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## **Introducing body movement/relaxation awareness in an urban elementary school : a case study in school improvement.**

Ethel B. Grossman  
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INTRODUCING BODY MOVEMENT/RELAXATION AWARENESS  
IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:  
A CASE STUDY IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A Dissertation Presented

by

ETHEL B. GROSSMAN

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1996

School of Education

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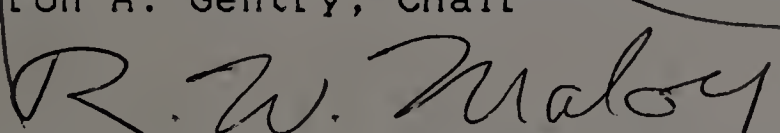
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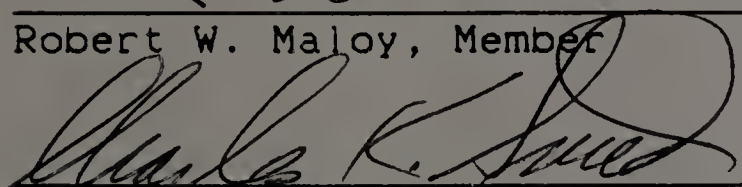
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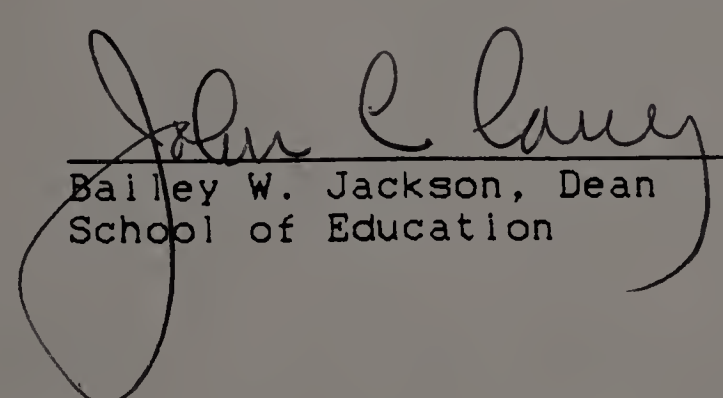
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my children, Bruce and Zoe, who continue to lift me onto higher peaks of respect, patience, and nurturing. I take pride in their humanity and decency.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful for the support of the many people who helped make this paper possible. Special thanks go to Dr. Byrd L. Jones, who guided me through the organization of the study; my dissertation committee, Dr. Atron A. Gentry, Dr. Charles K. Smith, and Dr. Robert W. Maloy for their assistance; Dr. Susan Savitt, my on site mentor, and Dr. Kevin Stack for his invaluable advice and encouragement.

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In closing, I want to thank my buddies, Gabriel, Sammy and Nicky-Solo for their loyalty and love.

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCING BODY MOVEMENT/RELAXATION AWARENESS

IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

A CASE STUDY IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

MAY 1996

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This case study investigated the planning, implementation, and assessment of a staff development project designed to reduce stress and provide a support base for improved learning by introducing Movement/Relaxation skills to an urban elementary school. Focus of the research was directed towards meeting the needs of differently-abled children in the low income African American community. It examined possible body/mind strategies for making the curriculum more accessible to the active learning style of African American children.

The program also took into consideration concerns of the adult learners among the professionals. It acknowledged school improvement as an ongoing process that must appeal to the efficacy of teachers who may commit to change when they feel what they are doing will make a difference. During workshops and coaching sessions, an action team of volunteer



educators explored aspects of nonverbal communication in space, ways of bringing Movement/Relaxation into the curriculum and techniques for developing body depth, or inner space, and relaxation. The action team generated a group dynamic that enabled the participants to: (1) share experiences; (2) clarify understandings; (3) encourage each other in the classroom practice of body/mind activities; (4) gain an awareness of nonverbal communication and how to improve teacher/student relationships; (5) realize the value of relaxation as basic to concentration, attention and learning; (6) excite the interest of other faculty members; and (7) foster a more nurturing school climate.

Endorsement of the study by central administration strengthened the commitment of school personnel who contributed towards its implementation. Cooperation by the principal, math and reading coordinators, as well as the responsibility demonstrated by school aides were essential to the progress of this research. The time spent working together served to bond the participants and those who lent supportive assistance to their efforts.

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## CHAPTER I

### STRESS AND RELAXATION IN AN URBAN SCHOOL

Overstressed conditions in homes, communities, and classrooms have plagued experienced teachers across the nation, especially in schools serving low income African American neighborhoods. This anxiety-stress and getting children back into a learning mode appropriate to their needs requires responsible investigation and attention. John I. Goodlad noted that "students appearing to be less able can and do approach the learning levels of those successful students when instruction is dovetailed to their special needs."<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to meet the standards of competence, most administrators and teachers have opted for conformity and traditional methods of acquiring the appearance of stability. Orderly, attractive classrooms, consistency in handling discipline, carefully planned lessons, clarity of instruction, supportive feedback, all characteristics of effective schools are not enough to resolve the problems of many differently-abled learners.<sup>2</sup>

Opposing viewpoints persist regarding the school's effectiveness in helping children achieve academically. Youngsters draw from each other physical postures and attitudes which, as noted by Goodlad, would appear to give credence to James S. Coleman's observations that "what

children bring from their homes and encounter there among children from other homes, not teachers and their practices, is what contributes most to their academic attainments." Other educators feel that teachers can make a difference. Goodlad pointed to the fact that there are teachers who believe that managing the schools, principals along with teachers, become dedicated and committed to developing ongoing strategies for self-improvement in dealing with the real concerns facing their schools.<sup>3</sup>

#### Purpose

This dissertation reports on the design, implementation, and assessment of a staff development project with volunteer teachers at the Ulysses Byas Elementary School to introduce Movement/Relaxation activities as a way of reducing anxiety-stress in African American students. Through the collaborative efforts of the teachers and researcher, the expectation was to develop experiences for the classroom that might contribute to stress reduction, improved body/mind integration in keeping with the active learning style of African American children, and encourage spontaneous participation in attaining academic growth.

### Significance

The study can be of value to the younger staff members in that it involved them in movement, a neglected aspect of the African American child's active learning style. While the possible value of Movement/Relaxation to education needs ongoing staff development, teachers and their students were trying simple breathing and relaxation activities. The friendlier atmosphere in the building reflected the interest generated by the participants and the study.

Staff development suggests that change may occur when individuals working within the school can commit to active involvement in the planning, assessment, and implementation phases.<sup>4</sup> Those teachers who worked with this kind of dedication achieved a measure of success. Collaborative efforts and mutual support provide human resources that may yield positive changes and reinforce the staff development concept as a viable means of school self-renewal.

Since there is not too much research available on the impact of Movement/Relaxation on education, any results that prove workable may help others and stimulate further investigation. While staff development projects are specific to the needs of the local school unit involved in the change process, there are educators experiencing problems in traditional classrooms who stay alert to new studies.



### Staff Development

Staff development, as a means of focusing teachers' attention on alternative methods for dealing with local school issues, can be effective if it is presented in a nonthreatening setting, shows educators how they can use the concept without entailing great expense, and points out how the instructor can use it to make learning meaningful to the students.<sup>5</sup> Seymour B. Sarason urged the need to build underlying relevancy into any staff development program, so that teachers are not simply "trading one set of books for another."<sup>6</sup> Evaluation should consider whether the new method is involving children in an exploratory mode where they can participate in further clarifying constructs.

The Roosevelt Public School/University of Massachusetts Project begun in 1982 brought together professionals in the Roosevelt School District committed to improving the quality of education in a predominately low income African American community. Under the guiding hand of Ulysses Byas, the then Superintendent of Schools, the Roosevelt School District and the University of Massachusetts entered into a joint effort to set up a staff development project.

It has been effectively shown that a program that works for one school culture may not be wholly applicable to another school culture.<sup>7</sup> The Roosevelt Public School/UMass staff development project was based on an analysis of Roosevelt's problems and needs.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of staff

development was to research self-improvement studies that would directly benefit the Roosevelt condition. The Roosevelt Union Free School District saw in this collaborative effort an opportunity for continuous professional growth in the hopes that the educators might become more involved, among other things, in activities and study to identify inhibitors to wholesome learning."<sup>9</sup>

Teachers were encouraged to participate in this collaborative enterprise to develop concepts that could have meaning for Roosevelt's children and their families.

Movement/Relaxation and stress reduction address an aspect of the goal to research inhibitors to wholesome learning.

While movement expression, along with other nonverbal behaviors, make up 90 percent of communication skills, they remain the least understood of the organizing systems contributing to higher order thinking. Universities training teachers do not include movement education among the required courses. This makes for a handicap where instructors work with differently-abled children who need access to all their supportive inner resources to help them in learning and retaining academic material.

#### Community Setting

The Roosevelt community, according to information from the 1990 census, as compared to 1980, breaks down as follows as:<sup>10</sup>

TABLE 1

Village Population			
	1980	1990	Percent of Total Population
Black	12,516	13,331	88.7
Asian	44	58	.4
Hispanic	290	1,309	8.7
White	1,259	332	2.2

Although the Hispanic population has grown considerably in the past ten years, by sheer numbers alone, Roosevelt's problems are predominantly concerned with meeting the needs of the African American families living there now. In fact, many Hispanics go into nearby Freeport, where there are Spanish-owned and operated bodegas, churches, social clubs, and a supermarket. As with any community, however, all members are in some way a part of the major problems of the area.

At this point in time, Roosevelt residents are separated along socioeconomic lines reflecting the economic range existing in African American society today. This bears out Willard L. Hogeboom's reference to William Julius Wilson's study in 1980 indicating "that class differences within Black society have become as important or even more important than race."<sup>11</sup> With the passage of civil rights legislation and court rulings, many more African Americans

were able to take advantage of educational opportunities. In Roosevelt, those owning homes in areas west and northwest of Nassau Road, both Black and White, are largely professionals whose children of school age attend private schools. Those residents living east of Nassau Road generally are dependent on welfare. The Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics estimated that in 1990, 12 percent of Blacks earned less than \$15,000 and 8.2 percent were unemployed.<sup>12</sup>

Roosevelt is ranked within the top ten Nassau communities with people living below the poverty level. Middle income families are also having a hard time trying to keep up with mortgage payments, high real estate taxes, and family and community responsibilities. Up to now the problem of unemployment has put a strain on the lives of poor families. In the face of budget cutbacks, however, large numbers of people in every socioeconomic level will be out of work. This will present serious concerns to the Roosevelt community.

Like much of the nation, drug and alcohol abuse have been critical issues to Roosevelt. Campaigns in the schools to educate children, as well as the community banding together in programs letting drug pushers and users know the anti-drug feelings of the citizens, have not done enough to stop drug trafficking. With increased joblessness, this situation may worsen.

At present, Roosevelt's low business tax base makes it impossible to afford essential services necessary to maintain the health and safety of the community. It depends on Hempstead Township and neighboring communities for sanitation, fire, and police needs. It has no independent government offices in place to handle major internal problems. The public school network is the one place to which Roosevelt contributes support and in which it has representation. It is the schools that Roosevelt looks to for quality education so that their children may have opportunities for a better life.

In contrast to the downside scenario, there has been an attempt to revitalize the business district along Nassau Road. There has been renovation of the shops and the building of a shopping mall in the center of town. In addition, a new housing development has been constructed on a site just north of the business district. An investigation of the housing site revealed an influx of middle and upper middle income families has moved back into this area.

Further south on Nassau Road a public library has been completed with expectations that it will act as a center for Black history on Long Island. The project is being supervised by a leading developer of libraries, who has designed it for performance and growth into the twenty-first century. It is already working on programs with the schools

and community, building self-esteem and respect for culture and education in the lives of the citizens.

### School Setting

The Roosevelt public schools serve approximately 1,900 students from kindergarten through grade six and approximately 1,375 students from grades seven through twelve. The Ulysses Byas Elementary School, site of this study, serves approximately 428 students, of which 98 percent are African American with 2 percent Hispanic or other descent.<sup>13</sup> The Ulysses Byas School, recently renamed to honor the retired superintendent, was built in 1929. In 1971, the district reverted from the Princeton Plan back to a neighborhood school system.

The 1990 staff has twenty-one classroom teachers, four teacher assistants, two computer lab aides, a reading coordinator, a math coordinator, a librarian, two part-time music instructors, an art teacher, a full time nurse, a part-time social worker, and a part-time school psychologist. Due to normal attrition and an increased number of retirees, the staff is made up of a number of persons under the age of thirty-five. The school members who participated in the study included a cross-section of the staff.

### Generalizations to Other Learning Climates

At present, there is daily frustration on the parts of both teaching staffs and students. This tension caused by aggravated stress shows up not only in learning problems, but also in a high incidence of discipline problems. In a survey conducted by Goodlad, "approximately 38 percent of the children in the first three grades perceived behavior control to take the most time."<sup>14</sup>

Stress-related problems contribute to a poor learning climate. The school's excuse of "not enough money" or "not enough time" does not serve those students who remain illiterate, and those who leave school without graduating. Equally ill-served are the children who come to school to learn and find themselves disrupted by noise, acting out behaviors, and classroom fighting. In school, children can integrate and internalize that discipline, systematically developed, which will help them question, interact, and communicate with significant bodies of knowledge. They need and should have opportunities for "encounters designed to inform, enlighten, and stimulate thought."<sup>15</sup>

When youngsters are labeled "slow learners," they may develop a sense of self-consciousness about their abilities now and in future life. The effects are cumulative. Children might hold back physically, emotionally, and mentally from participating in total involvement of the self in learning. The instructor, attempting to teach to these

holding patterns, winds up compounding one failure with another. Along the way, relaxation, imagination, and joy of learning are replaced by tension, self-defeating competition, fear of failure, loss of position and direction. A pattern of non-participation is set in motion for the differently-abled child sitting in a traditional classroom. The school, in trying to meet the community's expectations, insists on a teacher-controlled classroom. The instructor is responsible for all the decisionmaking regarding scheduling of events, curriculum, seating plan, behavior, and evaluation of progress.<sup>16</sup> This setting is tension producing for the differently-abled child. In most cases, it provides little opportunity for self-determination, cooperative interaction, and freedom of expression on the part of children who need it most, those with low self-worth, anxiety, and no sense of purpose to their lives.

#### The African American Child's Experience of the Problem

African American children are poorly served in traditional classrooms that do not take into consideration their active learning style when planning lessons and organizing the curriculum. Restricted movement, few opportunities for cooperative interaction, and routine lessons contribute to an environment that is both learning inhibiting and stressful. In the past, hyperactivity, a



form of anxiety-stress, usually signaled a discipline problem or a child with low intelligence. African American educators now believe this behavior may often be the sign of a bored student, who requires a stimulating presentation and hands-on experience to generate inner motivation and self-regulation.

Given the stress that low income African American children undergo, public schools need to evaluate and implement ways of providing a stress-reduced learning atmosphere. Introducing Movement/Relaxation on an elementary school level, attempts to reach students when they are still impressionable and find it easier to internalize new ideas.

#### The Supportive Role of Movement/Relaxation

Stress goes hand-in-hand with relaxation to meet the body/mind requirements for activation and rest. Moshe Feldenkrais, a pioneer in body/mind research, acknowledged the significance of a balanced relationship between stress and relaxation, extending it into the broader field of human interaction. He maintained that the environment made the difference in how a person learned to respond to life experiences. He stated that "to change a habit, we must change the environment so that the symptom is not sustained, or we must learn a new response to the existing stimuli."<sup>17</sup>

Movement/Relaxation is a step in the direction of reducing anxiety-stress. It may improve the academic performance of differently-abled elementary school children by making it possible for them to enjoy spontaneous participation in the learning process. It provides opportunities for them to use more of their inner experiences through exercises that ground them physically, emotionally, and mentally. The activities take them from their inner space, within the body, enlisting physical awareness and visualization, out towards their own movement range in outer space. In this way, they are involved with simulating the natural progression of developmental movement, which is the basis of body/mind integration. While the form is new to the classroom teacher, the problem solving techniques utilized include methods trained professionals practice in all areas of the curriculum. Some of these are working with goals, main themes, sequence, before and after, cause and affect, and beginning-middle-end.

Movement/Relaxation may enable children with difficulty in nonverbal communication develop freedom for adequacy in their receptive and expressive skills. Stephen Nowicki and Marshall P. Duke discovered, in their research, that children who have trouble fitting in socially have not acquired sufficient nonverbal skills to freely interact with

clear messages. Nonverbal skills are necessary for verbal clarity.<sup>18</sup>

### Limitations

Implementation of the study was hampered by building renovations that interfered with scheduling time, place, and class coverage. The upcoming standardized tests forced the study into a short time frame which restricted participation, collaborative efforts, and feedback accuracy of teacher/student behaviors. Restraints may have been influenced by the action of individual personalities on the group's interaction, as well as the personal disposition of the researcher for the project.

Opportunities to experiment with the project over a longer period of time might have yielded insight into future classroom application. With an improved time frame, the team of volunteers may have developed firm commitment and been a source of a support system to keep the change process ongoing.

### Research Questions

Important phases in planning this low-cost school-based staff development project included the design format, implementation, and assessment. Consultation with experts in the body/mind field, years of attending classes and workshops, review of the selected literature, and

twenty-three years of experience in traditional classrooms afforded the background for research questions that guided the progress of the study:

1. How can activities from the movement field be understood and effectively translated into practical application for the classroom?
2. How can activities in the workshops influence change in teacher/student interaction?
3. How can working with an action team help teachers maintain an open mind and in time become risk-takers?
4. What kinds of materials and support do teachers need to implement change?

Since the primary change agent is the classroom teacher, the researcher focused attention on helping instructors see how to implement Movement/Relaxation concepts. In accommodating an active learning style, there is the opportunity for changing the passive learner to an active learner.

#### Outline of Chapters

Chapter I establishes the environment of stress that generally affects school communities and the larger community. It states the problem in Roosevelt and describes the school and community settings. It notes the purpose,

significance, and limitations of the study. It also outlines the five chapters of the research project.

Chapter II reviews the selected literature and discusses the following: educating minority children; the body/mind factor in learning; breathing rhythm/learning rhythm; the triune brain; Movement/Relaxation as stress reducer and skills reinforcer; learning characteristics of African American children; effective schools research applied to African American children; and staff development.

Chapter III details the procedure followed in preparing for the study. It describes the sequence of activities and collegial climate that went into the planning of the workshops, as well as the support from the principal and aides. It also includes data and events experienced in the implementation and evaluation phases.

Chapter IV delineates the workshop activities including the objectives, material, and workshop procedures. The workshops dealt with: space and communication; introducing Movement/Relaxation into the curriculum; and teaching the body to develop depth and relaxation. It also details the coaching session strategies and activities.

Chapter V examines the results and conclusions of the workshops and coaching sessions, as well as the need for continued body/mind research to ascertain its significance for the education of African American children, with particular attention to the differently-abled.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future (New York: McGraw Hill, 1984), 104.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald R. Edmonds, "Progress of School Improvement: Overview," Educational Leadership (December 1982), 4.

<sup>3</sup>Goodlad, pp.4, 256.

<sup>4</sup>Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith, "Effective Schools: A Review," The Elementary School Journal, vol. 83, no. 4 (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1983), 442.

<sup>5</sup>Susan Loucks-Horsely and Leslie F. Hergert, An Action Guide to School Improvement (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1984).

<sup>6</sup>Seymour B. Sarason, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982), 59.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>8</sup>Byrd L. Jones, A Report on Roosevelt Public Schools: Strengths and Potential Improvements (Amherst, MA, University of Massachusetts, 1983).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>10</sup>Roosevelt Board of Education et al., Roosevelt Schools Self-Study for the Middle States Assembly of Elementary Schools (Roosevelt, NY: 1983), 36 and The Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, census ed., vol 2, code ISBN 0-918417-4 (Arlington, VA: CACI Marketing Systems, 1992), 216-B.

<sup>11</sup>Willard L. Hogeboom, "Education: The Key to Black Progress," American Educator, Fall 1980, 29.

<sup>12</sup>The Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 9th ed., code ISBN 0-918417-50-3 (Arlington, VA: CACI Marketing Systems, 1994), 217-B.

<sup>13</sup>Roosevelt Public Schools, Student Census Report (Roosevelt, NY Census Office, 1990).

<sup>14</sup>Goodlad, 100.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>17</sup>Moshe Feldenkrais, The Potent Self: A Guide to Spontaneity (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 85.

<sup>18</sup>Stephen Nowicki and Marshall P. Duke, Helping the Child Who Doesn't Fit In (Atlanta, GA: Peachtree, 1992), 5.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of selected literature supported the proposition that redesigning the elementary school curriculum to incorporate Movement/Relaxation might be effective in advancing the academic development of differently-abled children focusing on the African American child. The organization of this review included the following topics:

- A. Educating Minority Children
- B. The Body/Mind Factor in Learning
- C. Breathing Rhythm/Learning Rhythm
- D. The Triune Brain
- E. Movement/Relaxation as Stress Reducer and Skills Reinforcer
- F. Learning Characteristics of African American Children
- G. Effective Schools Research Applied to African American Children
- H. Staff Development

The researcher looked into past attitudes and ways of handling the education of minority children in order to understand some of the stresses in the public school system that may have impeded their academic achievement. Negative



attitudes that prejudiced the system over one hundred years ago were found still in evidence today. Topic A examines issues of minority education. Topics B, C, and D investigate body/mind developments that impact on learning. Topic E looks into how Movement/Relaxation may contribute towards reducing stress and gaining body reinforcement for skills acquisition. Topic F examines the active and interactive learning style of African American children ignored in most traditional classrooms. Topic G centers on reaching standards of excellence in teaching and learning using strategies beneficial to African American children, in particular those who are differently-abled. Topic H researches staff development as a way of bringing about school improvement.

#### Educating Minority Children

Although Horace Mann envisioned a public school system that would help the lower class participate in the mainstream of America by gaining skills necessary for social and economic mobility, Charles E. Silberman noted that "the public school never has done much of a job educating youngsters from the lower class or from immigrant homes." The schools, from their inception, have not been responsive to the needs of poor and minority children. He pointed to the fact that American schools fashioned the curriculum according to European teaching methods which were meant to

instruct children from upper class families.<sup>1</sup> Instead of helping the lower class improve their conditions, the schools managed to keep them in their place and widened the separation between classes.

Basically, lower class and immigrant children had to adapt to the schools. Aside from studying words and passages that had no meaning, suffering corporal punishment, living with mandated silence throughout the school day, Dr. Leonard Covello complained that "the constant drilling and the pressure of memorizing, the homework, and detention after school raised havoc with many students." As a person of Italian descent, he noted that no mention had ever been made of Italy, the Italian language, or heritage. His reaction as a child was that being "Italian meant something inferior and a barrier was erected between children of Italian origin and their parents. This was the accepted process of Americanization. We were becoming American by learning how to be ashamed of our parents."<sup>2</sup> This situation was compounded by the fact that the children, uprooted from their homeland and alienated from their culture, had to repress their feelings in a show of obedience to a school climate that extended them little respect or compassion.

Most immigrant families experienced stress with regard to the schools, doubting the need for education. According to Silberman, "they viewed the schools with suspicion and outright hostility." In Europe, the peasant children did

not attend school. The only way they knew to improve their lives was by hard work. When low wages and unemployment brought economic strain to the family, children as young as ten years old were withdrawn from school to get jobs and bring in extra money to the home. According to Stephan Thernstrom, often mobility "was achieved by sacrificing the education of the younger generation." Those who made it to the middle class usually did not do so through education, but rather by means of business, politics, and "to a considerable extent through crime."<sup>3</sup>

The attitudes that keep the poor and minority population from gaining economic and social mobility in mainstream America are experienced today in the African American and Hispanic communities. Most public schools do not treat these children as young people with inner resources that need to be nurtured, expressed, and empowered towards a productive lifestyle. In The Me Nobody Knows a ghetto child wrote of his feelings about school:

When I first get up in the morning, I feel fresh and it seems like it would be a good day to me. But after I get in school, things change and they seem to turn into problems for me. And by the end of the day I don't even feel like I'm young. I feel tired.<sup>4</sup>

Lower class children can be as creative and perserving as middle or upper class youngsters. Harry Morgan related that while children come to school full of enthusiasm and vivid imaginations "from the third grade through the upper grades, however, there is a steady decline in group-measured

performance of Black children to do school work."<sup>5</sup> Their eagerness to learn is diminished by intimidation, fear of rejection, lowered self-esteem, lack of confidence in their talents and repression of their feelings.

Morgan attributed this behavior to the school climate that forces African American children into the difficult position of having to "channel their energy until given permission to release it. He claimed this restrictive behavior is particularly hard on "lower income children whose parents emphasize survival skills rather than conformity, docility, and quiet manners, more typical of middle class child-rearing."<sup>6</sup>

This repressive environment is destructive to the natural learning style of African American children, whose energy level is high and whose motor activity is advanced, particularly in the early years. G. Rosaline Preudhomme commented on the hidden message conveyed by this confining school climate stating that "throughout the majority of their experience in schools, Black children learn that the schools do not like them, do not respond to them, do not appreciate their culture and do not think they can learn."<sup>7</sup>

Jonathan Kozol's report on the public schools in Boston supported this view. He described the resistance to educating African American youth with details of school plant deterioration, use of old social studies books that made no reference to contributions by Blacks in America's

development, working with boring, irrelevant basal readers, and prejudiced teacher attitudes that shape African American children's self-image. He portrayed the reading instructor as "intensely persuading." The children were taken out of their homeroom and "in reading with docility and in writing without their own imagination, were always willing to confirm a White teacher's idea of them and to put forward in their writings and conversations not what they really felt or dreamed but what they had good reason by now to know that she wanted to believe about them."<sup>8</sup>

Black mothers getting reports from the schools regarding the hyperactivity of their children begin to see this motor advantage as bad. Their response is to quell the enthusiasm expressed in their children's movement in the hopes of improving school performance. Morgan asserted that "these mothers need encouragement and support in initiating and sustaining an active, thoughtful environment of unrestricted warm acceptance."<sup>9</sup>

Sheila Tobias referred to a passage in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World to establish a background in which to reflect on how public education is serving lower class differently-abled students. Huxley envisioned five social classes, three of which undergo arrested development and "are programmed in vitro for a lower class future." If there is any individuality left in the embryos after birth, it "will be conditioned out of each child, until there is no

one in this brave new world who does not grow up accepting and even loving his bleak servitude."<sup>10</sup>

The book implied that if people were managed by a "science of human differences," it would enable those in power to access each person's capabilities and place him/her in the proper slot to function in society. Using standardized tests to measure intelligence and ability is education's way of accepting this premise. Tobias confirmed that "education in this country is becoming a process of separating the gifted from the average, the intelligent from the slow." Those children who do well on these tests are provided with educational challenges, while those who do poorly are not expected to learn much. Their low quality education indicates this and condemns them to "menial, dead-end jobs."<sup>11</sup>

This testing beginning in the early grades is harmful to differently-abled youngsters, since many of them take longer to develop reading and math skills. Susan Harter observed that these tests let them know by the second or third grade that they are "smart " or "dumb." Harter commented that early labeling affects their self-esteem and their ability to be successful learners. Jeannie Oakes suggested that testing leading to tracking is a tactic to "resegregate desegregated schools." The result of this inequality of education for minorities, according to Tobias, is to "produce a whole class of people, particularly

inner-city Blacks and Hispanics, who have little role in our society."<sup>12</sup> Stress caused by the mishandling of minority education combined with family pressures for economic and societal survival may serve to perpetuate a sense of hopelessness of ever achieving mobility through education.

### The Body/Mind Factor in Learning

Frank K. Merry and Robert V. Merry referred to early research by Wilder Penfield establishing the fact that "for every stimulus going to the cerebral cortex, a concomitant activation is noted in the motor area."<sup>13</sup> Merry and Merry indicated that during the embryonic period, there are the beginnings of the heartbeat, nervous system, skeleton, and vital organs. Structure and function develop at that time according to "two fundamental laws: (1) development in a head-foot direction; and (2) development from the trunk outward to the periphery of the body." Jean Piaget determined that "by the time a child is born, development of the mind has already been started. The nervous system and the sensory mechanisms are operating." He also noted that the "physiological development before birth is clearly necessary for the cognitive development, which will take place later."<sup>14</sup>

### Maturation and Learning

Eugene G. Roach and Newell C. Kephart researched a perceptual-motor theory that identified a sequence of learning stages which children go through to establish a foundation for constructs of more complex learnings. Underlying their theory of maturation and learning was an emergence of movement patterns. One proceeded from generalized gross motor activity (total body involvement) to differentiated behavior (movements such as head turning and head lifting), while the other pattern of movement progressed from specific (reflexive behaviors such as sucking and grasping) to generalized integrated behavior (an example of this would be reaching for an object, grasping it, and bringing it to the mouth for sucking).<sup>15</sup>

Merry and Merry reported on studies involving patterns of motor growth that follow a similar sequence for each child, with differences occurring in the rate at which specific motoric behavior is manifested. The research confirmed that "both the rate and pattern depend more upon maturation, or inner growth, than upon training and experience." Merry and Merry noted that in acquiring motor skills where training is necessary, "adequate maturation must be present if the full benefit of such training is to be achieved."<sup>16</sup>

Roach and Kephart viewed maturation as a process embracing two principles evidenced in prenatal activity:



(1) cephalo-caudal principle, in which motor behavior develops from the head end down to the tail end; and (2) proximo-distal principle, in which the infant develops differentiated movement from the central axis (spine) out to the periphery (limbs). Sequence in the emergence of differentiated behavior in line with these two paths is essential to maintain an individual's physical soundness, independent movement, and to provide a range of motor responses. Roach and Kephart indicated that "It is through differentiation in pattern that the child builds up a structured motor response system which allows him to generalize his motor skills from one learning situation to another."<sup>17</sup>

Judith Stransky and Robert B. Stone advised that at birth "the stem brain controls the simple reflex movements."<sup>18</sup> Until the cortical brain develops, all of the infant's behavior is reflexive in character and survival-oriented. In addition to breathing, a few of the other survival reflexes already in place are "feeding responses, like sucking and swallowing, and visceral reflexes needed for elimination."<sup>19</sup>

Barry J. Wadsworth noted that "through maturation and interaction with the environment, sensorimotor reflexes become modified, and behaviors not present at birth begin to emerge."<sup>20</sup> Simple reflexes begin to interrelate with other reflexes until they become part of related groups, which

then are integrated into the total structure. An early example of this can be seen in the "righting response." This is one of several postural reflexes. According to Mabel E. Todd, "these are the reflexes that attend constantly to the important task of adjusting weights along the upright of the curves."<sup>21</sup> The "righting response" can be seen in the youngster's sitting right up after falling over.

Reflexive behavior plays a significant role in learning. Reflexive behavior depends on the brain's receiving a stimulus, getting the body ready to respond to the stimulus, and then taking the appropriate action. Todd stated that "stimuli from the environment and stimuli from the thinking are correlated and relayed as motion in the body." This motion is largely reflexive in nature. Todd estimated that approximately 90 percent of human behavior involves reflexive activity, leaving 10 percent for directed action.<sup>22</sup> Navel radiation is an internal support reflex that starts out as a contraction and release of physical and emotional energy in the abdomen. It later may be important in supporting forward moving active participation and attention in learning. The rooting reflex is one that impacts on learning. In the beginning, it engages the infant's mouth in looking, finding, and reaching for food. Through maturation, it develops into a search, grasp, and communication of ideas through speaking.<sup>23</sup>

### Movement Patterns

Roach and Kephart placed importance on "early motor learning and on the development of learning patterns, rather than on specific skills." At the core of their perceptual-motor theory is the recognition that a child must go through a sequence of learning stages in order to establish a base on which a hierarchy of more complex cognitive learnings could be constructed. Motor patterns allow for a wide-range of activity organized for a purpose. Movement becomes goal-directed in such a way as to engage a series of motor skills focused on accomplishing a particular task. If the skills within the motor pattern are interacting effectively, this leaves a person free to attend to other aspects of the problem and to make any necessary changes required by the situation. As Roach and Kephart observed, "motor patterns are the foundation for more complex learnings because the motor pattern provides the basis for meaningful orientation."<sup>24</sup>

Data gathered from the proprioceptive system (stimuli from internal cells, tissues, organs), as well as from proximo-distal experiments, provides the basis for the emergence of a major integrative pattern known as laterality. It is the internalization of an awareness of things occurring to the left and right of the midline (spine). It includes being able to ascertain how far left or right of center an event is located. According to Roach

and Kephart, "it is the right-left gradient which will become the basis for his concepts of the coordination of space."<sup>25</sup>

In building perceptual-motor match, the motor system, mainly through maturation, stores a body of information. This early data interacts with the perceptual field. From that point forward they operate as a team. Experimentation with perceptual data involves utilizing information already within the organism as a basis for comparing and perceiving shape, direction, and spatial relationships. Since it is the motor data that is in place at that early time, the comparing and classifying is related and matched to that information. Roach and Kephart concluded that "perceptual data are matched to motor data so that perceptual and motor information come to mean the same thing."<sup>26</sup> Because of this perceptual-motor match, the input is related to the same environmental reality.

Children using manipulatives are an example of how while motor behavior is engaged in dealing with objects, perceptual data is being transmitted regarding characteristics of the objects. If, for any reason, there is an obstacle or restriction in the path of this experimentation, Roach and Kephart noted that "the child comes to live in two worlds: a motor world and a perceptual world."<sup>27</sup> Because the child is not getting the same information from these two worlds, he/she is suspended in a

state of confusion, unable to put things together and make sense of them. This may be a source of serious learning problems since, as Wadsworth stated, "a child must act on the environment for development to proceed."<sup>28</sup>

Roach and Kephart stressed that new learning, like early learning, must be "based upon the body of skills and information already present."<sup>29</sup> Since motor information precedes perceptual data, the direction remains from perceptual to motor. When perceptual-motor match is poor, there is a way to fake it and simulate the appearance of good perceptual-motor match by a technique referred to as splinter learning. This happens when the individual is trained to perform a skill in one way. The slightest change in the structuring of that skill will serve to disorient the child. This can be seen while preparing children to take the standardized math test. If the addition sentence is placed in the horizontal position instead of the vertical, many students distort the place values and some get completely blocked.

Directionality is a motor pattern that is developed and integrated within the body using the central axis to internalize the experience of right/left, up/down, and before/behind. When there is sufficient maturation and motor activity regarding these directions, they are projected into space. Because space lacks clear points that represent up or down, left or right, without a motor base

followed by consistent and appropriate perceptual-motor match, there would be a confused relationship to objects in space, spatial relationships, and dimensions. Roach and Kephart considered the possibility "that many reversals and similar confusions in reading can be attributed to a failure to establish adequate directionality."<sup>30</sup>

### Body/Mind Benefits to Education

Roach and Kephart's research convinced them that "solid concepts rest on solid percepts which, in turn, rest on solid basic motor patterns."<sup>31</sup> When enough perceptual data has been collated and matched to the existing motor base, the child is ready to form concepts. The sequence of motor behavior is now part of the child's mind pictures.

Wadsworth explained that "instead of having to engage in trial-and-error movement to find solutions to problems, the child begins to solve problems through internal representation, or thinking."<sup>32</sup>

Piaget believed children develop intelligence directly from their ability to interact more effectively with the environment. The mind is involved with organizing and transforming reality.<sup>33</sup> Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, founder of the School for Body/Mind Centering, works on developmental patterns to achieve a continuum of support from balanced body alignment to perceptual-motor integration and purposeful action. She noted "that all mind patternings are expressed in movement, through the body. And that all

physically moving patterns have a mind."<sup>34</sup> Alfred B. Pasteur and Ivory L. Toldson referred to Roger W. Sperry's research on the brain in which he observed that "the entire output of our thinking goes into the motor system." Because of the data gathered investigating the brain, Sperry suggested that it is possible to comprehend the human nervous system and higher order cognitive functioning "in terms of its motor output rather than in terms of its sensory input." The motor system is involved in every action, movement pattern, and thought process. When Sperry measured muscular activity using electromyography (fine-tuned machines), there was always evidence of muscle involvement during thinking. He advised that perception takes place when the organism is prepared to respond to environmental stimuli by a "discharge into motor patterns." According to Sperry, thinking improves with the increase of these motor patterned adaptations.<sup>35</sup>

Marion North, an authority on movement education in England, indicated that a central benefit to the education process for persons actively involved in movement expression is in how it "helps the participant to form ideas, feelings, and sensations into disciplined wholeness." The degree of pattern-forming ability that develops from simple movement phrases to complex wholes is the physical manifestation of evolving cognitive processes. North observed that "being able to formulate and make patterns and forms, to make leaps

or bridges between ideas, thoughts, and feelings, is all linked with man's developing cognitive functions."<sup>36</sup>

Body and mind are actively engaged in bringing material from unconscious to conscious awareness. Tony Crisp presented this event in four stages researched by Van Rhijn. These are:

(1) On the deepest level are the unconscious physiological processes, such as cell generation and digestion. Problems which cannot move into consciousness are held at this level and become psychosomatic pains or illness.

(2) The next level of expression is postural or gestural. Hidden feelings and physical tone are apparent in gestures and movements.

(3) The third stage approaches awareness as it evolves from the gestural and movement level to symbolic representation.

(4) In the fourth stage, symbolism reaches enough conscious awareness for it to be verbalized and analyzed.<sup>37</sup>

As Crisp noted, "if one had attempted to verbalize something in level two, it would have been so far outside of consciousness as to defy description."<sup>38</sup> This may be one reason why differently-abled youngsters find trying to fulfill curriculum requirements stressful. It is possible these children need more time in the gesture/movement stage



to develop a motor foundation for body/mind integration before consciousness can be realized.

One concern of education is in training young people to develop good study skills and work habits. Stanley Keleman researched the area of retraining as it supports a person's ability to alter existing habit patterns. His work directed him to recognize somatic expression as an indicator of the individual's history. He noted that "the brain is a living ocean of electrohormonal currents generated by the total soma including the brain itself." He observed that by inhibiting certain behaviors and events, other actions and solutions emerge. To be conscious of where one is in space requires a body/mind slow down. Through this slowing and pausing process, both children and adults regain equilibrium and learn to control past impulsive physical and emotional memory patterns. Developing skill in the stopping procedure facilitates redirecting energy towards new behaviors evincing reduced frustration and stress.<sup>39</sup>

Using breathing and relaxation activities provides opportunities for achieving the stopping process as well as preparing the body/mind to resume flow of energy and movement. Rudolf Laban related movement development to a child's expressive life wherein "if a child has flow, he is in perfect harmony with all the motion factors and is mentally and physically happily adjusted to life, but this is not the case if there is no development of his natural

flow." Laban encouraged teachers to plan lessons incorporating mind and body activities operating cooperatively as opposed to emphasizing the importance of one while inhibiting other.<sup>40</sup>

### Breathing Rhythm/Learning Rhythm

The rhythm of rest and activity is evident in all life processes. According to Chris Brewer and Don G. Campbell, "rhythm and pulse begin from the moment of conception and develop as people grow and change." Evolving patterns of movement and rest, attention and inattention progress in rhythmic dynamics particular to the different ages and stages of life. Brewer and Campbell maintained that "inner rhythms begin to be affected by the rhythms of the outer world even before birth."<sup>41</sup> It is these experiences that the individual has with outer rhythms that shape the quality of his/her interaction with the environment. Keleman referred to rhythms of pulsation that help to form the "basic self." He elaborated this pulsatory continuum as "the outside in dialogue with the inside creates a response that stabilizes our associations and memories, concepts and actions, and gives us a personal sense."<sup>42</sup> Joan Borysenko commented that the breathing rhythm of the infant is based on full diaphragmatic breathing. By the time the child becomes a toddler, environmental factors begin to affect the rhythm of

breathing. The youngster's overall energy reflects concurrent emotional and mental reactions.<sup>43</sup>

The research of Swami Rama, Rudolph Ballantine and Alan Hymes suggested that breath and the energy of breathing provide a direct connection between body and mind. Every rhythmic change in the breathing pattern matches a mental attitude. According to Swami Rama, Ballantine and Hymes, while breathing is automatic, it can be brought into a person's awareness and be controlled. Swami Rama indicated that "controlling the breath, and thus calming the nerves, is a prerequisite to controlling the mind and body." The person who achieves a conscious sense of breathing can be considered to be "harmoniously coordinated."<sup>44</sup> Borysenko indicated that "learning to notice your breathing pattern and being able to change from tension-producing to relaxation-producing is one of the most crucial, and simplest, mind/body skills."<sup>45</sup> Leon Chaitow believed breathing exercises can provide the individual with strategies for breathing fully in stressful situations or environments. Using a breathing technique may help to overcome the "tendency for shallow, tension-inducing breathing" and result in improved energy levels, concentration, and mindfulness.<sup>46</sup>

The rhythms experienced in breathing, movement, feeling, and thinking have a common base in relaxation. When Todd noted that locomotion and breathing developed

together, she also pointed to the dangers of living on land that necessitated an integrated balance of nerve reflexes, musculature, and respiration to protect and provide for the organism's survival.<sup>47</sup> Alexander Lowen stated that a person "will not breathe deeply in a spontaneous manner until his tensions are relaxed and feelings released."<sup>48</sup> Deepak Chopra observed how intelligence, acting as an organizing force, is operative in every cell of the body. He maintained that "in order to have a thought you must set up channels that literally run through the entire body."<sup>49</sup> Chopra indicated that stress obstructs the free flow of intelligence. Brewer and Campbell reported that "the state of relaxed alertness is an important integrated learning state."<sup>50</sup> Relaxed body rhythms coordinate with synchronized brain wave frequencies.

Chopra agreed with researchers that "nature functions in cycles of rest and activity."<sup>51</sup> He regarded these cycles as part of a human's biological and psychological make-up. Those who are best able to deal with the pressures of everyday respect and abide by their inner rhythms. Brewer and Campbell advised that in the 1990's education is "rapidly changing to recognize the importance of the rhythms of the inner, feeling world." They said that by helping students reach into their inner sources of intelligence as a means of finding answers may enable them to "make room for the enlightening process of discovery."<sup>52</sup> This provides a

way for children to focus their attention on self-awareness and motivation.

Researchers have acknowledged that the brain grows in keeping with rhythmic patterns that move forward through neurological and structural maturation towards cognitive development. During brain growth spurts, neural connections form which activate body/mind capacities and facilitate new integrating possibilities. Brewer and Campbell cautioned that "frustration, self-doubt, superficial understanding, awkward skill developments, and learning 'turnoff' may emerge if learning demands are placed upon students before the necessary brain structures are in place."<sup>53</sup>

Activity and rest cycles flow in rhythmic patterns that generate different learning states. Brewer and Campbell described four brain wave frequency cycles and the characteristics of their learning states on a Brain Wave Rhythms chart:<sup>54</sup>

#### Brain Wave Rhythms

Brain Wave State	Wave Frequency in Cycles Per Second (CPS)	Characteristics
Delta	slow neuron firing 0.5 to 3 CPS	deep, dreamless sleep
Theta	4 to 7 CPS	unconscious sleep state deep meditation reverie deep creative dreaming deep creative thought

Brain Wave State	Wave Frequency in Cycles Per Second (CPS)	Characteristics
Alpha	8 to 12 CPS	relaxation daydreaming connection to subconscious creative imagination inspiration high suggestibility information synthesis fact assimilation integrated learning state
Beta	13 to 40 CPS	logical thought processing analysis alert, active

There is a need for physical, emotional, and mental balance in the lives of children. Becoming aware of breathing and relaxation techniques may make it possible for youngsters to gain enhanced benefit when participating in a variety of differently paced learning activities.

### The Triune Brain

The triune brain was researched by Dr. Paul MacLean, Chief of Brain Evolution and Behavior at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The triune brain consists of the following:

1. The reptilian or primal brain creates patterns, habits, routines, and instinctive behavior, as well as a sense of territory and safety.
2. The limbic system, the most chemically active brain, is the site of origin for all of a person's emotions.

3. The neocortex is divided into the left and right hemishperes, also known as left and right brains.<sup>55</sup>

Except for the left neocortex, the other brains are concerned with nonverbal imagery.

According to Laurie Nadel, Judy Haims and Robert Stempson, "many nonverbal, instinctive patterns are generated in the reptilian brain." Self-esteem, the need for trust, recognition from and connection to others all stem from territorial boundaries and safety to the extent that Nadel, Haims and Stempson noted "if you are always searching for a place to feel safe, you will never experience real brilliance," When there is any indication of discomfort due to stress, the reptilian brain shuts off the energy that should be going up to the higher brains and anything they are processing becomes inaccessible.<sup>56</sup> This makes it difficult to maintain concentration on academic achievement.

#### Movement/Relaxation as Stress Reducer and Skills Reinforcer

Since stress reduction releases body/mind energy for interactive learning experiences, it seemed appropriate to examine these behaviors in one section.

#### Anxiety-Stress

Joseph Chilton Pearce referred to the results of scientists working with degrees of stress in laboratory rats. They discovered that "although the stressed mindbrain grows in ability and the unstressed one lags behind, the overstressed one collapses into shock and shuts

out everything." This is observed in humans when the information fed into the organism involves high stress and incurs an inability to adapt. The individual remains in a perplexed state experiencing the pain of unresolved anxiety-stress rather than the balanced state of relaxation. Hans Selye, a Canadian Nobel Prize winner, addressed this problem of anxiety-stress in his research. Selye concluded that stress and relaxation exist in a balanced relationship in all forms of life.<sup>57</sup>

#### Excitement-Stress

Because the idea of stress has come to mean everything that is bad for people and something to be avoided or neutralized, it has not taken its rightful place in the learning process. Pearce advised that "this organizing of the body and brain to deal with the immediacy of an event and respond accordingly is 'stress'." Because of its active involvement of the musculature and sensory system, it is also referred to as 'excitement'. It is this excitement-stress that is the motivating force behind a child's learning about the world and joyfully participating in it. Pearce indicated that it is excitement-stress which enables intelligence to grow.<sup>58</sup>

Sylvia Ashton-Warner alluded to excitement-stress when she cited Erich Fromm's belief that "life has an inner dynamism of its own; it tends to grow, to be expressed, to be lived. The amount of destructiveness in a child is



proportionate to the amount to which the expansiveness of his life has been curtailed. Destructiveness is the outcome of the unlived life."<sup>59</sup>

### The Relaxation Response

Relaxation is perceived as the interaction of mind-brain-body. According to Pearce, "the rhythm of intellectual growth is movement into the unknown-unpredictable, or stress, and assimilating or digesting it back into the known-predictable, or relaxation."<sup>60</sup> Each time individuals deal with the external reality they are integrating the known with things that are new. Their musculature and nervous system are involved in establishing new links and connections in the process of learning and growing.

Herbert Benson researched the Relaxation Response because he believed that "since the environment is unlikely to grow less complex or more stable, we must find within our own bodies a physiologic means of dealing with the demands of twentieth century life."<sup>61</sup> The Relaxation Response is an innate mechanism which serves as protection from overstress. It works to slow down body processes (heart rate, rate of breathing, metabolism) and brain waves (from beta to alpha).

Joan Borysenko helped her clients elicit the Relaxation Response in order to achieve "an internal balance where the mind becomes still." Stilling of the mind makes it possible for the individual to experience mindfulness. Mindfulness

allows a person to be attentive to the present, with an open mind and an involvement in process. Borysenko used meditation and breathing exercises to release the Relaxation Response. She observed that body tension stimulated tense mental associations causing those who are overstressed to see life's challenges as threats instead of opportunities. When body and mind are relaxed "negative conditioning circuits are derailed and the mind is open to the formation of more productive habits." Borysenko explained that those who adapt to change with an open mind are considered to be stress hardy.<sup>62</sup>

North viewed the need to reduce negative conditioning and its stressfulness from the perspective of movement education. A prime objective of movement education is for the child to develop a positive body image. This is accomplished through movement phrases that restore a child's body rhythm and flow, in action and stillness.<sup>63</sup> These experiences are integrative and help to develop internal balance and security. This balance and security may provide stability and motivation to learn.

#### The Body as Learning Reinforcer

Part of the process of gaining control of cognitive functioning is allowing the body to reinforce the learning. In 1970, Marcia Guttentag and Sylvia Ross did research using African American and White pre-schoolers. The data gathered disclosed that African American four-year-olds had

both a larger amount of movement responses and a broader range of differentiated movement than lower and middle class White four-year-olds. Guttentag and Ross proceeded to use the outcome of this study as a jumping off point for their next two projects, which were to determine if instruction based on a movement approach could be used with advantage in teaching simple verbal concepts.

The first study used four-year-old African American children from low income, inner-city neighborhoods. After four weeks, the children were tested for recall, use, and recognition of each concept. Those children who received the movement training scored highest in concept acquisition. Some reasons for this were: (1) in order to move appropriately the child must listen closely to verbal cues; (2) using the body involves greater participation; and (3) while enlisting more complete use of body/mind integration, the child is gaining self-reinforcement as well as emotional and intellectual feedback.<sup>64</sup>

In the second project, Guttentag and Ross wanted to ascertain if the movement approach would be successful with older children. They questioned whether the four-year-olds in the first study might not have been affected by the fact that they spent most of their lives involved with sensorimotor activity. The subjects of this study were ethnically mixed and included heterogeneous groupings of low to middle income youngsters from kindergarten to fourth

grade. Neither range of prior movement nor the frequency of motoric behavior were factors under consideration. This time the movement approach was the sole object of the project.

The results of the research indicated that the children receiving motor activities training with their instruction scored higher than those in the traditional setting of simple verbal concept learning. There was also evidence to show that the learnings were transferred to material outside of the testing situation. Guttentag and Ross observed that the success of the motor approach was due to heightened attentiveness in order to follow directions, the total involvement of the subjects, and the self-reinforcement through combined efforts of physical activation and mental awareness. They concluded that "the results of these studies suggest that movement-related techniques offer a potentially rich source for the development of new learning technologies."<sup>65</sup>

Lida C. Colwell, under the direction of her principal, developed a program in California to identify children with psychomotor needs. Teachers and volunteers worked with a schedule to help students improve areas of motor weakness. The program grew out of concern for the increasing numbers of children who were not experiencing their full intellectual potential because of: (1) poor self-image and self-concept; (2) poor motor coordination; and (3) poor

perceptual development. The program was so successful in aiding children to improve their self-concept that it was added to the kindergarten curriculum.<sup>66</sup>

Anne Green Gilbert, as a third grade teacher in North Chicago, had a class of thirty middle-income students who had the newest educational kits and games but remained unmotivated. Being a dance instructor, she introduced a movement program into the classroom. The program was built around bringing movement into the academic subjects. As the plan progressed, positive behaviors emerged: (1) the children exhibited a more cooperative attitude; (2) after exercises in body spelling, scores on spelling tests rose sharply; and (3) after making up math problems with their bodies, they took renewed interest in math.<sup>67</sup>

The Department of Dance and Dance Education at New York University sponsored the first nationwide conference on Life in Motion, March 30 to April 2, 1989, in order to bring together people of related interests in the body/mind connection. The thrust of the separate workshops was directed towards each person reaching his/her highest potential. While the techniques featured different approaches, they shared a common goal in achieving balance between stress and relaxation. In order to release energies for creativity and self-development, the body/mind works best in an atmosphere of inner relaxation.<sup>68</sup>

Movement/Relaxation draws upon both the researcher's experience with movement as well as studies done by investigators in the body/mind field. Its goal is to reduce stress in children in order to promote self-awareness, the ability to be attentive in the present, and the freedom to move forward in taking risks and coping with challenges. Through a relaxation approach, differently-abled children may learn to quiet their body/minds while building inner support for functioning closer to the top of their academic potential.

#### Learning Characteristics of African American Children

There are important factors that impact on the African American child's learning style. Among these are: (1) African values; (2) the body/mind relationship; (3) circular relational style; (4) vernistic home environment; and (5) nonverbal communication.

Richard K. Simmons explained that the values transmitted through the public school system negate the African American child's learning style. He compared European and African values pointing out the differences that confuse children:

#### European Values

1. "I" oriented (individual is most important)

#### African Values

- "We" oriented (community is most important)

## European Values

## African Values

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 2. | Individualism collectively refers to Europeans (White ethnic groups valued more than non-White groups) | Values all people equally   |
| 3. | Materialistic (things and property valued more than people)  | Methaphysical (spirituality values human life over material things) |
| 4. | Teaches primary loyalty to nation  | Primary loyalty to God  |

Simmons believes it would be nurturing to the African American child's self-esteem to be educated in keeping with African values.<sup>69</sup>

Pasteur and Toldson noted that "for the African there is a total relationship between body and mind." Through motor activity the African child communicates with the environment and builds concepts of reality. New understandings automatically relate back to things already experienced in the body. These researchers stated that the child "seeks to find in outside objects images reflecting his own bodily images." This bodily sensitivity is something Africans return to throughout life as a source of spiritual and emotional expressiveness. Pasteur and Toldson saw African workers moving rhythmically and humming at their labors and observed how "feeling, thinking, and movement functions were all comingled in the behavior, revealing the unifying nature of the Black expressive style."<sup>70</sup>

Pasteur and Toldson referred to Pierre Erny's research affirming that the African child's early affective life

contributed to the "legacy of psychomotor development which noticeably surpasses that of the European child."<sup>71</sup> Erny suggested that this affective interaction made the African child's body lively and alert. Wade Boykin called this body/mind energy "behavioral verve" and related it to the African American child's learning style. Boykin is now researching what impact the introduction of movement to the curriculum will have on the academic performance of Black children.<sup>72</sup>

Social researchers are disturbed that African American children are the victims of society's and the school's lack of respect for the personal orientation of the Black child's cognitive style. The experiences of African American children prepare them to learn in a circular relational style directed more to persons than to objects.

Judith S. Kestenberg's work demonstrated how, through interactive attunement and harmonizing with the mother, the infant "will learn to integrate his motor patterns into biologically advantageous, expressive, and functional combinations which will form the basis for the successive development of his ego functions."<sup>73</sup> The rhythmic flow in the interchange between mother and child forms a bond of communication that is at once stimulating and relaxing and evolves into the child's general learning style.

This rhythmic cadence is found in the speech and verbal play between mother and child. Janice E. Hale-Benson



referred to Laura Lein's study of migrant children. Lein found that even under adverse conditions, there was a spontaneity and participation as "children talk with adults, play verbal games with them, and argue with them, although usually in joking terms." Boykin compared this emotional rhythmic core to the depth of soul. He commented that "perhaps we can facilitate the academic/task performance of the Black child if we can increase the soulfulness of the academic setting."<sup>74</sup>

Boykin pointed with pride to the vibrant atmosphere of the African American home: the variety of activities; the movement of people in and out of the home; the continuous rhythm of mental, emotional, and physical vitality. While researchers investigating the home environment have labeled it chaotic, Asa Hilliard has used the cognitive style of Black children to generate a comparison of two learning styles, the analytic approach versus the relational, which would be more enabling to Black students:<sup>75</sup>

(Abridged)

Analytic

Relational

(as it is in general)

(as it could be)

Rules  
Standardization  
Conformity  
Rigid order  
Differences equals  
deficits  
Preconceive  
Controlled  
Cognitive  
Unison

Freedom  
Variation  
Creativity  
Flexibility  
Sameness equals  
oppression  
Improvise  
Expressive  
Affective  
Individual in group

## Analytic

Linear  
 Memory for specific facts  
 Precision  
 Egocentric  
 Convergent  
 Hierarchical  
 Isolation  
 Regularity  
 Constant  
 Scheduled  
 Sign oriented  
 Thing focused  
 Duty

## Relational

Patterned.  
 Memory for essence  
 Approximate  
 Sociocentric  
 Divergent  
 Humanistic  
 Integration  
 Novelty  
 Evolving  
 Targets for opportunity  
 Meaning oriented  
 People focused  
 Loyalty

From the African American child's cognitive style of an emotional, feeling, person orientation combined with a total body/mind involvement emerges nonverbal communication. Hale-Benson cited Virginia Young's observation that in lower class families there is minimal verbal communication. In place of this, she noted that people "look deeply into other's eyes, not speaking, but seeming to communicate fully." Examples of nonverbal communication are "the mother's caressing the baby and children sitting in a circle rubbing bare feet."<sup>76</sup>

Hale-Benson pointed to the investigations of P. Byers and H. Byers that profile a cultural difference in nonverbal communication between White and Black children. Hale-Benson is concerned that "this difference in nonverbal communication may have implications for the kinds of rewards and punishments Black children elicit from the environment."<sup>77</sup>

As noted, Nowicki and Duke's findings showed that deficits in nonverbal communication skills, whether receptive or expressive, make it hard for a youngster to fit in socially. Albert Mehrabien's research indicated "that in face-to-face interactions, 55 percent of the emotional meaning of a message is expressed through facial, postural, and gestural means, 38 percent of the emotional meaning is transmitted through the tone of voice." This leaves 7 percent of the emotional meaning to be expressed in words. Most of the time when verbal cues differ from nonverbal language, it is what is communicated nonverbally that is believed.<sup>78</sup> In school, this is evident in both peer and student/teacher interactions. Any violations of appropriate nonverbal communication signal that a person is either strange, frightening, or insensitive. According to Kestenberg, when people try, but cannot interact with others it is because "some become rigid and do not allow their flow of empathy to be mobilized; others are distrustful and fail to give the right cues for understanding them."<sup>79</sup>

Nowicki and Duke stated that "nonverbal behavior is an organized system of signs which must be mastered if people are to be effective and capable social beings."<sup>80</sup> As with verbal language, there are those who encounter deficits in the expression or reception of nonverbal conversation. There are six channels through which individuals can

experience nonverbal deficits in either expression or reception:

1. rhythm and the use of time;
2. interpersonal distance (space) and touch;
3. gestures and posture;
4. facial expressions;
5. paralinguistics (voice tone, pitch, sounds like whistling or humming);
6. objectics (style of dress, personal hygiene).

While Nowicki and Duke stated that these deficits can be remedied and researchers have shown some deficits improve as children become better processors of perceptual information, studies point to the fact that unpopular children "are prone to develop adjustment problems and to become unpopular, maladjusted adults."<sup>81</sup>

The physical tension and emotional stress generated from trying to fit in make it difficult for a child to function academically. J. B. Rotter's theory of locus of control of reinforcement (the awareness that what happens to individuals is or is not caused by their own actions) is important because the maladaptive social behavior of externality (what occurs is due to people or events beyond a person's control) siphons energy from the individual's cognitive performance. Externality in the classroom may be seen in repressed, overbearing, or disruptive social behavior as well as in inappropriate academic interactions such as cheating. Internality (when people see that what happens to them is a result of what they do) may help the interpersonal relationship and empower the cognitive

process.<sup>82</sup> Relaxation plays a central role in preparing young people for retraining deficits in receptive or expressive nonverbal communication.

Effective Schools Research Applied to  
African American Children

When James S. Coleman's report was published in 1966 entitled "Equality of Educational Opportunity," it had a damaging impact on the effectiveness of the public school system as a viable institution for providing equal educational opportunities to all of America's children. After evaluating data gathered from 645,000 students in four thousand elementary and secondary schools, it stated that:

schools bring little influence to bear upon a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context; and that this very lack of independent effect means that the inequalities imposed upon children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront life at the end of school. For quality of educational opportunity must imply a strong effect of schools that is independent of the child's immediate social environment, and that strong independent effect is not present in American schools.<sup>83</sup>

Other negative reports followed Coleman's study. In 1969, the Harvard Educational Review printed an article by Arthur Jensen addressing the problem of improving scholastic achievement. Jensen commented on the failure of compensatory education to improve the performance of low-achievers.<sup>84</sup> In 1972, Christopher Jencks collaborated on a book which included information showing that equalizing

the quality of education for children in low socioeconomic communities would result in marginal improvement of cognitive ability. Jencks noted that "equalizing the quality of elementary schools would reduce cognitive inequality by three percent or less. Equalizing the quality of high schools would reduce the cognitive inequity by one percent or less."<sup>85</sup>

Effective schools research grew out of the belief that schools can make a difference in providing opportunities for equal education to poor and minority children. Critics of Coleman suggested that "he surveyed only what is and not what could be."<sup>86</sup> Ronald R. Edmonds stated that one concern of the effective schools movement was the need to organize a schoolwide approach enabling students from upper and lower socioeconomic backgrounds to achieve a basic mastery of school skills. Edmonds found the following characteristics common to effective schools: (1) strong leadership; (2) clear understanding of the instructional focus; (3) orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (4) high expectations for student achievement with emphasis on minimum mastery of basic skills; (5) school resources redirected to obtain goals; and (6) frequent monitoring of student progress.<sup>87</sup>

It is important to see how these characteristics of effective schools can gain relevancy for educating African American children. In this section, the researcher will

examine some of the issues regarding instructional focus, high expectations, and testing, based on the findings of various educators and applied to the learning style of African American students.

### Instructional Focus

Goodlad indicated that effective schools must provide satisfactory results in serving the students, their parents, and the larger community. Schools should incorporate procedures for self-renewal, since the needs of their clients and society-at-large keep changing. He advised that a process for lasting change required understanding of what a school is, as well as its impact on a child's development. Goodlad and his colleagues designed research questions regarding the "commonplaces of schooling" and studied them from the viewpoints of students, teachers, parents, and principals. The commonplaces of schooling comprised such matters as:

teaching practices, content or subject matter, instructional materials, physical environment, activities, human resources, evaluation, time, organization, communications, decision-making, leadership, expectations, issues and problems, and controls and restraints.<sup>88</sup>

From the data, combined with classroom observations, Goodlad arrived at behaviors that may positively affect children's learning. While others concluded that "no single variable in itself appears sufficiently powerful to influence student learning significantly," Goodlad felt that integrating several techniques can make a difference. He

noticed that early elementary grades (K-3) engage in more interactive hands-on experiences. In upper elementary grades, youngsters have been socialized to accept passive educational roles. A few of his suggestions for effective learning include: (1) achievement improves as children are actively involved; (2) rearranging instructional groups geared to different purposes; (3) sensitivity to the needs of those who appear to be differently-abled; (4) use of alternative methods of instruction (films, field trips, library research, movement experiences, role playing, building, and drawing); (5) clear instruction and corrective feedback; and (6) praise.<sup>89</sup> Goodlad did not see the above in many classrooms. He reflected on education's historical responsibility, "the process of humanizing knowledge in schools so that all students gain access to it." He commented that its two major components are trainable: (1) teacher's interest in both the student and the curriculum that must be learned; and (2) the different methods employed to maintain the student's active participation in the learning. Goodlad noted that youngsters have difficulty dealing with academic subjects because they are abstract. Students would be better served with concrete experiences since they "need to see, touch, and smell what they read and write about."<sup>90</sup>

Learning by doing is particularly suited to African American children who learn through their bodies and



manifest their intelligence in expression and communication. These learning events secure strong body/mind integration within Black children and may provide a foundation for building self-esteem and inner-directed motivation.

Goodlad viewed collaborative learning strategies as opportunities for students to interact with their peers. For African American children, collaborative techniques parallel the relational style of their cultural environment. Instead of working alone, as in a traditional classroom, developing competitive attitudes inappropriate to the African experience, Black children may feel at home, stress hardy, and motivated in a well-managed interactional group. Sherl E. Gilbert II and Geneva Gay discussed the fact that Black children work better "in cooperative, informal, loosely structured environments, in which students and teachers work closely together to achieve common goals." Gilbert and Gay advised that African American children enjoy process, are proud of their efforts and less concerned with results, and bond together to work for the good of the group.<sup>91</sup>

In the collaborative setting, allocated time to complete a task is not as important to African American youngsters as the momentum generated by the excitement and involvement of the learners. According to Gilbert and Gay, Black children "are accustomed to participating in several different interactions simultaneously and to participating

cognitively, affectively, and physically."<sup>92</sup> This multimodal approach is essential to the Black child's learning style. A. Wade Boykin is troubled that Black youngsters who are labeled hyperactive may be "normal children who are bored, restless, and unstimulated because there is inadequate affordance of stimulus change and inadequate allowance for expression of behavioral variability."<sup>93</sup>

The collaborative method facilitates a multidimensional body/mind approach where students may contribute their strengths while they get help to clarify and gain control of weak concepts without being singled out and humiliated. Jawanza Kunjufu described a communication peer group effort to deal with developing self-discipline. He incorporated a policy of five parts praise to one part criticism in order to build self-esteem. As a result of Unity/Criticism/Unity, a child is expected to gain functional awareness of his/her behavior. Kunjufu indicated that those in the group should feel free and open to participate in solving the problem fairly and directly.

The activity proceeds along the following format:

1. The children form a Unity Circle in which those who come together care enough to want to help each other.
2. The teacher asks for words of praise. This is valuable to those who have improved their behavior as well

as for the child who may be apprehensive about his/her discipline problem.

3. The teacher asks for criticisms. The instructor records the names of those who raise their hands. Anyone causing a disturbance loses his/her turn. The idea is to create a calm, respectful climate where children can learn to develop into "logical thinking adults."

4. The children whose names were recorded by the teacher are called upon to give their criticisms. Negative displays of anger or yelling are reasons for a child to lose his/her turn. The idea is to teach basic skills of communication: (a) express ideas clearly; and (b) think before speaking. While this is taking place, the child who is being criticized has a chance to sit quietly and reflect on his/her classmates' remarks. If this child demonstrates a lack of self-control by outbursts of defensive anger, he/she is sanctioned for breaking the rules.

5. The child, having listened, now gets an opportunity to explain his/her feelings about the situation. The two children involved may then discuss the problem. Only those with relevant information may join the discussion when the teacher recognizes them. If sanctions are indicated, they are decided by the group, moderated by the teacher, and passed by a majority vote. A sense of fairness, order, and responsibility becomes part of the communication peer group experience.

6. Unity/Criticism/Unity ends with the members of the Unity Circle singing or chanting a song whose message incorporates the concept of coming together in unity. Kunjufu indicated that UCU technique is more effective with pre-schoolers and primary grade children because in their innocence they speak the truth. Older children are mistrusting and secretive. Their tensions build up into attitudes so that they talk behind people's backs and interact with angry attacks. Kunjufu suggested that the UCU session be held every day for fifteen minutes anticipating the praises may overshadow the criticisms.<sup>94</sup>

As Goodlad mentioned, one strategy, by itself, will not have sufficient impact to restructure behavior. Future research may indicate how a sequence of activities using Movement/Relaxation methods might support developmental changes, such as the self-discipline project, by improving breathing, communication through flow of movement, and empowering self-esteem using grounding techniques.

#### High Expectations

The value of high expectations observed in effective schools mirrors in essence a cultural influence in Black children's affective, cognitive, and kinesthetic experience. The "care syndrome" investigated by Akpan Ebsen focused on the feeling tone that passes from African mother to child and extends beyond to the community of relationships. In the "care syndrome" the mother draws her baby into the

family lifestyle with her every body action and rhythm. The child is in her arms or on her back participating in mother's duties and relational interactions. When mother is not attending to baby, other relatives are. Everyone is supportive. By the age of six, the child is ready to take an active part in contributing to the welfare of the community. He/she begins by being given the responsibility of caring for a younger sibling, learning to be responsive within a close interpersonal and interdependent social system. The youngster grows up in an environment where the individual is respected and encouraged in his/her endeavors.<sup>95</sup>

Janice E. Hale-Benson referred to the findings of several researchers, who have observed that what Black mothers desire for their children, rather than cultural activities, pressures to do well, or other facilitating behaviors, seems more effective in motivating achievement. Norma Radin investigated low income families. She explained that as mother and child interact in a circular relational style, mother by nonverbal and verbal approval, reveals her hopes, shows sensitivity to the child's needs and wants, and sets up a safe climate. This motivates the child to want to please her, as well as to take risks exploring the environment for the purpose of learning about his/her world. Radin commented that this process enhanced the intellectual development of pre-school children. Eva Sandis tried to

determine the effect of different socialization techniques in the "transmission of mothers' educational ambitions for their children and the children's own educational plans." Sandis found that what mother wanted for her child was instrumental towards the youngster's academic achievement. Radin suggested that research needs to determine how to bring maternal child rearing practices into the classroom to serve as incentive for academic growth.<sup>96</sup>

Kunjufu is a staunch advocate of high expectations for all students and staff. From the effective schools research, Kunjufu explained his understanding of high expectations:

Effective schools expect teachers to teach and pupils to learn. Standards are high but realistic. No student is allowed to attain less than minimum mastery of the basic skills of the assigned level. Teachers believe that they have the ability to provide the required instructional program and that all students can master basic skills.

The remainder of this section will suggest ways in which it may be possible to make the last statement of the above relevant towards educating African American children, and in particular those who are differently-abled. The issues will concern concentration, intuitive thinking, creativity, and nonverbal communication, all areas that may gain depth of experience from strategies used in Movement/Relaxation.

Concentration. Kunjufu described a workshop on concentration and brain control. The participants formed a

circle and were asked to concentrate on a given object. No one was able to maintain focus for more than two or three minutes. The workshop conductor spoke about how important it was to discipline the brain. Kunjufu came away feeling that children should be trained through exercises in concentration very early in school.<sup>98</sup>

Borysenko explained concentration as an experience in mindfulness or as she termed it a "be here now" approach. She stated that "it is a relaxed state of attentiveness to both the inner world of thoughts and feelings and the outer world of actions and perceptions."<sup>99</sup>

Mariane Kohler described three styles of handling concentration. In the first way, an individual's eye scans the object "without really seeing it." The conscious part of the brain is not involved in the process. In the second, that attention given to the object is so fixed as to create tension. In the third practice of concentration, Kohler stated that the observer is relaxed and "does not attempt to seize the object," but allows it to come to him/her. It is more like the person and the image meet in the middle. Kohler subscribed to the third method, since it is productive in revealing much about the object. As people practice this third kind of concentration, they reach a depth of involvement that voids distraction and lets them feel as if they are seeing the object "for the very first time."<sup>100</sup>

Preparation for a concentration experience includes deep abdominal breathing and a relaxation activity that releases the body from blocked tensions, brings the body/mind into center, and provides a continuous learning balance. In this state of relaxation, brain rhythms slow down so that alpha rhythms can become operative. The alpha rhythm gives the individual access to creative imagination and an integrated learning state.

Research is needed to determine what kinds of achievement might benefit from relaxation-based concentration. Gilbert and Gay discussed "stage-setting behaviors" which are important preliminaries to the Black student's performance. Since they take time away from on-task activity, Black children are the recipients of negative feedback. Gilbert and Gay asserted that this type of cultural insensitivity on the part of teachers may lead to "failure for poor Black children." Some of these stage-setting behaviors include "asking teachers to repeat directions that have just been given, and checking the perceptions of neighboring students."<sup>101</sup> It is possible that relaxation-based concentration could become a part of stage-setting behaviors resulting in a positive experience for both students and teachers.

Intuitive Thinking. Intuitive thinking focuses on understanding and relevance. It is committed to working with inner organizational processes. Boykin addressed the



fact that schools need to respect and become responsive to the dynamics of Black children's learning styles. He emphasized that African American children can improve their on-task behavior through intrinsic motivation inspired by a facilitating climate. Boykin advised that Black children, raised with the stimulus of a verivisitic home life, may learn best in an environment that encourages "curiosity, exploration, behavioral change, and attention-or interest-enhancing variables such as complexity, variability, novelty, surprise, and uncertainty... on a meaningful basis." He stated that this exploratory behavior and intrinsic motivation do not occur spontaneously. According to Boykin, intrinsic motivation places the focus on planning and organizing presentations of basic skills content in a manner that is both stimulating and meaningful to Black children.<sup>102</sup>

Piaget's research led him to understand that children's ideas about the world evolve in constructs shaped by mental structures (internal organizers) and experience. These mental structures are not set at birth, but develop in a sequence of stages relative to the child's age. One of the internal organizers of mental growth is the principle of motivation. Piaget described motivation as a forthright process in which learning may take place without the support of external rewards. He noted three aspects pertaining to the nature of learning that characterize motivation:

(1) involves organizing data into spatial, temporal, or causal patterns in relational sequence; (2) individuals are not consciously aware that they are processing information; and (3) learning involves a person's own actions.<sup>103</sup>

Motivation is based on a model of homeostasis. This is a self-regulating model in which "the organism is continually responding to needs that create tensions which 'demand' reduction." Piaget indicated that the "self-regulating kernel is at the very heart of the development of intelligence." Piaget advised that homeostasis is experienced at every level of human behavior as the end product of a process.<sup>104</sup>

Piaget recognized that educators needed to see children as experimenters. He did not expect teachers to let students do just anything, but to provide them with opportunities to follow the direction of their organizational processes in constructing patterns and relationships. Piaget suggested that "it is a matter of presenting to the children situations which offer new problems, problems that follow on from one another." A feeling of anticipation is sensed in motivation where there exists a learning partnership between the student's freedom and the instructor's guidance.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to arranging a varied and stimulating environment as a way of encouraging exploratory behavior, Gilbert and Gay stated that in teaching African American

children the "learning itself should focus on the concepts and principles, getting an overall feel for a task, rather than on minutiae."<sup>106</sup> Intuitive thinking incorporates the idea of a global learning style into the multimodal approach (affective, cognitive, kinesthetic) for seeking understanding and meaning. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, an early believer in intuitive thinking, upheld the position that "education is essentially a process through which sense impressions acquire meaning."<sup>107</sup> The body/mind builds a data base of these meaningful patterns of knowledge, derived from sense experiences, and stores them in chunks of related arrangements for easy access. Beryl Lieff Benderly referred to Herbert Simon and Michael Prietula, who indicated that it is this chunking of patterns which enables the individual to continuously move intermediate steps out of awareness. Instead of going through the entire reasoning process, one may "simultaneously sense a pattern and feel a hunch." Simon and Prietula advised that "over time as more patterns are chunked and linked, the hunches become better" and the person gains in expertise.<sup>108</sup> For the differently-abled student, the implication is that appropriate experiences may make it possible to develop a knowledge base of skills to facilitate learning challenging material with relaxed self-confidence.

The findings of Boykin, Piaget, Gilbert, and Gay seem to support the results of ongoing investigation in the area

of intuitive thinking. Nel Noddings and Paul J. Shore suggested further characteristics of intuition that might be helpful to educators:

1. Familiarity--To enhance the intuitive model, the individual's response to sensory contacts must align with his/her quest for meaning. People are usually intuitive in subject areas where they have a deep interest and willingly put in the time to build up a store of knowledge. Noddings and Shore indicated that educators needed to concentrate on making it possible for children to build up a knowledge bank.

2. Receptivity--This phase of the intuitive mode is involved with a person's being able to concentrate on an event permitting free flow of relevant stimuli. The alpha brain wave allows the individual to be in the moment as he/she watches, listens, and grasps in a relaxed frame of body/mind. Noddings and Shore stated that this is an important period of incubation that educators have neglected and should develop a way of teaching.

3. Understanding--The intuitive mode deals with a way of knowing that manifests in deeper meanings and clear pictures. The movement towards this insight is called directionality. It is a time/space phenomenon much like the directionality experienced in motor activity. Should the directionality prove unsuccessful, homeostasis operates to bring things back on track with questions like, "What does

this mean? What must I do to find out what it means? What do I see here? What must I do to make it work?" Teachers can be instrumental in encouraging or frustrating directionality. Noddings and Shore noted that when a student's intuitive quest for understanding is interrupted or sidetracked, mental trauma occurs. If the educator does this frequently, a child will abandon the quest for understanding.

4. Safety--Noddings and Shore stressed the importance of creating a safe environment for students to become involved with the intuitive process. Children need to feel comfortable and at ease, not pressed for time or intimidated, as they begin an intuitive exploration. Noddings and Shore found that degrading remarks or harsh criticism may cause students to lose confidence in their insights, give up the hard work necessary to support their organization of the insights, and yield to the teacher's understandings.

5. Collaborative Efforts--Noddings and Shore referred to the research of L. Vygotsky who found that social relations encouraged the development of mental operations. Children learn from doing things together. They internalize these interactions into mental schemata. When a child's intuitive position is challenged by his/her peers, it forces the student to go back and look again at the environment of

the problem. Small group interactions can be useful in broadening the child's cognitive field.<sup>109</sup>

Students, especially the differently-abled, need to use all of their capacities and resources to make meaningful choices for their lives. Intuitive thinking may provide an opportunity for a child to pursue his/her interests while working out personal understandings. From infancy through age six, children learn movement, perception, and language interacting directly with their bodies. In the elementary grades, brain growth and developing neurological pathways add another dimension enabling the child to use inner speech. Brewer and Campbell advised that this ability helps youngsters use internal thought processes and concrete reasoning.<sup>110</sup> Movement/Relaxation may prepare the body/mind to focus on inner passive listening in the receptive mode and active participation in patterning, chunking, and directionality for the purpose of gaining understanding and meaning. Among those researching intuitive thinking is the Institute of Noetic Sciences, founded by Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell. The institute's mission is "to support research and educational programs that expand humankind's understanding of consciousness and the mind-body link."<sup>111</sup>

Creativity. Hale-Benson acknowledged Hilliard's description of creativity in African American culture. Hilliard noted that African Americans are inclined towards a personal distinctive style expressing novelty and freedom.

Their high standards have less to do with a right or wrong product, and more to do with a process that generates "fit" or "harmony."<sup>112</sup> Ruth Richards viewed creativity as basic to the human condition. She suggested that it is the "ability to adapt to change. It is the very essence of human survival." Vera John-Steiner saw it as a "search for meaning" where sensitivity to inner reality helps a person reach out and transform an aspect of outer world with which he/she is preoccupied.<sup>113</sup>

Inner listening is basic to every step along the creativity continuum. Through relaxation, it may be possible for the body, emotions, and subconscious mind to supply inner listening with the resources for creative insight. Brewer and Campbell recognized that "inner exploration accentuates the wonder of learning and leads the learner on." They advised that the creative process linked with perception and knowledge emerges as creative intelligence. This level of development is trainable and leads from problem solving to problem finding in upper elementary grade children. They suggested the following steps in working with the creative process: (1) Preparation --gathering information and exploration; (2) Incubation--a period of processing in the mind and body; (3) Illumination (the Aha)--an exciting point of insight; (4) Verification--insuring the integrity of the insight; and

and (5) Implementation--putting the information and insight into a usable framework.<sup>114</sup>

The creative thought process combines intuitive reasoning with the ability to visualize patterns of connections from a creative perspective.<sup>115</sup> Although most public schools are managed along lines of conformity and deal little, or not at all, with the creative thought process as a learning and thinking tool, business is beginning to see the economic necessity of creative input from employees. Wayne Silby, a financier, complained that solutions to problems will remain hidden "unless man creates a culture that encourages creative approaches, where it is okay to have bad ideas." Creativity consultants, like Synectics, Inc., are hired by companies to promote a creative approach. Jeff Mauzy, a facilitator, commented that "half the battle is to get clients to relax and accept that they are in a safe place where the cutthroat rules of the workplace do not apply, so they can allow themselves to exercise their creative potential in group sessions."<sup>116</sup>

Brewer and Campbell suggested that creative arts (movement, music, drama, art, creative writing) in the curriculum present "safe and easy ways to facilitate the neural stimulation necessary for greater proficiency in listening and learning."<sup>117</sup> Movement, in particular, provides an opportunity, especially for the differently-abled child, to pattern constructs that may help



to locate him/herself in space, develop boundaries, and gain direction towards achieving goals. The improvisational, expressive, and intuitive learning style of African American children may benefit from a creative arts program supported by Movement/Relaxation. Research may be able to determine the effect of such a program on the achievement of the differently-abled child.

Nonverbal Communication. Hale-Benson considered the mother/child nonverbal relationship to be a significant cultural force in organizing the learning style of African American children. She based her understandings on the research of those investigating mother/infant interactions, as well as school-related behaviors, where good rapport between students and the examiner has resulted in measurable improvement on standardized tests. Ann Piestrup's study of standardized test results characterized the proctor as being warm, as well as speaking with a familiar cadence and intonation in speech pattern.<sup>118</sup>

Brewer and Campbell viewed nonverbal communication as taking place through receptive and expressive channels. They observed that the receptive and expressive channels depend on a child's depth of inner listening. This capacity for the nonverbal process of inner listening involves the body, mind, and emotions. Brewer and Campbell stated that inner listening provides the capability for incubation and illumination. These educators commented that each person

"develops his/her special way of listening to the inner world."<sup>119</sup>

Nowicki and Duke are involved with retraining inappropriate nonverbal interactions caused by receptive and expressive social deficits. In order to develop construct validation for their Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (DANVA), they related the investigation to previously researched areas bearing on the processing of nonverbal social information. The participants in the project were 855 White children and 156 mixed racial students from first through fifth grade. Social class and IQ were not considered.

Results of the research of two propositions seemed to provide a link between social-emotional deficits and academic performance. Proposition 4, dealing with locus of control of reinforcement, yielded insight into individuals' abilities to connect what they do with what happens to them. A disability in making this connection can result in externality and interpersonal difficulties. The children with good skills in matching their efforts to what happens to them displayed internality and successful interpersonal adjustments. A low DANVA score generally indicated externality. Proposition 5 tried to assess whether deficits in processing nonverbal social interactions of an emotional nature would impact negatively on academic situations. The results of the research for Proposition 5 showed that "less

accurate processing of social nonverbal information was associated with lowered academic achievement performance in elementary-aged children."<sup>120</sup>

Nowicki and Duke indicated that children with nonverbal social deficits can be retrained to engage in appropriate nonverbal communication. The researchers suggested that the children practice exercises in a supportive and nurturing environment. The learning may not be rushed and should be internalized and applied before moving on. Relaxation and enjoyment keep the child on task, building clarity and confidence.<sup>121</sup>

The African American child is at a disadvantage in the analytic orientation of traditional classrooms. The challenge is to develop strategies and environments that may help African American children realize their academic potential. Recently, Western Suffolk Boces sponsored a two-day workshop (November 17-18, 1994) presented by Dr. Phyllis S. Weikart. Dr. Weikart is Movement Consultant to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation and Director of the program, Education Through Movement: Building the Foundation. She addressed the need for educators working with children in Pre-K through sixth grade to integrate action, thought, and language as a support base for higher order cognitive development.<sup>122</sup> It is hoped that future research into the supportive role of Movement/Relaxation in areas such as concentration,

intuitive thinking, creativity, and nonverbal communication will yield supplemental methods for enhancing Black children's academic achievement.

Testing. Gilbert and Gay acknowledged the unfairness of standardized tests which, due to their culture bias, make it hard for the relational child to perform up to his/her intelligence potential.<sup>123</sup> According to Rosalie Cohen, even high relational achievers go far afield on abstract ideas based on analytic, linear progression.<sup>124</sup> They are better able to handle concrete problems. Gilbert and Gay stated that some African American children get traumatized by the test setting, test format, and style of questions.<sup>125</sup>

Since the standardized test is used to evaluate students at all levels of school life, Gilbert and Gay noted that African American children need to do several things to make it possible for them to succeed on these tests. The researchers concluded that efforts must be made to help the children shift from an active to a sedentary modality, from expressive to conformist behavior, from demonstrating achievement in an open-ended, ongoing manner to a written, rigidly structured, formal manner.<sup>126</sup>

Among the usual pretest preparations, such as becoming familiar with the tester, practicing drill exercises, and going through procedures for handling time, Gilbert and Gay recommended "desensitizing students to the stress of test taking through relaxation and concentration skills."<sup>127</sup>

Since these latter skills take time to internalize where they can be used effectively, it would be advisable to incorporate relaxation and concentration activities into the year-round curriculum.

### Staff Development

According to Seymour B. Sarason, the failure of a project to relate to the school culture is a major reason for breakdowns in planned change. He considered the school culture to involve the professionals as they interact in "three general types of social relationships: those among the professionals within the school setting; those among the professionals and pupils; and those among the professionals and the different parts of the larger society."<sup>128</sup>

### Common Ground

In the give-and-take of each of these complex relationships there seems to be a bond of basic prerequisites: (1) assurance of safety; (2) respect for boundaries; and (3) an ongoing commitment to relevance and excellence in education. Lynne Miller studied the research and found where schools dovetailed improvement with the range of teacher concerns, they had the best possibility for positive change.<sup>129</sup>

George Litwin made recommendations for staff development that would appear to take the above prerequisites into consideration as guidelines:

1. Learning is more likely to occur when there is unfreezing of prior attitudes, thoughts, and behavior patterns.
2. The more frequently individuals practice the desired behavior, the more likely it is that new behavior patterns will be demonstrated on the job.
3. Learning will be more effective to changing behavior when learners see concrete goals and develop written action plans.
4. The learning experience will be enhanced if all parts of the whole person (cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic) are activated and integrated.
5. Learning may more likely lead to behavior change when the physical-social environment encourages and supports the emergence of new behavior patterns.
6. The creation of an on-the-job support system maximizes the application of new learning and behavioral change.<sup>130</sup>

### Teacher Support

Sarason pointed out areas from the Rand Studies research that provided teacher support throughout the change process. One aspect of the findings noted the importance of including teachers in understanding the scope of the project. Sarason explained that it was essential for educators to comprehend the goals of the project and, also, to visualize the implementation of the change process. This empowers teachers and motivates them to work for improved behaviors. A second result of the studies indicated the need to develop practical implementation strategies. Effective strategies provide structure to keep the project moving forward. They afford instructors necessary and relevant feedback, allow for choices to be made to correct

errors, and encourage commitment to the project. A third finding of the Rand Studies related to the significance of school organizational climate and leadership.

Organizational climate, to be effective during the change process, must deal with the how of professional relationships. These encompass such things as trust, open communication, and collegial support through collaborative efforts. The research brought out the fact that schools should be responsible for managing the necessary conditions for improvement. The principal as "gatekeeper of change" plays a major role in seeing these conditions are met.<sup>131</sup>

The principal's support for the school improvement plan brings all the forces together in a united effort. It assures there will be time provided for project meetings, a place to meet, necessary supplies will be available, and the coordination of ancillary assistance will be adequate. In order that the change process meets the needs, experiences, and objectives of the school culture, when resources (human or material) are in short supply, it may take imaginative leadership to find sources in the community-at-large to keep the project intact.

#### Successful School Improvement Programs

Effective schools take into consideration the relationship of self to achievement. Morgan described designing a humanistic curriculum for two public schools, one in Brooklyn, the other in New Hampshire. The overall

philosophy was to empower the children, help them gain trust, and give them a sense of identity. The content of the activities came from the children's interests, experiences, and relationships to family, peer groups, and community institutions. Teacher input came from understanding the neighborhood in terms of how it came to be and what forces were operative in holding it back from change. Morgan and his staff were committed to the belief that how children feel about themselves affects academic success or failure. This understanding guided the progress and evaluation of the curriculum.<sup>132</sup>

The Mead School for Human Development is an example of a school organized for the purpose of changing passive learners into active learners. It was founded in 1969 in Greenwich, Connecticut. Students were brought there by parents whose children were losing the ability to think and be creative in traditional schools. As the children gain freedom to make choices, they learn to respect themselves, their ideas, their need for safety and spatial boundaries, and to also respect the needs and rights of others. Relaxation activities have been used with fifth and sixth graders since 1970, when they began exploring biofeedback techniques. Excitement-stress is encouraged in two learning centers. In home centers, teachers help children of the same age develop their strengths. In curriculum centers, children of all ages work with others having similar



interests. Basic skills are taught in the interest groups. The curriculum devotes 50 percent of the studies to visual and expressive arts because the Mead School believes that the arts are strategic to cognitive growth. They feel that good education combines the arts and traditional academic subjects. Their records show that children scoring below average in the first three years come up to average and above by the fifth and sixth grades.<sup>133</sup>

### Conclusion

A review of the selected literature brought together the research findings in brain development, perceptual-motor integration, and concept acquisition. The results have shown that motor intelligence and mind intelligence operate as one in energy activation and rest. The research has also shown that excitement-stress is the dynamic force behind inner motivation and learning, but where the system cannot adapt due to overstress, it closes down the ability to process information.

Movement/Relaxation addresses the need to reduce stress using breathing and relaxation techniques. Deep breathing not only supplies the body and brain with oxygen, but it also quiets the body/mind and opens inner spaces allowing the body to participate in a relaxed breathing rhythm. Alpha and beta rhythms were shown to impact on different learning states. Schools put a priority on beta rhythm

behavior, when they emphasize logical thought processes and analytic learning. Children respond to opportunities to experience alpha rhythm, in order to work creatively. Students require time to reflect, incubate, and integrate inner and outer world data.

Movement educators believe that releasing tension in the body/mind allows for improved patterning ability, not only of movement, but of ideas and concepts that find reinforcement through body participation. Educators, like Guttentag and Ross, found that using motor activity training to reinforce language skills improved the learning of simple verbal concepts. Colwell saw good results when she applied a movement training program to building self-esteem. Gilbert designed movement reinforcement activities for academic subjects that produced improved understanding and interest.

The literature revealed that African American children have high motoric development. Guttentag and Ross's research pointed out the range of motor behavior observed in four-year-old African American children as compared to the low and middle income White youngsters in the study. The African American child's active relational learning style has its heritage in the physical interaction between African mother and child, nonverbal communication, and caring community life that supported high expectations and came

together in unity, rather than in tension producing competition.

Leaders in the African American community are troubled because children are being educated without regard for their culture or learning style. They stressed education as the way African Americans can improve their lives and communities. Kunjufu emphasized the goal of respect, praise, and high expectations as children learn basic skills. He included concentration training to help children pay attention. Boykin applauded the verivistic home life that made it necessary to present stimulating lessons to reach into a child's internal motivation. Gilbert and Gay explained methods by which children might be prepared for testing, including relaxation activities to help children shift from high motility to the quiet order of the test situation.

This concern for improving education for African American students is a reach into the twenty-first century, where schools will have to educate youngsters to be fully aware of their potential and in control of their decisions. Ongoing staff development may be a factor in realizing these goals.

## NOTES

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### CHAPTER III

#### PROGRAM PLANNING

Before transferring to Ulysses Byas, the researcher taught at the Centennial Avenue School in Roosevelt, where she presented theatre/dance programs, as well as come-alive bulletin boards based on Black history themes. Short skits were produced in the hall in front of the bulletin board. These were later performed in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. The value of movement in the curriculum was evident in the excitement of both the performers and the children in the audience. New understandings were taking shape in the children's awareness which fostered a sense of pride in their heritage. Their questions attested to an arousal of interest to know more.

The researcher began exploring ideas about Movement/Relaxation while working at Centennial during the school years from 1986-1988. In her fourth grade classroom, she introduced exercises in breathing and relaxation. The science curriculum included lessons on the respiratory, skeletal, and muscular systems. The focus was on a multidimensional approach. For example, in studying the central axis of the body, students looked at pictures of the spine, handled plastic vertebrae detailed to represent actual bone, and also experienced the effects of gravity in activities demonstrating the weight-bearing characteristics

of the spinal bones. Visualization was used to help students release tension and maintain balance down the spinal column. In order to help youngsters develop confidence from a body/mind perspective, there were exercises that moved from inner space, starting along the central axis, to explorations of outer space. The children enjoyed the opportunity to move in a purposeful way and looked forward to the afternoons when these activities were scheduled. As the term wore on, there were visible changes in how many more students were willing to take risks in expressing movement, ideas, and participation in learning. While the principal was supportive of the study, videotaping classroom activities, the decision to transfer to Ulysses Byas was prompted by the need for a closer liaison with the other doctoral candidates.

In advance of planning the staff development program at Ulysses Byas, the researcher attended the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies from 1987 through 1990. The courses included:

- 1987 - Introduction to Bartenieff Fundamentals (Sharna Allison)
- Developmental Movement and Reflexes (Martha Eddy)
- Neuromuscular Therapy: Reading the Moving Body (Sara Vogeler)
- 1988 - Introduction to Laban Movement Analysis (Jacqueline Hand Vigario)
- An Introduction to Grounded Movement (Sara Rudner, Nancy Topf)
- The Psoas: Being In and Moving From Center (Topf)
- Dances With the Mouth (Vogeler)

- 1989 - Introduction to the Kestenberg Movement Profile  
 (Susan Loman)  
 Using Laban Movement Analysis With Special Needs  
 Children (Nancy Beardall, Suzi Tortora  
 Biederman)
- 1990 - Changing Focus: Participating More Fully in the  
 Moment (Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen)  
 The Tools of Self-Discovery (Fran Levy)  
 Authentic Movement (Nina Robinson, Zoe Avstreich)

From March 30 to April 2, 1989, the researcher attended a conference on Life in Motion: The Body/Mind Connection sponsored by New York University Department of Dance and Dance Education. During the fall of 1989, she also participated in a weekend seminar on The Feldenkrais Method of Awareness Through Movement presented through the auspices of the Feldenkrais Learning Center.

#### Action Research/Case Study Approach

In order to decide on how to manage the school improvement study, the researcher assessed the problem, setting, time frame, and available human resources. Because this was a low-cost project, financial resources were not an immediate concern. She considered that, at the time, working with a small group of volunteer teachers could make the change effort feasible. The researcher reflected on the fact that she wanted to make the study meaningful and practical, exposing the educators to experiences and understandings that, although new, had educational integrity. Bringing this team of teachers together in a

collaborative effort might provide a bond to support commitment to the change process.

An action research approach seemed best suited for this staff development project. Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion identified five critical areas in which action research was applicable: (1) in resolving a difficult problem or relieving conditions that are stressful; (2) in providing inservice workshops where teachers can develop new skills and techniques; (3) in introducing new methods to the education process, which is normally so resistant to change; (4) in bridging the gap between teacher and university researcher; and (5) in providing the educator an opportunity for objective awareness of common problems.<sup>1</sup> The researcher found the first three areas and the last relevant to the study.

The focus of action research is on diagnosing a problem specific to a local situation, implementing a change process, and evaluating the results of that process. Ideally, the professionals on the action team share leadership roles, or provide feedback towards moving the research forward. In a change process that develops from within, there may be a better chance that teachers will be open to self-evaluation methods that encourage continuous modification of behavior leading to the desired improvement. The implementation process has been shown to be central to the success of innovative programs.<sup>2</sup> A characteristic of

action research is that it is responsive to organizational climate and adaptable to implementation preferences.

Action research gains direction from using case study strategies, since they are both involved with contemporary events, limited control, and flexibility in management.<sup>3</sup>

Case study evidence is reality-based, subject to direct observation, and gathered from a variety of sources. Among these may be: (1) documents such as journals, needs assessments, questionnaires, and evaluation reports; (2) observations at different sites; (3) feedback during workshops, conferences, and meetings; and (4) interviews.<sup>4</sup>

As a method of inquiry, the case study may lead to discussion and a keener understanding of essential issues of the study. "How" or "why" questions apply best in the process of gathering data. A good candidate for case study research should be skillful in the following: (1) asking insightful questions and analyzing their responses; (2) being able to listen without bias; (3) being flexible enough to adapt to new directions within the research; and (4) knowing the issues so that the project can be guided on a manageable course.<sup>5</sup>

The researcher employed case study strategy to maintain linkage communication during the period between workshops.



The volunteers were encouraged to:

- \* keep a journal noting classroom observations, activities, and results to be shared with the other participants;
- \* invite each other in to watch an activity;
- \* call an interim meeting with the researcher, or another team member, to get help with a problem, or develop an idea.

Recording the progress of failures and successes was an important step in the implementation stage, since it made the educators aware that they shared common problems. It provided a direct line to each participant's objectives, weaknesses, and strengths. It kept the teachers on task, helped them decide on the next move, and contributed material to be discussed with the other team members.

#### Procedures for Organizing and Implementing the Study

The first data collecting document submitted to the Ulysses Byas faculty was a needs assessment. There was an immediate 100 percent response indicating an interest in remediating problems that may be stress-related. The topics of greatest concern included the following:

Amount of Votes	Topic
9	Strategies for Self-Control Through Relaxation
8	Encouraging Creative Expression
7	Centered Movement to Release Tension - Discovering Holding Patterns Which May Impede Learning
7	Integrating Movement Into the Content Areas - Improved Learning Through Exploring and Experiencing
7	Breathing - Strategies for Developing Breathing Patterns to Facilitate Learning and Test-taking

The researcher used some of the data to outline her first workshop. In planning for Workshop I (Space and Communication), the researcher consulted with Jacqueline Hand Vigario, an instructor at the Laban Institute, regarding both the workshop and the overall program for introducing Movement/Relaxation to the educators. The researcher brought a list of activities based on the results of the needs assessment survey. Vigario empathized with the underlying determination, on the part of the researcher, to present Movement/Relaxation as a viable method for helping children develop a stress-reduced inner-motivated learning approach, rather than to just demonstrate relaxation exercises.

In reviewing the workshop format, Vigario approved of the opening activity with its setting in the womb. She felt

it was a good beginning strategy for people new to in-depth movement. While she found the sequence of activities progressed logically, Vigario demonstrated examples of movement that might generate a more dynamic awareness of nonverbal communication. She was impressed by the educators' interests and endorsed the following as positive introductory experiences:

#### Strategies for Self-Control Through Relaxation

1. Creating a safe, non-threatening environment using positive nonverbal communication;
2. Exercises in deep breathing, grounding, lengthening the spine in sitting and walking, cranio-spinal centering;
3. Individual and interactive movement in slow motion.

#### Encouraging Creative Expression

1. Exercises in breathing and grounding;
2. Cranio-spinal centering along the lines of gravity;
3. Visualizing and stepping into the picture;
4. Moving to inner or outer music.

#### Centered Movement to Release Tension--Discovering Holding Patterns That Might Impede Learning

1. Breathing into different parts of the body;
2. Sensing where the body is tense;
3. Creating spaces through visualization and floating action;
4. Cross patterning activities;

5. Movement exercises exploring personal space.

Integrating Movement Into the Content Areas--Improved Learning Through Exploring and Experiencing

1. Put together learning packets of activities for math, reading, language arts, and science.

Review the directions and let teachers work together in practicing exercises.

2. Provide a bibliography of books that demonstrate how to do movement activities to reinforce skills.

Breathing--Strategies for Developing Breathing Patterns to Facilitate Learning and Test-taking

1. Methods for developing an awareness of diaphragmatic breathing down the full length of the spine;
2. Centering the head over the spinal column and letting the weight of the vertebrae drop within the lines of gravity;
3. Exercises to improve concentration based on deep breathing and relaxation;
4. Being in the moment based on deep breathing and relaxation.

The researcher wanted to develop an action research team so that she might work with a core group of educators. After conferring with the principal, she organized a team of nine volunteer teachers from grades K through 6, including the special education instructor. The second week of

January 1990, the researcher met informally with three groups of participants during their lunch periods. These were as follows:

Group	Grade	Total Instructors	Coverage
I	K, 1, 2	3	not necessary
II	3, 4(2), Sp. Ed.	4	not necessary
III	5, 6	2	not necessary

At Ulysses Byas, the researcher taught first grade. She did not, therefore, need coverage for her class during the lunch meeting with Group I. This group met on Monday. During the Group II meeting, the researcher's class sat in a first grade classroom where the children watched videos every Friday after lunch. This made it possible to schedule Group II for their Friday lunch period. The Group III meeting was held on Thursday because the researcher's class had library during the third lunch period of that day. Unable to use her room, the librarian read stories to the children in their classrooms. The participants convened in the faculty lounge, which provided a location for uninterrupted time.

The purpose of bringing together the volunteers and the researcher in advance of the workshops was an attempt to prepare the instructors for a positive experience with Movement/Relaxation by giving them a chance to ask questions and voice concerns. The researcher indicated that one of the things the workshops were going to try to accomplish was

to encourage teachers to find active methods that may help the differently-abled child improve his/her social and academic performance. The researcher also talked about alternative ways of gathering data (journals, photographs, and videos).

The third, fifth, and sixth grade teachers were most resistant to the concept of Movement/Relaxation. They liked the idea of relaxation, but were skeptical about integrating movement into the curriculum. Some of their concerns were the following:

1. Does movement mean dancing?
2. How can you have movement and relaxation happening at the same time?
3. We are so tight on time, how can bringing movement into the classroom be justified?
4. Won't discipline become a problem?
5. The children come back charged up from gym. How can Movement/Relaxation get them settled down to work?

Arranging a schedule for where and when to hold the workshops presented problems because the Roosevelt schools were undergoing major renovation. At the Ulysses Byas Elementary School, a second floor wing was added to the main building and the new classrooms below had to be reinforced to support the new construction. This meant that an entire section of classrooms could not be used for most of the school year. This resulted in the doubling up of classes and

the use of every available space for teaching. By the end of a day, the stress of working with children crowded together in close quarters led to fatigue and tension for all concerned. After discussing this situation with the principal, it was decided to hold the staff development program during the school day. Since the library and gym were being employed for classrooms, the only remaining place was the general purpose room, which was unoccupied in the mornings until 10:15 A.M. The principal gave his approval for use of the general purpose room for the inservice workshops.

The principal also consented to enlisting the assistance of school aides to cover the volunteer teachers' classes. The assistant to the principal/math coordinator arranged for the needed coverage. Four aides and two computer lab assistants were assigned to supervise the children during the progress of the program as follows:

Grade Assignment	Aide Coverage
1 (portable)	1
K, 1	1
2, 3	1
4, 4	1
5, 6	1
Sp. Ed.	1

The assistant to the principal/math coordinator and the reading coordinator assumed responsibility for setting up a

refreshment table and arranging the work space. The latter included putting up charts, displaying materials (books, learning packets, pictures, handouts), and collecting the evaluations.

The workshops were scheduled to begin at 8:45 A.M. and end at 10:15 A.M. on the following dates:

February 2, 1990--Space and Communication

This workshop was designed to give the participants some sense of the support network of basic structures that affect passage from inner space to outer space and go on to integrate into more sophisticated body/mind movement/thinking patterns. Breathing and grounding were shown to be critical to relaxation, the factor that enables energy flow and interactive communication.

February 16, 1990--Introducing Movement/Relaxation Into the Curriculum

This workshop provided detailed experiences in breathing and grounding. It emphasized the importance of school as a safe place where children can feel acceptance so that relaxation can operate in motivating children to participate in their learning, encouraging them to be risk-takers. The workshop led the teachers through current literature showing them how to bring movement into the curriculum.

March 2, 1990--Teaching the Body to Develop Depth and Relaxation



This workshop looked at ways to release tension to improve motility and balance. It used physical examples and creative imagery to demonstrate techniques to open up spaces between the bones and provide depth of movement, improved balance, and relaxation. Students were brought in to present a few of the activities they experienced in the classroom.

The volunteers were given journals for the purpose of keeping a record of any activities they might try with their students. At first, only three teachers made notations in the journals. After the second workshop, four more instructors used the journals to jot down something they were attempting with their students. One educator used movement for stretching exercises as a transition between subjects. Some children's remarks were as follows: "(1) It's fun; (2) Let's do it again; and (3) It's relaxing." The educator noted, "I have done this several times in my class. I find it to help the children become less restless." A second instructor discussed an idea with the researcher and incorporated movement into teaching the commutative law in addition. She pinned a number on the front of several children and let them move forth and back as they danced to a tape. Every time the music stopped, the class counted the sum of the numbers. The teacher wrote, "I have always tried to help children understand that numbers may move and still

not change their value. This was the first time my class got so excited about this lesson."

### Evaluating the Study

Because of the time limitation, evaluations became an important guide as to how the volunteers were responding to the study. Questions about practical application of Movement/Relaxation in content areas led to the introduction of learning packets in language arts, reading, mathematics, and science. This gave the participants a reference tool. The researcher tried to provide supplemental material where possible to clarify concepts. Three instructors requested and received special learning packets to meet their individual class needs for skills acquisition in money, science, and rhyming. The researcher also brought in instructional charts, photographs of children participating in movement lessons, and a bibliography of current literature relating to movement and relaxation.

In the evaluations, there were references to the need for more time to work with the ideas. By the third workshop, some teachers asked the researcher to come into their classrooms for coaching sessions with the students. After considering the latter suggestion, she decided this would be an efficient way to use time, as well as an appropriate follow through on the program. In place of doing another workshop, she opted to organize a series of

four coaching sessions with three of the educators. Using her lunch hours and teacher preparation periods made it possible to arrange units of twenty-five minute lessons. The researcher met with each teacher in advance of the sessions to set the times, days, and focus of the unit. The researcher used the post-assessment phase of the coaching sessions to interview these participants regarding the possible benefits of Movement/Relaxation to differently-abled children.

Since the volunteers had little or no prior knowledge of ideas examined in the workshops, there was the anticipated resistance to new concepts and techniques by older learners. The researcher had the responsibility of easing the educators into being responsive to methods that might improve skills acquisition on the part of differently-abled children. She explained things in language free of technical terminology used by people in the movement field. The researcher tried to provide experiences by which the instructors could comprehend the scope of the project and ascertain any positive influence it might have on a child's growth. Final evaluations indicated an interest in ongoing staff development to support implementation and sharing of ideas. The approval ratings for the study were as follows:

## Ratings Based On Responses to Questionnaire

Workshop Title	Question Relating to:	Good	Fair	NA
Space and Communication	theme	7	2	
	clarity of concepts	5	4	
	real issues of children's growth	9		
	ideas for classroom	7	2	
Introducing Movement/ Relaxation Into the Curriculum	need for movement in the curriculum	8	1	
	sharing movement experiences in the classroom with participants	6	3	
	hands-on experiences to support implementation	8	1	
	movement experiences to help children learn worth trying	9		
	handling discipline	7	2	
	movement implementation valid and challenging	8	1	
	workshop material relevant and useful (learning packets, journals)	9		

Workshop Title	Questions Relating to:	Good	Fair	NA
Building Depth Into Body/Mind Experiences Through Movement/ Relaxation	improved awareness of body/mind and relaxation	9		
	while insecure about implementation, gained in understanding of study	7	2	
	improved awareness of how children may be reached through active participation in learning	8	1	
	awareness that relaxation results in deeper involvement and a wider range of purposeful movement, facilitating internalization of concepts	6	3	
	encouraged to want to try some exercises	9		
	desire to learn more about how movement may support cognitive growth using exercises in:			
	breathing	9		
	grounding	6	3	
	relaxation	9		
	concentration	9		
nonverbal communication	7	2		
movement reinforcers in subject areas	8	1		

### Conclusion

It was during informal exchanges and workshop interactions that clarification of the study's focus evolved. The team of volunteer instructors discussed stress-related learning problems such as concentration, difficulty remembering concepts, and managing self-control. They experienced hands-on methods (breathing, relaxation, nonverbal communication) geared especially towards freeing-up and getting back on track the differently-abled child's learning style, self-motivation, inner locus of control, and coping skills. The limitation of time helped shape the purpose of this staff development project. Primarily, it was to expose the teachers to ways in which they might support their students enabling them to change from passive learners to active learners in a stress-reduced manner.

Data was gathered through needs assessments, informal meetings with participants, post-workshop evaluations, interviews, and journals provided for recording classroom activities or observations. Supplemental materials included learning packets, charts, and a bibliography of literature detailing how to incorporate into content areas movement experiences that may reinforce skills acquisition.

The workshops examined the impact of overstress on learning, nonverbal cues that affect children's self-image, confidence, social interaction, and academic progress. The

direction was to involve more of the inner resources and learning style of differently-abled students. Workshop I (Space and Communication) included hands-on experiences demonstrating some characteristics of the fetus' support network, in place before birth, affecting passage from inner space to outer space. These basic reflexes and movement patterns are fundamental to the maturing individual's development. The volunteers did exercises centering through deep breathing to gain a beginning awareness of relaxation. They worked with spatial boundaries to establish the space within which one might use relaxation and inner locus of control during interactive communication. Workshop II (Introducing Movement/Relaxation Into the Curriculum) emphasized the importance of school as a safe place for children to become active learners and risk-takers. The educators used ideas from the learning packets to practice ways of bringing movement into the curriculum. Breathing, grounding, and relaxation exercises were an important part of the activities. Workshop III (Teaching the Body to Develop Depth and Relaxation) used alternative ways to demonstrate how children may be helped to release tension from contracted areas within the body. As these blocked places release, breathing improves. Inner space opens up and gradually deepens to allow for greater stability and purposeful mobility. In time, these changes may translate to better integration and attention.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, Research Methods in Education (Dover, NH: Crom Helm, 1985), 211.

<sup>2</sup>Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Applied Social Research Methods Series, vol. 5 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1984), 42.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 56.



CHAPTER IV  
WORKSHOP AND COACHING ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The implementation of this research study began as a series of four workshops, which evolved into three workshops and twelve coaching sessions. This happened because by the third workshop several teachers asked for individual assistance towards bringing Movement/Relaxation exercises into their classrooms. The researcher regarded this as an opportunity to develop a personalized unit to meet each teacher's concern.

The first workshop set out to engage the educators in exploring a trusting and empowering learning climate, and monitoring the stresses that may occur in space and communication between an individual and the environment. The focus of each activity was to make the teachers aware of the messages borne in classroom stresses and direct them towards alternative solutions involving Movement/Relaxation techniques which may: (1) prevent or reduce stress and generate a positive learning climate; (2) improve communication for the differently-abled student; and (3) provide a body/mind reinforcement as these children deal with classroom challenges.

All of the workshops were held in the general purpose room at Ulysses Byas Elementary School during February and

March of 1990. Refreshments were available for the participants. Those in attendance were: nine teacher volunteers (K-6 and special education), reading coordinator, math coordinator, principal, two members from central office.

Workshop I--Space and Communication

February 2, 1990

- I. Introduction
  - A. Defining the Problem
  - B. Dealing With Stress Through Movement/Relaxation
- II. Activity I--Warm Up
  - A. Communication
  - B. Fetal Development
  - C. Reflexive Development
  - D. Support
- III. Activity II--My Name Is
  - A. Self-Identity
  - B. Identity of Others
- IV. Activity III--This Is My Space
  - A. Centering Through Breathing
  - B. Assertiveness

- V. Activity IV--Exploring Personal Space
  - A. Habitual Use of Space
  - B. Pausing, Breathing to Facilitate Movement Alternatives
- VI. Short Break (refreshments/peer group interaction)
- VII. Activity V--Shared Space Messages
  - A. Negative Reinforcers
  - B. Positive Reinforcers
- VIII. Evaluation Forms
- IX. Conclusion

Before the participants arrived, four lunchroom tables, with their attached benches, were arranged to enclose an area that was wide in front and angled in at the rear. This made it possible for the teachers to interact with each other and still have room to do the Movement/Relaxation exercises. Charts and supplemental reading materials were displayed so that the volunteers could get an awareness of the literature as well as gain confidence in the project.

### Introduction

Defining the Problem. The researcher focused on the condition of overstress, which is particularly damaging to differently-abled children's ability to locate themselves in space, respect boundaries, communicate clear messages, and learn to their full potential. The problem becomes how to

work towards a nurturing climate, with reduced stress, in order to help youngsters' social and academic progress.

Dealing with Stress Through Movement/Relaxation. The researcher advised the participants that the study would entail working with strategies to help students access the dynamics of the Relaxation Response for the purpose of reducing stress and improving attention to academic tasks. The Relaxation Response takes the brain into the alpha mode allowing it to think things through in a calmer frame of mind.

#### Activity I--Warm Up

Objective: To help the teachers gain an awareness of fetal experiences in communication, behavior, and support as an integrative network.

Material: Tape recorder

Cassette tape of simulated vocal tones heard  
by fetus

Exploration Procedure: Prior to the workshop, the participants were advised to wear pants or other comfortable clothing for easy movement. The activity began with the teachers seated two on a bench. The directions were to curl up in the fetal position bringing their arms and knees close to the chest. A few groans and suppressed laughter could be heard as they arranged their bodies for the exercise. Facial expressions ranged from doubt and consternation to

smiles of genuine enjoyment in trying something new and childlike.

Communication. The audio tape played in the background as the volunteers were asked to close their eyes, breathe softly, and listen to the tape, much like the fetus who, by the fifth month, is able to hear the mother's filtered down vocal tones, and sense the rhythms of her heartbeat and respiration. This network of hearing and sensing prepares the organism for listening. The educators were quiet as they listened to the tape.

Fetal Development. In order to experience the sequential movement from head to tail, through the spine, the educators began with a small movement at the head end of the spine. They were directed to let this slowly travel down to the tail end. They tried to sense this action two or three times at their own pace. The head to tail movement helps the maturing fetus differentiate the front of the spine from the back. Perception of this spinal focus later translates into attention. The teachers were able to get the movement to the level of the shoulder blades, but some had a harder time going the full length of the spine.

The next fetal development exploration was a reach away from center and back. The participants were instructed to sense an easy action beginning at the spine, at the level of the shoulder blades for the arms and at the level of the pelvis for the legs, and moving out towards the end of each

extremity, then returning to the center. The participants did their own investigation of this activity. This movement serves to differentiate the right side of the body from the left and continues to integrate further after birth, making it possible for the child to locate him/herself in space.

Observing the participants, the researcher witnessed that the kindergarten and special education teachers were the least restricted in exploring the activities. One instructor remarked, "This is fun." The first grade teacher was willing in her attitude, but restrained in her body. During this first workshop, teachers in the higher grades talked nervously, from time to time, and laughed, but found it hard to move and try possibilities. Because of this, the researcher paused to give everyone a chance to breathe quietly and deeply.

Reflexive Development. In the curled up position with eyes closed, the instructors were advised that birth was only three months off and it was time they prepared to get food in an earth environment. They were introduced to two survival reflexes that develop during gestation. The first was the sucking-swallowing reflex which is initiated by the thumb in the mouth. The volunteers were given a Life Saver candy, in place of the thumb, to simulate how the lips, tongue, palate, and mouth interact in this reflex. The sucking-swallowing reflex is the base for later integration in eating and speech production skills. While the educators

had a positive response to the candy, they needed assistance in sensing the regularity of the exercise and how all the parts work to achieve the swallow.

The second reflex presented to the instructors was the rooting reflex, which permits the infant to use its mouth in searching, finding, reaching, and grasping for nourishment. It also enables the tongue to move in all directions and, like the sucking-swallowing reflex, contributes to eating and speaking. The participants were directed to move only their mouths, in any direction, and letting the head follow.

Support. The final phase of the warm up focused on the importance of a support base in preparing the fetus for secure passage out to earth conditions. Pre-birth communication bonds the fetus to mother through external factors as: (1) rhythmic flow from mother's breathing; (2) impulses from mother's heartbeat; and (3) vibrations from mother's voice tone. These form the support bridge that makes the infant's bonding to mother a natural process.

(1) Rhythmic Flow from Mother's Breathing--The object of this exercise was to improve the participants' awareness of a relaxed breathing rhythm and how it sharpens the reception of sensory input. The teachers placed a hand on the abdomen, inhaled to that level, and slowly hissed the air out. The goal was to make the breathing easy and effortless. Three of the educators began yawning, which indicated they were starting to relax. As they relaxed,

some responded to sounds and smells coming out of the kitchen, coughing, and voices.

(2) Impulses from Mother's Heartbeat--The object of this exercise was to help the educators realize that, like any muscle, the heart may be positively affected by relaxation. Relaxation, in this instance, makes the individual receptive to rhythms and pulsations in the environment. The participants placed a hand on the heart and concentrated on exhaling. Practicing gentle breathing, on every exhalation they needed to think, "Let go. Let go. Let go." The volunteers were asked to gradually sense the energy of the people in the group, as well as those working around the room. The teachers seemed to find this exercise worthwhile. The special education instructor noted that when some of her students begin fighting their chests get tight. She felt this activity released her upper body, freeing her to breathe better. She stated, "I'd like to fit an exercise like this into my day. I'm sure it would help the kids."

(3) Vibrations from Mother's Vocal Tones--The object of this experience was to provide the volunteers with insight as to the potential support of mother's vocal reassurance to the maturing fetus. The volume on the cassette was adjusted, so that the teachers could focus on the sounds. The volunteers were asked to breathe deeply, listen to the mother's vocal tones, and imagine the sounds were saying, "I will always be here for you. I will help you when you are



in trouble. I will always love you." The participants were mixed in their reception of this supportive message. Most smiled upon hearing it, but two looked uncertain.

Navel Radiation--The researcher introduced an important internal support factor. The object of this exercise was to establish an awareness of the navel area as a center of control, starting with the fetal stage and continuing to influence behavior through infancy and childhood. The navel acts like the center of a circle. The spine, including the head and tail end, and the extremities are the radii of that circle. Movement is generated along a radial path into and away from the center. Navel radiation in the maturing child integrates as a gathering of energy into center and a release. The release may function as part of a network motivating the child in a forward direction. The rhythm of this support is both relaxed and dynamic.

The exploration was a short exercise in which the volunteers tried to sense the emotional quality of relaxing into and releasing out from center. Some reactions were the following:

Towards Center

cozy  
warm  
sad  
helpless  
peaceful

Away from Center

angry  
tough  
panic  
fighting

### Activity II--My Name Is

Objective: To give the teachers a chance to identify an inner feeling about themselves with expressive movement of the upper body, and to recognize and respect the inner feelings of others.

Material: None

Exploration Procedure: Standing in a circle, the volunteers first tuned into themselves and each other.

Self-identity. Starting with the kindergarten teacher and continuing to the next person to the left, each one participated in the activity. They had to sense a feeling they had about themselves, release a movement consistent with the feeling, using the upper body and arms, while saying, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_."

Identity of Others. After every third person performed the activity, the group repeated the gestures and names of the three people in the segment. The interchange was lively and enjoyable.

### Activity III--This Is My Space

Objective: To build an awareness that assertive behavior gains support when the individual is efficiently bonded to earth. Breathing exercises help to align the body/mind along the vertical axis and within the lines of gravity.

Material: None

Exploration Procedure: Sitting on the bench, the participants worked with a breathing exercise that got them up on their feet and into a walk. Communication through the combined efforts of movement and vocal expression completed the activity.

Centering Through Breathing. Seated on the bench, with feet on the floor, the instructors were advised to let the bench carry their weight. In this way, it exerts a counter force to gravity and allows the individual to feel centered, relaxed, and better prepared to breathe deeply. As the exercise progressed, they inhaled through the nose down to the level of the tail, held for a count of two, and hissed the air out through the mouth. Breathing down the spine line enhances the awareness of the vertical axis, as well as right and left of center. This lateral orientation contributes towards a child's sense of him/herself in space.

Assertiveness. The educators then had to rise to a standing position as they inhaled the full length of the spine. Breathing while walking followed. In the final phase, as they walked around and met each other, they had to state, "This is my space." They became like children claiming territorial boundaries. Facial and physical gestures, as well as postural stances, become part of the nonverbal communication. Even the two serious holdouts seemed able to express their feelings in this exercise.

There were neither demands for perfection nor negative criticisms. The teachers were having enough difficulty overcoming fears of looking foolish.

#### Activity IV--Exploring Personal Space

Objective: To sensitize the teachers to their habitual movement patterns and to investigate alternative movement possibilities.

Material: Job cards:

- \* checking homework
- \* teaching a reading skill
- \* listening to a child's problem
- \* reprimanding a student
- \* disciplining the class
- \* planning a class trip
- \* breaking up a fight

Exploration Procedure: The teachers watched first one educator, then a second, choose a job card and demonstrate, nonverbally, how they manage space in a student/teacher interaction. Then, pausing for time to breathe deeply and quiet the body/mind, the educators had to visualize the same intent using another spatial relationship, which they also enacted. Observable differences in the use of personal space were compared.

Habitual Use of Space. Personal space was defined as that immediate spatial area controlled by the individual in which he/she does the jobs necessary to function in life. Personal space was broken down by distance and level. People develop spatial habits by utilizing near (close to

the body), middle (arm's length from the body), and far space (beyond arm's reach). They also experience space at low (below the knee), middle (thigh to shoulder), and high levels (above the shoulder).

Because of time limitations, only two teachers did this activity. The special education teacher showed enthusiasm for the workshop from the outset and volunteered to try this strategy. She chose the job card that read, "breaking up a fight." She decided on a fight between two boys on the playground during recess. At first, she stood watching her students. When she sensed a combative exchange going on, her initial reaction was to jump in between the boys and separate them. Her movement indicated a struggle to keep them apart.

Part two of the exercise began when the instructor was directed to pause, breathe deeply, quiet her mind, and move into another distance and level before attempting to break up the fight. After following these instructions, the educator shifted into a far distance, high level use of space. She pantomimed blowing a whistle as she raised her right hand above her head with commanding gestures to stop. She then walked towards the children, took each by the hand, and sat down on a bench to talk over the problem. The group learned that, since speaking with the researcher earlier, the teacher had been using the words "freeze" and "melt" in the classroom. She found that it gave her students time to

calm down when they got too noisy while working on projects or playing games. These words helped her as she improvised the scene.

The first grade teacher also wanted to do this activity. With little more than a year's experience in the classroom, she felt uneasy about performing in front of her colleagues. She decided to work on "planning a class trip." While a ditto was going home explaining the details of an upcoming trip to the Bronx Zoo, she wanted the children to feel they contributed in the preparation for it. Using a wall as a blackboard, she blocked out three sections and wrote a heading in each one relevant to the trip. Her spatial movement was a repetition of pointing to the board, acknowledging a child's response, and writing it on the board.

Once again, part two asked the educator to pause, breathe deeply, quiet her mind, and move into another distance and level before reenacting the activity. After taking time to relax and think through her next move, the instructor decided to work in a middle to far distance at a middle level. She got a folding chair, opened it, and sat down. The class sat around her. She gave the impression of holding large cards, which she pointed to as she smiled in her interaction with the children. The teacher explained that the class reviewed the trip information using the cards.

Pausing/Breathing to Facilitate Movement Alternative.

Because the instructors were new to the idea of breathing as a support factor in body/mind integration, the researcher incorporated a breathing experience into the movement preparation for the second half of the previous activity.

One teacher commented that since the improvisations had no actual students in them, they were not true pictures of what might happen. The researcher reminded the group that the object of the activity was to give the participant some familiarity with his/her use of personal space, as well as a possible skill in developing alternative ways of managing this space. The first grade teacher felt that working without children gave her a chance to get into the pause to breathe and plan a further approach. She admitted that she surprised herself when a spontaneous idea came to her as she relaxed and got quiet. Another educator argued that there was not enough time to stop to breathe and think when you are dealing with children. The researcher reassured her that as with any newly acquired skill, it required practice to become second nature. The special education instructor had a positive response to the exercise. She liked the idea of having a tool that might give her flexibility in relating to the children while, at the same time, effecting changes within herself. Although she did not find it hard to follow the sequence of the activity, she would not judge its merits until she tried it with her students. She also planned to

introduce lessons on breathing to see if they could help her children relax and pay attention.

There was general agreement that improved behaviors developed for both teachers in the second part of the activity. Regarding the first grade teacher, one educator noted, "When she sat down with the children there was more of a feeling that she cared about them."

#### Short Break (refreshments/peer group interaction)

Discussion continued among the volunteers. A kindergarten teacher asked some colleagues, "What does she mean by nonverbal? My children are very verbal. They talk all the time." In another group, one teacher insisted, "The students who come into my room have plenty of freedom to move. They are not restricted to sitting at the same desk each day." Another commented, "My children move from station to station throughout the morning as they finish dittos or text book assignments." A sixth grade teacher went in another direction when she remarked, "I heard about using movement in the classroom in a subject like social studies, where the kids learn dances from different countries." The kindergarten teacher expanded on this for the early grades stating, "We teach social skills and coordination through movement activities like fingerpainting, finger songs, and circle games. The little ones need to be involved without getting wild."



### Activity V--Shared Space Messages

Objective: To have the teachers experience the communication of shared space messages as they affect the environment in which children, in particular the differently-abled, must find acceptance and support.

Material: Two charts on Space and Communication

\* chart 1 - photographs of children

demonstrating shared space

interaction

\* chart 2 - flow chart relative to a

supportive classroom environment

Exploration Procedure: Aided by the charts, the researcher indicated the need for developing sensitivity to nonverbal space messages. The volunteers took partners in role playing student/teacher relationships. They dealt with negative and positive reinforcers.

Negative Reinforcers. This exercise had mainly to do with the message imparted by the way the teacher uses his/her body in the spatial relationship to student. The participants were working with negative reinforcers. The volunteers, in student/teacher teams, repositioned themselves according to the following directions:

1. Student sits, teacher stands facing each other.
2. Teacher sits, student stands to right of teacher, who looks straight ahead or to the left.

3. Student sits, teacher walks back and forth facing away from student.

Positive Reinforcers. The directions continued as follows:

1. Student and teacher sit facing each other.
2. Student and teacher sit side-by-side maintaining eye contact.
3. Student and teacher walk side-by-side maintaining intermittent eye contact.

Two educators who role played the teacher during the negative reinforcers expressed a sense of control almost to the exclusion of the student's needs. One volunteer who role played the student during the negative reinforcers declared feelings of frustration towards the teacher and stated, "I can see how a teacher acting like that could turn me off."

In response to the positive reinforcers, most were comfortable with being enablers. Two teachers indicated concern about losing control if they gave children that kind of attention. Those who role played the students said they felt important this time because the teachers demonstrated a caring attitude.

### Evaluation Forms

An evaluation form was distributed to the volunteers. The researcher made every effort to incorporate educators' requests in the workshops.

Some of the suggestions wanted the following included:

1. activities for teaching reading, math, and science;
2. using a music background throughout the presentation;
3. extending the length of the workshop;
4. more relaxation techniques to calm down hyperactive children and discipline problems;
5. making explanations clearer;
6. upper grade level exercises incorporating movement in little space;
7. ideas to help students improve their concentration and attention span.

### Conclusion

In this first workshop, the researcher's goal was to establish a background for Movement/Relaxation with exercises based on body/mind development along the vertical and horizontal axes. Vital body/mind processes operate along the vertical axis. Breathing along the spinal axis promotes relaxation. Relaxation allows the body to utilize gravity efficiently, while cooperating with the mind as it builds stability into learning new concepts. For

differently-abled students, being well-centered may help them draw on available inner resources to work through social and academic problems.

In Activity I, the womb was used as the setting because: (1) it brought the participants within the body in contact with some influences that impact on a maturing fetus; and (2) it was the natural beginning for body/mind interaction. As an example of how body and mind work together, the study focused on early survival reflexes. The value of a supportive environment was begun in Activity I and would be reinforced throughout the staff development process.

The next two activities related to a child's need to belong in the world and establish his/her place in it. Activity II dealt with identity. Activity III recognized spatial boundaries.

Activity IV and V examined the use of personal space in student/teacher relationships. In Activity IV, the volunteers observed two of their colleagues handling personal space in a given situation. The two explored an alternative approach to a classroom problem, pausing first to practice quiet breathing, and then proceeding to make changes in spatial relationships. In Activity V, the educators used negative and positive nonverbal reinforcers to role play.

The researcher was encouraged by the teachers' willingness to learn about Movement/Relaxation and how it might help in meeting the needs of differently-abled learners. During the first workshop, it became clear that, except for a few educators, the others had trouble experiencing through their bodies. This made the first session a guide to planning the upcoming workshops. Seeing that the participants were comfortable with important principles guiding Movement/Relaxation took first priority. Because teacher input played a role in organizing the training series, journals were handed out to the volunteers for their convenience in recording movement or relaxation activities, observations, and reactions explored with their students. This contributed data for keeping the study relevant to curriculum needs and within the instructors' grasp.

Workshop II--Introducing Movement/Relaxation into the Curriculum

February 16, 1990

- I. Introduction
  - A. Defining the Problem
  - B. Creating the Safe Place

## II. Activity I--Warm Up

### A. Breathing

1. The Diaphragm
2. Abdominal Breathing

### B. Grounding

1. Stabilizing the Body Within the Lines of Gravity
2. Visualization and Grounding

## III. Activity II--Using the Literature to Plan Movement

### Explorations for the Classroom

#### A. Guidelines

1. Planning for Success
2. Lesson Plan

#### B. Language Arts

1. The Alphabet--Making Body Letters
2. Reading--Sequence Sculptures

## IV. Short Break (refreshments/peer group interaction)

## V. Activity II (continued)

#### C. Science

1. Magnets--With Partners
2. Magnets--Group

## VI. Evaluation Forms

## VII. Conclusion

For this workshop, two lunchroom tables were pushed together to make one long table permitting the educators to sit facing each other. This was done to facilitate the sharing of ideas. On display were three wall charts, a

letter with a lesson packet for each participant, and books related to the study. A tape recorder was hooked up for musical accompaniment as needed. A refreshment table was prepared for the break.

### Introduction

Defining the Problem. True education reaches the individual's personal source of inner motivation. Only in a safe climate can a child trust others and allow him/herself to question, hypothesize, experiment, and invent. One aspect of creating a safe environment involves respecting how children use the body/mind to learn.

Creating the Safe Place. In this segment, the researcher and volunteers reviewed two charts. The first chart, Space and Communication- Environment, separated a positive learning climate into four categories: (1) safe to inspire trust; (2) responsive to excite interaction; (3) nourishing to stimulate learning; and (4) supportive to encourage exploration and risk taking. The second chart, What A Child Learns, listed the quality of relationships that influence those values and attitudes acquired by children. This chart, purchased from the Seeded Earth, a store in Seaford, New York, read as follows:

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.  
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.  
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.  
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

(author unknown)

The researcher pointed out that Movement/Relaxation required a safe environment to be effective. Two educators complained that their classes were large, with children functioning on different levels and some with short attention spans. A stern approach was the only way to keep them in line. The special education instructor responded, "We get angry at children because they can't sit still for too long doing seat work. That's why we need to include in the day movement activities that build cognitive skills." The researcher advised that Movement/Relaxation exercises may prepare youngsters to handle learning events, as well as keep the student/teacher relationship on an even keel. A second grade teacher remarked, "I have been told that top priority is to be given to bringing up the test scores." The researcher pointed out that many children have a short attention span, which frequently causes poor retention skills and incomplete concept formation. Movement experiences may help to give body reinforcement to concept learning, which could make it possible for the children to do better on tests. A fourth grade teacher noted, "We're



asked to try new ideas, but we don't have time to sit down and brainstorm or follow through to check our progress. I personally think it would help everyone if we could take a new approach to the kids."

At this time, a letter and a packet of movement lessons were distributed to the participants. The letter, author unknown, was printed in This Week, a Freeport, New York newspaper, the week of February 10, 1990. In part it read:  
Dear Mom and Dad,

Please don't tax my honesty too much. I'm easily frightened into telling lies. Don't be inconsistent. It confuses me and makes me lose trust in you. Please answer my questions when I ask. If you don't, you'll find that I'll stop asking and seek my information elsewhere. Don't tell me my fears are silly, they are real to me, and your understanding does much to reassure me. ... Don't forget that I love experimenting. It's partly how I learn, and I couldn't get on without it; so please put up with it. Last, but not least, please don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of love and understanding, but I don't have to tell you that, do I?

Love,  
Your Child

After the researcher read the letter to the group, the educators appeared visibly moved. Several thanked her for their copy of the letter.

#### Activity I--Warm Up

Breathing. Problems of lack of attention, chronic fatigue, and apathy may be due to shallow breathing, and if neglected could develop into lifestyle disorders. In the

classroom these problems may contribute to an impidence in reaching high standards of achievement.

### The Diaphragm

Objective: To investigate the diaphragm, the major muscle of respiration, and how to improve its performance through breathing exercises.

Material: Illustration of the diaphragm

Exploration Procedure: The volunteers, using the lesson packet, turned to an illustration of the diaphragm, and noted the large size of the muscle. To establish the dimensions of the diaphragm, the teachers did as follows: (1) for the width, they placed their hands on either side of the rib cage; (2) for the depth, they placed one hand on the sternum in front and the other hand on the vertebrae in the back; and (3) for the length, they kept the hand on the sternum and placed the other on the abdomen.

To sense the dynamic action of the diaphragm, the educators did the following: (1) to simulate inspiration, they placed the tips of the fingers of both hands together to form the dome-shaped top of the diaphragm. The hands closed into two fists as they pressed down along the spinal axis towards the feet (crus) of the diaphragm; and (2) to simulate expiration, the hands, rising upward, opened and reshaped into the dome. Using the hands helps to reinforce the pattern of improved diaphragmatic breathing.

### Abdominal Breathing

The volunteers did the above exercise adding the hissing sound on expiration. The hiss continued until the air seemed completely expired. As the participants found out, it takes time to break a pattern of shallow breathing. The breath keeps getting held at the shallow level before finally yielding to relaxation and practice.

Grounding. In the organism's striving to gain equilibrium, human energy, like electrical energy, needs to be grounded. Using the inbuilt structures for living within the lines of gravity and its opposing force of anti-gravity helps to maintain grounding. Grounding allows children to feel rooted and comfortable in their body/mind equilibrium.

### Stabilizing the Body Within the Lines of Gravity

Objective: To help the instructors understand that relationship of gravity/anti-gravity as it relates to the body may be applied to improving the grounding of energy.

Material: Plastic model of brain stem,

Part of spinal cord and cervical vertebrae

Ruler with weighted string

Exploration Procedure: Using the skeletal model, the researcher and participants observed parts of the vertebrae, such as: (1) the round-shaped weight bearing area; (2) the posterior vertebral tails that contribute to stability and balance; (3) the discs between the vertebrae that cushion the transfer of weight along the vertical axis. The

researcher then demonstrated the gravitational pull by holding the ruler and dropping the weighted string perpendicular to the floor. The volunteers passed the ruler from one to the other.

The participants placed the fingertips of one hand on top of their heads and tried to sense a perpendicular line to the seat of the bench on which they were sitting. To experience anti-gravity, the researcher reviewed letting the bench hold them up. This upward thrust of anti-gravity brings the individual into a posture of attention. The instructors walked around seeing if they could 1) sense the perpendicular line of gravity down the spine and 2) feel the floor holding them up as they strolled.

The lower grade teachers suggested ways to introduce grounding such as, Simple Simon, or while marching around the room. A sixth grade instructor thought an appropriate way to present it would be as a science lesson. Their interest was genuine, but the volunteers agreed they would need practice in grounding to fully appreciate how it could benefit the children.

#### Visualization and Grounding

Objective: To provide the educators with a visual reinforcer to facilitate the movement of grounding.

Material: Plastic model of brain stem,  
Part of spinal cord and cervical vertebrae  
Diagram of spinal column

Exploration Procedure: Using the diagram, the researcher pointed to the disc spaces between the vertebrae. The researcher used the plastic model to explain that these discs needed to be flexible and centered for optimal functioning. The teachers were asked to close their eyes and see the spaces between the vertebrae of the neck. There was laughter of disbelief until the researcher helped each of them locate the disc spaces. As she touched a disc space, the researcher suggested the educators exhale and think, "Let go." The teachers worked successfully with the cervical spaces.

## Activity II--Using the Literature to Plan Movement

### Explorations for the Classroom

Guidelines. Teachers with little or no background in movement can become comfortable about adapting material from source books to meet their classroom needs.

#### Planning for Success

Objective: To present suggestions for positive involvement of children in movement activities.

Material: A lesson packet

Exploration Procedure: The participants discussed how to incorporate movement experiences into the curriculum. Some of the ideas included: (1) de-emphasizing competition; (2) involving all of the children; (3) encouraging children to explore different movement solutions; (4) first becoming

clear about an activity so that directions to the children are specific; and (5) reinforcing positive attitudes with praise.

The researcher also noted that questioning methods already in place may be utilized to stimulate creative approaches to solving movement problems. Children gain control when they are guided towards trying alternative movement possibilities with questions like, "What might happen if. . .?" or "Can you find another way to. . . ?"

#### Lesson Plan

Objective: To devise an easily managed tool for educators who want to use Movement/Relaxation experiences to help students reduce stress and reinforce the learning process.

Material: A lesson plan outline (part of the lesson packet)

Exploration Procedure: The volunteers turned to the lesson plan outline and reviewed the format. The researcher pointed out that for best results they should arrange to give the lesson(s) on the same day(s) and time(s) each week. The length of the lesson can be flexible. With careful planning thirty minutes is enough for a lesson.

#### Objective

1. Choose a simple activity.
2. A good lesson is challenging but not frustrating.

3. The lesson should be completed in the time segment.

#### Material/Music

1. Introduce students to a range of music: classical; ethnic; instrumental; marches; mood.
2. Children like to make their own music: clapping; finger snapping; beating; foot tapping.

#### Group Size

1. Until children understand how they are expected to work during the lesson, it is best to involve the entire class as the group.
2. As the class progresses, the participation in small groups provides for manageable behavior and social development.

#### Sequence of Development

1. Beginning--Centering Exercise

Students do a breathing, relaxation, or grounding exercise in preparation for the main action.

2. Middle--Main Action

Students experiment with the movement problem. It is helpful to develop an action vocabulary. This facilitates nonverbal communication and assists in bodily reinforcement of concepts. Example:  
Precipitation (part of the water cycle)

## Action Vocabulary

### Lightning

zig zag  
darting  
frenzy

### Thunder

booming  
bursting  
exploding

### Rain

tapping  
pounding  
plopping

The children use their bodies to explore the shapes in space, time, direction, and flow.

### 3. End--Coming to Rest

Students bring the movement to a close where there is relaxed breathing and rest.

## Language Arts

### The Alphabet--Making Body Letters

Objective: To reinforce learning the alphabet through a movement experience.

Material: A source book exercise in the lesson packet

Exploration Procedure: The educators turned to a page in the lesson packet that listed activities using the alphabet. The third exercise requested the following:

Can you make an "A" with your hands? with your arms? with just your legs? with a leg and an arm?<sup>1</sup>

It was suggested to those teachers not used to working in this way with their bodies to try "C" or "T." This made it possible for all to go through the activity feeling a sense of accomplishment. This exercise indicated how a movement problem can be solved in different ways depending on the individual's body structure and orientation.



### Reading--Sequence Sculptures

Objective: To plan an activity for the class that will encourage expressive nonverbal communication and provide a body/mind awareness of sequence of events.

Material: A source book exercise from the lesson packet

Black Folktales by Julius Lester

Water Music by Handel

Exploration Procedure: In this exercise, the researcher helped the instructors adapt a movement activity for reading comprehension to reinforce the concept of sequence. While the volunteers looked at the page from the packet, the researcher read the following:

Working in sculptures on different levels, is a very good pre-story experience. This gives a background for working together, positive touching, group cooperation, and interesting configurations.<sup>2</sup>

Instead of using this as a pre-story experience, the researcher used it as a culminating activity. She read a short folktale, "How God Made the Butterflies." The group agreed on the breakdown of events into three scenes, beginning, middle, and end. Two roles were assigned, the Lord and an angel. The others filled in as grass, bushes, and flowers as the researcher read a summary of each scene. They were reminded to move through levels, much as clay might do as it is shaped into different forms. When the researcher called for them to freeze, all movement had to stop. Music accompanied the molding of each sculpture. The

music background received a positive response from a third grade teacher who had been resistant to a body/mind concept that might contribute towards improved learning. There was no negative criticism of how the educators moved, whether they could have been more involved, or if they failed to follow the instructions. The researcher appreciated their efforts. They were able to see how moving through the scenes provided a sharper experience of the sequence of events.

#### Short Break (refreshments/peer group interaction)

The teachers' conversations reflected the excitement of working together on these activities. During the intermission, a few of the educators expressed interest in having the researcher come to their classrooms for individual coaching assistance aimed at introducing Movement/Relaxation ideas. Since this would serve both the researcher and the teachers, a promise was made to get authorization and work out a schedule before the next workshop.

#### Activity II (continued)

##### Science

##### Magnets--with Partners

Objective: To reinforce the concept of magnetic attraction via movement simulation with a partner.

Material: A source book exercise from the lesson packet

Exploration Procedure: In the lesson packet, the educators found a magnet exercise for partners. The directions were as follows:

We will make believe partner "A's" hand is a magnet. Partner "B's" nose will be magnetized. As "A" moves his/her hand, "B" will respond accordingly, moving as if attracted by the magnet. Also, as much as possible, keep your feet on the floor. We want you to have to twist, bend, go up or down, bend backwards, as you follow the magnet. We want you to get into as many positions as you can create. Change roles.<sup>3</sup>

Working with partners gave everyone a chance to be both the magnet and the magnetized. It also increased the level of participation invested by the different educators. They agreed that the children would enjoy this activity and it could be used as part of a unit, or as a review.

#### Magnets--Group

Objective: To reinforce the concept of magnetic attraction using movement simulation with an entire class as the group.

Material: A source book exercise from the lesson packet

Exploration Procedure: The researcher noted that even with a simple format, the energy of a larger group effort affects the individuals on several levels: (1) in relation to group cohesiveness; (2) the sense of self within a group; and (3) the ability to integrate a concept. The instructions for this exercise were as follows:

Everybody bunch together, all facing the same direction. One person, face the group. With your magnet hand, indicate which way you want the group to move, and the group will respond as one. You will be like an orchestra with the group swaying left or right, up or down as indicated.<sup>4</sup>

In the classroom, as many children as possible should have a chance to be the leader. It gives a sense of empowerment to the leader. The tight time schedule allowed only the fifth grade teacher to act as leader. She was one of the instructors who almost never used movement experiences to reinforce concept learning. She took longer than other volunteers to permit herself to move. The researcher advised that these types of activities hold the interest of children with a short attention span and may benefit the differently-abled person, since the good feelings generated by the exercises lend an element of safety to the learning climate.

### Evaluation Forms

The questionnaire indicated that the teachers wanted more information about methods to improve breathing, relaxation, and reinforcing concepts through movement explorations. Based on requests found on this and the previous evaluation form, the researcher incorporated these into the third workshop. She also tried to include more time for sharing ideas and experiences.

## Conclusion

This workshop was designed to introduce Movement/Relaxation into the curriculum. It spent time establishing the need for a safe learning environment where children can relax and learn free from stress factors that create negative interactions.

In Activity I, the educators learned about the diaphragm. The researcher demonstrated and the teachers practiced how the diaphragm functions during breathing. When tension constricts the diaphragm, it inhibits its ability to reduce stress through relaxation and deep breathing.

Grounding was introduced because it contributes towards relaxation and balance. Like relaxation exercises, it operates along the vertical axis of the body adhering to the lines of gravity. The process grounds the body's energy as a person is involved in performing tasks and stabilizes the body/mind. While body and mind are integrated in a way that makes it impossible to separate them, for this warm up activity, the researcher focused first on stabilizing the body and then on using visualization to sense how grounding takes place.

Activity II began with suggestions for teachers preparing to implement movement experiences into the curriculum. To further assist the instructors, a lesson plan outline was included based on a three-step sequence of

development. The beginning of the lesson was reserved for an exercise to implement breathing, relaxation, or grounding, since focusing on any of these areas may help to center an individual and prepare him/her for better attention. The middle of the lesson involved active investigation of the concept. The end of the lesson aimed at bringing the project to resolution and rest.

Activities in language arts and science completed Activity II. With language arts, the researcher introduced music and literature to demonstrate their use in a lesson. The exercises were geared to different group sizes to give the teachers an idea of how the dynamics change. This is useful for upper grade instructors when deciding the benefits of one group size over another.

The source books provided a sample of the available literature for educators preparing to incorporate movement activities into the curriculum. The researcher demonstrated how an exercise can be adapted to fit the teacher's needs. Pictures of children performing the exercises provided additional assistance.

During the workshops, the instructors progressed from looking around at each other and virtually no movement to gradually taking more risks. Early on, a few volunteers displayed embarrassed behavior that interrupted the concentration of the others. Towards the end of the second workshop, there was evidence the educators were

becoming responsive to the purpose of the project. They began to realize there was something here that might be of value to their students. Even though their movements were cautious and restricted, the researcher appreciated their attempts to learn, a sign that their commitment to the study could develop through ongoing workshops and maintenance. The researcher's dedication to meeting the teachers' needs, over time, should help to build increased relevance and practicality for the Movement/Relaxation program.

Workshop III-Teaching the Body to Develop Depth and  
Relaxation

March 2, 1990

- I. Introduction
  - A. Defining the Problem
  - B. Inner Space
  - C. The Continuum
- II. Activity I--Warm Up
  - A. Chinese Proverb
  - B. Somagram--Drawing the Spine
- III. Activity II--Breathing/Relaxation Exercises
  - A. Exercise 1
    - a. Opening Up the Spaces of the Spine and Ribs
    - b. But Mama Loves You

B. Exercise 2

a. Opening Up the Spaces of the Arms and Legs

b. Putting On a Smoke Suit

IV. Short Break (refreshments/peer group interaction)

V. Activity III - Children Demonstrations

A. This Is My Space

B. Mirror Movement

C. The Magic Stick

VI. Evaluation Forms

VII. Conclusion

For the third workshop, the tables were arranged in a wide "V" shape to afford the participants enough room to do the activities. The front table had an exhibit of source books, packets of handout material, a plastic model of the cervical vertebrae, and a tape recorder. A chart of the Chinese proverb was tacked to the front of the table.

### Introduction

Defining the Problem. A high priority problem for educators is to help students disengage unproductive behavior patterns and build in new patterns that facilitate their successful mediation with social and academic achievement.

Inner Space. An accumulation of tension producing events causes over-contraction of inner space, thus impeding the full contraction and expansion of normal muscle. Inner



space conforms to feelings. Tension is a sign of incomplete feelings. The workshop combined relaxation and breathing techniques with movement expression that may make it possible for persons having difficulty learning due to stress to gain a positive sense of themselves as they communicate in space.

The Continuum. The human organism is supported by a network of continuums to coordinate optimal balance as it moves forward. Examples of these are: (1) gravity/antigravity; (2) contraction/expansion; (3) inner space/outer space; (4) inspiration/expiration; and (5) feelings/actions. The workshop focused on sensitizing the volunteers to the importance of functioning along the central axis. Individuals who stabilize their movements from the depth of the central axis may more efficiently manage the body/mind's continuums.

### Activity I--Warm Up

#### Chinese Proverb

I hear and I forget.  
I see and I remember.  
I do and I understand.

Objective: To encourage those educators who had not begun working with movement lessons to try this medium to either reinforce or enrich skills learning.

Material: Chart with the proverb

Chalk board

Exploration Procedure: This activity was a discussion in which the instructors talked about how they were implementing movement experiences in their classrooms, their successes and their problems. The chalk board was used to record problems to see how they might be resolved. The lower grade teachers explained they had been using movement activities with their students in circle games, Simon Says, and rhythmic marches to develop language and basic counting skills. The kindergarten teacher now included having the children make letters of the alphabet with their bodies. She mentioned she has let her class act out a nursery rhyme. A fourth grade instructor had been doing calisthenics in the morning with his students and has added a breathing exercise to that routine. Those who had attempted some form of movement activity reported mostly positive results. The students were excited but manageable. Those who had not begun complained that their classes were too large. Also, with children going to different programs, it was hard to schedule a movement activity. The fifth grade teacher admitted to feeling inadequately trained to handle movement exercises. The researcher suggested that in the beginning they work with ideas that are simple and comfortable for the educators to explain. Trial and error was part of the learning process.

Somagram--Drawing the Spine. The somagram is a drawing of how the individual perceives his/her spinal image.

Objective: To bring to the participants' awareness that the spinal image reflects a person's emotional self-image.

Material: Drawing paper  
Pencils

Exploration Procedure: The volunteers closed their eyes to get a sense of how their spines felt, rather than picture an anatomically correct spine. When they were ready, they were instructed to draw the feeling sense of the spine. After the workshop, one teacher brought her sketch to the researcher. She was surprised to learn the depth of her nervousness. The diagram was a mass of uncoiled and coiled wires.

## Activity II--Breathing/Relaxation Exercises

### Exercise 1

#### Opening Up the Spaces of the Spine and Ribs

Objective: To release tension in the disc spaces between the vertebrae and the spaces between the ribs to allow for expansion and contraction during breathing at rest or in movement.

Material: Plastic model of cervical vertebrae  
Skeletal diagrams

Exploration Procedure: Using the plastic model and the skeletal diagrams, the researcher focused on the disc spaces

starting at the cervical vertebrae and going down the spine. As the disc spaces open up, they cause the rib spaces to do the same. The volunteers sat with their eyes closed, hands resting in their laps. They thought "let go" as the researcher walked from one to another touching the vertebrae at different levels. The educators next took slow, deep breaths trying to sense if letting go helped them breathe easier and deeper. Relaxation supports release of tension during inhalation and exhalation and with practice contributes to a person's ability to maintain stress reduced breathing.

#### But Mama Loves You

Objective: To personalize a situation that may cause tension and help the individual open the spaces between the vertebrae and those between the ribs.

Material: None

Exploration Procedure: The researcher explained how this exercise is done in the classroom. It is not introduced until the teacher knows the children and understands their concerns. In the classroom, the youngsters close their eyes and drop their heads on the desk. The teachers just closed their eyes.

The exercise begins with a story in which each person is the central character, as follows: You are on a beach on a beautiful sunny day. The waves roll up on the sand and flow back out to the ocean. There are rocks, pebbles, and

shells all around. You are thinking about \_\_\_\_\_.

The sun warms you. And the sun says, "But Mama loves you."

In the insert is anything that might be bothering the child. It is stated briefly and quietly. Only the last part of the story is repeated as the teacher goes from student to student.

The researcher demonstrated the kind of hand movements that go along with the story. The middle finger defines a few vertebra moving down the spine. Then both hands pass over the back of the ribs moving towards the spine and down. Any gentle massage will help the spaces open and result in deeper breathing.

### Exercise 2

#### Opening Up the Spaces of the Arms and Legs

Objective: To release tension in the forearm and lower leg by opening the spaces between the ulna and radius, as well as the tibia and fibula.

Material: Skeletal diagrams

Exploration Procedure: The teachers observed the diagrams of the forearm and lower leg bones. They rested the left forearm on the table. The right hand encircled the middle of the left arm. The instructors had to sense a midspace between the thumb and the other fingers and think "let go." Practice helps to relax the area and widen the space between the ulna and radius, permitting improved

muscle coordination. The volunteers switched arms and repeated the exercise.

With the lower legs, the participants sat with feet on the floor. Placing both hands on either side of the calf, they were asked to imagine a midspace between their hands and to think "let go." The researcher walked around encouraging the educators to continue deep breathing. Here, too, practice transmits the relaxation message and releases tension, opening spaces for better balance and stability.

#### Putting on a Smoke Suit

Objective: To provide a fun experience for dealing with opening up the spaces in the arms and legs.

Material: None

Exploration Procedure: The educators had to put on a jacket and pants made of smoke. They got into the suit by allowing it to filter through the spaces in their arms and legs. In this exercise, the individual has an opportunity to release tension, which can be observed as the movements begin to flow.

#### Short Break (refreshments/peer group interaction)

The researcher took time to hand out a schedule to the three teachers who wanted coaching instruction. Arrangements were made with each one for a preliminary conference to map out the coaching topic and strategy.

### Activity III--Children Demonstrations

The children were invited to demonstrate a few classroom activities to give the teachers an idea of how students respond to these exercises. Each activity served another purpose.

#### This Is My Space

Objective: To help children assert their territorial boundaries through improved breathing and grounding.

Material: None

Exploration Procedure: Standing in a circle the children breathed in deeply and hissed out the air. They bent their knees and sat within the lines of gravity and pushed up into a standing position. After doing this three times, they began walking in different directions. When two children met, they spoke and gestured, "This is my space." This was a mixed group of children in terms of gender and personality. The teachers could see they had good feelings for each other, while being forthright about their space.

#### Mirror Movement

Objective: To give children an opportunity to appreciate each other.

Material: Thais Meditation by Massenet

Exploration Procedure: Working with a partner, one child was the originator of the movement, the other was the mirror. Then they reversed roles.

### The Magic Stick

Objective: To stimulate creativity through solving movement problems.

Material: A large drawing paper (or tag board) rolled up and taped to simulate a stick

Exploration Procedure: The children made a circle around the child with the stick. The child with the stick imagined it to be an object and moved with it according to its function. When the child finished the movement phrase, he passed it to someone else in the circle. Everyone got a chance to recreate the stick and listen to the praise and excitement of his/her idea.

The teachers were impressed by the demonstrations. They were affected by the positive interaction among the children.

### Evaluation Forms

The teachers responded with a favorable rating of the workshop. They found the material and suggestions in this session useful for their classes. Two expressed the hope that the researcher would hold other workshops to help them understand more about the body/mind connection and how to work with it. A fourth grade instructor asked if the researcher would continue to supply the group with learning packets.



## Conclusion

This workshop was designed to expose the educators to a few strategies for releasing tension in inner spaces that might impede learning and present obstacles to the development of productive social and academic behaviors. Using a somogram during the warm up showed the teachers how much mind there was in body. Releasing tension in inner body spaces, making it possible for deeper, relaxed breathing also indicated how much body there was in mind. The activities tried to direct the participants in actions that would engage them closer to the central axis.

By the third workshop, resistances were beginning to ease off and being replaced by a sense of trust. The researcher compared the teachers' early responses to their present receptiveness and could discern a readiness to learn more.

## Coaching Activities

Immediately after the workshops were completed, the researcher began scheduling coaching sessions. On Tuesday, March 6, 1990, the researcher met with the kindergarten instructor to discuss implementation of a coaching series of four sessions. The plan called for two lessons a week for the following two weeks. These were set for Tuesday and

Friday mornings during the researcher's preparation periods.

In charting the program, the researcher, at the suggestion of the classroom teacher, worked with the concept of opposites using the example of "open" and "close." They decided on a basic agenda:

Day 1 - Introduction of researcher and topic;

Day 2 - Reviewing facial openings and using the body to form open and closed letters;

Day 3 - Basic machines, how they open and close, and comparing them to similar movements in the body;

Day 4 - Reading a story (The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle) and acting out the concepts of "open" and "close."

The lessons developed as follows:

Day 1

Objective: To introduce researcher and topic

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Introduction of researcher with cross-spine handshakes, alternating right and left hand while saying "Hello! How are you? I'm fine! What's new?"<sup>5</sup> This was done to establish the right and left side of the central axis.
2. Breathing Activity--Provided a body experience for "open" and "close." Seated in a circle with hands on the abdomen during inhalation and exhalation,

the children felt the area open up like a balloon filled with air and close down when the air was expelled.

3. My Name is--This introduction along with a facial and/or hand gesture encouraged expansiveness. The children participated without hesitation, except for one girl. She was not pressured to take part but, before long she volunteered to introduce herself. When she finished, the group clapped.
4. Development of Purpose--The researcher stated her reason for the class visit. She asked several questions and waited for the children to respond with movement:

Can you show me open hands?

Can your fingers open more?

Can your arms go wide open?

The children reversed this process when the word "close" replaced "open" in the question. The children were directed to observe what happened to the space as they opened and closed hands, fingers, and arms. Guided by the educators, they talked about how the space got big (open) and tiny (close).

5. Breathing Activity--The children got up on their feet and shook themselves out. They took a deep

breath and opened their arms. They blew the air out and closed their arms.

6. Conclusion--Using a familiar song (Open! Shut Them!) the children and their teacher sang "Open! Close them!"

## Day 2

Objective: (1) to reinforce open and close through body relationships  
(2) to reinforce learning of letter shapes through body relationships

Material: Large size lower case letter cards

Sign: Laughing lips and word "open"

Smiling lips and word "close"

### Procedure:

1. Greeting--Did the cross-spine handshake and greeting.
2. Breathing Activity--Same as Day 1.
3. A Fingers Trip Around the Face and Ears--This activity was designed to make the children sensitive to and respectful of their bodies. The fingers started at the eyes, moved down to the nose, to the mouth, and around to the ears. At each stop the children did a tactile check of the skin quality, the shape, the ability to open and close. They finished by making faces to show

how many ways they could open and close these apertures.

4. The Sign--The researcher pointed to the laughing lips and the word "open." She did the same with the smiling lips and the word "close."
5. Making Body Letters--Their teacher took out the letter cards a,b,c,d and placed them on separate chairs. The children saw that all the letters were round and open, but that three had closed parts. Working with partners they made the letters with their bodies.
6. Conclusion--The children held hands and walked in a circle singing the alphabet song.

### Day 3

Objective: To introduce the function of basic machines, how their opening and closing compare with body mechanics

Materials: Hinge

Pulley

Cup and ball (ball and socket)

Hand drum and stick

Procedure:

1. Greeting--Did the cross-spine handshake for "Hello! How are you?" and a cross-spine elbow touch for "I'm fine! What's new?"

2. Breathing Activity--Same as Day 1.  
The greeting and breathing activities were initiated to develop body depth and stability around the central axis.
3. Review--Used the sign to review the words "open" and "close."
4. Machines in the Body--As the children sat on the floor in a circle, they were able to hold and examine each machine. After the machines were collected, the researcher demonstrated how the hinge, pulley, ball and socket open and close when people use them. She showed the children how the machines work in their bodies. They practiced moving the ankle and wrist hinge, the pulley that brought the legs up close to the body and let them open out, the ball and socket at the hip that helped them walk, run, jump, and kick.
5. Moving the Body Machines--The children marched around the room accompanied by a drum beat. They walked in slow motion lifting their legs up high. This changed to walking quickly with small steps. They finished by jumping high and sitting low like rabbits, opening and closing their bodies.
6. Conclusion--After several high jumps, the children stretched out on the floor, breathed in deeply and blew it out.

## Day 4

Objective: To experience the concept of "open" and "close" in literature

Materials: The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Music: Clarinet Concerto in A Major by  
Mozart

Corrugated box with a large circle cut into  
opposite sides but not removed

## Procedure:

1. Greeting--Same as Day 3.
2. Breathing Activity--Same as Day 1.
3. Review--The researcher wrote the words "open" and "close" on the board. She asked the children what things they needed to open and close in the morning to get ready for school.
4. Reading to Children--In preparation for reading, the researcher questioned the children to find out what they knew about caterpillars to develop a background for listening and visualizing the story that was about to unfold. They talked about the cover picture. As the researcher read the story, the children were absorbed with the pictures, the holes in the pages and the organization of the book.
5. Putting Action to the Story--After reading the story, the researcher talked about how the

caterpillar got its food by eating openings into everything. The researcher reviewed the story, while the children became caterpillars and crawled through the pretend food (corrugated box) eating openings into it. The teacher turned on the record player to accompany the activity. The children closed up in their cocoons. The music stopped. They nibbled an opening in their cocoons, came out, and opened their butterfly wings circling the room.

6. Conclusion--The researcher had the children land, come to rest, take a deep breath and blow it out.

The kindergarten teacher was instrumental in carrying out this unit. She prepared the children, had the room set up so there was adequate space for them to move with freedom and safety, and had a record player in working order. After school on Friday, March 23, 1990, the researcher met with the instructor for a post-assessment conference.

On Tuesday, March 26, 1990, the researcher met with the sixth grade educator to discuss how the coaching sessions might meet her needs. After agreeing to a Tuesday and Friday morning schedule for the following two weeks, the educator explained her problem. It was two-fold: (1) her students were having difficulty grasping the cloze concept, which was basic to passing the upcoming reading PEP test;



and (2) her students were not motivated to taking standardized tests.

Time being short, there had to be a way of finding common ground between these two problems. The dialogue between teacher and researcher revealed that common ground to be focus. Black youngsters are naturally divergent thinkers. Their imaginations are fertile with rhythms, colors and pictures. Cloze deals predominantly with focus. The reader has to be able to see one picture and focus in on it. With this as guide, the researcher gained teacher approval for the following four-day coaching plan:

Day 1--Introductions (student/researcher); purpose;

grounding

Day 2--Breathing

Day 3--Relaxation and concentration

Day 4--Test-taking

The lessons developed as follows:

Day 1

Objective: To create an atmosphere of respect with introductions; to state purpose; to show how grounding helps focus

Materials: Yardstick (one with weighted string)  
Handballs, model of vertebrae

Procedure:

1. Introduction of Researcher--Respectful of the sixth grader's level of maturity, his/her need for

recognition as decision maker, and his/her mistrust of most adults, the researcher introduced herself and stated that she would like to walk around the room to shake their hands. There was mixed approval, but no significant resistance. The researcher did the cross-spine handshake with just "Hello! How are you?"

2. My Name Is--In preparation for the coaching lessons with this class, the researcher passed the room several times to observe the children. Their low energy level influenced the way she did this activity. The class was divided into four groups of seven students. The desks had been arranged to fill the entire room. By moving a few desks, it was possible for one group at a time to work. Each person was given a yardstick as he/she joined the circle. The directions indicated that at the individual's turn, he/she was to take a large forward step (yardstick held like a staff) and say, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_."

3. Explanation of Purpose--On the board, their instructor had written the Chinese proverb used in Workshop III:

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

The researcher advised the class that understanding cloze required learning how to focus attention.

Each classroom visit was going to deal with doing something that may improve their ability to focus.

4. Grounding--The researcher explained the need to ground energy. She demonstrated the line of gravity (with yardstick and weighted string) by which energy traveled efficiently. She showed the children a model of the vertebrae, noting how the pull of gravity moves through these bones, bearing the body's energy in maintaining balance.

The researcher walked around the room letting the students hold the yardstick with weighted string as they sensed the long downward path of moving energy. After practicing grounding energy, the children were directed to let their chairs (simulating the force of anti-gravity) hold them up sending new energy upward along a vertical path.

5. Juggling--This activity provided a focusing experience using the concept of grounding. The researcher demonstrated gravity and anti-gravity by tossing a ball up with one hand and catching it on its downward fall with the other hand. The students, in their groups, lined up in front of the room to try it.

6. Conclusion--The researcher reviewed the relationship of centering through the spine for grounding and achieving focus. The students shook out their bodies, breathed deeply, blew out the air and came to rest.

## Day 2

Objective: To become aware of main structures of breathing as they function along the body's central axis for integrated focus.

Materials: The Incredible Body Machine by Paula S. Brown

Diagram of the diaphragm

### Procedure:

1. Greeting--Same as Day 1.
2. Respiratory System--The children were given xeroxed copies of pictures showing parts of the respiratory system to use in class and keep for reference.
3. Breathing Down the Length of the Spine--The children felt their ribs widen on inspiration. The emphasis was on the action of the diaphragm. At the center of the diaphragm is a tendon. The crus are two leglike extensions from it. The students made two fists, placed them on the sternum, and moved them down the length of the spine on inspiration. After practicing this several times, they got the idea of breathing down on inspiration.

4. Swimming--This activity integrated action along the central axis with a forward focus. Lined up in front of the room in their groups, torsos simulating a swimming position, the students lifted one arm at a time up and forward. They breathed in on one stroke and out on the other. The researcher reminded them to breathe down the length of the spine.
5. Cat and Mouse--This activity had to do with breathing down the length of the spine and focus. The children, at their desks, were cats. They crouched in their seats breathing deeply. On each desk was an imaginary mouse. They had to focus on the mouse as it went back and forth. Then they pounced on it.
6. Conclusion--The children rested on their desk. The researcher reminded them of how important breathing along the full length of the spine was to focus.

### Day 3

Objective: To show how relaxation supports concentration, necessary to focus

Materials: Fabric swatches

Pictures from newspapers and magazines

A descriptive paragraph

Cup and ball

Yardstick and weighted string

Procedure:

1. Greeting--Did the cross-spine elbow touch saying, "Hello! How are you?" The researcher demonstrated with a few children and had the rest do it with a neighbor classmate.
2. Relaxation Activity--Using the ball and cup to simulate the ball and socket articulation found at the joints, the researcher explained how tight muscles make it hard to center the body for grounding, breathing, and focusing. The children touched the ball and socket joint towards the spine of the collar bone (clavicle) on the right and left sides saying, "Let go. Let go. Let go." They did the same for the ball and socket joint at the top of the thigh bones (femur). The researcher walked around helping students release tension by opening spaces in the neck vertebrae.
3. Concentration Activity (Focus I)--Each student had a fabric swatch placed on his/her desk. They were instructed to take a long, centered breath, relax, and focus on the main design. Being relaxed makes the pattern seem like it is moving towards the individual. They turned the swatch over and outlined the design on the desk with a finger.
4. Concentration Activity (Focus II)--Each student had a picture placed on his/her desk. They were

instructed to take a long, centered breath, relax, and focus on the main happening of the picture. They were advised to take enough time to relax any body places that seemed tense. In this way, the important part of the picture will move forward and become clearer. Some children reported to the class. The others shared the main event with their neighbors.

5. Concentration Activity (Focus III)--There was not enough time to do this activity and it was done on Day 4.
6. Conclusion--Since the whole body breathes and every cell needs oxygen, the class decided to breathe into different parts of the body. On the exhale, they hissed out the air for as long as they could.

#### Day 4

Objective: To reinforce how experiences that center body/mind (grounding, breathing, relaxation) help concentration and focus for test-taking

Materials: Opaque eye protectors  
 Glasses with cheating eyes on lenses  
 A descriptive paragraph  
White Fang by Jack London  
 Zoo Books (magazine about wolves)

Procedure:

1. Greeting--Same as Day 3.
2. Do Not's of Test-taking--The researcher put on opaque eye protectors to demonstrate what might happen in panic. She reminded the class of the exercises they had done which can help them stay calm and focused. She put on the glasses with cheating eyes covering the lenses to show them what some children do when they lose confidence in a test situation. Part of preparation for the test should include deep breathing, grounding, or relaxation exercises.
3. Concentration Activity (Focus III)--This exercise brought focus into the cloze process. The researcher instructed the class to take a deep breath, let the chair hold them up, let go of tension, and listen to the researcher describe a beach scene. The children were asked to visualize the scene until all the parts were in clear focus and they could step into the picture. The researcher read the paragraph again leaving out the key words in each sentence to which the children gave oral responses.
4. Reading to Students--White Fang (Chapter 6)--Before reading the two paragraphs from this story, the researcher provided background regarding wolves'



intelligence, instincts, and lifestyle. She showed them the Zoo Books magazine on wolves. The researcher reminded the students to prepare to listen. The children were asked to visualize the scene until all the parts were in clear focus and they could step into the picture. The researcher read the two paragraphs twice. On the second reading, key words were left out of the text. The children supplied the missing words (or synonyms) with accuracy.

5. Conclusion--The students were invited to send notes or stop by the researcher's room if there were any questions or comments.

The students in this sixth grade class, by-and-large, began to trust that the researcher cared about them and wanted to help them learn. She got letters from them about the coaching sessions. A few of the students stopped by to help the researcher with tutoring and art projects. When the tests were over two boys came by after school to let the researcher know how calm they were during the test. One stated that he felt free enough to ask the proctor questions when he had a problem. This was something he never could do. On Friday, April 13, 1990 the researcher and the teacher met after school for a post-assessment conference.

Because the standardized tests were coming up in May, the researcher wanted to complete the coaching sessions by

the end of April. She met with the Special Education teacher Wednesday, April 11, 1990 on the researcher's lunch break. The Tuesday/Friday morning schedule was suitable to the instructor as the time and day for the coaching sessions.

The Special Education teacher had a problem in her class with sharing. She had a new student who was having trouble adjusting. He spoke to no one, sitting by himself most of the day. The others would share nothing with him, or with each other. It was late in the term and this inability to share had not been resolved. The researcher prepared a mind mapping chart in order to get the necessary data to approach this problem. On a piece of drawing paper she drew a circle in which she wrote the word "sharing." Using this diagram as a guide helped the researcher and instructor decide what issues to present in the coaching sessions. The agenda for the four lessons was as follows:

Day 1--Introduction (students/researcher) and purpose.

Day 2--Give-and-take

Day 3--Building trust

Day 4--Listening

The lessons developed keeping the above in mind:

Day 1

Objective: To introduce all the parties involved as part of step one in sharing and to present the purpose in a meaningful way.

Materials: A mirror (5 in. x 7 in.)

Procedure:

1. Greeting--Taking the time to smile into each child's eyes, speaking clearly and distinctly, the researcher used the cross-spine handshake while saying, "Hello. How are you? I'm fine. What's new?"
2. Breathing/Stretching Activity--The researcher explained that she came to get to know the children and share some fun activities with them. In the breathing/stretching warm-up, the children took a deep breath down to their toes and hissed it out. Then they breathed down to their toes and out to their finger tips and hissed it out. They were sitting in their seats and could stretch full out on the inhalation.
3. My Name is \_\_\_\_ and I Like To--The Special Education classroom was small. There was just enough space for the eight children to form a circle. Each one said his/her name three times, getting stronger with each repetition, and then demonstrated what he/she liked to do.
4. Mirror Movement--The researcher passed a mirror from one child to the next. The children made facial and hand gestures, all the while looking into the mirror. The students paired off and,

moving some desks against the wall, found an area with enough space to interact with their partners. First, one was the mirror and the other, the reflection. Then they reversed roles.

5. Conclusion--The children went back to their seats, rested their heads on the desks and did some quiet, deep breathing.

## Day 2

Objective: To engage the students in give-and-take experiences

Materials: A large sheet of construction paper rolled up to simulate a stick

Inflated balloons

Procedure:

1. Greeting--Same as Day 1.
2. Breathing/Stretching Activity--Same as Day 1. This was done twice. By the second time, one of the children released further tension in yawning.
3. Sharing a Balloon--Standing in a circle, each child had a chance to hold the balloon that was passed from one to the other. The children paired off, with two sets of partners sitting down to watch as the others participated. The two working pairs were each given a balloon. Both team members kept their hands on the balloon, but only one person moved it through space. After a few minutes,

control of the balloon shifted to the partner.

This pattern was repeated once. The children who observed became the participants as the others sat down to watch.

4. Happy Birthday--the students stood in a circle.

The researcher explained that each one would have a turn to bring a birthday gift to a friend that he/she felt the person might enjoy. The paper-roll stick was the gift. The gift-giver had to walk around the inside of the circle with the stick demonstrating what it was before presenting it to the recipient. The youngsters supported the gift-giver with these words, "\_\_\_\_ is bringing a birthday present to his/her friend. I wonder what it is." The gift-giver had to describe the present with actions only until someone identified it. The birthday child took the gift and the game began again. It ended after every child got a gift. Two children needed help deciding on a gift. They were allowed to ask one person for assistance. This exercise excited them and there was good interaction among the classmates.

5. Conclusion--Back in their seats the students dropped their heads on the desks, breathed deeply, and listened to a request from the researcher.

She asked them to bring a favorite toy to school, for the next visit, to share with a friend.

### Day 3

Objective: To build trust through responsibility

Materials: Students' toys

Procedure:

1. Greeting--Did the cross-spine handshake for "Hello! How are you?" and a cross-spine elbow touch for "I'm fine! What's new?"
2. Breathing/Stretching Activity--In this exercise the children were in their seats. It was done in slow motion and involved contra-lateral (diagonal) integration as follows:
  - a. breathing in stretching the left leg
  - b. breathing out and bringing the left leg back
  - c. breathing in stretching the right arm
  - d. breathing out bringing the right arm backThe same thing was done using the right leg and left arm. The pattern was repeated twice.
3. Sharing Toys--The researcher, special education instructor, and children discussed concerns about sharing toys. They agreed on rules for sharing toys that may allay these fears, which were:
  - a. Each child must tell his/her neighbor important things to remember when playing with the toy.

- b. Each child must pay attention and treat the classmate's toy with care.
- c. Once a person accepts the responsibility of playing according to the rules with his/her friend's toy, he/she should be allowed to play without criticism.

This was hard to do. The researcher and special education teacher guided the children through the rules. It took a while before they could relax. There was ongoing advice from some children about the handling of their toys. Gradually they got busy enjoying each others toys. A few children began playing together. The special education instructor was pleased to see the transformation in her class. The new boy found it easier to interact with the others. He befriended a shy girl who had been having a problem socializing.

- 4. Conclusion--The toys were returned to their owners and put away. The children dropped their heads on the desks, breathed deeply, and rested. The researcher congratulated the students on the responsible way they handled themselves. They demonstrated they could treat other people's things with respect. She invited them to her classroom where there was opportunity for more movement, since it was larger.

## Day 4

Objective: To have the children experience listening as a part of sharing

Materials: Large coffee cans with plastic covers  
 Small covered coffee cans containing a small amount of rice  
 Uncovered shoe boxes encircled by two or three rubber bands  
 Drum sticks  
 Long wooden blocks  
 Pastorale Symphony by Beethoven

## Procedure:

1. Greeting--Same as Day 3.
2. Breathing/Stretching Activity--Same as Day 3.
3. People Sounds--The researcher explained that listening was another way of sharing. People, as they listen, share by trying to understand what other people are expressing. The researcher demonstrated by making sounds of laughter, anger, fear, and crying. She paused between sounds to give the children time to react.
4. Listening/Sharing Rhythmic Sounds--Each student chose an instrument and sat on the floor with a partner. The researcher demonstrated this exercise with the special education teacher as her partner. When one beat out a short rhythmic phrase, the



partner listened and prepared to answer it. No one could tell anyone what to do or be critical of the response. They had to alternate being the initiator. The emphasis was on respecting each other in the sharing. The special education instructor worked hard to keep the sharing concept carried forward in the classroom between coaching sessions, which made it possible for most of the children to be ready for this activity. They were able to work things out together without much educator assistance.

5. Listening/Sharing Classical Music--The students received instructions to let the music put a picture or a feeling in their bodies and minds. They were encouraged to breathe deeply, relax, and move through the room when the researcher tapped them. The children tuned into the music and moved freely about the room following their individual responses. In passing one another, a few shared their feelings nonverbally through gestures and body shapes.
6. Conclusion--As the facilitator turned down the volume, she directed the children to melt into the ground and rest.

This unit on sharing produced positive results for all concerned. The Special Education instructor achieved her

goal to help her students develop a more sharing and caring attitude towards their classmates. The children's self-esteem improved. They were able to walk through the halls without fussing and fighting. When they met the researcher on their way to lunch, or doing an errand, they would stop and give her the coaching session greeting. The researcher was able to see possible ways for introducing and using some of the Movement/Relaxation ideas.

The researcher presented certain activities for consistent practice, as well as those which extended the concept and could be used from time-to-time as separate lessons. The Special Education teacher was cooperative and committed to integrating breathing and movement exercises into the curriculum to help her students. She consulted frequently with the researcher on different ways to structure body/mind techniques into skills development.

### Conclusion

The workshops were managed with the purpose of establishing the need for a stress-reduced learning climate. They tried to present experiences that would expose the educators to a few of the many ways that impact on children's development. Movement, relaxation, and grounding are basic to implementing Movement/Relaxation.

The coaching units gave concrete form for introducing Movement/Relaxation in the curriculum. Since the researcher

set out to investigate strategies for helping differently-abled children, success with the special education students provided valuable input. Since these students were trained to be disciplined and sit quietly, they surprised their teacher by not going wild when they had an opportunity to move and interact with another student. They showed interest in trying to do the exercises. There was basic respect between students and educator. This transferred to the coaching environment. The kindergarten children were immediately open to the exercises and looked forward to the coaching lessons. They expressed exuberance but could calm down and be good listeners. There was excellent rapport between children and teacher. The sixth grade experience was different because instructor and students did not respect each other. It, therefore, took time for them to gain respect for the researcher. Having observed the class in advance, when she entered the classroom, she moved in among the children determined to involve all of them in the coaching session. This was so unexpected that from that point on they were not sure of what was going to happen next. It woke them up and most of them enjoyed the dynamics and the chance to be active and accepted. They appreciated the focus on the upcoming tests because they were nervous about being unsure of the cloze process.

Working with the children made it clear to the researcher that there was a need for further study in Movement/Relaxation to find strategies where children can use more of their inner resources to become active learners. If children are to meet high expectations, the schools have the responsibility for providing a safe, stress-reduced learning climate and opportunities for children to express, experiment, and invent.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Anne Green Gilbert, Teaching the Three R's Through Movement Experience: A Handbook for Teachers (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1977), 31.

<sup>2</sup>Teresa Benzwie, A Moving Experience: Dance for Lovers of Children and the Child Within (Tucson: Zephyr Press, 1987), 106.

<sup>3</sup>Benzwie, 86.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>5</sup>Jody Gottfried and Kyle Haver, workshop demonstration at the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies, 23 January 1988.

## CHAPTER V

### OVERVIEW, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, INTERVIEWS, AFTERMATH, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

#### Overview

This study focused on processes for designing and implementing a low-cost, school-based staff development project that introduced Movement/Relaxation in an urban elementary school serving low income and minority students. The study was particularly concerned with differently-abled children, who experience overstress in traditional classrooms and do not function up to their potential.

This study applied research findings in dance movement, movement education, the Relaxation Response, nonverbal communication, brain development, prenatal development, effective schools, the African American child's learning style, and cultural influences to engage teachers in creating a safe learning climate where students may change from passive to active learners. The staff development process provided the teachers an opportunity to gain first-hand experience in body/mind activities. The researcher gathered data through observation and feedback to improve the practical nature of the workshops.

The staff development process evolved as an action team effort relying on the collaborative support of nine

volunteer educators from the Ulysses Byas Elementary School. This collaborative effort was an empowering experience for the teachers. Combined with their commitment to provide responsible education for the students and the community, it seemed to result in: (1) a gradual lessening of resistance to movement exploration as a possible aid in learning; (2) sensitivity to nonverbal communication between instructor and student that might make for a safe learning environment; and (3) an interest in further study of Movement/Relaxation as it applies to curriculum reinforcement.

Active participation in Movement/Relaxation exercises was essential in implementing this study, since the educators had no working knowledge of body/mind techniques. Through participation, they got some practice in how to develop a more interactive range of movement to: (1) reach the children and (2) create learning opportunities in keeping with the active learning style of African American children. By the third workshop, 75 percent of the teachers reported doing three or more project-related activities with their children. Three educators inquired as to the possibility of coaching sessions in their classrooms.

Planning and implementing the coaching sessions provided an extension of participation and empowering input. They served to augment the data base of experience necessary for both researcher and teachers to maintain this kind of change process. Even the most motivated instructor, when

confronted by a tight curriculum schedule. finds it hard to break routine to introduce new methods. As a result of the coaching sessions. the educators had a clearer understanding of how they might use short time segments to: (1) enhance the curriculum using movement activities: (2) bring integrative dimensions to concept learning; and (3) engage children in possible long-term improvement in breathing. relaxation. and coping skills.

This staff development project indicated a need for regular maintenance to keep the change process one of ongoing self-renewal. One teacher suggested designating a maintenance team of two or three volunteers to coordinate materials. sustain a learning link between educators. and provide encouragement to stay the course. It was evident to the researcher that where she was able to give this kind of support. the teachers were motivated to do more with the children.

The benefits of this low-cost school-based staff development study far outweighed the human and environmental obstacles that had to be overcome. The advantages of the project were manifested in some of the following ways: (1) it brought the participants out of isolation; (2) it helped the participants gain empowerment in shaping the research to meet their needs; (3) it urged positive interdependence between teachers and aides; (4) it fostered a healthy school climate; and (5) it revealed a need for



further research and experimentation in discovering areas where Movement/Relaxation may be relevant.

### Research Questions

Four research questions guided the progress of this staff development study, in its attempt to make the project both reasonable and feasible for use by the Ulysses Byas educators. During the progress of the workshops, the following emerged as possible solutions in response to the questions:

#### Research Question 1

How can activities from the movement field be understood and effectively translated into practical application for the classroom?

#### Response to Research Question 1

The problem of facilitating comprehension of the concepts was handled by (1) framing them in familiar language; (2) using content area skills already in place; and (3) enlisting teacher participation in the activities.

Making the concepts and activities practical entailed gathering, analyzing, and sharing of data. This information came from needs assessments, evaluations, journals, classroom observations, teacher input during the workshops, interviews, and informal meetings. Organizing concepts to meet teachers' special needs in the coaching units provided

further understanding as to how movement material might be brought into the educational process.

#### Research Question 2

How can activities in the workshops influence change in teacher/student interaction?

#### Response to Research Question 2

As team members of a staff development project, the volunteers were also students and vulnerable. Teacher confidence was encouraged through praise and the elimination of negative criticism. There was the awareness that practice over time would improve understanding and application of the concepts.

There was emphasis on the importance of positive nonverbal expressive and receptive communication. Since this area requires ongoing maintenance, skills using pausing and stopping, breathing, and relaxation were introduced to reinforce the ability to change teacher/student interactive behavior. The instructors began to understand this and used it with the children. They spoke of better classroom responsiveness and attention. Some remarks included:

1. "I have started smiling more and the children seem to appreciate this."
2. "I usually got so frantic when the children weren't paying attention. This week, I stopped, took a few deep breaths and acknowledged their feelings of restlessness and boredom. I let them stretch and

breathe. Then they worked together with partners on a map activity."

### Research Question 3

How can working with an action team help teachers maintain an open mind and in time become risk-takers?

Working with an action team bonded the teachers in their collaborative efforts for school improvement. Teachers, all too often, operate in isolation. Educators, themselves, need to learn better ways to breathe, relax, cope, and function interdependently. Basic to the change process was managing a safe climate for the instructors where their ideas were respected. The dynamics of the action team provided support on all levels of interaction.

Despite the limitation of time, striving for a safe environment resulted in a gradual reduction of tension and nervous giggling. By the third workshop, the educators seemed comfortable about asking questions and expressing their thoughts. Some, sooner than others, came to realize that movement was a natural part of a total learning experience. Several participants began moving with greater flow of movement patterns. Those who were still restrained showed efforts at letting go. The risks taken by the end of three workshops was an indication of how much more might be accomplished with a longer staff development program. An increased degree of movement patterning ability might have found its way into the classroom, where application may have

produced emotional, social, and academic advantages for the students. Sensing a need for continued team support, one of the volunteers suggested organizing a maintenance group to keep the momentum ongoing.

#### Research Question 4

What kind of materials and support do teachers need to implement change?

#### Response to Research Question 4

The instructors were given learning packets of activities in the content areas. These were well-received and put to use. Several volunteers requested packets for special skills needs. Other faculty members began asking for copies of these learning packets. The learning packets were easy to fit between the covers of a lesson plan book for quick reference to reinforce a concept. The participants were given a bibliography of current literature in the body/mind and movement fields. They were given journals to log activities and observations.

Informal meetings with teachers were opportunities to help them with an idea for a breathing, relaxation, or movement activity. They were regularly encouraged to observe each other for support and sharing ideas. This motivated more of them to get started with simple exercises.

The coaching unit proved to be an excellent way of guiding teachers towards implementing change. It provided a collaborative effort in handling the instructor's problem.

It included analysis of the problem, planning the sequence for its resolution, and carrying out the plan.

Every aspect of the support structure played a part in getting the teachers to take the first steps towards trying a Movement/Relaxation activity. Collegial interaction manifested in a safe, non-competitive climate may be the most effective way to mobilize confidence for implementation and maintenance of change.

### Summary of Interviews

Formal evaluations were assessed after each workshop. For a reaction to the combined structure of workshops and coaching units, the researcher concentrated on interviewing those teachers who were part of that whole process. The interviews were informal in style but included questions that would help the researcher in planning future projects. The following is a summary of those questions and responses:

P - Positive  
N - Negative  
U - Undecided

Questions	Kindergarten	6th Grade	Special Education
1. Do you use ideas from the workshops?	P	P	P
2. Do you use ideas from the learning packets?	P	P	P
3. Did planning the coaching unit help to focus the problem?	P	P	P

Questions	Kindergarten	6th Grade	Special Education
4. Did the coaching unit help resolve the problem?	P	U	P
5. Would you participate in another coaching unit?	P	P	P
6. Since using ideas from the staff development program, have you noticed more participation from your students?	P	U	P
7. Do you use positive nonverbal communication?	P	P	P
8. Do you have a scheduled time for doing Movement/Relaxation activities?	P	N	P
9. Do you think combining workshops with coaching is a good way to plan future staff improvement programs?	P	P	P
10. Is there some part of the program you would like to see changed or expanded?	P	P	P

The teachers had different suggestions for changing or expanding the study. The kindergarten teacher expressed concern over the fact that some children come to school fearing the experience, the children, and the teacher. They demonstrate their fear in the extremes. She explained that "you either find them withdrawn and afraid to do anything or overbearing, pushing everyone and everything out of the way." She felt that there should be more experimenting with nonverbal communication to reassure these children and give

them a way to enjoy school and learning with a better attitude.

Even though the sixth grade teacher was not yet committed to the study, she agreed in principle with the value of continuing to research Movement/Relaxation methods as possibly benefiting education. She thought it would be a good idea if, during a workshop, the teachers could create lessons together. She remarked, "This way we could help each other practice making up teacher-made lessons."

The special education instructor felt that she wanted more experiences with the concepts from the workshops. She commented that "the next time workshops are given, the team should concentrate on a few things and develop them from a child's point of view." She believed this would help teachers keep the work enjoyable to youngsters. She asserted, "Next year I plan to do more with movement. When we did the coaching units, the children had such fun dancing and expressing themselves. It helped them get along much better. I thought they would get wild, but that didn't happen."

These educators indicated that working cooperatively with other teachers had a positive influence on the quality of education in their classrooms. They also suggested that since there is always a need to update educational procedures, school-based staff development was the most cost-effective and psychologically satisfying way to do it.

Open lines of communication gave them a sense of empowerment they seldom had realized.

### Aftermath

As a result of the workshops and coaching units implemented at the Ulysses Byas Elementary School, the researcher observed the following activities:

1. The participants maintained contact with the researcher consulting with her for advice and materials.
2. Several instructors set aside regular times in the afternoon for breathing, relaxation, or movement exercises.
3. Movement exercises were used to reinforce language arts and math.
4. First and second graders went to the New York Hall of Science, a hands-on science museum, where the exhibits involved exploring through the senses and use of total body participation.
5. The special education teacher moved to the resource room, where breathing and relaxation exercises were used to help children calm down and concentrate.
6. The first grade teacher moved to fourth grade and designed an action-based program. The instructor felt that this cut down her list of seven failures to three by mid-term.



7. The collegial atmosphere contributed to an improved learning climate.
8. Children reflected improvements by getting along better.

The researcher did two workshops in the district on empowering children. The first was presented to the Ulysses Byas Elementary School staff. The demonstration/participation program was held in the researcher's classroom, so that the faculty could observe how things were done and shown some of the results. The second workshop was given before the Harry Daniel Primary School staff. A young educator at the Harry Daniel School found the ideas to be particularly valuable to people starting careers in education.

Through these workshops, the message seems to be getting clearer that children are naturally active learners. Those children who show no sign of interest in active learning may need to be drawn out while they are young enough to respond to nurturing, caring adults. Where administrators, teachers, and other school personnel, through collaborative efforts, can commit to educating all the children, the school climate may reflect this in staff development training that investigates ways to empower children to grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

### Recommendations for Staff Development

Designing, implementing, and evaluating a low-cost, school-based study using an action team requires including the following:

1. Researching and organizing the data to meet the needs of the program and the participants.
2. Enlisting input from the participants through needs assessments and meetings/conferences to shape the sequence of the workshops with their collaborative efforts.
3. Assessing human and fiscal resources to assure coverage of these necessities.
4. Adequate preparation of supplemental materials to give the participants every support in implementing the program.
5. Involving the participants in ongoing evaluation of the program to keep it practical and relevant.
6. Encouraging suggestions from those on the team.
7. Ensuring a safe, nonthreatening environment.
8. Planning for adequate time and space to accommodate the learning style of the team as they integrate the program.
9. Consulting with experts in the field.
10. Encouraging classroom observations by team members.

11. Planning coaching sessions includes time to focus, analyze, implement, and assess the problem and its resolution with the teacher involved.

12. Planning for maintenance.

The intent of this project was to enable teachers to reduce classroom stress through Movement/Relaxation activities and, in this way, make it possible for children, particularly the differently-abled, to experience their education from an active, expressive, personal involvement perspective. Contributing factors to stress reduction may integrate as a network to gradually release body/mind tensions and generate a scenario where children can use more of their inner resources in learning.

#### Educational Perspectives

The research in the body/mind field, as it pertains to children's development, is gradually making its way into educational literature. It is important that it becomes better understood as technology advances into the twenty-first century, so that individuals, at an early age, may begin to develop a conscious awareness of who they are in terms of boundaries, space, roots, and direction. Modern life keeps accelerating at such speed, it is hard to maintain stability without stress. Stress reduction may be a significant factor in aiding youngsters, especially the differently-abled, as they deal with school pressures to

achieve in traditional classrooms. More importantly, based on body/mind research, stress reduction combined with an active learning environment may improve the chances of low-income minority and African American children to develop the skills necessary for high academic achievement.

Since government sponsored programs, including Headstart, are in jeopardy, schools in poorer communities will have to take responsibility for preparing students with the means to enjoy self-esteem, self-confidence, and success in achieving high expectations. Traditional methods of teaching have served to increase the stress of learning, particularly for differently-abled students. Low-cost, school-based staff development seems to be a viable method to train school personnel (and human resource people) in techniques for school improvement. Working in collaboration with peers, at the school site, affords the chance to establish a unified approach towards educational goals. In the face of new research and investigation into developmental learning, instructors resistant to change may come to realize the possibility of engaging all the children in dealing with academic and social challenges.

Priority may need to be given to presentations, within the content areas, that draw children into integrated body/mind participation in learning, especially where concepts are difficult to grasp. Projects involving purposeful movement, as well as arts-based experiences,

bring children in touch with their inner creative energies while affording opportunities for sharing and appreciating the human spirit expressed by classmates. The organizing process in these experiences incurs integration that makes the individual attentive to the moment. Movement/Relaxation is primarily concerned with reducing overstress, which allows for a release of tension and the flow of energy into the moment. If children are functioning in a safe environment, emotionally/socially/physically, that flow of energy may be channeled into opportunities for improved concentration, work habits, and academic achievement. Satisfaction in these areas may lead to productive self-confidence and self-esteem.

### Conclusion

In this staff development project, an action team of elementary school teachers volunteered to explore ideas on reducing stress experienced by students, as well as that stemming from the learning environment, to help children especially the differently-abled, become active learners. Once the limitations of time and space were dealt with, the next hurdle was in dealing with those teachers who had to overcome their resistance to innovative concepts and the idea of change. The collegial interaction and the bonding that ensued developed into a supportive attitude. The teachers became comfortable about sharing ideas and

concerns. A few began observing in each other's rooms. Sharing ideas and concerns resulted in: (1) release from isolation; (2) the realization that others were having common problems in getting started; (3) motivation to keep trying activities and even creating simple original ideas; (4) getting assistance; (5) trying a colleague's idea; and (6) empowerment and respect. The strength that began to show itself from these three workshops was an indication as to the potential for growth in ongoing staff development.

The coaching units emerged in response to problems teachers were having that could not be resolved by traditional methods. In order to serve the learning style of African American children, the teacher needs to develop a multimodal approach to teaching/learning. Using alternative techniques avoids burnout, and draws on the educator's ability to be creative while nurturing that quality in his/her students. The coaching units helped teachers plan a step-by-step program using the child's body/mind resources. The children in kindergarten and special education grew in responsiveness and ability to participate with one another. The sixth grade class had a few children that required more time to trust this new learning format. There was agreement among the teachers involved in the coaching units and the workshops that working together in collaborative efforts brought increased self-respect for the job they were doing

and an awareness of the need for professional development to meet future challenges.

This staff development project was ably supported by the principal, math and reading coordinators, school aides, and maintenance people. Adapting some form of ongoing, low-cost, school-based staff improvement program may provide the vital link between school and community to survive and move forward in a rapidly changing world of high technology. Schools are going to need the cooperation and guidance of well-trained people to create stress-reduced environments where youngsters can be encouraged to develop a stable outlook as they become high achievers, creative risk-takers, problem solvers, and active participants in contributing to a healthy community.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
CONSENT FORM

ULYSSES BYAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
ROOSEVELT, NEW YORK

CONSENT FORM

To participants in this study:

I, Ethel Grossman, am a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts, in Amherst. Currently, I am in the process of organizing several staff development workshops. Your professional judgment is needed to help formulate a staff development project for the elementary grades at the Ulysses Byas Elementary School. The issues to be researched concern the improvement of self-awareness and mental development using Movement Relaxation techniques.

Your participation in this project will include: (1) voluntary participation in three or four ninety minute workshops; (2) completing a needs assessment; (3) sharing of ideas and activities; and (4) completing evaluation forms.

Individual needs assessment, evaluations, feedback and survey will remain anonymous. I will keep this material confidential except for general reports that will appear in my dissertation and other scholarly presentations. I will modify identifying details so that individual comments cannot be determined. I believe that this project will help students in Roosevelt and that teachers working together can improve the quality of our professional levels.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and anyone may withdraw at anytime.

Signing this form entails no financial obligation by myself or the University. You are also agreeing that no medical claims will be required by you from me or the University should any physical injury result from participating in these workshops.

I want to thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

-----  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above statement and agree to participate in this project under the conditions stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of workshop facilitator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX B  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 From: Mrs. Grossman--Portable 2 Re: Staff Development  
Workshop

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am in the process of organizing several staff development workshops as partial requirement towards my doctoral degree at the University of Massachusetts. The main thrust of my thesis will deal with the importance of relaxation in its supportive role in learning, both at rest and in movement.

Since I want to deal with material that is relevant to you in your classroom, I would appreciate your taking a few minutes to check over my suggested topics and list some of your own concerns.

Please number, in the order of their importance, those topics that would be of interest to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Eye-hand Coordination--Another Perspective.

\_\_\_\_\_ Breathing--Strategies for developing improved breathing patterns to facilitate learning and test-taking.

\_\_\_\_\_ Movement for Indoor Weather.

\_\_\_\_\_ Centered Movement to Release Tension--Discovering holding patterns which may impede learning.

\_\_\_\_\_ Safety in Movement--Strategies for helping children become more aware of themselves in space and reduce possibilities of injury due to poor coordination or hyperactivity.

\_\_\_\_\_ Integrating movement into the content areas for improved learning through exploring and experiencing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encouraging Creative Expression.

\_\_\_\_\_ Strategies for Self-control Through Relaxation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please also indicate the following:

I can participate in the workshop during the second lunch period. \_\_\_\_\_

It would be more convenient to meet at 2:30 on  
Monday\_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday\_\_\_\_\_Wednesday\_\_\_\_\_Thursday\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your consideration.

E. Grossman

APPENDIX C

SPACE AND COMMUNICATION EVALUATION FORM

## SPACE AND COMMUNICATION EVALUATION FORM

Good = Useful  
 Fair = Worth Considering  
 NA = Not Applicable

Good      Fair      NA

The overall theme of the workshop was appropriate for my classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_

The on-hands approach to the material gave me a better understanding of how I might use certain concepts in the classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_

The presentation focused in on real issues that need to be looked at in terms of children's growth.

\_\_\_\_\_

The workshop provided ideas that I can take back and try in my classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_

The presenter could improve this workshop by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The next workshop will consider how to incorporate Movement/Relaxation into areas of the curriculum. I would like the presenter to include material on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

INTRODUCING MOVEMENT/RELAXATION INTO THE CURRICULUM  
EVALUATION FORM



INTRODUCING MOVEMENT/RELAXATION INTO THE CURRICULUM  
EVALUATION FORM

Good = Useful  
Fair = Worth Considering  
NA = Not Applicable

Good          Fair          NA

The workshop further clarified the need for movement in the curriculum.

It was helpful to share our experiences with aspects of movement awareness.

Working on movement exercises showed me how I might implement these ideas into the classroom.

Designing movement experiences to improve Students' involvement with the curriculum is worth trying.

I am concerned about discipline.

I feel that implementing movement experiences is valid and will provide an interesting challenge.

The material provided in the workshop is relevant and useful.

This workshop could be improved by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The next workshop will explore how to teach the subject of the body to achieve relaxation, greater depth of understanding, and experience. I would like to know more about \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX E

BUILDING DEPTH INTO BODY/MIND EXPERIENCES THROUGH  
MOVEMENT/RELAXATION EVALUATION FORM

BUILDING DEPTH INTO BODY/MIND EXPERIENCES THROUGH  
MOVEMENT/RELAXATION EVALUATION FORM

Good = Useful  
Fair = Worth Considering  
NA = Not Applicable

Good Fair NA

The workshop has made me aware of the inter-relationship of the body, relaxation, and mental behavior.

While I may not feel secure in applying movement/relaxation, I have gained a more patient understanding of the problem.

I am encouraged to want to apply some of the strategies presented and to learn more about the relatedness of movement to cognitive development.

The workshop exposed me to the fact that there is an expanding area of strategies for helping the differently-abled child.

If this workshop were given again, it could be improved by

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Most important to me \_\_\_\_\_

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