Adolescents in the 1980's: Toward Dynamic Youth Development

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Bowed with the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes upon the ground
The emptiness of ages on his face
And on his back the burden of the world
Who will touch him
Again with immortality

Edward Markham
"Man With a Hoe"

Will it make a difference, world when I am gone?
I think not.
You will go on, day after day,
What then, do I owe you?
Who will ever shed a tear for me?

18 year-old female writing to Gisela Konopka

Who will help adolescents grow and develop? Who will fill them with hope, give them a chance to feel their own competence, provide the nurturing and facilitating conditions which will enable and ennoble them? Who will touch them with immortality?

In this context, in this particular setting, and with Gisela Konopka present, it seems not only appropriate but requisite to focus on the issue of adolescent growth and development. The word focus has a special meaning. We meet not only to learn about the legitimate emotional and psychological needs of youth but also, and most importantly, to consider what we can and should be doing to bring about change. The nation is indeed at risk. The risk does not, however, come from the failure of schools and other human service agencies to force students to study harder or to study harder subjects. The real risk comes from our failure to promote the development of adolescents as psychologically maturing persons.

We believe adolescents are persons with specific qualities and characteristics who have a participatory and responsible role to play, tasks to perform, skills to develop at treat particular time of life.

(Konopka, 1973, p. 292)

This means adolescence is more than a period of transition, or of being a tourist, or of existing in marginality. Too often, unfortunately, adolescence is a mined opportunity for significant psychological development.

At the moment we, that is, the adult society in general, neatly divide adolescents into two categories: normal and abnormal. From this dichotomy a series of assumptions flows. From these assumptions come programs. For youth in the first group, the major social institution is the public school, and it is to that institution that my next comments are directed.

The Role of Schools and Healthy, Psychological Development

Although we have been “treated” to over 20 national studies concerning schools in the past five years, such criticism is hardly new. I would simply remind you that the so-called radical critics of the 1960s have been replaced in the 1980s with groups and commissions. These groups identify the same basic problems yet prescribe different remedies. The schools themselves, of course, really haven’t changed significantly. At a generic level, the situation is still as it was 20 years ago, or indeed 80 years ago. The forms are different, yet the substance is the same. In 1912 almost 80% of all secondary classroom interaction was unilateral teacher talk. Almost all the teacher talk was asking short, concrete, questions which required brief rote-like answers. The picture hasn’t changed. The most recent nationwide observational study by John Goodlad, Frances Klien, and their associates painted the same dismal picture of real life in classrooms (Goodlad, 1979, 1980).

The Goodlad group used a combined approach to obtain data from (1) almost 1000 actual classroom observations, (2) almost 15,000 pupil questionnaires, (3) interviews with over 800 teachers, and (4) over 6000 parent questionnaires. Using a stratified sample, they surveyed seven major geographic regions with different socioeconomic and racial-ethnic composition. In short, the researchers attempted to gain an accurate national picture of the public schools. What did Goodlad’s associates find when they sat in the back of the classroom? The English/Language Arts curriculum was selected for an in-depth study since that area was common to all secondary schools in the study. The observers and the survey data both agreed that by far the predominant mode of instruction and material employed was almost totally traditional—a textbook, a worksheet, and rote memory recitation. In fact, in over half the secondary schools these were the only methods and materials used at all. Thus, these students were not exposed to even one different media op method
of instruction. No films, no slides, no television, no simulations, no tapes, no teaching machines, and no learning kits. In the remaining schools, the reported use of such materials varied from 40% to 3%. This means that in spite of major changes in the availability of multimedia materials and in innovative teaching methods in English over the past decade, such materials and methods have not become a part of the students’ classroom experience. In addition, the observers found that the use of teacher praise, encouragement, correction with guidance, and positive interaction declined sharply when compared to earlier grades. Positive classroom interaction between teachers and pupils dropped 50%. Negative learning atmospheres replaced the generally positive climate in elementary schools.

We should not conclude, however, that the problem outlined was unique to the English education curriculum. National studies in science education (Welch, 1979), in mathematics (Dessart, 1981) and in the general experience of secondary schools (Coleman, 1974) all reach similar conclusions. The day-to-day experience, which curriculum expert Louise Berman calls the “dead hand of dailiness” (Berman, 1980), creates mis-educative learning atmospheres in the secondary school classrooms. The classes are, on the average, still listless, monotonous, and mindless.

The irony in all this is that we know what needs to be done, as well as the current impact of present schooling. On the latter point Mackey (1977) has shown quite clearly the pattern of alienation that results. If we place healthy, active, psychologically alert humans into negative, repressive, monotonous school environments we know that the effects will be one of three: (1) learned helplessness, (2) alienation and withdrawal, or (3) rage. For a variety of reasons, the current scene seems to foster alienation as the prime reaction, as Mackey (1977) has so aptly pointed out, even though alienation itself may take different forms depending on sex, social and economic class differences. For example, males in general had higher ratings on guidelines, working class students were higher on cultural estrangement, and in suburbia a sense of personal incapacity (e.g. powerlessness) was highest. I need hardly add that Konopka, (1966, 1976), found many a poignant case study of patterns of alienation which were highly similar.

The irony noted above comes from the clear evidence, both old and new, that we know how to solve the mindless school syndrome. A brief excursion into history via the now ignored, yet remarkable Eight Year Study (1942) makes the point quite clearly. The study, begun in the 1930s, traced two groups of students. Young people comprising the experimental group attended special high school programs organized around an activity-based project and were compared to matched controls from regular high schools.

The study involved some of the most eminent educators of the day, such as Ralph Tyler and Arthur Jersild, and there was insistence on careful evaluation of outcomes. To meet this criterion, the researchers compared a large group of the activity school graduates who went on to college with a matched group from traditional high schools who also went on to college. The groups were equated on such variables known to affect academic performance as age, sex, socioeconomic status, and intelligence test score. The students from the activity schools were admitted to college on the basis of the school’s recommendations, however, without regard to their Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. The colleges agreed to set aside their usual admission criteria and to allow each high school in the study to recommend admission on the basis of the student’s actual performance in the activity curriculum. If the high school felt that the student was ready for college, he or she was admitted. The colleges admitted the students from the matched control group independently.

The results of the comparison follow. In college, the activity school students:

- Earned a slightly higher total grade average;
- Earned higher grade averages in all subject fields except foreign language;
- Specialized in the same academic fields as did the comparison students;
- Did not differ from the comparison group in the number of times they were placed on probation;
- Received slightly more academic honors in each year;
- Were more often judged to possess a high degree of intellectual curiosity and drive;
- Were more often judged to be precise, systematic, and objective in their thinking;
- Were more often judged to have developed clear or well-formulated ideas concerning the meaning of education—especially in the first two years in college;
- More often demonstrated a high degree of resourcefulness in meeting new situations;
- Did not differ from the comparison group in ability to plan their time effectively;
- Had about the same problems of adjustment as the comparison group, but approached their solution with greater effectiveness;
- Participated somewhat more frequently in, and more often enjoyed, appreciated experiences in the arts;
- Participated more in all organized student groups with the exception of religious and “service” activities;
- Earned in each college year a higher percentage of nonacademic honors (scholarships in organizations, election to managerial societies, athletic insignia, leading roles in dramatic and musical presentations);*
- Did not differ from the comparison group in the quality of adjustment to their contemporaries;
- Differed only slightly from the comparison group in the kinds of judgments about their schooling;
- Had a somewhat better orientation toward the choice of a vocation; and
- Demonstrated a more active concern for what was going on in the world.

The individual differences were generally not great, but the cumulative differences were quite substantial. In other words, across the board, whether it was in academic work, college leadership, general problem solving, extracurricular activities, or a general con-
cern for society at large, the differences favored the pupils—1475 of them—who graduated from one of the 30 high schools with the experimental curriculum.

Why then, in view of these results, have the high schools in this country not been more innovative in the past 30 years? The Eight Year Study (1942) certainly provided a solid research base to attest to the differences a curriculum can make. The one major factor that the study could not contend with, though, was history. The results were published just as the country was entering World War II. The war, the subsequent flooding of schools and colleges with returning veterans and postwar babies, the Cold War, and the competition with Russia for leadership in science in the intervening years were some of the main elements that obscured both the need for secondary school reform and the major blueprint for change outlined by the Eight Year Study. The nation became occupied and preoccupied with other issues of postwar recovery, issues that appeared more pressing in the short run. In the long run, of course, the secondary school as an institution suffered a major setback from which it has yet to recover in spite of substantial research and theory that confirms the importance of the original findings.

A recent study directed by Dan Conrad and Diane Hedin involved a national sample of over 1,000 students from 22 different schools, and the results were quite clear. Students in experiential-learning classes were compared to students in control classes from the same schools. The experimental class students demonstrated gains in the following areas:  
- self-esteem
- social problem solving: personal efficiency
- social and personal responsibility
- empathy: altruism
- career exploration
- moral/value development
- ego development

Conrad and Hedin’s findings show a clear difference in favor of the experiential-learning classes. In every instance the experimental classes showed gains exceeding those of the control groups on a variety of estimates of psychological maturity. These results indicate that classes can be organized in a manner that provides intellectual and psychological growth during adolescence.

It is also interesting to note which characteristics the teenagers themselves cite as making a positive difference. The following list gives the results of a multiple regression analysis (a sophisticated multivariate statistical technique) that ranks the elements considered most important by the students:
- What I did was interesting.
- Was appreciated when I did a good job.
- Felt I made a contribution.
- Had freedom to develop and use my own ideas.
- Had adult responsibilities.
- Discussed my experiences with family and friends.

From this we can conclude two things. There is clear and indeed overwhelming evidence that school programs can be organized in ways that will promote psychological development. (In fact here in Minnesota, Mary Gum at Duluth was one of the early pioneers; Miller (1976, 1982) of the Minnesota Department of Education has carefully synthesized all of the research into a framework for school programs.) The second conclusion seems to be that all this effort has had very little impact on school programs. I shall give my interpretation of this oxymoron following the next section. It is necessary to review the modes of psychological treatment in order to complete the description of the problems we need to solve before comprehensive solutions can be prescribed.

**Psychological Treatment for Adolescents: An Uncertain Method**

If schools are failing as agents of healthy socialization and psychological development, what about mental health agencies? After all, if adolescence is a time of great psychological stress (sturm und drang) then the clinical model must surely provide the needed assistance. There are two immediate problems. The first is with the storm and stress assumption. While the early giants such as Freud, but more so G. Stanley Hall, indelibly impressed on our minds the images of major psychological distress and inner turmoil of volcanic proportion (the seething cauldron of sex and aggressive impulses overpowering the exhausted ego during adolescence), a view we now realize is at best an overstatement. The Dusek and Flaherty studies (1981) show quite clearly that only a small proportion of young people experience great stress; most experience difficulties of much less magnitude. Also it is for this very reason that Garmezy (1978) is so concerned over the expansion of DSM III. He correctly notes that the schema itself has expanded from 60 categories of mental illness to 230 even though there has been no major increase in the knowledge base for mental illness. The category system is so broad that virtually any aspect of adolescent behavior that is different can be labeled as mental disease. Just to give you a flavor here is one such listing:

- Specific Reading Disorder (i.e., Specific Reading [Mental] Disorder), Specific Arithmetical Disorder, Developmental Language Disorder, Developmental Articulation Disorder, Enuresis, Attention Deficit Disorders, Separation Anxiety Disorder, Shyness Disorder (!?), Overanxious Disorder, Introverted Disorder of Childhood, Oppositional Disorder, Academic Underachievement Disorder, Emancipation Disorder of Adolescence or Early Adult Life, Identity Disorder, Specific Academic or Work Inhibition.

(Garmezy, 1978)

Garmezy points out the problem with a psychiatric approach to adolescent behavior. During adolescence when so much change is occurring, invalid labeling may have extremely negative conse-
quences. And a conservative approach to diagnosis is always the rule during times of rapid change and growth. Such an approach would help a large portion of our young citizenry who should not carry the burdens of mental disorders they do not have.

(Garmezy, 1978)

So, the first difficulty with the clinic model is the dual assumption of storm and stress and psychiatric diagnosis. The second difficulty is more direct: the track record of treatment. There have been three major studies of effects of intensive psychotherapeutic counseling on young people. E. E. Levitt’s review (1971) of 3,399 cases revealed no meaningful differences between treated and control children. Sixty-seven percent of the group receiving treatment improved on follow-up; seventy-two percent of the control group improved. Volsky (1965) in a study at the Minnesota Student Counseling Bureau found no difference in outcomes. The research design was the most comprehensive, and indeed even the most elegant, that has ever been attempted. Similarly, in a study I conducted at the high school level some years ago (Sprinthall, 1963), no differences were found. In this instance the research design approached and closely approximated the Volsky framework.

Without belaboring the point, the track record for school-based counseling programs is no better than for intensive psychological clinic treatment. A detailed critique of school counseling can be found in Sprinthall (1984). Two studies are briefly cited here. In 1979 the Citizen’s Policy Center issued a report on the guidance program in the California Secondary Schools. Its title is Lost in the Shuffle. In the second study the Konopka group interviewed over 1000 teenage females.

About half of the girls who talked about schools mentioned school counselors, but not spontaneously. They responded only to questions asked by the interviewers. Girls regarded school counselors mainly as people who should arrange class schedules or enforce school regulations. Very few young women talked about counselors as job or career advisers. Only 26 girls mentioned this function at all, and 14 of those indicated that counselors were not helpful in that respect. More than half the girls said that they had either no contacts or very unfavorable contacts with school counselors. Their point of view was expressed something like this:

They don’t act like they want to help.
They don’t understand your point of view.
They never really have time to talk with you.
You only go to them when you are in trouble for breaking some regulation.
They don’t listen to you; they just tell you what to do.
Their only job is changing classes, you have to have their permission.
They won’t respect confidentiality.
They ought to help you with real problems, not just bureaucratic matters.

(Konopka, 1976, p 125)

As a result Kohlberg has summarized the counseling and treatment research in rather stark terms. He states,

Put bluntly there is no research evidence indicating that clinical treatment of emotional symptoms during childhood leads to predictions of adult adjustment.

(Kohlberg, 1975)

And, on the other hand, Kohlberg points to the other side.

The best predictors of the absence of adult mental illness and maladjustment are the presence of various forms of competence and ego maturity in childhood and adolescence rather than the absence of problems and symptoms.

(Kohlberg, Lacrosse, and Ricks, 1972)

In a sense we should not really find such outcomes surprising. After all, intensive treatment is an extremely complex proposition. Paul Meehl noted that within the conventional model of treatment only about 25% of the clients were appropriate or “good” patients and only about 25% of the therapists were really proficient in psychotherapy. Under conditions of ATI or Attribute-Treatment Interaction and random match, the really positive outcomes occur about 6% of the time. (Meehl, 1965)

While such a percentage may be unduly pessimistic, it is certainly true that the empirical basis for intensive treatment is modest at best. In spite of this, however, I should remind all of you to reread George Albee’s Konopka Lecture given here in 1980 (Albee, 1980). He pointed out quite graphical that, in spite of the obvious conclusion, there is more and more emphasis on secondary prevention, or treatment. Primary prevention still gets short shrift even though the evidence does not support the traditional clinical model.2 Albee underscored the opposition within the psychiatric establishment to primary prevention in a quote from Henderson (1975, p. 235), to the effect that primary prevention is a “magical notion.” If secondary prevention doesn’t work is primary prevention a magic solution?

Psychological Development: The Goal of Primary Prevention

The magical notion question requires a two-part approach. First, does primary prevention make a difference, and second, can we really do anything about it? I will take the questions in order.

Does it make a difference to espouse a goal such as psychological maturity? Does success in living relate to grade point academic achievement or to psychological treatment? This is admittedly a most difficult research question because of the complexities involved in a definition of success in life. There is evidence, however, that life skills and success after the completion of formal edu-

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2 This probably refers to Schofield’s (1964) contention that traditional therapy is really designed to help those who need it the least, the YAVIS syndrome.

1 Derek Bok’s recent report on medical education makes the point that less than 1.5% of the graduate curriculum is devoted to primary prevention. See D. Bok, “Needed: A new way to train doctors.” Harvard Magazine 1984, May-June, pp. 37-44.
cation are more highly related to psychological maturity than to any other factors. A Ford Foundation study of college graduates over a 16-year span (Nicholson, 1970), indicated that scholastic aptitude and grade point average were not related to life success measured by a combined index. (Who’s Who, peer judgment, advanced graduate work). With an overlapping design and sample sizes of 400 to 500 students, the study did indicate that secondary school counselor/principal recommendations based on estimates of personal and psychological maturity were effective predictors not only for college success itself but also in follow-up. These so-called “high-risk” students presented SAT scores some .50 points below the comparison groups. Unfortunately the results were not widely publicized.

More recently, Heath’s longitudinal studies with college age samples reached similar conclusions. Carefully identified constructs such as ego maturity and competence were significantly related to a broad and multiple definition of life success while traditional indicators such as SAT score and academic achievement were not (Heath, 1977).

Just how did Heath define psychological maturity? He suggests four components: the ability (1) to symbolize one’s experience, (2) to act allocentrically with compassion, (3) to act autonomously with self-control, and (4) to make a disciplined commitment to humane values. These qualities formed part of the core of psychological maturity. Ironically, he found, especially for the Americans in his cross-cultural study, that:

Adolescent scholastic aptitude as well as other measures of academic intelligence do not predict several hundred measures of the adaptation and competence of men in their early thirties. In fact, a scholastic aptitude was inversely related in this group to many measures of their adult psychological maturity, as well as of their judged interpersonal competence.

(Heath, 1977, pp. 177-178)

Also note that his definition avoids one of the long-standing problems almost endemic to cognitive-development theory. His components include so-called intellective and so-called affective components. The criticism that psychological maturity is a code word for some neo-version of the idolatry of the intellect does not hold. Also please note that his last two components involve action. So in everyday terms we are speaking of the ability to symbolize/think, to be compassionate/feel, and to take action based on principles of justice.

Thus psychological maturity, broadly defined, does make a real difference especially as a predictor of humane, complex performance. There have been an enormous number of studies examining aspects of psychological development as an independent variable, as a predictor. Table 1 displays a number of such studies with different populations and employing varying assessment methods for estimates of psychological maturity. On an overall basis, these studies demonstrate quite clearly that there is a consistent relationship between stage of development and performance.

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bieleke (1979)</td>
<td>Unmarried Teenage Mothers</td>
<td>Loevinger Ego Stage</td>
<td>Higher stage: More sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McNamara (1977)</td>
<td>College Students in a distress situation</td>
<td>Kohlberg Moral Stage</td>
<td>Higher stage: Provided help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt &amp; Joyce (1967)</td>
<td>School Teachers</td>
<td>Hunt Conceptual</td>
<td>Higher stage: More effective in classes “Read &amp; Flex”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candee (1977)</td>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>Rest Moral Stage</td>
<td>Higher stage: More democ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKhinn &amp; Joyce (1983)</td>
<td>School Teachers</td>
<td>Maslow Stages</td>
<td>Higher stage: Adopted Innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortenson (1983)</td>
<td>Student Teachers</td>
<td>Hunt Conceptual</td>
<td>Higher stage: More congruent non-verbals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thies-Spinthall (1980)</td>
<td>Cooperating Teachers</td>
<td>Hunt &amp; Rest</td>
<td>Higher stage: more effective as supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly P. (1980)</td>
<td>Jr. H.S. Teachers</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Higher stage: More humane in discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eherhardt J. (1982)</td>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Higher stage: Decision-making more just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walters &amp; Stivers (1977)</td>
<td>Student Teachers</td>
<td>Erikson</td>
<td>Higher stage: More effective in classrooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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As to the second point, on the efficacy of planned educational strategies, my own work in collaboration with a wide-ranging group of colleagues does validate that contention (Sprinthall, 1980). I do wish to stress the word collaboration. One of the most difficult messages to get across to each new generation of researcher interventionists (or, better, development educators) is the requirement to collaborate. To create abundant, humane and facilitatory environments for pupil growth is obviously complex. Generic human growth is simply not subject to a “quick fix.” (Just review for a minute Heath’s four components.) To facilitate that kind of
growth requires more than one individual. Teamwork is essential, given the nature of formative field-based evaluation as the feedback link to change programs to fit the students' needs, rather than the other way around. Also I should say that there are a variety of other plans and strategies which achieve outcomes similar to those in the area of deliberate psychological education. Mosher (1979) and Kohlberg (Wasserman, 1976) in a framework of the "Just High School," Parker (1979) and his associates in their application of the Perry model, as well as other programs reviewed in a recent special issue of the Personnel and Guidance Journal (Special Issue, 1984), all indicate that educational programming does work. Primary prevention is clearly an empirically supported idea whose time has come. It is not a magical notion.

**The Problems: Programs and Personnel**

If there is one factor that prevents prevention, it is the personnel equation. If we look at schools, clinics, and other youth serving agencies, how many persons do we see trained in and committed to a developmental point of view? Instead, youthworkers in schools and agencies are caught between the press for academic achievement on one hand and a clinical model of intensive treatment on the other. Unfortunately, the youth themselves are caught in the middle with inadequate educational programs and inadequate models of treatment. Rosemary Sarri (1982) pointed out the inadequacy of those treatment approaches which only euphemistically can be called juvenile justice. The costs are staggering: $3,000 per pupil per year for a public school, $13,000 for an adolescent adjudicated to an adult prison, and $38,000 for a youth in a juvenile treatment facility. Yet far worse are the psychological costs. If schools and treatment facilities fail to educate, other adults fill the vacuum. We see troubled youth flocking to cults on one hand or literally being dragged to heavy-handed, authoritarian "new" treatments where heads are shaved and youth are forced to chant in unison and shake and wave on cue. From an objective point of view both the cults and these new treatment methods are one and the same. Programming and deprogramming are but different sides of the same authoritarian coin. Neither promotes growth. Both are psychonoxious.

What we need are programs and personnel in schools and community agencies to manage the process of healthy psychological growth and development. We certainly have enough evidence as to the program requirements. We do not need further research to establish what is effective. The frameworks are available, at least enough to start. Our primary need for successful primary prevention, then, entails new and imaginative training programs at the graduate level. In other words, what we need right now is a graduate program that crosses disciplines and professions and that will educate a now missing elite, a cadre of youth workers. Such workers must be trained quite uniquely for two seemingly diametrically opposed functions. We need workers who can educate their youth in primary prevention modes. That means employing the helper-principle, giving our professional secrets away to the lay public, and cooperating in open systems with democratic, grass roots cross-consultation. This is the educative role, conducting short-term workshops, reaching out into communities, and finding and developing human resources in a manner described by Lewis and Lewis (1983). Such an educative function is both intensive and extensive. The role is educative in a true sense, without the authoritarian hierarchy. Perhaps the best way to sum up the function is to note its similarity to the work of Friere (1981). He points out vividly that adults have a particular responsibility to provide for the conditioning of critical consciousness through dialogue, praxis, and as teacher-learners. In short we need adults who can truly educate because they are with and part of the experience of the devalued group. The usual adult hierarchy complete with anti-dialogue and "assistancialism" is simply a code word in Friere's view for paternalism—adults withholding responsibility from adolescents, in this case to prevent development. His description of the Brazilian culture can apply equally to our own.

Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in activity, could never develop a critical consciousness

(Friere, 1981, p. 37)

Devalued groups can learn democracy through the exercise of democracy as Friere would say, but to bring this about we need effective youth educators.

On the other hand, seemingly antithetical to the educative role, the new youthworkers must be skilled as advocates. Adolescents in general, and particularly those who are poor, handicapped, Black, Native American or female, represent a great underclass as socially devalued populations. For them, primary prevention often requires advocacy just as much as education. Just recently in North Carolina we had a clear example: a 16-year-old emotionally troubled Black youth with a long history of major psychological disturbance was sentenced to the detention center for a misdemeanor. He had publicly stated on numerous occasions that he needed help, not a jail cell. He got the cell. The next day the guards found him hanging. Investigation revealed that there was no room for him in the intensive care unit of the local public hospital; he hadn't met their admission criteria—a formal referral by a psychiatrist. This is just one example of the need for advocacy. Others, too numerous to mention, speak to the same point. The burdens are great and the benefits few for so many adolescents.

While it may appear that these roles cannot be mixed, in my view they must be fused, or else accepted as a productive paradox. In fact I think one of the most challenging educational opportunities is to attack that problem. How can we organize an effective graduate program that will achieve these dual goals? In my view effective advocacy can be a legitimate and morally just role. In this sense I part company with radicals such as Alinsky and his moral...
relativism run rampant. Certainly the example of a Martin Luther
King, Jr. or indeed of a Gisela Konopka is the real point: those who
believe in the democratic system so passionately insist on using
democratic means for democratic ends, even though it’s often slow,
frustrating, and terribly draining. Nonetheless, it is exactly
toward that goal that an effective graduate program must aspire.

Yet it will take more than a call to bring this about. We need
to face the barriers directly. In times of budget crises, downsizing,
merging, and cutting back, the spirit of innovation languishes. March
(1975) put it more bluntly in a brilliant piece in which he accurately
predicted the withdrawal of support for human service programs.
Under such conditions, teachers, administrators, and researchers
all share a common danger and we tend to respond by protecting
ourselves. But privatism, excessive concern for career, position,
and the petty indulgence of personal pleasure without point or
consequence were the responses he predicted. And I must say, that,
when I view the increasingly guild-like nature of our various profes-
sional organizations, his prediction looks far too accurate for com-
fort. Sub-groups within national psychological associations, per-
sonnel and guidance groups, and the various teacher associations
have all narrowed their focus and threaten to take separate
action, mostly to protect their own rather than a national
interest. So we must offer ourselves a choice: Do we continue to
drift, to narrow our objectives and horizons, and to retreat into the
comforts of our professorships, our libraries, and our offices, or do
we rise again and battle for what we know is both right and desper-
ately missing

Epilogue

On my last day as a professor at this University, I gave a brief
talk to my colleagues and ended with a story I’d like to repeat here.
It’s a story about one little boy, just entering adolescence, and an
industrial arts teacher.¹ The boy was 13 and has been designated as
EMR (educable mentally retarded). His first six years in school were
in separate, special education classes. With mainstreaming legisla-
tion, he entered a regular class for the first time in the seventh
grade.

The teacher had taken some courses as part of his in-service
training to develop his skill in relating to a broad variety of pupils.
Also, he had attempted to use a greater variety of teaching strate-
gies, including learning to recognize the legitimate feelings teenag-
ers experience. As a result, when the 13-year-old entered his class,
the teacher was quick to spot both a high level of anxiety and a
hesitation to try anything new. Gradually, as the teacher individual-
ized his lesson plans, he was able to get the boy going on a task,
making bookends. Using positive reinforcement, the teacher soon
saw the young man take a genuine interest. Each day he would
appear earlier and earlier at the door. He worked furiously, cutting,
gluing, and sanding. Finally, the project was finished, just as the
term ended. (The bookends, the teacher said later, weren’t exactly
straight but they were smooth.)

¹The story of the junior high school boy was related to me by Victor
Hauck, a teacher at Northview Junior High School, Osseo, Minnesota.

That evening the teacher received a phone call from the boy’s
mother. She said, “I just wanted to thank you for your work with
my son. You know,” she continued, “we had some qualms about
this mainstreaming, but no longer. Today after school, he appeared
and rang the doorbell at the front door. It was a shock. Usually he
would sort of sneak home from the special class and go right to his
room, in silence, and stay there until supper. Not today. Today he
appeared at the front door. I opened it and there he stood, at least
ten feet tall, holding up these tippy bookends. ‘Look,’ he said. ‘Look
what I can do!’”

As the teacher related the story to me, he said, “Look! Look
what we can do!”

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