

AN EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES
OF URBANDALE HIGH SCHOOL

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by
Jerry Wayne Figg
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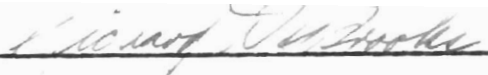
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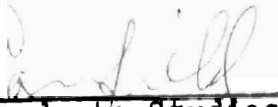
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Approved by Committee:







Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	2
Statement of the problem	2
Importance of the study	2
Limitations of the study	3
The Procedure	4
Definition of terms	6
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	8
III. PRESENTATION OF DATA	23
Data on objective number one	23
Data on objective number two	24
Data on objective number three	28
Data on objective number four	31
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	35
Summary	35
Conclusions	36
Recommendations	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY	40
APPENDIX A	45
APPENDIX B.	49

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Number and percent of responses from the 1969 graduates of Urbandale Senior High School attending a post high school institution of learning, to the questions involving study habits, self-responsibility, self-confidence, social adjustment, and content of high school courses and experiences.	25
II. Number and percent of responses from the 1969 graduates of Urbandale Senior High School, who were not attending a post high school institution of learning, to the questions involving work habits, self-responsibility, self-confidence, social adjustment, and content of high school courses and experiences	27
III. Percentage of responses from the entire student body of Urbandale High School and from 100 randomly selected students of Valley High School to the questions involving learning over grades from the "High School Characteristics Index."	29
IV. Percentage of responses from the entire student body of Urbandale High School and from 100 randomly selected students of Valley High School to the questions involving significant educational decisions	33

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When examining most high school curriculums today, it will be found that the curriculums are content-discipline centered with a definite emphasis on the college course of study. There exists a rigid structure of class offerings with few alternatives for the student. The student is talked at, not with, and is told what to do instead of being asked what fields could be explored.

A great majority of the students are not being educated. Students are forced to start school when not ready, and then forced to stay in school, while being mental drop-outs for much of the school year. Students are graded, and by doing so, are influenced in the following way: The low ability students take the attitude, "I'm going to fail, so why try anyway;" the high ability "get all tense" concerning the grade instead of learning; and the middle student is not challenged at all, because they work, "just to get by."

By study halls, forced attendance, detention, lectures, nonindividual attention, and grades, many students fear, hate, or detest school instead of enjoying it.

It is for these reasons that Urbandale High School adopted many innovations to help the student achieve a better education. In doing so the school established four primary

educational objectives. At present the school is operating under these objectives. However, it has not been established to what extent these objectives are being achieved.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this project is to determine the extent to which Urbandale High School is achieving the following educational objectives: (1) The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and college, (2) The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and the working world, (3) The student will stress learning over grades in the educational process, (4) The student will be capable of making significant educational decisions.

Importance of the study. The conclusions resulting from this project should point to the effectiveness of the educational program at Urbandale High School in preparing students for college and for the working world. The project should also point to the effectiveness of the educational program in emphasizing that learning is more important than simply achieving certain grade points. Finally the project should point to the effectiveness of the program in preparing students to make educated decisions in facing every day situations.

Unless evaluation of a school's educational objectives

takes place, the effectiveness of those objectives and of the school's entire program will never be known. If the same objectives are to be used year after year, the effectiveness of those objectives must be continually evaluated. If it is found that the school's educational program and objectives are not meeting the needs of an overwhelming number of students, then changes are needed.

Limitations of the study. The study was limited to those students who graduated in the 1969 class of Urbandale High School and to 100 randomly selected students of Valley High School in the Spring of 1970.

A greater limitation on this entire project, however, was the fact that the data collected were entirely dependent on how people felt about the educational environment in which learning takes place. Pace¹ points out that a student only defines his role and establishes his mode of behavior after he defines the educational environment. Whether their definition of the environment is distorted or real is immaterial for it becomes real in its consequences. Consequently the entire project may be biased simply because of environmental

¹E. Robert Pace, Personality Factors on the College Campus (Austin: The University of Texas, 1962), p. 17.

factors at the time the questionnaires were completed.

Procedure. The first phase of this study was to review the available literature published by Urbandale High School to determine the most important educational objectives which the school system was trying to meet. From these sources, the previously mentioned objectives were listed.

The second phase of the project was the development of a questionnaire, based on objectives one and two. This resulted in a questionnaire listing eleven questions, five questions to be answered by students presently in a post high school institution of learning and six questions to be answered by students presently not in a post high school institution of learning. The investigator used the 1969 graduating class of Urbandale High School as the sample for the study. The total number of questionnaires mailed out was 147. The questionnaires returned, however, were 127 for an 85.2 percent return rate.

The investigator asked the former students to answer the question: Are you attending a post high school institution of learning? If the response was yes, then the student answered further questions dealing with study habits, self-responsibility, self-confidence, content of high school courses, and social adjustment. The response for each question was indicated by checking a scale from "poor" to "excellent". If the student response was no, then the former student indicated his present activity, and then answered further questions dealing with work

habits, self-responsibility, self-confidence, social adjustment, and content of high school courses. Students also indicated their response to the individual questions by checking a scale from "poor" to "excellent".

The third phase of the project was an analysis of the "High School Characteristics Index", which was administered to the entire Urbandale High School student body in the Fall of 1969. The "Index" lists 300 true or false statements dealing with objectives three and four, which were listed previously. The analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the students were achieving these two objectives.

From these forty-nine items only those items that were checked by more than 66% or less than 33% of the student body were used for the analysis of objectives three and four. Each item was keyed by the "Index" either true or false, consequently items that were answered with the key by 66% or more students can be termed characteristic of the high school. Items that received 33% or less agreement with the key can be considered as not characteristic of the high school. All that can be said about items that did not attain the 66%+ or 33%- consensus is that the respondents disagree about the item being characteristic of the high school environment.

The "Index" was studied by Herr and Kight as to the reliability of the scales used in the "Index". The following is the statement made by Herr and Kight:

Clearly, most of the scales possess sufficiently high reliability to permit an accurate appraisal of the various environmental characteristics. To the extent that each characteristic is properly defined and assessed, this instrument can provide many insights into the high school environment.¹

Consequently, upon determination of the forty-nine items, a questionnaire using those items was administered to 100 randomly selected students at Valley High School in West Des Moines. The comparison of the scores from the two schools gave a basis for the validity of the "Index" for the Urbandale High School scores.

The last phase of the project was the tabulation of the questionnaires. Each question of the questionnaire for objectives one and two was tabulated to find the majority response. Then the majority responses were analyzed to determine the degree to which objectives one and two were being met. Each question of the questionnaire sent to Valley High School was tabulated to find the percentage responses above 66 percent and below 33 percent. A final comparison of the significant items from the Urbandale questionnaire and the Valley questionnaire were made to determine the degree to which the students at Urbandale High School were achieving objectives three and four.

Definition of terms. The following definition of terms

¹Edwin L. Herr and Howard R. Kight, "The High School Characteristics Index: A Study of Scale Reliabilities," The Journal of Educational Research, LX (March, 1967), p. 335.

used in this project are as follows:

Working World. The term working world includes the activities of those former students who are presently not in a post high school institution of learning.

College. College includes the activities of those former students who are presently in a post high school institution of learning.

Learning over grades. The emphasis by the student on learning for satisfaction of the individuals basic needs, rather than learning to get a certain grade to pass the course is referred to as "learning over grades."

Significant educational decisions: The ability to make adequate decisions in meeting the demands of everyday life are defined as significant educational decisions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Urbandale High School has embarked on an educational program which includes: ungraded curriculum, campus plan of attendance, large group-small group classes, team teaching, elimination of bells, education by agreement courses, voluntary class attendance for "A" students, continuous progress, individual independent study projects, and pass-fail options for all elective courses. These concepts of education can be attributed to writings of a multitude of educators and non-educators. The following discussion of literature involves some of the authors who have influenced Urbandale High School. The discussion involves those who have written in favor of the change in education, and also those who feel that schools such as Urbandale must certainly be wrong.

Metcalf and Hunt in their article have set the tone of the School by saying:

Young people today will be in the prime of their life by the year 2000. They can begin to think now about what they want as a society by that time. Four questions are basic to a curriculum that would start now to build toward future-planning: (1) What kind of society now exists, and what are the dominant trends within it? (2) What kind of society is likely to emerge in the near future, let us say by the year 2000, if present trends continue? (3) What kind of society is preferable, given one's values? (4) If the likely and prognosticated society is different from the society that one prefers, what can the individual, alone or as a member of groups, do toward eliminating the discrepancy

between prognostication and preference, between expectation and desire?¹

Metcalf and Hunt went on to say that:

Any school that has not made this social movement a subject of serious study on the part of its youthful clientele is about as irrelevant as it can get.²

Consequently the School program is developed to enhance the individual, to help the individual grow to his greatest potential and prepare himself for what lies ahead. Several writers have voiced their opinion in a similar way. Clark, Klein, and Burks have said:

The implication for the curriculum is self evident: the major aim of education should be to ensure that each youth can make the most of his life and fulfills his potentialities: a curriculum that subordinates any child to the crowd is absolutely unbearable. Accordingly, the best curriculum is pupil-centered.³

John Gardner in a contemporary article continues this idea by stating:

Every democracy must encourage high individual performance. If it does not, it closes itself off from the main springs of its dynamism and talent and imagination, and the traditional democratic invitation to the individual to realize his full potentialities becomes meaningless. More, perhaps, than any other form of government, a democracy must maintain what Ralph Barton Perry has called "an express

¹Lawrence E. Metcalf and Maurice P. Hunt, "Relevance and the Curriculum," Phi Delta Kappan, LI (March, 1970), 360.

²Ibid., p. 360.

³Leonard H. Clark and Raymond L. Klein and John B. Burks, The American Secondary School Curriculum (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1965), p. 27.

insistence upon quality and distinction.¹

Alexander and Hines have stated:

Schooling may be viewed as the process whereby the learner is helped to become sufficiently independent of school and teacher that he can and will carry on his own learning enterprises successfully after schooling is ended.²

And finally Trump and Miller expressed their favor of individual study by writing:

All pupils need to learn the required content with as much freedom as possible from constant supervision and help. All pupils need to follow their special interests and talents even though some of them achieve mediocre results in relation to other pupils - a contrast which teachers should refrain from highlighting.³

Why is this an essential quality of the School, this independency? Why not the old way of teaching with the teachers up front? What has happened to influence many educators to change? James Coleman in his book discusses some of these changes:

(1) For a variety of reasons, teenagers are becoming socially sophisticated earlier than before. They simply know more about the world, more about sex and about the opposite sex, and have more opportunity to learn both academic and non academic matters outside of school.

(2) Now, more than ever before, the school encompasses the total community of adolescents. The adolescents' social sphere has become the social system of

¹John Gardner, "Excellence In A Democracy," Secondary Education: Origins and Directions (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

²William M. Alexander and Vynce A. Hines, Independent Study In Secondary Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 3.

³J. Lloyd Trump and Delmas F. Miller, Secondary School Curriculum Improvement (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), pp. 271-272.

the high school.

(3)there is less need for the adolescent in the adult world. It is a further indication of their isolation from responsibility in the adult society, an indication of the degree to which the adult world has found them economically unnecessary and thus, unwittingly, told them to "go have fun" with their friends.

(4) A further reinforcement of the social world of adolescents has been the emergence of commercial entertainment designed specifically for them.

(5) With all of the factors making for a special world of teenagers, there is one other very important point: they must go to school.

The combination of these five changes has produced a peculiar set of circumstances: adolescents have their own little society, with special symbols and language, special interests and activities. It is a society composed of people who are worldly-wise in many ways, of people who are more adult than child, yet a society of people without responsibilities, a society subject to the demands placed on it by others - that is, by adults. To be sure, adults are doing this for their "own good," but it is the adult who decides what is good and what is not. Such a situation invites trouble.¹

Coleman's remarks have many implications for the School and many implications for the change that has taken place in high schools across the country. The adolescent, with his own society needs a model to follow, an adult model. By allowing the student independent freedom in the school, the teachers also have more independent freedom to work individually with the student. Consequently the close adult-teenage relationship may develop into one of understanding and respect. This

¹James S. Coleman, Adolescents and the Schools (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965), pp. 10-12.

independence also allows both parties to decide what is good and what is not for the individuals involved. From this then should evolve a student with understanding of what is expected of him, what he expects, and where he can go in the world. How this process of freedom, communication, and respect takes place is the basis upon which many educators have addressed themselves.

In the past decade many educators have expressed the "innovative" way toward the educational process. Each has said this is the way it should be. Therefore, Urbandale High School has taken many suggestions in meeting the needs of the students. The concepts that follow are the basis of the Urbandale Program.

In 1959 James Conant had the following to say about individual educational programs:

It should be the policy of the school that every student has an individualized program; there would be no classification of students according to clearly defined and labeled programs or tracks such as "college-preparatory," "vocational," "commercial." Furthermore, with individualized programs, the students themselves do not feel that they are labeled according to the program they have chosen in the ninth or tenth grade. If flexibility is combined with a declaration of policy in regard to the programs for the academically talented and if a good guidance service is available, the academic inventory should show results in a school which has a clear-cut academic or college-preparatory track.¹

¹James Bryant Conant, The American High School Today (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 46-47.

In 1959 J. Lloyd Trump also discussed the idea of education for the individual. Trump writes:

Much more emphasis will be placed on training students to check their own progress. Students will be able to make more immediate self-appraisals, using a variety of machines and self-marking tests, instead of waiting for teachers to grade their work. Obviously there will be independent evaluation by the faculty, but this will occupy a less important position than it does now. Teachers will have more time to plan and conduct evaluations that will be helpful to students in showing progress toward achieving all the purposes of instruction rather than merely the possession of facts, the principal area of evaluation at present.

An underlying purpose of the school will be to develop ability to study, think, and solve problems, in contrast to today's emphasis on memorizing facts. In large groups, small-group discussions, and individual study, the emphasis will be put on the goal of helping the student develop the ability to solve problems on his own.¹

In 1960 A. S. Neill published the concepts and background of a school called Summerhill. The impact of his ideas have been tremendous. The following are a few of those ideas:

(1) When my first wife and I began the school we had one main idea: to make the school fit the child - instead of making the child fit the school.

(2) All it required was what we had - a complete belief in the child as a good, not an evil, being. For almost forty years, this belief in the goodness of the child has never wavered; it rather has become a final faith.

(3) My view is that a child is innately wise and realistic. If left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, he will develop as far as he is capable of developing. Logically, Summerhill is a place in which people who have the innate ability and wish

¹J. Lloyd Trump, "Images Of The Future - A New Approach To The Secondary School," Secondary Education: Origins and Directions (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), pp. 347-350.

to be scholars will be scholars; while those who are only fit to sweep the streets will sweep the streets.

(4) Lessons are optional

(5) There is a timetable - but only for the teachers

(6) The children have classes usually according to their age, but sometimes according to their interests.

(7) We have no new methods of teaching, because we do not consider that teaching in itself matters very much.

(8) Learning in itself is not as important as personality and character.

(9) My staff and I have a hearty hatred of all examinations. Obviously, as long as the exams are in existence, they are our master.

(10) In Summerhill, everyone has equal rights. No one is allowed to walk on my grand piano, and I am not allowed to borrow a boy's cycle without his permission.

(11) The function of the child is to live his own life - not the life that his anxious parents think he should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows what is best. All this interference and guidance on the part of adults only produces a generation of robots.¹

Neill continues throughout his book giving Summerhill's concepts on coeducation, work, play, child rearing, sex, religion and morals, children's problems and parent's problems. The impact of this book on Urbandale High School has been minimal as it has on most schools. Basically because educators refuse to believe that children are good, not evil. Much of the philosophy of Summerhill, guides many teachers; however, most refuse to let go and adopt it fully. The important concept, however, is that it has had some effect and certainly that is better than none.

A. S. Neill, Summerhill (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 4-12.

The final educator and undoubtedly the educator who has had the most effect on the School is John Holt. In 1964 Holt published, How Children Fail. This book, had great impact on Urbandale High School. The basis of what he said is as follows:

Behind much of what we do in school lie some ideas, that could be expressed roughly as follows: (1) Of the vast body of human knowledge, there are certain bits and pieces that can be called essential, that everyone should know; (2) the extent to which a person can be considered educated, qualified to live intelligently in today's world and be a useful member of society, depends on the amount of this essential knowledge that he carried about with him; (3) it is the duty of schools, therefore, to get as much of this essential knowledge as possible into the minds of children. Thus we find ourselves trying to poke certain facts, recipes, and ideas down the gullets of every child in school, whether the morsel interests him or not, even if it frightens him or sickens him, and even if there are other things that he is much more interested in learning.

These ideas are absurd and harmful nonsense. We will not begin to have true education or real learning in our schools until we sweep this nonsense out of the way. Schools should be a place where children learn what they most want to know, instead of what we think they ought to know. The child who wants to know something remembers it and uses it once he has it; the child who learns something to please or appease someone else forgets it when the need for pleasing or the danger of not appeasing is past. This is why children quickly forget all but a small part of what they learn in school. It is of no use or interest to them; they do not want, or expect, or even intend to remember it. The only difference between bad and good students in this respect is that the bad students forget right away, while the good students are careful to wait until after the exam. If for no other reason, we could well afford to throw out most of what we teach in school because the children throw out almost all of it anyway.¹

¹John Holt, How Children Fail (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 174-175.

Holt goes on to say that a curriculum as an essential body of knowledge is absurd, because people can not agree on what knowledge is essential and knowledge keeps changing, so what is true today may not be true tomorrow. Also it cannot be judged what knowledge will be needed in ten years. Besides Holt feels that it is not the subject matter which makes learning valuable, but the spirit in which the learning is done.

He also feels that real learning only comes from absorption of that knowledge or understanding the child needs most to strengthen and best fit his model of reality. And, only the child knows what that is and when it is.

Finally Holt writes that we must reject the idea of school as places where children are doing what adults tell them to do, because there is no way to coerce a child without making him afraid. Fear does not produce learning, only more fear.¹

His alternative is "to have schools and classrooms in which each child in his own way can satisfy his curiosity, develop his abilities and talents, pursue his interests, and from the adults and older children around him get a glimpse of the great variety and

¹Holt, op. cit., pp. 175-179.

richness of life.¹

In 1968 John Holt wrote another book which has had continuous effect on many schools. The reason for the effect is that it makes sense. The whole book does. In the following quotes can be seen this sense:

What ever truly adds to his understanding, his capacity for growth and pleasure, his powers, his sense of his own freedom, dignity, and worth may be said to be true education.²

What young people need and want to get from their education is: one, a greater understanding of the world around them; two, a greater development of themselves; three, a chance to find their work, that is, a way in which they may use their own unique tastes and talents to grapple with the real problems of the world around them and to serve the cause of humanity.³

The fundamental educational problem of our time is to find ways to help children grow into adults who have no wish to do harm. We must recognize that traditional education, far from having ever solved this problem has never tried to solve it.⁴

On the other hand, if we want a country in which people will resist the growing pressures to conformity and servility and will vigorously defend their own rights and the rights of others, then we had better begin to give children some real freedom in school - freedom to move, to talk, to plan and use their time, to direct and assess their own learning, to act, and be treated, like sensible human beings.⁵

Throughout his book, Holt prescribes several ways in which education must go. The following prescription is and

¹Holt, op. cit., p. 180.

²John Holt, The Underachieving School (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1969), p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 116.

⁵Ibid., p. 167.

will be the code of educators for many years to come.

- (1) Abolish compulsory school
- (2) Get rid of all grades
- (3) Abolish the required curriculum
- (4) Stop the usual reading teaching
- (5) Give children respect
- (6) Cut down the competition to make kids get better grades, go to the best college.
- (7) Get children out of the schools and into the real world.¹

Even though the program at Urbandale High School has been developed to reflect the philosophies of the educators previously mentioned, the school is not without its many problems. Pressure from all groups of the community are common because such philosophy creates situations which are not completely acceptable to the community. The following writers discuss the pros but basically the cons of the flexible schedule and independent study which Urbandale strives to perfect.

Robert Gard in his article discusses both sides of the program. First of all the reasons in favor, then the problems against.

Because of the availability of students it can be shown that the staff in a flexible schedule can deliver more help per pupil than the same ratio permits in a regular schedule. Because of the greater use of teacher aid time, the staff for a flexible schedule costs less than the same size staff for a traditional schedule. The potential, then, for greater service at a lower cost per staff member is a powerful argument in favor of flexible scheduling.

¹Holt, op. cit., pp. 6-167.

On the positive side may be found a reduction in fighting because of the decrease of tension normally brought on by the hour-by hour routines of the traditional schedule. In the flexible day not as much steam builds up, and the "blowing off" is less frequent.¹

The teaching day can be varied to suit individual class needs, pupils can be regrouped at will for instructional purposes, individuals can be reached, and pupils can benefit from experience with organizing their own time and working independently. The school can rejoice in glowing reports from colleges and employers that its graduates know how to "take hold" when they are placed on their own.²

However Gard goes on to say that there are many problems. Study centers, for example, must be kept free and equipped to accommodate those who wish to do routine assignments or independent research. Also with a flexible schedule a student may be asked to be at two places at the same time by staff members which causes frustration and tension. However, the largest problem is that in some schools twenty-five percent of the students at any given time are free from direct supervision. If even ten percent of those students slip off campus for a cigarette or a stroll, homeowners and small businesses are swamped by students loitering. Vandalism and petty theft can skyrocket. Also the comparatively law abiding may cut class now and then to be with friends. Absenteeism does unquestionably increase, thus parents must exercise more control to keep the student in school.²

¹Robert R. Gard, "A Realistic Look At The Flexible Schedule," The Clearing House, XLIV (March, 1970), p. 428.

²Ibid., p. 429.

The most interesting comments from those who are against the flexible type of schedule comes from a social science teacher in a large suburban city. Fallers in her article gives the following comments against the system.

(1) While it is clear to me that some flexibility in teaching and some faith on the part of the young people that they have some control over their path through life may be the difference between a liberal society and a totalitarian one, too much openness in the socialization process is terrifying to the student. It swamps him, saps his energy, and may lead him to search for security in sex, in social movements with answers, in dependence on shallow personal connections, or in a position which rejects the society altogether. The effect of leaving too much choice to young people is to make them feel insecure, to make them feel that the adult society is not sure of itself - to make them thrash around, criticizing the socialization institutions.¹

(2) Individualization of education involves a complete misunderstanding of the process of growing up in a society.²

(3) All societies must pass on to the next generation the skills and attitudes necessary to keep the society going.³

(4) Students are not sure of their future status or occupation, and hence what education they will need is not evident to them.⁴

(5) College students should, and do, make choices as to what and how they will prepare for adult life; most high school students in our society --- even those who seem very confident of their choices --- do not have the knowledge on which to base such choices.⁵

(6) Students with more certainty about what they have to do and about what constitutes a completed task will have more free time, and will be more sure about using free time to pursue their individual interests. It will make them more confident, more independent.⁶

¹Margaret Fallers, "Choice Is Not Enough," School Review LXXVIII (February, 1970), p. 234.

²Ibid., p. 230.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 232.

⁵Ibid., p. 236.

⁶Ibid., p. 237-238.

Of course resistance to change in education always comes from the parents in one form or the other. Gorton in his study found the following parental statements to be the most prominent:

Parents basically support the new program, however a significant minority do react in opposition to such change. Common reactions were as follows: (1) "Whats wrong with the present schedule?" (2) "I don't see how my child can learn when he is under no teacher direction" (3) "Don't the kids have too much freedom under this new plan?" Unfortunately their conception of the school is that of a 'watch dog' or supervisor and on the other hand that of an institution for developing independent and responsibility as well as subject matter background, (4) "Isn't this program just for the college-bound?" The program is basically designed to help the student who lacks initiative and responsibility, (5) "Won't this program hurt my child's chances of getting into college or obtaining a scholarship?" It has been found that for some grades may go down, but usually do come up soon after.¹

The review of literature has considered articles including the basic tone of the School program, the authors that support individual study, the authors that show why education

¹Richard A. Gorton, "Parental Resistance to Modular Scheduling," The Clearing House, XLIII (March, 1969), pp. 392-395.

must change, the authors that have proposed educational philosophies and programs over the past decade in support of the Urbandale High School type of program, the authors who present both sides of the controversy, and those who have serious questions about the program. All have contributed to the understanding of how children can succeed. But all should remember a statement by George B. Leonard:

Every educator, parent, and student has a stake in this building project. All will help determine whether our schools become flexible, humanistic and joyful, or whether they must first become more rigid, monolithic, and doctrinaire. In either case, change they will. The traditional glue can't hold it together much longer.¹

¹George B. Leonard, Education and Ecstasy (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968), p. 215.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data on objective number one. Objective number one states: The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and college. The following data indicate to what degree the students feel that Urbandale High School has helped them make that adjustment.

Eighty-five of the 127 students or 66.9 percent who returned the questionnaire answered yes to the question, "Are you attending a post high school institution of learning?"

Each student responded to the questions asked on a five point response scale of poor, below average, average, good, or excellent. Those questions were as follows:

(1) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your study habits have been since entering your post high school institution?

(2) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-responsibility has been since entering your post high school institution?

(3) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-confidence has been since entering your post high school institution?

(4) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your social adjustment has been since entering your post high school institution?

(5) How adequate was the content of your high

school courses and experiences in meeting the demands of your post high school education?

From the data indicated in Table I (page 25), the students felt that their study habits have been average to good (76%) as a result of their high school education. They also felt that their self-responsibility, self-confidence, and social adjustment has been good to excellent (86%, 74%, and 74% respectively) as a result of their high school education. In relationship to the content of their high school courses and experiences, the students felt that the content was average to good (72%) in meeting the demands of the post high school institution.

Data on objective number two. Objective number two states: The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and the working world. The following data indicate to what degree the students feel that Urbandale High School has helped them make that adjustment.

Forty-two of the 127 students or 33.1 percent who returned the questionnaire answered no to the question, "Are you attending a post high school institution of learning."

The response to the following questions is indicated in table II (page 27). Each student responded to the questions on a response scale of poor, below average, average, good, or excellent. Those questions were as follows:

(1) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your work habits have been since entering your post high school institution?

TABLE I

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES FROM THE 1969 GRADUATES
OF URBANDALE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDING A POST HIGH
SCHOOL INSTITUTION OF LEARNING, TO THE QUESTIONS
INVOLVING STUDY HABITS, SELF-RESPONSIBILITY,
SELF-CONFIDENCE, SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, AND
CONTENT OF HIGH SCHOOL COURSES
AND EXPERIENCES

	RESPONSES									
	Poor		Below Average		Aver- age		Good		Excel- lent	
	No.*	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number and percent of students responding to study habits	3	4.	9	10.	38	45.	26	31.	9	10.
Number and percent of students responding to self-responsibility	3	4.	5	6.	12	14.	46	54.	19	32.
Number and percent of students responding to self-confidence	3	4.	6	7.	13	15.	48	56.	15	18.
Number and percent of students responding to social adjustment	4	5.	4	5.	14	16.	33	39.	30	35.
Number and percent of students responding to content of courses and experiences	3	4.	11	13.	25	30.	36	42.	10	11.

* Number of students who responded

(2) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-responsibility has been since entering your post high school institution?

(3) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-confidence has been since entering your post high school institution?

(4) As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your social adjustment has been since entering your post high school institution?

(5) How adequate was the content of your high school courses and experiences in meeting the demands of your present activities (nature of employment, housewife, armed services, etc.)?

From the data indicated in Table II, the students felt that their work habits have been average to good (73%). They also felt that their self-responsibility has been good to excellent (76%), and their self-confidence average to good (81%). However, in relationship to social adjustment, the students response was varied from average to excellent (90%). This was indicated by 19 percent of the students responding average, 48 percent responding good, and 24 percent responding excellent. In relationship to content of their high school courses and experiences, the students felt that content was average to excellent (85%). This was indicated by 19 percent of the students responding average, 40 percent responding good and 26 percent responding excellent.

TABLE II

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES FROM THE 1969 GRADUATES OF URBANDALE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, WHO WERE NOT ATTENDING A POST HIGH SCHOOL INSTITUTION OF LEARNING, TO THE QUESTIONS INVOLVING WORK HABITS, SELF-RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-CONFIDENCE, SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, AND CONTENT OF HIGH SCHOOL COURSES AND EXPERIENCES

	RESPONSES									
	Poor		Below Average		Average		Good		Excellent	
	No.*	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number and percent of students responding to work-habits	2	4.	4	10.	14	33.	17	40.	5	12.
Number and percent of students responding to self-responsibility	1	2.	4	10.	5	12.	22	52.	10	24.
Number and percent of students responding to self-confidence	0	0.	3	7.	15	36.	19	45.	5	12.
Number and percent of students responding to social adjustment	0	0.	4	10.	8	19.	20	48.	10	24.
Number and percent of students responding to content of courses and experiences	1	2.	5	12.	8	19.	17	40.	11	26.

* Number of students who responded

Data on objective number three. Objective number three states: The student will stress learning over grades in the educational process. The following data indicate to what degree the students feel that Urbandale High School influences them to emphasize that objective.

Twenty-eight true-false statements were selected from the 300 statements of the "High School Characteristics Index" to determine the degree to which the educational program at Urbandale High School was satisfying this objective. The "Index" was administered to the entire Urbandale High School student body, and was also administered, in a shortened questionnaire, to 100 randomly selected students from Valley High School. The responses of the students from Valley High School were used only as a comparison to the responses of the students from Urbandale High School.

The statements in Table III (Page 29) were significant for Urbandale High School (either above 66% or below 33%) in determining the programs success. Also in Table III are listed those statements which indicate some differential data.

Urbandale High School is a flexible, innovative school. Valley High School is a traditional, study hall type of school.

From Table III the data indicate that Urbandale High School in relationship to Valley High School is more open and does stress learning over grades to a greater degree. Table III also indicates that students at Urbandale High School:

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES FROM THE ENTIRE STUDENT BODY OF URBANDALE HIGH SCHOOL AND FROM 100 RANDOMLY SELECTED STUDENTS OF VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL TO THE QUESTIONS INVOLVING LEARNING OVER GRADES FROM THE "HIGH SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS INDEX."

Questions Asked	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES AGREEING WITH "INDEX" KEY RESPONSE		
	Key Response	Urbandale Percentage	Valley Percentage
1. There is a lot of competition for grades.	True	66.	73.
2. Teachers often try to get students to speak up freely and openly in class	True	85.	59.
3. Students can feel free to disagree with their teachers openly.	False	31.	61.
4. Students here learn that they are not only expected to have ideas but to do something about them.	True	67.	53.
5. In English classes, students are encouraged to be imaginative when they write.	True	87.	69.
6. Students seldom read books which deal with political and social issues.	False	30.	44.
7. Student groups seldom meet to discuss current social problems and issues.	False	32.	30.
8. Most students are not interested in television programs dealing with social and political problems.	False	28.	34.
9. No one needs to be afraid of expressing a point of view that is unusual or not popular in this school.	True	30.	35.
10. If a student thinks out a report carefully teachers will give him a good mark even if they don't agree with him.	True	69.	65.

TABLE III (CONTINUED)

Questions Asked	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES AGREEING WITH "INDEX" KEY RESPONSE		
	Key Response	Urbandale Percentage	Valley Percentage
11. Teachers welcome the students' own ideas on serious matters.	True	75.	72.
12. Quite frequently students will get together in their own time and talk about things they have learned in class.	True	33.	23.
13. Clear and careful thinking are most important in getting a good mark on reports, papers, and discussions.	True	78.	84.
The following statements further indicate some differential data.			
14. Examinations here really test how much a student has learned.	True	58.	44.
15. Many teachers here stress the practical uses of their subjects, in helping students to get a good job.	True	55.	39.
16. Assemblies or discussions on serious subjects are not held very often here.	False	62.	16.
17. There is a lot of interest here in learning for its own sake rather than just for grades or for graduation credits.	True	44.	21.

(1) are encouraged to speak up freely and openly in class (85% to 59%), (2) can feel free to disagree with their teachers openly (69% to 39%), (3) are encouraged to be imaginative when they write (87% to 69%), (4) are given tests which show how much a student has learned (58% to 44%), (5) do hear the practical uses of their subjects (55% to 39%), (6) do have assemblies or discussions on serious subjects (62% to 16%), (7) do have higher interest in learning for its own sake (44% to 21%).

Data on objective number four. Objective number four states: The student will be capable of making significant educational decisions. The following data indicate to what degree the students feel that Urbandale High School influences them to emphasize that objective.

Twenty-three true-false statements were selected from the 300 statements of the "High School Characteristics Index" to determine the degree to which the educational program at Urbandale High School was satisfying that objective. The "Index" was administered to the entire Urbandale High School student body, and was also administered in the form of a questionnaire to 100 randomly selected students from Valley High School of West Des Moines. The responses from the Valley High School students were used only as a comparison to the Urbandale High School student Responses.

The statements in Table IV (page 33) were significant

for Urbandale High School (either above 66% or below 33%) in determining the programs success. Also in Table IV are listed those statements which indicate some differential data.

As was indicated previously, Urbandale High School is a flexible, innovative school. Valley High School is a traditional, study hall type of school.

From Table IV the data indicate that Urbandale High School is more student oriented and does influence the student to be significantly capable of making educational decisions in meeting everyday problems. The data also indicate that Urbandale High School does this more effectively than Valley High School. Table III indicates that students at Urbandale High School: (1) are influenced to try out their new ideas (80% to 21%), (2) are encouraged to be on their own and to make up their own minds (81% to 59%), (3) do not get their assignments done when the assignments get difficult (67% to 81%), (4) are expected not only to have ideas but to do something about them (67% to 53%), (5) are encouraged to be on their own and to make up their own minds (81% to 59%), (6) do take the individual initiative when getting just passing grades at mid term to earn higher grades by the end of the term (53% to 30%), (7) and are accountable for what they say by frequently speaking up in class without worrying what they are going to say (56% to 37%).

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES FROM THE ENTIRE STUDENT BODY OF URBANDALE HIGH SCHOOL AND FROM 100 RANDOMLY SELECTED STUDENTS OF VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL TO THE QUESTIONS INVOLVING SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS.

Questions Asked	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES AGREEING WITH "INDEX" KEY RESPONSE		
	Key Response	Urbandale Percentage	Valley Percentage
1. Students are made to explain why they did something when the teacher doesn't like what they've done.	True	77.	69.
2. New ideas are always being tried out here.	True	80.	21.
3. When students think a teachers' decision is unfair, they try to get it changed.	True	81.	72.
4. Pupils are often expected to work at home on problems which they could not solve in class.	True	79.	75.
5. Students don't hesitate to voice their complaints around here.	True	68.	62.
6. When the assignments really get tough, many students just won't do them.	False	33.	19.
7. Students here learn that they are not only expected to have ideas but to do something about them.	True	67.	53.
8. Students often start things without thinking about how they will develop or where they may end.	True	70.	71.
9. Students here are encouraged to be on their own and to make up their own minds.	True	81.	59.
10. It doesn't matter who you are, at this school you are expected to be 'grown up' and able to handle your own affairs.	True	78.	81.

TABLE IV (CONTINUED)

Questions Asked	PERCENTAGE RESPONSES AGREEING WITH "INDEX" KEY RESPONSE		
	Key Response	Urbandale Percentage	Valley Percentage
The following statements further indicate some differential data.			
11. You need permission to do anything around here.	True	57.	67.
12. A lot of students who get just passing grades at mid term really make an effort to earn a higher grade by the end of the term.	True	53.	30.
13. Students frequently speak up in class without worrying about what they're going to say.	True	56.	37.

CHAPTER IV

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Urbandale High School was achieving the educational objectives of: (1) The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and college, (2) The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and the working world, (3) The student will stress learning over grades in the education process, (4) The student will be capable of making significant educational decisions.

The data gathered for this project were obtained through the use of: (1) a questionnaire distributed to the graduating class of Urbandale High School of 1969. The questionnaire used in this survey first asked if the individual was attending a post high school institution of learning. Secondly if the response was yes, then five questions were asked to determine the individuals feelings about the result of the education received at Urbandale High School. The adequacy of study habits, self-responsibility, self-confidence, social adjustment, and content retention since entering the post high school institution were examined. These questions were asked to determine the degree to which the student has bridged the gap between high school and college.

Thirdly, if the response was "No," then five questions were asked to determine the individuals feelings about the results of the education received at Urbandale High School. These questions indicated the adequacy of the educational experience at Urbandale in developing work habits, self-responsibility, self-confidence, social adjustment, and content utilization to meet the working world demands.

(2) The High School Characteristics Index was given to the entire Urbandale High School student body in the fall of 1969. Twenty-eight items were identified as determining the degree to which the following educational objective was being met; The student will stress learning over grades in the educational process.

Twenty-three items were identified as determining the degree to which the educational objective; The student will be capable of making significant educational decisions, was being met. A forty-nine item true - false questionnaire was then administered to 100 randomly selected Valley High School Students to allow a comparison for the Urbandale High School student responses.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the findings of this study which concerned itself with the educational objectives of Urbandale High School, the following conclusions are presented:

1. The first objective, The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and college, is being met at a "good" level on a scale of poor, below average, average, good, and excellent.

2. The second objective, The student will satisfactorily bridge the gap between high school and the working world, is being met at an "average to good" level on a scale of poor, below average, average, good, and excellent.

3. The responses from the former students who are not in a post high school institution of learning to objective two, are more scattered throughout the total (poor to excellent) scale than are the responses from the former students who are attending a post high school institution of learning to objective one.

4. Based upon collected data, the third objective, The student will stress learning over grades in the educational process, is being met more successfully in the open, innovative, non-graded environment of Urbandale High School than it is in the traditional environment of Valley High School in West Des Moines.

5. Based on collected data, the fourth objective, The student will be capable of making significant educational decisions, is being met more successfully in the innovative environment of Urbandale High School than in the traditional environment of Valley High School in West Des Moines.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the data gathered for this project, it is necessary that Urbandale High School conduct studies in the following areas:

1. A committee should be organized, consisting of former students, faculty, administration, and college advisors to determine adequacy of the college preparatory curricula. This committee would determine the courses that need to be altered within the present curricula to insure adequate student preparation in meeting the demands of the post high school institution.

2. A committee should be organized, consisting of former students, faculty, administration, and business-industrial advisors to determine the adequacy of the work-study programs in the curricula. This committee would determine the courses that need to be altered within the present curricula, and the courses that need to be added to the curricula to insure adequate student preparation in meeting the demands of the working world.

3. A committee should be organized, consisting of students, faculty, and administration to determine the environmental needs of the school in emphasizing that learning is for the students' future, not for the present grade.

4. A committee should be organized, consisting of students, faculty, and administration, to determine the environmental needs of the school program that will allow the student to make decisions to insure a productive decision making life.

The purpose for these recommendations lies in interpretation of the data contained in this study. Based on the data, not all of the former students and present students feel that Urbandale High School is doing an excellent job of preparing students for college or the working world, nor is it doing as much as could be done with the environment of the school. Consequently the previous studies are recommended to allow for the satisfaction of the indicated student needs.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The following questionnaire was administered to 147 former Urbandale High School students of the graduating class of 1969.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate response.

Are you attending a post high school institution of learning?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answered YES to the above question, would you please answer questions one through five, by marking the response which most nearly represents your feeling, if you answered NO to the above questions please go to question number six.

1. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your study habits have been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

2. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self responsibility has been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

3. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-confidence has been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

4. How adequate was the content of your high school courses and experiences in meeting the demands of your post high school education?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

5. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your social adjustment has been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

6. Please indicate on the line below what you are now doing (nature of employment, housewife, armed services, etc.), then answer questions seven through eleven as they relate to your activities.

7. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your work habits have been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

8. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-responsibility has been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

9. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate do you feel your self-confidence has been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

10. As a result of your education at Urbandale High School, how adequate, do you feel your social adjustment has been since entering your post high school institution?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

11. How adequate was the content of your high school courses and experiences in meeting the demands of your present activities (nature of employment, housewife, armed services, etc.)?

- A. Poor _____
- B. Below Average _____
- C. Average _____
- D. Good _____
- E. Excellent _____

APPENDIX B

The following questionnaire was administered to the entire Urbandale High School student body, and 100 randomly selected students from Valley High School.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate response which most nearly represents your feelings. The statement is true if you think it is generally true, and false if you think it is generally false. This questionnaire is given to determine how you feel about things around your high school.

<u>TRUE</u>		<u>FALSE</u>		
<u>Val-</u>	<u>Urban-</u>	<u>Val-</u>	<u>Urban-</u>	
<u>ley*</u>	<u>dale*</u>	<u>ley</u>	<u>dale</u>	
67%	57%	--	--	1. You need permission to do <u>anything</u> around here.
73%	65%	--	--	2. There is a lot of competition for grades.
--	--	44%	35%	3. Popularity, pull, and bluff get students through many courses.
44%	85%	--	--	4. Examinations here really test how much a student has learned.
79%	64%	--	--	5. There are awards or special honors for those who do the best work or get the best grades.
69%	77%	--	--	6. Students are made to explain <u>why</u> they did something when the teacher doesn't like what they've done.
--	--	29%	36%	7. Most students can easily keep out of trouble, in this school.
21%	80%	--	--	8. New Ideas are always being tried out here.
30%	53%	--	--	9. A lot of students who get just passing grades at midterm really make an effort to earn a higher grade by the end of the term.
59%	85%	--	--	10. Teachers often try to get students to speak up freely and openly in class.
72%	81%	--	--	11. When students think a teachers' decision is unfair, they try to get it changed.

*Valley High School
*Urbandale High School

<u>TRUE</u>		<u>FALSE</u>		
<u>Val-</u> <u>ley*</u>	<u>Urban-</u> <u>dale*</u>	<u>Val-</u> <u>ley</u>	<u>Urban-</u> <u>dale</u>	
75%	79%	--	--	12. Pupils are often expected to work at home on problems which they could not solve in class.
62%	68%	--	--	13. Students don't hesitate to voice their complaints around here.
--	--	19%	33%	14. When the assignments really get tough, many students just won't do them.
--	--	66%	44%	15. Teachers seldom get annoyed when students disagree with them during classroom discussion.
--	--	61%	31%	16. Students can feel free to disagree with their teachers openly.
35%	37%	--	--	17. Students are expected to report any violation of rules and regulations to their teacher or the principal.
40%	44%	--	--	18. Most students take an active part in school elections.
48%	52%	--	--	19. Both teachers and students here are actively concerned about ways to make this world a better place in which to live.
53%	67%	--	--	20. Students here learn that they are not only expected to have ideas but to do something about them.
38%	39%	--	--	21. Students put a lot of energy into everything they do - in class and out.
26%	38%	--	--	22. The teachers really push each student to the limit of his ability.
69%	87%	--	--	23. In English classes, students are encouraged to be imaginative when they write.

*Valley High School

*Urbandale High School

TRUE		FALSE			
<u>Val-</u> <u>ley*</u>	<u>Urban-</u> <u>dale*</u>	<u>Val-</u> <u>ley</u>	<u>Urban-</u> <u>dale</u>		
72%	59%	--	--	24.	This school offers many opportunities for students to get to know important works of art, music, and drama.
--	--	44%	30%	25.	Students seldom read books which deal with political and social issues.
--	--	30%	32%	26.	Student groups seldom meet to discuss current social problems and issues.
55%	47%	--	--	27.	Teachers frequently urge students to consider the influence of history or current events.
--	--	34%	28%	28.	Most students are not interested in television programs dealing with social and political problems.
71%	70%	--	--	29.	Students often start things without thinking about how they will develop or where they may end.
42%	43%	--	--	30.	New ideas are met with immediate enthusiasm in this school.
--	--	35%	45%	31.	Students who tend to say or do the first thing that occurs to them are likely to have a hard time here.
37%	56%	--	--	32.	Students frequently speak up in class without worrying about what they're going to say.
35%	30%	--	--	33.	No one needs to be afraid of expressing a point of view that is unusual or not popular in this school.
40%	44%	--	--	34.	The principal and teachers are usually understanding if a student does something wrong and will give him the benefit of the doubt.

*Valley High School

*Urbandale High School

TRUE		FALSE		
Valley*	Urbandale*	Valley	Urbandale	
65%	69%	--	--	35. If a student thinks out a report carefully teachers will give him a good mark, even if they don't agree with him.
58%	62%	--	--	36. If students do their work well they get a good mark, whether or not the teacher likes them.
--	--	59%	58%	37. Most students take their school work very seriously.
39%	55%	--	--	38. Many teachers here stress the practical uses of their subjects in helping students to get a good job.
55%	63%	--	--	39. Learning to work with others is emphasized in this school.
--	--	48%	55%	40. Students are seldom encouraged to think about developing their own personal values and a philosophy of life.
72%	75%	--	--	41. Teachers welcome the students' own ideas on serious matters.
22%	35%	--	--	42. Long, serious discussions are common among the students.
59%	81%	--	--	43. Students here are encouraged to be on their own and to make up their own minds.
--	--	15%	36%	44. Most teachers prefer that students work out their own problems.
81%	78%	--	--	45. It doesn't matter who you are, at this school you are expected to be "grown up" and able to handle your own affairs.
23%	33%	--	--	46. Quite frequently students will get together in their own time and talk about things they have learned in class.

*Valley High School

*Urbandale High School

<u>TRUE</u>		<u>FALSE</u>		
<u>Val-</u> <u>ley*</u>	<u>Urban-</u> <u>dale*</u>	<u>Val-</u> <u>ley</u>	<u>Urban-</u> <u>dale</u>	
--	--	16%	62%	47. Assemblies or discussions on serious subjects are not held very often here.
21%	44%	--	--	48. There is a lot of interest here in learning for its own sake rather than just for grades or for graduation credits.
84%	78%	--	--	49. Clear and careful thinking are most important in getting a good mark on reports, papers, and discussions.