and relate to the younger

student's experiences. At the same time, two years is not such a big difference that the relationship will be perceived as "babysitting" (student's word).

19. When possible, mentors and mentees should be of the same gender.

The question of gender (i.e., Would it be appropriate to match a male student with a female student?) was not discussed at length by any group of participants. Nevertheless I do believe this will be an important issue for people to consider when designing the program. Though cross-gender matching may prove to be successful in numerous instances, my own inclination is to pair women with women, and men with men. Adolescence is a time of change and uncertainty for many youth and my feeling is that a mentor of like gender may be better able to relate to and understand the mentee's experiences and thus provide appropriate support. Some support for this inference is provided in the literature. Burke and Weir (1978) "compared male and female adolescents in terms of experienced life stress, social support received from parents and peers, and emotional and physical well-being" (p. 277). The results of their study indicate that female adolescents are "more likely than males to choose same sex peers as helpers" (p. 285).

20. Multiple methods of matching students should be considered.

Considering and incorporating multiple methods of matching mentors and mentees would give the process flexibility and variety. Again, the best way to come up with different methods is to ask stakeholders to submit their ideas.

When asked, the focus group participants quickly came up with some suggestions for matching. Most people agreed that mentors and mentees should be assigned to one another so selection of a partner does not become a popularity contest. At the same time, members of the

teaching and support staff group suggested retaining natural pairs (i.e., two people who already support each other). A few focus groups thought it would be a good idea to consult with teachers (from GCI and from feeder schools), support staff, and parents who could recommend appropriate matches. A popular suggestion was to ask students to fill out questionnaires and then match participants on the basis of compatible responses. Two completely random methods were also suggested, namely to allow a computer to select pairs, or simply pull names from a hat.

21. The mentorship program should be designed to be fun.

Support does not always have to be something serious. Mentorship participants should have fun and enjoy their experiences in the program. Special events, celebrations, activities, and possibly group outings should be considered fundamental components of the program.

One particular proposal brought up in the focus group discussions was to create a mentorship course wherein students would gain course credit for being a mentor or mentee. While this suggestion has merit and could still be considered, I have not submitted it as one of the design considerations. The reason for my resistance stems from a comment made by one student who said if a course was offered and it was popular it might be difficult to get into. When access to the program becomes restricted because of class size, it defeats the vision of a school-wide primary prevention program.

Phase 2: Planning. In this second phase plans and preparations are made for implementing the mentorship program.

Estimated Duration: 5 months (April 1994 to August 1994)

1. All members of the GCI community (not just those who will be directly involved in the program) must be informed as to the purpose, goals, components, and benefits of the

mentorship program.

As I already mentioned, there are numerous outlets for disseminating information to the GCI community about the mentorship program, some of which include: assemblies, staff meetings, Students' Council meetings, Parent Advisory Committee meetings, morning announcements, posters, bulletin boards, and the GCI newsletter.

2. The mentorship program should be consistently advertised or promoted within the school so it becomes a visible part of GCI life (this recommendation extends throughout all phases of the mentorship program).

Again, there are many ways of advertising the program within the school environment (see strategies suggested for previous recommendation).

3. An individual who will assume responsibility for coordinating the various aspects of the mentorship program must be identified.

Finding and selecting the person most suitable for the position of coordinator could be the responsibility of the mentorship program advisory board (see design consideration #1). Engaging the coordinator should occur at the beginning of the planning phase so she/he can attend to planning other program details.

4. A number of grade 12 students (these students will be at the OAC level during the 94/95 school year) should be recruited to assist in the implementation of the mentorship program.

To enlist the assistance of future OAC students, the coordinator could approach grade 12 students in the Peer Helping class and ask for volunteers, or the coordinator could ask teachers, guidance counsellors, and other staff to recommend students that would be interested

in and capable of filling the facilitator positions.

5. Those students who will be participating as mentors and mentees should be identified during this phase.

Potential participants should be identified early on in the planning phase to allow time for information to be collected that will facilitate the matching process. Identifying and gaining access to the future grade 9 students may present some difficulties.

I think another of the coordinator's responsibilities should be to establish links with the various feeder schools to identify the incoming Grade 9s and obtain the necessary information from these students.

6. Information should be gathered from participants to facilitate matching mentors and mentees. The type of information gathered will depend on the method(s) chosen during the design phase of the program (see design consideration #20).

7. The coordinator should establish at least preliminary pairings of mentors and mentees.

I am suggesting that pairings be considered "preliminary" at least until mentors and mentees have had a chance to meet one another. There has to be room for flexibility and shuffling if people are not satisfied or comfortable with their partner. Nevertheless, I think preliminary pairings are important to ensure support is initiated from the onset of the school year, rather than waiting until later in September or October to begin the matching process.

8. The program coordinator should give the prospective mentors and OAC facilitators an initial training session about the program, available resources, their roles and responsibilities, possible activities, etc. Training and "refresher" sessions should be conducted

periodically during subsequent phases of the mentorship program.

9. The content and format of the initial meeting between mentors and mentees should be decided upon and then organized.

The initial meeting can set the tone for the program for the rest of year; thus care must be taken when planning this event.

The gathering itself should should take place on a day during the first week of school, however this meeting should not involve an extended time commitment. Some things that should be part of the initial meeting include: introducing mentors and mentees; establishing small group support clusters; a brief overview of the program and participants' roles and responsibilities; distribution of the program manual, refreshments; and, possibly a group activity that requires mentor/mentee cooperation.

10. An information letter should be mailed home during the latter part of the summer that updates participants about and familiarizes parents with the mentorship program.

This letter should: (a) remind students about their commitment to participate in the program, (b) provide details of the program and any expected activities, (c) inform students about the initial meeting (e.g., location, time), (d) give names and phone numbers of the program coordinator and other contact people, and (e) advise participants and their parents of appropriate methods of communicating about the program.

Phase 3: Implementation: Commencement Stage. The implementation of the program is divided into three segments, the first of which I call the commencement stage.

Estimated Duration: 3 months (September 1994 to November 1994)

1. The initial meeting between mentors and mentees takes place sometime during the

first week of school.

2. Throughout this, and all implementation phases, there should be regular contact of some kind between mentor/mentee pairs, within mentorship groups (i.e., between 3-4 mentor/mentee pairs and an OAC facilitator), and within mentor support circles (i.e., 3-4 mentors and an OAC facilitator).

Depending on the needs of the mentor/mentee, the pair might be in contact daily, every other day, or weekly. The mentorship groups and support circles could meet once every three weeks or once a month.

3. During the commencement stage the coordinator should be making preparations for the interim evaluation.

The specific questions to be asked in an evalution should be decided upon during the design phase. However, the mentorship program coordinator will need to organize the process depending on the evaluation strategy(ies) selected; this may require putting surveys together, arranging times to interview students, etc. The coordinator should also be responsible for notifying participants and other stakeholder groups that an evaluation is forthcoming. Moreover, the coordinator should pre-reserve time in her/his schedule for reviewing the evaluations.

Phase 4: Implementation: Interim Stage. During this second implementation phase students at GCI are on Christmas holidays, writing exams, then making the transition to a new semester.

Estimated Duration: 3 months (December 1994 to February 1995)

1. An interim evaluation should be conducted to assess whether the program is working effectively, to identify any problems or weaknesses of the program, and to elicit suggestions

for improvement.

The specific evaluation strategy(ies) that will be used to asses the mentorship program cannot be determined here. Rather, these are decisions that must be made collaboratively by the program designers, the mentorship advisory board, and the community in general. I can however, predict that a thorough interim (and year-end) evaluation may require more resources (e.g., time, energy, skills) than school community members can provide. Additional resources may be required.

Several individuals/organizations may be available to assist in conducting an evaluation. First, there are several universities in the vicinity that require their B.A. students to complete thesis projects. The community psychology masters program at WLU requires students to work in a practicum setting for at least 200 hours and to complete a community-oriented thesis project. Plans are underway for a doctoral program in community psychology at Laurier which would again require internship and thesis activities. Furthermore, I see no reason why students at GCI could not assume some of the evaluation responsibilities. With the help of outside consultants, a senior class could evaluate the program as a major class project.

2. The coordinator should take the information gathered in the interim report and make any necessary adjustments to the program for the next phase of implementation.

Based on the interim evaluation results, the coordinator, in conjunction with the mentorship advisory board, should make necessary revisions to the program. Appropriate evaluation suggestions that can be accommodated easily should be implemented immediately Other recommendations for improvement should be recorded and considered when planning the program for the following year.

3. A "welcome back" event should be organized for all program participants to allow pairs and small groups to reacquaint themselves after the holidays and exams.

Phase 5: Implementation: Closure Stage. The closure stage represents the final phase of implementation.

Estimated Duration: 4 months (March 1995 to June 1995)

1. Early on in the closure stage the program coordinator should make appropriate preparations for the year-end evaluation (see interim stage recommendation #3).

2. Mentors and OAC facilitators should be given a training session to prepare them for bringing the mentor/mentee and small group relationships to a close.

Although the connection between mentors and mentees may continue after the school year ends, the specific mentoring relationships must be closed. However, there is more to withdrawing from a relationship than saying "good-bye."

There are many support-oriented organizations in the area that provide their volunteers with training to help them successfully withdraw from their relationships (e.g., Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Friends Program). Perhaps the mentorship program coordinator could contact these orgainzations to get suggestions for training mentors and OAC students to separate from their mentees and small group support circles.

3. A year-end evaluation must be conducted, again to assess the effectiveness of the mentorship program, to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to generate suggestions for improvement.

All groups in the GCI community should be included in the year-end evaluation. It will be important to determine the impact of the program school-wide. However, involving different

stakeholder groups will likely necessitate a variety of evaluation strategies.

Again, I suggest approaching outside resources to help with the evaluation process.

4. A special event should be held to celebrate and recognize the efforts of all participants.

A year-end social event will help provide closure, not only to the various relationships, but to the program itself.

Phase 6: Planning Anew. Phase six represents the final phase in one mentorship program cycle, and the beginning of another.

Estimated Duration: 5 months (May 1995 to August 1995)

1. The results of the interim and year-end evaluations along with the input received throughout the year should be used to revise and improve the program for the following school year.

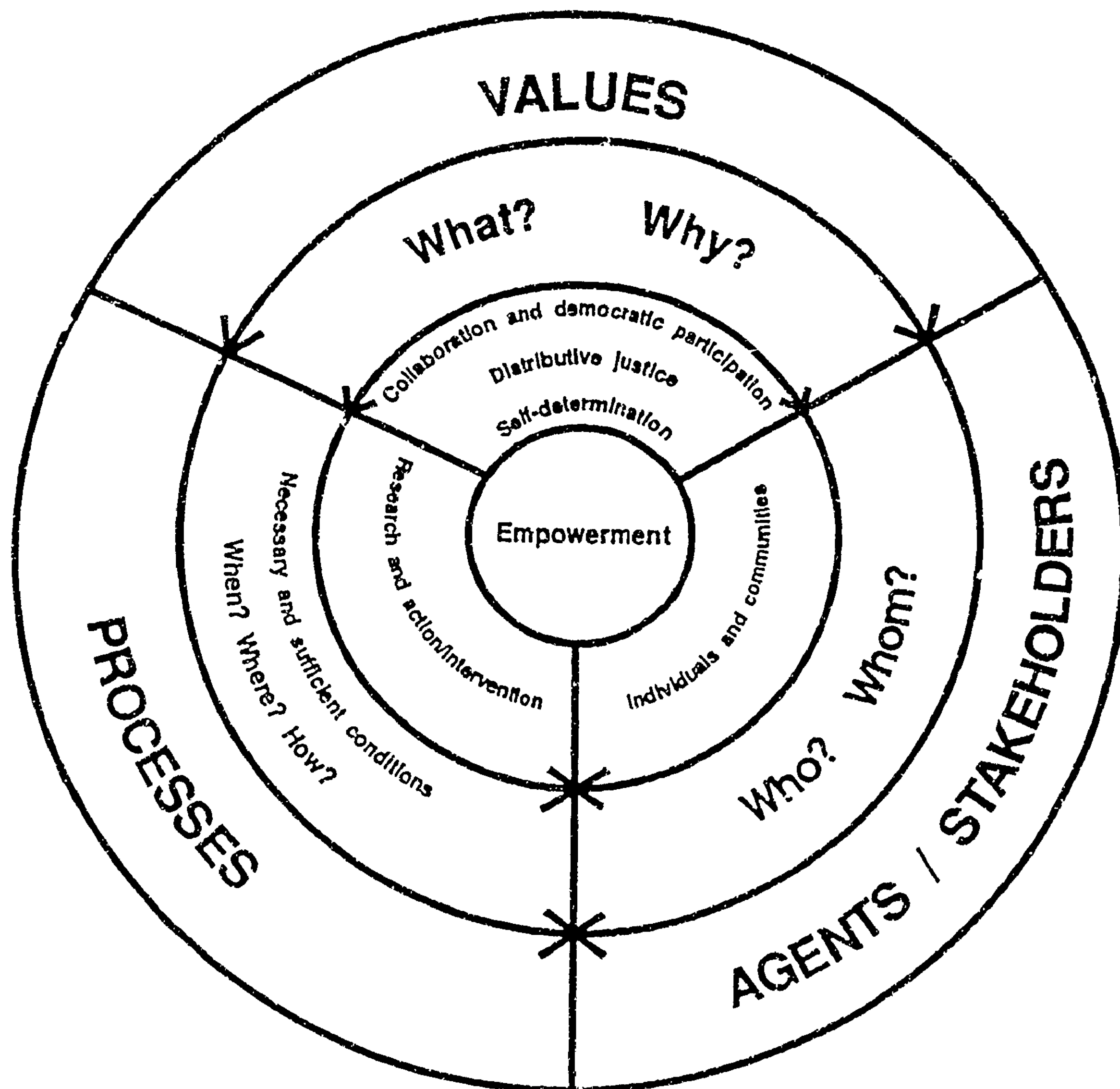
2. The coordinator should begin preparations for implementing the mentorship program the following September (return to Phase 2).

Grounded Theory and the Empowerment Agenda

Upon reflection of the data, it is interesting to note the main components of the grounded theory presented above and the subsequent recommendations for a peer mentoring program tend to validate the integrative conceptual model of empowerment proposed by Prilleltensky (in press, see Figure 3). In other words, when participants were asked to describe a successful school change process, they described elements of change that are congruent with empowerment values This lends support for the proposition that the best way to approach change in schools, and possibly other organizations as well, is through a process that empowers the people in the

setting.

Figure 3. "A descriptive and prescriptive model of empowerment." From "Empowerment in mainstream psychology: Legitimacy, obstacles, and possibilities" by I. Prilleltensky, in press, *Canadian Psychology*.



To show the parallels between empowerment models of change and the grounded theory formulated here, I turn first to the model advanced by Prilleltensky. According to Prilleltensky's model, empowerment is comprised of three main elements: values, agents/stakeholders, and processes. The three key *values* of empowerment, namely, self-determination, distributive justice, and collaboration and democratic process were presented at the beginning of this document as one of the project's three leading frameworks. As Figure 3 shows, these values influence both the agents/stakeholders and processes of empowerment (note arrows pointing from values to agents/stakeholders and processes). *Agents* and *stakeholders* are terms that describe the people engaged in empowering processes. Agents both facilitate and participate in empowerment Stakeholders are the people who are supposed to benefit from the intervention. They, too, can become agents of empowerment later on. *Processes* refers to the "necessary and sufficient conditions for [empowerment] to develop" (Prilleltensky, in press, p. 9). The interrelationship between the people and the processes is indicated in Figure 3 by arrows converging at the juncture between agents/stakeholders and processes.

The main elements of the grounded theory developed within this research parallel Prilleltensky's (in press) model of empowerment. Community ownership, attention to human factors, and proper implementation tend to parallel the three key components of the model presented in Figure 3, namely values, agents/stakeholders, and processes, respectively

The *values* of distributive justice, self-determination, and collaboration and democratic process are reflected in the *community ownership* section of the grounded theory. The value of distributive justice is applied when determining need for a program/change. Stakeholders must decide whether resources should be allocated to a particular program/change or if they should

be channelled elsewhere. Self-determination is linked to two factors within the grounded theory, specifically internal impetus for change and tailoring programs. Both of these factors highlight the need for stakeholders to initiate and define programs/changes that will respond to their needs, rather than accept imposed agendas for change. The third empowerment value, collaboration and democratic process, appears in the grounded theory as the need for stakeholder collaboration and consensus of agenda. People are empowered when they have a voice and a say in the changes that affect their lives. The *processes* through which community ownership develops have been described by other authors (e.g., Czukar, 1987).

The *agents/stakeholders* section of the empowerment model matches the *attention to human factors* portion of the grounded theory presented herein. The "people issues" defined in the theory are as follows:

1. stakeholders' willingness to change and/or adopt new programs;

2. effective and appropriate communication between stakeholders and agents;

3. building trust between agents and stakeholders and within stakeholders themselves;

4. ensuring agents/stakeholders have sufficient time, energy, and skills to engage in an intervention;

5. assuring stakeholders are capable of, and confident in carrying out their responsibilities by providing appropriate training;

6. encouraging peer support for program participants; and

7. recognizing the efforts and accomplishments of program participants.

The support-related issues described within this section of the theory are reminiscent of Sarason's (1974) discussion about "the psychological sense of community," whereby people

function and work best when feeling supported.

The *processes*, or "necessary and sufficient conditions" (Prilleltensky, in press, p. 9) of empowerment are described in the grounded theory under the heading "*proper implementation.*" Various resources are required for successful implementation of programs/changes including. people, materials, planning sessions, training programs, pilot programs, and evaluations. Additionally, stakeholders must maintain a long-term view of change, programs must be initiated at the *right* times; safeguards must be in place to respond to unintended, secondary consequences of interventions; and agents and stakeholders must engage in open communication. The importance of proper implementation is imparted in the ecological principles (Nelson, 1983, Trickett et al., 1972) described earlier as part of the conceptual framework of this research. Emulating the relationships indicated in the empowerment model (note arrows in Figure 3), community ownership influences both human factors or considerations and the implementation process. As well, proper implementation and human considerations impact upon one another.

In summary, the research presented herein tends to support the notion that meaningful change can best happen through an empowering process. This is what stakeholders thought will lead to successful change at GCI.

Reflections on the Research and Action

Limitations of the Study

There are numerous ways this investigation could have been done differently. There are also a number of ways that this project could have been done better. I would like to draw attention to two specific limitations of this study. The first limitation relates to the low number of participants who took part in the focus group sessions, in particular the parent (four participants) and the teaching and support staff (four participants) discussions. I can suggest a few alternative explanations for the low participation rates, besides lack of interest. In regards to the parents, there was stormy winter weather on the evening this group was asked to meet at GCI. This may have deterred some parents from attending the session. Also, it may be that I chose an ineffective means of announcing the parents' focus group (i.e., an ad in the local newspaper), though in response to a STEP questionnaire, parents suggested communication through local media as a reliable method of conveying information. The lack of attendance at the teaching and support staff group may be explained by the fact that the session was scheduled for the first lunch period during which time approximately half of the people in this group would have been unavailable. It is also conceivable that some of the available staff did not want to give up their lunch period, and perhaps their only break during the day, to take part in the exercise. While I think the low participation rate may have limited the strength (in numbers) of support for, or opposition to various dimensions of the change at GCI, I think, even with the small groups of people I interviewed, a saturation point was reached with the contributions (i.e., groups were saying the same things).

The second, and possibly most important, limitation of this project was the lack of

exploration regarding the culture of GCI. I realize that a fundamental part of the change process involves getting to know and understand the culture of the setting (Sarason, 1982, 1990), yet I did not have sufficient resources to conduct a intensive, long-term ethnographic investigation of the school. In the early stages of this project I intended to devote time and attention to exploring various dimensions of GCI's culture. However, after some discussion my thesis committee and I decided to forego the broader cultural inquiry and focus specifically on the dimension of change. To compensate for this limitation, I relied on the knowledge I have gained about the school over the two years I consulted with GCI. In addition I have recommended ongoing, compulsory participation from the GCI community in the evolution of the mentorship program The stakeholders who experience the cultural flux of the school must critically evaluate the recommendations presented in this document as well as all future developments in order to ensure that any new program or change responds to their unique needs.

My Experiences

While the total experience of participating on the STEP Committee and working on the mentorship project has been unique, challenging, and remarkable, there are a few details that stand out for me. First, I learned an important lesson in consultation. Before contracting her/his services a consultant must determine whether or not she/he can realistically and responsibly consult in the given context. If there is some question about the problem definition or the consultant's role, the consultant must negotiate with the setting to reach an appropriate contract (O'Neill & Trickett, 1982). Originally when I agreed to work on the mentorship initiative as my thesis project, the idea was for me to develop the actual program. However, after much reading and contemplation I decided I was neither comfortable with my role, nor properly equipped to

assume responsibility for designing *the* program. Most of all I became concerned that commencing with the development of the program itself was not the right next step. Consequently I proposed a *groundwork* project that would inform the design of a mentorship program, a task I felt comfortable with and capable of accomplishing. The STEP Committee agreed.

The second lesson I learned was how challenging it is to work as an outside consultant, especially in a school setting. I think for a consultant to be effective she/he must have an advocate within the immediate school community. I'm not sure exactly how I would have managed if I did not have the support and assistance of a particular GCI counsellor. Among other things, this person introduced me to people in the school community, acted as a liaison, arranged for me to speak at staff meetings and Parent Advisory Committee meetings, booked rooms for the focus groups, but most importantly, made me feel at home each time I visited the school.

Throughout the last two years I have also learned the value of the statement that "practice makes perfect." While my consultation skills are far from "perfect," this project has provided me with opportunities to test or "practice" the skills I learned in the classroom. I can say, without hesitation, that I have become a better organizer, coordinator, facilitator, and leader. Yet by far, the most significant personal change I have experienced as a result of this project has been an increase in self-confidence and proficiency in speaking to groups of people.

I think when you can come out of two years of intensive study on a particular project and you can truly say that you are still motivated and excited, it has been a positive experience. I'm still motivated. I'm still excited.

Summary and Conclusion

In closing, I would like to recap the main contributions of this study. First, this thesis contains a unique literature review in which I address the process of introducing programs or making changes in schools; an area often neglected by authors reporting on new programs/changes. In this "focus on process" section I discussed traditional, organizational development, and community-oriented approaches to consultation in schools. I also produced an inventory of the various factors identified by authors as impacting on the success or failure of school-based programs/changes. Although several authors consistently appear as contributors (e.g., Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991), I did not encounter in the literature any index of factors affecting change in schools that was more extensive than the list I put together. In the second half of the review I examined the content of school-based prevention programs, paying particular attention to mentoring interventions that have been implemented in school settings. My search of the literature did not uncover any comprehensive compilations of school-based mentoring programs. Hence, I believe this segment of the review represents one of the first attempts to assemble descriptions of and information about the different mentoring programs that have been and are currently being implemented schools.

Second, I created an analytical framework, namely the qualitative comparative analysis, that was useful for organizing data. The design of the framework was distinctive in that it yielded a visual representation of all the information collected from each stakeholder group in response to the six main questions. Colour-coding the category pairs reduced the confusion created by more words, and made it easy for me to pinpoint and connect factors across both stakeholder groups and discussion questions. The qualitative comparative analysis is a technique

that I will certainly consider when faced with the task of organizing data in the future.

Third, I proposed a grounded theory for successful change in secondary schools. This theory is innovative, in that it integrates a multitude of factors and organizes them according to three major themes, namely community ownership, attention to human factors, and proper implementation. While many authors refer to factors affecting their interventions, their attention to these issues tends to be cursory. Few authors go into detail about specific factors, and fewer still attempt to synthesize numerous factors into superordinate categories of change. In fact, only in the last half year have I discovered sources in which authors advance comprehensive theories of change in schools, analogous to the theory provided herein (e.g., Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Generating and communicating such theories is an important exercise since these theories can provide direction and instruction for consultants, and school communities alike when planning new programs/changes.

Fourth, prior to presenting the recommendations for action, I identified and discussed several key features of successful social support programs in secondary schools. This list of factors constitutes a contribution to the literature, in that nowhere, in all the sources I reviewed, did I come across a thorough analysis of the factors affecting social support programs, especially in the wider context of change in schools.

Finally, I proposed recommendations for proceeding with the next stages of designing, implementing, and evaluating a peer support program for students at GCI. In general, these recommendations were derived from a synthesis of the grounded theory for change in secondary schools, the information gathered from stakeholders in the GCI community, the relevant literature on schools, change, prevention, and social support, and my two years of experience

as a consultant at GCI. Providing suggestions for continuing with the mentorship program satisfied the project's primary action goal. In conclusion, this project consolidates the literature, informs theory, and advocates action.

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Appendix A

Focus Group Invitation to Parents

139 HOME RENOVATION

RENOVATIONS/IMPROVEMENTS — Complete home and small business repairs. Plans drawn to specifications. Door/window repairs and replacements Siding, soffit, fascia, rec rooms, bathrooms, painting, drywall, trimming, and all phases of carpentry. Plumbing repairs Free estimates. Call Mike, 653-4788.

JKS HANDY SERVICES — Renovations, ceramic tiles, plumbing, decks, luminous ceilings, most home repairs. Work guaranteed. Call John, 658-9116 (tf)

MYERS & MARROCCO — Specializing in home improvements Interior/exterior painting, renovations of bathrooms, rec rooms and kitchens. Call Pat at 650-2561 or Dino at 740-2589.

QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN — Specializing in updating older homes CSA approved by Ontario Hydro Call Mike, 653-4788.

ADAM HOME IMPROVEMENTS — Basements, kitchens, bathrooms. Quality work. Low rates. Call Adam 740-3072.

RON'S WOODWORKING AND RENOVATIONS — Additions, kitchens, bathrooms, drywall, ceramic tile. References, guaranteed. 30 years experience Ron Germaine 621-1095.

140 BUSINESS SERVICES

CAR PROBLEMS — Licensed mechanic interested in doing work in spare time All repairs, all makes and models Call Adam 650-2306.

CUSTOM REFINISHING — Antique and modern furniture and kitchen cupboards. In-home estimates. Call Bruce at 621-8105.

DRINKING WATER Purification. Counter top, under sink units. Reverse osmosis. Reasonably priced Mapp Marketing, 740-0337.

M-D SECRETARIAL SERVICES — Letters, reports, essays, manuals, resumes, Laser Printer. Reasonable rates Call 622-8102.

MOVING? — Man with truck and equipment will assist. Extra men available Low rates Call 650-0722.

AFFORDABLE BOOKKEEPING
- Small Business Personalized
- Books / Systems / Taxes
- Free Initial Appointment

Stoltz & Associates
740-8322

140 BUSINESS SERVICES

ARE YOU MOVING? — Pick-up truck and cube van available Reasonable rates Call Pete 650-0040

PRECISION PAINTING — Painting interior, exterior and wallpapering Will undercut any other professionally written estimate Quality workmanship Call Dean 650-0511.

RELIABLE MAN with van ready for quick delivery or moving for you Low rates. Call George 740-3072.

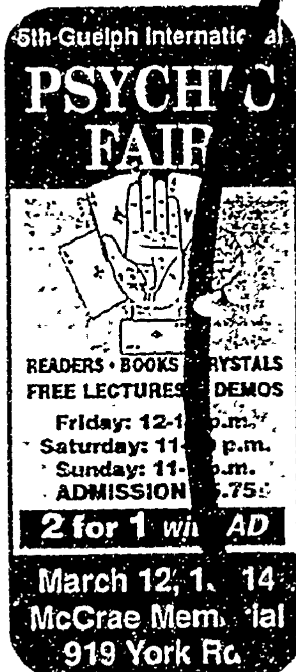
143 MUSICAL INSTRUCTION

GUITAR LESSONS for all ages $15/hour. One-on-one. Call 624-0197, Monday to Thursday, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

149 MISCELLANEOUS CLASSES

FRENCH, SPANISH LESSONS by professional. Flexible time. Special children's classes. Call and register now, 894-8613.

150 COMING EVENTS



151 ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES Spring Showsale. Friday, March 12, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday/Sunday, March 13/14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. $3 admission . Ancaster Fair Grounds. Highway 53, Ancaster. Bigger and better for our 10th year

157 COMPANIONS

153 ANNOUNCEMENTS

PARENTS OF STUDENTS attending Galt Collegiate are invited to attend a discussion hour on Thursday, March 11, from 7 p.m. until approximately 8 p.m. in Student Services (located in the Guidance office) Please enter the school through the main front door. The focus of the discussion will be on identifying various factors that affect the success and/or failure of programs at GCI, particularly programs intended to provide social support to members of the school's community Parental input on this topic would be greatly appreciated This session will be coordinated by Leslea Peirson, a member of GCI's STEP Committee and a graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier Please call and leave you name and number with Tish Hardy in Guidance if you are planning to attend the group If you are unable to attend the session, but would like to contribute your thoughts and/or experiences, please contact Leslea Peirson either through Ms Hardy or through the secretary in the Psychology office at Wilfrid Laurier (884-1970 ext 2371)

BRISA LATINA BOUTIQUE
Unisex Clothing/Crafts
Craft Jewellery
New Business
Extra 10% OFF with this ad.
840 King St. E. 650-0374

153 ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONE-OF-A-KIND BOARDING HOME for Seniors in Cambridge
2 Linwood Avenue
WILL OPENING JAN. 25, 1993
information write to P.O. BOX A1035 CAMBRIDGE REPORTER 621-5234

156 PERSONALS

IN-DEPTH PSYCHIC
20 years experience, tarot cards, psychometry (jewellery) and photograph readings Bring tape Brantford 4 minutes from Cambridge Barbara Wood, 1-756-1793

183 BEAUTY SERVICES HAIR CARE

HAIR AND NAILS
Done in the comfort of your own home 8 years experience LOW! LOW PRICES! Call 624-5779

UNABLE TO GET OUT FOR QUALITY HAIR CARE? Hairstylist years experience will come to home to perm, colour or cut family's hair Call Michele, 2-6138

Earn extra mo
Routes avail
CAMBRIDGE Times
Blue
Glenmorris / Second
Glenmorris / Stanley
Forrest Rd. / Berkley
Birch / Servise
Beesley Cres.

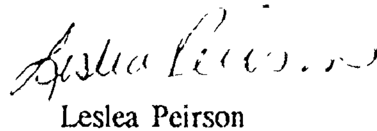
— GARAGE SALE KITS —
Get your FREE Garage Sale Kit when you

Appendix B

Focus Group Invitation to Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff are invited to attend a discussion hour during C Block (11:30 to 12:48) on Thursday March 4th in room 201. Lunch will be provided. The purpose of this discussion is to provide teaching and support staff with an opportunity to participate in the planning-stages of a school-wide peer mentoring (or 'buddy') program for students at GCI. The focus of the discussion will be on identifying various factors that affect the success and/or failure of programs at GCI, particularly programs intended to provide social support to members of the school's community. This session will be facilitated by Leslea Peirson, a member of GCI's STEP Committee and a graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier. Please leave your name with Tish Hardy in Guidance if you are planning to attend the group. If you are unable to attend the session, but would like to contribute your thoughts and/or experiences, please contact me through Ms. Hardy or through the secretary in the Psychology office at WLU (884 1970 ext 2371).

Thanks,



Leslea Peirson

Appendix C

Interview/Focus Group Guide Used by Facilitators

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

- what is a focus group?
- personal information about myself (name, student, STEP committee, one year with setting)
- STEP committee information (what name stands for, our mission)
- here to share an idea STEP has for a program and get your input
- background investigation to help ease implementation of program
- here to ask questions about efforts to make changes within the school so we can learn what to do, and what to avoid doing
- when I say "changes" I am talking about changes in the way GCI is run that affect most if not all the people involved with the school (e.g., changing the schedule/timetable), not changes to specific individuals, curriculums, or programs (e.g., LINK - ESL program, new math)
- I would also like to get your input on how best to approach a specific change at GCI, namely a school-wide mentoring program
- please remember that what we talk about in this group should remain confidential and anonymous

QUESTIONS

General Changes in School Structures

1. Could you/we talk about some of the changes you are aware of that have occurred or are presently occurring at GCI, that have influenced or will influence the way the school is run?

a) What are some things that facilitated these changes?
(PROBES: open mind, tolerance and patience, consultive, built-in, tailoring, paid, recognition of effort, peer support, administrative involvement, evaluation)

b) What are some things that inhibited these changes?
(PROBES: closed mind, intolerance and quick fix, laid-on, temporary or add-on, pre fabrication, voluntary, lack of recognition of effort, lack of peer support, lack of administrative involvement, lack of evaluation)

Specific Changes for a Mentoring Program

2.a) Are you aware of any efforts that have been made or are presently being made to increase the amount of social support received by members of the GCI community?

b) If yes: Could you describe these efforts?

c) What are some things that facilitated these attempts at support?
(PROBES: open mind, tolerance and patience, consultive, built-in, tailoring, paid, recognition of effort, peer support, administrative involvement, evaluation)

d) What are some things that inhibited these attempts at building support among members of the GCI community?
(PROBES: closed mind, intolerance and quick fix, laid-on, temporary or add-on, pre-fabrication, voluntary, lack of recognition of effort, lack of peer support, lack of administrative involvement, lack of evaluation)

INFORMATION ABOUT MENTORING PROGRAM IDEA

- school-wide peer mentoring program for students
- goal is to increase availability of social support → increase well-being
- use of resources already available within the school
- something that becomes a part of the regular school routine, not just another program

3.a) What are some things you believe may facilitate the implementation of a supportive peer mentoring program for students at GCI?
(PROBES. open mind, tolerance and patience, consultive, built-in, tailoring, paid, recognition of effort, peer support, administrative involvement, evaluation)

b) What are some things you believe may inhibit the implementation of a supportive peer mentoring program for students at GCI?
(PROBES. closed mind, intolerance and quick fix, laid-on, temporary or add-on, pre-fabrication, voluntary, lack of recognition of effort, lack of peer support, lack of administrative involvement, lack of evaluation)

ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR GCI ADMINISTRATOR ONLY

c) What necessary components would have to be incorporated into a student mentoring program for it to receive both moral and material support from GCI administration and at the Board level?
(PROBES: funding proposal, funding availability, evaluation, demonstrated approval/acceptance of program by school community, regular record keeping, academic elements)

Providing Closure to the Interview/Focus Group Session

4. How did you feel about this interview/session in terms of

a) the content?

b) the process?

c) Could you provide any suggestions about how to improve either the content or the process of upcoming interviews/focus groups?

Appendix D

Focus Group/In-person Interview Discussion Guide Given to Participants

Discussion Guide

1.a) What are some of the changes[1] and/or programs you are aware of that have occurred or are presently occurring at GCI, that have influenced or will influence the way the school is run? (for example: the change in the schedule from one lunch period to two lunch periods)

b) What are some things that helped these changes take place at GCI?

c) What are some things that limited or even prevented these changes from occurring?

2.a) What are some of the efforts that have been made or are presently being made to increase the amount of social support received by members of the GCI community?
(for example: the Care for a Kid program that matches teachers with high-risk students)

b) What are some things that helped to increase the success of these attempts at support?

c) What are some things that limited or prevented these attempts at building support among members of the GCI community?

The next question deals specifically with the development of a mentoring program for students at GCI. In earlier meetings the STEP Committee considered the importance of the following points when discussing the development of a mentoring program:

- school-wide peer mentoring program for students (all students would be involved)
- goal is to increase availability of social support which may lead to an increase in well-being
- use of resources already available within the school
- mentoring become a part of the regular school routine

3.a) What are some things you believe may help the implementation of a supportive peer mentoring program for students at GCI?

b) What are some things you believe may limit or prevent the implementation of a supportive peer mentoring program for students at GCI?

(additional question for GCI administrator)
c) What necessary components would have to be incorporated into a student mentoring program for it to receive both moral and material support from GCI administration and at the Board level?

---

[1]When thinking about change at GCI please try to focus on changes that have affected the way the school is run and/or that affect most if not all members of the GCI community (e.g., changes to the daily rotation schedule, destreaming) rather than focusing on changes that affect specific individuals, curricula, or programs (e.g., English as a Second Language - LINC, "new math" curriculum).

Appendix E

Introductory Letter and Consent Form for Focus Group Participants

Wilfrid Laurier University

Founded 1911

Dear Participant and Parent/Guardian: February, 1993

My name is Leslea Peirson and I am a graduate student in Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, working under the supervision of Isaac Prilleltensky, PhD. Since fall 1991 I have been a member of GCI's STEP Committee. STEP stands for Students, Teachers, Extras (consultants from the Board of Education and Wilfrid Laurier), and Parents. This committee was formed to explore ways of reducing stress and promoting the well-being of all members of the GCI community. One of the projects STEP has been investigating is the development of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI. Of course, we hope that the program design will suit the unique environment of GCI and will effectively reduce students' stress and well-being. We think that knowing about other programs and changes that have happened at GCI will help in the design of a mentoring program. Since you have been connected with GCI for some time, I would consider you to be the expert on what has changed about the school

The purpose of this focus group session is to share your experiences with, and thoughts about change at GCI. We will be talking about structural changes of GCI, that is, changes that have affected the way the school is run and/or changes that have affected everyone in the school rather than specific individuals We will also be talking about your ideas, opinions, and suggestions for setting up and running a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI.

It is up to you, and if you are a student under 18 years of age it is also up to your parent/guardian, as to whether you wish to participate in the discussion. Students who are 18 years of age or older do not need parental consent. However, parents are encouraged to ask any questions they might have. Students who need parental consent are also asked to sign the consent form to ensure that their participation is voluntary. While I appreciate your input, please remember that your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to respond to one or more of the questions, or you may choose, at any time, to withdraw from the group.

To help me process all of the information that is shared, I would like to tape record all focus group sessions. I will be the only person who has access to the tape recordings which will be completely erased (approximately one month) after the sessions have been recorded. All names and personal identity information revealed in the discussion will not be recorded in any documents. If any member of the group does not agree to have the session tape recorded, detailed notes of the session will be taken instead. If I would like to incorporate the exact words of any participant into my thesis document, I will first contact that individual to ensure that the person agrees and confirms that there is no identifying information within the quote.

Feedback information about this project will be available to you near the end of the school year, 1992-93 (approximately May 31st). If you have any questions please feel free to call either myself (884-1970, ext.2371, leave a message with the secretary, I will return your call) or my advisor (884-1970, ext. 2989). Thank you for your time and interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Leslea Peirson   Isaac Prilleltensky   C.W. Wilson

Department of Psychology
Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo Ontario Canada N2L 3C5 (519) 884-1970 Fax (519) 746-7605

Wilfrid Laurier University

Founded 1911

Consent Form

I am willing to participate in a focus group discussion about how changes are made at GCI that will be facilitated by Leslea Peirson, a graduate student from Wilfrid Laurier University who is under the supervision of Isaac Prilleltensky, PhD. I understand that participation in this session is completely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any point during the focus group discussion (Please check the appropriate space below.)

YES_____ NO_____

Participant's name:_______________________________

Participant's signature:____________________________

Parent/Guardian's signature:_________________________
(if participant is a student under age 18)

I agree to have the session tape recorded: YES_______ NO______

I would be willing to review a written reproduction of the session in order to confirm the accuracy of the translation: YES______ NO______

I would like to receive feedback about the project in the following form (please check):
_____ a) a letter
_____ b) a phone call
_____ c) an information session
_____ d) I do not wish to receive feedback about this project
_____ e) other (please specify)_____________________

Feedback should be available near the end of the school year 1992-93. Please indicate how I can best contact you about permission to include direct quotes, the written summaries of your session, and/or with feedback information about the project.

____

____

____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND YOUR TIME

Department of Psychology
Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo Ontario Canada [illegible]

Appendix F

Introductory Letter and Consent Form for In-Person Interview

Wilfrid Laurier University

Founded 1911

Dear Participant: February, 1993

My name is Leslea Peirson and I am a graduate student in Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, working under the supervision of Isaac Prilleltensky, PhD. Since fall 1991 I have been a member of GCI's STEP Committee. STEP stands for Students, Teachers, Extras (consultants from the Board of Education and Wilfrid Laurier), and Parents. This committee was formed to explore ways of reducing stress and promoting the well-being of all members of the GCI community. One of the projects STEP has been investigating is the development of a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI Of course, we hope that the program design will suit the unique environment of GCI and will effectively reduce students' stress and well-being. We think that knowing about other programs and changes that have happened at GCI will help in the design of a mentoring program. Since you have been connected with GCI for some time, I would consider you to be the expert on what has changed about the school

The purpose of this informal interview is for you to share with me your experiences with, and thoughts about change at GCI. I would like to talk about structural changes of GCI, that is, changes that have affected the way the school is run and/or changes that have affected everyone in the school rather that specific individuals. I would also like to talk about your ideas, opinions, and suggestions for setting up and running a school-wide peer mentoring program for students at GCI. It is up to you, as to whether you wish to participate in the interview. While I appreciate your input, please remember that your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to respond to one or more of the questions, or you may choose, at any time, to withdraw from the interview.

To help me process all of the information that is shared, I would like to tape record the interview I will be the only person who has access to the tape recording which will be completely erased (approximately one month) after the session has been recorded. All names and personal identity information revealed in the discussion will not be recorded in any documents. If you do not agree to have the interview tape recorded, I will take detailed notes of the session instead. If I would like to incorporate a direct quote from our discussion into my thesis document, I will first contact you for your permission and to ensure that that there is no identifying information within the quote.

Feedback information about this project will be available to you near the end of the school year, 1992-93 (approximately May 31st). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either myself (884-1970 ext. 2371, leave a message with the secretary and I will return your call) or my advisor (884 1970 ext.2989). Thank you for your time and interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Leslea Peirson

Isaac Prilleltensky

Department of Psychology

Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Wilfrid Laurier
University

Consent Form

I am willing to participate in an informal interview about how changes are made at GCI that will be conducted by Leslea Peirson, a graduate student from Wilfrid Laurier University who is under the supervision of Isaac Prilleltensky, PhD. I understand that participation in this session is completely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any point during the interview. (Please check the appropriate space below.)

YES_____ NO_____

Participant's name:________________________________

Participant's signature:_____________________________

I agree to have the session tape recorded. YES_______ NO_______

I would be willing to review a written reproduction of the session in order to confirm the accuracy of the translation: YES_______ NO_______

I would like to receive feedback about the project in the following form (please check).

_____ a) a letter
_____ b) a phone call
_____ c) an information session
_____ d) I do not wish to receive feedback about this project
_____ e) other (please specify)______________________

Feedback should be available near the end of the school year 1992-93. Please indicate how I can best contact you about permission to use direct quotes, with a written reproduction of the session, and/or with feedback information about the project.

____

____

____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND HAVE IT WITH YOU AT THE INTERVIEW.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND YOUR TIME

Appendix G

Sample Letter Accompanying Transcripts

March 23, 1993

Dear Parents' Focus Group Participant,

On your consent form you indicated that you would be willing to look over a transcript of the parents' focus group session held on March 11th. As you can see, there is a lot of information here, so it's up to you whether you would like to review the whole discussion, or whether you would prefer to review just your comments. Keep in mind however, that you still have the option of not reviewing the session transcript.

The reason I am asking people to review the discussion is to make sure that I have recorded people's comments accurately[1] and fairly. If you don't think I have done this, please make corrections on your copy of the transcript. If you want to clarify your comments, please do so. You are also free to add on to your own or other's comments, or to contribute additional points that were not brought up during our discussion. In addition, please indicate which, if any, comments you do not want quoted directly (i.e., word-for-word) in either my thesis document or other feedback materials for this project (for example, if you do not want to be identified and printing a specific comment would disclose your identity in some way). To protect the privacy of your fellow participants as well as yourself, I ask that you treat this document as confidential material.

I would really appreciate receiving your feedback as soon as possible. I am hoping to spend the month of April compiling and analyzing all the information. So, if you decide you're still interested in reviewing the session, please seal the transcript with your comments in the envelope provided and slip it into the mail. I have already put sufficient postage on the return envelope.

Thanks again for your help. Sincerely,

Leslea Peirson

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[1]Just a note I didn't include all of the "ums" and "uhs" that were said throughout the discussion.

Appendix H

Letter Accompanying Feedback Package

Wilfrid Laurier University

Founded 1911

Dear Participant,

May 21, 1993

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for sharing your experiences with, and thoughts about change at Galt Collegiate during the discussion groups I ran between February 23rd and March 11th. I collected a lot of valuable information that will be very useful in guiding the development of a peer support program for students at GCI. During the 93/94 school year the STEP Committee will continue looking at developing and implementing such a program.

I would like to remind you that I plan to use some quotes from the discussions to illustrate or highlight the various themes that emerge from the data. About two months ago I sent out a number of transcripts for participants to review, many of which were returned to me. I have deleted or changed comments as people requested. To further ensure the anonymity of participants I will not use any quotes that I believe will identify the speaker, nor will I use any names. If however, for any reason, you are not comfortable with being quoted, even anonymously, please contact me through the psychology office at Laurier 9884-1970 ext. 2371) or through my advisor, Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky (884-1970 ext 6989).

In this package I have provided you with: a) a brief overview of the information shared during the five discussion groups and one in-person interview, and b) some preliminary recommendations about how to proceed with the development, implementation, and evaluation of a peer support program for students at GCI. I plan to complete my thesis before the end of the summer, therefore, if you would like to review a more thorough document, a copy of my thesis will be available at GCI in the fall.

A number of people who participated in the discussions requested feedback in the form of an information session. If you are interested in speaking further with me about this project, I will be at Galt Collegiate on June 1st between 12:00 and 1:30pm. Please come to the Student Services room located in Guidance. If this time is not convenient please contact me through one of the two numbers I listed above to arrange another time.

Thanks again for contributing your time and ideas to this project.

Sincerely,

Leslea Peirson

Department of Psychology
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3C5 (519) 884-1970 Fax (519) 746-7605

Appendix I

Feedback Package

Who were the Participants?

A total of 31 people contributed their thoughts, opinions, and ideas to this project. The number of participants in each of the five discussion groups was as follows: parents group, 4; teaching and support staff, 4; student group #1, 7; student group #2, 9; and, STEP Committee, 6. I also conducted an in-person interview with one of GCI's administrators. In terms of gender, 19 participants were women and 12 were men.

Overview of Findings

The purpose of this project was to find out how change happens at GCI in order to provide some direction for planning future changes and programs at the school. In particular, I asked people to identify various factors that either promote or limit the success of change. While each of the six groups provided valuable new information, a lot of the same points were raised in each discussion. It seems that the various groups within the GCI community tend to agree on what works and doesn't work at GCI, and why. In general, participants identified three key ingredients for successful programs and change. community[2] ownership, attention to human issues, and proper implementation.

Community Ownership

For programs and change to be considered successful, community members must come to see them as their programs and their changes. Building or creating this ownership involves: (a) including members of the school community in all aspects of developing, implementing, and evaluating programs or change, (b) an agreement among community members that there is a need for a new program or change, and (c) creating programs and change that respond to the specific and perhaps unique needs of the school community.

Attention to Human Issues

The success of a program or change depends heavily on the community's response. Participants described a number of ways to encourage a positive response from community members when new programs or changes are introduced. Some of these approaches are: (a) using language people understand to convey information about a program or change, (b) having realistic expectations about the time, energy, and skills people can give to a program or change, (c) asking interested people to participate rather than forcing everyone to take part in a program or change, and (d) recognizing (formally or informally) the efforts of people who participate in and contribute to programs and change.

Proper Implementation

Hardware: "Hardware" refers to the more tangible resources that are needed to make a program run. Participants identified a number of such resources including: (a) adequate funding, (b) physical space, (c) designated time for activities, and (d) people to plan, run, coordinate, participate in, and evaluate programs and change.

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[2]When I write "community," I am referring to the community of GCI which includes students, teaching and support staff, administrators, and parents.

Software: "Software" refers to the more intangible details that need to be addressed for the smooth running of programs and change. Participants thought programs and changes would be more successful if they incorporated the following components. (a) proper preparation (e.g., training programs, pilot programs), (b) consideration to how a program or change might affect other aspects of school life (ripple effects), (c) channels of communication through which all members of the school community can give and receive information about a program or change, and (d) on-going evaluation in order to modify programs and change to better meet the needs of the school community.

Peer Support Program

The results of this investigation will provide direction for many future programs and changes at GCI. However, a second aim of this project was to ask for your opinions and ideas about a specific program, namely a school-wide peer support program for students at GCI. Based on the input of the 31 participants I have put together the following list of preliminary recommendations for proceeding with planning and implementing a peer support program.

1. All groups within the GCI community should have a say in planning a program.

2. Program participants must be given clear information about their roles and the limits of their responsibilities.

3. The program should begin small with a group of interested grade 9 students who would be paired with interested grade 11 students.

4. Multiple methods of matching students should be considered, for example. pairing students who already provide support to one another, having students fill out questionnaires and match based on common interests, ask teachers to recommend suitable pairs.

5. Participation in the program should require a full year (i.e., two semesters) commitment.

6. There should be an individual who's job is to coordinate the program (e.g., oversee matching students, deal with any problems).

7. OAC students could be offered a course that focuses on group management, facilitation, communication etc. which would also involve organizing and meeting with small groups of "peer-supporters."

8. Attention must be given to positive promotion of the program so that it becomes a respected activity and gains the support of all groups within the GCI community.

9. There must be a way for all members of the school community to give on going feedback about the program.

10. There must be on-going and year-end evaluation in order to make appropriate adjustments to the program to better meet participants' needs.

Appendix J

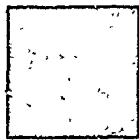
Schematic Representation of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Group X Question	Parents	Teaching/ Support Staff	Students Group #1	Students Group #2	Administrator	STEP Committee
Question 1b: What factors facilitated general change at GCI?	[3]					
Question 1c: What factors limited general change from occurring at GCI?						
Question 2b: What factors facilitated attempts at social support at GCI?						
Question 2c: What factors limited attempts at social support at GCI?						
Question 3a: What factors will facilitate the success of a mentorship program?						
Question 3b: What factors will limit the success of a mentorship program?						

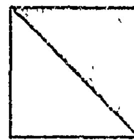
[3] Each of the 36 cells was divided into 18 sections as such. For clarity of presentation I have partitioned only the first cell.

Appendix K

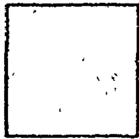
Category Pairs and Colours



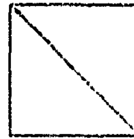
Tolerance/Patience



Quick-Fix/Impatience

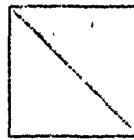


Built-In

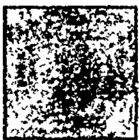


Add On

Positive Stakeholder Response



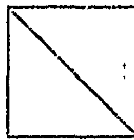
Negative Stakeholder Response



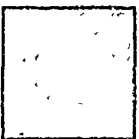
Collaboration

Laid-On

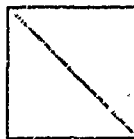
Consider Ecological Perspective



Isolated Projects



Reasonable Role Expectations

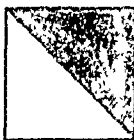


Role Overload/ Unsuitable Roles

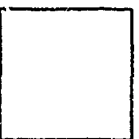
Consensus of Agenda

Conflicting Agendas

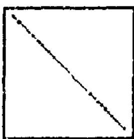
Coordination



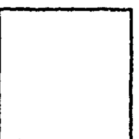
Lack of Coordination



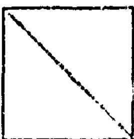
Good Communication



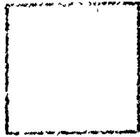
Poor Communication

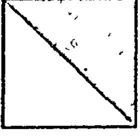


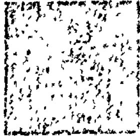
Proper Training



Untrained/Improperly Trained Resources


Good Timing


Poor Timing

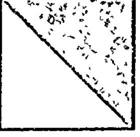

Continuity

Lack of Continuity

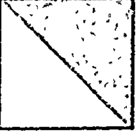
Committed Stakeholders

Uncommitted Stakeholders

Attention to
Content and Process

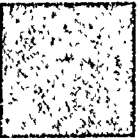

Attention Only
to Program Content

Pilot Programs


No Pilot Programs

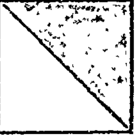
Evaluation

Lack of Evaluation

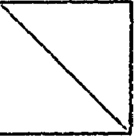

Recognition for Effort

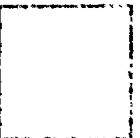
Lack of Recognition
for Effort

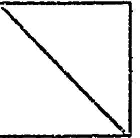
Stakeholder
(Peer) Support


Lack of Stakeholder
(Peer) Support

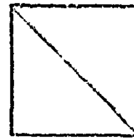
Sufficient Resources


Insufficient Resources

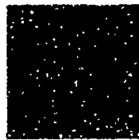

Voluntary Participation


Mandatory Participation

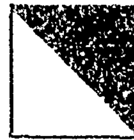
Good Matching (Mentor/Mentee)



Poor Matching (Mentor/Mentee)

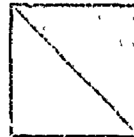


Trust



Mistrust

Impetus for Change from Within Setting

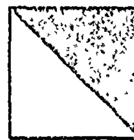


Impetus for Change is External to Setting

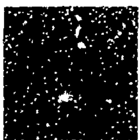
Tailored Programs/ Change

Prefabricated Programs/Change

Need Identified

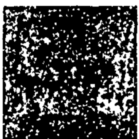


Little or No Need Identifiable

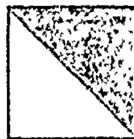


Reasonable Time Commitment

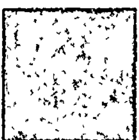
Unreasonable Time Commitment



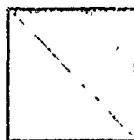
Open Mind



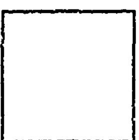
Closed Mind



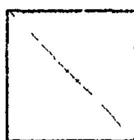
Paraprofessionals



Experts Only



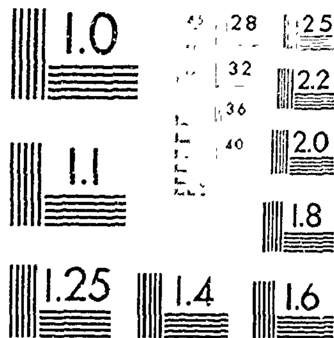
Consider/Understand Culture of Setting



Ignore Culture

3 of/de 3

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT



Appendix L

Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Group X Question	Parents	Teaching/Support Staff
Question 1b: general change, facilitated		
Question 1c: general change, limited		
Question 2b: social support, facilitated		
Question 2c: social support, limited		
Question 3a: mentorship, facilitate		
Question 3b: mentorship, limit		

Group X Question	Students: Group #1	Students: Group #2
Question 1b: general change, facilitated		
Question 1c: general change, limited		
Question 2b: social support, facilitated		
Question 2c: social support, limited		
Question 3a: mentorship, facilitate		
Question 3b: mentorship, limit		

Group X Question	Administrator	STEP Committee
Question 1b: general change, facilitated		
Question 1c: general change, limited		
Question 2b: social support, facilitated		
Question 2c: social support, limited		
Question 3a: mentorship, facilitate		
Question 3b: mentorship, limit		