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Children, Youth and Family Life

Creative Practices Developed by Teachers
for Improving Classroom Atmospheres

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PREFACE

This pamphlet is one of a series of four written for teachers. The contents were discovered and organized by an action research team of social scientists and educators from the Institute for Social Research of The University of Michigan. The teaching practices, themselves, were developed and refined by elementary and secondary school teachers from 25 schools in nine systems in southwestern Michigan. The study lasted from 1959 to 1963.

During the initial phase of the study, the participating teachers collaborated in a program of diagnostic study of their class-rooms. The results of these efforts are presented in a separate volume entitled, Classroom Study Tools for Improving Classroom Atmospheres. During the study's second phase the teachers and the assisting university social scientists explored ways of initiating, maintaining, and evaluating improvements in classroom teaching practices aimed at facilitating mental health and learning conditions in the classroom. The contents of this pamphlet concern some of the results of this second phase of the study.

The first pamphlet in the series entitled, Solving Interpersonal Problems in the Classroom, describes ways in which the classroom teacher can improve the teaching-learning environment of the classroom by utiliz-ing scientific outlooks and methods. Case studies are reported and methods described in that pamphlet which clarify the ways in which the teacher can use the "action research" approach to increase his own compe-tence and to gain satisfaction from his teaching activities.

In the present volume, the third of the series, are reported a sample of the teaching practices which were either invented or adapted by the cooperating teachers. All of the practices summarized in this report have emerged from the cooperative analysis by researcher and teacher of a classroom situation, or from the initiative of fellow teachers who became interested in trying out and creatively modifying one of the practices developed by another teacher.

The research team "discovered" and recorded numerous practices emerging from the efforts of this typical sample of teachers to study and improve their own teaching performance. A selection of these practices is reported here with the hope that it will be of interest to colleagues in the teaching profession, and may stimulate a wider sharing of teaching practices than is true at the present time.

The classroom teachers whose efforts are summarized here, are:

Lorrain Asprin	Lillian Kuiper
Helen Bradshaw	Peggy Lippitt
Aileen Brown	Sue McGough
Margaret Copley	Florence Panattoni
Astrid DeMarrais	Mae Ava Phillips
Ann Erkkila	Leota Powers
Jean Fitzgerald	Virginia Ryan
Myrtle Funk	Edward Smith
John Galbreath	Fred Stefanski
Avis Gesler	Luana Turner
Mabel Kaufman	Irene Vogel
Gertrude Kinnel	Robert Williams

The Michigan school systems and school buildings which have served as collaborating field sites are:

Ann Arbor Public Schools (Burns Park Elementary, Haisley Elementary, Wines Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, Perry Elementary, Mack Elementary, Abbott Elementary, Allen Elementary, Tappan Junior High)

Manchester Public Schools (Manchester High School)

Milan Public Schools (Milan High School)

Northville Public Schools (Northville High School, Main Street Elementary, and Amerman Elementary)

Plymouth Public Schools (Plymouth High School, Plymouth Junior High)

Saline Public Schools (Saline High School, Saline Intermediate)

University of Michigan (University School)

Willow Run Public Schools (Kaiser Elementary, Holmes Elementary, Foster Elementary)

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INTRODUCTION

All teachers are, at one time or another in their careers, inventors of new or modified teaching practice. Typically, a puzzling classroom situation presents itself to the teacher, thinking is stimulated, skills are mobilized, alternatives for action are considered, and a new practice is born. Many of these creative teaching practices are minor variations on previous inventions by self or others. Many of them are transitory; used only once and discontinued because of their apparent ineffectiveness or because of a change of situation. On the other hand, many of the creative practices do represent significant improvements in education which deserve to be consolidated, evaluated, and made available to other teachers as part of the cumulative body of professional practice.

Unfortunately, most of the significant developments of new practices, or improvements of old ones go to waste in education. The profession of education does not profit from most of the creative efforts of thousands of dedicated and innovative classroom teachers. Why, we might ask, is this the case?

One reason is that many teachers lack the concepts and skills needed to clarify and evaluate their own creative practices and, consequently, do not develop confidence in the fact that they have something significant to offer others.

Another reason we have discovered is that professional communication among teachers in the same building, or within the same system, is very inadequate causing little motivation and opportunity to share a practice invention.

A third, and perhaps most important reason, is that in the teaching profession few, if any, practices and standards have developed to support active searching for and making visible new practices. This situation is quite different from that in many other professional fields, such as agriculture, medicine, and public health. Compared to the practitioners in these professions, educators are badly in need of procedures for identifying, evaluating, and spreading significant practices of the creative teacher.

In fact, never before has such a challenge to upgrade the meaningfulness and efficiency of school experiences existed. Never before has it been so important to differentiate between the "showy inventions" or "gimmicks" of classroom practice and the solid, well thought out inventions which respect and deepen the integrity of teaching-learning transactions between teachers and pupils. There is a need, for instance, for a host of creative practices to help stimulate motivation to inquire and learn in children, and to develop classroom group norms that will support high quality academic efforts on the part of children of all ability levels. Further, inventions are needed for adapting teacher performance to the differential learning needs and readinesses of different learners, for helping overcome the frequent negative attitudes toward school and authority figures, for helping learners to cope with their many dysfunctional stereotypes about national differences, race differences, sex differences, and social class differences. Perhaps even more important, inventions are needed that will permit and encourage children to take more initiative in guiding their own learning experiences.

One way that the profession of education can develop some of the high quality practices, so desperately needed at all levels of our educational

system, is through the cumulative efforts of collaborating teams of creative teachers and social scientists. What follows is a brief description of what has been found to be one effective process for involving teachers and collaborating social scientists in the development of creative teacher practices.

During the school year of 1959-60, data concerning peer group sociometric structures, individual and group standards regarding learning, significant life space forces influencing both pupils and teachers, and pupil-teacher interactions in the classroom were collected and analyzed. Some teachers took the opportunity to study these data on their own classrooms by attending a summer workshop in 1960. These teachers, in addition to several others who did not attend the workshop, developed plans for altering their teaching practices in order to improve mental health conditions and learning atmospheres in their classrooms.

The teachers were supported in these attempts by individual staff consultation and through "clinic" sessions with other innovative teachers and the research staff. One consequence of this procedure was that many teachers developed and tried out new ideas in teaching. During the year 1961-62, other procedures for supporting the creation and diffusion of new ideas and practices were initiated and studied throughout selected school staffs and systems. As part of this enterprise, resource materials for teachers, including parts of the content of this pamphlet, were found to be useful.

What motivated these teachers to be creative? Like their colleagues, the creative teachers with which the project staff has worked had feelings of discontent about the adequacy of their teaching performance. But this discontent alone is not enough to be innovative in education. Our

analysis indicates that the collaborative venture, social scientist and teacher, lends the teachers support and encouragement and helps them respond constructively to this sense of discontent.

Several aspects of the collaboration seemed important. The creative teachers felt supported by resource persons who could help them to make a diagnosis and to think through some of the needed facts about the learning situation in their classrooms. They also were buttressed by the knowledge that teachers in other buildings had the same concerns and were taking similar kinds of initiative to study and improve their teaching. But the most important fact motivating creative effort on the part of the participating teachers appeared to be the idea that "whatever I accomplish in my classroom is not just for me. It will be for others, too." In other words, the teachers had a communication channel or an influence channel in their minds through which their efforts might flow to contribute to the profession in general as well as to the pupils in their classroom in particular.

With these sources of motivation as a base, the creative teachers in this study found it possible to face with some objectivity and enthusiasm the facts about their classroom situations, and to use these facts as a springboard for thinking about possible improvements which they might initiate. In most cases they needed some help in drawing from the data about their classrooms the concrete interpretations and alternatives that seemed appropriate. Sometimes, they found it necessary and important to explore new personal skills in order to carry forward their plans for action.

The initiation of classroom inventions does not necessarily require collaborating social scientists, but some type of supportive relationship with interested colleagues is required. Such support is a necessary

condition for most teachers in order that they may take the risks, commit the energy, and carry through the disciplined effort needed to change a pattern of classroom performance and to contribute a new practice to the profession. The monthly "clinics" with their colleagues from other schools and the members of the University team, which provided an opportunity to share the difficulties with which they were confronted, served to high-light this need for support from others. In these clinic sessions, some of the discouraging, early failure experiences, as well as some of their needs for additional insight and help, were discussed and worked through.

Perhaps even more important than this complex process of invent-ing teaching practices, however, is the process of diffusing or disseminat-ing them so that other teachers can learn about and adapt the new practices to their own classroom situations and teaching styles. What, we might ask, has been the typical process of spread and adaptation as we have observed it in this project?

First, the willingness of the cooperating teachers to put effort into the descriptions of their practices so that they would be available to others was very important.

Second, many teachers learned to accept and evaluate positively the idea that an important part of one's teaching role is to be profes-sionally interested in what colleagues are doing and to be constantly alert to the possibilities of adopting or adapting new practices.

Third, teachers discovered that learning from an inventive col-league is in itself a creative process rather than a routine and degrading imitative activity.

A most important thing which we discovered in this research is that new teaching practices of significance cannot be communicated easily

by written description. Teachers can be guided in writing careful descriptions of their projects so that other teachers can gain a general idea of what they were trying to do and how they approached it; but almost always we found it necessary to make further efforts of a more intensive type before a teacher was able to adopt or modify a practice successfully. Sometimes this happened by arranging for a visit with the creative teacher whose project description had been read with interest. Such a teacher may have been in another building or even in a neighboring school system. Sometimes the University consultant was able to act as a link between individual teachers. Other times, members of the action research team would discover that several teachers were interested in learning more about a particular technique. An afternoon workshop or clinic would then be arranged to work with the whole group at one time. Still another technique was that of helping the innovating teacher make a tape recording about her teaching project which other interested teachers could borrow and listen to at their leisure. One particularly effective mechanism for dissemination proved to be the setting up of three-person teams within a school building, consisting of the principal, a cooperating teacher, and an outside resource person. These "change agent teams" looked at a variety of approaches to the challenge of making new teaching practices visible and accessible to the staff of the particular school building.

One of the most difficult problems of any dissemination process is that of helping the adopting teacher gain enough clarity about the techniques and enough understanding of the necessary values and skills so that the quality of the original creative practice is preserved or improved rather than fading off into a watered down and ineffective version of the original effort.

Let us turn, now, to the contents of this report. An attempt is made below to describe briefly and concretely the key elements of each of a series of teaching practices so that the reader and other interested teachers can understand what the particular practice involves. If the reader wishes to pursue any one of these projects further, the staff at the Institute for Social Research will channel any inquiry to the appropriate teachers. The selected sample of teaching projects included in this pamphlet have been grouped into five categories. Each of these categories emphasizes an overall educational problem with which the teachers concerned were attempting to cope in their particular innovations. As an introduction and guide to the several practices outlined below, a detailed account of the innovative experiences of Teacher "A" is presented.

In reading these descriptions of teaching practices and the detailed account of Teacher "A", it may be helpful for the reader to consider such questions as:

"Are there more details about how this innovation was carried out that I need to know?"

"Are my pupils different? How can I find out?"

"What skills did this teacher possess that I might need to develop beyond what I have now?"

"In what ways is my classroom situation different? What effect might these differences have on my approach?"

We hope that other teachers may be interested in enlarging the circle of those creative teachers who have been motivated to share their practice inventions with their colleagues. If this idea is attractive to the reader, tear-out sheets will be found at the end of the pamphlet on which descriptions of other creative classroom practices can be written. The project staff will help make any contributions available to others.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CREATIVE EFFORTS OF TEACHER "A"

I. Background to Initiation of Change

Problems Perceived by Teacher: Teacher A was generally sensitive to difficulties in interpersonal relationships among her pupils as evidenced by expressions of intolerance toward others, unhealthy boy-girl competition, and by ambivalence toward others in the class. She saw as possible sources of the problem the pupils' failure to accept individual differences of classmates and failure to recognize the importance of all members of the group.

Inventory of Possible Approaches: Based on consultation with the research staff, study sessions at a summer workshop, and readings from a variety of sources, Teacher A identified a list of possible approaches toward improving the learning atmosphere in her room. Suitable approaches seemed to include:

1. The use of role playing to develop insight into problems and needs of "new" or "different" pupils.

2. The use of data from last year's class (without identifying it as such) to point out attitudes toward class work and classmates held by some pupils and to extract specific questions which might be used in group discussions, such as:

   a. How can you feel self-confident without having people think you are "stuck up"?

   b. Why do many children think that teachers and principals have a lower opinion of them than their parents do? How can we find out more about this?

   c. Do children have a fixed notion as to how teachers and principals are supposed to feel, and see them this way regardless of the way they act? Do we do this with other people?

3. The study of people in other lands (especially elementary school children) with emphasis on observing differences in standards of behavior and appearance.

4. The development of a school newspaper to encourage the recognition of the importance of the contribution of all those who are in school. (What is being studied in other grades? How does what is done in one grade effect others?)

5. The establishment of groups with increased responsibility for planning and carrying out learning activities in the classroom.

6. The use of pupil participation in making decisions on groupings and seating arrangements in the classroom.

7. The use of sociometric tests by the teacher as a basis for grouping.

8. The use of questionnaires on room jobs once a month to encourage recognition for class contributions and appreciation of various individual abilities, and to encourage additional breadth of experience for all pupils in the class.

Criteria for Determining the Usefulness of a Potential Innovation to a Given Situation: Two main criteria were identified by Teacher A. (1) Will this innovation contribute to the security of individual pupils? (The insecurity of the pupil who perceives himself as rejected by the group hampers that individual's learning.) (2) Will this innovation enhance relationships among sub-groups thereby contributing to the learning efficiency of the class as a whole?

II. Creative Efforts

In light of Teacher A's perception of the needs of her class and in line with the significant criteria she recognized as prerequisite to change attempts, she tried several approaches to the aforementioned problems at different times during the school year. Two of these creative efforts are described here in detail:

1. Giving Small Peer Groups Increased Responsibility for
Planning and Carrying out Learning Activities in the Classroom.

Description: The pupils were given an opportunity to work in,
peer groups in such activities as checking answers to daily assignments,
planning for individual and group reading activities for the day, and,
eventually, planning a number of the daily classroom activities. These
groups were originally set up by Teacher A; later, by the pupils themselves.

Source of the Idea: The idea came originally from one of the
participating teachers in the project's "clinic" sessions.

Reason for the Choice of This Particular Innovation: Teacher A
assumed that an effective working relationship might be easier for pupils
to understand and work out in small groups prior to dealing with total
class problems, since small groups can be set up on the basis of congeni-
ality, common interests, and friendship. Further, individual pupil
involvement in planning in these small groups would encourage every child
to contribute and might lead to more participation by all in subsequent
classroom activities.

Development of the Plan: On the basis of ability, interests
and sociometric choices Teacher A arranged groups so that they were fairly
congenial. She engaged in some preparatory training by assigning discus-
sion topics or specific tasks to each group, helping them to analyze their
process of organization, division of work, assignment of responsibilities,
and method of support and cooperation for all group members. The groups
were then ready to check assignments together. Teacher A circulated to
help groups, reminding pupils to keep their voices down. Later the pupils
themselves arranged groupings and initiated activities.

Evaluation: Teacher A felt it was a good learning experience
for the pupils: "It made them do more thinking on their own." Some pupils

liked it very much. Most pupils preferred it to the traditional way of doing things. To some, however, it was inefficient, while a few others were completely frustrated by it.

a. Special Skill Points: It became apparent that the pupils needed additional support and training in order to undertake these new learning responsibilities effectively. Perhaps some of the pupil's dissatisfactions could be met by a more careful development and analysis with the class of purposes, planning of procedures to be used, and practicing specific techniques with opportunities for evaluation and retrial. Attention might be given, for example, to the bashful child who is too timid to seek assistance. It is also possible that certain kinds of daily assignments lend themselves to being checked by peer groups while other kinds can be more efficiently handled by the teacher without sacrificing learning opportunities.

b. Special Operating Problems: Among the obstacles or difficulties encountered was frustration on the part of some pupils in not having the answer handed down to them. In their naiveté as to ways and means of seeking information and solutions to problems, one group decided to vote on the correct answer. Teacher guidance at crucial moments such as this is most important. All work was eventually handed in and checked over by the teacher as a means of keeping in touch, giving needed support and evaluating group and individual academic progress.

Next Steps: Teacher A plans to continue the use of this practice. Her attention will be given to (1) identifying those classroom activities which can be most effectively and profitably dealt with through small group interaction, (2) helping the class clarify the values inherent in the use of peer resources, and (3) structuring more carefully the sequence

of training events that would help pupils become more secure in working in small groups.

2. Involving the Pupils in Deciding on Groupings and Seating Arrangements in the Classroom.

Description: The class elected four representatives who chose sub-groups for which each representative would be a leader. The class decided how long these representatives would serve, whether or not they would be re-elected, what the leaders would do, and how the group would participate. Leaders then picked their groups, using class cards, and made up seating charts. They were responsible for their group, organizing it for whatever learning activity was to be scheduled, maintaining effective working conditions, rearranging the seating or initiating such other action as necessary to insure productive operation.

Source of the Idea: The pupils originally proposed the plan. It evolved from a discussion between Teacher A and the pupils about how the four class officers happened to be in one sub-group. The pupils liked the idea of having one leader in each group. They also wanted these leaders to choose the members of the groups.

Reason for Choice of This Particular Solution: Teacher A assumed that positive and constructive working relationships would develop within the class if the pupils had more opportunities to be involved in establishing the conditions under which they work. Seating arrangements, the formation of sub-groups, and the selection of pupil leaders are examples of such conditions. Since the proposed plan for involvement of the class in determining significant learning conditions resulted primarily from class discussion, it seemed appropriate to permit a trial.

Development of the Plan: After the plan was suggested by the class, as described above, Teacher A summarized the discussion to determine if class members were clear as to the recommendations and possible implications of the proposal. Criteria for selection of leaders were developed and an election followed. After the four leaders were elected, Teacher A met with them in the hallway where the choice of group members was made. Thus, four working groups were formed.

Difficulties arose when an authoritarian pupil leader would make decisions and pronouncements without first consulting his peer group. In one group four non-conforming members decided to split off from the group and sit by themselves. In some groups it became apparent that cliques developed, particularly when the pupils in the group were not well acquainted initially or were not accustomed to working together. Over time, the plan gradually evolved from a situation in which the group leaders had complete authority to one in which there was more group involvement in decision making.

Evaluation: Most pupils liked their groups, but objected to certain practices of the leaders. Nevertheless, Teacher A considered it good that they seemed free to question and to suggest changes. The teacher was uncertain as to whether the practice was successful enough to warrant repetition.

a. Special Skill Points: The shifting of certain types of decision making authority from the teacher to the children involves the need for careful planning, timing and training in order to avoid the usurpation of power by a few strong peer leaders. If the goal of having children share in determining classroom working conditions is to be enjoyed by all, conditions for free expression of opinion must be protected and a method of having leaders responsive to group needs must be established.

b. Special Operating Problems: It is possible that the tech-
nique of selecting the leaders first, then permitting them to select
their group members, constitutes a more rigid procedure than might be
necessary, and does not draw sufficiently upon the resources and insights
of the class in determining the basis for grouping and for management of
the groups. Questions might also be raised as to whether or not the plan
provided sufficient opportunities for extending the class understanding
of the leadership function.

Next Steps: Teacher A was cautious about future use of this
grouping plan. Considerable modification would seem to be indicated,
particularly with regard to the process of choosing leaders, the develop-
ment of specific skills in leadership and in training the class to become
more understanding of and skillful in the function of small groups in the
room.

FIVE CATEGORIES OF CREATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

Teacher A's new practices represent only a small part of the many creative teaching practices developed as part of this project. The practices developed are quite diverse ranging from special grouping pro-c cedures to increase learning potential, to new teaching designs to enhance pupil mental health and motivation to learn. These varied teaching practices are grouped into five general categories. Each of these categories is described briefly below.

I. Grouping according to interests, abilities, or peer support as means to higher academic achievement.

Learning to work cooperatively is enhanced when either the individuals have some things in common, or they complement one another in some ways. Teachers find that grouping pupils who have similar or complementary characteristics often is a useful way to raise learner interest, motivation and subsequent achievement.

Furthermore, the relations that pupils have with one another can affect the way in which each of them performs academically from day to day. Interpersonal rejection and anti-school standards among the peer group often lead to less than optimal achievement for the pupils in such situations. On the other hand, interpersonal support and shared feelings of worth in the school setting serve to enhance individual satisfaction and academic achievement. Research indicates that the important psychological variables involved here are the pupil's self-esteem and his attitude toward school. When these are positive, the pupil has the best chance of utilizing his intelligence at a high level.

II. <u>Participation and involvement in curriculum planning, execution,</u>
<u>and evaluation to enhance academic achievement.</u>

Pupils often work harder and with more interest on tasks which
they have chosen and structured themselves. In the light of this principle,
many teachers are attempting to enhance possibilities of academic achieve-
ment by encouraging greater pupil involvement through participation in
some phases of curriculum planning, execution, and evaluation.

Evaluating others and oneself has received special attention.
Some teachers are working on programs of evaluative feedback for sub-
groups of pupils or individuals, for instance, to aid in increasing the
achievement awareness and involvement of such youngsters. Others are
working on individualized programs of giving and receiving feedback with
special pupils. Not only is such individualization important for cogni-
tive development for some pupils, but it is also significant for altering
their feelings of alienation and non-involvement in the classroom. These
latter changes, in turn, raise the likelihood of such pupils performing
at a higher level academically than they did before.

III. <u>Providing support for interpersonal acceptance, expression of feelings,</u>
<u>and problems of relating with one another to enhance mental health and</u>
<u>motivation to learn.</u>

Classroom groups with supportive emotional climates, in which
pupils share a respect and liking for one another, are said to be mentally
healthy. Positive feelings about self grow out of such conditions of
interpersonal warmth, while abilities to understand and deal with conflicts
develop from learning to express and receive the expression of emotions.
Teachers are attempting to create classroom groups with such atmospheres
as to enhance the affective development and motivation to learn of their

pupils. Research indicates that positive mental health in this sense facilitates a fuller utilization of one's intellectual abilities.

IV. <u>Participation and involvement in group self control to enhance mental health and motivation to learn.</u>

Pupils learn to relate more responsibly toward one another as they jointly develop and share their own standards for classroom behavior. In so doing, pupils begin to feel powerful and competent as members of the classroom group. These feelings, in turn, lead to positive attitudes concerning self and school in general, thus enhancing pupil mental health, and motivation to learn. Under such conditions, mutual trust develops among the pupils and they have little difficulty in solving interpersonal conflicts that arise from day to day as a consequence.

Another outcome of participating in the setting of classroom standards and rules is that pupils are more committed to their own decisions and are able to reinforce one another's attempts to maintain these standards and rules. Classroom conditions like these allow the teacher to concentrate more completely on the material to be taught, releasing her from many of the petty operations of "controlling the class".

V. <u>Facilitating academic learning by using special teaching designs.</u>

Sometimes, pupils simply cannot get involved in subject matter taught in a traditional manner. They have little internal drive to learn and external pushing fails to get them involved. They are disinterested and bored. Some teachers have attempted to change pupil attitudes like these by trying new teaching designs. For instance, some have tried presenting subject matter in various ways, while others have used involved pupils to help the disinterested ones find meaning in the subject. Still

others have tried to involve pupils more completely in the process of learning by using role playing. Each new design is aimed at facilitating academic learning in this category.

Brief descriptions of creative teaching practices fitting into each of these categories follow.

I. Grouping According to Interests, Abilities, or Peer Support as Means to Higher Academic Achievement.

Practice #1: Organizing Small Work Groups to Implement Learning Objectives (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher was inter-
ested in developing a classroom procedure which would
help to increase the level of pupil involvement in learn-
ing tasks, encourage pupils to accept a greater degree
of responsibility for their own learning, and facilitate
the use of learning resources present in the classroom
group.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: Two types of
instruments were devised. The first was a sociometric
questionnaire used to obtain pupil preferences for work
group composition. Two questions were posed to the pupils:
"With whom could you work well?" and "With whom could
you not work well?" A second set of instruments was de-
signed to obtain evaluative judgements from the pupils
regarding their work groups. The following questions were
submitted to the pupils at different points in time during
the course of their working together:

How did things go in your group?

Do you think you learned more or less than when working
individually?

Did other members contribute to the work of the group?

How could the work of your group be improved?

What do you think your grade should be?

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher
decided to form work groups based on sociometric choices.

What Happened: The teacher administered a sociometric ques-
tionnaire to obtain pupil preferences for work group composi-
tion and small work groups were organized honoring these
preferences. The groups were used in a variety of instruc-
tional settings such as: designing and carrying out experi-
ments and projects, vocabulary study with instruction to
"state the words in terms that an elementary school child
could understand without losing the meaning of the word";
and study groups focusing on a specific topic with the task
of formulating questions for discussion.

Evaluation: The teacher feels that the pupils became more
interested in the work groups than when working as indivi-
duals. Working in small groups extended the teaching
potential of the classroom in that pupils learned from each
other. In general, pupils likedthe small work group format
and felt they learned more than when working as individuals.
They also felt that the work groups functioned effectively
and provided an opportunity for everyone to contribute.

   a. Special Skill Points: Considerable skill is needed
for getting pupils involved in planning and decision making.
The teacher needs some tolerance for ambiguity during this
stage and must allow the pupils a chance to express them-
selves freely.

   b. Special Operating Problems: The pupils undoubtedly
will feel strange and uncomfortable in the beginning. Time
should be spent working these feelings out.

Adaptation of Practice #1: The Use of Small Groups to Stimulate Academic

Learning Motivation (secondary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: Two areas were identified
as warranting the teacher's time and study: (1) The need
to encourage children to develop self-discipline and self-
initiative. (These children were taking general math mainly
because of poor study habits.) (2) The need to break down
the idea that students cannot help one another.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: Teacher did not
use tools to diagnose the situation.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: After con-
sulting with a member of The University of Michigan
project staff, the teacher decided that both of these
needs might be met by assigning children to small work

groups with added responsibilities. Attitude question-
naires were also administered during the year.

What Happened: The class was divided into small work
groups according to pupil preferences. Each group chose
one person to serve as group leader for a two-week period.
The group had academic responsibilities to help any of its
members who needed help and social responsibilities to
maintain order and discipline. The group leaders had
lunch together periodically to discuss the progress of
their undertaking.

Evaluation: The freedom pupils had to help one another
in learning tasks proved to be very effective. Cooperation
rather than competition was good for this group of youngsters.
Though many learned to assume self-discipline for learning
academic and social responsibility, the time spent in this
process (only a part of one semester) was too short for some.

   a. Special Skill Points: There are usually a couple
of children who cannot work well in groups. The teacher
must be alert and work individually with these children so
that the work of the groups will not be disrupted beyond
repair.

   b. Special Operating Problems: These students were
not accustomed to working in an unstructured situation and
felt very uncomfortable at the beginning. They needed a
period of adjustment.

Practice #2: Grouping Pupils into Socially Compatible Work Groups (second-

ary):

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher was inter-
ested in increasing student motivation to work as a means
for enhancing learning productivity. The subject matter
was electricity and from previous experience the teacher
felt that the students would require a great deal of
motivation in order to handle the concepts to be learned.
The teacher also wanted to avoid some problems raised when
pupils are put together in a group which has a difficult
time working well together. The teacher's experience, here,
was that decreased learning effectiveness results when
students are in conflict.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: The teacher used
the sociometric instrument from our project in order to
improvise and develop his own. His instrument was con-
cerned with getting information regarding interpersonal
nominations for working on science projects.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The
teacher used the sociometric instrument from this project
in order to get some idea of the format for such a device.
He improvised by substituting the question: "What four
classmates would you most like to work with on a project
concerning _ _ _ _ _ ?", for the usual sociometric items
regarding liking, influence, etc. He completed this by
indicating a set of projects, one of which was electricity,
as separate sociometric items.

What Happened: The pupils were happy to have a chance
to do this so the grouping appeared to work well on the
electricity unit. A few interpersonal conflicts arose
which led the teacher to consider some regrouping for
the next unit. Many of the pupils were reluctant to choose
another group to work with. Through class discussion the
pupils agreed that each project was somewhat different and
that each individual had something slightly different to
offer. The pupils began to look forward to working with
different people on different projects.

Evaluation: The teacher felt these sociometric data were
quite useful in creating socially compatible work groups.
He felt the pupils would have learned much less in incom-
patible work groups. The pupils appeared to like the
situation also according to the teacher.

a. Special Skill Points: The teacher should be flexible
enough to change grouping from unit to unit until optimal
conditions are reached. Such flexibility demands diag-
nostic sensitivity. The teacher should occasionally evalu-
ate by using diagnostic tools also.

b. Special Operating Problems: The teacher must be
careful not to dominate any of the groups. He must allow
the students to arrive at their own working procedures as
long as they are efficient and worthwhile.

Practice #3:   Using Small Group Organization to Facilitate Academic Pacing

(elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher wanted to
develop a method in which children might become more self-
sufficient and responsible in pacing their study in arith-
metic and reading.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: In order to deter-
mine the achievement level of the pupils in the class the
teacher administered the Iowa Achievement Test at the begin-
ning of the year.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: After analyz-
ing the results of the standard achievement test, the teacher
divided the class into ability groups. Some children were
potential candidates for the accelerated mathematics class
in Junior High School and were capable of advancing at a
rapid rate. Many different kinds of books and texts were
made available to all the children.

What Happened: Each group had its own captain. The children
were expected to check each other's papers and to help each
other. Pupils were free to move from one ability group to
another as they felt the work was becoming too difficult or
too easy. No stigma was attached to this free movement
from group to group. The first year this was tried, each
group kept records of the tests taken and the grades achieved
by the group members. The second year the teacher kept these
records. The teacher's record books and plan books were
made available to all the children at all times. The teacher
planned a meeting with one group a day, mainly to introduce
new work. If a group wanted the teacher's help, they could
check the plan book and see when she was scheduled to work
with them. If they felt they needed an earlier date, they
could talk to the teacher and try to adjust the schedule.

Evaluation: Generally, the children had a very positive
feeling towards this approach. They liked the freedom of
being able to decide which group was most appropriate at a
given time. The individual child felt he had some control
over his fate. The teacher was well pleased with the result
of this approach generally.

     a. Special Skill Points: It is important for the
teacher to keep tabs on the "pulse" of the class to deter-
mine which children are benefiting from the arrangement and
which children need more help or supervision. The teacher
must be flexible and ready to adjust the situation as the
need arises.

     b. Special Operating Problems: The teacher felt that
not all groups could gain from helping each other after each
problem. Some children simply copied the answer from the
others and did not have a real problem-solving experience.
During the second year, the teacher allowed certain groups to
compare, check and correct as they saw necessary, but pupils
in other groups were encouraged to complete the entire
assignment to the best of their ability before asking for
help. The teacher also felt that allowing the groups to keep
the records of their progress and later communicating them to
the teacher actually proved to be very time consuming for
the teacher and of no real benefit to the pupils.

Practice #4:   The Use of Small Compatible Groups for Academic Activities

(elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher wanted to set up study groups for the social studies program. Since it was early in the school year, it was not yet obvious which children could work well together, which children were isolates or rejectees and needed support and which children would make good group leaders.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: The teacher administered sociometric instruments in order to diagnose the social make-up of the class.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher conceived the idea of using sociometric measurements as a basis for grouping during a faculty meeting presided over by the school's change-agent team. A University of Michigan consultant also provided a Tool Kit which contained examples of sociometric questions.

What Happened: The teacher organized sociometric groups combining those children who could work well together with a few isolates or rejectees. The leaders who had been pinpointed by analyzing the class responses were appointed chairmen of the group. The social studies unit was presented. Each group discussed the assignment, decided how best to organize the study, designated jobs to each member of the group, did its work and presented its findings to the class.

Evaluation: All the groups, with the exception of two isolates who were never really accepted by the children, worked very well. They enjoyed sharing the responsibility of planning and executing their studies in small groups. The quality of the work was good. This was a good, practical and useful way of providing leadership opportunities for many able children.

    a. Special Skill Points: The teacher needs skill in social management in order to organize the groups carefully so that they are good work groups as well as being socially compatible.

    b. Special Operating Problems: This technique did not solve the problem of the rejected child in this class. It may be that the problem was too severe to be handled without outside help.

Practice #5:   <u>Using Grouping to Bring About Better Learning Conditions</u>

<u>in the Classroom</u>   (elementary)

> **Problems as Perceived by Teacher**:   The teacher was looking for
> ways of developing good classroom conditions.   She wanted to
> encourage children to help plan and develop good attitudes and
> to assume more responsibility for class life.
>
> **Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem**:   The teacher adminis-
> tered sociometric instruments to help determine which children
> were the isolates, rejectees, stars and clusters in the room.
> She used other questionnaires to obtain information on children's
> attitudes towards the class as a whole, towards different
> aspects of school work and towards the other children in the
> class.   She also used evaluation sheets to determine the suc-
> cess or lack of success of the different projects tried.
>
> **Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem**:   The teacher
> gathered information and suggestions made by the University
> of Michigan consultants during a school faculty meeting, re-
> ferred to the Tool Kit, the Innovations Booklet and other
> reading materials provided by the consultants and used some
> ideas discussed during a reading conference.   After evalu-
> ating the needs of her class, she decided to try two types
> of grouping, one based on academic needs, one based on social
> needs.
>
> **What Happened**:   (1) The teacher divided the children into
> ability groups according to their achievement in reading and
> arithmetic.   During lessons in these areas they left their
> usual seats, formed groups and worked together.   This allowed
> the various groups to work and advance at rates appropriate
> to their needs and readiness.   (2) The teacher analyzed the
> sociometric structure of the class and used the information
> obtained to seat the children in friendship groups.   Every
> child was grouped with at least one of his first choices,
> desks were arranged in clusters of four, and children sat in
> their choice groups most of the day (not during reading or
> arithmetic lessons).   If a child spent too much time chatting
> with his friend at the expense of his work, his seat was changed
> by the teacher.
>
> **Evaluation**:   The teacher felt the children were happier, more
> relaxed and more cooperative when they were given an oppor-
> tunity to participate in planning.   The seating by friendship
> groups was beneficial to the shy child but did not always work
> well with the more talkative, aggressive child.   The teacher
> began to feel more at ease when sharing responsibility with
> the children and felt that her more flexible approach was an
> improvement over former methods.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: In setting up the friendship groups, the teacher must be very sensitive to the needs of the isolate, the child who is chosen by no one. He must be placed in a group where the children are most likely to be accepting and make him feel comfortable.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: The only problem the teacher ran into was that of the talkative child who misused the privilege of sitting near his friends.

II. Participation and Involvement in Curriculum Planning, Execution, and Evaluation to Enhance Academic Achievement.

Practice #6:   Giving Pupils an Opportunity to Teach Their·Own Lesson Plans

(secondary)

Problems As Perceived by Teacher: The teacher's consideration of some of the data collected in the project regarding attraction to learning tasks led her to be concerned about involving pupils more actively in the planning and carrying out of lesson plans.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: No special tools were used.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The teacher incorporated three approaches to the problem into a single plan. These were: (1) pupil planning, (2) grouping on the basis of who they thought they could work best with, and (3) pupil teaching. Group discussions concerning this proposed innovation were employed in the ·beginning.   The teacher followed up the trial by holding a discussion concerning the strong and weak points of such a program, and then had the pupils complete an evaluation sheet.

What Happened: The teacher took the following steps: (1) He· discussed the possibility of forming study groups with the pupils; (2) .He outlined with them the responsibilities of what a leader would have to do; (3) He invited interested pupils to submit lesson plans to cover a two week period of work.   The pupils understood that their teacher would choose the best four or five plans for sub-group work. (4) When the plans were received he drew up a master plan which included ideas he endorsed.   Then, this plan was mimeographed and distributed.   The group leaders were able to pick out some of these ideas to use with their groups. (5) He used two techniques as the basis for grouping.   In the first of these he assigned pupils to groups; while, in the second, the pupils chose the groups in which they wanted to work.

Evaluation: When the teacher selected the groups, classroom activity was more successful than when the pupils were given the responsiblity for choosing their leaders.   According to the teacher the latter plan did not work out as well because the elected leaders lacked skills in gaining the support of the other pupils.

a.   Special Skill Points: The teacher must be able to go slowly enough in the early stages so that all youngsters get a feel for what is generally expected.   Teacher skills in accepting even minor pupil contributions are needed.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: This teacher felt it important to pick the groups herself, at least the first time. In this way she could control the distribution of skilled and unskilled pupils in the groups.

Adaptation of Practice #6: <u>Giving Pupils an Opportunity to Teach Their</u>

<u>Own Lesson Plans</u>. (elementary)

<u>Problems as Perceived by Teacher</u>: The teacher has a combined fifth and sixth grade class. For some lessons she finds it most desirable to take the fifth graders out to an adjoining room and teach them separately. The problem arose as to how best to provide educational stimulation and learning for the sixth graders, while they were not being supervised by the teacher.

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem</u>: It was felt that the use of diagnostic tools was not relevant to this problem.

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem</u>: The teacher met with a project consultant who suggested she try training and using pupil-teachers for the sixth graders. The teacher further referred to the Innovations Booklet (an earlier edition of this pamphlet) to see how other teachers with related problems attempted to solve them.

<u>What Happened</u>: The teacher presented the idea of pupil lesson planning and teaching to the sixth graders. They were enthusiastic about the opportunity to teach a lesson and all were eager to try. The teacher met individually with each successive pupil-teacher to go over the lesson plan, make suggestions and help locate material helpful for the lesson. Every pupil had a chance to teach one or more lessons.

<u>Evaluation</u>: The teacher felt this plan effectively met two criteria: (1) It relieved her of the need to be with the fifth and sixth graders at the same time. (2) It provided the sixth graders with an opportunity to participate more fully in the learning-teaching process.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher felt it was very important to go over each lesson plan with the designated pupil-teacher to make sure the plan was realistic and worthwhile.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: At first some pupils tended to act silly and not cooperate with the pupil-teacher. A teacher-led group discussion was held at which time it was pointed out that every child would be in the position of pupil-teacher and would, in turn, need the cooperation of all other pupils in the group in order to be successful in his teacher role. Subsequent lessons did improve and the teacher and the participating pupils felt the method was a success.

Practice #7:   Involving Pupils in Evaluating Classroom Activities (secondary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher's recognition of the problem concerning the academic motivation of low ability adolescents led him to consider new techniques for more actively involving his pupils.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: A discussion technique and short questionnaire were used for measuring student feelings about various classroom activities. Later discussion was used in conjunction with an evaluation sheet. A consultant was used to assist in the interpretations of the first evaluations and for a general assessment of the new procedure.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The teacher developed technique for (1) finding out how students feel about an activity, (2) finding out any suggestions they might have for improving the activity, and (3) demonstrating to them his willingness to take pupil suggestions seriously.

What Happened: The following steps were taken by the teacher: (1) He discussed the idea of evaluating classroom activities with the total class; (2) He explained the reasons for doing this; (3) He put sample evaluations on the board and answered questions about them; (4) He had the pupils fill out evaluation sheets and hand them in; (5) He read and summarized them by putting totals on the board the next day for discussion; and finally, (6) He made some curriculum changes as a result of these evaluations.

Evaluation: According to the teacher this technique made the pupils feel that their ideas were important and that sensible suggestions would be used. He felt that it also gave them a legitimate channel for complaints and it provided him with important information about the pupils' feelings. The pupils said they liked the procedure and felt quite serious about their participation. The teacher reported that sometimes he "didn't know what to do with the evaluations" after he had gotten them, however; and also that when he used oral rather than written evaluations the situation that emerged became quite threatening to him. Besides this, sometimes the class could not agree on an evaluation, thus creating an awkward situation to handle. The teacher was not sure about the continuation of these evaluations.

   a. Special Skill Points: Some skill is needed in the developing of evaluation procedures. The teacher must learn to work out procedures which are appropriate to his class and to the subject matter being taught.

   b. Special Operating Problems: Sometimes making evaluations, especially negative ones, is difficult for all members of the classroom. Perhaps considerable warm up by making evaluations of things other than classroom procedures is a good idea.

Practice #8: Pupil Participation in Planning and Executing a Research

Project (secondary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher was interested
in encouraging pupils to use their community as a learning re-
source through a systematic study of a specific problem.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: A sociometric ques-
tionnaire was administered to obtain pupil preferences for work
group composition. A special questionnaire format was devised
by a pupil committee. Occupational survey data were obtained by
each class member conducting four telephone interviews. The
teacher administered evaluative questionnaire items to the pupils
at different points in time. Pupils responded anonymously to
items such as:

> How do you feel things are going in your group?
> Do you feel you are learning from this experience?
> How could the work of your group be improved?
> What do you think your grade should be for this unit?

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: As an approach to
teaching a unit on "The Community", the class conducted a survey
of occupations represented in the local school area.

What Happened: The class was divided into committees on the basis
of sociometric preferences for work associates. The following
tasks were divided among these committees: construction question-
naires, developing research procedures, compiling and studying
data, writing up the study, and typing sections of the final re-
port.

Evaluation: The teacher felt that this experience provided con-
siderable opportunity for pupils to take initiative and respon-
sibility in planning and executing a learning experience. It
also provided an opportunity to use the local community as a
resource for learning. Furthermore, the teacher felt that pupils
worked harder, and were more highly motivated and involved than
when he assumed the responsibility for assignments and working
methods.

Pupil evaluations of the experience were very positive, indicat-
ing that they had learned a good deal from the experience. They
stated that they had learned a great deal about their own town
and at the same time had developed a greater appreciation for the
complex problems and decision-making involved in conducting such
a study. The pupils also commented that they felt working in
groups was helpful and that they particularly enjoyed the oppor-
tunity to assume responsibility for designing and conducting the
research project.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The skill to evaluate critically the work of the committees without discouraging them is most useful. Also some skill in using sociometric tests is valuable.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: No special problems arose with this practice.

Practice #9: <u>Student Participation in Planning Carries Over Into Student-</u>

<u>Faculty Relations</u> (secondary)

<u>Problems as Perceived by Teacher</u>: There was a general concern over the inability of students to retain materials they had studied in their various classes in school.

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem</u>: A personal inventory using questions such as: "Do you read a newspaper?" "What do you do when you are not in school?" was administered. The teacher used this information to determine the interests of the children in the class.

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem</u>: Experience, discussion with many professional people and extensive reading in the field were the main resources used. Discussion with the students about what would help them retain their studies brought about the method to be used. Pupil-teacher planning served as the foundation for a multitude of different approaches.

<u>What Happened</u>: As each unit of work was presented the class (a high school class in English) discussed the basic content and decided on an appropriate attack of the problem. A great variety of ways of getting information were devised. In studying Parliamentary Procedures, the class divided into committees, or "clubs", each with its own area of concern. One club had as its goal "To Better Student Relations with the Faculty". This club was so successful that instead of disbanding at the conclusion of the unit, the class asked to continue it for the remainder of. the semester. The club changed representatives periodically and every member of the class had a chance to serve as chairman and secretary. Every other week the club invited a teacher for lunch. They paid for the teacher's lunch and held an interview based on questions suggested during the original class unit of study. Two members of the club were responsible for writing up of the interview. This interview was consequently published in the school newspaper after having been approved for publication by the classroom teacher, the faculty member being interviewed and the principal of the school.

<u>Evaluation</u>: The general method of having pupils participate in planning a unit is a good way of stimulating motivation. The particular project involving publication of interviews with faculty members was very well received by students and teachers and presented excellent experience in elementary journalism for the participating students.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher must never become too self-satisfied with what was done previously. Hard work and a willingness to make changes are necessary to make this approach successful.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: None

Practice #10: <u>Pupil-Teacher Planning of Academic Work and Time Sequence</u>

(secondary)

<u>Problems as Perceived by Teacher</u>: The teacher found that some pupils did not have their work done on time, or had not done as good a job as they were capable of achieving, because other pa--pers and work related to other school subjects happened to fall due at the same time. The teacher felt this was an undesirable situation and warranted class attention. How could these students share in the responsibility for determining the sequence of school events so that social and physical activities and academic papers and tests were staggered to avoid conflict and encourage good work habits?

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem</u>: The teacher felt the use of diagnostic tools was not relevant to this problem.

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem</u>: The teacher listened to a tape prepared by the project consultants analyz-ing the social situation and interactions existant in the teach-er's previous class. Some of the suggestions made by the con-sultants seemed pertinent to the present situation. Based on these suggestions, the teacher decided to try to involve the students in the planning and pacing of the class academic work.

<u>What Happened</u>: At the outset of a new study unit the teacher and the class held a planning session. At this session the scope of the work was discussed and dates were established for tests and outside written papers. During the course of the semester as interest in participation increased, it was de-cided that the class would be allowed to write their own final examination. The class divided into three groups each responsible for one section of the test. One group planned the grammar section, one the literature, and one the vocabu-lary.

<u>Evaluation</u>: When questioned, the students indicated that they liked this opportunity to participate in classroom planning. The teacher felt the plan released the students from undue pressures. As a group they made decisions quickly and were able to live up to their commitments. The teacher also felt that writing the semester exam was a good learning experience for the class. The pupils reviewed much more than they normally would have, but in the final analysis, they found that they had been unrealistic as to how long the test would take.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher felt it took a great deal of restraint on her part to keep from "taking over" all class discussions and act as a guide and consultant rather than as the "all-knowing" central authority.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: At the beginning the students tended to hesitate about presenting any ideas they felt might possibly conflict with the teacher's known standards. They seemed to feel that compliance was what the teacher wanted no matter what she said. It took time and skill on the part of the teacher to win the students' confidence so that they felt safe in speaking freely and expressing points of view that might be new or different.

III. Providing Support for Interpersonal Acceptance, Expression of Feelings, and Problems of Relating With One Another to Enhance Mental Health and Motivation to Learn.

Practice #11: <u>Arranging Pupils Into Compatible "Work Groups, Helping Units"</u>

(elementary)

<u>Problems as Perceived by Teacher</u>: The teacher had the following objectives: (1) To get her pupils from the previous year and her ten new class members to form a more cohesive unit and to act more friendly toward one another; (2) To use the more capable pupils as helpers; (3) To make each pupil feel more responsible for the achievement of this group rather than just for his personal achievement; and (4) To develop some friendships for those pupils who score low on a "liking" sociometric instrument.

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem</u>: A sociometric instrument concerning nominations of desirable work-mates along with achievement test information were used in arranging the pupils into compatible work units.

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems</u>: The teacher developed a sociometric device patterned after the sociometric instrument used in this project. Her sociometric question concerned "With which four or five classmates would each pupil wish to work?" The teacher explained that the work groups developed would be together for two weeks at first. This two-week interval was to be evaluated and the pupils given an opportunity to change so they would not "feel so doomed". The work groups were arranged from sociometric and ability data.

<u>What Happened</u>: After the two-week try out period, the work groups were changed slightly on the basis of pupil requests as well as new sociometric data. The pupils felt, by and large, that they were being helped and learning more in this working arrangement. They progressed both academically and socially according to the teacher.

<u>Evaluation</u>: The teacher reported that her four objectives were accomplished. She especially emphasized that these "work group helping units" served successfully as mechanisms for creating needed friendships for some rejected pupils. Her future plans call for the continuation of this procedure.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: Very little new skill is needed for this practice. Some skill in presenting and scoring a sociometric test would be useful.

b. Special Operating Problems: The teacher must remain
flexible and change composition of groups according to the
incompatibilities that might arise at any time.

Practice #12:   Use of a "Question Box" Enabling Pupils to Submit Questions

Anonymously   (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by the Teacher: The teacher felt her pupils
needed a way of posing questions which were of genuine concern to
them but often were not asked because of self-consciousness or ap-
prehension about the reaction of the teacher or other pupils.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: None

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: A "Question Box"
into which pupils could deposit their questions anonymously was
placed in the room. A period was set aside once a week to consider
the questions submitted.

What Happened: Only a few questions were submitted the first week
(five or six) but this number increased from week to week. The
concerns reflected in the questions varied from very personal mat-
ters to issues of general concern. During a designated period
each week the questions were presented to the class for discussion.
Pupils attempted to provide answers and suggestions while the
teacher provided a summary of the discussion and added any addi-
tional suggestions which occurred to her.

Evaluation: The pupils were very enthusiastic about the procedure
and showed keen disappointment when the discussion period occasion-
ally had to be postponed from the usual time. The teacher felt
her pupils developed a standard of attempting to provide sincere
and helpful suggestions. The discussion procedure encouraged
those who tended to be somewhat shy and withdrawn to participate.

a. Special Skill Points: None

b. Special Operating Problems: None

Adaptation of Practice #12:   Use of a Question Box for Anonymous Questions

for Class Consideration (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher felt there was
group rejection of individual children and wanted to improve the
classroom atmosphere so that all would be included.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems: The teacher used the
sociometric scales and questionnaires outlined in the Diagnostic
Tool Kit prepared by the Project staff to verify and give more
accuracy to her personal observations.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: After.conferring with a Project consultant and referring to the Innovations Booklet, the teacher decided to try the Question Box technique as one of several approaches to the problem.

What Happened: A class Question Box was made available at all times so that children could submit unsigned questions for class consideration. These questions might pertain to class, school, personal problems, family problems, or any facet of life the child thought was important and warranted discussion in class. Questions were read and discussed once a week making for a sharing time of common interests and concerns. Some of these discussions led quite naturally into role playing the situation to help children see and understand the problems of some of their classmates.

Evaluation: Both the teacher and the pupils felt the Question Box technique was very helpful. Progress towards the goal of having the class more accepting of all children was made as the children began to feel free to discuss many problems and to suggest satisfactory possible solutions.

a. Special Skill Points: It was necessary to keep the discussions general so that individual children would not feel exposed and yet to handle the problem in a concrete fashion so that all children would understand the underlying issues.

b. Special Operating Problems: This group responded in a positive fashion to this technique right from the beginning and had no particular operating problems.

Practice #13: Development and Use of Pupil Questionnaires and Sociometric

Tests (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: This teacher was interested in developing a more cohesive classroom group. She wished to encourage more leadership, responsibility and personal adjustment among the children.. A number of types of children in the class were seen to be in need of special help--the child with angry feelings, the aggressive bully, the timid withdrawing child.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems: Three instruments were devised for getting information about pupils' background and the social structure of the classroom.
1. getting acquainted with you
2. your friends
3. my classmates
The Project consultant advised in the development of the instruments, observed in the classroom, and assisted the teacher in exploring ways of making wise use of the information.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: As an approach
to dealing with these problems the teacher decided to devise
ways of coming to a better understanding of each child in the
class. Information about interpersonal feelings, family back-
grounds of pupils, and the personal resources and difficulties
of each pupil would be useful in making decisions about the
kind of help and support each class member might need.

What Happened: The teacher devised three instruments for gaining
information and summarized the information obtained in a card
file. These data were studied by the teacher. In some cases an
analysis of the "forces" impinging on a child was made for indi-
vidual pupils. Then as problems involving a particular child arose,
the teacher talked to the child in individual conference. Some
problems concerning the group were approached through class dis-
cussion, with emphasis on developing in pupils a sensitivity toward
the needs of others, and on building of wholesome group standards.

Evaluation: The teacher feels these new data about her pupils are
most helpful especially in building a better relationship between
the pupils and herself. Pupils became more willing to help each
other; more aware of the special resources and strengths that each
had. This teacher plans to continue by improving the sociometric
instruments.

    a. Special Skills Points: Considerable skill is required
for developing and scoring questionnaires and sociometric tests.

    b. Special Operating Problems: There appeared to be no
special operating problems.

Adaptation of Practice #13: Pupil Participation in the Development of

Questionnaires and Sociometric Tests (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by teacher: The teacher felt the pupils
needed to be encouraged to develop more self-discipline. She also
felt they should have more responsibility for sharing in making
the rules of the classroom. Before starting on a program of
sharing responsibility, the teacher wanted an accurate picture
of the class structure and attitudes.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: The teacher used soc-
iometric instruments and other pupil questionnaires to obtain
her first reading of the class social structure and attitudes.
Later the class built their own.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher first
became interested in objective analysis of the classroom social
structure during a meeting of the faculty presided over by the
school change-agent team. She obtained her first set of instru-
ments from one of her colleagues on this team.

What Happened: The teacher administered the first set of instru-
ments, analyzed the findings and presented them to the class for
discussion. The class and teacher decided that some children need-
ed to work on some problems and discussed ways of helping them
solve these problems. It was also thought that the class really
needed to have more information of a slightly different nature in
order to understand why some people behaved the way they did. As
a result of this discussion the class, with the aid of the teacher,
devised a new set of questionnaires to meet their needs. These
new questionnaires included such questions as how the children
felt about the teacher and how they thought she felt about them
and some of the things they did.

Evaluation: The teacher and the children got to know and under-
stand each other much better. The children felt free to take a
chance doing new or different things. With a keener insight into
the make-up of the group the teacher was able to use this as a
jumping-off place to give the class more responsibility for esta-
blishing and maintaining class management and for planning and
executing academic units in small groups.

     a. Special Skill Points: It is necessary to develop a feel-
ing of mutual trust and sympathy before the children will feel free
to answer personal questions, especially how they feel about the
teacher or about the various things done in the room.

     b. Special Operating Problems: There were no real problems
in interesting the children in finding out more about themselves
or each other.

Practice #14: Social Attitude and Behavior Training to Improve Acceptance

of Rejected Pupils (elementary)

          Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher noticed that the
          data from her classroom indicated that the same pupils continued,
          from the beginning to end of a school year, and from year to year,
          to be rejected or isolated by their classmates.

          Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: A special sociometric
          questionnaire, a list of classroom problems, some pupil reaction
          sheets on the training sessions; and a special consultant used

to train teachers in use of the "auxiliary chair technique"[1]
were used.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The teacher
decided to develop techniques for giving special training, in
a group situation, to the socially handicapped children; while
also giving special responsibility training to the sociometric
leaders of the classroom.

What Happened: The following steps were taken: (1) A socio-
metric tool was developed for quick diagnosis of rejected or
isolated children; (2) A special teaching procedure, "the aux-
iliary chair technique," (special reprint available) was devel-
oped to train rejected children in social attitudes and behav-
ioral skills needed to gain more acceptance by their peers;
(3) Special training sessions for high influence children were
used to teach them to initiate efforts at understanding, in-
clusion, and acceptance of socially handicapped classmates;
(4) Also special procedures were developed for weekly 40-min-
ute total class sessions on human relations problems in the
classroom.

Evaluation: Children as young as second graders can partici-
pate in and profit from training in social relations and social
values. Pupil leaders are ready and able to take more responsi-
bility for helping the socially handicapped members of the class.
This work also indicated that teachers are able to use a labora-
tory method for teaching social standards and social behavior
to the total classroom group.

a. **Special Skill Points**: Skills in working out the
auxiliary chair technique as well as in working with the highly
influential pupils are needed.

b. **Special Operating Problems**: None occurred during this
new procedure.

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[1]For a description of this technique see _Role Playing in
the Classroom_, Document No. 15, Inter-Center Program on Children,
Youth, and Family Life, Institute for Social Research, The
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Adaptation of Practice #14: .Social Attitude and Behavior Training to

Encourage Participation and Sharing by All (elementary)

Problem as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher wanted to bring the withdrawn children into the group, to give an opportunity for all children to express opinions, guide the group and the teacher, and to make behavior problems more meaningful to all.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: The teacher used sociometric instruments and attitude questionnaires to gauge the social climate of the class before trying any social experimentation.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher attended study sessions sponsored by the University of Michigan research team. Ways of analyzing the social atmosphere of a class and of working on needed change were discussed at these meetings and during school faculty meetings. A health book used by the class contained a section on mental health that was very appropriate to the problems and needs of this particular age group and that lent itself readily to role playing situations.

What Happened: The children in the class took turns "acting out" or role playing the characters and situations presented in the health book. After each presentation, they discussed the actions and feelings of the different members of the cast and discussed different ways of handling the situation that might prove more satisfactory. They then tried it again. The class also developed the use of a Suggestion Box so that some of the more timid children might have an opportunity to have some of their ideas discussed and acted upon. Also, a Steering Committee to help set up and maintain class standards was established. In addition to its management function, it acted as liason between the class and the teacher.

Evaluation: The use of role playing was a very effective way of dealing with behavior problems in the class. It got the point across better than lecturing would have and it was enjoyable for teacher and class. The use of the Suggestion Box did not serve its purpose and was consequently abandoned. Some very good ideas, plans and activities resulted from the experiment with the Steering Committee.

a. Special Skill Points: The teacher felt it was important to keep the role playing situations spontaneous and yet to develop a thorough and deep understanding of feelings and ideas.

b. Special Operating Problems: The only serious problem arose over the use, or misuse of the Suggestion Box. Children tended to act silly about it and put in outlandish and impractical suggestions.

Practice #15:   Development of a Technique to Encourage Peer Acquaintance

and Acceptance of Newcomers   (elementary)

Problem as Perceived by Teacher: The school is located in a
highly transcient neighborhood and at the beginning of each
school year there are many children who are new and do not
know the others. The children tend to be suspicious and re-
jecting of newcomers causing fragmentation and ill feeling in
the class.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: In order to understand
the social set-up in the room, the teacher used sociometric
devices outlined in the Tool Kit provided by the Project staff.
This helped her identify the rejectee, the isolate, the star,
the clique, etc.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher
conferred with a staff consultant who suggested several ways
of approaching the problem. One way the teacher decided would
be appropriate for her class needs was the "Getting to Know
You" technique.

What Happened: The teacher assigned a biography as a class
lesson. Each child interviewed one of his classmates in order
to gather pertinent material for use in a written biography.
When a biography for each pupil in the room was completed, the
class played the game "I've Got a Secret". During this game
the children tried to identify the person described in the
biography and , in the process, learned something about each
child's background, likes and dislikes, interests, hobbies,
strengths and weaknesses. Every child had the opportunity of
having the entire group's interest and attention focused on
his life before his identity was made known.

Evaluation: This technique succeeded in the goal of having
children become well acquainted and helped, to some degree,
towards the inclusion of rejected pupils.

    a. Special Skill Points: This process serves as a wedge
to open doors to the rejected child. However, the teacher
must give further support and encouragement to make sure a
healthy situation continues to exist.

    b. Special Operating Problems: Since some of the pupils
may be suspicious of each other and of the teacher at the be-
ginning of the year, the teacher will have to overcome this ob-
stacle by engendering an atmosphere of trust, good will and fun
in relationship to this assignment. Many children will need
some encouragement in order to feel free to enumerate some of
their own strengths and weaknesses.

Practice #16: Developing attitudes of Acceptance and Helping Towards

Peers and Adults (elementary)

Problem as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher felt that a vital part of classroom teaching involves teaching children to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to understand the position of other people. She wanted to engender a feeling of human relations and respect for all human beings.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: None used.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher took courses in guidance at the university and read many books and pamphlets on human relations activities. In trying to build understanding of other youngsters, the pupils in the class "adopted" a foreign child. In trying to build acceptance and sympathy for needy adults, the class "adopted" an elderly person in a local home for the aged.

What Happened: Some of the children corresponded with children in other countries and shared their letters with the whole class. They also exchanged photographs and sent some simple, inexpensive gifts.

The class as a whole "adopted" an old man to be class grandfather. This was a real treat to the children who had no real grandfather of their own and gave them a certain amount of pride in the situation. They brought birthday cards and presents on his birthday and maintained a warm relationship through visits to their "adoptee". The children played checkers, chess, cards or other games during these visits. At Christmas time there was another flurry of cards and presents and visits to the home. One year, when their "adopted" friend died, the children sent a plant to the funeral parlor and many of them attended the funeral. They also made arrangements with the funeral parlor to have the flowers sent to the home after the service so that the other old people could enjoy it.

Evaluation: The teacher felt that most children responded warmly to this approach and learned that "giving" of themselves brought personal pleasures. They also learned that children can be effective benefactors of adults as well as the other way round.

a. Special Skill Points: The teacher felt that these activities are important mostly as they fit into the general scheme of human relations sensitivity in the class. An atmosphere of accepting and understanding is something the teacher must believe in and work at all the time.

b. Special Operating Problems: Things seemed to go along smoothly with no special problems arising.

Practice #17:   <u>Developing the Use of a Human Relations Approach to General School Life</u>   (elementary)

<u>Problem as Perceived by Teacher</u>: The teacher felt that so long as the children spend a large part of every day in a large group, the class, it was necessary to develop a feeling of mutual trust and understanding. The problem was to find techniques suitable to a group of this size and children of this age.

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem</u>: No special diagnostic tools were used for the class as a whole.

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem</u>: The teacher referred to materials used while taking a guidance course at the university, to recent publications concerning human relations in the classroom and to various scholarly works in the area. Some of the methods selected by the teacher as particularly suitable to this age group included devoting class time in the early fall in getting to know each other, using class leaders as partners in helping to solve class problems, talking about class problems as a group, referring certain children to the school psychologist for assistance.

<u>What Happened</u>: In the early fall the teacher aimed for the feeling of one large family group. The stress was on social understanding with academics playing a lighter role. The teacher used little stories relating to human relations and the children were given the opportunity to react by identification with the various characters. The children developed a feeling of friendliness and a sense of experimentation. When a child had a problem that could be treated in a semi-public fashion, it was presented as a class discussion (with the child in question present or not according to the demands of the situation). All children were encouraged to express feelings and reasons for these feelings and were also asked to make suggestions to improve the situation. Sometimes the teacher would have a meeting with one or two of the class leaders and ask them to help her solve a social problem. These influential children would then receive the backing of their classmates in giving support where it was most needed. Upon the teacher's recommendation five children were working with the school psychologist on a group therapy basis. Because of the social orientation of the class, these five pupils began to be regarded as privileged and were admired by their peers.

<u>Evaluation</u>: The teacher felt that this approach relieved tension in the pupils and encouraged them to "take a chance" in the academic as well as the social areas. They learned to feel that their problems and mistakes were normal, shared by most children their age.

  a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher felt it important to resist the pressures for early academic stress in the fall. The time and effort spent on the social areas was well repaid by the emergence of an attitude of inquiry and speculation in the academic fields.

  b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: The teacher felt that this approach did not reach all the children. The problem of conflict with the environment was not solved completely.

Practice #18: <u>Using Questionnaires to Gain Insight and Leverage on</u>

<u>Group and Individual Problems</u>. (elementary)

  <u>Problem as Perceived by Teacher</u>: There were two problems that were somewhat related and warranted the teacher's attention. One was concerned with developing a sense of responsibility on the part of the children for the general social tone of the class. The second pertained to building an awareness on the part of the individual child of his own potential to change in a given, desired direction.

  <u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem</u>: The children were instructed at different times during the early part of the year to write three short papers. One was "Signs of a Good Day - Signs of a Bad Day"; the second was "How Would You Make the Room Better?"; and the third "How Would You Change Yourself if You Could?"

  <u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem</u>: The use of the above method of obtaining attitudes towards school and self was decided upon after having participated in school and inter-school faculty meetings in conjunction with visiting consultants from the University. These findings were then used by the teacher (1) on a group level for improving general behavior (2) on an individual level for building self-esteem.

  <u>What Happened</u>: (1) After having read and analyzed the first two papers, the teacher summed up the findings, presented them to the class for general discussion. The class agreed on the best ways of making the room better and on the most important signs of a good or bad day. Thereafter, the teacher would occasionally hold a short discussion at the end of the day which would point up whether this particular day had been mostly good or bad. The class was divided into rows and the children would remind other members of their row how to behave so that they would have a good day. (2) The information derived from the third paper relating to a child's desire for personal change was used for personal conferences with the particular child. The teacher would point out areas in which the child was capable of helping himself and areas in which the teacher could be of assistance. When it was felt the cooperation of the parents was required in order to reach certain goals, they too were invited to the conferences.

Evaluation: The method by which the pupils learned to assume some responsibility for the general tone of the class was quite successful. The teacher found she did not have to remind the children how to behave so often. The individual meeting with the children, with the teacher in the role of helper towards a child's stated goal, brought about an easier relationship between teacher and pupil and more willingness to work towards this goal.

    a. Special Skill Points: During the individual consultations, the teacher must behave in a non-judgmental role. The main aim is to help the child gain insight and to encourage his change efforts.

    b. Special Operating Problem: The first year the teacher tried the technique of having the children identify signs of good and bad days, the children were required to write two separate themes one day after the other. They found this boring and annoying. It is much better to combine both elements into one paper.

Practice #19: The Use of Small Academic Groupings to Lend Support for

Social-Emotional Needs (elementary)

Problem as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher felt that one girl was the undisputed, unchallenged leader in the class. She did not think it desirable to continue allowing the pupils to feel that one child was much better than anyone else in the room. She wanted to develop an understanding that there were many qualified children who could take the leadership role in the class.

Diagnostic Tools Used To Assess Problem: The teacher used sociometric measures to analyze the social compostion of the class.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher used information and suggestions from a class in guidance at the university to help study the results of the questionnaires. She found the one girl to be the unquestioned star of the room and also identified several isolates. She decided to form work groups to stimulate social interaction and give leadership opportunities.

What Happened: The teacher formed small work groups based on the findings of the sociometrics. The isolates were placed in those groups where their chance of ultimate acceptance was good since they had not been rejected by these children. A leader, or chairman, was chosen for each group. The teacher introduced the unit of study and then the groups worked on their own. New groups were formed and new chairmen chosen for each different social studies unit. At the end of the year the teacher administered another sociometric instrument to measure any change that had taken place in social relationships.

Evaluation:. The undertaking was partially successful. The pupils seemed to accept the different group leaders and to recognize their good qualities. Learning in the academic area was good. The sociogram at the end of the year indicated an improvement in the situation of the former isolates but the class affection and esteem still centered on the one star.

a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher tried to find ways of "building up" other children in the class without in any way "tearing down" the class star. This was a very difficult problem to solve since the children had built up a pattern of response over a period of years.

b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: It was almost impossible for the groups to work independent of the teacher because of a dearth of supplementary materials, texts and supplies. For truly independent work there must be resources available for the children in the school. A second problem was presented by the children with severe emotional disturbances who could not work cooperatively with their groups and were not accepted as leaders even when they had the position of chairman.

IV.   Participation and Involvement in Group Self Control to Enhance Mental
      Health and Motivation to Learn.

Practice #20:   Involving Pupils in Small Group Activity (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher developed an
increased awareness concerning the importance of developing
cooperative work skills for optimal learning and personal develop-
ment.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: None.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher
requested and received consultation regarding various criteria
of grouping pupils.   The teacher decided to assign greater
responsibility to the pupils for planning and executing class-
room learning activities.

What Happened: The following steps were taken: (1) The pupils
were assigned to groups by the teacher; (2) They were given
a task to accomplish; (3) They were asked, then, to make a re-
port to the total class; and (4) They finally conducted an
evaluation of the entire group activity.   This type of class-
room procedure led to frequent changes in the composition of
work groups.

Evaluation: This classroom technique was successful most of
the time, but sometimes the pupils did not attend to the
group task at hand.   At times, some pupils became upset with
the procedure and were unable to get along with their peers.
The teacher attributed some of the difficulty to the fact that
sometimes the task was quite vague and the pupils were not sure
what to do.   Toward the end of the year, however, the pupils
were able to work with one another successfully and the teacher
felt that each pupil learned something about cooperative work
skills.

   a.   Special Skill Points: Some knowledge about grouping
pupils and the outcomes of such grouping is needed.

   b.   Special Operating Problems: Task ambiguity can ruin
the project.   Teachers should be sensitive to ways of clearing
up what is vague about the practice in the pupils' minds.

Practice #21: <u>Pupil Participation in Classroom Management</u>.

<u>Problems as Perceived by Teacher</u>: Data collected as part of a university research project showed anti-learning, anti-school attitudes on the part of several high status pupils. These same pupils also showed a great deal of negative feeling toward a few other pupils.

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Work on Problem</u>: Sociometric tests, and questionnaires to measure classroom standards and pupil attitudes toward these standards were administered by the university research team.

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem</u>: In order to work out a solution to this problem, the teacher decided to develop a pupil steering committee which would give leadership in the development of group standards about classroom behavior and evaluate the classroom operation every day.

<u>What Happened</u>: The following steps were taken: (1) Sociometric instruments developed for this project were administered; (2) A five-pupil steering committee of highly popular and influential boys and girls was appointed; (3) Training sessions in leadership role were held each week at lunch; (4) A tentative set of rules for classroom behavior and procedures were developed, presented, and discussed; (5) One member of the steering committee served as an observer-evaluator each day; (6) A new steering committee was appointed by the old committee at the end of three weeks; (7) Friday afternoon, end of day, review of week and revision of rules were led by the steering committee; (8) All the pupils in the class served on the steering committee before "starting over again."

<u>Evaluation</u>: A special questionnaire requesting the pupils to evaluate the steering committee operation was developed. The pupils evaluated the steering committee using such criteria as their own adjustments to school and helpfulness to class in general. The teacher also invited the consultant to observe a class session led by the steering committee.

Seventeen of the twenty-one pupils questioned felt that the steering committee was a significant help. Some of the pupils who tended to be overly strict in the formulation of rules needed some help toward more flexibility and understanding. Very significant gains were made in the level of responsibility taken by the pupils for classroom operation. There was also a drop in the sociometric status of anti-school, anti-teacher pupils.

    a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher should know how to use sociometric devices. She should be patient and make sure pupils go through all phases of developing the steering committee before evaluating it.

    b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: Make sure all pupils get a chance to serve once before letting anyone else serve a second time.

Adaptation of Practice #21:   Establishment of Pupil Committees to Assist

in Classroom Management (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The pupils were passive and
needed to be involved to a greater extent. The teacher wanted
to encourage the children to set up an acceptable code of behavior
and to help enforce this code.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: The teacher did not
use any diagnostic instruments in connection with this under-
taking.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher was
aware of a similar attempt at sharing responsibility made by
one of the teachers in the University of Michigan workshop.
Frequent interchange among the University consultants and inter-
ested teachers plus literature prepared by the consultants gave
the teacher information and courage to proceed on a new under-
taking. At the beginning of the year she presented the idea of
student participation in classroom management to the group and
found the children eager to try.

What Happened: Early in the year the class voted for a Rules
Committee. This committee set up a Bill of Rights for all pupils
and presented it to the class for discussion and approval. The
class voted to accept the code. An example of some of the rights
would include: (1) People have a right to hear. (2) Don't inter-
rupt speaker - wait your turn. (3) Behavior outside reflects
upon the room. (4) Responsibility comes with office - lack of
regard for school rules may result in removal from office. The
class wanted to have a different committee enforce the rules.
They were wary of giving too much authority to any one group.
They voted for a Judiciary Committee consisting of two boys and
two girls. At first these pupils were in office for two weeks,
but they found this unsatisfactory because it did not allow enough
time to learn the responsibilities involved and do a fair and
honest job. The class then voted to extend the term of office to
four weeks. · The committee put a schedule of the day's activities
on the board including the name of the committee member who would
be responsible for supervision of behavior during each period.
A system of "citizen's arrest" was also started but it was seldom
used. Under this system any child could write a slip saying
someone was bothering him or misbehaving, have it witnessed by
another citizen and submit it to the committee for action. The
Judiciary Committee and the class officers also met as a group
to arrange the class seating plans and rearrange them as necessary.

Evaluation: The teacher feels this is a workable, valid and
valuable way of sharing responsibility with pupils.

     a.   Special Skill Points: It is necessary to have a long-
term view of the inherent values and to accept the arguing and
disruptions that occur, especially at the beginning of the plan.

b. Special Operating Problems: This group was very wary
about giving authority to class peers. They felt everybody
should have an office and that no one should hold office twice
before all had had a chance. Also, those children who are
classroom "problems" will continue to need the teacher's attention
and cannot be expected to cooperate fully with peer committees
right away.

Adaptation of Practice #21: Use of Class Steering Committee to Assist in

Classroom Management (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The pupils in this class had
been trained by a previous teacher to assume responsibility for
behavior in the class. They were not happy to return to a situ-
ation where the teacher made all the decisions. The teacher
felt some sharing was necessary, advisable and to the potential
benefit of all.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: Though the teacher
did not use diagnostic tools to work directly on this problem,
she did administer sociometric instruments to help understand
the social structure of the group.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher
referred to discussions at faculty meetings led by the school's
change-agent team, conferred with the group's previous teacher
and had meetings and discussions with the children in the class.
It was decided to continue the use of the Steering Committee
with minor changes.

What Happened: A new Steering Committee was elected. One of
the members obtained a copy of the class rules and standards
built and maintained the previous year. Using this as a base,
the committee gradually revised and upgraded the code with an
eye towards the positive and a minimizing of the negative. The
teacher met with the existing committee at lunch one day a week.
These meetings were involved or concerned with establishing good
general attitudes and maintaining a pleasant room atmosphere.
The pupils helped in the enforcement as well as the establishment
of acceptable room standards.

Evaluation: The teacher felt this was a worthwhile undertaking
for the pupils. It developed more leadership opportunities and
status for the children. The luncheon meetings also made it
possible for the teacher to communicate to the highly accepted
peers who would then pass on these expectations to the others.

a. Special Skill Points: The teacher needs skill in direct-
ing the discussions at the luncheon meetings so that the group
does not get bogged down in trivia. It is important to learn to
guide and not to take over the meeting.

b. Special Operating Problems: The children had had exper-
ience in this type of activity and ran into no major roadblocks.

Practice #22:   Formation and Clarification of Peer Group Behavior Standards

(elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: Adult standards for behavior
are accepted overtly but not really internalized by the pupils.
Furthermore, these adult standards are not supported often by
pupils in their relations with each other.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems: A sociometric question-
naire to identify peer leaders for sub-group discussions was used.
The consultant was invited to observe the procedure for evaluation
and recommendation of possible improvements.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The teacher de-
cided to divide the class into small sub-groups for discussion
concerning some question of behavioral standards. These groups
were to be led by selected peer leaders.

What Happened: Illustrations of this process in action occurred
with topics of "What can we do to have fun without bothering
other people on Halloween night?"; and "What are things we can
do in the classroom when we have spare time?" The sub-groups
of five or six were led by pupils selected by the teacher from
the sociometric data. These "leaders" were oriented to their
jobs by a training session with the teacher. Each sub-group
reported its findings orally to the class, and the total group
identified the ideas they liked best.

Evaluation: "The children really enjoy having a part in making
their own rules.....less talking and more contentment. They take
more responsibility for controlling their own behavior, and for
helping the other fellow by reminding him."

a. Special Skill Points: It is important to choose topics
which will both interest the pupils and be appropriate for further-
ing group self-control in the classroom.

b. Special Operating Problems: None was reported.

Practice #23:   Forming a Classroom Student Council (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher felt that the pupils
lacked a feeling of being psychologically involved in the affairs
of the classroom. She wanted to give her pupils a feeling that
their ideas and wishes were considered important, that the nature
of the classroom situation depended on them to a large measure; and
that each pupil has a responsibility for making the classroom a happy
and a profitable place to work.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems: The teacher used no special devices in making this innovation.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The teacher decided to attempt to involve the pupils more in decision-making by developing a student government idea. She decided to make the agenda and to serve as chairman of the first meeting herself as a model. She, then, helped the elected president to get started.

What Happened: Over the course of the year, all of the pupils had a chance to be a council member. The council made recommendations to the class which were voted on and either accepted or rejected. The list of these decisions was posted in the room. The council also decided on and carried out punishments for infractions of the rules. These punishment-discussions were voted on by the entire classroom group. Sometimes these were quite extreme but the teacher made it clear that she wouldn't be responsible for carrying them out. She allowed almost all of the decisions made by the group to be carried out right down to one rather unsatisfactory one regarding dunce hats for fighters. Over time the council became more careful in its recommendations and punishments after some of these were rejected by the class.

Evaluation: The teacher commented that the student council usually worked quite well. She felt that the pupils gained experience and ability in leadership, that group standards developed which supported adherence to the classroom rules, and that this whole process promoted individual responsibility and self-discipline. The teacher's final observations were that the pupils enjoyed it and that she plans to continue it with another group.

a. Special Skill Points: The most important skills were patience and directing discussions. Teachers should work especially on the latter, learning to be a facilitator, not a dominator.

b. Special Operating Problems: None except for the extreme punishments for minor infractions. This teacher was able to solve the problem of extreme punishment by letting the pupils work it out themselves. However, this may not always be possible.

V.   Facilitating Academic Learning By Using Special Teaching Designs.

Practice #24:   Having Children Act Out Situations in Order to Help Them

Understand Life in Colonial America (elementary)

> Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher was searching for
> ways of having children become truly aware of how different life
> was in three different sections of the country - a Southern planta-
> tion, the city of Boston, and the backwoods of the North - in pre-
> Revolutionary times.
>
> Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: Not relevant to this
> problem.
>
> Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The class was to
> present three plays, each depicting life in one of the three areas
> under study. Various social studies books were made available
> and the children referred to the chapters that were pertinent to
> their work. Some children read biographies or historical novels
> to give them a better feeling for the times and setting.
>
> What Happened: The teacher started a discussion on various parts
> of the country in which different children in the class had lived
> or visited. It was discovered that life in America today does
> not vary greatly from one area to another. By contrast, it was
> pointed out that early Americans living in different locations
> would have led lives vastly different from their countrymen living
> at the same time but in a different part of the country. It was
> decided that the class would present three plays to demonstrate
> these differences. The teacher used the class alphabetical list
> and divided the class into three even groups. By coincidence
> each group had approximately the same number of boys and girls
> and each had one or two bright children who could help with the
> reading and writing that would be involved. Each group chose a
> chairman to lead the discussion in an orderly fashion and a
> secretary to keep record of decisions made. A couple of children
> in each group volunteered to write the script for the group based
> on ideas presented by group members. When the scripts were pre-
> sented, the group chose the one they thought was best. The plays
> were dittoed off by the teacher and each child was given a copy
> and assigned a part in the play by his group. The teacher did
> not take part in any of the group planning.
>
> Each group worked on its own play and practiced in different parts
> of the room. When they felt competent enough, each group presented
> its play to the other members of the class. This practice period
> took four days. The plays were to be presented in the auditorium
> to the other classes, but unfortunately, the auditorium was being
> painted and no other large area was available for this purpose.
> However, the class had two foreign visitors from the University
> of Michigan Language Institute and presented their productions to
> these guests.

A brief description of the three plays will indicate the differ-
ences in Colonial American life that these children felt import-
ant enough to include in their work. The plantation play opened
with the daughter and maid chatting and acting busy. The butler
comes in and asks if the girl would like to speak to Mother before
breakfast. The girl declines. At breakfast, Mother, Father,
daughter and son talk about what they plan to do during the day.
Father was planning to spend a few hours in the library reading.
Then he was going to examine the tobacco since the foreman had
asked him to look the crop over. Mother had just received a ship-
ment of clothes from England and was going to put everything away.
The son was going riding and the daughter had to take a test with
the tutor.

As the play continues, the girl finishes her test and her brother
comes in from his riding to take his reading lesson with the
tutor. The girl goes off to have a private music lesson with the
music master.

In real life, the case was made up of three Caucasians, three
Negroes and one Chinese child. None of the servants were portrayed
by the Negro children. (This last event was particularly noticed
and commented upon by the visitors.)

The Boston play was concerned with Boston as a fishing town. The
cast included a Mother, Father, three children, a chip's captain,
a cabin boy. At the opening of the play the Father tells his son
that he is to be apprenticed to the ship next week. The son is
very unhappy and does not want to leave home or school. His mother
explains that his sister too has had to leave school to stay home
and help Mother with the sewing and chores. At this time the boy
is eleven years old.

In the next scene the boy is on ship. He meets the captain. He
also meets the cabin boy who befriends him and tells him of the
excitement of whaling. At the end they get their whale.

The third play was concerned with the life of the backwoods family.
In the case there was Mother, Father, two girls, a boy, a neighbor
and his wife. The play opens in the field with the father and son
meeting their neighbor. The neighbor tells them about the terrible
Indian raid on the nearest village and informs them that he and
his wife have decided to give up the frontier life and go back to
a safer location.

At dinner the members of the family discuss the raid and talk of
the possibility of leaving their home. Father would like to stay
because they have a good farm and he would hate to start all over
again. The son is very upset because they had started a school in
the village where he had already learned to read but not to write.
Now that the village was destroyed, he had no chance to continue
to learn. At the end the family decides to stay.

Evaluation: The teacher thought the whole plan worked out beauti-
fully. The children worked together very well and they understood
more fully what life was like in the different surroundings.

    a. Special Skill Points: The teacher felt that she did not
manipulate this situation at all. It all just happened. She
simply set up the organizational pattern and met with each group
once to make sure the chairman and secretary understood their
responsibilities. The teacher had to interfere only once to remove
one child who was being disruptive.

    b. Special Operating Problems: The only roadblock was that
the plan to use the auditorium was frustrated. The children were
very disappointed about this.

Practice #25: The Use of Role Playing to Help Teach Better Understanding of

Human Behavior (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: The teacher felt that the pupils'
attitudes of their peers was highly critical and non-accepting of
individual differences. There was general grumbling, unsatis-
factory interpersonal relationships and poor group behavior. The
teacher wanted to help children see the behavior of others from
more than one viewpoint.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: The teacher felt the
problem was self-evident and did not use tools for diagnosis.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problem: A team of project
consultants had presented a demonstration session on role playing
to the school faculty. With this as a source of stimulation the
teacher read some further information on role playing ideas, tech-
niques and devices and decided to try using this technique as a
lever towards better understanding of interpersonal relationships
in the classroom.

What Happened: This group had had previous experience in dramatizing
stories in the classroom. Taking advantage of this background,
the teacher scheduled "dramatics" for the next day. The teacher
told the class that for this lesson they were to make up their own
play. A class discussion was started on what the play should be
about. Should it be about children, home, school? The class was
advised to choose a plot that would be familiar to all. Several
possible plots were listed on the board by the children. Then a
question arose. What makes a plot interesting? From the discus-
sion it was determined that conflict, different points of view and
disagreement might be suitable elements to be included. The
children refined their list to include these factors and ended this
part of the preparation with the following recommendations as possible
plots: (1) awkward playground situation, (2) disagreements between
brothers and sisters, (3) making a report to the class or, (4) acting
like a teacher taking charge of the class. They then decided to try
the playground situation first.

There next arose the question of characters for their play. Who would be in the play? What types of characters were needed? How would they act? They decided to have a braggart, a poor sport, a person who is incompetent at sports but tries, and a diplomat to smooth things over. Everybody wanted to be in the cast. There was absolutely no concern over which part they would play.

The first cast tried presenting the play and bedlam followed. The primary reaction to the conflict was physical - yelling and fighting. The audience did not like the play because the people did not "say" anything. They felt the participants had not presented the characters well enough. After this discussion, the same group tried it again and the second time it was satisfactory. At other times the same play was tried with other casts. There was no avoidance of any of the parts. Everyone in the class had a chance to take part in a presentation at least once. Each performance was a little different from any other. After each attempt, the class evaluated how well each part was portrayed. Would a poor sport react this way? How could the diplomat have been more effective? They were seeking and finding solutions by themselves. This activity took place over a week's time in blocks of twenty minutes.

The second theme chosen by the class for their role playing was that of making a report to the class on the problems of being a speaker in front of the group. The characters decided upon to illustrate this situation were a timid, shy person giving the report, a small group to play the role of the class, the "buttinsky" who fills in the word before the speaker can think of it, the "expert" who can always give the needed figures and always questions the reporter, the supporter who understands the speaker and tries to make him feel better, the disinterested playboy, who couldn't care less and causes distraction.

In the first try, the disinterested playboy produced a yo-yo and succeeded very well in actually distracting the class. The girl who played the shy speaker was very sensitive and good. The expert was actually a _very_ bright child and played the role to the hilt. The class observed the whole group, not special characters. Different casts played the roles at different times and discussion and evaluation followed every performance.

Evaluation: Several days after experimenting with the first role playing situation the class was challenged to a soft ball game by the other sixth grade. The girls played against girls, the boys against boys. The rules were very carefully observed. The class teams lost in both games by very narrow margins. As the girls came back to the room, the teacher overheard some of the very same comments that had been made by the actors during the role playing exercises. The girls recognized these attitudes too and commented: "What are you, the poor sport?" "Oh, you're just being the diplomat." Once these and a few other remarks had been made, everyone just settled down and recovered very quickly from feelings of defeat. The teacher overheard no direct evidence from the boys, but when they came in, they seemed to be in good control. There was very little evidence of bad feelings about the game.

The teacher was not able to observe any direct carryover from the second role playing experience because it was quite late in the year when this was started. However, she felt that all the children did become aware of the problems of the person in front of the room needing the cooperation of his classmates.

a. Special Skill Points: The teacher felt that the discussion period following each role playing attempt was instrumental in helping the children gain some insight into the feelings and possible reasons for behavior of different children. The teacher used the approach of asking, "Why do you think he felt this way?" or "How could the team captain have handled that situation so that his feelings were not hurt?" to encourage the children to seek satisfactory alternative behavior patterns.

b. Special Operating Problems: The problem of immaturity and inexperience on the part of the children can lead to "bedlam" as described by this reporting teacher or to chaos. A teacher must be prepared for some unsuccessful attempts by groups of children and be skilled and ready to guide the situation into educative channels.

Practice #26:   Trying to Develop Human Relations Skills in Young Children

(elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: There was an inability on the part of the pupils to solve personal relations problems without fighting. The teacher feels that some children grow up with bitterness, envy and hatred because others have so much more than they do. The problem is how to teach these children to lead a satisfying life without self-pity.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problem: No tools were used.

Method and Resources Used to Work on Problem: The teacher became interested in a human relations approach when a team of consultants from The University of Michigan addressed the school faculty meeting. Books on role playing were read to find general information on this technique and specific situations that might be suitable to early elementary children. A tape recorder was used as a recording and teaching device.

What Happened: Short class meetings were held twice or three times a day. Sometimes the meetings were discussions at which topics such as "How to get along better" were presented. Some of these discussions were taped so that they could be played back again and reevaluated by the youngsters. Since these children were too young to write answers to attitude questionnaires, attitude surveys were conducted orally during the meetings. Children had a chance to express their opinions when answering questions such as, "What did you like about today?", "What do you like about our school?" If a child was displaying annoying behavior, such as constantly interrupting

others, a role playing situation was set up in which this type of
behavior was a problem. The children then suggested alternate ways.
of behaving and the situation was played again according to the
standards suggested by members of the class.

Evaluation: There was a change in the children's behavior. They
started to use discussion, instead of fists, when confronted with
an opposing opinion. The children who were highly respected by
their peers set good examples of school behavior and encouraged
the others to do the same. The undertaking would have been far
more effective if other classes in the school, particularly other
lower elementary classes, had been using the same approach to problem
solving.

    a. Special Skill Points: The role playing situations in which
the children were deliberately acting out aggressive or negative
behavior proved to be exciting and dramatic to the children. The
situations in which all behaved "properly" tended to be dull and
uninteresting to the children. More reward and excitement must be
built in to the approved situations.

    b. Special Operating Problems: Getting good, clear tape
recordings proved to be more difficult than expected. Background
noise and more than one voice going at a time tended to keep the
tape from being understandable.

Practice #27: Older Pupils as Academic Helpers of Younger Ones (elementary)

Problems as Perceived by Teacher: A single teacher finds it diffi-
cult to relate effectively and adequately to all the individual
pupils of her classroom group given the variety of academic and
social-emotional pupil needs. The teacher finds some difficulty
also because all pupils, to different degrees, reject, or find
difficulty in identifying with an adult as a source of learning and
a model for behavior.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems: No special tools were
used in the early stages of developing the new practice.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: As one approach to
dealing with the problem the teacher decided to train older pupils,
from a higher grade, to spend regular periods during the week as
assistant educators of the younger pupils. Special interview sched-
ules were constructed in order to obtain ideas and problems from
helping pupils; to get data from helpers on perceptions of their
own learning and contributions, and to develop appropriate materials
for special training sessions with older helpers.

What Happened: The following steps were taken: (1) Teams of pupils,
five or six at a time, from an upper grade, spent one hour three
times a week for two weeks as assistant teachers of younger pupils;

(2) these special tutors attended an initial seminar on the Friday
before the first week of their assistant teaching. This seminar
was referred to as "a seminar on olders as academic helpers of
youngers"; (3) the tutors also attended seminars on the two days of
the week they were not teaching the youngers. These special seminar
sessions included some role-playing and discussion of typical educa-
tional situations in the classroom; (4) each helping older related
to one younger and typically assisted him in one of the following:
reading, arithmetic, penmanship, spelling, physical education, and
phonetics; (5) at their request the helping older pupils also were
given an opportunity to observe the behaviors and educational program
of the youngers during another period, with special observation
blanks; and (6) discussion ensued among the olders during seminar
time about their observations of the youngers.

Evaluation: There was a high acceptance of older pupils by the
younger ones, particularly the acting-out aggressive, younger boys.
There was also a high enthusiasm for the role of teacher by the
older pupils accompanied by the development of interpersonal rela-
tions skills, and increased motivation for their own learning because
of new insights into the problems of teaching.

a. Special Skill Points: It would be helpful if the teacher
had some skills in working with role-playing in the classroom.
During the training sessions for the olders the teacher will find
role-playing an effective way of giving the olders "a feel" for the
youngers. The teacher must also have skill in communicating to the
pupils his inadequacy in dealing with all children and how useful
the help of the olders will be.

b. Special Operating Problems: The youngers must be able to
improve somewhat. If they can't, for intellectual or emotional
reasons, the olders will only be frustrated and learn to dislike
tutoring quickly. Further, cooperation is necessary from the
teachers of the olders. If possible, a constant interchange of
observations and new ideas should be carried on among the teachers
involved. Since the timing of seminars and helping sessions is
important, teachers must cooperate in the very early stages of the
development of this practice.

Practie #28:   Teaching Behavioral Science as Academic Subject Matter (elementary)

Problems As Perceived by the Teacher: The teacher noticed that
relations between the pupils in her class were very poor. Snide
remarks and unkind comments often were a part of pupil discourse
in the classroom and on the playground. Further, many pupils were
not happy with school, disliked coming in the mornings, and did not
work on their academic subjects with much concentration. These
problems came into focus when the teacher attempted to teach a unit
in social studies by using committees and small group work. These
pupils simply were not able to work effectively with one another.

Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems: The teacher administered a sociometric test along with some "attitudes toward school work" questions to the pupils. She wanted to get a validity check on her observation that the "stars" in the classroom were the most uncooperative pupils. Her observation was borne out by the data.

Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems: The central method involved is role-playing. Books on role-playing were read to find general information on this technique and specific suggestions suitable to teaching elementary pupils how to work in groups. Some observation sheets were developed later as resources for the pupils observing the role-playing skits.

What Happened: From this early work, the teacher developed the idea of presenting the material on "learning to work in groups" as a unit of behavioral science. She, thus, began teaching behavioral science as a part of social studies. The following steps were taken: (1) The teacher told the pupils that they were going to try something new for social studies that week. She then presented the unit as "learning to work in groups". (2) Two role-playing skits were chosen initially. Four pupils were chosen to participate in them on the basis of their high peer status and cooperation in school matters. (3) These four pupils took different parts; one was to be the chairman, while the others were (a) a child with high intelligence who likes to work alone, (b) a child with many ideas, most of which are not well thought out, and (c) a child prone to goof off, play around, and not work well in the group. (4) This committee was supposed to work on a report concerning how it would be to live in South America today. (5) For the first skit, of these initial two skits, the chairman was briefed to be bossy and controlling. He was also supposed to be very critical of others. (6) The pupils enacted the skit for the class. The results were, of course, very poor. (7) Then, the second skit was done and the chairman was told to try to get everybody's ideas while encouraging full participation. This session worked much better. (8) Discussion occurred after the session about the various roles played and "how many of us are like the people depicted in the play". (9) The next full session involved what is called multiple role-playing. Here the class was divided into six groups and three became role-playing groups while three were observing groups. Pairs went off into different corners of the room, one part of the pair being a role-playing group, the other an observing group. (10) These groups tried to enact "good" group discussions from what they learned during the first major session. (11) Discussion ensued once more about "what makes us able and not able to work effectively together". (12) Finally, a third session was held during which different groups of pupils attempted to enact model groups for future work. Discussion occurred and the pupils summarized what they had learned.

Evaluation: The lessons went exceedingly well according to the teacher. The pupils were able to carry through with effective small committee work with little difficulty. Each member of the class now had a better idea of what a chairman's role is and how members of a group should behave toward the chairman and others in the group.

The pupils themselves thought the practice of learning about themselves was wonderful; "very exciting" as one youngster commented. They also felt much more positive about working in groups. Perhaps the most helpful aspect of the lessons was that all of the pupils now had a common frame of reference about what to do in groups and were able to remind one another of what they had learned as they worked in groups.

    a. <u>Special Skill Points</u>: The teacher should learn how to use role-playing. For any unit in the behavioral sciences that she might develop, it potentially has a place. Also, the teacher might read introductory texts in psychology and sociology again to become reacquainted with the subject matter.

    b. <u>Special Operating Problems</u>: It is important that the teacher find regular time for teaching behavioral science. Probably taking a day or two a week during social studies time would be a good way.

(tear-out sheet)

Description of A Creative Practice of My Own
(or one I have heard about)

<u>Problems as Perceived by Teacher</u>:

<u>Diagnostic Tools Used to Assess Problems</u>:

<u>Methods and Resources Used to Work on Problems</u>:

<u>What Happened</u>:

(tear-out sheet)

<u>Evaluation</u>:

<u>Special Skill Points</u>:

<u>Special Operating Problems</u>:

Name:

Address:

Grade taught:

Mail to: Classroom Project
           c/o Dr. Richard Schmuck
           Institute for Social Research
           The University of Michigan
           Ann Arbor, Michigan

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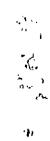
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