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Improving instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions.

Kevin Stack

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL
PROFESSIONAL STAFF INTERACTIONS

A Dissertation Presented

by

KEVIN STACK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1991

Education

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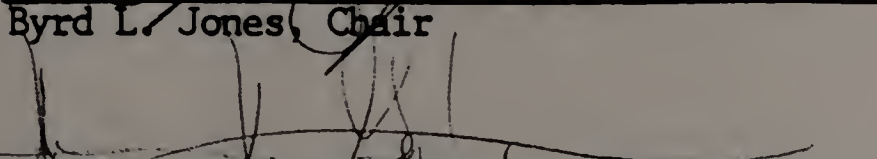
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KEVIN STACK

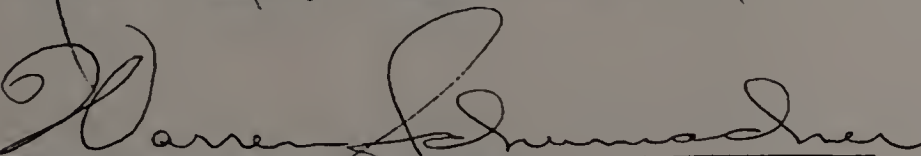
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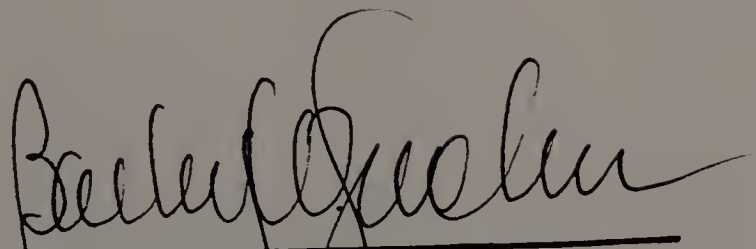
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Marilyn Haring-Hidore, Dean
School of Education

This dissertation is dedicated
to Victoria, "With You I'm Born
Again," and to my parents,
Margaret and Lawrence.

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My aunts and uncles Anna and Bob, John and Betty, Pidgie and George, Jeannie and Pat.

ABSTRACT

IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL
PROFESSIONAL STAFF INTERACTIONS

FEBRUARY, 1991

KEVIN STACK, B.A., QUEENS COLLEGE

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Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Directed by: Dr. Byrd L. Jones

This dissertation documented the process of developing, implementing, and assessing a low-cost staff development project in an urban elementary school. The purpose of this study was to plan a staff development project that would improve the interactions between instructional staff (teachers) and non-instructional professionals (psychologists). An action research methodology was utilized focusing instructional and non-instructional professionals on the topic of support services in the Roosevelt Schools. The flexibility of this method encouraged collegial interaction and connected participants to the larger issues of change and school improvement.

Twelve workshops were collaboratively planned with twenty voluntary members of the Ulysses Byas staff. Needs assessment and formative evaluation tools were utilized to obtain feedback from participants and organize workshops. School climate, bureaucratic structures, the process of change, staff development, and issues of race and equity appeared to impact on staff interactions. Workshop

sessions provided an opportunity for instructional and non-instructional professionals to grow both personally and professionally and to develop mutually agreed on goals for support services.

The results of this project indicated the following: (1) The instructional staff was interested in improving support services in The Ulysses Byas School. (2) Misunderstandings that occurred between instructional and non-instructional professionals erected territorial boundaries, and the participants recognized the necessity of breaking through the barriers and establishing new relationships. (3) The collegial atmosphere of the workshops was a step in breaking down negative, defensive attitudes toward colleagues. (4) The instructional staff had skills, expertise, motivation, and interests that were essentially untapped and could be utilized for the benefit of children. (5) Instructional and non-instructional professional staff would benefit from trusting, caring, cooperative relationships.

In conclusion, low cost staff development activities were an appropriate direction for schools to begin the process of change vital to school improvement. In addition, staff development was a viable means for struggling, urban districts to provide additional training for staff.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Urban school districts such as Roosevelt are faced with a need to provide more psychological and social work support services for students and their families. Traditionally, psychologists and social workers ("non-instructional staff") have provided services apart from teachers ("instructional staff"). Administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional staff have formed individualized perceptions of their own roles and responsibilities as well as of their colleagues. Efforts to improve support services in schools must focus on raising consciousness, developing communication, and defining roles and responsibilities among administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional professionals.

Consider the following generalized assumptions each group may possess: (1) Administrators assume responsibility for a clean, orderly, and safe school environment with attention to processing students through the system. (2) Instructional staff assume responsibility for academic development of students and maintaining order in the classroom. (3) Non-instructional professional staff assume responsibility for the social and emotional welfare of children, especially those identified as not fitting within school norms. The services of the groups frequently overlap and result in disagreements about how to meet needs of individual children.

Schools as human service agencies establish goals for support services and attempt to impose these goals on staff. Ann Withorn

contended that it was difficult, if not impossible, for human service agencies to achieve the goals they set for themselves.¹ When frustrated by a gap between goals and achievements, human service workers begin "blaming or passing the buck, in denial or anger or barely repressed hostility."² Withorn referred to this cycle of unfulfilled goals and hostility among workers, which results in inadequate human services to clients, as the "circle game."³

In schools, administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional professional staff are players in the "circle game." The game begins when administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professionals decide to intervene on behalf of a child experiencing academic, social and behavioral problems. In Roosevelt, a student is recommended for support services through the existing five step referral process which includes: (1) completing the referral form (2) contacting the parents (3) listing strategies utilized to resolve the difficulty in the classroom and school (4) administering psychological/educational evaluations, and (5) referring students to the committee on special education. Administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professional staff frequently conflict over how support services should be utilized to assist children. Consider the concerns of each group: (1) Administrators generally focus on the number of students serviced and placed in alternative programs. (2) Instructional staff seek to restore order to their classroom and obtain service for an individual student. (3) Non-instructional professionals emphasize the responsibility to deliver quality services to children.

Collegial interactions among these groups could help modify their individual perceptions and formulate a shared view of the role and function of support service. By law and practice, teachers, administrators, and non-instructional professionals must agree with each other and the child or parent about the nature of services. Interactions fostered through staff development begin the process of breaking the blaming cycle inherent in the "circle game."

Statement of Problem

Support services provided insufficient interventions for students in regular elementary school programs. A strategy was needed to address the mandate set forth by the Regents of New York State "to provide educationally related support service to non-handicapped pupils in order to sustain their placement in a program of regular education."⁴ A simplistic response to the mandate would be to hire additional personnel, but this is not a viable option for urban schools with limited financial and human resources.

The problem of improving support services is ill-structured and multifaceted because it involves interactions among administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professional staff, as well as individual perceptions each group has of their colleagues' roles and responsibilities. Examining the intricate and complex process of human interactions among administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professional staff is the first step toward improving support services. Collegial exchange limits the damage from the blaming

circle and encourages the development of strategies that would help students experiencing academic, social and behavioral difficulties in the regular elementary school program.

Background

Administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional professional staff have sporadically functioned as an interdisciplinary team to assess the support service needs of children. James P. Comer advocated that teachers, administrators and support personnel should work as a team to help children with academic, social and emotional problems.⁵ The team should "apply the principles of the social and behavioral sciences to problems of and opportunity for improving relationships in schools."⁶ However, the interdisciplinary team rarely assesses the needs of the school, classroom or themselves.

Typically, urban schools have not provided enough services to meet student needs. Providing support services in the same manner they have traditionally been provided will only serve to repeat the mistakes of the past. Thus, resources should be examined in terms of roles and responsibilities of all school personnel.

Michael Lipsky presented this view:

Other things being equal, increased capacity results in reproducing the level of service quality at a higher volume for any imaginable increase in resource availability. This proposition is critical because it explains why the steady increase in resources available to street-level bureaucracies in recent years has not resulted in improvements in the perceived quality of client treatment.⁷

Statistical information related to special education and support services being provided indicated some of the immediate issues facing educators.

School districts in the Long Island area have experienced significant increases in the demand for special education and support services. State Education Department figures from 1981 to 1986 indicated that Nassau and Suffolk County school districts have had an 89.4 percent increase in special education expenditures and a 62.8 percent increase ⁸ psychological services. The dramatic increases in spending were related to the mandates of PL94-142 which have emphasized the support services of counseling, resource room and special class. Districts use the handicapping classifications as "the only financially ⁹ feasible alternative to a regular classroom." According to one local superintendent of schools, "If you want to give a kid special special attention in a given area, it's costly, and you don't get ¹⁰ reimbursed for him unless you label him a handicapped kid."

The State Education Department has recognized the trend of school districts to classify students as handicapped to obtain additional funding in order to provide support services. The New York State Education Department has noted

the upward spiral in special education enrollments in many districts, however, the State Department of Education is giving districts incentives to find alternatives. This year, for the first time, the department is providing 13 million for counseling, speech therapy and psychological services for non-handicapped students. It is also providing seed money for a new category of declassification aid aimed at encouraging districts to move children out of special education and into the conventional classroom.¹¹

Given the increases in expenditures for support services and the continued projected increases for service, a different means of

providing support services is necessary. Financially strapped urban schools can seldom augment support services when they are struggling to meet minimum requirements.

According to the Office of Civil Rights--Elementary and Secondary School Survey, 1669 school districts of the 3312 surveyed nationwide identified greater than 10 percent of their enrollment as requiring special education services.¹² The survey also noted that 41,957 students in the 1669 school districts were awaiting evaluation.¹³ Given the increasing percentage of students in special education and the substantial number of students awaiting evaluation, the gap between student need and services available is widening. The bureaucratic structure of urban schools deprives children "awaiting evaluation" of support services. When services focus on the needs of identified handicapped students, they are unavailable for early intervention in home or classroom.

Setting

Roosevelt is a residential area within Nassau County with a population of approximately 15,000. The population of the Roosevelt schools was 98 percent Black with 2 percent representing people of other ethnic backgrounds.¹⁴ Geographically, Roosevelt is one square mile in size and tends to be an isolated area because of an absence of industry and commerce. Since 1984, the community has been revitalized through the expansion of Nassau Road, a major thoroughfare, and the building of a shopping center complex. This revitalization of the community has helped

expand the tax base which supports Roosevelt's schools while maintaining a reasonable tax rate for residents.

Ulysses Byas School was one of two facilities for grades K-6. Additional facilities for grades K-6 included: A pre-kindergarten center, a K-2 school, a grade 3-6 school, and one junior-senior high school. Approximately 2854 students were provided educational services in these facilities. The Ulysses Byas School serves 483 students in grades K-6 with a staff of twenty.¹⁵ Built in 1929, the school has been well-maintained over the years. The main corridors, classrooms and bulletin boards display the students' work in an educational and aesthetically pleasing manner. The positive school climate is encouraged by the principal who has held the position for seventeen years.

The need for support services in Roosevelt is as great as in any other school district in the region. However, the financial limitations force support services toward the bottom of active priorities. Therefore, Roosevelt needs new ways to utilize existing services and resources. The Roosevelt School District has the following staffing ratios for support service personnel. On the elementary level, two psychologists and four social workers service 1269 students. On the junior/senior high level, one psychologist and one social worker service 1370 students.¹⁶ The ratios indicate the impracticality of providing individualized support services. Roosevelt's staffing ratio for psychologists is comparable to adjacent school districts. However, Roosevelt provides a higher proportion of social work services.

Equity Factors

Issues of race and class affect interactions among administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professional staff. Human sensitivities and motivations are integral parts of the process of providing support services in schools. Although professionals espouse an ability to be objective, personal feelings and prejudices influence their perceptions of minority groups. Administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professionals in urban schools function within the constraints of middle-class values and beliefs. Consequently, it is not unusual to hear a professional make a comment like, "What do you expect from these children," or "You know what kind of neighborhood it is." The previous statements exemplify the subtle racism accepted within our culture. In summarizing the impact of racism on urban schools, Byrd L. Jones concluded:

The immediate answer lies in the lack of sensitivity and awareness of today's teachers and administrators to their own racism and the impact of their values upon schools. They view children from poor families in terms of their own restricted middle class outlook.¹⁷

Support services have been developed to meet the needs of the community/school and, thus, have become an increasingly important aspect of the schools' culture. Administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professional staff have assumed that the best means to increase support services is to increase personnel. Seymour B. Sarason concluded that "a solution to the problem of providing special service in schools cannot be based on the assumption that the traditionally trained professional will ever exist in adequate numbers." Support

services such as psychological counseling and social work have their roots in the culture outside the school setting. Models of psychology and social work, which emphasized individualized service, were transferred from the larger culture to schools.

Social scientists have contributed to the understanding of the structure, function and process of schooling. Selected social science research has focused on negative interactions and yielded limited insights into positive interactions among subgroups within the school. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot pointed out that "social science research is often heavily laden with values that reflect deep cultural bias and moral tone. We see that it has been used as a rationalization and justification for maintaining inequalities." Lightfoot continued: "Social scientists have created a social dichotomy of the child's existence into socialization and education, the one shaped by the family and the other by the school." Educators should address this split. The establishment of positive interactions and working relationships among school professionals would support a productive, positive link with community residents.

The involvement of administrators, instructional staff and non-instructional professionals in staff development projects can facilitate the process of changing and expanding their view of the role and function of support service. Collaborative relationships would be mutually beneficial to the professionals involved. According to David L. Singer, support service personnel can provide assistance "through their

understanding of the dynamic aspects of education, the psycho-social
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phenomena which affect learning." Singer continued:

The interests, goals, needs, and anxieties of individuals and groups within the school are constantly in dynamic interplay and are constraints on the success of education. The primary task of the psychologist working in the school should be to help the school carry out its educational mission.²²

Federal laws and state mandates have increased the importance of support services in schools. The laws and mandates specify the support services for handicapped children, but services for non-handicapped children are vague. Instructional and non-instructional professionals interpret the laws and mandates from individual frames of reference and have difficulty recognizing where support service responsibilities overlap. In Roosevelt, 85 percent of the instructional staff and all the non-instructional professionals agreed that they worked together to meet the needs of a child. (See table I and II). However, 52 percent of the instructional staff indicated there was no building plan for helping students, while the majority of non-instructional professionals indicated a plan did exist. (See tables I and II).

Groups sharing responsibilities create voids. The void is created when each group assumes the other is responsible and has taken action. In reality, neither instructional nor non-instructional professionals have responded, and children are denied support services. Recognition and discussion of expectations, responsibilities, and the voids that are created was a prerequisite for meaningful change. The

individual expectations of instructional and non-instructional professionals were challenged in order to provide equitable support services for all children.

Purpose

This study aimed to design, implement, and assess a staff development program for instructional and non-instructional professional staff on the elementary school level. Adopting an action research approach, evidence of interpersonal interactions of the participants were continuously documented and reflected on. Those interim assessments were part of a formative evaluation which allowed for modifications and adjustments of the staff development process, as needed. ²³ These educators began developing mutually agreed on goals and functions of support services that had practical implications in the school.

Significance

A staff development project conducted in the Roosevelt School District during the spring of 1985 by Susan Savitt, the District Director of Compensatory Education, alerted this researcher to difficulties in the relationship between instructional and non-instructional professional staff. Issues raised during Savitt's staff development project led this examiner to conduct a preliminary survey of support service needs during the spring of 1986. The survey was administered to twenty six elementary teachers, ten of whom were

special education teachers. The survey results are included in appendix A.

In interpreting the data, the survey participants indicated the following points: (1) Support services within the Roosevelt School District were inadequate. (2) The amount of support services available for children in regular classes was less than the amount available for those in special education classes. (3) Child study team meetings were not scheduled on a regular basis. (4) There was no consensus as to the question of whether or not teachers and support staff worked together as a team. (5) The teachers rated individual interactions with support service personnel as productive, but wanted support personnel to take a more active role in the classroom.

This survey confirmed a general point that instructional and non-instructional professional staff interact in many ways but seldom feel part of an instructional team effort. This researcher knew most of the teachers, as well as the non-instructional professionals. They seemed interested in children and working together, but unknown factors in their interactions inhibited them. It seemed that some variant of the circle game might be addressed through staff development efforts that encouraged more open communications.

Attitudes and expectations of instructional and non-instructional professionals about the role and function of support services, formulated through years of experience, were difficult to change.

Instructional and non-instructional professional staff tended to work in isolation and collaborated infrequently. Insufficient support personnel, predetermined attitudes and beliefs, financial constraints, and insufficient time to share ideas were some of the major factors that obstructed change for support services. Staff development programs addressed these obstructing factors and facilitated change.

The process of change depended on instructional and non-instructional professionals developing mutually beneficial patterns of interactions. The establishment of effective staff interactions in conjunction with mutually agreed on goals might serve as an impetus for improved support services to meet academic, social, and behavioral needs of more children.

The staff development approach utilized in this study was directed at improving staff interactions in the Ulysses Byas School. The process of staff development in this study cannot be directly imposed in another setting. However, analogies may be drawn from this staff development/change process that may be useful in other urban schools. More directly, certain processes seem critical in effective staff development efforts.

Methodology

An action research approach was utilized to assess the role and function of support services and improve instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions. Action research has been defined as

...small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention. Action research is situational--it is concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context. 24

Action research can be collaborative with researcher and practitioner working together in attempting "...to comprehend all the factors relevant to an immediate problem whose nature continually changes as events proceed." Characteristically, action research is "...essentially an on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation." The action research does not study factors in isolation but within the context
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giving them meaning.

Action research methodology recognized that problems and situations are multifaceted and dynamic, not stagnant. The approach "interprets scientific method much more loosely," but is particularly suited to address interpersonal dynamics, morale, attitudes, and motivation. The continuous feedback utilized in action research was "translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, and redefinitions as necessary." The adjustments and modifications assisted researcher and participants in responding to the dynamics of group interactions as they evolved. In real life, staff
26
development involves group dynamics and the vagaries of relationships.

Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion contended action research could be utilized in schools and classrooms to:

1. Remediate problems or improve specific situations
2. Provide in-service training
3. Introduce change into a system that inhibits innovation and change
4. Improve communication between teachers and researchers
5. Allow for a subjective approach to address classroom problems.

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For the purpose of this study, the action research was implemented in the following manner:

1. A needs assessment was conducted during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting. (See table I).

2. The needs assessment yielded discrepancies between the instructional and non-instructional professional staff in regard to support services.

3. Discrepancies that were uncovered served to establish issues of critical concern. For example, all the psychologists perceived the teachers as being accessible, but 55 percent of the teachers did not view the support service personnel as accessible. Specific concerns served as the basis for formulating initial workshops.

4. Results of the needs assessment were summarized by this researcher and presented to the participants as part of the first workshop. An overview of support services was also presented at this time.

5. A series of twelve workshops were conducted with seventeen instructional staff members of the Ulysses Byas School and three members of the non-instructional professional staff.

6. Workshops were designed around the needs and interests of each group. Needs were assessed through a formative evaluation tool administered after each workshop. (See appendix D).

7. The results, suggestions, and recommendations of each group were summarized by this researcher and shared with the building principal.

8. The building principal indicated that insights gained regarding staff interactions would assist in the formulation of the 1988-89 school improvement plans.

The action research methodology presupposed no solutions nor predetermined courses of action. The action research process encouraged interactions among participants and demonstrated the personal commitment of the Ulysses Byas staff. Instructional and non-instructional professional staff participated in a decision-making process with a potential for change. An action research approach allowed the participants to determine their goals and develop strategies for obtaining these goals. The flexibility of this method encouraged collegial interactions which led to conflicts and compromises. The collegial interactions evolved into shared understandings regarding the role and function of support services based on mutually agreed on goals.

Research Questions

This study focused on improving instructional and non-instructional staff interaction in relationship to the issue of support services in the Roosevelt schools. As the district's school psychologist, this researcher had been sensitized to the

weaknesses and strengths of support services in Roosevelt. The Roosevelt Committee on Special Education had reviewed individual case histories that were indicative of limited support services in the regular elementary school. A committee member's comments summarized the situation. "We have to do something for him--he's in the seventh grade for the third time. How did he get so far without anyone doing anything to help?"²⁸ A review of the selected literature, combined with seven years of experience and observation has led this researcher to formulate the following questions about instructional and non-instructional professional staff:

- 1) Would they volunteer to be involved in staff development workshops related to support services?
- 2) Would they attend staff development workshops consistently?
- 3) Would they express their ideas and concerns regarding support services during scheduled workshops?
- 4) Would they increase interactions as a result of participation in the project?
- 5) Would they value their interactions with colleagues?
- 6) Would they develop recommendations that would have practical implications for the Ulysses Byas School.

These questions determined what observations would be needed to test the general thesis that staff development and action research were viable means to initiate change in urban districts with limited resources. Because small case studies seldom generate school change large enough to be measured in student achievement scores, this study relied on multiple indicators of staff involvement and direct

participation by the researcher to assess the meaning of interactive processes.

Limitations

Instructional and non-instructional professional staff have a role in assessing the academic and behavioral needs of children. The present system of support service dictates that teachers refer students, psychologists test, and social workers counsel. That system may induce an "assembly line mentality" among the professionals in schools. The goal is to "process" cases after referral. Members of the instructional staff say, "I referred the child for testing; what else am I supposed to do?"²⁹ The assembly line mentality does not allow the professionals to share their knowledge or expertise and promotes the development of territorial boundaries.

The territorial boundaries of instructional and non-instructional professional staff deter collaborative efforts. As an example of one such boundary, if a psychologist does a social intake interview of a student, it is viewed by social workers as insufficient data to be called a social history. Another limitation is how do the real or imaginary boundaries of school professionals interfere with the support services available for children in the elementary school.

Individual personalities, group dynamics, and a possible history of negative interactions among instructional and non-instructional professionals impeded the development of trust, caring and cooperation which are essential to successful staff development. This

researcher encountered limited feedback from non-instructional professionals because only two were assigned to the Ulysses Byas School on a part-time schedule. Feedback from other non-instructional professional staff was generalized and not specifically related to the Ulysses Byas School setting.

This researcher reflected on personal and professional concerns regarding support services, social work, psychologists, administrators, Roosevelt Public Schools, and participants in the project. This researcher was not a member of the Ulysses Byas School, which could raise questions regarding credibility and commitment.

Finally, some participants may have questioned the appropriateness of a White male conducting staff development workshops with a faculty that was predominately composed of Black females. This researcher relied on personal and professional relationships, developed over the past seven years, to engender support for this project.

Dissertation Chapter Outline

The dissertation chapters were organized in the following manner:

Chapter I--Introduction, Statement of Problem, Background Information, Setting, Equity Factors, Purpose, Significance, Methodology, Research Questions, Limitations, and Dissertation Chapter Outline.

Chapter II--Selected research studies in several areas:

Introduction, School Climate, Bureaucratic Structures,

Elements of Change, Staff Development, Race and Equity
Factors in Urban Education, Summary.

Chapter III—Designing and Implementing a Staff Development

Project: Administrative Perspective, Staff Input,
District Psychologists, Organization and Preparation.

Chapter IV—Workshop Sessions and Results: Workshop I

Objectives, Needs Assessment Results: Workshop I,
Summary and Interpretation--Assessment Results--
Workshop I, Workshop II Objectives--Group A, Group
A-Assessment--Workshop II, Workshop III Objectives--
Group A, Group A-Assessment--Workshop III, Workshop
II Objectives--Group B, Workshop III Objectives--Group
B, Workshop II Objectives--Group C, Workshop III--
Objectives--Group C. Workshop I Objectives--Group D,
Workshop II Objectives--Group D. Workshop III
Objectives--Group D.

Chapter V—Assessment, Review and Implications: Assessment

Results, Research Questions, Workshop Linkages
Roosevelt/UMASS Staff Development Project,
Implementation Issues, Implications and Outcomes,
Summary.

Notes

Chapter I

1

Ann Withorn, The Circle Game (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 126.

2

Ibid.

3

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C H A P T E R I I

SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The selected literature supported a proposition that staff interactions are critical to the success or failure of any change or improvement efforts in schools. Topics included (a) school climate or culture, with an emphasis on effective schools; (b) bureaucratic structures with attention to school organizations and implications for improving schools; (c) elements and perspectives of change and the process of change; (d) utilization of staff development as a means to initiate change and explore the role of non-instructional professionals as staff development facilitators; and (e) influence of race and equity in urban education, including an exploration of the historical relationship of schools and society, as well as current social and political factors.

Staff interactions were influenced by school climate, bureaucratic structures, change, staff development, and issues of race and equity. Therefore, attempts to improve interactions could be linked to the larger issue of school improvement.

School Climate

Human interactions are essential to the development of effective urban schools. Interactions between instructional and non-instructional professional staff represent a situation where continuous dialogue and

collegial relationships can foster improved school climate and lead to more effective schools.

Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith's synthesis of research on effective schools confirmed linkages between positive school climate and effective schools. The authors focused on the content and process of research on effective schools. Content referred to identifiable characteristics of schools and their personnel. Process referred to the way people within schools interact to determine goals, conduct business, and accommodate conflict and change. The processes of interaction modified the school climate and rendered schools more or less effective.¹ Brookover defined interactive processes: "the nature and style of political and social relationships and the flow of information within the school."²

Edgar A. Kelley defined school climate as "the interaction between satisfaction and productivity for groups and individuals who live and work in school environments."³ John Lindelow and JoAnn Mazarella found that organizational climate depended on every aspect of the organization: its history, its environment, its staff, and its policies in conjunction with the interactions and communications among members of the organization are the real indicators and determinants of the climate.⁴

In phenomenological terms, people continually try to make sense out of experiences from their particular frames of reference. "Different frames lead to different interpretations and constructions of reality."⁵ Interpersonal interactions are influenced by the

process of making sense of experiences and therefore are important to the concept of school culture.⁶ Phenomenologists describe this as multiple realities.

Eugene R. Howard defined school climate as: "those qualities of the school, and the people in the school, which affect how people feel while they are there."⁷ School climate, like personality, can be experienced by others and described although it is hard to obtain objective measurements of those factors. Feelings of trust, respect, and pride are present in positive school climates. Howard summarized that positive school climates are people centered, and a negative school climate is institution centered.⁸

The recognition of the important social nature of schools allows researchers to observe how the individual and combined roles of teachers, administrators, parents, and students create a learning environment and impact on the effectiveness of schools. Therefore, a positive school climate or culture has a symbiotic relationship with effective schools.

Effective Schools

The educational research on effective schools and school improvement opened a "universe of alternatives"⁹ that has enabled educators to think about the school environment for what it really is and develop strategies for meaningful and lasting change. Education in urban school settings has been characterized by poor student achievement

and high dropout rates. These characteristics of urban schools have been attributed to low socio-economic status and deprived family background.¹⁰ However, some researchers have challenged the alleged causes of poor student performance in urban schools and outlined characteristics of effective schools.

Ronald Edmonds observed that educators, following the Coleman report, presumed that home environment and family background were the major influences on student performance. Social scientists perpetuate this belief, which "has the effect of absolving educators of their professional responsibility to be instructionally effective."¹¹

Michael Lipsky offered the view that "in non-voluntary bureaucracies, such as schools, there is a tendency to blame or attribute failure to the client instead of the worker, his attitude, or the system."¹²

A recent newspaper article stated that:

Parents, legislators, and crusaders who ignore the influential impact of the home environment and choose, instead, to lay the blame for below average grades on teachers are guilty of either simple ignorance or blatant disregard for a more complex truth.¹³

This statement signifies the forces in our society that place blame on students and resist searching for other causes, as Edmonds' and Lipsky's views implied.

Edmonds observed that educational settings where students are expected to fail and educators express pessimistic attitudes will prevail if poor student performance is blamed on the home or student. Edmonds contended that effective schools shared the following characteristics:

(a) strong leadership, (b) high expectations for student achievement, (c) orderly, safe learning environment, (d) emphasis on the acquisition of basic academic skills, and a channeling of the school's human and fiscal resources to obtain the objective, and
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 (e) frequent monitoring of the students' progress. In effective schools teachers, administrators, parents, and students were less
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 skeptical about what they could achieve.

Wilbur B. Brookover presented a view similar to Edmonds. Brookover, et al., argued, "If some urban schools are successful in teaching youth from disadvantaged backgrounds then something in the nature of the school influenced the level of student
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 learning." According to Brookover and his colleagues, the ideology of the school, the organization of the school, and the instructional practices within the school interact to create an effective learning environment.

The characteristics of an effective school learning climate focused on: (a) Student achievement and those factors that affect achievement, (b) a collective set of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within a building, (c) the school as a social system, (d) the social
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 group within the school being the most effective change agents.

The characteristics of effective schools encompass broad guidelines. Since each school creates a climate or culture through the interpersonal interactions of its members, the characteristics they emphasize are unique. The selected literature presented supports the proposition that analyzing and reflecting on the human dynamics

of school cultures is imperative if urban schools are to become more effective.

Bureaucratic Structures

Few teachers understand school organizational structures on a district-wide level. Staff development provided instructional and non-instructional professionals an opportunity to view school organization from a district perspective and to see relationships with other organizations, for example, social and protective services. Additionally, instructional and non-instructional professionals participated in a problem-solving process that involved collegial interactions which may improve schools.

Organizational structures of schools have imposed restraints on developing effective schools with positive climates. Lipsky succinctly described the multiple realities of street level bureaucrats trying to resolve conflicts between organizational needs and their personal and professional needs. Street level bureaucrats, such as teachers and administrators, seek "to secure or restore the importance of human interactions in services that require discretionary intervention or involvement." Lipsky contended that workers within large bureaucratic structures develop coping mechanisms that assist them to function within the broadest limits of the organization's stated policies while at the same time gaining some sense of accomplishment, stress reduction and personal satisfaction. Coping mechanisms, which include selective enforcement of agency policies and techniques for "working the system," enable workers to achieve a degree of job

satisfaction in a hierarchial bureaucratic system that disregards human
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 factors.

Albert Shanker reflected a view similar to Lipsky when he
 stated, "You can't run schools with 'top-down' bureaucratic
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 regulations." The New York State Education Commissioner's report,
 a "Blueprint for Teaching and Learning," stated the top down bureaucratic
 hierarchy present in most schools deters teacher input and rejects their
 professional judgment regarding how to achieve school goals. 21 Purkey
 and Smith concluded that "recent research and theory have rejected a
 notion of schools as classical bureaucracies, hierarchically structured
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 and susceptible to rational control."

Typically, schools have organizational charts which display lines
 of supervision and key decision-making personnel. Many educational
 decisions, however, are made through informal channels. Lines of
 supervision frequently represent obstacles to be avoided or overcome.
 Schools adhering to a strict bureaucratic structure ignore the idiosyn-
 cracies of people in the organization. Despite the research, many school
 organizations cling to the facade of being bureaucratic structures which
 promote frightening, monumental, and "mazelike" demands and deter the
 development of more humane, compassionate, and flexible systems.

Perspectives of School Organizations

Researchers have provided insightful alternative perspectives
 for viewing school organizations. Jerry L. Patterson advanced a
 view that educational systems are not rational. If school organizations

were rational they would function logically, and make clear linkages between goals, organizational structures, activities, and outcomes. The authors continued that each school district and school building had a unique culture. However, the district and school culture must interact in a reciprocal fashion to achieve goals. The understanding of the reciprocal relationship is essential for educators who wish to establish more effective schools.

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The nonrational model offers a framework that explains how things really work in school. Schools are "cultural phenomena" that function with guiding beliefs and daily behaviors. Highlights of the nonrational model include:

- A. Goals can be ambiguous, competing, and are selected because of their importance at the time.
- B. Decisions are made to achieve goals, but problems that demand attention may take priority.
- C. Power is available throughout the organization, especially to effective spokespersons.
- D. The community is unpredictable and can intrude at any time.
- E. There is a range of appropriate teaching methodologies depending on the situation.
- F. The connection between policy and classroom instruction is loosely coupled.²⁴

Karl E. Weick presented a slightly different view of school organizations. Weick contended that "parts of some organizations are heavily rationalized but many parts also prove intractable to analysis through rational assumptions."²⁵ Schools are loosely coupled organizations and, therefore, need to be managed differently.

The concept of loose coupling serves as a sensitizing device for educators. Educators will begin to notice and question things that had been taken for granted. The sensitization will lead educators to conclude that teaching is simply not a routine, repetitive task than can be performed in a tightly coupled system. In loosely coupled systems people and their interactions and interpretations of what is happening around them are key variables. The threads that hold a loosely coupled system together are the common images that are shared by administrators, teachers, parents, and students through socialization.²⁶

Roland S. Barth agreed with the view that schools were loosely coupled organizations. School personnel function within their perception of what is appropriate for the school. Therefore, the visions of school personnel are the only ones that have a chance of being taken seriously and incorporated into the daily routines of the school.²⁷

Sergiovanni asserted:

Successful schools are both tightly and loosely structured. They are tightly structured with respect to basic values and sense of mission. But at the same time they allow wide discretion in how the values are to be embodied.²⁸

The perspectives of school organizations provided a frame of reference for researchers to consider prior to implementing change strategies to improve schools.

Directions for School Improvement

Shanker perhaps best summarized the future direction of school improvement and educational reform. Shanker stated:

Some urban schools have succeeded because they managed, in a comprehensive way, to restructure themselves according to what best fit the needs of their students, from early intervention, to smaller schools, to community partnerships, to flexible scheduling arrangements and other non-typical reform strategies.²⁹

The concept of non-typical reform strategies is the hallmark of what researchers are saying about school improvement and attempts to implement improvement plans.

John I. Goodlad viewed school improvement as a process whereby people become self directing and develop a capacity to become self-renewing. Goodlad contended that school improvement should become a daily activity in school, not a periodic activity imposed from outside. Identifying problems, gathering data, formulating solutions, and "...monitoring of actions, take care of both business as usual and change."³⁰ School personnel must develop self-renewing capabilities in order for schools to develop into productive and satisfying work places. Goodlad concluded that the process of school improvement and change stimulated the creativity of the staff to achieve³¹ mutually agreed upon goals.

Paula Mintzies and Isadora Hare contended that positive cooperative relationships and collaborative teamwork among school professionals facilitated school improvements. The individuals within the school must realize they contribute to the success of children and the school on both an individual and joint level. Advocates of school improvement must, therefore, consider the intellectual, familial,³² interpersonal, and social realities of the school. Despite what

research has confirmed about school improvement, there are obstacles to the movement. David L. Clark has found that "uncertain conceptual foundations, weak technology, problematic preference, ambiguous authority relationships, and inexperienced and changing program participants are the ordinary conditions surrounding school improvement efforts in education."³³

Purkey and Smith urged researchers to respect the strength of political influences over the decisions of school personnel. School personnel tend "to operate on the basis of their perceived self-interests as well as on their professional desire to educate children."³⁴ Eugene R. Howard offered a different warning to school improvement advocates. School improvement should focus on "the causes rather than the symptoms of student and staff alienation."³⁵ Howard outlined the current status of our schools as closed authoritarian environments that condemn students to situations where they have failed and will continue to fail, thus diminishing the students' self-esteem. Also, the physical structures of school buildings were designed to be emotionally sterile and deter meaningful human interaction. Howard emphasized that school improvement efforts have to recognize the personal, emotional, and intellectual processes involved in learning.³⁶

Despite the obstacles to school improvement, efforts are being made to implement change. Ann Lieberman and Lynn Miller observed that teachers and their interactions with the school organization are essential to initiate and sustain planned change and school improvement.

Teachers were urged to recognize the skills they already possess and seek support to learn new skills. Lieberman and Miller offered the following guidelines for school improvement:

- A. Recognize teachers' expertise and enable them to articulate the activities of their classrooms.
- B. Reward teachers for trying something new.
- C. Encourage teachers to share ideas and concerns and recognize that colleagues have similar concerns.
- D. Recognize the importance of the role of the principal in effecting change.³⁷

The guidelines suggested by Lieberman and Miller concentrate on the professional staff. However, parents, non-instructional staff, and school volunteers are also powerful potential change agents. Linkages among teachers, administrators, parents, and community members would facilitate change and school improvement. Lieberman and Miller concluded, "School improvement involves a combination of staff development, networking, and problem centered activities."³⁸

Byrd L. Jones and Robert W. Maloy have elaborated on partnerships as a means toward school improvement. Partnerships with outside agencies, such as universities, provided an opportunity for teachers and administrators to enhance personal and professional goals and involved the organization of the school and university to interact and gain insight into each other's functioning.³⁹ The partnerships made all participants aware of human dynamics, organizational constraints, racism, and power, which impinge on efforts to improve urban schools. Jones and Maloy contended "School improvement must involve sustained

efforts by educators to involve new resources and to introduce different behaviors into school settings." Jones and Maloy concluded "Partnerships can introduce different perspectives, allow individuals to explore new approaches, and generate alternative organizational strategies and substructures--all without requiring a major shakeup of the institution."⁴⁰

Research on bureaucratic structures, perspectives of school organizations, and directions for school improvement substantiate the need and desire of educators to explore school organizational structures. Many educators have considered alternative structures that included school personnel in decision-making processes for improved schools. The selected literature presented supports the proposition that the structure of organizations and peculiarities of schools yield multifaceted problems which can be addressed successfully through school improvement activities.

Elements of Change

Implicit in any discussion of effective schools, school organizations, and school improvement is the element of change. Involvement in a problem-solving, decision-making staff development project actualized the forces which promoted change for instructional and non-instructional professionals within school organizations. A staff with some insight into change processes in complex organizations may be able to initiate and sustain change in the future. Change is a "people" process whereby attitudes, techniques, and daily routines evolve to meet need as perceived by individuals. There is no universal formula

for implementing effective change strategies, but researchers have identified useful approaches.

The process of change is initiated when educators begin to examine their goals and the methods they are using to achieve them. Lieberman observed: "Schools are complex organizations. We therefore need complex ways of thinking about them."⁴¹ This statement is a challenge to all educators to think about the ways schools operate. Change strategies often fail when simplistic solutions are imposed. Many researchers have assumed that schools work in a relatively simple bureaucratic hierarchy and neglected to examine the complex organization or technological changes in formal curriculum

Seymour B. Sarason concurred with Lieberman "If we have learned anything about the change process, it is the bedrock importance of gaining the understanding and support of those who own the problem."⁴² Researchers attempting to implement change must consider the circumstances of the organization. Issues of incompetence, poor management, politics, systematic inertia, and personal matters influence participation and commitment to the change process.⁴³

Rethinking school structures is difficult, as Sarason observed:

When efforts at educational change repeatedly founder, despite everyone's good intentions, it is safe to assume that we are prisoners of ways of thinking that seem so right, natural, and proper that we never critically examine them.⁴⁴

Educators "are not able to take distance from ideas and conceptions that were highly overlearned by us in the course of our socialization."⁴⁵ Rethinking school structures is necessary to address the growing schism between the education in urban centers and education elsewhere.⁴⁶

Educational researchers have viewed change from several perspectives but share a central theme that the interactions, perceptions, and emotions of people facilitate or deter the change process. Terrence E. Deal conjectured that "change is not one thing it is many."⁴⁷ Deal elaborated that change:

- A. is affected by individual skills and attitudes.
- B. alters relationships and roles.
- C. raises issues of power and conflict.⁴⁸
- D. is influenced by culture.

Deal concluded:

If we can embrace the variety of roles change can play in organizations, we are much better able to understand it. If we understand the process, we are in a better position to improve organizations.⁴⁹

Sarason presented a similar view:

Any suggestion for change implies two related considerations: first, that one has an explicit theory of institutional change, and second, that this theory is appropriately formulated for the setting in which the desired change will be effected.⁵⁰

Sarason concluded that "until we understand the way in which school personnel were defining and experiencing problems in their daily work--⁵¹ efforts to change and improve schools would fail."

Social realities of schools and the people who interact within them are now the core of any change effort.⁵² Jones and Maloy offered the view that "Change requires involvement by many individuals in a school, creating and shaping both activities and meanings that relate to the needs, personalities, and climate of a particular building."⁵³

Jerry L. Gray and Frederick A. Storke observed that "People do not naturally resist change. When they do it is because something within

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them is being threatened by the change." The Rand Change Agent Study
confirmed that resource personnel at the school are essential to the
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implementation and continuation of change. Dwight W. Allen and John C.
Woodbury presented the view that a change agent should stimulate
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activity and encourage new thought.

Change process cannot be clearly delineated for purposes
of educational researchers. However, human dynamics must be considered
if change efforts hope to be sustained. Examining the variety of
emotional, social, and organizational forces for and against change
strategies is the challenge of future research. The selected literature
presented supports the proposition that rethinking existing school
structures, involving school personnel in decision making and goal
setting, is likely to support ongoing school improvements and change.

Staff Development

Staff development activities for instructional and non-
instructional professionals provided an opportunity to share and
communicate in a collegial, non-threatening setting. The activities
fostered interactions which enabled instructional and non-instructional
professionals to view each other as potential resources. These staff
development activities served to enhance communication between
instructional and non-instructional professionals which could lead to
changes that would improve schools.

Research has provided educators with some insights into the
interrelatedness of the following elements: Effective schools, school

climate, organizational structures, improvement efforts and change. The cohesive theme of these elements are the interactions, emotions, perspectives, and expectations of school personnel. Staff development represents an approach to attaining school improvement through planned change. Planned change involves the participation and continuous involvement of school personnel who will be affected by the change. The school personnel, in conjunction with principals and district administrators, determine the critical problems and develop strategies that attempt to alleviate or resolve the problems. Purkey and Smith presented this view: "Staff development should be based on the expressed needs of teachers revealed as part of the process of collaborative planning and collegial relationships."⁵⁷

Milbrey W. McLaughlin and David D. Marsh stressed that staff development provided school personnel with opportunities to change and develop as they adapted teaching practices to solve problems.⁵⁸ Ulysses Byas viewed "staff development which was relevant, need oriented, well-conceived, and organized as playing a significant role in helping school districts attain goals."⁵⁹ Fred H. Wood, Steven R. Thompson, and Sister Frances Russell encapsulated the elements of staff development when they stated:

Staff development cannot be "in place" and static. An objective of effective staff development is to create an environment which meets individual and organizational needs and has the ability to modify itself as perceived needs and conditions change.⁶⁰

Wood, Thompson, and Russell presented an overview of the staff development process. The authors outlined an inservice education

model that consisted of five stages. The stages included: readiness; planning; training; implementation; and maintenance. Readiness involved developing school climate and professional behavior that supported change. Planning involved organizing and preparing long-term objectives for staff development. Training involved staff in structured activities that led to new understandings and change. Implementation involved incorporating what was learned in workshops into the daily practices of the school. Maintenance involved monitoring the new practices and behaviors to see if they were being used.

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Armand Lauffer described a consultation model for agency staff development. The model included utilizing instruction and other means to effect the management of the organization and the manner in which staff related to each other. The underlying assumption was that greater job satisfaction and better internal relations increased effectiveness and efficiency. This form of staff development was most difficult because it requires input from members of all levels of the organization. "The most common activities do not look like traditional training but include group problem solving, team building, and the development of new communication channels."

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Sam Rodriguez and Kathy Johnstone proposed the collegial support group model of staff development. Collegial support "helped teachers reach higher levels of professionalism and self satisfaction." Staff development conducted by personnel within the organization may have a greater impact than staff development conducted by outside consultants.

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Edward M. Glaser argued that successful staff development programs were characterized by "...long term personal interactions between persons in the conventional and alternative program." Therefore, "The most effective single means that can be used to increase information utilization is personal interaction and the strategic contact is the well-informed colleague."⁶⁴

Incorporated in effective staff development were activities which recognized and respected the humanity of the participants. Carl Rogers' concept of a "helping relationship" was relevant to staff development activities. A helping relationship was "a relationship in which one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping with life of the other."⁶⁵ Implied in helping relationships was an awareness and recognition of the needs of people in a particular setting. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs provided a justification for continuous assessment of needs in schools. Maslow stated, "A need satisfied no longer motivates."⁶⁶ Therefore, motivation is contingent on knowing the needs of people, and successful staff development is contingent on the motivation of people.

The impact of school environment on student performance is largely unexplored. Most schools have not addressed the needs of staff and students. Urie Brofenbrenner argued that "understanding of the basic intrapsychic and interpersonal processes of human development requires an investigation in the actual environment, both immediate and remote, in which human beings live."⁶⁷ Staff development efforts

that improved working and interpersonal relationships enhanced the possibility of creating changes that would improve schools and ultimately the quality of education for all children.⁶⁸

Awareness and understanding of human sensitivities and motivations are aspects of the role of non-instructional professional staff such as psychologists, social workers, and counselors. Consequently, non-instructional professional staff are particularly suited for initiating and sustaining staff development activities. Non-instructional professional staff and other school personnel share what Lipsky referred to as the "human mode of interacting where caring and responsibility is a motivation to public service workers who basically believe in helping others."⁶⁹ Helping others and working together are the unifying forces at the core of successful staff development activities involving non-instructional professional staff and school personnel.

Research related to the concept of "team work" and "training" demonstrated the important role non-instructional professional staff play in staff development and school improvement. James P. Comer advocated a child study team approach to provide related support services such as psychology. "The team worked to help teachers acquire the skill necessary to manage the average behavior problems so they did not feel they had to automatically refer children for services."⁷⁰ Barbara K. Thomas presented a view that the interdisciplinary team model should be utilized to "concentrate efforts on working with adults in the

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 school setting...." The task of non-instructional professionals is to help the school attain their stated mission.

Robert W. Maloy and John Fischetti stated that, sociologically, teamwork includes: actual relationships, and activities that "are subjectively experienced by the people involved." School personnel working together as a team creates "new educational change realities." 72
 Sarason summarized the purpose of teams as seeing "...how we can be of help within the confines of the school." 73

An alternative to the team model is "to use specially selected and trained non-professionals in a human service role." 74 Donald C. Smith stated, "Developing new intervention programs which utilize ancillary or non-professional personnel is almost mandatory." 75 Sarason offered a similar view: "A solution to the problems of providing special service in schools cannot be based on the assumption that the traditionally trained professional will ever exist in adequate numbers." 76

Joel Meyers advocated "a collaborative approach between psychologist and teacher to address practical school problems." 77
 Lois B. Senft and Bill Snider discussed the possibility that inservice training conducted by non-instructional professionals would facilitate the flow of "specialized knowledge and skills to the classroom teacher, who in turn would implement the suggestion in the daily contact with children in the classroom." 78
 Changes in education practice are more likely to be adaptations rather than adoptions of the innovations of

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others." Staff development is synonymous with adaptation, and adaptation is incumbent with the role and responsibilities of non-instructional professional staff.

Recent research on the relationship of instruction and non-instructional professions by Kenneth A. Tye and Barbara B. Tye indicated that, "The teachers in the sample were rather indifferent about the quality of the intra-staff relationships in their schools." Tye and Tye surveyed teachers about the availability, use, and value of resource personnel. "Eighty percent of the teachers indicated that resource people were available, but only about half of the teachers indicated they had actually used such resources." Approximately half the teachers found district resource personnel to be of little or no help, but seventy-five to eighty percent of the teachers found outside consultants to be of little or no help. An interpretation of the aforementioned data suggests:

- A. Difficulty and alienation between teachers and resource personnel.
- B. Reluctance by teachers to interact with resource personnel.
- C. Slight advantage of in-district personnel being helpful as opposed to outside consultants.
- D. The need to involve teachers and resource personnel in staff development activities.

Michael Fullan stated, "There is limited research and underestimation of the potential role of district resource staff." Fullan continued that internal agents such as district specialists "are probably more critical than external consultants because of the necessity of continuous personal interaction." Thus far, non-instructional professional staff has had a limited role in staff development. Future efforts to staff development should recognize and expand the role of non-instructional professionals as potential
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change agents.

Staff development represents the least threatening and most comprehensive approach to change and school improvement. The selected literature presented supports the proposition that staff development involves all school personnel in developing improved interactions and that non-instructional professionals are untapped resources in efforts to improve schools.

Race and Equity Factors in Urban Education

Race and equity factors influence the interactions of people in urban settings. Equity issues such as dysfunctional families and the amount of support services for non-handicapped students were raised by instructional and non-instructional professionals involved in a staff development project. Discussions connected with these issues helped instructional and non-instructional professionals realize that issues in the larger society affect interpersonal interactions in schools.

Issues of race and class impact on the interactions among instructional and non-instructional professionals within the school setting. Personal feelings, ingrained social values, and prejudices influence instructional and non-instructional professionals' perceptions of minority students in urban schools. Joseph J. Caruso stated that, "Middle class teachers and professors had little appreciation or understanding of the political, social, and economic pressures of the daily life of welfare families."⁸²

Lipsky argued that bureaucratic agencies such as schools differentiate among the people they serve. The acceptability of differentiation "is supported by the racism and prejudices that permeate the society and are grounded in the structure of inequality." Lipsky continued that differentiation based upon inequality "leads to the institutionalization of the stereotypical tendencies that permeate the society."⁸³

Human service institutions such as families and communities have been undermined by the growing discrepancy between institutional and individual powers. "There is a need for human services to facilitate communication and to restore to individuals a sense of importance and of possible meaning in their lives."⁸⁴ Poor and minority students are failed by urban schools because of ignorance, bureaucratic indifference, and cultural behavior patterns that, "...systematically produces unequal results on the basis of race."⁸⁵

Schools and the larger society have a history that must be remembered by educators who hope to create change rather than repeat the mistakes of the past. For example, educators must recognize that schools in urban areas include little of the language and culture of Blacks, Latinos, and other minorities they serve. ⁸⁶ Issues of racism and equity are part of our society and, therefore, part of our school systems. Michael W. Apple and Barry M. Franklin contended:

Schools exist through their relations to other more powerful institutions, institutions that are combined in such a way as to generate structural inequalities of power and access to resources. Second, these inequalities are reinforced and reproduced by schools.⁸⁷

Early educators in our industrialized society were concerned with establishing and preserving a "cultural consensus," while at the same time allocating individuals to their "proper place." Thorndike theorized that individuals with high intelligence were better and more able to help society than the majority of the population. This philosophy led to the development of a differentiated curriculum with two purposes, first to educate the leaders, and second, to educate ⁸⁸ the followers. Sarason argued that "differences in intelligence are somehow inherently associated with ethnic origin. This genetic premise appears firmly rooted in our folklore, although it as yet lacks any ⁸⁹ scientific basis."

Seymour B. Sarason and John Doris concurred with the importance of history in reviewing schools and educational change. "Traditions, customs and practice are not easily unlearned," therefore, schools

today have organizational structures that were developed to meet the needs of earlier conditions. "The structural characteristics of schools will be effective obstacles to efforts at change." Consequently, educators seeking to adapt today's schools to the needs of Black and minority students must be aware of the history and purpose behind the development of public schools.⁹⁰

Sarason and Doris recounted how German and Irish immigrants of the 1820s rejected the public schools which cared for "children who were part of, or wished to be part of, the dominant Anglo-Protestant culture."⁹¹ The immigrants withdrew from the public schools and formed parochial schools, thus choosing assimilation in American society on their own terms. When compulsory education laws were enforced, children of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds were integrated into the "Anglo-Protestant" model and children who were divergent were labeled as socially deviant.⁹²

The history of school structure in relation to treatment of minority students raised the issue of whether urban schools have continued to assimilate Black and minority students into the Anglo-Protestant model, with little or no regard for the students' individuality and culture. Sarason and Doris concluded that one way to prevent the travesty in the treatment of minority students is "to respond with firm commitment and balanced judgment to adjust not the child to the school, but to adjust the interactions of the school, the subculture, and the family for the benefit of the child."⁹³

Paulo Freire also viewed the educational system as being designed to bring about conformity. However, Freire advocated that education become "the practice of freedom: the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." ⁹⁴ Janice Hale Benson advocated:

A new approach to the education of Afro-American children is needed. Black parents generally want their children to master the tools of mainstreamed society so that they can be economically viable and can contribute to the creative development of their community and society. At the same time, the Black community wants to preserve and celebrate aspects of Afro-American culture.⁹⁵

Therefore, it is imperative that an educational model be developed that appreciates the uniqueness of the Black culture. The model would provide an alternative to the White cultural/cognitive ⁹⁶ model that formed the structure of today's schools. Shirl E. Gilbert and Geneva Gay presented this view: "The means appropriate for teaching Black students differs from those appropriate for teaching other students because teaching and learning are sociocultural processes that ⁹⁷ take place within given social systems."

Black and minority parents are concerned with the issue of raising children who maintain a Black identity and pride while they become cognizant of mainstream cultural values in a predominately ⁹⁸ White society. Educators who doubt or dismiss the relevancy of the White cultural/cognitive model need only examine the representation of Blacks and minorities in the educational field. For example, nearly one-third of one hundred and twenty-eight school districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties, New York, do not employ a Black teacher or

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administrator. Parents of minority students are faced with raising children in a society that condones a racial double standard and school structures that perpetuate racial inequality. Black parents cannot rely on the schools to develop a sense of cultural heritage for their children.

Jawanza Kunjufu has argued that there is a conspiracy to destroy Black boys. The conspiracy involves members of society with obvious white racist beliefs and parents and educators who deny being racist, but allow institutional racism to continue by keeping silent. ¹⁰⁰ Alvin Poussaint stated, "Educators must take action against descrimination that is deeply ingrained in American culture." ¹⁰¹ John O. Ogbu presented a similar view when he stated:

Black children observe the job experience of parents and other blacks, conclude that their own chances in the white world are not very good and come to believe that doing well in school will not help much. ¹⁰²

William Julius Wilson contended that economic changes have significantly decreased job opportunities for the Black ghetto under class. Wilson warned that this economic state increasingly isolates Blacks from mainstream society. ¹⁰³ Barbara Love, Byrd L. Jones and Atron Gentry summarized the politices of urban education when they stated:

The interrelationship among schools and other elements of the urban environment--family, mass media, jobs, neighborhoods and association offices for economic security and public safety--define the possibilities and limitations of public education. ¹⁰⁴

Educators must look beyond the confines of the school building or district and critically examine how issues in the larger society impact on urban schools. The selected literature presented supports the proposition that issues of race and class are powerful forces in our society and perpetuate inequality for Black and minority students in urban schools.

Summary

Interactions are complex and multifaceted. This study cannot document every step involved in staff-development activities. However, improved interactions could lead instructional and non-instructional professionals to link their concerns and problems with larger issues in education and society. The selected literature supported the following propositions:

A. Analyzing and reflecting on the human dynamics of cultures is imperative if urban schools are to become more effective.

B. The structure of organizations and the peculiarities of schools yield multifaceted problems which can be addressed successfully through school improvement activities.

C. Rethinking existing school structures, involving school personnel in decision making and goal setting, is likely to support ongoing school improvements and change.

D. Staff development involves all school personnel in developing improved interactions and non-instructional professionals are untapped resources in efforts to improve schools.

E. Race and class are powerful forces in our society and perpetuate inequality for black and minority students in urban schools.

The propositions support improving interactions as positive directions toward school improvement. This staff development project was an initial step in improving interactions among instructional and non-instructional professionals.

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C H A P T E R I I I

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Implementation of the proposed staff development project required management of bureaucratic components to enable instructional and non-instructional professional staff to work together toward a goal. The bureaucratic structure of schools required this researcher to work within the existing structure and simultaneously develop an atmosphere where change could be considered positive and helpful instead of negative and detrimental. Support and cooperation were obtained from administrators and instructional and non-instructional professional staff through collaborative efforts and the personal initiative of this researcher.

Administrative Perspective

The process of obtaining support for improving instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions required administrative support from the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and the building principal. Obtaining administrative support from each of these administrators necessitated an alignment of needs with staff development activities and the personal and professional goals of employees.

The philosophical framework of the Roosevelt/UMASS Staff Development Program outlined the following premises:

Designing and implementing a staff development program in Roosevelt with any promise of success, requires consideration of the individual professional goals of employees, thus, one undergirding premise of our (leadership). Staff development is the guiding philosophy that, as employees work toward achieving school district goals, they must feel they are simultaneously achieving their own personal/professional goals, and that employees can and will grow beyond expectation of minimum job description(s). 1

Each administrator had a different perspective of the potential impact of the proposed staff development project. The Superintendent focused on benefits of the project for the district and students. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services focused on existing support services and ways to improve services. The building principal focused on increased staff productivity and improved morale.

As the educational leader of the Roosevelt Union Free School District, Superintendent Dr. Ulysses Byas played an important role in establishing district priorities and guiding the Roosevelt/UMASS Staff Development Program. Participants worked toward meaningful and useful staff development activities for the district. The researcher reviewed and discussed his dissertation proposal with Byas. Initially, Byas agreed that instructional and non-instructional professional staff interaction might be improved, but he raised two questions. First, How would "improved interactions" be measured? and second, What impact would this have on the school district? Byas raised additional questions that guided this researcher to understand that staff development must address the issues of racism, urban schools, and resources. In addition, the researcher must also be prepared to respond to criticism

by those researchers who rely heavily on a traditional approach to educational research and are skeptical concerning action research methodology.²

Byas queried, "Are there a disproportionate number of Black kids in special education?" and "How does Roosevelt School District compare to surrounding communities?"³ This researcher revised the dissertation proposal to include additional statistical information regarding special education services and the support services of psychology and social work. The nature of instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions are ill-structured and multifaceted. The thrust of this staff development project was not to "correct" a situation, but to begin a process of group interactions prerequisite to change. The group process involved school personnel in a decision-making process that focused on support services. Issues related to support service were raised with these school personnel. Through collaborative interactions, issues relevant to individual professional goals and problems related to their schools could be addressed. Byas advised this researcher to continue this staff development dialogue with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and the building principal.

The Director of Pupil Personnel Services, is a central office administrator with multiple responsibilities. Dr. Joan M. Cottman oversees health, speech, language, psychology, social work, home

teaching, district-wide testing, and special education. Cottman's support was essential for a staff development project aimed at improving instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions. This researcher had an ongoing discussion with Cottman because of our professional affiliation for the past six years. Issues of concern to Cottman and the district were: (1) Referral procedures for obtaining support service; (2) Interdisciplinary building teams; and (3) Improving the quantity and quality of support services.

Cottman and this researcher discussed how intricately related these issues were and that personal and professional interactions were vital for improving referral procedures, interdisciplinary building teams, and the quantity and quality of support services. Improving instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions was related, but not a component part of, this researcher's responsibilities as district school psychologist.

The Director of Pupil Personnel Services made several administrative adjustments to facilitate this staff development project. First, a substitute was permitted to attend Committee on Special Education meetings so that this researcher could conduct staff development activities. Second, schedules of one school psychologist and one social worker were changed so they could participate in the staff development activities at the Ulysses Byas School. Third, portions of meetings for district psychologists were devoted to discussing referral procedures, building teams, and the quantity and quality of

support services. The guidance and support of Byas and Cottman enabled this researcher to present an organized and realistic staff development project to the principal of the Ulysses Byas School.

Dr. Earl Mosely, a veteran administrator, had been the principal of the Ulysses Byas School for 17 years. Mosely's strengths were positive relationships with staff and community members, respected leader of fellow administrators, and advocate of staff development activities. Mosely indicated that previous experiences with action research and staff development had been effective in making positive changes in the school climate.

Mosely and this researcher discussed instructional and non-instructional staff interactions in the elementary school and focused on issues of concern. Mosely was concerned about support services of psychology and social work. The school received part-time service from the school psychologist and social worker. The part-time scheduling and office availability prevented these non-instructional professionals from being in the building on the same day, thus inhibiting the delivery of support services. Mosely recognized the potential for improving support services through staff development activities directed at improving instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions.

Mosely viewed the staff development project as a means of addressing a problem in his building. He suggested that this researcher present an overview of the project to his staff at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting and designated Perletter Wright,

mathematics coordinator, to assist in the scheduling and implementation of the project. The administrative views of Byas, Cottman, and Mosely, combined with professional experience in the district, helped this researcher prepare for the staff development presentation at a faculty meeting of the Ulysses Byas staff.

Staff Input

Staff input and an assessment of needs was obtained to provide a basis for the staff development process. Through the needs assessment, themes important to administrators, instructional, and non-instructional professional staff emerged. These themes or issues of concern established the launch pad for workshop activities.

On October 26, 1987, this researcher made an initial presentation of the staff development project. Twenty-seven staff members were present at a mandatory faculty meeting. The staff was composed of both new and veteran teachers. Establishing credibility and familiarity with the Roosevelt Public Schools was accomplished when this researcher reviewed his professional experience and tenure in Roosevelt for the past six years. This researcher observed the staff's reaction and they appeared attentive. A case scenerio, formulated by this researcher, was presented to provoke thought and discussion about support services, psychologists, social workers, and referral procedures.

A child in third grade is doing poorly in reading even though Chapter I services are being provided. The child is beginning to display behavior difficulties in unstructured situations, such as the playground and lunchroom, as well as behavioral problems in class. As the classroom teacher, you have spoken with the teacher from the previous grade and obtained the following information:

- 1) The child was retained in kindergarten.

- 2) The child was referred for evaluation in second grade, but the evaluation was never obtained.

What are you going to do with the student this year? Your options are as follows:

- 1) Request an evaluation.

- 2) Place the student in the lowest reading group and hope that Chapter I services will be enough.

What can you do to address this student's frustration, lack of academic improvement and disruptive behavior which interferes with the learning atmosphere in the class?

This researcher then asked the faculty if this scenerio sounded familiar, and the majority of the teachers nodded "yes." One teacher stated, "I have three kids like this in my class now." The scenerio encapsulated a situation familiar to elementary school teachers in Roosevelt and helped maintain attention and pique interest.

A brief review of the psychological service situation in the Ulysses Byas Elementary School accentuated the isolation of teachers

coping with problems similar to the scenerio. The school had been without a school psychologist for six months. If a person were hired, a backlog of referrals for testing would take precedence over referrals for intervention services. This researcher stated, "Many of you are faced with a situation similar to the scenerio, but there are things we can do to help ourselves and the children." This researcher outlined three premises which formed the framework for this dissertation.

1) A situation similar to the one described in the scenerio should not be faced by a teacher alone.

2) As professionals and individuals, we have knowledge and skills effective in helping children, but opportunities to share our knowledge are rare.

3) There is no single, right solution to this case scenerio, but by working together the situation could be improved for many children.

Needs Assessment

The researcher asked the faculty if they would be interested in working with colleagues in a group process that would address issues related to support services at the Ulysses Byas School. One teacher asked, "Will this be done during the school day?" The researcher responded affirmatively and noted that several more teachers added their names to the list of interested individuals. The researcher then distributed a needs assessment form. All twenty-seven faculty members returned their forms, and the results were reported to the staff at a later date. The data collected through the assessment served as a

basis for developing workshop sessions. Thirteen of the twenty-seven faculty members agreed to participate at the end of the first meeting. Additional faculty members agreed to participate in the week following the meeting, bringing the total participants to seventeen. The needs assessment forms were collected and tabulated by the researcher. The results are recorded in percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. (See Table 1).

TABLE 1
Needs Assessment Survey Results
Ulysses Byas Staff

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. Teachers have a role in affecting the social and emotional development of children.	63	37	-	-	-
2. Teachers have a role in assisting students who approach them with a personal problem.	48	52	-	-	-
3. Teachers and support staff often work together to meet the needs of a child.	41	44	11	4	-
4. I believe child study team meetings can be beneficial in helping children.	44	52	-	-	4
5. I have an understanding of the role of support services in my school.	22	41	33	4	-
6. The support services for children in my building are adequate.	-	22	44	33	-

Continued, next page.

1 continued

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>No Response</u>	
7. My school has a plan for helping students who are beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties.	4	44	37	15	-	
8. My experience has been that support service personnel are accessible.	7	33	44	11	4	
9. I have valued my interactions with support service personnel.	11	67	15	-	7	
10. Referral procedures to obtain support services for children are adequate.	4	41	33	15	7	
11. I would like support service personnel to take a more active role in my classroom.	30	55	-	-	15	
12. All children have equal access to service from support staff.	4	19	59	11	7	
				<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>No Response</u>
13. I feel confident assisting students who approach me with a personal problem.	<u>Always</u>	<u>Frequently</u>				
	33	33	33	-	-	
14. I meet with parents to discuss the non-academic aspects of their child's functioning.	19	33	48	-	-	
15. I have requested assistance from support services for students beginning to display academic, social and/or behavioral difficulties during the 1986-87 school year.	11	30	41	7	-	

Item 16 of the Needs Assessment Survey asked the participants to "Please list five topics about which you would like additional information." Listed below are the individual topics of interest.

- Parental involvement
- Listing of social services available outside the school
- Methods to detect and deal with students who exhibit social and emotional problems
- Ways to assist those students who seem to be falling between the cracks
- Psychological services in all schools
- Helping the child from a "neglected home life"
- Identifying students with learning disabilities
- Exactly how far can the school push a parent if the parent disagrees with having their child evaluated?
- Support services in the district and what they do
- Mainstreaming
- Help for children after school (tutorial, social, counseling)
- The role of the support team
- Outside counseling services available at low cost--which are good?
- Procedure for conducting child study teams
- Skipping children who may not be ready socially and the effects
- Parents who are doing their children's homework
- Alternatives to special education
- Pre-testing of students before they enter school
- More knowledge of what outside social workers are doing with certain students

The response to Questions 1 and 2 showed general agreement that teachers have a role in assisting students in a social, emotional, and academic capacity. Ninety-six percent of the surveyed population expressed the opinion that child study teams were beneficial, but fifteen percent disagreed that teachers and support staff work together. In addition, seventy-seven percent disagreed that support services were adequate. Fifty-two percent of the staff disagreed that there was any kind of building plan for helping students beginning to display academic,

social or behavioral problems. Interactions with support staff were valued by seventy-eight percent of the staff. Fifty-five percent viewed support personnel as not being accessible. Eighty-five percent of the staff desired increased participation of support service personnel in the classroom. Forty-eight percent of the staff viewed the distribution of support services as inequitable. This experienced staff felt confident in assisting students with personal problems and in discussing these problems with parents. The limited interaction between teachers and support personnel was demonstrated when forty-eight percent sometimes or never requested assistance from support service personnel.

The response to Item 16 suggested to this researcher a serious gap in knowledge concerning psychological and social service and uncertainty about building procedures related to support services. The information requested by the participants indicated an interest in obtaining knowledge beyond the academic sphere. The topics reflected an overriding concern to meet childrens' needs which extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom or school.

The general interpretation of the data was that no consistent patterns or interaction existed between instructional and non-instructional professional staff. The school schedule allowed few contingencies that enabled instructional and non-instructional professional staff to work together effectively to assist children with social, emotional, and academic difficulties.

The results of the needs assessment were also shared with four colleagues involved in the Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts Staff Development Program. Each member brought a perspective of the Roosevelt School District that provided realistic feedback to this researcher. The purpose of the group was to critique staff development activities in the district.

Five members of the Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts Staff Development Program, including this researcher, met six times from December 1987, through February 1988. The meetings were structured in the following manner. Participants were prepared to:

- A. Present an overview of staff development activities they were involved in and problems or successes they experienced.
- B. Present at least two issues of concern related to staff development to which the group could respond.
- C. Set a short-term staff development goal to be completed by the next meeting.

The group discussions enabled this researcher to reflect on the needs assessment results. How were support service personnel going to participate if they did not attend the workshops? What mechanism would be in place to insure that this researcher's views and perceptions of support services were representative of the other three psychologists? The group indicated that continued dialogue with the psychologists would provide a form of check and balance for personal biases. Consequently, the needs assessment

and workshop sessions with psychologists were included in this dissertation.

District Psychologists

At a meeting of the district psychologists, this researcher described the identical case scenario presented to the Ulysses Byas staff. The two elementary school psychologists indicated familiarity with the problem by nodding their heads. Another psychologist responded to the problem by proposing the child should be socially promoted and suggested the home environment be investigated. The reaction to the scenario demonstrated a significant division within the group. The formal needs assessment was administered and results were tabulated by this researcher. The actual number of responses were reported because of the small size of the group. See Table 2.

TABLE 2

Needs Assessment Survey Results District Psychologists

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. Support staff have a role in affecting the social and emotional development of children.	3	-	-	-	-
2. Support staff have a role in assisting students who approach them with a personal problem.	2	1	-	-	-
3. Teachers and support staff often work together to meet the needs of a child.	2	1	-	-	-

Continued, next page.

2 continued

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>No Response</u>
4. I believe child study team meetings can be beneficial in helping children.	2	1	-	-	-
5. I have an understanding of the role of support services in my school.	2	1	-	-	-
6. The support services for children in my building are adequate.	1	-	-	1	1
7. My school has a plan for helping students who are beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties.	1	1	1	-	-
8. My experience has been that teachers are accessible.	1	2	-	-	-
9. I have valued my interactions with teachers.	2	1	-	-	-
10. Referral procedures to obtain support services for children are adequate.	1	-	1	-	1
11. I would like to take a more active role in the classroom.	1	1	-	1	-
12. All children have equal access to support services.	1	1	1	-	-

Continued, next page.

2 continued

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>No Response</u>
13. I feel confident assisting students who approach me with a personal problem.	-	1	2	-	-
14. I meet with parents to discuss the non-academic aspects of their child's functioning.	-	2	1	-	-
15. I have assisted teachers with students beginning to display academic, social and/or behavioral difficulties during the 1986-87 school year.	1	1	1	-	-

Item 16 of the Needs Assessment Survey asked the participants to, "Please list five topics about which you would like additional information." The following is a list of responses:

Support services for parents
 Techniques for motivating parents who are extremely uninvolved with the school situation
 Setting up counseling programs
 Teacher expectations for school psychologists
 Development of reading skills
 Helping children cope with death and illness

The data indicated that all the psychologists strongly agreed that support staff have a role in: affecting the social and emotional

development of children and assisting students with personal problems. The psychologists strongly agreed or agreed that teachers and support staff work together; child study teams are beneficial; and role of support services was understood. The majority of psychologists agreed that schools had a plan for helping students beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties. Psychologists have valued their interactions with teachers, viewed them as accessible, and considered referral procedures adequate. Additionally, psychologists viewed access to support services as equitable and would like to be more involved in the classroom. Psychologists frequently met with parents and always or frequently assisted teachers. The responses to Item 16 indicated an interest and concern on the part of the psychologists to explore, beyond the limits of a job description, issues that may be beneficial to children.

A comparison of the two needs assessments yielded many areas of agreement and disagreement between instructional and non-instructional professional staff. For instance, the majority of instructional and non-instructional professionals agreed that teachers and support staff often work together to meet the needs of a child. However, the majority of the instructional staff did not view support service personnel as accessible. The needs assessment and topics of interest formed a basis for mutual dialogue related to support service issues.

Organization and Preparation

After completion of these needs assessments, this researcher met with Perletter Wright, mathematics coordinator, to schedule staff development activities in the Ulysses Byas Elementary School. Wright had been designated by Mosley because of her familiarity with staff and building operations. Wright made recommendations in the following areas:

1. Fridays would be the most convenient days because the teacher assistants would be able to cover classes.
2. Workshop participants were scheduled with consideration of the following criteria: grade level taught, lunch periods, and specials (i.e., gym and music).
3. Dates were selected on alternate Fridays because of "bank day," an in-building term for "pay day."
4. Wright advised this researcher which classes teacher assistants may prefer to cover. Personal contact was made with each teacher and teacher assistant to confirm arrangements prior to the first workshop. The math coordinator, reading coordinator, and resource room teacher also agreed to substitute for certain classes.
5. Teachers and substitutes were notified of the exact date, time, location, and duration of the sessions. Teachers were asked to provide substitutes with sufficient class materials for the time they would be out of the room.

6. Subsequent to the first session, all teachers and teacher assistants were sent written notice of future meetings two days in advance.
7. The math lab was selected as the workshop location because it provided a comfortable, accessible setting conducive to working with small groups.
8. Refreshments were provided to help establish a cordial, comfortable setting.

During the workshops, several teachers and teacher assistants indicated appreciation for the effort that went into planning the workshops. One teacher assistant appreciated not having to cover a particular class. A teacher asked if the workshops interfered with "bank day." Several participants commented that the notices reminding them of the workshops were helpful because they had forgotten. The participants' comments underscored the significance of planning activities which consider the needs of staff.

A core of theoretical and practical datum was essential to the development and implementation of these staff development workshops. Ideas gleaned from the selected literature review assisted this researcher in designing the workshops. In addition, feedback from colleagues familiar with the district provided practical information that facilitated implementation of the workshops.

Notes

Chapter III

1

Roosevelt Public Schools, Roosevelt/UMASS Staff Development Program (Roosevelt, NY: Roosevelt Public Schools, 1984), 2.

2

Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, Research Methods in Education (Dover, NH: Crom Helm, 1985), 216.

3

Ulysses Byas interview by author, personal notes, Roosevelt, NY, 22 September 1986.

C H A P T E R I V

WORKSHOP SESSIONS AND RESULTS

A series of twelve workshops were conducted with seventeen staff members of the Ulysses Byas Elementary School and three members of the support service staff within the Roosevelt Public Schools. The voluntary participants were divided into three groups of instructional staff and a fourth group of non-instructional professional staff. Availability, school schedule, and grade level taught were the major criteria for organizing groups. Groups A through D were composed of the following personnel:

(1) Group A included six members of the instructional staff. Members were instructors in the following areas: two 5th grade, one 6th grade, one special education, one resource room, and one math lab.

(2) Group B included five members of the instructional staff. Members were instructors in the following areas: two 3rd grade, one 4th grade, one special education, and one school nurse.

(3) Group C included six members of the instructional staff. Members were instructors in the following areas: two kindergarten, one 1st grade, two 2nd grade, and one special education.

(4) Group D included three members of the non-instructional professional staff. Two members provided service to kindergarten through 6th grade schools, and one member provided service at the junior-senior high school.

The objective of the first workshop was the same for the four groups: to focus on areas of agreement and disagreement regarding support services within the Roosevelt School District. This was accomplished by reviewing the results of the needs assessment and providing an overview of support services. Subsequent workshops were designed to address the needs and interests of the participants. Needs and interests were gleaned from formative evaluation questionnaires that were completed at the end of each workshop.

The format for this chapter will be as follows:

(1) Workshop I and the evaluation forms of groups A, B, and C reported

(2) Workshop II for Group A and the evaluations by Group A, Workshop III for Group A and the evaluations by Group A

(3) Workshop II for Group B and the evaluations by Group B, Workshop III for Group B and the evaluations by Group B

(4) Workshop II for Group C and the evaluations by Group C, Workshop III for Group C and the evaluation by Group C

(5) Workshop I for Group D and the evaluation by Group D, Workshop II for Group D and informal evaluation by Group D, Workshop III and informal evaluation by Group D (See figure 4.1)

Workshop I Results of Needs Assessment Overview of Support Services			
Group A-1/15/88 N=6	Group B-1/22/88 N=4	Group C-1/15/88 N=6	Group D-1/13/88 N=3
Evaluation of Workshop I	Evaluation of Workshop I	Evaluation of Workshop I	Evaluation of Workshop I
Workshop II 1/22/88 N=6 Establish a link- age between in- structional and non-instructional professionals.	Workshop II 2/5/88 N=5 Problem solving and human rela- tions. Role of support service personnel.	Workshop II 1/22/88 N=6 Parent/teacher interaction. Responsibilities of psychologist and social worker.	Workshop II 1/28/88 N=2 Support services and interaction with teachers. Role and respon- sibilities of psychologist.
Evaluation of Workshop II	Evaluation of Workshop II	Evaluation of Workshop II	Informal Evalu- ation of Work- shop II
Workshop III 2/15/88 N=6 Realistic plan for conducting building team meetings.	Workshop III 2/12/88 N=3 Plan for obtaining appropriate infor- mation regarding new students to the district.	Workshop III 2/5/88 N=6 Develop a plan to improve interactions in the Ulysses Byas School.	Workshop III 3/29/88 N=3 Formulate a basic agreement about the role and function of psychologists.
Evaluation of Workshop III	Evaluation of Workshop III	Evaluation of Workshop III	Informal Evalu- ation of Work- shop III
Final assessment of all workshops conducted immediately following Workshop III			

Order and Sequence of Workshops

Figure 4.1

The researcher served as the workshop facilitator for all twelve sessions. Scheduling and personnel constraints prohibited the use of in-district personnel with expertise in parent communication, social work, and pupil personnel services. A link between non-instructional and instructional professionals was critical if improved interactions were to evolve. Therefore, the psychologist and social worker met jointly with groups A and C. The psychologist also met with group B, but the social worker was unable to meet with group B due to scheduling conflicts.

Workshop I--Objectives

This researcher served as facilitator for the session. The thrust for the first session was twofold: (1) to provide an overview of support services in the district, including perceptions of various roles and responsibilities; (2) to review all of the needs assessment responses (See Table 1) and focus on responses which stimulated thought and discussion. An activity was included in the session for the following reasons: (A) to have the group interact, and (B) to have the group reflect on their perceptions of themselves and others.

Workshop I Outline--Group A, B, C

I. The consent forms were distributed, read, and signed by the voluntary participants (see appendix B). The participants raised no questions about the form.

II. Overview

A. On October 26, 1987, the Ulysses Byas faculty responded to a needs assessment survey. The faculty gave professional judgments regarding the support services of psychology and social work on the elementary school level. The needs assessment and the support of the building principal resulted in these workshops.

B. As of February 1987, there were two psychologists and four social workers servicing 1666 elementary school students. On the junior-senior high school level, one psychologist and two social workers served 1430 students.

C. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Joan Cottman, was administratively overseeing the following support services:

1. Health
2. Speech/Language
3. Psychology
4. Social Work
5. Guidance
6. Committee on Special Education
7. Home Teaching
8. District Wide Testing
 - A. State tests
 - B. California Achievement tests
9. Special Education Programs
 - A. District level
 - B. Day treatment and residential

D. Board of Cooperative Educational Services

Given the multitude of services offered in Roosevelt, it sometimes happened that the roles and responsibilities of individuals who provided these services frequently overlapped, and sometimes students in need fell between the cracks.

E. The theme of roles and responsibilities was expanded through the description of the school psychologist's duties. The emphasis was on the amount of time involved in the evaluation process.

1. Testing--An individual psychological evaluation takes between two and three hours. Evaluations might be conducted over a period of several days, depending on the age and attention span of the individuals being evaluated.

2. Reports--The amount of time required to write a report is approximately one and one half to two hours. Report writing entails scoring and reviewing all tests administered during the evaluation and interpreting the results.

3. Liaison--The psychologist was the connection between the classroom teacher, parents, and community agencies. The agencies included Protective Services, Probation, Mental Health Facilities, neighboring school districts, and the district Committee on Special Education.

This researcher then shared some generalized perceptions of psychologists:

- A. A person who tests and gets a kid into special education
- B. A person who is never around when you need them
- C. A person who is always asking a teacher to fill out forms
- D. A person who is lucky they don't have a class

This researcher wanted to provoke thought among the participants about perceptions of others and themselves. A statement was made that the perceptions instructional staff have of non-instructional

professional staff and vice versa may interfere with professional interactions on behalf of children who are beginning to display social, emotional, or academic problems.

III. Needs Assessment Results

In order to facilitate the review of the needs assessment results, this researcher provided the workshop participants with a copy of the assessment forms (See appendix C). This researcher then reviewed each question on the assessment form and encouraged participants to make comments. The reactions and responses of each group reflected varied interests within the groups but also served to formulate the dynamics of the individual group. The reactions of groups A, B, and C are summarized below.

A. Group A

This researcher observed the most reaction to Items 6, 7, 10, and 12 of the needs assessment. Question 6 stated, "The support services for children in my building are adequate." One participant commented, "How can they be? The psychologist or social worker isn't always here." Another participant commented, "Sometimes you never hear about children you refer for service." Question 7 stated, "My school has a plan for helping students who are beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavior difficulties." A participant responded by commenting, "Each case is individual. There is no plan." Another commented, "Why don't we do more for children at a younger age to prevent problems? Why don't we have Title I services in grades 1, 2, and 3? Doesn't it make

sense?" Question 10 stated, "Referral procedures to obtain support services for children are adequate." One participant asked, "What can we do if a parent won't sign a consent form for evaluation?" This researcher responded by describing the due process procedures. Another participant commented that, "Parents don't want to label their kids." Question 12 was, "All children have equal access to service from support staff." A participant commented that, "Special Education students do not receive enough counseling." Another member responded to this statement with, "They get more counseling than the kids in my class."

The comments were interpreted by this researcher to represent the group's interest in procedures, and providing adequate and equal services for all.

B. Group B

This researcher noted that Group B responded stronger to Items 5, 9 and 11 of the needs assessment. Item 5 stated, "I have an understanding of the role of support services in my school." A participant commented, "Many of us really don't know the proper role of getting support." Item 9 stated, "I have valued my interactions with support service personnel." A participant commented, "The support service staff has turned over quite a bit. Teachers haven't had a chance to deal with a psychologist or social worker long term." Item 11 stated, "I would like support service personnel to take a more active role in my classroom." The following remarks were noted: "Helpful if they came in," and "Sometimes the kids need to talk to someone."

This researcher interpreted the comments as an interest of the group in understanding the role of support services through a closer working relationship within a classroom setting.

C. Group C

This researcher noted that Group C commented mainly on Items 6, 7, and 8 of the needs assessment. Item 6 stated, "The support services for children in my building are adequate." A participant commented, "What we need is more workshops to train teachers about support service problems and what we can do." Item 7 stated, "My school has a plan for helping students who are beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties." Several members commented, "It depends on the grade level. Some have a plan and some don't." Item 8 stated, "My experience has been that support service personnel are accessible." One participant commented, "The psychologist always seems to be saying, °I'm backlogged°." Another comment was, "We never seem to get feedback from psychologists or social workers. It's like we're not professionals." This researcher interpreted the comments to reflect an interest in working together as professionals.

IV. Activity--Auction

This researcher included an activity as part of the workshop to increase interactions among participants, establish a group identity, and reflect on both their self-perceptions and their perceptions of others. The activity was an auction adapted by this researcher and based on two models of consultation: behavioral and mental health.

The activity involved each participant bidding no more than two hundred dollars for six statements that were written on the chalkboard before the workshop. The statements were:

- 1. I would like to have more control over my class.
- 2. I would like to feel more comfortable handling students.
- 3. I would like strategies for dealing effectively with students.
- 4. I would like to understand my students better.
- 5. I would like a clear plan of action for dealing with a difficult student.
- 6. I would like assistance in analyzing a difficult situation with a student.

When the auction was completed, the participants were told that statements 1, 3, and 5 were associated with a behavioral consultation model. Statements 2, 4, and 6 were associated with a mental health consultation model. Behavior consultation includes: observation, base line data, examination of own behavior, and becoming actively involved in the formulation of a remedial plan. The behavior consultation model provided an approach that helped individuals feel more in control of situations. The mental health consultation model focused on achieving insights into personalities, analyzing feelings about situations, and understanding interpersonal dynamics. The mental health model provided an approach that helped individuals feel better about their own professional skills.

The response to the auction activity assisted this researcher in planning the approach which was utilized with Groups A, B, and C. The groups responded in the following manner to the activity:

A. Group A

Four participants chose the behavior consultation model which reflected a need for strategies and a plan for action. The two participants who functioned in a lab or resource capacity showed a preference for a consultation model which emphasized understanding and analyzing students.

B. Group B

Four participants chose a behavior consultation model which emphasized strategies and planning. Only one member of the group (the school nurse) indicated a need to understand students. One participant stated, "I want it all."

C. Group C

All the participants selected Item 6 which indicated a preference for analyzing situations, a consultation model approach. The group and this researcher were surprised that everyone selected the same item. The group laughed, and statements were made that all primary teachers must think alike. One participant said, "Maybe we didn't respond to Item 1 because it is taboo. No one wants to admit a lack of control." The facial expressions and head nodding of other participants indicated that fear or anxiety may have influenced the group's response to the auction activity.

V. Interpretation of Auction Activity

This researcher noted that veteran teachers relied on plans, strategies, and behavioral approaches. Instructional staff who taught

on the primary level--kindergarten through third grade--and instructional staff who worked with small groups of children were more comfortable with the consultation model. The responses to the auction activity provided this researcher with insights into the interpersonal dynamics among members of groups A, B, and C.

Assessment Results: Workshop I

The assessment forms (See appendix D) were handed out at the end of each workshop. The participants were asked to give a written response to the following three items:

1. What aspect of the session was the most helpful?
2. What topics would you like to explore at future sessions?
3. Any additional questions or comments?

Group A Assessment--Workshop I

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the following items.

Item: What aspect of the session was the most helpful?

The responses to this item indicated that the majority of participants benefited from the overview of support services. Respondents also found the explanation of the roles of support service personnel to be informative. One participant stated, "The discussion about documentation, especially when the parent is not willing to sign the referral form, was most helpful."

Item: What topics would you like to explore at future sessions?

The participants requested additional information about developing a greater awareness and understanding of childrens' problems within the classroom. Information was also requested regarding referral procedures and, as one individual stated, "...ongoing assistance for the child who has already been referred."

Item: Any additional questions or comments?

The participants' responses indicated that the workshop was helpful, informative, and enjoyable. As one participant commented "It gave a clear understanding of what is available within the district."

Group B Assessment--Workshop I

The following represents this researchers' summary of the participants' responses to the following items.

Item: What aspect of the session was the most helpful?

The participants indicated that the information regarding "support system" and the role of support service personnel was helpful. The participants indicated some benefit in exchanging views regarding support services.

Item: What topics would you like to explore at future sessions?

The participants indicated a need for additional information regarding: building the self esteem of students, single parent homes, and community agencies--resources.

Item: Any additional questions or comments?

The comments generally indicated the participants' concern for involving parents in the support service process.

Group C Assessment--Workshop I

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the following items.

Item: What aspect of the session was the most helpful?

The participants indicated the auction activity and ensuing discussion of consultation models was most helpful. The respondents also indicated that viewing support services from the perspective of classroom teachers, students, and support personnel was beneficial. As one participant stated, "It helped me find out what my co-workers felt."

Item: What topics would you like to explore at future sessions?

The participants' responses reflected an interest in exploring interpersonal dynamics, discussing measures that would prevent referrals to special education and crisis intervention techniques.

Item: Any additional questions or comments?

The participants commented that the workshop was helpful and provided practical information. One participant stated, "This session brought about an awareness which was much needed."

Summary and Interpretation of Workshop I Assessment Forms

Based upon the participants' responses, the basic objectives of the first workshop were fulfilled. The background information filled

in gaps in the instructional staff's knowledge of support services within the Roosevelt School District. The combination of the background information and needs assessments gave the groups a core of information that established a basis for meaningful dialogue. The participants raised issues related to support services which included foster children, dealing with parents, referral process, and working relationships with colleagues. The aforementioned related issues raised by the groups reflected the concerns, caring, and professionalism of the Ulysses Byas instructional staff. The participants indicated that the session was positive, helpful, and informative. The volume of requests for additional information and additional comments was indicative of the participants' motivation to learn and willingness to express needs and concerns.

The major differences among the groups appeared to be the degree of openmindedness to material presented in the first workshop. Instructional staff with five years or more tenure in Roosevelt seemed more resistant than instructional staff with less than five years experience. The grade level taught also seemed to influence the expectations each group had of support services. For example, instructional staff on the K-2 grade level seemed more interested in crisis intervention, and interpersonal dynamics among teachers, parents, and students. Instructional staff on the 3-6 grade level seemed more concerned with the process of obtaining support services for children. Additionally, the 3-6 instructional staff seemed to be seeking concrete solutions or approaches to problems related to support services.

The first workshop helped to establish a basic core of information and established themes related to support services. Each group, through interactions, established a variation of the support service theme based upon personal and professional need.

Workshop II Objectives--Group A

The first objective of the workshop was to respond to the questions raised and information requested on the assessment forms from the first workshop. This researcher responded to issues related to support services. The second objective was to establish a linkage between the instructional and non-instructional professional staff. A third objective was to respond to requests for information about testing materials and referral procedures. A fourth objective was to encourage group interaction and problem solving in an activity centered on "building teams" in the Ulysses Byas School. A fifth objective was to encourage discussion and interaction among the groups and staff between workshop sessions by giving the participants a specific assignment.

Workshop II Outline--Group A

I. This researcher reviewed the comments made by the group after the first workshop. The review served to remind the participants of the previous workshop and demonstrated that the group's responses were incorporated into the second workshop.

The group was concerned with the following themes:

- A. Appropriate and necessary forms for referral
- B. Responsibility for following up on referrals

C. Ongoing assistance for the child who has already been referred

D. Diagnosis of special students and samples of test given by psychologist

This researcher interpreted that the major interests of this group revolved around the referral process and testing.

II. Introduction of school psychologist and school social worker.

This researcher arranged for the school psychologist and social worker to make a short presentation about their roles and responsibilities in the Ulysses Byas School. The psychologist was a new employee, and the workshops provided an informal means of establishing personal contact.

The psychologist stated her preference for behavior management techniques and an interest in preventing children from being referred to special education. One participant raised the question: "How long does it take to test a child after the referral is received?" The psychologist responded that that depends on the priorities set by the principal. The psychologist also explained that there was a large backlog of referrals. The group raised no additional questions with the psychologist.

The psychologist presented from note cards in a manner that did not elicit questions from the group. This workshop was the first time the psychologist met many of the instructional staff. The group appeared reluctant to question this new staff member who was unfamiliar

with the intricacies of the organizational and personal dynamics within the school.

The school social worker had been in the building for several years. The social worker explained the mission to work with parents and students who were drug or alcohol involved. The social worker stressed the theme of drug prevention through education about drug abuse. The social worker stated the importance of confidentiality. Labeling and identifying families as drug involved was not a priority. One participant asked if it were appropriate to refer a child whose clothing smelled of alcohol. The social worker responded affirmatively. The group had no additional questions or comments regarding the social worker's role.

The presentation by the social worker was very formal with no deviations from a prepared text. The presentation appeared to create a distance between the social worker and the group. The social worker was reluctant to make the presentation and misunderstandings with staff had developed which made linkages difficult.

III. A brief review of testing materials and the psychological educational evaluation was conducted.

This researcher described a standard battery of tests which included, but was not limited to the following areas: observations, intelligence testing, academic achievement, visual motor skills, and emotional problems. This researcher explained how psychologists utilized observations to get a sense of the child's behavior in structured and unstructured situations.

A. Intelligence Tests

Tests that measured global intelligence, such as the WISC-R, provided information about the child's verbal and performance ability. Verbal ability included vocabulary and language skills which were correlated with school success. Performance ability assessed motor skills and attending behaviors. The full-scale IQ score permitted a comparison between one child and other children the same age.

B. Achievement Tests

This researcher described the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) and The Wide Range Achievement Test--Revised (WRAT-R). Essentially, a child responding to the PIAT is faced with a multiple choice situation and must select the appropriate response out of four possibilities. The WRAT-R is a "paper and pencil" task. Children are required to spell, read orally, and make mathematical computations.

C. Visual Motor Tests

This researcher described the Bender Gestalt Test where a child is asked to reproduce a series of designs. This type of test indicated difficulty with organic brain functioning, visual motor coordination, visual perception, and spatial organization.

D. Emotional Tests

This researcher explained that a variety of techniques were employed to elicit themes that may or may not be indicative of emotional problems. The "Draw-a-Person", family drawing, sentence completions, and Thematic Apperception Test were indirect ways of

eliciting emotional responses. The responses were subjectively interpreted by the psychologist. This researcher volunteered to show specific examples of all test materials at the end of the session, but the participants made no further inquiries.

IV. Overview of referral procedures and forms

The referral process in Roosevelt was developed in accordance with Public Law 94-142 and New York State Commissioner of Education Regulations, Part 200. This researcher developed a flow chart to help the participants visualize the referral process in the Roosevelt School District (See appendix E). A referral was initiated by parents, teachers, administrators, and other adults. The referral was then forwarded to the building principal who assessed the priority and assigned the case to the psychologist or social worker. The psychologist tested the child and meet with his or her parents and teacher. Recommendations would be made to:

1. Refer the child to an outside community agency.
2. Refer the child to the building team. (The social worker would proceed in the same manner as the psychologist, with the exception of formal testing.)

It was explained that the building team is a group of instructional and non-instructional professional staff who meet in conjunction with the principal to determine a course of action or interaction strategy for a particular child. The building team can decide one of two things:

1. The child must be referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE).

2. Resources within the school can be utilized to assist this child.

This researcher gave examples of what might happen in both situations. If the child were referred to the Committee on Special Education the child would be placed in a special class in-district, out-of-district, or on home bound instruction. In-district services include the following: resource room, Chapter I reading and math labs, a new class, tutorial assistance, individualized programming and counseling.

This researcher then reviewed district forms utilized in the referral process. One participant observed, "You can't test until you get permission." This researcher responded that New York State Education Law required parental permission before testing. Another participant commented, "Some parents don't realize that they are signing for the evaluation. They think they are signing for special education permanently." No additional questions were raised and this researcher proceeded with a group activity.

V. Activity

This researcher asked the group to imagine there was a breakdown of the referral process at the building team level. "What are some of your ideas and suggestions concerning the function of the building team? Remember, 96 percent of you thought the building team meetings were beneficial." (See Table 1). This researcher clarified the activity

by asking participants to make recommendations that would utilize resources available on the elementary level. The following questions were posed:

- A. What should the team be called?
- B. Who should be a member of the team, and what role should each play?
- C. How should a decision be reached?

Reactions

The group quickly formulated a response to the three questions posed. The group decided that the team should simply be called the building team. Members of the team would include a teacher, principal, parent, child, psychologist, social worker, and Chapter I, resource, gym, art, and music instructors when necessary.

The instructional staff would provide information and documentation of a child's academic and behavioral functioning. The principal would provide an overall picture of the student and district resources. The psychologist would test and suggest intervention strategies. The social worker would provide information about the student's home environment. The Chapter I, resource, gym, art and music instructors would provide information about the student in a setting outside the classroom. The parents would express personal problems or concerns and provide additional information about their child. The group agreed that the child should be present when results were presented in order to be involved in the process. The group also determined that the final

decision should be determined by a democratic vote of the team. The researcher had to terminate the activity at this point but assured the group we would continue the activity next session.

VI. Assignment

This researcher decided that an assignment would encourage interactions among group members as well as other members of the staff. The assignment was designed so that participants would communicate about the idea of a "building team" and share results at the next session. The assignment was to talk to another teacher in the building and find out his or her views regarding a building team. Each participant was asked to contact a person outside the group and on a different grade level than theirs. The participants agreed to do so.

Group A-Assessment--Workshop II

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the following items.

Item: What aspect of the session was the most helpful?

The participants' responses reflected an increased awareness of referral procedures and the roles of social workers and psychologists. One participant commented, "I felt the idea of the building team was good. To have a team that is functioning will be very positive in the school."

Item: What topics would you like to explore at future sessions?

The participants' remarks indicated an interest in continuing the topic of building teams and referral procedures for support services.

Item: Please list additional questions or comments.

None of the participants responded to this item.

Summary and Interpretation of Workshop II Assessment Forms--Group A

The participants seemed distant and subdued during the second workshop. Ms. Wright, the Chapter I Math Coordinator, assured this researcher that, based on her years of experience with this group of teachers, it was not unusual for them to "appear" as though they were not listening, but that they were listening. The activity involving the building team seemed the only time the group responded with enthusiasm. Group interactions appeared limited, but their willingness to communicate with other staff members regarding the assignment was positive. The assessment forms gave no indication that the group recognized a connection between information requested after Workshop I and the content of Workshop II. The second objective of establishing a link with the psychologist and social worker was attained.

The third objective of providing additional information regarding testing materials, the referral process, and the building team was attained. The request represented the group's interest in linking referral procedures to the building team in the Ulysses Byas School. The participants' positive response to the activity which focused on the "building team" indicated the fourth objective was attained. The participants interacted in the interval between workshops by completing the assignment which indicated the fifth objective was attained.

Workshop III Objectives--Group A

The objective of the third workshop was to have the group formulate a realistic plan for conducting building team meetings at the Ulysses Byas Elementary School.

Workshop III Outline--Group A

I. Review of Assessment Forms

A majority of the group wanted to continue and expand on the topic of the building team.

II. Assignment

At the end of the last session the group agreed to talk with another teacher in the building and ask his or her view regarding "building teams." Five members of the group responded to the assignment and found that their colleagues had never heard of or worked with a building team at the Ulysses Byas Elementary School. One member received the following response: "Sorry, I never heard of the building team. Go ask Ms. Wright." Another member was asked, "What is it?" After a brief explanation, the teacher stated, "I would like to see a building team. It sounds like a good idea." Another teacher responded by saying, "I never met with support staff as a group--only on an individual basis." The participants laughed when they heard some of their colleagues' responses. However, one participant commented, "If everyone seems to agree that building teams would be good, why don't we have one?" This researcher observed several other members nod their heads in agreement with this statement.

III. Activity—Building Team

Based on information from the assignment and the group's interest, this researcher asked them to continue to develop a realistic building team. The session began with a brief review of the suggestions that had been previously developed. The group had determined that the team would include: teacher, principal, psychologist, social worker, parent, and child. The resource, Chapter I, gym, art, and music instructors would participate in the building team meeting as needed. This researcher guided the group into focusing on the practical or mechanical aspects of organizing a building team. This researcher raised questions that stimulated the group to develop a plan for initiating a building team. The plan considered the schedule and resource constraints at Ulysses Byas Elementary School. This researcher started the session by asking, "Where should the meeting be held?" An immediate response was the principal's office. Some participants suggested that the office was too confining for a large number of people and, therefore, the library or lab would be more appropriate. Another member raised a question about conducting the meeting in the library during school time. This researcher then asked, "Who said it had to be during school time? What would be the best time?" The initial response was best described as stunned silence followed by laughter. The group unanimously decided that the meetings should be conducted during the school day.

This researcher then asked, "When should the team meet?" The group initially stated every Friday since that was the only day aides and

teaching assistants were available to cover classes. The group determined that the meeting should be no longer than one hour and that no more than three children per meeting would be scheduled. In addition, no more than two children from one teacher could be discussed at a meeting, because to do so would remove the teacher for an hour of instructional time. This researcher then asked, "Who should chair the team?" The immediate response was the building principal, Dr. Mosely. Then, other people such as the psychologist, social worker, or Chapter I teachers were recommended. The final group decision was that Dr. Mosely should be the chairperson, and the psychologist or social worker should be co-chairperson since these three individuals knew all the children. The co-chairperson position would be rotated, and the responsibility of this person would be to gather material, collect reports, and set the schedule for the meeting. This researcher raised the question, "Would members of the team have to prepare written reports?" The group concluded that all members would have to be prepared, otherwise the team wouldn't be able to evaluate three cases in one hour.

The group returned to scheduling concerns and indicated that there was no time in the schedule for such a meeting. The participants agreed that the morning was the optimal time to conduct the meetings, because from 11:00 o'clock to 1:00 o'clock, teachers were scheduled for lunch. This researcher questioned, "Why not Friday afternoon?" One member explained, "That's pay day--bank day." The group then decided that building team meetings should be held only on alternate

Fridays that were not pay days. One teacher commented, "We can't say that. It sounds terrible."

IV. Summary and Interpretation

This researcher's impression was that the staff relied heavily on the principal. The results of the group's interactions with other staff members revealed that the building team was dysfunctional or non-existent in the eyes of most teachers. The group helped this researcher recognize that for the building team to become a functioning reality, responsibility for making it work would have to be shared. The group reluctantly began to share "building secrets." The "building secrets" were analagous to "family secrets" which would be destructive of any attempt to change the "status quo." One teacher commented talking about "bank day" didn't sound right. However, the comment indicated the importance other staff members attach to this issue. This examiner questioned whether other "building secrets" may have been withheld during the session, and if these "secrets" would deter any efforts to initiate the recommendations of the group.

Group A-Assessment--Workshop III

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the following items.

Item: What aspect of the workshop was most helpful?

The participants' remarks indicated that the discussion of the building team was beneficial. As one participant commented, "Deciding on a positive approach to a building team was helpful."

Item: What additional topics would you like to explore?

One participant responded, "I would like to discuss ways to teach students while waiting for them to be placed."

Item: Please list additional questions or comments.

The participants' comments indicated a concern about whether or not any of the discussions involving the building team would become a reality. There was also concern about children who are unresponsive to intervention strategies developed by building teams.

Summary and Interpretation of Workshop III Assessment Forms—Group A

The objective of the third workshop was achieved. The group formulated a realistic, usable outline for structuring building team meetings at the Ulysses Byas Elementary School. The building team became a tangible possibility for the group. The group impressed this researcher as being dependent on outside authority to implement change. The group dialogue in developing the building team brought an awareness of the multiple constraints faced by the participants in their school. The comment by one member of the group, "I'm interested in seeing if any of our discussions will become reality," reflected the belief that the ideas developed were positive and beneficial to students, instructional and non-instructional professional staff. However, this statement also demonstrated a reluctance to believe any change would be implemented.

Workshop II Objectives--Group B

Based on group dynamics, this researcher perceived the group's main interest to be problem solving and human relations. The participants frequently spoke about difficult classroom situations and sought input from colleagues about effective strategies.

The group also indicated an interest in knowing more about the role and function of the psychologist and school social worker. Therefore, the first objective was to introduce the school psychologist and clarify the role of the social worker. The second objective was to have the group respond to a case study situation. The group was asked by this researcher to develop approaches or activities that would resolve the problem in the case study. The third objective was to relate the group's approaches or activities to support services and the interactions with psychologists and social workers.

This researcher reviewed the assessment results with participants. Participants recognized that assessment results had been given careful consideration in the development of the workshops. The following concerns were expressed by the group. First, the group was concerned with finding ways to improve students' self images. Second, the group was concerned with how to assist families with only one or no parent available in addition to families impaired by drug or alcohol abuse. The last concern involved the role of outside agencies in the Roosevelt school system.

Major issues that emerged during the first session were:

(1) The group implied that it was difficult to get assistance from

support service personnel. For example, once a referral was made the teacher received no feedback about what was happening. The group pointed out that without feedback they had no way of adjusting instructional or classroom activities to benefit a student. (2) The group indicated that they welcomed support service personnel to be more involved in the classroom. Classroom involvement of teachers and support personnel could help prevent additional difficulties from developing in children beginning to experience social, academic, and emotional problems. This researcher interpreted the comments and concluded that a theme of interest for the group involved developing prevention strategies and working cooperatively with support service personnel.

The session then continued. This researcher asked what classroom teachers expected of psychologists and social workers. The group expected support service staff to be available to meet and talk with children. The group was concerned that children in the building did not know the psychologist and social worker. Therefore, it might be a frightening experience for a child to deal with an unfamiliar psychologist or social worker. Another expectation was that communication among psychologists, teachers, social workers, and the school nurse needed to be improved.

The school psychologist, Lauren Hacke, introduced herself to the participants and provided a brief overview of her training and experience as a school psychologist. Ms. Hacke emphasized her belief that behavior management techniques in the classroom are beneficial.

Ms. Hacke expressed her interest in working together to maintain students in the regular program. The participants nodded in agreement but raised no questions.

This facilitator provided background information about the role and responsibilities of the social worker. Evelyn Bullock, school social worker, was unable to attend the session due to schedule conflicts. A summary of her role and function as a social worker was presented. The group was informed that there were six social workers in the district and that three of the six, including Bullock, were funded under a grant from the county. The grant stipulated that the social workers deal only with students or families that were drug or alcohol involved. Bullock was assigned to two buildings: the Centennial Avenue School and Ulysses Byas Elementary School. In addition to the individual building principals, Bullock was also accountable to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Transportation. The social worker provided assistance to students by:

1. Promoting positive self esteem
2. Arranging a support system in school and within the family
3. Listening and gaining insights into home and school dynamics
4. Making home visits
5. Focusing on:
 - A. Success in the social environment
 - B. Decision making

Awareness and prevention of drug and alcohol involvement are the goals of the social worker at the Ulysses Byas School. The social worker was not accountable for identifying families who were drug or alcohol involved.

The group listened to the summary and made comments suggesting that if a child's family was drug or alcohol involved, the social worker should be able to share more information with his or her classroom teacher. The group generally appeared to be "action oriented." Why bother referring a child to the social worker if they could see no results. One comment summarized their concern, "Connecting a referral to drugs or alcohol is an albatross around my neck. What we need is more social workers and psychologists who can be in the building all the time." This researcher concluded by stating that any additional questions could be directed to Bullock, the social worker.

The response to the information about the role of the social worker was minimal. One participant commented: "It seems we are being put off when we are told to complete a referral form." Another participant commented that "If we make a referral for drug and alcohol involvement, there is no follow-up because the information is confidential." These remarks reflected an adversarial relationship between instructional and non-instructional professional staff. The group also seemed reluctant to approach the psychologist or social worker, assuming they would be rejected or put off if they requested assistance.

The participants were asked to read a short in-basket situation and suggest strategies for intervening on behalf of the child. The group considered the following situation:

A nine year old boy is currently enrolled in the third grade. The student has just returned to Roosevelt from the Hempstead School District. The student is quiet, a loner, and follows classroom routines, but still has behavior problems (challenging authority, bullying younger students) in the lunchroom and gym. The student occasionally appears dishevelled and sometimes falls asleep in class. Academically, the student is reading on a second grade level and has third grade math skills. School records indicate the child has never been retained and has not been referred for special services.

The first response of the group was to contact the parent and determine the level of support. If a parent was supportive, then the teachers expected to see a change in the child's behavior. The group did not expect a complete change, but enough to show the child was thinking before acting. An important aspect of the parent contact was to assess the parent-child interaction. Did the child challenge the parents' authority? Was he or she fearful?

The activity continued by assuming the parent was supportive, but overwhelmed by other responsibilities. The group responded they would alter their teaching strategies by talking to the child about his behavior, feelings, and expectations. The group indicated the importance for this child to connect with an adult in a meaningful and positive way.

The group saw their role as that of surrogate parents who offered time, guidance and direction to troubled students. The key to working with these students was discovering what made them want to behave appropriately.

The activity continued when this researcher asked, "How would you like the psychologist or social worker to intervene? What do you expect them to do? The group responded that they expected the psychologist or social worker to "make it all better--That's what it boils down to." The group also expected the psychologist or social worker to;

1. Provide instant solutions
2. Observe the child in other settings
3. Elicit things that were bothering the child
4. Assess the environment to obtain an overall picture of the child
5. Establish a personal one-to-one rapport that would be consistent

The issues that emerged during the discussion of the activity were first, a system for crisis intervention and second, a need for an information gathering system for students entering the Roosevelt schools. Several members of the group described a situation in which a child woke up and found his younger cousin dead in the same bed. The child was distraught. Support personnel were not available to speak with the child. The group relayed their frustration in not being able to comfort or get help for the student. Another situation described by the group involved students who entered the system from neighboring school districts with no school records. It was common to be given a

new student without being given information such as reading and math levels.

The issues raised by the group members exemplified their plight. The specific situations described needed to be addressed so that viable plans for dealing with these situations could be developed.

This researcher gave the group an assignment to encourage interactions with colleagues and focus attention on issues of support services. The assignment was to ask another teacher in the building what it was they expected from support services (psychologists and social workers), and how did they want them to help.

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the aspects of the session that were helpful. The participants' remarks indicated a positive response to discussions concerning referral procedures. In addition the respondents were interested in services or techniques that could be utilized before referring a child. As one participant stated, "Discussing with a group ways to handle problems which may appear in our classrooms was helpful."

The participants' comments indicated their concern to meet the needs of children who were evaluated and understand the role teachers may have in creating problems in the classroom. One participant commented "What about discussing new laws regarding the AIDS child?"

The discussion of the role and responsibility of the social worker seemed to assist the group in expressing concerns about student behavior and steps to take before making a referral. It also provided

an opportunity to use the session as a sounding board and a chance to brainstorm. The second objective, to have the group develop a "laundry list" of approaches, was only partially completed. Instead of discussing possible actions, the group focused on the importance of discovering clues to a child's behavior. The discussion then led into how teachers expected support personnel to help the children in their class. The group impressed this researcher as being demanding. For example, the group expressed the belief that support personnel have a duty to share certain confidential information with a member of the instructional staff who refers a child. They expected a great deal from children and support personnel because they themselves gave much more than what was required in their roles as teachers.

Workshop III Objectives--Group B

The first objective of the workshop was to respond to issues raised at the last session, such as state mandates for related services. This also included a general review of the distinction between the terms "counseling" and "therapy." Second, the workshop aimed to discuss the assignment and continue the dialogue about the group's expectations of support service personnel. Third, discussions about crisis intervention would continue. A final objective was to further address the problems created by students entering the school system without academic records.

The following themes emerged as a result of the group's previous session. The participants were interested in obtaining support services without going through red tape, or feeling they were being put off. The

second theme involved dissatisfaction with the response that nothing more could be done to help a child. The final theme involved the group's concern that teachers' behaviors may be contributing to or creating problems for students.

This researcher reflected on the group's last session and inferred from the comments made that the participants felt frustrated in their efforts to obtain support services. They then felt guilt for having "failed" the child by being unable to obtain these services. The group recognized that one solution to some of the difficulties involved brainstorming and having a chance to use each other as "sounding boards." However, opportunities to meet and exchange ideas and techniques were rare.

In discussing the group's expectations of support service personnel, it was clear that "counseling" and "therapy" were used interchangeably when in fact there are significant differences between the two terms. According to the state Commissioner's regulations, Part 200, schools are to provide counseling as a related service.

Counseling is conducted with individuals or small group sessions with clear objectives. In schools, counseling sessions may involve discussing issues such as school behavior, academic problems, and children from divorced or single parent homes. Counseling sessions encourage participants to express concerns and feelings. Counselors listen and summarize what has been said, back to the participants. The counseling process helps the participants to reflect on issues

important to them and ultimately to find solutions.

Therapy is a more intensive type of counseling. Therapy can be conducted individually or in groups to help an individual achieve better self-understanding. Therapy is a longer term process to help people with severe or disabling mental health problems. For example, a person experiencing severe bouts of depression may require not only therapy, but medication.

The analogy of a crossroad is sometimes helpful in understanding the differences between counseling and therapy. In counseling, a person is standing at the crossroad, unsure of which way to go. The counselor helps the person assess the situation and reach a decision. In therapy, a person has selected a road and has traveled it for some time. The person may feel trapped or limited by the choice, and the therapist helps this individual to recognize other crossroads and make a decision about which one to choose. A member of the group commented that a child at risk is like the person standing at the crossroad.

At the previous session, the group was asked to inquire of another teacher in the building what it was he or she expected from support service personnel. How did they think a psychologist or social worker could help? Participants responded as follows: (1) How does a classroom teacher obtain support services? (2) What are the psychologists and social workers doing to assist in the development of parenting skills? (3) How does one meeting with a psychologist or social worker solve a child's problem?

Generally, responses indicated that the staff felt they did not get enough post referral feedback from psychologists and social workers. Asked to suggest possible solutions, some participants urged psychologists and social workers to be more persistent with difficult parents. It was also suggested that the classroom teacher be notified of meetings between a child's parent and the psychologist or social worker. In addition, teachers felt the need for more information about children entering their class.

The group referred to a child, new to the school but not the district, who was experiencing serious behavior and academic difficulties. The group expressed their concern that nothing had been done to help this student when he was in first and second grade in another building. From September until January, the new teachers blamed the other teachers for not referring the child. Not till January did they discovered that the student had been referred for evaluation but the parent refused. The group used this example to emphasize that teachers need more information, and that administrators, psychologists, and social workers should have the responsibility and accountability for coordinating student information.

The group discussion proceeded to focus on a realistic way to obtain the student information they sought. When a parent registers a child in the district, a certain amount of information is given at that time. However, additional information is needed. The group

believed that the school should have a form to be completed the first day a child is in attendance that would include: child's name, parent or guardian's name, phone numbers--home, work, emergency, name and phone number of previous school district with dates of attendance, grade placement and special services received, teacher's name, and academic level in reading and math, including a report card. Information regarding the child's social interactions with peers and adults is also needed. The group concluded that this information would be most helpful toward facilitating a child's adjustment in a new setting. In addition, the group thought that administrators, psychologists, and social workers might request student information from the previous school by telephone rather than waiting several weeks for the records to arrive.

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the assessment: What aspect of the workshops was the most helpful? The participants' comments indicated a benefit from discussing the needs of children who require support services. As one participant stated, "I learned what to expect from services and learned more about how to go about receiving help." earned more about how to go about receiving service help." What additional topics would you like to explore? The participants expressed an interest in networking with other school districts and community agencies to provide additional support services for children. Please list additional questions or comments. One participant commented, "I feel

workshops are needed more often in this district in reference to services."

This group was the most experienced in terms of years teaching and number of years in the district. The group had a tendency to rely on specific problems of children to explain or justify their plight in regard to support services. A pervasive attitude of intolerance toward administrative and referral procedures characterized the group. The group vented feelings of frustration and anger and subsequently focused on issues of support services. Brainstorming seemed valued by the group.

The objectives of discussing counseling versus therapy, and a continued dialogue of support services were obtained. The third and fourth objectives were partially attained when the group formulated practical suggestions for obtaining information about new entrants to the Ulyses Byas Elementary School. The assessment data from the final workshops indicated positive experiences by participants.

Workshop II Objectives--Group C

The first objective was to review assessment results and group dynamics during the first workshop. The group focused on interpersonal interactions as an area of interest. Second, the psychologist and social worker attended the session to describe their responsibilities and provide opportunities for the instructional and non-instructional professionals to interact in a non-threatening setting. The third objective was to elicit the group's personal feelings toward the referral process and ask the group to reflect on how parents may feel

when they receive information about their child from school. Fourth, this researcher provided guidelines that may be helpful in parent-teacher interactions. The final objective was to have the group continue the workshop dialogue through an assignment. This researcher requested the participants to find a colleague outside the group and discuss interactions with parents.

The session began with a brief review of the assessment forms from the previous session. Themes that emerged from the group included: A. Interpersonal dynamics; B. Working with parents of problem children; C. What to do with a parent who won't work with their child in regard to academics or behavior; D. How to help parents understand the need or value in having their child evaluated; and E. How to approach or request help from support groups.

This researcher summarized by reflecting on the group's interest in understanding situations through the process of human interaction. Other concerns of the group included labeling students and the impact of cultural and middle class values. How do values influence opinions about behavior differences among children? Additionally, the group seemed interested in understanding and being involved in the problem-solving process.

The school psychologist, Lauren Hacke, attended the session to introduce herself and to become familiar with the concerns of the teachers in the Ulysses Byas School. The psychologist had been working in the district for only about three weeks and eagerly shared her background and views regarding support services. Hacke explained that

her interest was in behavior modification. She invited the group to work with her. The relationship she sought with the staff involved working together to develop a plan to keep children in the regular program rather than putting children in special education. The group asked Hacke no questions and the session continued.

Evelyn Bullock, the social worker, presented an overview of her role and responsibilities. Bullock worked in a funded drug abuse prevention program. The program emphasized education. Bullock stated that the more a child learned about substance abuse, the less likely he or she would become involved with drugs. The program focused on children in grades K-6. Class presentations regarding drug abuse were made, and some students were seen individually. The program goals were: (1) to promote positive self esteem and a sense of self worth, (2) to reach out to community organizations, and (3) to help students understand the decision-making process and be successful in the social environment. Bullock's other responsibilities involved making home visits and assisting parents who wanted help with drug problems. The group appeared interested during the presentation and asked several questions. Bullock responded to all questions and established rapport with the group members.

This researcher designed an activity that would help the group focus on interpersonal relationships and working with parents. The researcher obtained the name of each group member's child. For the two group members without children, the name of a close relative was substituted. The names were written on the referral forms

utilized by the district to notify parents that their child had been referred to the Committee on Special Education. The group was asked to read the letter and give their initial feelings and reactions. The group was asked to project the possible actions parents might take. Throughout the activity the group shared experiences and placed themselves in the role of parent. Establishing a link between feelings and communications helped the group reflect on interactions among parents, teachers, and non-instructional professional staff. The participants said they experienced a variety of feelings and emotions in response to the letter. Listed were the following:

- A. Shame—What is wrong with me or my child?
- B. Coldness—The letter made no reference to what my child had done or why the referral was made.
- C. Intimidation—The letter made me feel threatened and intimidated.
- D. Sadness—I felt sorrow for the child and the necessity for the evaluation.
- E. Crazy—This letter is crazy and confusing.
- F. Disbelief—My child's name was spelled wrong. Do they really know my child?

The group agreed that if they were not educators they wouldn't understand the meaning of the letter. The group was then asked to express some reactions to the letter. Reactions included:

- A. Resentment—toward the teacher and school
- B. Defensiveness—nothing wrong with my child

- C. Withdrawal--Parent does not respond and is unable to be reached
- D. Hostility-Aggressiveness--toward the school or the child

The group noted that the majority of feelings and reactions were negative. The group was then asked to predict some of the actions parents may take if they received a letter referring their child to the Committee on Special Education. The actions included:

- A. Move the child from the school or the district.
- B. Transfer the child to another class within the school.
- C. Take legal action.
- D. Confront the teacher or principal.
- E. Compliance--The parents may consent to the evaluation of their child and participate in the educational planning.
- F. Intimidation--The parent would ask what the school is doing to the child and "pass the buck."

After listing the feelings, reactions, and actions on a blackboard, the group observed that:

Parents may feel and react negatively when they receive any form of communication from school. Teachers and support personnel must be alert to verbal and non-verbal communications of parents. Role playing helped sensitize the group to the fears and concerns of parents. The feelings, reactions, and actions discussed during this activity also related the apprehensions and concerns instructional and non-instructional professional staff have in communicating with parents and also impact on our interactions with each other. This researcher then

provided the group with general guidelines that could help improve interactions with parents and colleagues:

1. Trust your feelings or judgment.
2. Remain neutral and objective.
3. Perceive the correctness of your actions and respect your own rights.
4. Follow through on recommendations.
5. Be truthful and consistent.
6. Plan meetings in advance.

During this portion of the workshop, the group took notes about the activities suggested. This researcher expanded on planned meetings and offered suggestions to the group about preparing for meetings with parents or colleagues. The suggestions included:

1. Prepare a comfortable setting for yourself and the parent.
2. Clear your desk of other work to signify your undivided attention.
3. Set a time limit for the meeting.
4. Be clear about the message or point you are trying to convey.
5. Keep a positive tone.
6. Remember that it is not always what you say but how you say it. For example: "Jerry is always disruptive in class," or "Jerry doesn't act like most of the other children in class. I was wondering if you could help me understand him better."
7. Anticipate possible questions and be prepared to document or support your statements.

8. Remind the parent that the meeting is almost over and ask them to summarize what has been discussed. Invite the parent to contact you if they have any additional questions.

In addition to planned meetings, this researcher provided suggestions about how to establish a regular pattern of communications with parents: Send birthday cards to children in class; Send one note home a week to one child on a rotating basis; Have grade level meetings with parents instead of individual meetings; Discuss developing a procedure where psychologists and social workers could participate in meetings with parents; and Invite parents to spend time in your class.

The group responded positively to the suggestions offered. In addition, the group stated that one difficulty they had was talking to parents who walk into the class. The group indicated that frequently the parents who walked in had not responded to the teacher's request for a conference. The group suggested that in the situation described a teacher's assistant should be made available to substitute in the classroom, thus enabling the teacher to have the parent conference. The group also indicated the need for an observation room, or video taping, which would enable parents to see a child's interaction in a classroom setting.

This researcher asked the group to think about the issues discussed and to try one of the suggestions before our next meeting. The group was asked to share a parent contact you've had, and something new you've tried in interacting with a parent. Then, each should talk to a colleague not in this group about your experience (with a parent) and make a note of their response.

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the following items.

The participants' assessments indicated that discussions about parent/teacher meetings were helpful. In addition, the activity conducted during the workshop helped teachers experience the emotions of being a parent. As some participants commented, "I now understand how parents feel when they receive a communication from the school or teacher," or "It helped me develop more empathy and insight into how the parent feels."

The participants' remarks indicated an interest in the following topics to explore at future sessions: behavior modification techniques in the classroom, clarification of the referral process and improving communication within the school. As one participant stated, "I would like to explore techniques for improving effective and lasting communication among teachers, staff, principals, and parents."

The comments of the participants indicated an interest in having greater involvement of the support service staff and additional workshops that utilize staff input. As one participant commented, "[The workshops] raised our awareness of what needs to be done."

The responses indicated that the objectives of the workshop were attained. The assessment results of the first workshop were reviewed and the psychologist and social worker were introduced. The presentations of the psychologist and social worker appeared to have raised additional questions by the group in regard to the referral process and wanting additional information about support services

The third and fourth objectives were also attained. The group responded favorably to the activity focusing on parental feeling. The group's responses indicated that the insight into parental feelings would be helpful in improving future interactions with parents. The guideline or suggestions presented by this researcher were not viewed as insulting or simplistic, and some members of the group indicated they performed many of the activities but had not really thought their actions through. The group was asked to complete an assignment designed to continue a dialogue concerning teacher/parent interactions in the interval between workshops. The group's notetaking and attentiveness throughout the session were indicators of the group's interest and concern.

Workshop III Objectives—Group C

The first objective was to review assessment results and provide information regarding behavior management techniques and communication. Addressing these issues helped focus the group on feelings and interactions among instructional and non-instructional professional staff. Second, the group wanted specific information regarding referral procedures within the Roosevelt School District. A third objective involved the group reviewing their assigned interactions and promoted the exchange of ideas concerning parent/teacher interactions. The activity helped the group to recognize that the fears and anxieties a parent may have in dealing with the school may also affect the interactions and relationships among instructional and non-instructional professional staff. The final objective was to

develop a list of activities the group thought would help to improve interactions in the Ulysses Byas School.

I. The final session began with a brief review of the assessment forms and comments from the previous session. The major interest of the group was the utilization of behavior management techniques in a classroom. This researcher drew ideas from an article by Joseph C. Witt and Steven N. Elliott¹ which explained behavior management techniques for the classroom teacher. The thrust of the article was how to implement the techniques given the constraints of the classroom and a teacher's time. This researcher also reminded the group that Hacke, the school psychologist, had agreed to assist.

The assessment forms from the last session also indicated the group's concern regarding communication: How to word referrals appropriately; How to develop effective and lasting communications; and How negative communication may affect attitudes among teachers, principals, psychologists, and social workers.

An article by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, which dealt with teacher-child communication, had implications for the way individuals communicate in a school setting.² Ideas gleaned from the article assisted this researcher in addressing the concerns of the group.

The comments and the assessment forms from the previous session indicated that a review of the district referral procedures for special services would be appropriate. This researcher distributed the forms provided by the district. As the group received the forms, this researcher presented the following overview: Referral forms

are completed by the teacher, parent, principal, psychologist, or social worker. The referral is then reviewed by the building principal who makes a determination to assign the psychologist or social worker or both to follow through on the referral. When all testing and social background information have been obtained, the data is reviewed by the building team. The building team develops a course of action or intervention. The action could be: a change of class; remedial services; or referral to Committee on Special Education.

One teacher expressed a concern that sometimes a referral is made and nothing happens. This researcher explained that as the person making the referral, they have a right and obligation to check the status of a referral. The group seemed somewhat surprised that a written referral by them did not always result in action by the psychologist or social worker. It was the impression of this researcher that many of the group members would be reluctant to question the principal about the status of a referral.

This researcher reviewed the feelings, actions, and reactions people may have in response to a communication from school. The feelings were shame, coldness, intimidation, disbelief, craziness, and sorrow. The reactions encompassed resentment, defensiveness, withdrawal, and hostility. Actions included moving the child, transferring the child, taking legal action, confrontation, complying and passing the buck. These highlights were reviewed to show similarities in the manner in which instructional and non-instructional staff interacted.

Although we considered each other professionals, our feelings, reactions, and actions were very personal.

The teachers were asked to share a parent contact they had made and a new technique they had used in this situation. The teachers were asked to talk to a colleague, not in the same group, about the parent contact and note their response. Time allowed only three teachers to share their experiences.

The first participant described a situation where the parent was hostile, angry, and negative on the first day she brought her child to class. The participant was surprised and did not respond to the parent's negative comments. The participant subsequently sent positive reports and notes about the child's progress to the parent and invited her in for a conference. The parent did not respond to the participant's request. This teacher then decided to try something she had not done in the past, which was to visit the parent's place of employment. Since the parent owned a local business, the teacher stopped by the shop after school. After several visits, the participant and parent began discussing the child's progress in school, and the participant had no further difficulty communicating with the parent. This parent was less threatened in her own environment. In sharing the experience with a colleague, the response was positive. However, the participant noted that her colleague shared no similar experiences and gave no indication that she might try this technique herself.

A second participant described a situation in which a child was having adjustment problems in her class. There had been almost no

response from the home despite letters, requests for conference, and telephone calls. The participant tried a new approach to the parent conference based on ideas raised at our last session.

The participant sent home a letter stressing the importance of the conference and what she hoped to accomplish. Included in the letter were times the participant was available, the approximate length of the meeting, the school phone number, and a section where the parent could respond to the letter and return it to the participant. On the day of the parent-teacher conference, the participant sat in a child's chair opposite the parent. Prior to this, the participant had sat at her desk with the parent sitting at a student's desk.

The participant worked from an agenda and described the child's behavior rather than making judgmental remarks. This researcher asked the participant for an example. The participant responded by explaining: "Instead of saying he is acting out, I stated: 'The child was out of his seat walking around the room when the other children were seated.'" The participant asked the parent her concerns and formulated a plan of action for the child.

The participant indicated she felt very positive after trying the new techniques. In summarizing the experience, the participant stated she felt more secure, better organized, and had successfully conveyed to the parent her sincere interest in the child. The participant then shared this experience with a colleague who, although she showed little enthusiasm for trying this technique herself, indicated that it was a good idea.

A third participant indicated that she held the report cards of students whose parents did not respond to her requests for conferences. The participant indicated that parents came in very angry but that she was ready for them. A colleague's response to this approach was, "You do what you have to do." Some members of the group responded with negative feelings toward this tactic, and others indicated they had tried it and it worked. The participant was unable to elaborate regarding the impact on her communication with parents in the future.

This researcher felt that the assignment helped the teachers see the connections between their actions and feelings and how it applied to parents and colleagues. The colleagues' responses were generally positive, but a sense of enthusiasm was missing.

This researcher wanted the group to reflect on the interactions and feelings discussed during the sessions. The researcher asked the group to suggest activities that would improve interactions between instructional and non-instructional professional staff: 1. Hold rap groups or group meetings; 2. Build time into the schedule to allow teachers to get together. For example, adjust the lunch schedule so that teachers from different grade levels could meet; 3. Consider the needs and attitudes of others, such as teachers' aides; 4. Work with teachers who have the child for gym, speech, or remedial class. In many cases it seemed that instructional and support service groups were working in isolation. 5. Save part of a faculty meeting to address problems. Instead of being "spoken to," utilize the time for group discussion;

6. Close the separation between teachers and administrators. As one participant declared: "There is a separatism." Develop a mechanism for letting administrators know the teachers' needs and concerns; and
7. Develop professionalism. Involve teachers more in the decision-making process instead of merely telling them what to do.

The following represents this researcher's summary of the participants' responses to the following items. The aspects of the workshop the participants found most helpful were the discussions and sharing of ideas and concerns. As some participants commented, "[The workshops] provided the chance to express concerns and share ideas to possibly make some potential important changes," or "It gave us a chance for some input." The participants' comments indicated an interest in exploring: effective communication, brainstorming, school improvement, and collegial relationships. As one participant remarked, "I would like to explore getting staff members to work together collectively on issues that need to be addressed."

The participants' comments indicated a concern that more time be allocated for meetings with colleagues and parents. One participant added "This workshop was highly productive. I had the opportunity to share ideas and feel good about my feelings."

The assessment results indicated the objectives of the workshop were attained. The group received additional information on behavior management, the referral process, and communication. The assessment indicated that teachers felt positive about sharing ideas and feelings

during the sessions. The group readily shared ideas but seemed unable to offer support or encouragement to each other. For example, when the teacher described a new technique for having a parent conference, the group's response was positive but fell short of others saying "I'll try that." The group shared ideas but was reluctant to say this was the type of activity teachers should be doing as a group. The group formulated a practical list of activities that could help improve interactions in the Ulysses Byas Elementary School.

Workshop I Objectives--Group D

The objective of the first meeting with the district psychologist was to provide an overview of the staff development project. Prior to this first session, the psychologists were asked to complete a needs assessment. The second objective of the workshop was to compare the results of the needs assessment completed by the district psychologists with the results of the needs assessment obtained from the teachers at the Ulysses Byas School.

Group D was composed of three members of the non-instructional professional staff. The participants provided input concerning their interactions with instructional staff and perceptions of support services. The session began with a short introduction by Dr. Susan Savitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Savitt's remarks emphasized the importance of staff development activities to the Roosevelt schools. This researcher then provided an overview of an on-going staff development project which focused on

instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions and support services. After this researcher completed the overview, the psychologists were invited to participate in the study. One of the three psychologists was concerned about the necessity of the study and whether the workshops would require work beyond the school day. This researcher explained that there would be a series of workshops during school hours that he would be asked to attend. After this explanation, the psychologist agreed to participate.

This researcher then explained the purpose of the needs assessment forms. The forms were designed to elicit perceptions, judgments, and expectations of the support service system. This researcher reviewed the needs assessment results and noted that the group was not in agreement about: (1) the adequacy of support services; (2) referral procedures, and (3) building plans for helping children beginning to experience difficulties. The issues of children having equal access to support services, and psychologists taking a more active role in the classroom were also areas of disagreement. One psychologist stated: "If I go into a class, they would have me subbing all the time." This researcher continued by reading the results of the needs assessment conducted at the Ulysses Byas School.

The psychologists were concerned that they were not viewed as accessible when they perceived themselves as going out of their way to be available to teachers. In response to the issue of taking a more active role in the classroom, the psychologists were concerned that the

type of support would have to be defined. The psychologists seemed to have different perceptions of their roles. One group member viewed the psychologist's role as testing and conducting re-evaluations. Re-evaluations were viewed as a priority, and the only means of providing additional support for teachers would be to hire more psychologists. Two psychologists viewed their role as finding alternative resources; for example, speech, resource room, or Chapter I services to assist children. These two psychologists resisted the perception that their sole function in the schools was to test. They also indicated that time constraints limited their ability to consult with teachers more closely, i.e. the psychologist could be involved in setting class rosters. One psychologist saw no way of improving support services or helping teachers without increasing expenditures. The psychologist saw himself as being available for teachers, but had no obligation or responsibility to reach out to the staff.

This researcher raised the following question: "Why did 50 percent of the staff sometimes or never seek assistance from support personnel?" One psychologist responded that he would be happy if 100 percent never sought assistance, because his philosophy was that he is there for crisis intervention. Another group member suggested that a time-out room might assist teachers in coping with disturbed students and that psychologists could design the program.

This researcher asked the group for their thoughts on ways to improve the delivery of support services. The initial response was to

increase the staff. This researcher asked: "Could we improve service with the existing personnel?" The psychologists responded with intervention strategies that required close interaction with teaching staff and inadvertently reflected a negative group attitude toward teachers. Some group members felt that the teachers resented the intervention of psychologists and felt they had nothing to offer. The group continued, making statements like: "Teachers don't want help. They want the kid out of their class." One group member summarized the situation between instructional and non-instructional professional staff by saying: "When we offer to help a teacher, we are on some level telling them we know their business better than they do." Another member stated, "Sometimes we present ourselves as being superior, which creates resentment." This member continued, "Establishing a personal relationship or rapport with the staff is the quickest way to engender support." The group thought that workshops for teachers centering on issues of child development and behavior management would be helpful.

The following represents the participants' responses to the post-workshop assessments. Members found the session helpful in several ways. "Having the opportunity to exchange information with other psychologists and finding that similar problems were shared by all," "discussing interpersonal relationships," and "improving teacher-support staff interaction is sorely needed. If these workshops will improve relations, I am eager to be a participant in this study."

The participants indicated an interest in obtaining information about learning disabilities, re-evaluation versus new referral

priorities, and the possibility of increasing the psychological staff. No participants responded to the request for additional questions or comments.

The basic objectives of providing an overview of the project and sharing the results of the needs assessment were accomplished. The small size of the group and personalities within the group made a formal presentation difficult. After sharing the needs assessment results, this researcher posed questions related to support services for group discussion. In reviewing the discussions, one could glean the concerns this group had in working with teachers. The group's comments during the session suggested a history of difficult interactions. For example, the psychologists view their role as not only testing, but assisting children in the regular program. However, instructional staff sometimes view the psychologists' suggestions or recommendations as interference rather than help. One participant recognized the need to establish personal interactions as a prerequisite to establishing successful professional interaction. However, the group felt more at ease suggesting workshops as the vehicle for improving support service.

Workshop II Objectives--Group D

The objectives of the second workshop were first, to have the group continue their discussions of support services and interactions with teachers; and second, to have the group focus on a job description that would be mutually agreed on and represent the role and responsibilities of the school psychologist in the Roosevelt School District.

The session began with a review of the assessment forms from the previous session. This researcher stated that the group's interests centered on sharing ideas and improving relationships with teachers. Then, this researcher highlighted certain issues. The first issue involved increasing personnel to improve support services. This researcher requested that the group focus on existing personnel and services, which they reluctantly agreed to. The second issue involved the role or responsibility the psychologist has in reaching out to and assisting a teacher in the classroom or through consultation. One member stated: "That's not my thing." The third issue was how to enlist support of principals and teachers to implement psychological recommendations. The issues were multifaceted and contingent upon personal interactions between instructional and non-instructional professional staff. This researcher attempted to focus the group by having them develop a job description, or a working definition of the responsibilities of psychologists.

This researcher began the activity of developing a job description by providing the descriptions obtained from the personnel office and a pamphlet from a local university outlining the competency areas for school psychology interns. The group reviewed the handouts and seemed reluctant to formulate a description. One member commented: "Let's use the description from The Nassau County Psychological Association." This researcher explained that the Association's description was not available at this meeting and suggested the group develop a description of their own. The session continued, but the group

agreed only on a few descriptives. The group agreed they were responsible for state mandated evaluations and re-evaluations. Psychological and educational testing and interpretations were also a responsibility. This researcher raised the issue of whether or not in-service training should be included in the description. The group never agreed on a definition of inservice. One member stated that talking to teachers, informally, constituted consultation and "inservice" and that it was inappropriate to force teachers to attend sessions workshops, or seminars because, "Teachers don't want to hear about it." Joan Cottman, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, commented that the district "has a responsibility to reach teachers who are resistant."

The other group members saw the value of in-service workshops, but did not see the organization and execution of such workshops as being in the scope of their responsibilities. The session continued with discussion of staff training, but no agreement could be reached.

When this researcher asked the group to complete an assessment form, the following verbal responses were given: "I can't fill this out—you want to give me more work to do;" and "We didn't come up with a final product, but the discussion was enlightening." This researcher asked if this session was beneficial. One member responded: "Meeting on a regular basis makes me feel less lonely and isolated." The group ended the session by summarizing that mutual understanding and respect was needed, but offered no suggestions on how to achieve this. The following statement by a group member exemplified the need to improve interaction between instructional and non-instructional professional

staff: "I want to improve my relationships with teachers so that recommendations can be implemented. You can't implement something without having someone agree with you."

The objectives of the second workshop were not completely met. The discussion of support services and improving interactions with teachers was continued. However, the participants viewed the problem of improving interactions with instructional staff as not being part of the psychologist's role. The participants never agreed on a job description for school psychologist. This researcher underestimated the diversity of this group's perceptions of their roles and functions as psychologists.

Workshop III Objectives—Group D

The major objective for the final workshop was to formulate some basic agreement about the role and function of school psychologists without necessarily developing a job description. The workshop began with this researcher providing a brief summary of issues raised at the previous sessions. The issues related to support services and the perceptions and interactions between instructional and non-instructional professional staff were: A. Obtaining additional staff, B. Increasing services like speech and resource, C. Involving psychologists in workshops to improve relationships within the school building, D. Reaching out to teachers in their classrooms, E. Implementing recommendations and enlisting support of teachers, and F. Developing intervention strategies.

This researcher asked the group to continue the discussion of the job description. The group was asked to first, focus on developing

some general guidelines describing their role and function in the Roosevelt school system, and second, make a connection between their role and function and the issues raised in the previous sessions. This researcher then posed the following question to begin the discussion, "Do psychologists have a responsibility for developing professional growth?" One initial response was, "I hope we do." The group again began to recite a litany of problems and negative observations which included:

A. The answer is money.

B. Children are culturally and environmentally deprived, and the answer isn't to increase special services but improve the community and environment.

C. Black children are not going to have the appropriate experience that the white middle class has.

D. Parents expect the school to control their children when they have no control themselves.

One member countered the negative remarks by saying that there were ways to bend the existing system and that money was not the only answer. The group did not respond to this member's statements, and another member responded, "You want us to do more work for less money when less work and more money is wanted." The divisions within this group were vast, and a general consensus of the role and function of the psychologist could not be agreed on.

The objective for the final session was not attained. Despite this researcher's efforts to return the group to task, the resistance

and diversity within the group was overwhelming. The group again refused to complete written assessment forms, but made several statements indicating the dialogue had been helpful.

Notes

Chapter IV

1

Joseph C. Witt and Steven N. Elliott, "The Response Cost Lottery: A Time Efficient and Effective Classroom Intervention," Journal of School Psychology 20 (1982): 155-61.

2

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, "How to Talk So Students Will Talk," The Professional Journal of the American Federation of Teachers 11 (Summer 1987): 37-42.

CHAPTER V

ASSESSMENT, REVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter V represents this researcher's attempt to succinctly present the results and implications of a low-cost staff development project. This dissertation project presented a step toward initiating a change process. The positive reaction of the participants toward the staff development project reflected the willingness of instructional and non-instructional professionals to participate in activities that provided an opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Staff development activities represented a viable means for struggling urban school districts to provide additional training for staff. The Roosevelt Board of Education and administrators were instrumental in facilitating staff development activities throughout the district. The Board of Education and administrators recognized the value of individual staff development projects which were connected to the larger issues of change and school improvement.

Assessment Results

A final assessment was administered to 14 out of the 17 participants in groups A, B, and C. Final assessments were conducted immediately following the third workshop. The participants in group D elected not to complete the final assessment. Based on the small size of group D (three) the participants felt dialogue was more appropriate than

the assessment form. Table 3 represents the combined responses of groups A, B, and C. The results are recorded in percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

TABLE 3
Final Assessment Form Results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I have had adequate opportunity to express my concerns regarding support services	71%	29%		
2. I have a better understanding of the role of support services.	43%	57%		
3. I have a better understanding of referral procedures in my school.	36%	57%	7%	
4. I see teachers as an integral part of the referral process.	64%	36%		
5. Support staff should have a role in helping students beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties.	79%	21%		
6. Teachers should have a role in helping students beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties.	71%	29%		
7. In the past, personal attitudes have deterred me from interacting with support staff.		21%	57%	21%
8. I feel the support services in my school will improve.	29%	64%	7%	
9. I believe my interactions with support staff will increase.	29%	71%		
10. I would be more motivated to discuss my concerns about a child with support staff.	43%	57%		

A section of the final assessment form asked the participants to respond to the following items:

- A. What aspect of the workshops was the most helpful?
- B. What additional topics would you like to explore?
- C. Any additional questions or comments?

This researcher reviewed the final assessment responses, and the following represents a summary of the themes that emerged.

Item: What aspect of the workshops was the most helpful?

The themes that emerged in response to this item included: Discussing, deciding, and sharing of issues and concerns related to support services. The comments suggested a need to interact and work as a team for the benefit of children. One participant responded that the most helpful aspect of the workshops was "a chance for input."

Item: What additional topics would you like to explore?

The themes that emerged in response to this item included the following: Networking with other child care institutions, techniques for teaching children "at risk," more effective communication, and shared problem solving. One participant responded that "getting staff members to work together collectively" was an important topic to explore.

Item: Any additional questions or comments?

The themes that emerged in response to this item included: Needing more workshops of this nature, and making more time available

for teachers and parents to work together. One participant commented: "I had the opportunity to share ideas and feel good about my feelings."

Summary and Interpretation of Assessment Results

This researcher interpreted the final assessment results as a positive indicator that the participants surveyed benefited from the workshops. All participants surveyed indicated that they had a better understanding of support services and an adequate opportunity to express their views. Ninety-three percent of the participants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they had a better understanding of referral procedures in their school. All of the participants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that teachers and support staff have a role in the referral process and helping students who are beginning to display academic, social, and behavioral difficulties. Seventy-eight percent of the participants surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that personal attitudes interfered with interactions with non-instructional professional staff. Ninety-seven percent of the participants surveyed felt support services would improve. Finally, all of the participants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that interactions and motivation to interact with non-instructional professionals would increase.

Additional data obtained from the participants' written responses assisted this researcher in formulating the following interpretations. First, the instructional staff was interested in improving support services in the Ulysses Byas School. Second, misunderstandings that occurred between instructional and non-

instructional professionals erected territorial boundaries, and the participants recognized the necessity of breaking through the barriers and establishing new relationships. Third, working together in the collegial atmosphere of the workshops was a step in breaking down negative, defensive attitudes toward colleagues and change. Fourth, the workshops provided the participants with opportunities to explore change and perceive the roles of their colleagues in a new light. Fifth, the instructional staff has skills, expertise, motivation, and interests that were essentially untapped and could be utilized for the benefit of children. Sixth, teachers desired and would benefit from trusting, caring, cooperative relationships which were prerequisite to effective school improvement efforts.

In conclusion, the significance of this dissertation project was that low-cost staff development activities were an appropriate direction for schools to begin the process of change necessary for school improvement. Staff members can generate resources--mostly time--for useful activities, and the needs are less for complicated expertise than sharing local knowledge and building trust among potential colleagues.

Research Questions

The answer to six research questions which were formulated at the outset of this project lent additional support to the contention that staff development and action research were viable directions toward improving schools. The questions were: Would instructional and non-instructional professional staff

- 1) Volunteer to be involved in staff development workshops related to support services?
- 2) Attend staff development workshops consistently?
- 3) Express their ideas and concerns regarding support services during scheduled workshops?
- 4) Increase interactions as a result of participation in the project?
- 5) Value their interactions with colleagues?
- 6) Develop recommendations that would have practical implications for the Ulysses Byas School?

In regard to question one, would staff volunteer to participate in a staff development project, the response was affirmative. All of the district psychologists and 63 percent of the instructional staff at the Ulysses Byas School volunteered to participate in the workshops.

Table 4 delineates each group's percentage of attendance at each session. Attendance at the workshops represented the participants' personal and professional dedication to this staff development project. Participants had to alter busy schedules and prepare extra work for their classes in order to extricate time to attend workshops.

TABLE 4

Workshop Attendance

Group	Number of Workshops	Percentage of Attendance
A	1	100
	2	100
	3	100
B	1	80
	2	100
	3	60
C	1	100
	2	100
	3	100
D	1	100
	2	66.6
	3	100

The participants' response to the final assessment survey indicated that 100 percent of those surveyed had adequate opportunity to express their ideas and concerns. The extensive narrative responses submitted to this researcher were positive indicators that participants expressed themselves.

Although there was no mechanism for measuring increased interactions between instructional and non-instructional professionals, all of the participants surveyed felt their interactions with support staff would increase.

The question of whether individuals valued their interactions with colleagues was difficult to assess. However, all of the participants surveyed viewed themselves as being involved in "helping" relationships. In addition, the participants indicated they were motivated to work with other members of the staff. This researcher interpreted these responses to mean instructional and non-instructional staff valued interactions with colleagues.

In response to the last research question, three of the four groups developed practical recommendations appropriate for the Ulysses Byas School. Group A formulated a realistic outline for structuring building team meetings. Group B outlined practical suggestions for obtaining educational information about new entrants to the school district. Group C devised a list of activities that could help improve collegial interactions. Group D was unable to reach a consensus regarding roles and responsibilities of the school psychologist. Group D found it difficult to establish linkages

among themselves. The disparity among members of group D indicated the importance of staff development activities being geared to specific situations and settings with individuals who are directly involved.

Each non-instructional professional presented a unique perception of the role of school psychologist based on experiences in their particular setting. Therefore, it was difficult for the high school psychologist to relate to the needs and concerns of the elementary level psychologists.

Workshop Linkages

In the two-year period since the workshops terminated, informal linkages between this researcher, workshop participants, and the district have continued. For example, one participant approached this researcher to discuss a conflict she was having with support personnel at her child's school. Two other participants contacted this researcher regarding concerns they had for children in their class. Another participant, who transferred from the elementary to the high school setting, continued a dialogue with this researcher regarding children with special needs.

This researcher attended an inservice workshop for special education teachers conducted by an outside consultant. As teachers were leaving, some negative comments were made about the content of the workshop. A teacher who attended this researcher's staff development workshop stated: "That lady doesn't know how to run a good workshop like you." A teacher who overheard the comment asked for

further explanation. The teacher who made the comment responded by saying that the staff development workshops "were very comfortable and people shared ideas." This type of comment, made two years after the completion of the staff development workshops was at least suggestive of the potential positive implications staff development can have on teachers.

On a district level, the priority has been to increase the reading and math skills of all students, as measured by the California Achievement Test. To this end, the Ulysses Byas Elementary School staff formulated a comprehensive school improvement plan. Staff development techniques such as: including teachers in the planning process; formative evaluation; teachers working as teams; and utilizing teacher-made materials and district personnel were elements of the comprehensive school improvement plan. Staff development techniques incorporated into the school improvement plan were an indirect outgrowth and continuation of this Staff Development Project. This researcher's workshops, in conjunction with other projects, conducted as part of the Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts partnership, have influenced the Roosevelt schools.

Roosevelt/UMASS Staff Development Project

The strength of a staff development action research approach was that an individual or small group of individuals could address a specific problem with minimal cost to the district. The cost effectiveness of staff development was beneficial to an urban school district with limited resources. This dissertation project required

no specific funding. Existing resources, i.e. personnel, were reallocated to facilitate the project. Support from central office administrators and the building principal helped create a positive atmosphere for the project.

The long-term philosophical and financial commitment of the Roosevelt Board of Education to staff development encouraged staff to become involved in problem solving. The Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts program involved staff in a degree granting program while simultaneously addressing problems within the Roosevelt Public Schools. Dissertation projects were designed to meet the needs and goals of both the district and the individual.

The Roosevelt School District represents a loosely coupled urban school district with formal and informal lines of communication. The relatively small size of the Roosevelt School District facilitated the implementation of staff development activities. For example, administrators were readily available for consultation. There was flexibility in utilizing resources, and there was an awareness within the schools and community of the importance of staff development activities. The small size encouraged interactions and was conducive to the establishment of long-term collegial relationships. When issues of power arose, the situation could be handled quickly, thereby averting negative feelings among groups. Staff development activities within the Roosevelt Schools centered around those schools where administrative support and school climate fostered activities with the potential for change and improvement.

Implementation Issues

The incorporation of staff development activities into the daily routine was difficult. This researcher found that consideration of the following factors facilitated the planning of staff development activities. First, the participants' needs were considered when scheduling the workshops. Second, all workshops materials were prepared in advance, thus allowing the agenda to be followed in a timely manner. Third, activities which the group could relate to, for example, reviewing case histories, were provided. This served to link the content of the workshops with personal experiences and also established credibility for the workshops. Fourth, participants were given assignments that encouraged interactions during the time period between workshops. Fifth, notices reminding participants about the next workshop were sent. Sixth, the staff development activities were discussed with individuals not directly involved in the project to obtain additional feedback.

Although the factors noted appeared simplistic, they were considered carefully to prevent the perception that staff development was being imposed on the school instead of incorporated into the school. Consideration of human needs and motivations was essential to engender support for this staff development project. Involvement of staff in a decision-making process was an initial step toward change.

Implications and Outcomes

The staff development project conducted by this researcher focused on improving interactions between instructional and non-

instructional professionals. This researcher had observed that educators tend to view human interactions as being unrelated or secondary to the daily routines of schools. Therefore, interpersonal interactions tended to be devalued.

Michael Fullan made a similar observation. He stated:

"When collegiality is achieved, it is often short-lived because the school organization of the workplace is not conducive to maintaining collaboration in the long run." ¹ Involving non-instructional professionals in staff development activities could facilitate staff development. Consider the following scenario: Improved interactions in schools could lead to relationship building. Relationships could lead to the formation of teams with shared goals. The efforts of the teams could lead to school improvement and increased student achievement.

Individuals willing to initiate low-cost staff development projects represented a core group of change agents. The change agents, through their efforts, could diminish resistance to staff development activities. The thrust of this staff development project was to begin the process of group interactions which predicated change. The process of change was begun when the staff agreed to participate. The staff development workshops and activities were adjusted to meet the stated needs of participants in regard to support services. The combined efforts of this researcher and interactions among participants focused attention on issues of concern in the elementary school.

According to Robert T. DeVries and Joel A. Colbert, "There needs to be greater recognition that staff development is an integral component in the professional growth of all district staff." ² There is evidence that this concept is being utilized in other school districts. The Los Angeles School District utilized staff development to meet the demand for inservice training. ³ DeVries and Colbert stated that the Los Angeles Unified School District has mandated ". . .a loosely coupled approach to meeting staff development needs." The magnitude of the Los Angeles Schools' inservice training task is exemplified by the fact that the district had "seven hundred physical locations, 28,000 teachers, and 3,000 administrators." Staff development programs in Los Angeles were conducted on a voluntary, decentralized basis. The Los Angeles inservice training program ". . .reflects several coherent staff development principles: needs-based, owned by participants, differentiated, experimentally/behaviorally based, cooperatively planned, individualized, and involved." The authors concluded that, "The ultimate responsibility for change and improved teaching effectiveness lies at the region and school level, where the most pressing needs can be addressed in an intensive manner." ⁴

Fullan contended that "staff development and successful innovations or improvements are ultimately related." He favored "an institutional development" to "make staff development and improvement a way of life in schools." According to Fullan, the linkage between staff development and student achievement is beginning to be demonstrated in the educational research. Fullan reported that teachers participating

in a staff development program helped raise the reading scores of high school students. The reading grade equivalents were raised between six and eight months. The implications of such findings substantiate the necessity of continuing staff development activities⁵ in schools.

In conclusion, this dissertation project was a step in improving the interactions of instructional and non-instructional professionals. The interactions began the process of change and tapped human resources which had been isolated due to the bureaucratic structures of schools. The project assisted the voluntary participants to lower their defensive stance toward change and began to explore new alternatives to old problems. Change, school improvement, and increased student achievement can be attained when staff development activities demonstrate that things do not always have to remain the same.

Summary

The difficulties related to improving interactions among instructional and non-instructional professionals are ill-structured and multifaceted. The workshops conducted as part of this project provided a non-threatening environment where issues related to support services could be explored. As instructional and non-instructional professionals interacted, they learned something about the perceptions, expectations, and values of their colleagues. The process of sharing enabled participants to formulate mutually beneficial patterns of interactions and linkages that may be helpful in the future.

Topics raised during workshop sessions had implications concerning the present status of support services, instructional and non-instructional professional staff interactions, and goals for the future. The topics included:

1. Instructional and non-instructional professionals shared equally important but divergent roles in helping children beginning to display social, emotional, and academic difficulties. The goal would be to retain children within the regular curriculum and decrease placements into special education.

2. The bureaucratic structures of schools provided an atmosphere whereby instructional and non-instructional professionals avoided responsibility for improving support services. The goal would be to interrupt the blaming circle between instructional and non-instructional professionals and to formulate positive working relationships that would improve support services and benefit children.

3. Instructional and non-instructional professionals possessed unique knowledge and expertise. The goal would be to share this knowledge in a non-threatening, non-judgmental manner.

4. Racism and poverty impacted on the quality of educational services provided by instructional and non-instructional professionals. The goal would be to increase and improve interactions and communication within schools and diminish the effects of racism and poverty in the educational setting.

5. Individuals and small groups of instructional and non-instructional professionals can make a difference in urban schools.

The goal would be to recognize that, although change is slow and difficult, initiating institutional change is possible.

Finally, this staff development project exemplifies the difficulties of working within bureaucratic structures which resist changes dictated by human motivations. Lasting change is a difficult process which cannot be accomplished through mandates, but rather through the combined efforts of individuals who share similar beliefs and goals.

Notes

Chapter V

1

Michael G. Fullan, "Staff Development, Innovation, and Institutional Development," in The 1990 ASCD Yearbook (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1990), 22.

2

Robert T. DeVries and Joel A. Colbert, "The Los Angeles Experience: Individually Oriented Staff Development," in The 1990 ASCD Yearbook (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1990), 217.

3

Ibid., 203-17.

4

Ibid., 215, 210.

5

Fullan, "Staff Development," 37, 4, 6.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS

SCHOOL _____

GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT _____

Dear Colleagues,

Your professional judgment is needed to assess the support services within the Roosevelt Schools. For purposes of this survey, support services will be limited to psychology and social work.

Please respond to the following questions. Also, please feel free to add comments where indicated.

Thank you.

Kevin Stack

Please circle your response.

1. Other school districts provide more support services.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comment:

2. The Roosevelt School District provides adequate support services.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comment:

3. Referral procedures to obtain support services seem adequate.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comment:

4. Children in special education and regular class receive the same amount of service from support staff.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comment:

-3-

13. I want support service personnel to take a more active role in my classroom.

Yes

No

Comment:

14. I feel confident assisting students who approach me with a personal problem.

Yes

No

Comment:

15. I meet with parents to discuss the non-academic aspects of their child's functioning.

Yes

No

Comment:

16. Select five topics about which you would like additional information. Please prioritize your selection by using the numbers 1 through 5, #1 being the highest priority.

- Social and emotional development of children
- Student counseling
- Mainstreaming
- Crisis intervention strategies
- School mental health
- Substance abuse
- Discipline
- Warning signs of children with social and emotional difficulties
- Behavior management techniques
- Family counseling
- Special education
- Protective services
- Family court
- Referral procedures
- Parent conferences
- Committee on the Handicapped
- Other (please specify)

RESULTS

N=26

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u>	<u>NO RESPONSE</u>
1.	4	15	1	0	6
2.	0	3	16	5	2
3.	0	10	14	1	1
4.	0	6	14	1	5
5.	0	13	13	0	0
6.	4	10	11	0	1
7.	0	11	12	2	1
8.	0	4	15	3	4
		<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO RESPONSE</u>	
9.		20	6	0	
10.		20	5	1	
11.		19	6	1	
12.		18	4	4	
13.		17	3	6	
14.		23	1	2	
15.		18	7	1	

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Roosevelt Public Schools
Roosevelt, NY

Consent_Form

Dear Colleague:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts. Your professional judgment is needed to help formulate a staff development project, which addresses issues regarding support services within the elementary schools.

Participation in this project will involve: 1) completing a needs assessment survey, 2) participating in workshops, 3) sharing opinions, and 4) completing evaluation forms. Individual evaluation and survey forms will be reviewed and results will be summarized and shared with participants. The summarized survey data will be included in my dissertation. Your name will not be used in my dissertation. Statements made by workshop participants may be quoted in the dissertation. Written permission to quote an individual workshop participant will be obtained if necessary.

Participation in this project is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Any questions regarding staff development will be welcome. Thanking you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Kevin Stack

Please sign below if you intend to be a voluntary participant in this project.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM

SCHOOL _____

GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT _____

Dear Colleague:

Your professional judgment is needed to assess the support services for children within the elementary schools. For purposes of this survey, the support services of psychology and social work will be explored.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Individual surveys will be reviewed, and results will be summarized and shared with survey participants. The summarized survey data will be included in my dissertation, therefore, names should not be included to protect confidentiality.

Thank you for your participation.

Kevin Stack

Please circle your response.

- | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. Teachers have a role in effecting the social and emotional development of children. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 2. Teachers have a role in assisting students who approach them with a personal problem. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 3. Teachers and support staff often work together to meet the needs of a child. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 4. I believe child study team meetings can be beneficial in helping children. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 5. I have an understanding of the role of support services in my school. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

6. The support services for children in my building are adequate.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. My school has a plan for helping students who are beginning to display academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. My experience has been that support service personnel are accessible.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. I have valued my interactions with support service personnel.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Referral procedures to obtain support services for children are adequate.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. I would like support service personnel to take a more active role in my classroom.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. All children have equal access to service from support staff.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. I feel confident assisting students who approach me with a personal problem.	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
14. I meet with parents to discuss the non-academic aspects of their child's functioning.	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
15. I have requested assistance from support services for students beginning to display academic, social and/or behavioral difficulties during the 1986-87 school year.	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never

16. Please list five topics about which you would like additional information.

Comments:

APPENDIX D
ASSESSMENT FORM

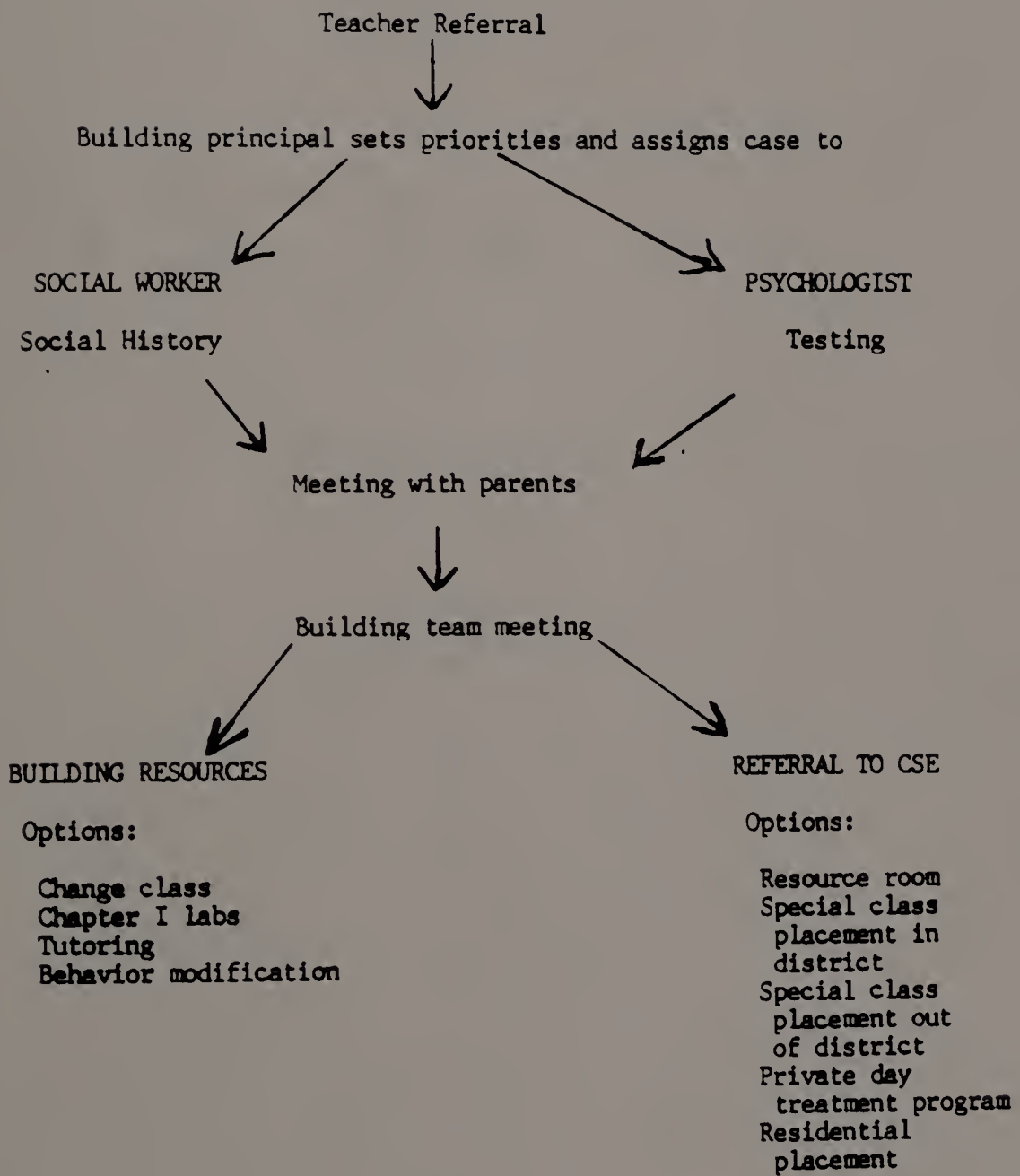
What aspect of the session was the most helpful?

What topics would you like to explore at future sessions?

Any additional questions or comments?

APPENDIX E

FLOWCHART OF REFERRAL PROCESS



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