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Integrative Learning From The Student Perspective: A Case Study

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INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

FROM THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE:

A CASE STUDY

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

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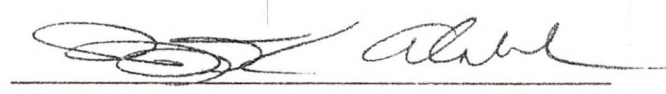
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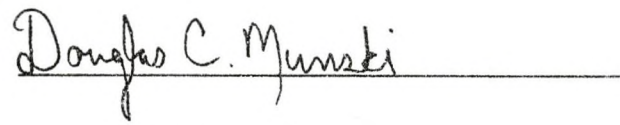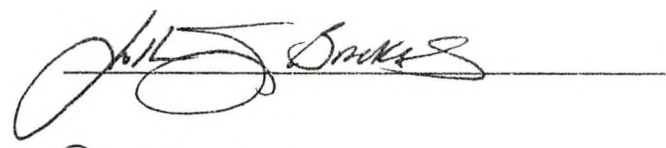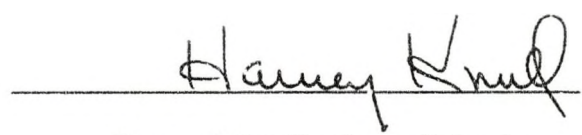
This dissertation, submitted by Ann Lee Miller Asbeck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the Graduate School

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PERMISSION

Title: Integrative Learning from the Student Perspective:

A Case Study

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Degree: Doctor of Education

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Signature *Ann L. Asbeck*

Date *May 20, 1993*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my high school teacher Warren Schutnecht who shared with me and my classmates the challenges and joys of integrative learning long before it was fashionable and who shall always be acknowledged as my most memorable teacher--learning, sharing, and caring with and for his students.

ABSTRACT

This paper considers the educational concept of integration as it applies to curriculum design and implementation and to the relationship between curriculum integration and integrative experiences of student participants. Three assumptions underlie the study: (a) Integration is a goal of a program called Integrated Studies, (b) the meaning of integration must be defined within the context of a program, and (c) integration in teaching and learning is more than a structure designed by a faculty. The Integrated Studies Program at the University of North Dakota, by its own description, seeks to provide a more coherent learning experience for students within the context of a complex, integrated curriculum and, as such, provides an opportunity for studying many aspects of integration. This qualitative study seeks first, to provide an understanding of integrative learning experiences from the perspective of eight first-year university students as they participated in the Integrated Studies Program and second, to provide a detailed description of the integrated curriculum.

The Program's integrated curriculum, as an alternative to a more traditional general education curriculum, provides opportunities for students to actively construct relationships among content, skills, and the social context of the Program. These opportunities are supported by a faculty who plan and teach as a team, by enrollment of 80-100 students as a cohort for at least one semester, and by cooperative small-

group activities such as book seminars, writing groups, and research groups which use a common set of materials selected by faculty to focus on the semester's theme.

Educational theories derived from process philosophy and the communications concept of reframing are discussed in terms of their contributions to understanding integration, integrated curriculum, and integrative learning experiences.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1986 the Integrated Studies Program at the University of North Dakota began as a pilot program offering an alternative means for undergraduate students to satisfy general education requirements. In their proposal for funding for the program submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities (1986), Doctors Patricia Sanborn and Gerald Lawrence expressed their concerns about the undergraduate experience in general education as follows:

> Student programs continue to be needlessly fragmented....One reason why the humanities no longer occupy a central position in American education is that they seem to students to be disembodied and anachronistic islands of quaint ideas and art from the past. Universities have partly contributed to this idea by abdicating their role as champions of an integrated liberal education and by permitting students to choose their curriculum as one might fill a luncheon tray in an ambitious cafeteria. (p. 5)

> Attitudes and expectations that many students acquire as they enter the university work against the goals of general education.... The structure of general education as it presently exists severely distorts the learning process and gives a false picture of the structure of knowledge. (p. 6)

1

This description of general education, particularly as experienced by first-year students, was confirmed in a three year study by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as reported by Ernest Boyer (1987). Boyer asked, "Can the American college, with its fragmentation and competing special interests, define shared academic goals? Is it possible to offer students, with their separate roots, a program of general education that helps them see connections and broadens their perspective?" (p. 83). He responded to his own questions with the following suggestion:

> We conclude that general education urgently needs a new breath of life. More
> coherence is required to relate the core program to the lives of students and to
> the world they are inheriting. There is a need for students to go beyond their
> separate interests and gain a more integrated view of knowledge and a more
> authentic view of life. (p. 90)

In his proposal for an 'integrated core' to meet the needs of general education, Boyer acknowledged that the crucial step would be the translation of the purpose into practice.

The continued existence of the Integrated Studies (IS) Program on the University of North Dakota Grand Forks campus, now funded as a University program, provides an excellent opportunity to study the translation of the idea of integrated curriculum into practice. The primary interest of this research in the IS curriculum is the interpretation of this program as a learning experience as described by students participating in it. Of particular interest is how students describe 'integration' in the program--does it happen? how does it come about? what does it mean to them in

terms of their learning? what does it mean to them in terms of being an undergraduate learning experience? This portion of the study is based on the assumption that students are able to articulate their learning experiences and that some students will be more articulate in this regard than others.

Another vital and equally important part of this research is preparing a description of the IS Program as a curriculum design in order to identify curriculum elements and instructional practices which enable and facilitate integration within the context of an integrated studies program. Three assumptions underlie this part of the study: (a) 'Integration' is a goal of a program called Integrated Studies, (b) the meaning of 'integration' must be defined within the context of a program, and (c) 'integration' in teaching and learning is more than a structure designed by a faculty. Vars (1991), in describing integration from a historical perspective, confirmed that integration is not a new idea. Major works on integration, such as those of Dressel (1958), Hopkins (1937), and Klein (1990), span almost six decades. Hopkins (1937), writing in 1937, could have been stating the concerns about understanding integration which still exist today:

> With increasing frequency and with expanding meaning, the noun integration, or one of its grammatical associates, has been used during the past ten years to designate educational goals, processes, and outcomes. It has been used to describe the individual as a whole, some aspect of his behavior, the entire school curriculum, the working relations between teachers and pupils, the administrative organization, the relation of school to other social agencies or the community as

a whole, the function of school in a democracy, how learning takes place, and in many other ways too numerous to mention. The result has led to confusion rather than to clarity of thinking on educational problems. That the word has met a need for which educators have been groping seems generally agreed. The problem now is to examine these divergent meanings and uses in light of accumulating experiences so as to refine thinking in these areas, in order to better direct projected changes in present curriculum practices. (p. 1)

Broadly defined, integration facilitates synthesis (a goal generally viewed as positive in education) in response to fragmentation (generally viewed as negative in education). Although as a concept it has been and continues to be a commonplace of curriculum organization (Goodlad & Su, 1992), its ready translation into educational practice remains elusive. Difficulty in translation reflects difficulty in defining the concept itself as well as frequent use of the term without clarification in current professional educational literature. Variations in defining the concept subsequently influence perceptions of possibilities of curricular form and how it is enacted (Gehrke, 1991).

Programs in higher education based on integrated curriculum are not monolithic in design even though they may share common purposes and goals (Apostel, Bergher, Briggs, & Michaud, 1972; Clark & Wawrytko, 1990; Klein, 1990; Newell, 1986). Hinden (1982), in describing one of the first attempts to provide an integrated core program at the University of Wisconsin in the 1930s, makes a distinction between programs in which the emphasis lies more in integrating subject matter and those

which promote an alternative educational environment. Although it is a distinction worth noting, because historically such programs in higher education have tended to emphasize one over the other (Dressel, 1958a; Goodlad & Su, 1992; Newell, 1986), it should not be taken as an unresolvable dichotomy. It was during the period of the progressive movement in education that integration came to be viewed as a process rather than merely an outcome or product (Hopkins, 1937) with the debate rekindled in mid-twentieth century (Dressel, 1958a) and readdressed with the middle school movement beginning in the 1960s (Beane, 1990; Vars, 1991). Whether it be interpreted as process or product with regard to curriculum organization and the learning experience within a curriculum, integration is generally regarded as positive.

Variations in the interpretation of integration as a concept and resultant diversity of its translation into curriculum highlights the necessity of studying integration within the context of a specific curriculum, program, or course. A preliminary study of the Integrated Studies program at the University of North Dakota, which involved talking to IS faculty and former student participants and reviewing literature about the program, seemed to indicate that the program addresses both views of integration and thus would be an appropriate context for this study. There also is a need for more detailed description and analysis of specific integrative programs for undergraduates, such as Jones' (1981) Experiment at Evergreen which served as a starting point for the design of UND's Integrated Studies Program. Likewise, there is a need for student-participant voice in the descriptions, particularly as the curriculum is experienced by the students (Erickson & Shultz, 1992; Goodlad & Su, 1992; Halliburton, 1981).

Through this study, both needs will be addressed and. in the process, a richer

understanding of integrated curriculum will be provided.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature related to theories of teaching and learning on which the Integrated Studies curriculum is based. The first section of this chapter reviews literature related to the concept of integration in the learning process and in the planning of curriculum. The second section of this chapter reviews literature related to the concept of thinking as an educational goal. The third section of this chapter reviews the literature on cooperative learning which is a primary mode of instruction in the Integrated Studies program. Each of these theories contributes to defining the elements and sources of support for the integrative educational experience as it is embodied in the design and enactment of the IS curriculum.

Integration as an Educational Concept

Integration has long been and continues to be a consideration in teaching and learning and educational planning. The confusion about integration as an educational concept as expressed in the introduction to this dissertation in a quotation from Hopkins (1937) is reiterated by Clabaugh (1989) as he describes the present dilemma which educators frequently encounter in professional discussions of integration:

Calls for an "integrated" or "integrative" curriculum are often little more than slogans. This is because there is little or no consensus concerning what these terms describe, and no widely recognized authority to provide a conclusive definition. So instead of a meaningful reform, the "integrated" curriculum becomes the latest in that inexhaustible supply of educational buzzwords that fail to inform, but still excite enthusiasm. (p. 5)

The lack of a clear definition has not, however, prevented educators from regarding integration as a worthy educational goal, nor has it prevented researchers from studying integration or from attempting to describe the educational environment in which it finds fruitful expression.

While recent calls for a more cohesive, connected, 'integrated' curriculum have come from all levels of education (Brady, 1993; Brandt, 1991; Caine & Caine, 1991; Fogarty, 1991; Klein, 1990; Schenk, 1989; Shoemaker, 1989; Vars, 1987), it is for those levels which address general education that most research and professional literature on integration is frequently directed--namely, middle school (Brandt, 1991; Beane, 1990; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Dickinson, 1990; Toepfer, 1991) and undergraduate general education (Apostel et al., 1972; Boyer, 1987; Boyer & Levine, 1981; Clark & Wawrytko, 1990; Dill, 1982; Gaff, 1983; Halliburton, 1981; Newell, 1986; Newell & Green, 1982). A wide range of interpretation of integration is found in these studies, both in definition of the concept and in suggestions for implementation in educational settings. This review of literature on 'integration,' regardless of the level of schooling under consideration, confirms

Shoemaker's (1989) conclusion that studies about integrated approaches "are concerned about the fragmentation of the current curriculum and the compartmentalization of knowledge with its accompanying specialization and frequent irrelevance to real-world problems" (p. 1). These concerns were shared by Sanborn and Lawrence in their conception of the Integrated Studies curriculum.

Conceptions of Integration

Contributors to professional literature who do acknowledge the need to clarify terminology related to the concept of integration credit the 1958 report of the Committee on the Integration of Educational Experiences of the National Society for the Study of Education, The Integration of Educational Experiences (Henry, 1958), with providing the theoretical groundwork and terminology for continuing discussion of the concept. Therefore, this seminal piece shall be the focus of this review of literature since, for the most part, the various conceptions of integration espoused in contemporary writings cited have evolved from it.

Integration as both a state and a process

Dressel (1958a), in The Integration of Educational Experiences, states that "the real difficulty with the word 'integration' rests in the multiplicity of interrelated meanings which permit its use in reference to many and differing situations but which also may result in ambiguity which interferes with a reasoned discussion" (p. 8). In an effort to reduce ambiguity, Dressel describes an apparent dichotomy commonly

encountered in educators' consideration of integration, that of viewing integration as a state or as a process, and the implications of each view for curriculum.

Integration as a state. "As a state, [integration] implies the attainment of perfection, completion, or wholeness. Integration in this sense is a goal toward which every individual and social group presumably should strive" (Dressel, 1958a, p. 10). The implication of this belief for education is that there exists a unified view of commonly held knowledge. Dressel views education as experience and defines educational experiences as those "which [are] selected and planned with one or more definite purposes or objectives in view. The selection and planning include a consideration of the relationship of the particular experience to those educational experiences which precede, accompany, or follow it" (Dressel, 1958a, p. 6). From this perspective, he describes a fundamental distinction in the consideration of integration, that of educational experiences which are 'integrated' and those which are 'integrative' (or 'integrating'). With the premise that integration is a state, or in the case of curriculum a product, then 'integrated' educational experiences are planned "with the hope that the basis for organization (integration) will be grasped by the students" (pp. 6-7).

Most of our current curricula reflect the belief that academic disciplines define various aspects of knowledge, and that through the schooling process, some coherent whole can be taught or may become apparent to learners as they come to know the various contributions of the disciplines. Thus, the most common choice in response to the traditional, fragmented curriculum is one which seeks to make the connections within and between disciplines explicit for students, either by directly telling students

of connections--as determined by experts in the disciplines or educators specialized in teaching particular disciplines--or by providing experiences for students to "discover" these preconceived connections. Students who do not readily "see" the connections presented in a particular lesson or unit may be told that the coherent whole will become apparent in their future learning, perhaps when they are "ready" to understand it.

Thus, cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum are suggested, all frequently subsumed under the name of "interdisciplinary" in professional literature (Beane, 1991; Jacobs, 1989; Halliburton, 1984; Klein, 1991). Correlated, fused, and broad fields models of curriculum design, often with their primary objective being the demonstration of interrelations between disciplines, emphasize disciplines as the subject or content portion of the curriculum (Fogarty, 1991; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Jacobs, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 1975; Vars, 1987). Each of these curriculum models exemplifies Good's (1973) definition of integrated curriculum as "a curriculum organization which cuts across subject-matter lines to focus upon comprehensive life problems or broad areas of study that bring together various segments of the curriculum into meaningful association" (p. 159).

Integration as a process. The primary role of the learner in integration is emphasized by Hopkins (1937) as he describes integration as "a shorthand word used to designate intelligent behavior. Integrating refers to continuous, intelligent, interactive adjusting" (p. 1). Henry (1958) states that "there is a strong emphasis

throughout this volume on the idea that the all-important process in achieving an integrated education is the learner's own integration of the material he has learned" (p. viii). Although this view of the learner as the 'ultimate integrator' could be interpreted as the process of a learner coming to know the integration (as a state) as provided for the student from discipline experts and faculty, Dressel (1958a) describes integration as a process which provides "the opportunity for students to organize, interrelate, or integrate factual learning and experience after their own fashion" (p.4). In contrast to integrated experiences, 'integrative' educational experiences are planned "so that each individual is encouraged to make his own organization" (p. 7). The purpose of an 'integrative' or 'integrating' experience is to offer an opportunity for students to construct their own integration of the immediate experiences and to develop some ability and satisfaction in seeking meaningful organizations and relations of their later experiences.

Reconsidering the state/process dichotomy

Dressel (1958a), in summarizing conclusions reached by the contributors to The Integration of Educational Experiences, states that the task of integration in education "is not that of communicating to the individual an integrated view of all knowledge; it is rather that of developing individuals who will seek to do this for themselves" (p. 5). Harter and Gehrke (1989) interpret Dressel's conclusions to mean that "the two seemingly separate ways of thinking about integration were really inextricably tied to each other" (p. 13). Dressel himself writes: "This first approach [integrated], though useful, must, therefore, be tempered by the second--integrating experiences--for those

to hold the possibility of developing even greater insight into and respect for the integrations made by the great minds of the past" (p. 7).

Thus, while Dressel sees the purpose of an 'integrated' experience to be acquainting the student with integrations achieved by others (in particular, those espoused within academic disciplines), he envisions an 'integrating' experience in which the connections made explicit in the integrated experience may serve as a take-off point for the student's achievement of his own integration. Dressel (1958b) reminds educators that "the real difficulty , however, is not with the superficiality of the relationship [especially in the teaching of an oversimplified version of another's integration] but with the possibility that the relationship may be taken as a fact rather than as a hypothesis for further study" (p. 255). He also implies that considerations of the integrations of others would include those of student peers. "We must learn to encourage, accept, and to develop the relationships and attempts at organization which do occur....The teacher's task may be as much that of developing an environment where such contributions are valued as it is to plan specific experiences which will provoke them" (p. 261).

More recently, educators such as Beane (1990 & 1991), Clark and Wawrytko (1990), Gehrke (1991), Jardine (1991), and Toepfer (1991)   explicitly support the idea that the integrative curriculum not limit learners' understanding of the integrations of others to those of "great minds of the past." Rather, meaningful integration for the individual learner is seen as an ongoing, dynamic process in which the integrations of

fellow learners prov not only additional 'content' in the curriculum, but, more importantly, becom part of the learner's integrative process.

Shoemaker (1989) provides an informative summary of several models of integrative education each of which she briefly describes in terms of their theoretical underpinnings. Models identified are: (a) All Mind/ Brain Functions Approach, (b) Thematic Approach, (c) Interdisciplinary Approach, (d) Information Processing/Concept Development Approach, and (e) a Combination of Approaches. Conspicuously absent from her summary, however, is reference to literature of process philos hy and its emerging theories of education which provide strong support and new insights into possibilities for integrative curriculum. Alfred North Whitehead, a nowledged as the leading exponent of process philosophy, is frequently quoted in rguments decrying fragmentation in the teaching/learning process and the lack of meaning in traditional content for most learners ("inert ideas"). Although the uncommon terminology created by Whitehead (1925; 1929; 1933; 1978) to describe his vision of teaching and learning has possibly resulted in the omission of process theory in discussions of integration and integrative curriculum, contemporary process philosophers (Brumbaugh, 1982; Gershman, 1988; Moore, 1988; Oliver & Gershman, 1989) enhance and clarify a view of integration characterized as movement--a dynamic, ever-emerging, interactive, and on-going experience.

Hereafter integrated and integrative (or integrating) will be purposefully used in this dissertation in acceptance of the distinctions made by Dressel and clarified by contemporary educators writing in the spirit of his views.

Integrative Curriculum

Klein (1990), in her discussion of Armstrong's (1980) four levels of integration and synthesis in education, describes the degree of interaction between integrated and integrative experiences as they might be manifest in curricula:

1. At the first level [italics], students take a selection of courses from different departments, counting them toward a particular disciplinary major. [Though this] probably [is] the most easily achieved interdisciplinary variant, it may also be the least effective.

2. At the second level [italics], there is an institutionally provided opportunity for students to meet and share insights from various disciplinary courses, often in a capstone seminar. However, the responsibility for achieving integration may be left largely to the students.

3. At the third level [italics], a significant change occurs as faculty join students in the process of synthesizing knowledge. ...these courses are often characterized by serial rather than integrated team teaching, since individual faculty simply 'bring their disciplinary wares to be displayed in a different context.'

4) At the fourth and highest level [italics] there is a conscious attempt to integrate material from various fields of knowledge into 'a new, single, intel-lectually coherent entity.' This demands an understanding of the epistemologies and methodologies of other disciplines and, in a team effort, requires building a common vocabulary. (p. 57)

The limitations of the first three levels of Armstrong's schema are revealed by Harter and Gehrke (1989) who caution that "if a teacher becomes too involved in the transmission of current structures, such as those of the academic disciplines, he or she is apt to not only bore students, but also deprive them of the necessary experiences of creating their own, new, divergent structures. When students lack opportunities to create, they remain unaware of the very need to seek them" (p. 13). Betts (1983) also supports an integrative curriculum which emphasizes the active participation of the learner:

> The 'quality' of a learning experience refers to the learner's ability to relate personally to the learning, to create a coherent whole of which the individual is an inseparable element, not what or how much is learned. This is a somewhat different use of the concept of 'quality' which, in many institutions, is treated as an objective phenomenon; for example, evaluating the quality of writing by the degree to which it conforms to a methodological ideal, rather than the degree to which the act of writing contributes to the writer's and reader's understanding of the subject. (p. 113)

Gehrke (1991) suggests that educators explore the implications of current metaphors intended to describe integration and consider the possibilities for integrative curriculum with new metaphors. "With the introduction of a metaphoric element in the definition of integration, the individual trying to create a schema for understanding conceptions of integration is forced to draw back and take a new perspective. Having originally looked only at the possibility of rational forms of integration--all very neat,

orderly, rather linear and predictable--this new metaphoric element is disconcerting" (p. 39). Her view describes the efforts of the educational theorists of process philosophy.

UND's Integrated Studies Program exists within the broader context of the University's general education curriculum. The UND Undergraduate Catalog 1988-90 (UND, 1988), in its statement of philosophy for general education, implies integration as a goal by stating: "this dual objective--nonspecialized and specialized education--is reciprocal and inclusive. Each kind of education is expected to inform and enrich the other and to contribute to those special qualities and abilities we have come to expect of university graduates" (p. 27). It concludes: "Faculty and students must create from their commitment to general education a sense of the unity of learning" (p. 32). The statement of philosophy organizes specific goals for general education into two sets: cross-disciplinary abilities and disciplinary abilities. It is in describing cross-disciplinary abilities that integrat is explicitly addressed: "[Cross-disciplinary abilities are] not tied directly to any particular discipline and give attention to integration around such abilities as critical thinking, effective communication, creative thinking, recognizing relationships and understanding value formation" (p. 28).

Thinking in Integrative Learning

Thinking is addressed in this research for several reasons: (a) it is specifically designated as one of several goals for student learning in both the Integrated Studies

Program and General Education at the University of North Dakota of which Integrated Studies is a part; (b) integration, by definition, involves learning processes which educators would generally consider to be 'thinking' or 'thinking skills'; and (c) an integrative experience, as curriculum, needs to provide a teaching/ learning context in which thinking will find fruition.

Thinking as an Educational Goal

Although having students become competent thinkers is a commonly stated goal for education at all levels, interpretations of what it intends may be as narrow as the application of a particular thinking skill (such as testing hypotheses) or as broadly conceived as Greene's (1978) "critical awareness". Angeles'(1981) Dictionary of Philosophy defines thinking as: (a) "a mental activity whereby a person uses concepts acquired in the process of learning and directs them toward some goal and/or object;" and, (b) "any use of the mental activities of which we are conscious, such as re-flecting, inferring, remembering, introspecting, retrospecting, doubting, willing, feeling, understanding, apprehending, perceiving, mediating, imagining, pondering, etc." (pp. 293-294). Ruggiero (1988) states that our present knowledge of thinking derives primarily from two separate disciplines, philosophy and psychology, with recent significant contributions of neurosurgery on the physiology of thought. He claims that "the dominance of philosophers in the movement accounts for the fact that teaching thinking has usually meant teaching critical [italics] thinking: that is, teaching students how to recognize and/or construct sound arguments, applying the principles of formal

and informal logic and avoiding fallacies in their reasoning" (p. 2). He asks that educators consider that "analytical, evaluative emphasis is important, but equally important is the dimension of thinking cognitive psychologists have made a special object of study for more than 30 years--the production of ideas, creative [italics] thinking" (p. 2).

The University of North Dakota's philosophy of general education (UND, 1988) likewise makes a distinction between critical thinking and creative thinking although the abilities listed for each are closely related. Critical and creative thinking are described in the University of North Dakota Undergraduate Catalog 1988-90 as two of five cross-disciplinary abilities, along with communication, recognizing relationships, and recognizing and evaluating choices.

Critical thinking can provide students confidence and assurance to make informed decisions. The process of dissecting and reassembling ideas can be personally liberating and serve as a powerful means for developing one or more of the following abilities: 1) defining a problem and selecting pertinent information for its solution; 2) recognizing stated and unstated assumptions in order to formulate useful hypotheses; 3) understanding methods of inquiry as they are used in specific disciplines; 4) using imagination and insight to expand an exploratory process; 5) questioning what one has been told; and 6) relating skills to thought and action. (p. 28)

Creative thinking can be encouraged by promoting students' ability and effort: 1) to imagine alternatives to accepted ways of solving problems or

formulating questions; 2) to change categories and comprehend analogies; 3) to generate new ideas; and 4) to add details, transform, or extend ideas. (p. 29) It is implied that by selecting from the list of courses according to the required distribution, the cross-disciplinary abilities mentioned, including thinking, will somehow be attended to in students' learning.

Current educational literature acknowledges the necessity of addressing and valuing both critical and creative aspects of thinking, often describing them as broadly inclusive and interrelated perspectives (Brandt, 1988a; Costa, 1985; Costa & Presseisen, 1985; Perkins, 1986; Resnick & Klopfer, 1989; Ruggiero, 1988). Unfortunately, this inclusiveness and interrelatedness leads to confusion when all thinking is called "critical thinking," without explanation, in stating educational goals. Further uncertainty accrues when thinking, as a goal, becomes entwined with various conceptions of 'knowing' and 'making meaning' which may value affective, nonlinear, and unconscious processes as well as cognition in the learning process (Brown, 1989; Cornbleth, 1985; Eisner, 1979; Gardner, 1983; Greene, 1978; Oliver & Gershman, 1989; Paul, 1984; Vallance, 1985). Cornbleth (1985), for example, states:

The essence of critical thinking is informed skepticism, a trusting, yet skeptical, orientation to the world. It is active inquiry rather than passive acceptance of tradition, authority, or 'common sense.'...[Critical thinking] is generative [helps construct knowledge and meaning] as well as evaluative and appropriate to the range of ideas and events we encounter, including our own ideas and experiences. Ideally critical thinking is reflexive or self-reflexive. (pp. 13 & 14)

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Thinking in the Curriculum

Clearly, how one defines 'thinking' becomes a primary consideration in how it is

incorporated in curricula. Brandt (1988b) makes a frequently cited distinction between

three approaches commonly used to incorporate thinking into the curriculum: teaching

for thinking, teaching of thinking, and teaching about thinking.

Teaching for thinking begins with provision of intellectually engaging content

and learning activities. It also includes development of language and conceptual

abilities through various forms of interaction: teacher questioning and follow-up,

group discussion, cooperative learning, and so on.

Teaching about thinking is encouraging students to be aware of their

thinking and helping them to learn to control it. Teachers try to do this by asking

students to monitor their own thinking and by making deliberate use of various

thinking frames.

[Teaching of thinking is] the attempt to teach particular mental skills and

processes such as summarizing and decision making. (Brandt, 1988b, p. 3)

Teaching for thinking focuses on creating an environment conducive to thinking;

teaching about thinking emphasizes learner metacognition (sometimes called self-

regulation); teaching of thinking generally views thinking as comprised of discrete,

generic skills (which may be used individually or in a variety of combinations) which

have particular applications depending on the nature of the problem posed or the discipline within which study is undertaken. Costa (1985) provides examples of each approach although both he and Brandt are quick to point out that the distinctions become blurred as thinking goals move from intent to enactment within curricula.

Creating an Environment for Thinking

Regardless of the approach taken toward thinking in the curriculum, current literature on thinking in the curriculum pays considerable attention to describing an environment for thinking--often described as 'student-centered' rather than 'teacher-centered' (Cuban, 1984; Glatthorn, 1985; Goodlad, 1984; Liebmann, 1987; Sizer, 1984). Cuban (1984) states that "contradictions between organizational arrangements [of schools] and current cognitive theories that stress thinking as an active, holistic, inquiring process demanding the student's total involvement are staggering" (p. 670). He claims that structures anchored in earlier demands for efficiency--such as dividing of content into courses, assigning equal amounts of time to each subject, and expecting teachers to cover certain topics for final tests--do not provide an environment supportive of thinking. Glatthorn (1985) compares a traditional classroom to a classroom which provides an environment for thinking:

> Typically, in the teacher-centered classroom where direct instruction is
> emphasized, the student plays a role that critics usually characterize as 'passive'--
> listening, reading, answering teacher questions, writing answers to practice
> exercises. In the best thinking environment...the student plays a different role as

learner--fantasizing, mediating, talking, asking questions, observing, acting parts,

and creating novel solutions. (p. 80)

Increasingly, in discussions of an environment for thinking, the social context is

described in terms of interaction of <u>all</u> participating in the learning experience, thus

acknowledging the importance of student-student relationships as well as teacher-

student relationships. "To foster improved thinking, then, we must create an

environment conducive to developing a sense of autonomy within a social context of

sensitivity to others. Without concern for others, we become unable to engage in

critical inquiry, which requires that we listen and respond to others' points of view.

Students need to feel free to take risks, to experiment with alternative behaviors, to

make mistakes without being chastised, and to learn from failure" (Barell, Liebmann,

& Sigel, 1988). Dillon (1984) contends that "discussion...cannot take place if students

are afraid to speak freely; [or if] teachers think student opinions are not worth

listening to" (p. 55).

Resnick and Klopfer (1989) affirm the importance of attention to social context

in their discussion of the role of social communities in shaping learners' dispositions

for thinking. They suggest that an environment in which all learners work

cooperatively provides occasions for modeling effective thinking strategies by skilled

thinkers (often the instructor, but sometimes fellow students), for scaffolding

complicated performances for each other, and for communicating that elements of critical

thought are socially valued. They argue that "through participation in communities,

students would come to expect thinking all the time, to view themselves as able, even obligated, to engage in critical analysis and problem solving" (p. 9).

Thinking and other cross-disciplinary abilities

Although critical and creative thinking may be described in a curriculum as cross-disciplinary skills separate from communication, recognizing relationships, and recognizing and evaluating choices, literature on thinking emphasizes the interconnections among them. These cross-disciplinary abilities are generally addressed in curriculum as reading, writing, and discussing. Smith (1989) criticizes curricula which disregard the interdependence of these abilities and thinking: "Thinking has been taken out of reading and writing by the fragmented and decontextualized skills-based approach to teaching them, and now it is proposed to reinsert thinking as another set of skills" (p. 359).

Hull (1989), in discussing recent writing research, tells of two "great revolutions" in thinking about writing: (a) that writing is a complex cognitive process and not just a product, and (b) that writing, as a process, is embedded in a context--that is, "it depends for its meaning and its practice upon social institutions and conditions" (p. 109). This approach to writing is also espoused by Gould (1989) in a text used in Integrated Studies during the field work period of this research. Resnick and Klopfer (1989) contend that these same two revolutions have generally reshaped our understanding of thinking and its enactment in curricula. They suggest an approach to teaching thinking by creating "cognitive apprenticeships" in which the thinking

curriculum: (a) requires a real (authentic) task, such as writing for an interested audience rather than just the teacher, (b) involves contextualized practice of tasks, not exercises on component skills that have been taken out of the context in which they are to be used (e.g., grammar drills), and (c) provides numerous opportunities to observe others (students and teachers) doing the kind of work they are expected to learn to do. Although some of the terminology used above to describe thinking in the curriculum may be unique to the authors cited, the view that these cross-disciplinary abilities are thinking processes which involve the construction of meaning and knowledge within a social communi / is widely held by contributors to research on thinking.

Integration and Thinking

Organ (1958), in discussing the philosophical bases for integration indicates a preference for the pragmatic philosophy of education. Within this view "...integration is always an unfinished task. The integrating person must also be a disintegrating person. He challenges established patterns as well as forms new patterns....Each new integration sensitizes the individual to the existence of new problems and unassimilated ideas which will in time force a new integration" (p. 42). Current literature on thinking supports the view that Organ's description of the 'integrating person' is also a description of a thinking person. Likewise, the integrative experience, as described in the first part of this review of literature, requires an educational environment which corresponds to that which is considered conducive for thinking.

Perkins (1989) views integrative learning as a thoughtful enterprise for students and teachers. He sees integrative learning organized around a theme serving the goal of teaching thinking in several ways: (a) first, the integrative theme engages students in thoughtful confrontation with subject matters as they ponder what the theme reveals about the deep and distinctive characters of different (and often seemingly unrelated) subject matters; (b) second, attention to the integrative theme fosters a level of abstraction in students' thinking that they are otherwise not likely to reach (i.e., an awareness of fundamental and universal patterns); and (c) finally, the integrative theme provides a lens which helps determine the nature of thinking strategies for inquiry, analysis, and understanding. He cautions that having an integrative approach may not help students think better unless the approach is student-centered and inquiry-oriented.

'Across-the-curriculum' Approaches

Krathwohl (1958) observed that typically teachers who are "integration-conscious" are primarily concerned with interconnections of courses as defined by their subject matter. This view emphasizes the 'product' perspective of integration, often to the exclusion or minimization of the 'process' component of integration. Recently 'across-the-curriculum' approaches, for writing in particular, have been proposed and established, to varying degrees, at all levels of education--most recently at the college level (Ackerman & Perkins, 1989; Britton, 1983; Fulwiler & Young, 1990; Gray, 1988; Herrington, 1981; Rothman, 1986). Fulwiler and Young (1990) contend that "while the term writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) is fairly recent, the

problem it addresses is basic· the relationship among language, learning, and institutions of education....For students, writing-across-the-curriculum programs promote general literacy, improved writing, and active learning" (p. 1). Regardless of the model chosen for a WAC program, Britton (1983) states that "only in this way can what is learnt in school subjects effectively become a part of an individual's total learning pattern, his world-knowledge and his self-knowledge" (p. 221). Rothman (1-986) also emphasizes the "symbiotic relationship between writing and thinking" (p. 14) and suggests that reforms stressing WAC and the process of writing have the potential to nurture this relationship. Contributors to Resnick and Klopfer (1989) emphasize thinking-across-the-curriculum in their shared belief that "all learning involves thinking [and] thinking ability can be nurtured and cultivated in everyone..." (p. 2). Ruggiero (1988), in reference to thinking-across-the-curriculum suggests that the focus be on changing teaching methods rather than adding content, a suggestion supported by research on creating an environment for thinking described earlier.

Implications in

Interdisciplinary/Transdisciplinary Curriculum

Several questions arise when research on thinking is considered in the context of an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary curricula, when discipline lines intentionally become blurred. Kuhn (1986) states that "thinking skills are neither completely wedded to specific content or contexts of use, nor are they completely generic" (p. 498). This suggests that there is a continuum from which to choose in determining

how thinking becomes part of the curriculum. Although it may not be the intent of educators who tend to support the context/content-bound view of thinking to view particular thinking skills as appropriate only for particular subject matter or disciplines, most literature on thinking addresses context and content within the parameters of specific disciplines. Dressel's (1958a) definition of integrative curriculum would not preclude considerations, especially critiques, of traditional approaches to disciplines-- how the traditional paradigm is shaped by a particular view of thinking and at the same time shapes the thinking of experts in that field. His definition would insist, however, that students be made aware that thinking processes attributed to disciplines are the result of integrations of others and may not be as meaningful (at a particular time) in their integrative experiences.

Curricula described as interdisciplinary or integrated generally have a focus--a theme, issue, or problem--around which a potentially integrative experience emerges. Clark and Wawrytko (1990) state that "most of what passes for liberal studies and general education is so out of touch with today's world that it is simply beside-the-point. The curriculum bears little connection to contemporary reality, and even when it does, it is in such a fragmented form that little useful understanding is possible" (p. 2). Both Paul (1984), in discussing thinking in the curriculum, and Reckmeyer (1990), in calling for curricular reforms in education, raise the issue of the "messiness" of contemporary problems and the need to seek different kinds of approaches for studying and potentially resolving them. Paul (1984) says "the most vexing and significant real life problems are logically messy. They span multiple categories and

disciplines. They are typically not <u>in</u> any one of them" (p. 11). Reckmeyer (1990) says "the dilemma is that we know a great deal more about problem solving than we do about mess management. Consequently, people are prone to treat every issue with the same kinds of conventional approaches that have worked well in the past, even though they may be poorly suited for the situation at hand..." (p. 56).

In the context of the integrative experience, traditional views of thinking may need to be reconsidered to cope with "ideas thrown into fresh combination" (Whitehead, 1929, p. 1). In doing this, Gershman (1988) cautions against "replacing the old set of abstractions, brought to the learning situation by the student, with a new set of abstractions chosen on the basis of a pattern apparent only to the person in charge, i.e., the teacher. We must provide for the activity of the student's mind such that he or she freely perceives a new abstract pattern, in art or literature or mathematics. We must provide opportunity for the student to relate to that stream of consciousness that is life" (p. 223).

Cooperative Learning in Integrative Learning

Cooperative learning is addressed in very general and more implicit than explicit terms both in written descriptions of the Integrated Studies Program prepared by the IS faculty (Lawrence & Sanborn, 1986; IS Program Pamplet, 1989; IS Student Handbook, 1989) and in faculty discussions among themselves and with students. Cooperative learning, as an educational concept, may be broadly defined as "the instructional use

of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991, p. 1:14). Literature on cooperative learning was initially reviewed prior to the fieldwork portion of this research based on an apparent intent in IS to organize instruction as defined above by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith and was reviewed after the fieldwork to put field observations in perspective with relation to current use of cooperative learning at the college level. Also, as noted in earlier parts of this literature review, numerous references are made to educational environments conducive to integration and thinking in the learning process, most of which could be broadly construed as 'cooperative.'

Theoretical Underpinnings of Cooperative Learning

Cooperation in the learning process is addressed primarily from three theoretical perspectives: (a) social interdependence theory drawn from the Gestalt School of psychology, (b) cognitive developmental theories based largely on the work of Paiget and Vygotsky, and (c) behavioral learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1993). Differences in these perspectives, and resultant disagreements about the nature of implementation of cooperative learning in educational settings, are due to differences in basic assumptions of each perspective. Social interdependence theory "assumes that the way social interdependence is structured determines how individuals interact which, in turn, determines outcomes....Cooperative efforts are based on intrinsic motivation generated by interpersonal factors in working together and joint aspirations to achieve a significant goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1993, p. 7) Cognitive development theories

assume that "knowledge is social, constructed from cooperative efforts to learn, understand, and solve problems" (Johnson & Johnson, 1993, p. 7) The emphasis of this perspective is on the learning process within an individual as a result of social interaction. The behaviorist perspective assumes "cooperative efforts are powered by extrinsic motivation to achieve group rewards" (Johnson & Johnson, 1993, p. 7).

The Value of Cooperative Learning in Education

Cooperative learning, as one of the most thoroughly researched of all instructional methods, is valued in education for its simultaneous effects on many different instructional outcomes (Brandt, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1989 & 1993; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; Joyce & Weil, 1972; Sharan & Sharan, 1976; Slavin, 1990a). Its effectiveness, as confirmed by both theoretical and demonstration research, applies broadly--for every age level and diversity of participants; across various subject areas, curricula, and tasks; and utilizing different settings and ways of structuring cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1993). Slavin (1990b) states that the "areas of agreement among cooperative learning researchers far outweighs areas of disagreement" (p. 52). Differences among the proponents of cooperative learning are most obvious in the wide variety of classroom strategies proposed and practiced.

Regardless of theoretical orientation and resultant strategies, cooperative learning has been found to have positive effects in three broad areas related to student learning experiences: achievement, interpersonal relationships, and psychological health (Johnson & Johnson, 1989: Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; Slavin, 1990b).

Descriptions of specific effects within these broad areas are readily found in the vast research base on cooperative learning. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) discuss further benefits due to the reciprocal relationships among achievement, positive interpersonal relationships, and psychological health: (a) "Joint efforts to achieve mutual goals create caring and committed relationships; caring and committed relationships among group members increase their effort to achieve" (p.2:27); (b) "Joint efforts to achieve mutual goals promote psychological health and social competence; the more healthy psychologically group members are, the more able they are to contribute to the joint effort" (p. 2:28); and (c) "The more caring and committed the relationships among group members, the greater their psychological health and social competencies tend to be; the healthier members are psychologically, the more able they are to build and maintain caring and committed relationships" (p. 2:28).

Elements of Cooperative Learning

Research on cooperative learning most often seeks to compare characteristics of students' learning experiences ⟨   ⟩ ning outcomes according to the type of interdependence among students John⟨⟩, Johnson, and Smith (1991) state that "interdependence may be positive (cooperation), negative (competition), or none (individualistic efforts)" (p. 1:27). With cooperation as the preferred form of student interdependence, Johnson and Johnson (1989) describe five elements necessary for the maximum effectiveness of cooperative learning: (a) positive interdependence (may be established through mutual goals, joint rewards, divided resources, and complementary

roles), (b) face-to-face promotive interaction (supporting and assisting each others'

efforts to learn), (c) individual accountability (each learner doing a fair share because

the group's success depends on individual learning of all group members), (d)

appropriate use of social skills (assuring that group functions well), and (e) group

processing (determining how effectively members are coordinating and integrating

their efforts). Although researchers and practitioners generally agree on these elements,

various strategies for implementation of cooperative learning differ in emphasis on

individual elements and the specifics of how each may be achieved.

Cooperative Learning at the College Level

Personal relationships (student-student, student-faculty, and faculty-faculty) in the

college learning experience (whether called cooperation, collaboration, or collegiality)

have been addressed in research (Astin, 1985 & 1992; Boyer, 1987; Bruffee, 1987;

Chickering, 1981; Clark & Wawrytko, 1990; Erickson & Strommer, 1991; Gaff, 1983;

Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; Lewis, 1984; Manley & Ware, 1990; McKeachie,

Pintrich, Lin, & Smith, 1986). Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seven principles for

good practice in undergraduate education clearly emphasize the need for positive

social interaction among all participants. Astin (1985 & 1992), in research on

undergraduate education which has spanned a decade, has found that the factor most

closely related to positive student learning outcomes was the amount of interaction that

students had with peers (in curricular as well as extracurricular experiences) and the

second greatest positive influence on academic achievement and other positive

outcomes was student interaction with faculty. Warshaw (1993), in her summary of an address by Astin on his findings which are germane to cooperative learning, states that Astin views cooperative learning as a means of capitalizing on the power of the peer group as well as providing quality faculty-student interaction when faculty serve as enablers of learning.

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) note that "the importance of social support has been ignored within education over the past 30 years. A general principle to keep in mind is that the pressure to achieve should always be matched with an equal level of social support" (pp. 2:18-19). Their suggestion is for college faculty to consider a new paradigm of teaching and learning in which faculty "remember that the challenge in college teaching is not covering the material for the students, it's uncovering the material with students" (p. 4:3) in a joint construction of knowledge . Specifically, they recommend that faculty adopt various options of cooperative learning in their classrooms with the caution that "putting students into groups is not the same as structuring cooperation among students" (p. 1:18); the cooperative experiences must be structured to include the five elements for effective cooperative learning described earlier in this review of literature.

Cooperative Learning and Learning Communities

Researchers and practitioners who acknowledge the need for social support for both students and faculty in college teaching and learning, often discuss the new paradigm in terms of 'learning communities' rather than the specifics of cooperative

learning strategies which are generally the focus of literature for pre-college education (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, & Swidler, 1985; Boyer, 1990; Bruffee, 1987; Clark & Wawrytko, 1990; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Greene, 1978; Klein, 1990; Lawrence and Sanborn, 1986; Marshall, 1992; Oliver & Gershman, 1989). Johnson, Johnson, & Smith (1991) acknowledge the relationship between cooperative learning as a curricular and instructional structure and the concept of a learning community.

[Education] is a personal transaction among students and between faculty and students as they work together. All education is a social process that cannot occur except through interpersonal interaction (real or implied). Learning is a personal but social process that results when individuals cooperate to construct shared understandings and knowledge. Faculty must be able to build positive relationships with students and to create the conditions within which students build caring and committed relationships with each other. The college then becomes a learning community of committed scholars in the truest sense. (p. 1:10)

Lawrence and Sanborn (1986), without specifically defining the nature of the learning community which they anticipate emerging in IS, state that "this program will offer students an opportunity to study an entire semester in a learning community of five faculty and one hundred students" (cover page), will "give both students and participating faculty members a greater stake in the educational enterprise" (p. 4), and will address the problem of students graduating "without knowing a single faculty member well and without any sense of the excitement and depth of the traditions that

faculty members represent" (p. 6). Although cooperative learning literature generally pays more attention to student-student collaboration, with the faculty role as "guide on the side" (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991), Oliver and Gershman (1989) suggest that teachers in a learning community "could learn to allow activity in the presence of knowledge, to let students discover meanings and form novel viewpoints, to develop a sense of shared pursuit of knowledge (which involves risking failure in front of students). Above all we could learn from artists that learning, like the aesthetic experience, is something teachers can facilitate but not force" (p. 167). While cooperative learning literature appears to place the faculty outside of the cooperative learning structures as curriculum designers and instructional facilitators, learning community advocates seem to envision a more active role for faculty within the cooperative experience--as learners.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the rationale for the methodology and the procedures used to study college students' perceptions of their learning in a college level integrated studies program. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a discussion of the rationale behind the choice of qualitative research methods. The second outlines the specific procedures followed in conducting this study.

Rationale for Choice of Methodology

Educational research has historically been dominated by scientific methodology linked with measurement and experimental design. This approach to understanding education as a process has failed to provide meaningful insights and, as a result, has failed to significantly influence educational practice (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Chilcott, 1987; Eisner, 1979; Graubard, 1981; Walker, 1992). In response to this, many educational researchers and practitioners have abandoned the scientific approach and have sought more meaningful alternatives. In their review of research on organization of the curriculum, Goodlad and Su (1992) found that "the effort to identify

37

commonplaces of curriculum and inquire into different ways of addressing them has not extended far beyond the K-12 system" (p. 331).

In 1979 Eisner wrote The Educational Imagination in which he called for a reconsideration of both the concept of curriculum and the processes utilized in inquiries into and prescriptions for curriculum. He envisioned the role of curriculum researcher/evaluator as 'educational critic' whose task "is not to translate what cannot be translated but rather to create a rendering of a situation, event, or object that will provide pointers to those aspects of the situation, event, or object that are in some way significant" (p. 197). Like other qualitative researchers, Eisner called for attention to context, participants' experience and meaning, illumination rather than validity, heightened awareness of the particular, and experience and judgment of the investigator as focal points to shape research design and its interpretation and not merely as 'other considerations' in the scientific/ quantitative approach's selection, measurement, and analysis of variables.

Each of these concerns addresses what Erickson (1986) calls "the central substantive concerns" of interpretive research: (a) the nature of classrooms as socially and culturally organized environments for learning, (b) the nature of teaching as one, but only one [italics], aspect of the reflexive learning environment, and (c) the nature (and content) of the meaning-perspectives of teacher and learner as intrinsic to the educational process (p. 120). Whether this form of inquiry is called interpretive, ethnographic, qualitative, or naturalistic (among numerous other names), Erickson (1986) emphasizes that the key feature of family resemblance among the various

approaches he calls 'interpretive' is the "central research interest in human meaning in social life and its elucidation and exposition by the researcher" (p. 119). Thus, the long tradition of ignoring the social context of education, particularly in curriculum studies, is being rectified by the growing tendency in education to turn to qualitative research methodology (Jackson, 1992).

Several characteristics of qualitative research show it to be the appropriate methodology for this study. For example, qualitative research, with its concern for context, has the natural setting as the direct source of data; it is descriptive, based upon the assumption that everything in the setting has the potential of being a clue which might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied; it is concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products; its researchers tend to analyze their data inductively; and it has "meaning' from participant perspectives as an essential concern (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

My choice to do a case study within the framework of ethnography is supported by Yin's (1984) description of case study as a research strategy which matches the general goals of qualitative research. "The distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 14). Yin (1984) states that "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context"

(p. 13). Likewise, Erickson (1992), in his discussion of research on students' experience of the curriculum, highlights the merits of ethnographic case studies:

> Personal experience, by its very nature, is evanescent and transitory. Capturing glimpses of it on the wing, as it were, requires rich and detailed inquiry and reporting.... Case study particularizes. It can report detailed information on the palpable texture of experience in a specific setting. (p. 479)

Fieldwork in an ethnographic case study, which employs participant-observation, interviewing, and reviewing various documents and artifacts as its primary investigative strategies, informs and is informed by the underlying concept of grounded theory which is basic to ethnographic research in general.

> The human reality is not simply 'out there' awaiting scientific study. Instead it is socially and symbolically constructed, always emerging and relative to other factors of social life. Such a philosophy is reflected in each step of grounded theory research, but especially in its data collection strategies, participant observation and interviewing. In both strategies, researchers go to the 'participants' (called 'subjects' in experimental research) in an attempt at understanding their perspective within a given situation. (Hutchinson, 1988, p.125)

Qualitative research is frequently challenged as being "soft" by those who prefer the study of education using experimentation and measurement, particularly in reference to questions of validity, reliability, and generalizability. It is common for qualitative researchers to respond to requests to discuss the concepts of validity,

reliability, and generalizability, so central to quantitative research methodology, by asking "Why the fuss?" (Becker, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Wolcott, 1990). For example, Wolcott (1990), in his attempt at 'answering' to validity in qualitative research states that "the more important issue before us is to examine whether validity is the right question" (p. 135). Certainly the attention these concepts receive in qualitative research literature, either in rejecting them or redefining them, reflects researchers' concerns about demonstrating the quality of their research both as process and product. Lincoln and Guba (1988) affirm this by stating that "it is inappropriate to apply criteria devised for the conventional paradigm to the alternative paradigm, or vice versa. But it is [italics] reasonable to demand that a set of appropriate criteria be evolved for each paradigm and that its practitioners be assiduous in their efforts to meet them" (p. 110).

Lincoln and Guba (1988), for example, suggest a 'criterion of coherence' which demands that as a study evolves there is "the development of a construction that is internally consistent with the several realities that are found to exist in the setting" (p. 108) as judged by the inquirer and the respondent jointly. This is similar to Eisner's (1988) criterion for validation based on 'structural collaboration' (a process that seeks to validate or support one's conclusions about a set of phenomena by demonstrating how a variety of facts or conditions within the phenomena support the conclusions drawn) plus 'referential adequacy' (asks whether the referents' claims to describe, interpret, and evaluate can be found in the phenomena to which it attends). Schatzman and Strauss (1973) would ask: "Have the major propositions been checked against the

experiences and understandings of the hosts? Do these people [the research audience] recognize the phenomenon? Does the researcher's analysis actually help the audience explain--albeit in a new way--their own experiences?" (p. 135). Eisner and Peshkin (1990) state that " validity, in a basic sense, pertains to the congruence of the researcher's claims to the reality his or her claims seek to represent" (p. 97).

In addressing reliability, Bodgdan and Biklen (1982) remind us that the concept in quantitative research means achieving consistency in results of observations made by different researchers or the same researcher over time--an expectation not shared by qualitative researchers. "Qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations" (p.44). Demonstrating the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data collected replaces replicability in the qualitative researcher's concern for reliability.

Generalizability, based upon well-defined procedures for random sampling and statistical determination of significance, is a fundamental goal of the scientific approach. This concept, too, has been reconsidered and redefined within qualitative research. Schofield (1990) believes that "a consensus appears to be emerging that for qualitative researchers generalizability is best thought of as a matter of the 'fit' between the situation studied and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study" (p. 226). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1984) "[qualitative researchers] concern themselves not with the question of whether

their findings are generalizable [in the conventional sense], but rather with the question of to which other settings and subjects they are generalizable" (p.41).

If no other purpose is served, discussions of validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research literature remind researchers of the importance of careful and thorough use of appropriate research methods in working toward the broader goals of qualitative research.

What we attend to in practice is relevant to our purposes: we select the aspects we deem important; we coordinate and manipulate for the furtherance of our aims. Our aims in naturalistic research are to discover and apprehend the experience of others. We look for the way things appeared to them, the thoughts they entertained, the plans they projected, the beliefs they held, the customs and traditions they followed, the doubts they had, the hopes they held, the fears they avoided, and the needs they felt. We also look for the ways in which all this grew out of, and interacted with, their life conditions, the environment in which they moved, the demands it imposed, and the possibilities it afforded.

In short, naturalistic research deals not with abstract properties applying generally to people's lives at any time or at any place (or even at many times or at many places), but with knowledge of actual, concrete lives really lived.
(Landry, Medal, & Newhouse, 1991, p.42)

Background and Procedures for This Study

This study was designed to focus on the meaning of participation in, and thus, an experiencing of an integrated curriculum from the perspective of college students. The choice to study the student experience within the context of the Integrated Studies Program (IS) was informed by Yin's (1984) description of a case study being an empirical inquiry when: (a) it investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and (c) multiple sources of evidence are used. Prior to commencing this study, several visits to IS curriculum activities, a meeting with the IS faculty for the fall semester, and discussions with students who had previously participated in the IS Program confirmed that Integrated Studies would likely meet the requirements for this case study. Permission from the IS faculty to conduct the research was obtained during an IS faculty planning session during which the proposed research was described and then discussed.

When IS began in the fall semester, questions about the general structure of the program, the nature of the student experience in IS, and the potential for student participation in the study were addressed: How was curriculum of program structured? was it 'integrated'/ 'integrative'?; Did students seem to be having a different learning experience than what would be expected for a 'typical' first-year student at UND?; Would students likely be willing to participate in the study as interviewees? Also

during the fall semester, more specific research foci began to emerge and methods were refined to meet the needs of the study.

Consistent with the study's emphasis on student meaning, participant observation and interviewing (both formal and informal) were chosen as primary investigative strategies. Analysis of documents produced within the program, including student writings (research reports, compositions, self-evaluations, and exam papers)and a collection of faculty-prepared materials (brochures and handbooks describing the IS Program, instructional materials, and written evaluations of student work) served to satisfy the criterion of data triangulation as well as to help define context. Data collection was frequently supported with audiotaping, particularly during formal interviews.

Daily participant observation took place over two semesters, the duration of the usual 'cycle' of students in the program [80 of the 100 students starting in the fall semester continued in the program for the spring semester]. By the end of the study, approximately 450 hours of participant-observation had taken place. Because there were multiple sections of curriculum activities (book seminars, writing groups, research groups) meeting simultaneously, several sessions of each of the sections were attended during the first semester and then limited in the second semester to participant-observation only in those groups in which student interviewees (referents) were participants. Data was collected in the form of field notes and session handouts for students from faculty. Although many observations were made in the IS Program

lounge of informal activities which were not part of the planned curriculum, most observations focused on the planned curriculum activities.

The intent to have formal interviews of five to eight students was part of the research design as described in the research proposal. As it turned out, each of seven students participated in three interviews (each lasting from one to two hours) and one student participated in a single two hour interview, unable to continue due to illness. Numerous informal interviews with these students also took place over the course of the year. Interviewees were chosen on the basis of: (a) their active participation in the program; (b) their ability to articulate their learning and experiences within the program; (c) their willingness to participate in the interviews and become the focus of particular observations; and (d) their continued enrollment in the program during the second semester.

Written documents, such as samples of student writing from weekly sessions as well as exams were solicited from students through several researcher-written "invitations to participate in the study" distributed in the program's student mailboxes. Considerable time was spent informally talking to as many students as possible, both as a 'participant' in the program and as the 'observer' "who seemed to be everywhere" as one student put it. Having established trust and rapport with the students, I was able to secure agreement with more than a third of the first semester's students (in a written contract) to allow ready access to their written materials and photoduplication of them. It is from this group of thirty that interviewees were solicited with both a written invitation and several informal conversations. Written contracts which

specifically discussed participation as interviewees were obtained from the eight students selected for formal interviewing.

Faculty and program staff were involved in the research process both as participants in events being observed which included students and as participants in sessions which generally included only faculty and program staff (such as the faculty's planning retreat in preparation for the upcoming semester, weekly planning sessions, and the faculty book seminar). Faculty were not formally interviewed. IS program documents such as the IS gr proposal and minutes of faculty planning sessions and almost daily informal conversations with faculty and staff helped define the program context and explicit curriculum.

CHAPTER 4

AN INTEGRATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in describing an integrative learning experience and the curriculum which supports it is the necessity of dealing with various aspects of each as if they could readily be separated. Analyzing integration may be an oxymoron, not only of words but of process. Just as the research methodology for this dissertation required a holistic approach, so must the report of its findings maintain the integrity of the Integrated Studies Program. To best understand IS from the student perspective, one would need to participate in it--as a student. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide that experience directly for each reader; but like an artist's work, my goal is to provide a representation of the experience which maintains a spirit of what has been studied and recorded with the possibility of its being revisited and seen in a new light with each visit.

Students first come to the Integrated Studies Program with a vague notion of a curricular structure quite different from that of their earlier educational experiences. Thus, this chapter will start with the Integrated Studies curriculum as an educational design, with particular emphasis on the commonplaces of curriculum--students, teachers, subject matter, and milieu as related to the organizing elements and organizing centers of IS. Then, with readers familiar with the curricular design of IS,

the second part of the chapter will 'describe' the integrative experience of one

imaginary student over a period of several weeks in "Betti's Story"--a composite of

the experiences of many students in the Program drawn from observational field notes,

informal conversations, and formal interviews with students. The third section shall lift

the experience out of the imaginary story and into the world of eight students as they

describe the Program and their experience in it as shared in their interviews. With

"Betti's Story" providing a sense of the experience, the student interviews provide the

'meaning' of this experience for them.

The Curriculum Design of the Integrated Studies Program

This description of the curricular design of Integrated Studies is drawn from

three major sources: written documents prepared by the IS faculty (grant proposals,

program brochures and handbooks for students, writings in campus publications),

formal and informal discussions with faculty and students (faculty planning sessions

and weekly staff meetings, interviews of students, faculty presentations in course

sessions), and the observational field notes of this research. The intent of this section

is to briefly describe what Eisner (1979) would call the "explicit curriculum"--that

which is made public, externally visible. Descriptions of the explicit curriculum of IS,

in the sources mentioned above, are consistently congruent. Most quoted description

below is from the Student Information Handbook for Integrated Studies, Spring 1990

(hereafter cited as the IS Handbook) due to its being the one source given to all program participants.

Participants: Students and Faculty

Students. Integrated Studies is designed for participation by 100 full-time students and six full-time faculty in the fall semester and about eighty full-time students and five full-time faculty in the spring semester. Students may enroll in the program for one to three semesters. Potential students usually become aware of IS through high school and college advisors, from IS pamphlets mailed to students at their request or to those who indicate "undecided" or particular majors (such as those in teacher preparation whose faculty view participation in IS as beneficial for their potential majors), or from previous program participants. The program accepts students on a first-come-first-served basis; if students are accepted into the University, they may enroll in IS provided there are openings. Integrated Studies advisors make it clear to potential students that this is not an honors nor a remedial program. It is anticipated that most students enrolling in IS will be first-year university students (freshmen).

During the year of fieldwork for this research, 1989-90, 100 students were enrolled in IS for the fall semester, with several other students on the waiting list; eighty students (including several new to the program) were enrolled for the spring semester. Although all first-year students at the University of North Dakota are considered members of University College (rather than university departments),

students in this program expressed interest in majors as diverse as journalism, education, aviation, and nursing.

Faculty. The program is staffed by three permanent faculty members--two program co-directors and a program coordinator--and two or three other faculty released from their respective academic departments for several planning sessions during the semester prior to their work in IS and then for the entire semester during which they teach in IS. Three faculty members represent the humanities disciplines and the remaining two or three usually represent disciplines in the natural and social sciences. Interested faculty are generally selected for the two or three 'rotating' positions according to the following criteria: "demonstrated long-term interest in interdisciplinary activity, senior faculty status, long-standing commitment to teaching, conviction as to the mutual enrichment of humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to be effected through integrated study, and willingness to work closely with other faculty members" (Lawrence & Sanborn, 1986, p. 15). All faculty are expected to work with the entire program content.

During the fall semester of the 1989-90 school year, when this study was conducted, faculty members from Geology, Nursing, and English departments joined the permanent IS faculty. In the spring semester, the three rotating faculty were replaced by one faculty member each from Anthropology and English. Two of these five rotating faculty members had participated as IS faculty in previous semesters.

Organizing Elements

"An organizing element is what the curriculum maker or teacher has in mind in selecting the next topic or unit of work: a concept such as energy, a skill such as legible handwriting, or a value such as respect for one another" (Goodlad & Su, 1992, p. 331). Organizing centers are the activities and materials selected by the faculty to carry out the organizing element(s); "organizing centers have been described as 'curriculum carriages for our students to ride in'--the curricles of the curriculum. The organizing element is the path they follow..." (Goodlad & Su, 1992. p. 331).

Focusing on a theme. All Program content for each semester is "structured around a theme which is an idea of historical and current significance. Teaching and learning in this context will draw on disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences" (Lawrence & Sanborn, 1986, p. 4). Lawrence and Sanborn (1986) envision a program that "will work from the view that phenomena are interdependent and that there are many perspectives from which a theme or issue can be investigated.... From the vantage point of Integrated Studies, a student can discover that a whole range of intellectual activities--reading, thinking, writing, laboratory work, and calculation--can cohere around an issue which is identified through its representations in literature, history, the arts, religion, and philosophy" (p.7). The faculty-determined theme for Fall 1989 was "Vital Signs: Health and Wealth;" for Spring 1990 the theme was "Home."

Developing skills. "It is the intent of Integrated Studies to teach a set of basic abilities that are necessary not only in a university career but also in the greater

economic, political, social, and personal worlds that students enter when they graduate. The program defines these abilities as: the ability to learn, the ability to communicate, [and] the ability to learn and communicate in cooperative settings" (IS Handbook, 1990, p. 1). For example, students are told that:

> You need to connect the idea, for instance, that if it is true that 'abilities are best learned by exercising them,' then it is important for you to exercise learning abilities. Since reading is a 'sub-ability' of the ability to learn, you need to resolve to read carefully and regularly. If it is true that the ability to learn is enhanced by communicating about your learning, then you must resolve to take an active part in discussion and in study groups as they form in order to develop your ability to communicate. (IS Handbook, Spring 1990, p. 1)

Creating and participating in a learning community. As noted previously in Chapter 2, characteristics of the "learning community" anticipated in IS, while not explicitly defined, are implied in descriptions of the small group activities which follow. IS pamphlets promise "an atmosphere which places value on developing close ties with faculty and fellow students" (Fall 1988) and which "provides you with teachers and fellow students who know who you are" (Fall 1989). By choosing to emphasize cooperative learning experiences over competitive and individualistic learning experiences, IS appears to embrace the qualities of cooperative learning described earlier in Chapter 2 and to agree with Sapon-Shevin and Schniedewind (1993) that "cooperative learning can be the organizing value of instruction as well as the primary form of pedagogy" (p. 63).

Organizing Centers

Book Seminar. Each week a book is assigned to be read by all participants in the program [see Appendix A for a typical semester book list and a schedule of organizing centers]. Five or six Book Seminar groups, each with 15 to 17 students and one IS faculty member meet together for an entire semester. For 2 1/2 hours once a week they discuss the assigned book with particular emphasis on its relationship to the semester's theme. "The seminar is the activity that allows you to learn about the book in a serious discussion with other students....Learning, for instance, involves reading the texts carefully, thinking about their meanings and, in particular, their meanings for you, and participating in the discussion" (IS Handbook, 1990, p. 3).

Cooperative Learning Unit (CLU) Groups. CLU is the name given to a faculty-prepared set of research questions focusing on a particular aspect of the semester theme for IS as well as to the small groups which do the research and share their responses to the questions with each other. Like Book Seminar groups, each CLU group has 15-17 students and one IS faculty member who work together for an entire semester.. Generally each group member (including faculty) researches two of the questions and presents oral and written findings to their CLU group during the 2 1/2 hour weekly session. There are no 'textbooks,' as such, for CLUs; rather students and faculty create their own 'texts' by gathering the photocopies of the CLU writings prepared by their group members and taking notes on the oral reports and subsequent discussions of CLU topics.

Writing Groups. Integrated Studies also organizes its Writing Groups in small groups of 15-17 students who work cooperatively together and with an IS faculty throughout a semester. According to the IS Handbook (Spring 1990), "writing assignments are made on an individual basis and geared to your particular interests, problems, and strengths. Often you will write about things that your work in other areas brings up....Remember that you will be writing in other areas of the Program-- program meetings and CLU's [sic]--as well" (p. 3). Most Writing Group members meet weekly as smaller groups of four or five students during the scheduled 1 1/2 hour session to critique one another's assigned writing projects and then rejoin their whole Writing Group to generate topic ideas for future writing assignments. A faculty member serves as a resource person for the sessions and may meet individually with students for tutoring..

An attempt is made to create different combinations of students and faculty for each small group (CLU, Writing, and Book Seminar) for a semester. Most students would experience a small group setting with either two or three different faculty. Usually the Program Coordinator assigns students and faculty to the small groups. Student and faculty members remain in their respective small groups for an entire semester. Students generally do not have the same faculty member in more than one of their small groups during a semester. Faculty encourage students to establish their own informal cooperative learning groups for purposes of research, review, and discussion.

During the fall semester (1989), students were given the opportunity to temporarily meet with each faculty member and a group of 15-17 students in the small group settings as an orientation to the activities of IS. Students then chose three faculty members with whom they would like to work in the small groups for the semester. For the spring semester, students chose a faculty member with whom they would work for writing and were assigned to CLU and Book Seminar groups by the Program Coordinator.

Program meetings. All students, faculty, and IS staff are expected to attend the 1 1/2 hour Program Meetings which are scheduled for two mornings each week. "These meetings, the only times that we meet as entire group, are occasions for announcements, lectures, workshops, question and answer sessions, and student initiated [sic] projects" (IS Handbook, Spring 1990, p. 2).

Field trip and campus events. Early in the 1989 fall semester, IS participants took a three-day field trip to western North Dakota which involved overnight camping at the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and stops at Newtown (Fort Berthold Indian Reservation), Knife River flint quarries, Knife River Indian Village, and Garrison Dam. Although participants are informed of numerous UND campus events through the IS Newsletters, several specific events were included as part of the curriculum. IS participants visited the North Dakota Museum of Art as a group and individually attended sessions of the Writers' Conference and the Indian Time Out and Wacipi on the UND campus.

"As with everything in Integrated Studies, there is a learning objective for this week. You should exercise your ability to learn and to communicate by learning independently from these activities and by communicating what you have learned both in writing and in spoken form to faculty and other students in the program. Most likely some specific assignments involving writing and reporting back will be made" (IS Student Handbook, 1990, p. 4).

Geology Lab. Geology Laboratory sessions meet only in the semester in which geology is one of the contributing disciplines. Several lab sessions meet concurrently during the time scheduled. The faculty member representing Geology on the IS faculty plus a Geology graduate teaching assistant organize the lab activities and serve as resource persons. IS faculty who have not previously studied geology participate in the labs as learners. An optional geology help session is provided weekly for students requesting additional assistance in lab and other geology-related IS activities.

Each week a common set of geology questions (prepared by the Geology faculty member) is given to each student. The question sets draw upon information in the geology textbook used in IS for the purpose of preparing students for upcoming lab sessions, an occasional CLU activity, and the field trip. Several short-answer lab exams are given separate from the IS essay exams which draw from all program content as it interrelates.

Milieu

The third floor of Babcock Hall is the primary meeting place for both formal and informal gatherings in Integrated Studies. The area has faculty and staff offices, three

classrooms which are used exclusively by IS, an informal lounge area for use (e.g., informal meetings, eating lunch, resting, studying) by all participants and visitors from prior semesters, and a "mailbox" area with an open-faced compartment for each participant. Besides assignments and communications being shared during activity sessions, an IS Program Newsletter (prepared by the Coordinator) is distributed through the IS mailboxes. At the top of the climb of three flights of stairs is a bulletin board on which Program and University notices are posted along with items faculty and students wish to share with others (e.g., photographs from the field trip, newspaper clippings, short writings or drawings by participants, etc.)

IS classrooms, two of which have barely enough room to seat 15-20 participants, have seating around tables which are placed together in a large 'circle' or rectangle so that participants can readily interact with one another. Because there are five or six small groups meeting for the same time period, two or three groups meet in classrooms in other campus buildings.

Subject Matter/ Content

As discussed earlier, the subject matter of Integrated Studies is drawn primarily from the disciplines of faculty members for a particular semester. Although the IS curriculum is not organized by University courses, students enrolled in IS for the 1989-90 school year received credit (as shown on their University transcripts) for the following courses: (a) Fall semester, 1989: Composition I, Introduction to Geology and Geology Lab, Western Civilization Since 1500, Introduction to Humanities, and

Seminar in Nursing; for a total of 17 credits, and (b) Spring semester, 1990: Composition II, Philosophy and Life, Introduction to Humanities (focus on Greek culture), and Introduction to Cultural Anthropology; for a total of 13 credits.

In attempting to provide instructional materials which support the semester's theme, faculty members select CLU research topics and design CLU materials, choose 'texts' (books, films, speakers, campus activities), select topics for Program Meetings, and discuss possible teaching strategies for use in the various activity sessions. All participants are expected to read the same book for Book Seminar during a particular week as well as research and discuss the same CLU topic. At times the various Writing Groups will work on the same topic or activity (such as the Renaissance autobiographies discussed later) during a specified time frame. The tentative time schedules established by the faculty for weekly small group activities, readings, and study topics are intended to provide a general, overall structure for "shared/common experience" for all participants. However, considerable flexibility in faculty and student use of the common instructional materials is encouraged in the spirit of providing opportunities for integrative experiences unique to each participant and also for encouraging and enabling the cooperative integrative efforts of the various sections of IS small groups.

Betti's Story

The story which follows was created by the researcher with the intent to present one slice of learning as it might be experienced by a student in the Integrated Studies Program. The narrative is told in the first person by an imaginary student named Betti. Although one particular IS student came to mind in the writing of this story, the words and actions of Betti are a composite drawn from field observations, informal discussions, and formal interviews of IS students. A reading of the story and response to it by one of the interviewees of this study confirmed its representation of a student's experience over several weeks. While reading Betti's story, keep these words of Whitehead (1929) in mind:

> What education has to impart is an intimate sense for the power of ideas, for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas, together with a particular body of knowledge which has particular reference to the life of the being possessing it.
>
> (p. 12)

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I'm Betti, a student in the Integrated Studies Program at the University of North Dakota. I have been asked to tell you about The Death of Ivan Ilyich, a book I read a few weeks ago in Integrated Studies. Actually everyone in the program read it, 100 students, six faculty, the IS secretary), and the visiting researcher who asked me to do this writing. In Integrated Studies we never just read a book;... but I'm getting ahead of myself.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22: I took the weekly IS newsletter from my IS mailbox in Babcock Hall. As I glanced through the schedule for the next week, I noticed that the book assigned for the upcoming Book Seminar was Tolstoy's The Death of Ivan Ilyich. "How dull," I thought. "I read this book last year in high school." Memories of that earlier encounter with Ivan Ilyich flooded my mind:

--the search for Cliff Notes at a local bookstore the night before the class

discussion

--the class 'discussion,' a verbal fill-in-the-blank session

lead by my Senior Lit. teacher

--my teachers's thorough interpretation of the book's characters based upon her

notes from a summer workshop on Russian Literature

--the 'wicked' final test on the book; multiple guess

But as quickly as these memories were replayed in my mind, I felt that this time my reading of Ivan Ilyich would be different. Discussions in IS Book Seminars are not at all like those in high school. Students actually do most of the talking, and Ted, the faculty member in my Book Seminar group, asks an occasional question to keep our discussion moving. Everyone in the group is expected to come prepared to participate. Most people seem happy to share their ideas about the books. I like to hear what other people have to say about the books we read. We don't usually all agree about what a book 'means', but that makes it more interesting. I thought that I might actually learn something from Ivan Ilyich this time!

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2: I arrived at Book Seminar with my paperback copy looking like I had owned it for years. Before class, I used blue highlight to mark the parts of the book that I wanted to talk about in relation to the semester's theme and wrote a few notes in the margins in pencil. I folded page corners to help me find the parts I didn't understand. Inside the front cover I wrote the page number of the paragraph I intended to read at the beginning of the seminar when we take turns reading a sentence or a paragraph that we found to be especially interesting. (I'm amazed at the lengthy discussions we sometimes have about these passages.) My high school literature teacher would have been very upset if I had marked my book like this for her class.

Several students were already seated around the large circular table in our seminar room in Babcock Hall when I arrived. I took my usual seat, across the table from Ted's favorite chair (so I could watch Ted's body language in response to my comments about the book). Then I remembered that Ted was out of town and that three students had offered to lead the discussion of <u>Ivan Ilyich</u>. It felt strange to have someone other than Ted say "How should we start this discussion?"

Our discussion was not as lively as usual. The student leaders tried hard to 'draw out' interesting questions and themes as we took turns reading our favorite passages. We spent an hour trying to find a theme that anyone was willing to say more than three sentences about:

Ivan's feeling that he was unprepared for death, the lack of honesty about Ivan's illness by his doctor, Ivan's marrying for the wrong reasons, Ivan's poor relationships

with his family members. Finally, in frustration, somebody shouted "Break!," and we headed out to the lounge couches and the Pepsi machine. Keri, one of the student leaders for the session, yelled "Be back in ten minutes!"

Ten minutes passed and we were all still sitting in the lounge area just outside our classroom. Keri said, "Are we ready to go back inside?" There were groans and no one moved. Finally, Rick said, " This isn't working. Let's try what Tim's group did last hour." So we stayed in the lounge, sprawled out on the couches and the floor, and took turns telling what each of us would do if we had only six months left to live. At first some of the answers were quite flippant--elaborate trips to exotic places, extravagant purchases, drunken orgies. Then Rick told us about his grandmother's death, how she knew that she had a short time to live, and how her family joined her to make her final months meaningful for all of them. Then someone, I don't remember who, said "But don't you think Ivan Ilyich would have done the same if his family and the doctor had told him the truth about his disease?"

From that point on, the discussion was a fascinating mixture of the themes we tried to discuss in the first hour interspersed with stories from our own experiences. Death was no longer an abstraction in a novel; it was real. And Ivan Ilyich was no longer just a character in a book; his experience became one of our stories.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3: We don't have classes on Fridays in Integrated Studies. So that's the day I do my research for CLU and work at my part-time job in the afternoon. While I was at work, my boss' son called. I heard my boss say "Look, I

have work to do here. I'll get home when I get home. You don't complain when I bring a check home on payday." My first thought was "You"ll probably regret saying that someday." What a strange thought, until I realized that my boss' behavior reminded me of the way Ivan Ilyich must have treated his son.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7: Our CLU group really had to rush to finish reports on last questions assigned for the CLU about the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Because our IS theme for this semester is "Health and Wealth," most of the CLU reports have been about disease, medical practices, and views on wealth held by members of different social and economic classes in the United States and Europe. Although medical care was improving in the late 1900s, even wealthy people--like Ivan Ilyich--died with much pain, of diseases which were not understood.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14: Our second IS essay exam for the semester was given during CLU group in our CLU classroom. I like the essay exams much better than the geology tests we take as part of IS. We are told to study for the geology tests from our weekly geology worksheets and lab exercises. There is so much material to memorize; I'm never quite sure what is really important to know.

We were allowed to bring notes to the essay exam. There was some confusion before the exam as to what 'notes' meant. After we discussed it during the Program Meeting, the faculty decided that it meant CLU reports and any notes we had made during Program Meetings, CLU group, Writing Group, or Book Seminar. We weren't

allowed to bring the books we had read in Book Seminar. That seemed kind of silly to me; if I hadn't read the book, I certainly wouldn't have had time to read it and understand it during an exam! Although I hadn't taken many notes during our Book Seminar on <u>Ivan Ilyich</u>, I did prepare some notes, based on what I had highlighted in my book, to take to the exam. I also had a chance to ask friends in the other Book Seminar groups what had been said in their discussions of the book.

There were two, maybe three, questions on the essay exam for which I made references to <u>Ivan Ilyich</u>. I guess our discussion in the lounge taught me more than I realized.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20:   Sarah, our faculty member in our Writing Group, described our next writing assignment for Writing Group. It was to be a first draft of a paper about one of the books we had read in Book Seminar during the semester. The audience for the paper would be our Writing Group. Sarah said the purpose of the paper was to help the writer and the audience to better understand the book by focusing on a character or an event in the book and interpreting it, addressing the question "What is the meaning of this?"

Sarah had planned an exercise to help us decide which book we wanted to write about and a possible focus. First she asked us to write for a few minutes about "one of our most pervasive fantasies or daydreams." She assured us that this short piece of writing would not have to be shared with anyone; it would not be collected. When it

seemed like everyone had finished writing, Sarah read her fantasy to us. She said she had intentionally written one which she could share as an example. Then she asked:

--Do any of the books you have read in the Program have a piece of your fantasy/daydream?

--Is there any emotion that governs your fantasy/daydream that is similar to one of the books?

--Are there any themes which are shared by your fantasy/ daydream and one of the books - love/sex themes, emphasis on material goods, violence, heroism, achievement, taking on a different identity or character?

She told about how her fantasy related to Chopin's The Awakening which we had all read earlier in the semester.

Sarah said that writing the fantasy is one means of choosing a book to write about with which we can personally identify. If we find some of our own fantasy in a book, we can understand the book and take a greater interest in it. If our experience is related to the book, it will help us write a more impassioned paper. She suggested that novels are long fantasies/daydreams of their authors.

I wasn't sure that my fantasy was 'telling me' anything. It was about having lost something which was very special to me and suddenly finding it. When Sarah asked us to choose the book which seemed related to our fantasies, The Death of Ivan Ilyich immediately came to mind. I didn't really think much about it; the connection was just there. Sarah then asked if we had a character or situation "to focus through"--which specific scenes come to mind in thinking about a character or situation. She asked us

to jot down a few notes for ourselves about the scenes and what point we would want to make about a particular scene or the character in it.

Sarah then shared her notes about scenes/characters/situations with us. She described how she would go about planning her paper around the notes. Her fantasy suggested 'restlessness'; Edna was a restless character in The Awakening; her restlessness caused her to try some things, like swimming alone, which did not seem to be characteristic of her to that point in the story; while some readers might consider this a weakness in her character, Sarah considered it a strength.

I left class feeling quite unsure about how effective Sarah's 'exercises' were for choosing a topic for a paper; but I was certain that I would write about the death scene in The Death of Ivan Ilyich.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24: I was at home for Thanksgiving, surrounded by family and friends. It was so good to be home; I didn't realize how much I had missed my family until I walked through the front door of our house. I didn't have time to start writing my paper on Ivan Ilyich before Friday. Actually I didn't do much writing on Friday. I did spend some time rereading the death scene, paying close attention to the blue highlights, the penciled notes and the turned page corners. During my first reading, several weeks ago, I must have been quite concerned about how Ivan's family members treated him during his painful death, keeping in mind how poorly he had treated them before he was ill and how, at the moment of his death, he wished he could have changed the relationships with his family.

I read the pages over and over. What point did I want to make about this scene? My younger sister came to my bedroom door to tell me that dinner was ready. I followed her down the hallway, glancing in each familiar doorway as I walked. If only Ivan had appreciated his family and shown them his appreciation before he died. Now they were lost to him forever.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27: I read the first draft of my paper to my writing group. They commented positively on how I had made connections between the notions of 'love', 'loss', and 'knowing a person' and Ivan's last hours with members of his family. My group agreed that no one in Ivan's family really 'knew' him, especially as he was beginning to acknowledge that the 'loss' of his family was due to his own actions. How could they love him if they didn't really know him and understand that he had changed? What did their final visits with him mean? In my paper, I described his family members' attitude toward him : "Like plucking petals from a daisy --- they loved him, they loved him not." Can we really love someone we don't know? Can we feel a sense of loss where there is no love? How do we come to 'know' someone?

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7: The newspaper headlines read "Fourteen Female Students Shot in Montreal." As we arrived at Book Seminar, we talked about the sudden death of these students, the grief of their friends and families, the sense of loss.....

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Student Reflections

"Betti's Story," as an example of an integrative learning experience, speaks to some of the same areas of understanding raised by the eight student interviewees for this study in their reflections on their learning experiences in Integrated Studies. These students, in their efforts to explain their experience and its meaning for them as learners, spoke about their expectations for learning in college, their changing expectations and attitudes about learning in college as they participated in IS, and some of the unresolved discrepancies between their new visions of themselves as learners and their learning experiences as first-year college students.

The primary emphasis of this research is understanding integrative learning in the context of the IS curriculum from the student perspective, as it has meaning for student participants. Therefore, a primary source of data for this study came from written and spoken student descriptions of their learning in IS and their reflections on their learning. Participant-observation provided the third side of the data source triangle. Student quotations used in this section are drawn primarily from the responses of eight students during tape recorded interviews and from occasional writings in IS which asked students to reflect on their learning in IS. As agreed in the research contracts with student referents, students will be identified using pseudonyms--Will, Terri, Ned, Lisa, Phil, Sue, Perry, and Mary. Pseudonyms will also be used in this chapter in references to faculty members.

In the Beginning: Student Expectations and Attitudes

In the statement of rationale for the creation of a program for Integrated Studies at the University of North Dakota, Lawrence and Sanborn (1986) state that many university students acquire attitudes and expectations during their first year in college which work against the goals of general education. However, extensive research on precollege education provides ample documentation that students develop attitudes and expectations which are incongruent with an integrated liberal education throughout their precollege years in their school experiences (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Sizer, 1984). Student referents in this study told their own stories of fragmented learning prior to college--content with few ties across subject boundaries, skills taught in isolation from other skills and relegated to specified courses ("We only wrote in composition class."), student interaction viewed as cheating, tests that seldom asked what they felt they had learned, and all with no apparent relevance to their lives outside the classroom. As students began their experience in IS, it is apparent that their precollege educational experiences had a strong influence on what they anticipated for their college learning in general and particularly in IS.

The first entry in the fieldnotes for this study is a conversation among three students about their impressions of Integrated Studies before attending their first session in the IS program.

J: Do you really think anyone can learn something from reading a bunch of regular books and having discussions about them?

T: I'm not sure. Can you believe we're not going to have textbooks? So how are we supposed to get the information we don't catch in lectures?

C: Wow! Are you sure this isn't some sort of remedial program for retards? It all sounds too easy.

About content

Students views of knowledge are closely tied to content as they understand it from their earlier schooling. During his first semester in IS, Phil comments on the differences he notices in the content of study of World War I in IS and that of his high school history class:

One of my favorite CLUs was the one on the World War. I guess I liked it because with the things that are and were going on in the world last fall, it was kind of neat to look back at the big mistake that was made and then look at what the present looks like, the encouraging things that are going on. Maybe we won't ever have to worry about a third world war. We were looking at the war, not just one person in it.

When we studied the World Wars in high school, we got lots of names of generals, and names of places, and dates of this and that....But the day after the test, we asked ourselves what we had learned...matching 20 generals and 30 cities on a test. I know I learned a lot more in IS. If you gave me the sheet of CLU questions now and you gave me the high school test that said match the names, I could show I've learned a lot more about the war...how serious it really was.

Perry's ideas about what should be valued as content and who determines the value of content were shaped by his understanding of how to learn in high school:

They [high school teachers] present the information, you take your notes, you study it. You ask a question and they say, "It won't be on the test." That's the most irritating answer to any question...when I really wanted to know more about it. I never dreamed I'd read so many books [in college], especially on what we read them on. I thought we'd be reading a textbook, making outlines of chapters, and highlighting.

Precollege emphasis on knowing the 'right answers' influenced how the students viewed themselves and how others viewed them as learners. Mary confirmed this when she talked about her earlier experiences and about the stories she heard about college when she was in high school: "In high school if you had a question, or if the teacher asked you a question and you didn't know the answer, they'd make you feel like you were stupid. And a lot of university professors do the same thing." Like other IS students, Phil, Perry, and Mary based their expectations and attitudes about content in learning on their earlier experiences in school and on stories they heard from students who already had been to college for a year.

About skills

As with Mary, Phil, and Perry's descriptions of high school learning with regard to content, the skills that students understood to be important to learning at the precollege level influenced how confident students felt about their potential for success at the university and their expectations for how to learn in college. Memorizing was

viewed as a highly valuable skill in high school; listening was important as long as it was the teacher talking; reading and notetaking provided what was to be memorized, writing and speaking provided a way of showing what you knew (although these had limited application on multiple choice, matching and true/false tests), and discussing was what students did to distract the teacher from the lesson. Highlighting passages in textbooks was an acceptable skill only in schools where students purchased their books.

Students regarded skills such as reading, writing, and speaking in schools as the content of a class such as reading group in elementary school or composition or speech in secondary schools and of little use in learning other things (with the possible exception of reading to obtain information). Some students read or wrote for the enjoyment, but this was generally done outside of school. Terri based her decision to join IS partly on her expectation that reading in IS would be pleasurable:

> I knew [from reading IS brochures] we would be reading books and that really attracted me to Integrated Studies because before my senior year in high school I never read. I just couldn't read because I am such a slow reader. Then in my senior year, I took a novels class and now I love to read. So I knew we were going to be reading some very good books and I thought, "That's a good thing". I've read more in this past year than I've ever read in my entire life.

Early in the program students considered CLU, Book Seminar, and Writing Group sessions solely as opportunities to learn about or improve on specific study skills through practice--doing research, discussing, writing, and reading (conspicuously,

thinking was not mentioned). Sue felt she lacked "some basic skills" an   oked to

Writing Group for improvement:

> I had Tom for writing first semester.... I thought that since he was an English
> teacher, he could bring out any English I had in the back of my mind. And he
> did; he did a lot of basic, constructive criticism of my writing. It was pretty bad
> when I first started...because I couldn't remember my punctuation and things like
> that. Because when you're a mother, you don't think of where periods and
> commas go.

Lisa, who considered herself to be a good writer before she came into IS, statements
shared Sue's expectations for Writing Group, and she arried this expectation well into
the second semester when she wrote:

> I've noticed a big improvement in the way I write. It's just an overall
> improvement writing this often. Last semester I was writing two or three papers
> a week. This semester it hasn't been that often. It's still a big change [from high
> school] to have to get practice writing....

About the social context of learning

The interviews revealed that relationships with peers and teachers in the context
of schooling is of particular significance to the students. Interaction with peers in
classrooms made "being in school fun" but seemed to them to have little to do with
learning. Some students had occasionally worked in groups at the precollege level, but
student descriptions of group work had little resemblance to what Johnson and
Johnson (1989) describe as cooperative learning. The interviewees indicated that most

teachers at all levels of schooling gave the message that interaction among students during class time was "goofing off" or "cheating."

Even as work in small groups began in IS, students regarded it much as they had been taught to understand it in their earlier schooling--learning in the presence of others (not learning cooperatively). But since the IS faculty organized student interaction in the small groups and encouraged it throughout the program, students regarded it as socially acceptable and fun. In describing Geology Labs, Ned said: "I had a pretty good experience in the lab--interacting with the other students and getting together on a completely informal basis and just talking about our question set or whatever."

Student attitudes and expectations about student relationships with teachers focused on two areas: (a) the importance of knowing others and being known by others (also true of peer relationships); and (b) the role of teacher as the expert in knowledge, the controller of access to knowledge, and the evaluator of others' knowledge. Perhaps, more than any of the other views held by students, this was the area which most influenced the students interviewed in their attitudes about knowledge and expectations for how to learn in college.

The importance for a student of feeling that they know a teacher well and are well known by a teacher was revealed as students spoke fondly of their most memorable teachers. Terri's example shows that these relationships may extend over many years, even after the student no longer has this person as a classroom teacher: "The other teacher who sticks out in my mind is my kindergarten teacher. She was

just like a grandma. I'll always remember her. I still see her sometimes when I'm shopping and it's fun because she still remembers me!" Students saw being known well by a teacher as providing more information about their learning when the time came to give grades. Ned told this story:

> My English teacher was viewed by most of the rest of the high school students as real tough....I remember one incident when there were a few assignments I hadn't done....When she reminded us in class what we needed to turn in, she told me one assignment and then said, 'And any of your other indiscretions!'...After class, she told me that I was a good kid and that I could learn...after that I started doing more assignments.

Students said that being known by a teacher made the social context of learning more comfortable and also gave a sense that this reciprocal knowing would somehow enhance learning in a positive way, mainly in reaching some understanding of the other's attitudes in terms of what is valued and expectations in an educational setting. At some point in the interviews for this study, each of the eight students mentioned that joining IS involved "risk," in particular, risk in not knowing what academic expectations the faculty might have of learners in the program. As they saw it, the trade-off was a promise for an opportunity to get to know other students and faculty well and to be known. Another risk was the possibility of academic failure in the presence of those whom you would come to know well. Early in their IS experience, each of the eight students indicated that they were satisfied in taking these risks as

they came to view the IS learning environment as supportive of them as learners and as persons.

It is worth noting that the eight students interviewed for this study said that they decided to enroll in IS more for social reasons than for a particular intellectual approach to learning which seemed foreign to them based on their earlier schooling experiences. Lisa explained her decision: "I come from a very small town. I went to the same school all the way through grades 1-12 with about 30 students....I was very shy, too, so being in a smaller group might help a bit with socialization." Terri, who came from a large urban high school, expressed a similar reason for her decision: "All the teachers would work together, and all the students would kind of be together, and it would be a smaller setting. I think that's what really attracted me." Ease of registration was the second positive factor influencing decisions to join IS--being able to quickly enroll in a group of courses which students felt they "knew something about" (mainly through the IS brochures and an IS advisor) rather than taking "whatever was left for freshmen."

Students' preconceptions about teachers having all the right answers and teachers deciding how students would gain access to these answers was apparent in many ways. For example, students were given the opportunity to choose faculty members with whom they wished to work in the small groups during the first semester. Students indicated that their choices of faculty were based primarily on their understanding of individual faculty member's "expertise" in disciplines which the students tried to match with the small group activities. Lisa explained her choice to work with Tom in

Writing Group: "I thought it would probably be best if I had a person who was actually an English teacher instructing me." Perry chose Don for CLU "because I felt he had the background in history...that he really knew his history." However, having had several opportunities to meet and interact with IS faculty in classroom settings prior to making their choices, students also sought faculty who seemed to have positive qualities in common with students' 'memorable' pre-college teachers. Will chose Chuck for Writing Group acknowledging that "he's not a writing professor; he's a geology professor....But I believe Chuck and I share the same type of passion for the scientific."

About integration

During the first interview with each student participating this study, students were asked if they had any earlier learning experiences that seemed like their experiences in IS to that point (early in second semester). Although there was a general feeling on the part of the researcher that the term 'integration' was not a part of their vocabulary for describing learning prior to IS, students used the term freely in reflecting on earlier experiences which "felt the same as IS." For most of the interviewees, integration in learning was a rare occurrence; but when it did happen, it always seemed to be in connection with a 'memorable teacher' (memorable in a positive way). Mary spoke of science fairs; Perry told of going to a nature camp; Sue mentioned a teacher who taught everything around art themes.

For three of the students, two of whom had attended middle schools and two who had several experiences in nontraditional schools for most of their elementary

level schooling, integration, if not a familiar word, was certainly a familiar concept. Perry fondly recalled his experience at an elementary school "with an open classroom program ...where parents would come in and help with the learning...instead of going to chorus class, the teacher would play his guitar and we'd all sing...more of a hands-on approach to math and things like that." Both in the middle schools and the alternative school, integration as it related to the social context of learning seemed important to the students not only in terms of comfort but in terms of contributing to their learning. In spite of these early encounters with an integrated curriculum, the students had few expectations that college learning experiences would be like their earliest years of schooling; the experiences of junior high and high school had a greater impact in shaping their attitudes about learning and their expectations for learning at the college level. After several weeks in IS, students were asked to define "integration" in IS and as they saw it related to their learning. The student definitions emphasized "connections" anticipated in the explicit curriculum based on what they had read about the program or been told by IS faculty. Those early definitions of integration revealed the importance students placed on connections of subject matter. Will's description is typical of IS students' early visions of integration:

> It's just how different subjects can relate to each other. They have something to
> do with some whole. It's not like we're taking five different subjects; we're
> taking one subject and everything is in there. We won't be able to tell where one
> [subject] ends and the other begins.

In the beginning of their experience in IS, students saw the faculty-determined theme as the primary focus for making connections in the program. In preparing for their first essay exam in IS, students viewed all elements of the program as guiding them toward understanding the connections in content as the faculty would define them. Their concern was whether the connections they were making matched those of the faculty. Will's uncertainty about what exactly he was supposed to know for the upcoming exam became disheartening for him: "I feel frustrated that I can't understand how some things fit together as of yet. A lot of people [in IS] are just sick of not knowing what the teachers want us to understand, how this all ties together."

An Emerging Integrative Experience

Throughout the interviews with IS students, a recurring theme was student attention to relationships with faculty and peers in the learning environment. As indicated earlier, the students were willing to take what they considered to be the risks of enrolling in a nontraditional program (in which the role of learners seemed unconventional, learning outcomes seemed unclear, and the program's value as a first-year college experience uncertain) in order to fulfill a perceived need to know others well in the University setting and to be known as individuals and learners. The interviewees' persistence in addressing their changing attitudes and expectations about social relationships in the IS experience confirms what many researchers cited in Chapter 2 have suggested--that attention to the social context of a learning experience is essential to its being understood both by participants in the experience and by those

who study the experience. Also noted in Chapter 2 is the contribution of the social context of a learning experience in strengthening the reciprocal relationships among integration, thinking, and cooperative learning. In their attempts to describe the changing social relationships in IS, the students in this study revealed what it meant for them to be learners in an emerging integrative experience.

Students' initial understanding

of the student role

The section above on student expectations describes what the students in this study perceived to be the role of students in our institutions of schooling as they entered IS and during their first weeks in the IS program. The descriptions present an image of students who appear to be passive in their learning, not actively and consistently engaged in the processes which most educators would consider to be essential to learning--thinking, communicating, recognizing relationships, and recognizing and evaluating choices.

The students in this study did not necessarily see themselves as seeking this role in their education, but rather felt that it was insisted upon by the classroom environments in which they found themselves. It is well-documented (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Sizer, 1984) that most precollege classrooms provide an environment which is teacher-centered rather than student-centered, which means that the student role in the learning process is primarily determined by what the teacher determines to be the best interests of the students, academically and socially, within the instructional setting. The examples of precollege life as a student provided by Phil, Perry, and Mary

in the previous section of this paper, give glimpses into an environment which virtually ignores the potential contribution of students to the learning process except as recipients of the actions of the teacher. (It is worth noting that a substitute is considered essential for an absent teacher but not for an absent student.)

The students in this study initally defined themselves as learners in relation to their understanding of the role of the teacher based on their precollege learning experiences. It will become apparent in the later discussion of student-teacher relationships that the students' perceptions of their role, which in turn shaped their expectations and attitudes about learning, changed throughout their participation in IS as they considered a new set of expectations (which the IS faculty provided in concrete form as "assessment criteria" sheets and their discussions with students of the process for assessment) in a nontraditional learning environment.

Students' inital understanding

of the faculty role

The interviewees' prior experiences in teacher-centered classrooms led them to believe that the schools considered the teacher to be the most important person in the classroom; in describing their precollege learning experiences, the students usually used a generic, undefined "they" when providing explanations of why their schooling was the way students described it, implying that whatever went on in schools was sanctioned by society or at least the local community represented by school administrators (although sometimes "they" seemed to imply the collective voice of teachers in general). Perry spoke with emotion about decisions on his behalf

regarding his learning by the generic "they" when he suffered a head injury in high school:

> I slipped in soccer during the fall in my sophomore year and had a bad head injury that temporarily caused me to lose some memory....I wanted to graduate with my class. I talked it over with my parents, and we decided that I could still go to school and not get too far behind. My teachers were told of the problem, but they didn't seem to understand at all. My Spanish teacher forced me to make up two major exams and a vocabulary test during my first week back. When I didn't do well, "they" decided that I couldn't handle it even though I had a note from my doctor saying this was temporary and my parents' consent and offers to help me study at home. "They" decided I should drop from Spanish 3 to Spanish 1. I said that I would come in for help during lunch and after school, but the teacher wanted to have his cigarette in the lunchroom at noon and he wanted to get out of the building right after school. The same thing happened in algebra. A month later I was getting "As" in these classes. "They" aren't interested in helping students; "they" just expect you to perform like everyone else no matter what the circumstances. After that, you kind of learn your lesson about schools.

The lesson Perry seemed to learn was that he (and apparently his parents) had little choice about his learning experience even though they were willing to take responsibility for whatever happened. Perry 'learned' that it is the teacher's responsibility that a student learn and the teacher's choice how this should happen and what should be learned.

The students in this study understood the teacher's role to be that of expert in specific subject matter (who would 'know' <u>what</u> is important to teach to students), that of educator (who could best define <u>how</u> students should learn), and that of evaluator (who would determine <u>whether</u> the student was successful). Like Perry, the other students in the study were taught, in some not too subtle ways in their precollege years, that it is the teachers' choice and responsibility that students learn--not the students'.

<u>Emerging relationships and meanings</u>

Process philosophy describes reality in terms of relationships and movement, a continuous forming and reforming of relationships (Fetz, 1988; Gershman, 1988; Whitehead, 1929). In process terms, an integrative experience would involve all participants moving into fresh combination not only with one another but with all elements of the curriculum; that is, a relationship between curriculum elements would form, would change in reciprocal relationship to other relationships the experience, and, in the process of re-forming, emerge as a new relationship. Thus, the students in this study, in describing their understanding of the changing social relationships in IS, were also describing their relationships to other aspects of the curriculum; in effect, they were redefining themselves as learners.

<u>Assessment Criteria</u>. Will's expression of his frustration over "not knowing exactly what I'm supposed to know" as he anticipated the first essay exam in IS, was also an expression of his belief that (a) either the faculty failed to teach (tell) the IS students what they needed to know for the exam (which information to memorize)

during Program Meeting (when faculty "lectured") or (b) that he hadn't taken the 'right' notes during CLU and Book Seminar because he was too involved in the discussions to pay attention to the few comments that the faculty leaders had made.

IS faculty attempted to address student concerns about the nature of the essay exam during one of the small group settings by providing sample exam questions, having the group generate some possible answers which the faculty member then helped them critique, and asking the group members for strategies for preparing for the exam. As Sue indicated:

> It certainly wasn't much of a review session! It was OK to talk about how to <u>do</u> the exam; but when we asked about <u>what</u> we needed to know, we were told to think about all we had read and talked about in our groups and at Program Meetings and come up with some connections between them.... Tom even suggested that we get together in groups on our own and talk about how things 'integrated'....or share some of the things we wrote in Writing Group or for CLU....So what good would that do without a teacher there?

Phil said that he felt the geology test (which was to be given separately during lab time) would be easier than the essay exam:

> I have pretty good notes from Chuck's lectures in Program Meeting, and I can memorize most of the stuff on the worksheets....But the essay test will be wicked....I suppose the CLU reports will help, but most of my notes from Book Seminar are just things that other students said that were interesting.

When I asked Phil if the writings from Writing Group would be helpful for preparing for the exam, he said: "Maybe. We do write about the theme. But mainly we just write something and do a rewrite. It's practice; it's not taking notes. At least I went to all the program sessions. That should help some." In spite of the 'practice session' for the first exam, students went into the first exam feeling upset about not knowing the 'right answers' or the 'right' connections that the faculty would probably ask about in the exam. Several students wondered how the faculty could expect students to have the right answers when each of the small groups talked about different topics, although they all talked about the theme.

At the time prior to the first essay exam, students understood the content of the program to be an object separate from themselves. They understood content as something to be given to them by the faculty which they would give back, relatively undisturbed, on an exam. However, field observations in the small group sessions, particularly in Book Seminars, made note of considerable activity during the sessions-- participants interacting with one another; students as well as faculty raising questions about a book or a CLU report or a writing that someone in the group had done, relating topics raised to the semester theme, sharing what they thought an author or a source intended to say and why it might have been said in a certain way, telling stories of their own experiences which were similar to those of 'the content' at hand, and explaining why they were making these connections.

To this participant-observer, it was apparent that many participants were actively engaged in thinking. (It should be noted that some students didn't talk much during

the sessions but their writings--for Writing Group, for CLU, and on exams--frequently incorporated ideas generated in the sessions indicating that they were engaged in the session.) Clemson and McTighe (1991) state that "meaningful learning requires that students go beyond rote memorization and become intellectually engaged with new material, actively thinking about and puzzling over new concepts, in order to develop a personal understanding" (p. 6) 'Developing a personal understanding' could be considered to be 'integrating' and 'thinking' and 'developing a relationship' with content, first by the individual in preparing for a session and then by the individual engaging in thoughtful interaction with participants in the sessions and integrating anew.

Will, in expressing his frustration about not knowing exactly what to study for the exam, demonstrated that he viewed content as separate from himself even though he was a very active participant in small group sessions. When the first exams were returned, Will and many other IS students were surprised at the diversity of 'right answers' [in terms of content] which the faculty found acceptable for each question. When asked about his "graded" exam, Will said:

> I could have done a lot better. I worked too hard trying to outguess them [the faculty] on the exam. I went to all my groups and Program Meetings and read everything and usually had something to say about what we studied. I tried to put down everything I remembered about the books and lectures they asked about instead of answering the [exam] question. Sarah said I had some good examples but my answers didn't tie together very well. You know, they [faculty]

gave us sample questions and ideas how to do them, but I forgot that when I studied.

In spite of realizing that there were a variety of ways to answer the exam questions, not all were pleased with their first "grades" in IS. Students then tried to determine what would be a "good" answer. Several of the students interviewed asked faculty about what they [students] had "done wrong" and then realized that there wasn't one right answer for each exam question; rather that the "good" answers were those that spoke to the question, that provided "facts and thoughts" from the sources in support of the answer, and that was organized and written well. Other students, who did not talk to faculty about their exams, thought that they should have "gone more with opinion."

Discussions about grades, and assessment, and evaluation were also a common topic during the interviews, whether raised directly by the researcher or not. Lisa shared her ideas about grades in IS: "The teachers are not big on grades at all. They seem to think that it is a way of stifling learning. But never-the-less we are going to get grades in each course, and the evaluation is the only way we have any idea whatsoever of what's going on." The evaluation to which Lisa referred was in relation to the faculty-generated "Assessment Criteria" sheets for CLU, Book Seminar, and Writing Group. given to each student and faculty member during the third week of the fall semester [see samples in Appendix B]. Periodically throughout the semester, students were asked to evaluate themselves according to these criteria (on a form with descriptions considerably abbreviated and a rating scale from one to four matching the

level on the criteria sheets). Then the faculty member from the small group session would evaluate the student using the same criteria and the same form. There was also room for comment from both the student and the faculty member on the form. Students were also encouraged to visit with faculty about the evaluations, particularly if there seemed to be a major discrepancy between the faculty assessment and the student's self-assessment. Lisa continued her comments about grades:

Despite what they say, I have the feeling constantly that a four is transposed as an "A" and a three a "B". So I don't think that I've got what they want me to get out of the evaluation....There are four categories that are evaluated by the teacher and by the student. Take Book Seminar, we've got participation, thinking, .. I can't remember. There are criteria and it's graded one through four. [Interviewer (I): Do all the students know the criteria?] Well, before we evaluate ourselves, we usually will look at a sheet that they handed out to decide what level we're at or maybe upgrade it a level if we think we're ..[laughs]. [I: Do you find yourself thinking about the assessment criteria as you participate in the various groups?] I find that when I'm in a group, I know that I'm going to be graded for or evaluated for verbal participation. And I will talk more because I know that somebody is going to be evaluating me. It's a stressful thing because the teacher is writing notes about you and whether you're talking.... You have to keep it in mind.

The assessment criteria categories for CLU and Book Seminar are participation, thinking, preparation, and group interaction; for Writing they are content,

structure/organization, and conventions/style. The assessment criteria for CLU and Book Seminar emphasize process; for Writing Group, product. It should be noted, however, that the process for Writing Group, which had been established earlier, also stressed preparation (bringing assigned writing to class), participation (listening carefully and responding thoughtfully), thinking (providing a justified critique), and group interaction (using positive social skills). It is worth noting that the criteria for CLU and Book Seminar and the process for Writing Group speak to the learner's relationships with texts (in all forms), with skills, and with other participants in the group. Although the criteria are directed to the actions of the individual learner, they clearly have implications for the group in terms of defining the quality of the individual's contribution to the group's understanding of the material under consideration and the process of reaching a more thoughtful shared understanding.

Initially, the students interviewed understood the criteria to be the specifics for grading individual learners. Even with these specifics, however, students saw assessment in IS as a mystery. Lisa tried to explain the use of the criteria: "It's really hard in the program to tell where you stand because they don't give grades; they evaluate....You never know where you're at because it varies from week to week." Will was surprised that "they [IS faculty] did it right for me last semester. I think I got the grades I deserved, but to this day, I don't understand how they go about doing it. They don't do it in the classical sense of adding up points--I know that." Although the IS faculty tried to dispel the notion of grades, in the traditional sense, students continued to refer to assessment levels as "grades."

By the beginning of second semester, students' understanding of the assessment criteria had changed from: (a) the criteria being specified behaviors for faculty to use in grading a student, to (b) criteria as a set of faculty expectations of students as learners, to (c) student expectations of faculty as model learners, to (d) student expectations for themselves as learners, to (e) a description of a learning process. The students' understanding of the meaning of the criteria for them changed whenever they encountered what they decided was a discrepancy between their emerging integrative experiences and other learning experiences at the University but also within IS itself. Each of the students interviewed shared stories of experiences both within IS and in classes they took at the University outside of IS during the second semester for which the IS assessment criteria did not seem to them to apply as expectations nor as descriptive of the learning process as they had come to know it. Phil described a University course he was taking outside of IS:

> I'm taking an art class this semester. The professor has her slide shows and stuff with all the paintings. She's always telling us about certain shows in town and how she's learning from visiting speakers when they describe how they got into art. But in her class we're just going over the stuff; she's just telling us what she knows and what she got out of a book. They just teach the same stuff semester after semester.

Will talked about a science class in which he had enrolled:

> "When I'm in science class, we're just expected to sit there, and copy notes off the board and listen to what the teacher has to say at the same time.... And if you

indicate you know something about the topic and want to share it with the class, everyone looks at you like "what are you doing?" The students don't have to think or don't want to think; it's all memorization. Before the test you memorize the stuff and the only other time you have to recall that information is for the final; and after that it's gone.

Students in the study felt there were discrepancies even within IS. The geology component of the program was confusing in this regard. Students generally talked about geology as if it were a course separate from the program, especially in reference to geology worksheets based on the geology textbook, geology labs, geology help sessions, and geology lectures in Program Meetings. Terri noted that geology labs "were the only time that we were like other freshmen or college students. You went into lab, you had a TA, and you worked on some kind of worksheet packet that you had that dealt with a chapter in the textbook. I think there was no other way of doing it." When Terri had problems with geology, she attributed it to the nature of the subject. Lisa, however, became frustrated when she had difficulties (the first "D" in my life!), blamed herself, and reverted to old learning relationships:

I never had geology before....I'm a poor science student. Geology would have fit better in the program for me if I had been any good at it....The labs were very, very hard. I was lucky a couple of times to work with people who understood what they were doing. I ended up passing because I would copy their answers....The worksheets were to help us with a chapter in the textbook...to go through it and to understand it thoroughly. They were probably all that saved me.

They did provide a good study guide. I'd go through and memorize everything.

Usually the questions on the tests came right off the worksheets.

Although Lisa found a group who would "give" her the answers, this was not the way she had come to understand cooperation in IS. She did not see the questions asked in lab as the sort which she could raise in Book Seminar or CLU.

Models. Although the criteria seemed clear enough as a set of expectations and as a description of a learning process, student interviewees found that they understood the criteria better when they were modeled by the faculty. The students looked to IS faculty, as "more experienced learners," actively engaged in learning and teaching--preparing, thinking, participating, cooperating. Perry described Sarah modeling what it meant to be a contributing member of a Writing Group. Through her example, she encouraged them to thoughtfully consider the content and style of the paper and to give their suggestions in a way which would help the person write better and which would encourage the writer to make changes. "She shows us how to be a teacher--which is what we do for each other in Writing Group--actually in all of our groups."

Students were also quite critical of faculty who they felt did not model what they expected from students. Will said that "some faculty 'participate' more than others in CLU and Book Seminar. And some just talk too much, although it's usually interesting." They were most forgiving of faculty new to IS who they saw as "learning the program." Ned commented that "[faculty new to IS] are here to experience a new program themselves and to give a fresh addition to the program. I feel they haven't quite mastered the technique of just letting the students go and keeping the

conversation going. But they weren't with us at the beginning [of the school year], so they came into it cold." In terms of knowing and understanding IS, Ned considered himself to be the 'more experienced learner.'

Reflection. As the students came to see the assessment criteria as a means for defining themselves as learners and as they observed faculty modeling the type of learning which was valued in the program, the students who were interviewed became more reflective about their learning experience. (It should be remembered that to some extent, the students in the study were often asked to be reflective just by participating in the interview process. However, their ready responses to questions about their learning and their insightful descriptions of their learning in IS seemed to indicate that they were engaged in being reflective quite often.)

Phil's description of the same art class mentioned above demonstrated his awareness that he had his own purposes for learning and that they did not always match those of the faculty:

I chose the course to integrate it into what I hope to do when I get into film. I guess I'm not interested in the exact names of paintings or works of art. A lot of paintings and other works of art deal with depth and angle and a view--which is a lot of what I will need to do when I get into film. Which is why I took the course--what kind of angles work best and what I like the most. I guess I have a purpose a little different than what the teacher is teaching for. I have my own reason for taking it.

Phil also recognized that it was helpful to look back at his learning in IS:

This program has a lot of learning the books but also a lot of self-thought and self-reflection and what you think....With both themes it was really neat to see how they expanded during the semester. and we haven't learned everything we could have learned about each topic....Even the books we're reading this semester--I still think back to health and wealth [first semester's theme]--I'm looking how that even fits in now [second semester].

Lisa was beginning to see herself as an integrative learner. While Phil was making connections within IS, Lisa found herself drawing her learning outside of IS into IS:

I find myself concentrating more on integrating things. I see something and then I tie it back to something in the program. In Book Seminar, for example, we've been discussing Rachel and Her Children. ...We were talking about the homeless and I found myself bringing in something that I learned in psychology class this semester...about a study that had been done to determine what effect hunger has on people. I've been doing that a lot...bringing in outside information. It's interesting what happens to your mind when you're in a program like IS....There isn't much demand for that kind of thinking in the regular [college] classes. ...But I've been writing a paper for one of my other classes...and I find I'm using the same technique that I used on the midterm exam and it helped. It helped me think.

These examples of reflective thinking by Lisa and Phil stand in sharp contrast to a discussion during the second week of IS when students were discussing what it means to 'learn:'

Tom [faculty member]: So if we say we're going to 'learn' about health, what do we mean?

Students: Physical well-being...emotional health....way of thinking...spiritual well-being...religious beliefs.

Phil: Those last things don't have anything to do with health.

Mary: Religion has a lot to do with health.

Phil: That's just your opinion. We're going to study health...statistics and medicine....

Tom: How do you distinguish opinion from learning?

No students tried to answer Tom's question. He asked it several times during the discussion when the word "opinion" arose, but there still was no response. The students in the observed session did not see this as an opportunity to reflect upon various ways of knowing, even using their own experiences as the basis for their views.

Perry, as well as other students interviewed, described essay exams as "learning experiences." Will implied that he, too, learned from taking IS exams when he commented on more traditional exams: "You don't learn anything new; you just have to recite what you've memorized or what you think it is. You usually don't make any discoveries that way." Their new ideas about exams stood in sharp contrast to their thinking about their first essay exam in IS.

Membership in a learning community. Perhaps the best examples of emerging relationships and meanings were revealed in the interviewees' descriptions of their

changing views of their role in the IS learning experience and of their changing values as learners. Most often they described these roles and values in relation to an emerging notion of community. Ned describes the closeness of the members of IS and how it has an identity not only as a program in the University but also for those who participate in it:

> When we realized that we were all here for the same purpose--to learn--and that we were a special group on campus, it made us feel like a family in a way. I see other IS students on campus and I can say "I <u>know</u> that person. She's not just someone I see in class once in a while. She's someone I shared an experience with--a learning experience.

Perry describes Babcock Hall as the community's special place:

> Babcock is comfortable. It's tough to find other buildings on campus where you can find a place to sit down....Babcock has a lounge with comfortable chairs, a table where you can sit and eat your lunch, a couch where you could take a nap. It's probably meant to be a social place, but we spend a lot of time talking about what we're learning. It's neat because everyone knows what you're talking about. It kind of reinforces your learning....all of us sharing our stories of our experiences in IS.

Perry describes his experience in IS of knowing the other participants and being known by them and sharing a common curriculum as an anomaly on the University campus:

My high school biology teacher once used this example to describe an anomaly--
you have a flock of thousands of white geese and you have a crow in the middle.
That's how I would describe IS. Just the building itself stands out....I have
experienced one class, a learning-to-study type class, where what I was taught
about studying would never work in IS. For one thing, you're never told how
important it is to talk to other people when you're learning. It's all about how to
memorize and outline and highlight the book. It's all based on learning things
and not making connections.

Phil talks of the blurring of roles which seemed so clearly defined to him at the
beginning of his experience in IS:

I guess in this setting [IS], other than in Program Meetings, we don't have
'teachers' as much as other people who are learning with us. They come up with
a theme like 'Home' to be the focus and what home means to people....In this
Program, I don't know if there's any real way of saying you're a teacher or
you're a student, or you're a learner. They're all kind of interchangeable
depending on the moment.

As students in the study described their new vision of roles in IS, they also spoke of
values which they felt were necessary in a learning environment like IS. Ned spoke of
cooperation: "With the level of interaction in this program, it's essential that everyone
work to get along and work to learn. We all know the important part of CLU is
cooperative learning unit." In several self-evaluations Lisa expresses her surprise about
the learner she has become in IS: "

What I am saying is that the idea of taking responsibility for my own education takes some getting used to, but it is one I like.... I have done my best to contribute positively to the editing sessions [in Writing Group]. I have tried to give constructive criticism--I never gave those whose pieces I thought were lousy my unedited opinion, but tried to help them improve their work...I found it is more helpful to include any criticism with a fair amount of praise, and that it rarely works to tear a piece down.

Perry mentioned the assessment criteria as the "values of IS"--values he hoped could be found throughout the University. Although he knew that these values were not shared in all University classes, Perry said he was determined "to keep using them myself. I know they make me a better learner." During one of the last interviews of this research, Mary was asked if this approach to learning was better. She replied, "more meaningful."

CHAPTER 5

RESPONSE, VISIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By its own description, one of the goals of the Integrated Studies (IS) Program at the University of North Dakota is to provide a means for students to satisfy the University's requirements for general education. A second goal is to facilitate the first goal by providing an alternative curriculum in which students would experience a more cohesive, integrative learning experience, not only in terms of content but also in terms of the learning environment.

The primary focus of this study is to understand the learning experiences of first-year college students participating in IS as they describe them within the context of the IS curriculum. The second focus of the study is to describe the IS Program as an example of an integrated curriculum design intended to provide an integrative learning experience. In this concluding chapter, the findings of this study shall be used to address three areas of interest to educators: the relationship of integrated curriculum and an integrative learning experience; process philosophy as contributing to an understanding of the concept of integration; and recommendations for future study.

Researcher's Response:

The Relationship of Integrated Curriculum

to an Integrative Learning Experience

The Integrated Studies Program as

Integrated Curriculum

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) remind educators that "the importance of social support has been ignored within education over the past 30 years. A general principle to keep in mind is that the pressure to achieve should always be matched with an equal level of social support" (pp. 2:18-19). The findings of this study on IS would insist that the last sentence also read: "A general principle to keep in mind is that an insistence on change should always be matched with an equal level of support." In considering the IS curriculum in relation to integrative experience, one should remember that this curriculum represented a radical departure from tradition for the student participants (as well as for most faculty participants), particularly in insisting that they "learn integratively." Fortunately for the participants, the program provided support in some imaginative ways through the curriculum design itself and through its implementation which made use of the concept of reframing.

A review of the curriculum

As discussed in Chapter 2, most models of integrated curriculum are designed to emphasize relationships among content (generally viewed as discipline-based) or content and skills. Integrated Studies (IS) has interdisciplinary content and skills

integrated across the IS curriculum as two of its three organizing elements. Each semester's faculty-chosen theme serves as a basis for selection of curriculum materials and specific learning events to be incorporated into the curriculum. The use of common 'texts' in CLU, Writing Group, and Book Seminar allows the various sections of the small groups to explore the theme according to their interests with the knowledge that students could go from one small group to another and still have a sense of what others are discussing and have an "audience" who understand what they have to say. At times activities are more structured, such as CLU questions and the Renaissance papers (for which each student wrote an 'autobiography' of a significant person from the Renaissance period and then acted their person in a roundtable discussion of issues of the period).

The faculty, organized as a team for teaching and planning, support integration of content and skills by representing their disciplines in designing the interdisciplinary content, with the intent of assuring that concepts and kills typically designated to their disciplines are not misrepresented in the process. While most 'learning conversations' in IS ignore the boundaries of the contributing disciplines, having a faculty team allows students who seek to understand the integrated view of a particular discipline in relation to the theme (How would an anthropologist's view of some aspect of the theme compare to the view of a philosopher or a geologist?) to pursue their questions with a person with expertise in the discipline.

The relationship of content and skills to social context may not be addressed in all models of integrated curriculum. If social context is addressed at all in these

models, it is not likely incorporated into the curriculum design as an organizing element but is viewed as a "consideration." (An exception is integrated curriculum as incorporated in the concept of a middle school.) The Integrated Studies (IS) curriculum addresses social context by having "community" as its third organizing element.

In IS, community is addressed by the use of cooperative learning as its primary instructional approach; by enrolling students as a cohort group; by providing a readily identified 'home' for the program in Babcock Hall; by the faculty being easily accessible to students; and by having faculty function as a teaching and planning team, thus providing the opportunity to be aware of the social needs and interactions of the students as learners and to adjust the curriculum accordingly. The use of small, heterogeneous groups in organizing centers such as CLU, Writing Group, and Book Seminar provide the opportunity for students to know others in IS and to be known. Activities involving all participants meeting as a single group also serve the goal of community such as Program Meetings which provide the opportunity for some information to be shared by all participants in the same manner and the Field Trip which, according to one interviewee (who had never been camping before), involved "learning to work together in a survival mode."

Reframing

Through the IS curriculum design, the faculty provided the integrated foundation for the opportunity for integrative learning experiences to evolve and be nourished. One of the most significant constraints to implementing the curriculum, however, were the attitudes and expectations about teaching and learning based on precollege

experiences and a view of knowledge as objects stored and distributed in neat

packages which the students brought to IS. IS students were being asked to set aside

(at least temporarily) these attitudes, expectations, and views while they considered the

integrated approach of IS through participation in it, a task which they as students

anticipated being very difficult.

To an observer somewhat familiar with the concept of 'reframing,' the two

semesters in IS provided an opportunity to observe a classic example of reframing (as

confirmed by a communication faculty member on his reading of a study of IS as

reframing, written by the author of this dissertation). Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch

(1974) define the concept of reframing as follows:

> To reframe, then, means to change the conceptual and/or emotional setting or
>
> viewpoint in relation to which a situation is experienced and to place it in
>
> another frame which fits the "facts" of the same concrete situation equally well
>
> or better, and thereby changes its entire meaning. (p. 95)

Because 'reality' is subjective, it is open to change. Watzlawick says that in this "lies

the power of intervention by reframing" (1978, p. 119).

To the best knowledge of the researcher of this study, implementation of the IS

curriculum was never described by the participating faculty or IS program designers

using the term reframing. Whether the IS faculty were aware of this concept and

consciously made an effort to employ it; or whether the decision to make a radical

departure from traditional curriculum was based on specific learning theories; or

whether the curriculum design and implementation was based on the intuitive sense of

experienced educators (as teachers and learners) as to what changes would be needed in providing the opportunity for integrative experience, are questions left unanswered at this point.

Two examples of reframing in IS are given here to clarify the concept of reframing for the reader. The first is based on a method employing reflection as a basis for change in an individual's view (in this case, a view of teaching and learning). Watzlawick (Watzlawick et al., 1974) contends that: "If a person comes to know a theory about his behavior, he is no longer bound by it but becomes free to disobey it" (p. 100). Integrated Studies is one program, besides the University's Center for Teaching and Learning, where there are frequent discussions among faculty and undergraduates about the nature of learning and teaching. The first CLU in IS was just such a discussion. Students and faculty talked about their earlier schooling experiences and their perceptions of the process and meaning of 'learning' and 'teaching'. Although some ideas seemed to held in common by students and faculty, many participants (especially the students) were amazed at the variety of perspectives. In my interview with Sue, she said:

> I had never really thought much about learning and teaching and knowledge even though I want to someday be a teacher myself. The discussions about learning in CLU, Book Seminar, and on exams really made me stop and think about what I was doing. Now when someone tells me to "Learn" or "Think about it!", I first have to think about what that means to me--what it means I'll have to do. Before, I probably wouldn't have done anything--not even think.

The second example is based upon the idea that there exist certain language forms that enable us to say something without quite saying it (Watzlawick, 1978, p. 85). A joke is one such form: During the first Program Meeting, after Ted had just finished a rather lengthy introduction of the faculty using their first names, a student asked "How do we address you?" Ted replied with laughter in his voice, "I live on ___ Street." [laughter] "First names. We don't dwell on formalities in this program." At that point another faculty member named Don said, "I kind of like to be called 'Your Excellency'". [more laughter]

The punch lines of this exchange combined a communication with a metacommunication. As confirmed by student and faculty laughter, the content of the faculty messages is taken to be unreal; it is the metacommunication about student-faculty relationship (how shall we address one another?) which becomes part of the participants' views about the program. While this example may seem trivial to a reader, this event was mentioned by several IS students in interviews as an example of the possibility of nontraditional student-faculty relationships in IS (Will: "There was more to this than just calling faculty by their first names.") and as an indicator that more that was nontraditional was yet to come in IS.

In addition to reframing, the IS faculty's use of more explicit means to encourage change also proved effective. Providing explicit statements of expectations in the form of the "Assessment Criteria" and suggestions on "how to integrate" in the IS Newsletter and in Program Meetings gave students something concrete to consider as they tried to make sense of the IS experience. Another powerful propellant for

change was the modeling of integrative learning by the faculty, frequently with explanations of what they were doing and why.

Becoming Learners

Whitehead's principle of process:

how an entity becomes constitutes what an entity is.

Students do not become learners at the University by virtue of their presence on campus and a list confirming their registration in particular courses. A year of conversations and interviews with the students of the Integrated Studies Program confirmed what is commonly known by educators about first-year college students-- that while some students may start their first year at the University with a solid subject matter knowledge base and well-practiced learning skills, other students come unsure about their academic preparation for college. While some students come with a cadre of friends from their hometown, others come with no friends from home. While some come believing that they know what it means to be a learner at the college level, others express uncertainty about it. Most come with the expectation that they will learn, not only about content and skills but also about themselves and their relationships with others at the University (Can I be a good student at the college level? How well will I be able to compete with other students? How does all of this relate to my plans in life? What does this experience mean to me?).

The students in this study share the broad range of characteristics of first-year college students described above. On entering the University, IS students expected to

'learn,' and they expected the University to provide a curriculum which would support

the opportunity for a worthwhile learning experience. With regard to general

education, all of the students interviewed had read the distribution requirements and

course options for general education in the Undergraduate Calatog but readily admitted

not reading or remembering much about the stated goals for general education. The

one student who indicated that she had carefully read the section on general education

in the Undergraduate Catalog said that she understood the goals for general education

at the University and understood the options available within the distribution

requirements but could only "imagine" that the learning experience would be "just like

high school, only harder." This general impression about their upcoming academic

experience was shared by the other students interviewed in the study. However, the

students did say that they did get a better a sense about the goals of general education

and what to expect in their learning experience in IS from brochures about the IS

program and from information provided by IS faculty and staff during initial inquiries

about the program and summer registration. As the first semester began, IS students'

anticipated a learning experience with expectations shaped by what they had been told

about the IS program but shaped more by their understanding of "being a student"

based on their precollege learning experiences.

During the course of this study, it became apparent (through observation,

informal and formal interviews with students, and reading most of what a third of IS

students wrote as part of the IS program) that most IS students were becoming

'learners' as envisioned by IS faculty (and one would hope as envisioned by most

University educators). Throughout the year, in the context of the IS Program, students constructed new relationships with peers, with faculty, with content, and with skills. For each student, the starting point in this process was different, The relationships were expressed and valued differently by individual students and differently at various times throughout the experience. Understanding these relationships from the students' perspective (and from the perspective of an experienced educator as researcher) revealed student growth--intellectual, social, and personal. With regard to content, the students interviewed came to see it as interrelated, coherent, and integrated as they had constructed it. Students also came to realize that learning content can take place outside of the constraints of academic disciplines and still be informed by those disciplines. With regard to skills, the students came to see them as more than subject matter and as "conduits" for learning; rather, through use in and between the contexts of the IS organizing centers, students came to appreciate skills such as thinking, writing, reading and interpreting 'texts,' listening, discussing, doing research, participating, cooperating, and evaluating as integral "tools" in the learning process (see Oliver & Gershman, 1989 on Reddy's discussion of the conduit versus tools metaphors). Students learned that the more they used these tools, the better they became at using them and the stronger their 'constructions' of knowledge became. With regard to community, students came to value their relationships with peers and faculty as fellow learners in a shared learning experience. The students interviewed found that being members of a learning community involved sharing knowledge, jointly constructing meanings for relationships of every sort in the IS setting, and

valuing such community-building qualities as shared experiences, appreciation and acceptance of diversity in abilities and roles among community members, responsibility (in working toward individual as well as community learning goals), informed choice, and knowing others well and being known both as individuals and as learners.

The students interviewed said that they came to understand interrelationships of content, skills, and community--and not just because they were told by IS faculty that this was the understanding they should have as college learners. Although the students did not ignore the advice of IS faculty in this regard, the students found this advice confirmed through their learning experiences as participants in Integrated Studies and from their reflections about these experiences, whether self-reflection or in conversation with other IS participants and the researcher of this study. Students appreciated that their 'integrations' (as ever-changing products and as an on-going process) were openly valued by their IS peers and the IS faculty.

The students interviewed were adamant in making a distinction between "being students" and "becoming learners," and that they themselves valued their new understanding of what it meant to become a learner. They believed that their new understanding would continue to evolve and would find use in their learning outside of IS in the University and throughout their lives. Although the students interviewed did experience discrepancies in their experiences as integrative learners, both within IS and in the larger University setting, they responded at times by using their new understanding of what it means to be a learner and at other times by reverting to their

former methods of learning but with an awareness of the inconsistencies of their actions to their new understanding of themselves as college learners.

During the closing days of the spring semester, the last observations, interviews, and informal conversations with IS students took place. As students turned in their final exams, checked their IS mailboxes for the last time, and said goodbyes to friends in the IS lounge and in the faculty offices, most students experienced mixed feelings: a certain sadness about leaving their IS learning community--of leaving very special friends (but with intentions to keep in touch) and a special learning environment--and at the same time the joys of coming to know one another and what they accomplished together as learners. They left wanting to believe that the larger University community would support their new vision of themselves as learners and would appreciate the contributions they would make to their next learning experience as the learners they had become.

New Visions of Integrative Curriculum

Shoemaker (1989) made a valuable contribution to the understanding of the concept of integration in her discussion of recent studies of various models of integration, particularly as they have been used in curriculum design. However, the conspicuous absence of discussions of integration in terms of process philosophy was noted in Chapter 4. Whitehead's principle of process, "how an entity becomes constitutes what an entity is," is described by Fetz (1988) and, in relation to this study,

could be restated as "how one becomes a learner constitutes what a learner is." In terms of a learner's relationship to curriculum, the learner would be viewed as experiencing in the curriculum rather than experiencing the curriculum, the latter implying that the student is outside of the curriculum rather than being an integral part of it. Whitehead's principle of process informs both the concept of integration as a process and the means by which integration may be studied.

Process philosophy describes reality in terms of relationships and movement, a continuous forming and reforming of relationships. As the findings of this study show, the concept of integration is readily described in terms of relationships. From the process perspective, curriculum in relation to its constituent elements would be dynamic, emergent, integrative, organic, holistic, and synergistic. Gehrke (1991) suggests that educators embrace new metaphors in considering integration, particularly metaphors which avoid the traditional rational view of educational processes as being neat, orderly, linear, and predictable.

Efforts to provide opportunities for integrative learning experiences, such as those of participants of the Integrated Studies Program, would do well to heed the advice of Gershman (1988) to "[keep] open the possibility of novel patterns at all times" (p.223). To achieve what Whitehead (1929) encourages as "ideas thrown into fresh combination" (p. 1), Gershman suggests that as educators "we must provide for the activity of the student's mind such that he or she freely perceives a new abstract pattern, in art or literature or mathematics. We must provide the opportunity for the student to relate it to that stream of consciousness that is life" (p. 223). Certainly this

describes the integrative experiences of learners in the Integrated Studies Program. Certainly this brief exploration of process philosophy should serve to illustrate its value for achieving a better understanding the concept of integration.

Recommendations for Future Study

If integration in education is not to be considered "just another buzzword in education" (Clabargh, 1989), then it must become a focus of continuing theoretical and classroom research at all levels of education. The recommendations for future study apply specifically to IS, although the questions raised could apply generally to studies of integration as concept.

This study describes integration as an integrative experience from the perspective of the student participants. The students interviewed in this study were chosen on the basis of their active participation in the program and their ability to articulate their learning experience. There were students in the program, however, who did not seem to be as engaged as the students who were interviewed. The IS curriculum design and program goals are intended to accommodate student diversity and, for the most part, this is achieved. It would be useful to understand the IS experience from the perspective of students who were not apparently actively engaged in the program in the hopes of maintaining diversity within the program and meeting the learning needs of these students.

As student experience, the Integrated Studies Program represents an radical departure from that of first-year students in the more traditional approach to general education at the University. Based on their limited experiences with more traditional courses on campus, IS students expressed concern about making the transition "back to the reality" of the traditional approach. Follow-up studies of IS students as they go through this transition, might help IS faculty provide support for these students. The intent of this suggestion is not to imply that IS students have 'deficiencies' as a result of their IS experience; rather its is in response to Watzlawick's (1978) belief that once an individual's thinking has been reframed, it is very difficult for the individual to return to the former way of thinking. A study of IS students 'in transition' could also consider whether IS students continue to be 'the learners they have become' or whether they revert to their precollege beliefs about learning and teaching.

A study of how faculty view their experience in IS (in essence, do this study from a faculty perspective) would inform the implementation of integrated curriculum and the preparation of faculty for participation in the program. to ask faculty the following questions: How do individual faculty members view the student-faculty relationship in light of the students' new understanding of it? Do faculty experience the integrative aspects of participation in an integrated curriculum in ways which correspond to those of the students, i.e they redefine for themselves what it means to be a learner? What impact does participating as faculty in an integrated curriculum have on their teaching once they return to their respective departments?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE SCHEDULES AND READINGS

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES: FALL, 1989

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-10:30 Staff Meeting Meeting	9-10:30 Program Meeting		9-10:30 Program	
10:30-noon Writing Groups *				10-noon Faculty Seminar
1-4:00 Geology Labs	1-3:30 CLU Geology Help	2-3:00 Seminar Session (voluntary)	1-3:30 Book	

*Additional times scheduled on an individual basis for tutorials in writing.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING UNITS AND BOOK LIST

Introduction: World War I:	Cousins, Anatomy of an Illness
	Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front poetry (from period around World War I) Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby
Where Our Dreams Lie:	Huxley, Brave New World
1859:	Chopin, The Awakening Welch, Fools Crow Tolstoy, The Death of Ivan Ilych
Renaissance:	Shakespeare, Hamlet Boccaccio, The Decameron Brecht, Galileo

Plus, Geology text

Supplementary Reader: poetry; Marx "Communist Manifesto"; excerpts from Freud and Darwin.

APPENDIX B

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR WRITING

Content

Level 1: The paper does not accomplish its purpose. It may lack focus or suffer from inadequate development or lack of clarity and/or specificity.

Level 2: The paper comes close to accomplishing its purpose. It is well focused but inadequately developed or occasionally lacking in clarity or specificity.

Level 3: The paper accomplishes its purpose. It is thoughtful and well developed.

Level 4: The paper goes well beyond accomplishing its purpose. It shows unusual thoughtfulness, creativity or originality.

Structure/Organization

Level 1: The paper has no clear organizational structure. It is very difficult for the reader to follow.

Level 2: The paper has an apparent organizational structure but is marred by frequent gaps in logical or verbal coherence that confuse the reader.

Level 3: The paper is generally well organized and coherent, though it may seem a bit mechanical or be difficulty to follow in spots.

Level 4: The paper is well organized and easy to follow, with a clear internal structure and careful attention to the subtleties of logical and verbal coherence.

Conventions/Style

Level 1: The paper is so frequently marred by distracting errors in usage and/or mechanics that it becomes unreadable.

Level 2: The paper is generally readable but marred by distracting lapses in usage and/or mechanics.

Level 3: The paper conforms to the standard conventions of usage and mechanics, but is unremarkable in terms of language and style.

or

The language of the paper shows signs of vigor and freshness, and there is some sense of individual style. There are few distracting errors in usage and mechanics.

Level 4: The language in the paper is consistently vigorous and fresh, and the writer displays a keen sense of style. The paper conforms to the standard conventions of usage and mechanics.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR CLU

Participation
Level 1: You are present and seem to be interested in what is going on. but you don't get into the discussion.

Level 2: You get into the discussion occasionally.

Level 3: You are actively involved in the discussion.

Level 4: You are actively involved in the discussion and the quality of your contributions is excellent, showing real thought and creativity.

Thinking
Level 1: Your comments show some thought about the material in the reports.

Level 2: You are actively involved thinking about material and asking questions.

Level 3: Your are thinking critically about the material and about the comments others are making.

Level 4: You think critically about the material, integrate ideas, tie the material into other themes, and apply it to current issues.

Preparation
Level 1: You prepare your assigned reports on time.

Level 2: Your report is more than simply a copying of material from one source. You indicate your sources.

Level 3: You have used more than one source, you use your own words, and you have done some original thinking about the topic.

Level 4: You have integrated a number of sources, have added some interpretive material of your own, and have tied the topic onto larger issues. You have become a resource on this topic.

Group Interaction
Level 1: You are present and not impeding the group's activity.

Level 2: You take some responsibility for keeping communication going.

Level 3: You keep communication going and you are a good listener. You don't interrupt. you respond to what others say, and you try to follow topics up.

Level 4: You take a leadership role in helping others to express and develop their ideas.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR BOOK SEMINAR

Participation
Level 1: You are present and seem to be interested in what is going on but you do not get into the discussion.

Level 2: You get into the discussion occasionally.

Level 3: You are actively involved in the discussion.

Level 4: You are actively involved in the discussion and the quality of your contributions is excellent, showing real thought and creativity.
Thinking
Level 1: Your comments show some thought about the material.

Level 2: You are actively involved thinking about the text, as evidenced by comments and questions about the material in the reading.

Level 3: Your are thinking critically about the reading and about the comments others are making in the group. You make comparisons to other things that have been read or thought about in the program.

Level 4: You not only think critically about the reading, and compare materials, you also integrate ideas, tie the reading to the general theme, and show an ability to make the material applicable to current issues.
Preparation
Level 1: You come in with the book read.

Level 2: You indicate in some way that is clear to an observer that you have read the entire book carefully. (You refer to specific pages in talking about a topic and you have a clear sense of the major ideas and themes.)

Level 3: You indicate in some way that is clear to an observer that you have thought and interacted with the book. (Underlining, making notes, preparing items to talk about, having agenda items.)

Level 4: You have done all that is indicated above and in addition you have prepared some material that links the reading to other aspects of the program.
Group Interaction
Level 1: You are present and not impeding the group's activity.

Level 2: You take some responsibility for keeping communication going.

Level 3: You keep communication going and you also are a good listener. (That is, you don't interrupt, you respond to what people say, and you try to follow up on what others say.)

Level 4: You take a leadership role in helping others to express and develop their ideas.

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