

PAULO FRIERE'S DIALOGUE METHOD IN A GRADE SIX  
CLASSROOM

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by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (Education)

Running Head: Dialogue in a Grade Six Classroom



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## ABSTRACT

## Paulo Freire's Dialogue in a Grade Six Classroom

By Joy M. McDade

April 28, 1992

This thesis on Paulo Freire's dialogue is an account of a liberatory pedagogy in process. This method uses the strategy of a problem-posing "code" to develop discussion, and was investigated with 27 grade 6 students from a largely white, middle-class, rural setting in the Atlantic Provinces. Stories, a skit and movies were codes used in this project. There were 14 males and 13 females involved in a 1 1/2 hours dialogue on one code a week for 13 weeks. Dialogues included a study on gender, race and class relations. Six students were chosen for in-depth study of their participation in the dialogues, through the case study method. Also included is an analysis of the learning of the total class body as well as a report of my own learning from participation in the dialogues. The findings show that this pedagogy is an exceptionally valuable educational experience. It integrates the affective, social and cognitive learning experiences for students and teacher, reinforcing the concept of students as teachers and teacher as co-learner in a study that examines power relations in the classroom as well as the society of which it is a part.



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Most importantly, I wish to thank all the grade six students whose generous and candid comments made this research project possible.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all those who believe that teaching is an act of love and freedom.

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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO PAULO FREIRE'S DIALOGUE PEDAGOGY

In critical education theory there are two paradigms: reproduction theory and production theory. A brief description of these theories will provide a foundation for the later discussion of Paulo Freire's philosophy and dialogue pedagogy and, in conclusion, my own personal intent. Reading from the sources listed in the reference has helped me to understand and to articulate the positions of these theorists in the brief account that follows.

## Critical Education Theory

Critical education theorists attempt to expose the class, race and gender inequities in the present society and discuss the role of human agency in transforming the society. They describe how schools are institutions which both challenge and perpetuate the existing power relations in the society. Kathleen Weiler (1988) provides a comprehensive review of critical education theory and distinguishes between reproduction theory and production theory. Institutions in the society embody and encourage this perpetuation of the status quo in terms of class, race and gender power relations. Weiler describes that reproduction theory "in general is concerned with the processes through which existing social

structures maintain and reproduce themselves" (p. 6). Furthermore, she (1988) states that reproduction theorists all,

share the underlying view that students are shaped by their experiences in schools to internalize or accept a subjectivity and a class position that leads to the reproduction of existing power relationships and social and economic structures . . . social production theorists have influenced critical education theory profoundly by calling into question and making problematic the role of schools and the process of schooling. (p. 6)

On the other hand production theorists recognize that schools can also be sites where change can occur because certain members in society "resist" their designated placing in the society and teachers can encourage students to analyze the myths of that society that help to control them and keep them in "their place." Weiler (1988) describes critical education theory as resting on ". . . a critical view of the existing society, arguing that the society is both exploitative and oppressive, but also is capable of being changed" (p. 5).

This faith in the ability of people to change, distinguishes the production theorist from the reproduction theorist because the production theorist recognizes that students do have power to resist and frequently exercise that power in an attempt to find meaning. People are thinking,

creating individuals who are producing their own meaning despite the structures which would confine and control them. Therefore critical education theorists are referred to as production theorists because they recognize agency, the production aspect of the learner.

To emphasize this further, at the risk of sounding redundant, difficulties that production theorists have with reproduction theory is its lack of vision in regards to how the system can be changed for the better. It lacks the consideration of how students can and do resist the dominant ideologies that would keep them in their place, whereas production theory deals very specifically with this resistance. Kathleen Weiler (1988) states it this way: "Production theories are concerned with the ways in which both individuals and classes assert their own experience and resist the dominant ideology" (p. 11).

Therefore, production theorists argue that it is teachers' moral imperative to raise the critical consciousness of students to this level of analysis and action, not only so that they can understand how society is functioning, but also, so they can exert a changing influence on it. In this way, society can become more just and provide for a more equitable society for all its citizenry.

Moreover, Critical education theorists emphasize the importance of a political commitment to human betterment. They believe that schools have a moral imperative to aid in the liberation of learners from a potentially oppressive

system by teaching the critical thinking skills necessary for emancipation.

Education that strives for equality for all people may be addressed in the classroom by adopting liberatory teaching practices. This "moral imperative" just mentioned is addressed by Peter McLaren (1988):

Critical pedagogy is founded on the conviction that schooling for self and social empowerment is ethically prior to a mastery of technical skills, which are primarily tied to the logic of the marketplace (although it should be stressed that skill development certainly plays an important role). Concern over education's moral dimension has provoked critical scholars to undertake a socially critical reconstruction of what it means to "be schooled." They stress that any genuine pedagogical practice demands a commitment to social transformation in solidarity with subordinated and marginalized groups. This necessarily entails a preferential option for the poor and the elimination of those conditions that promote human suffering. Such theorists are critical of the emphasis that liberal democracy places on individualism and autonomy from the needs of others. (p. 162)

In this way, Peter McLaren stresses that it is important for educators to realize that the role of the educator is not to encourage students to better themselves by attaining a higher social-economic status. This would have the effect of



only enabling them to fit into the present society which would still leave that society oppressive. Rather, he feels that it is important to encourage students to analyze the society as a whole so as to become "change agents" to form a society that recognizes more equitable relations for all of its members.

To prepare learners to accept a liberatory education, students must first feel that the system can be changed and secondly that they are capable of changing it. This entails the necessity to de-mystify society and culture. Both must be seen as being created by human beings and therefore as being changeable by human beings. Furthermore, knowledge must be viewed as being subjective, rather than objective, as it is argued that no human knowledge can exist outside of learners and the experiences that they bring with them to the learning situation.

Critical education theory goes beyond consciousness raising, beyond critical thinking and beyond individual personal development. Rather, it is more concerned with the collective good. Therefore, it is important that reflective thinking be combined with action and that individuals take positive action towards a more democratic process. Critical educational theorists support a critical pedagogy that addresses the concerns of production theorists and they believe that such a critical pedagogy will result in a more democratic education, regardless of social class, race or gender.

Before going into Paulo Freire's theory and practise, a

brief discussion on hegemonic control and the nature of resistance will help to clarify the theory further.

In terms of class, schools often reproduce oppressive structures that can function to help keep the rich and the poor in their present social-economic positions in the society. These existing power relations are termed, "hegemony." Kathleen Weiler (1988) discusses hegemony as it is conceptualized by an Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, who dedicated his life to the struggles of the Italian working-class.

Central to Gramsci's thought is a concern with the various ways in which the dominant classes in any society impose their own conception of reality on all subordinate classes, and the possible ways in which the oppressed can create alternative cultural and political institutions to establish their own understanding of oppression in order to oppose and change it. Gramsci addresses these problems through the concept of hegemony. (p. 13)

Weiler continues to discuss how Gramsci's concept goes beyond the concept of control to include an acknowledgement of human agency such as resistance.

But a closer reading reveals an insistence in Gramsci's work on the power of individuals to contest hegemonic control and the resultant need for dominant classes to struggle to reimpose an hegemony in constant danger of being resisted and contested by subordinate classes.

(p. 14)

Race and gender power relations can also be affected in the same ways. Schools can perpetuate white, male, middle-class knowledge, oppressive to those whose experiences are often not of these social categories. One way oppression can operate is through choosing curricula which values certain history, for example, white, male, Western European, over other histories. Another way is through the use and valuing of certain cultures and languages, for example, English, over others. Weiler (1988) says this about institutional racism when she describes that white women teachers in her study did not acknowledge their advantage over others in being white because,

as white they are in a position of dominance and thus do not identify themselves by race, since white privilege is so much a defined part of U.S. society that whites are not even conscious of their relationship of power and privilege. In U.S. society, white is the norm: people of other color are defined as deviating from that norm and therefore their race becomes an issue. This is precisely what is meant by institutional racism. The failure of white women to articulate their whiteness is simply a measure of the way that all white people in this society benefit unconsciously from being in a dominant position.

(pp. 76-77)

A similar analysis can be applied to gender and Weiler describes how the broad feminist movement has influenced

education in two ways, one of which has application in this thesis. She states (1988) that,

existing curricula and classroom practises have been criticized for their sexist biases and patriarchal attitudes. These critiques have addressed such questions questions as sex role stereotyping, the absence of women in history textbooks, the ways in which women have been portrayed in children's readers and literature, the ways in which girls have been led into certain areas of the curriculum and away from others. (p. 1)

However Weiler feels that critical education theory has been limited in that it has failed to take feminist theory into account. She says,

While critical education theory has largely failed to recognize sexism as a significant issue to be addressed and as a result has failed to consider the ways in which gender has been both produced and reproduced through texts and material practises, existing feminist analyses of schools have too often failed to recognize schools as sites of ongoing struggle over knowledge and social relationships. (p. 4)

Weiler says her study is an attempt to address this problem.

### Paulo Freire

A brief summary of Freire's background is necessary to understand his growth towards this theory and pedagogy. Paulo

Freire is a Brazilian educator and philosopher who led a successful literacy program in that country until 1964, when the military overthrew civilian rule.

Richard Shaul (1970) in the Forward of "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," describes the causative factors behind Freire's developing a consciousness of the oppressed from an early stage of life.

Born in 1921 in Recife, the centre of one of the most extreme situations of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World, he was soon forced to experience that reality directly. As the economic crisis in 1929 in the United States began to affect Brazil, the precarious stability of Freire's middle-class family gave way and he found himself sharing the plight of the "wretched of the earth." This had a profound influence on his life . . . . His early sharing of the life of the poor also led him to the discovery of what he describes as the "culture of silence" of the dispossessed. He came to realize that their ignorance and lethargy were the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social, and political domination --and of the paternalism--of which they were victims. Rather than being encouraged and equipped to know and respond to the concrete realities of their world, they were kept "submerged" in a situation in which such critical awareness and response were practically impossible. And it became clear to him that the whole

educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence.

(pp. 10-11)

Cynthia Brown (1987) provides some additional background information on Freire's life and work. She describes how he represented the plight of the peasants and worked with them to encourage them to gain power over their own lives through his literacy program. Because of the growing emancipation of these peasants, the existing status quo was threatened. As a result, Freire was forced to flee to Chile.

Freire's philosophy is representative of critical education theory and has resulted in a variety of teaching practices which have been termed "Freirean." It is important to note that such a critical pedagogy cannot be conceptualized as if it were just another method to be implemented. Rather, it is a process that has at its core the commitment towards changing the oppressive structures of society, to ones that actively promote equality among all people. Freire says further, that his method can only be effectively implemented by a teacher who has this philosophy and commitment. In his own words, Paulo Freire (1987) said that a teacher's convictions are reflected in the teaching:

Education is a moment in which you seek to convince yourself of something and you try to convince others of something. For example, if I am not convinced of the need to change racism, I cannot be an educator who convinces you. No matter what a teacher's politics,

each course points in a different direction, towards some convictions about society and knowledge. The selection of materials, the organization of study, the relations of discourse, are all shaped around the teacher's convictions. (p. 33)

Behind critical pedagogy is a philosophy about learners and about learning--one that has faith in the person as learner and that believes learning takes place in a social and political environment where learners can help each other and take responsibility for the growth and development of each other, as well as for themselves.

Also included in this pedagogy is a belief that all learners need to be part of the decision-making process in an environment that advocates a learner-centered approach. This implies also that cooperation rather than competition will effect a better and healthier climate for learning. It means fostering independence in decision-making and encouraging creative thinking and ownership for tasks which leads to personal commitment. Motivation is built into this commitment and is not something applied externally to make the task more palatable.

When learners get involved in goal-setting decisions, be it a classroom rule or a classroom project, they feel ownership for them, commit themselves to the values and are intrinsically motivated in the act of learning.

In the schooling system teachers must build a good rapport with students as it is important that students

perceive that the teacher cares about their growth and development and considers them as valued members of the class. This lays the groundwork for the acceptance of the teacher's primary role as facilitator of learning. The teacher needs on-going communication with students to keep in touch with their needs, concerns and interests as a resource for developing the pedagogy. Through personal example, discussion and the encouragement of reflective thinking, the teacher sets the stage for learning.

Also, when teachers encourage students to critically think about their historical place in society, both privileged and oppressed, students become aware of the consequences of the options that they chose in life and thus can become active participants in the fight for their liberation from an oppressive system.

It is hoped that such student empowerment will foster the confidence, the responsibility and the commitment towards building a more just, truly democratic society. Because this pedagogy is situated in the real needs of the learners, it must be very flexible. The pedagogy starts with a plan, but one which is flexible and involves the interests and concerns identified by students as well as teachers. It involves a risk-taking experimentation by teachers who have faith in their students and themselves both as teachers, as learners and as researchers.

Paulo Freire (1987), in conversation with Ira Shor, states it well: "The teacher learns from the students and the



academic professor is informally educated by workers. This agenda is different from the traditional curriculum, and more democratic than simple student-centered teaching" (p. 30).

In fact Freire goes on to say that,

liberatory education is fundamentally a situation where the teacher and the students both have to be learners, both have to be cognitive subjects, in spite of being different. This for me is the first test of liberating education, for teachers and students both to be critical agents in the act of knowing. (p. 33)

#### Personal Intent

It is my intent to work towards developing a pedagogy that is consistent with critical education theory, in general, and with Paulo Freire's dialogue method, in particular. This thesis, "Paulo Freire's Dialogue Method in a Grade Six Classroom" is one product of that intent.

I am presently employed as a Resource teacher. In the past, Resource teachers had been programming for students with particular needs and had been expected to create their own curricula in meeting student needs. In my particular case, this has led to student-centered approaches that have effected learning, both for the students and for myself as the Resource teacher.

I now have a different perspective on this past role. In the spirit of wanting to help these children, I worked hard to

try to get their skills up to the standard level, or at least, to a coping level to alleviate their stress in the classroom. However, my past perception of these students as having a problem that needed fixing, has been challenged. Now I can see the problem is much more complicated than this previous view embodies and instead I see it as a problem with the system as a whole.

Many of the students I see in the Resource room do not have learning disabilities, but rather, have motivational difficulties, which can be called, resistance in Freirean terms. In light of my experience with the Freirean dialogue, I have a better understanding of this resistance, and the forms of it that I discovered through my experience with others in the dialogues. Freire (1989), in conversation with Antonio Faundez, describes how important it is to understand resistance and through these discussions I gained a glimpse into his definition of the term. When Faundez says that the oppressed combat the dominant ideology by contributing to creating a new one, Freire (1989) agrees,

that the starting point for a political-pedagogical project must be at the level of the people's aspirations and dreams, their understanding of reality and their forms of action and struggle . . . that the starting point should precisely be resistance. In other words, the forms of resistance of the popular masses. (pp. 27-28)

From this I think Freire means that within each

individual exists a free will and if the dominant ideology is alien to the needs and aspirations of the individual, then that person will resist this ideology and this resistance expresses itself in a variety of forms. I believe the reader will gain a deeper understanding of resistance when it is discussed in the case studies in Chapter Four.

Presently I am examining the Resource role in the same light of "false generosity" that Freire (1970) describes about charity for the poor or underprivileged.

Any attempt to "soften" the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity: indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this. In order to have the continued opportunity to express their "generosity," the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fount of poverty. That is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source.

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands--whether of individuals or entire peoples--need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world.

The lesson and this apprenticeship must come, however from the oppressed themselves and from those

who are truly solidary with them. As individuals or as peoples, by fighting for the restoration of their humanity they will be attempting the restoration of true generosity. (p. 29)

In this light, I now perceive that these Resource students are victims (the oppressed) in the system because, for a variety of reasons, they are not meeting the standards of the system. In a spirit of false generosity the system provides for these students by offering a Resource Program, much in the same vein as providing charitable institutions. This does not mean that either Resource programs or charitable institutions should be discontinued, because under the present system, they do provide some relief. However, it does mean that it is important to look at the system as a whole and to examine it carefully. Such inspection illuminates the reality that the system itself, because of the values of inequality that it promotes, is the cause for the necessity of such charitable institutions in the first place.

Presently, in regards to my own situation, the Resource role has official sanction to change its focus from a diagnostic-remediation model to one that includes a broader delivery of service through the consultative aspect of that role. This involves more direct service to classroom teachers and administrators as part of a school-based team to deal with the needs of all students. This provides me with more opportunities for developing an agenda that I find more meaningful.

Learner-centered approaches to learning and the role of the teacher as facilitator, have always held interest for me, but now I am more sensitive to the moral imperative of Freire's agenda. This means the promotion of equality in opportunity both inside and outside of the classroom. I strive to take advantage of the many and varied opportunities that arise out of the historical space that I now occupy.

The challenge, as I presently view it, is to encourage the development of effective pedagogues in the classroom setting and to enhance my ability as a member of the school-based team to contribute to the decisions affecting the education of all of our students and this means, in part, promoting the problem-posing dialogue method.

It has been my experience that liberatory teaching practises and philosophy are consistent with my view of reality, both personally and in my teaching experiences. Freirean practices (1987) put educational issues in their historical and political context and start with learners themselves as they are located in these larger structures. I find the concept of Freire's problem-posing to be an effective way of looking at these kinds of educational problems.

It is very important, also, to distinguish between problem-solving and problem-posing. The kinds of social problems that are "codified" are best dealt with by a problem-posing methodology in order to open the discussion to enable all participants to speak of their own interpretation, based

upon their experiences with these problems. If problem-solving were the methodology, the problem under discussion would have been already solved by several beginning participants in the conversation and this would have the effect of closing down the communication process of others, thus hindering further analysis and understanding of the true complexity of social problems.

Problem-posing methodology places the teacher in a role in which teacher and student engage in a search together towards many truths and realities and both are learners and teachers. Freire (1987) used dialogue to stimulate discussion in his adult literacy classes and I wanted to try this methodology in a grade six classroom. I believe that the teaching practises and the reflective thinking described in this thesis is consistent with the philosophy and methodology that can be identified with liberatory teaching practices.

Like Gramsci, Freire's central interest in critical education theory has been the issue of class power relations. However before leaving this section on Freire, I would like to address how he (1987) views racism and sexism.

We [Brazilians] are a strong *machista* society, not a Marxist one. For me, racism and machismo are expressions of authoritarianism, also . . . I see racism and sexism very much linked to capitalist production . . . it does not mean that in a socialist society racism and sexism will be overcome automatically. (pp. 165-167)

Freire humbly acknowledges the effects of his own

socialization into the Brazilian society and says that the society is very "machismo." This aspect of his socialization is apparent in his early works in that his comments on Brazilian peasants are from the male perspective only. It was mentioned earlier that Weiler states that more work is needed in terms of encouraging critical education theorists to recognize the importance of the feminist position and that her study is an attempt to bridge this gap. I hope that this thesis is also helpful in this regard. I am using Freire's methodology to include "codified" issues of race and gender, as well as issues of classroom status and social grouping.

#### Questions to Consider

Before leaving this introductory chapter, I would like to share a few questions that I had focused on during the duration of the dialogue process. There were many questions that I went into the research with, but still more, that arose throughout the process of the thesis. Some had to do with the mechanics of the dialogue, and with the roles of teacher and students. These difficulties were addressed to varying degrees of satisfaction by both the students and myself. As a novice researcher, in the more formal sense of the term, "researcher", I found myself pondering the eclectic relationship between the practice throughout the dialogue process, and the theory, through continuing to read the works of Freire and others, and also through reflecting on all

aspects of my learning. The following is a brief list of some of the more global concerns and questions I found myself reflecting on:

1. Are the power relationships between the students in this class "typical" or is this a unique classroom situation?
2. How do the power structures get established?
3. How do newcomers affect the hierarchy in the power structures already established in the classroom?
4. How do existing power structures affect the integration and mainstreaming of handicapped students in our present school system?
5. How do these grade six students become convinced of the need for a change in the values of their society?
6. How can this kind of change come about?
7. How relevant is this pedagogy to these privileged middle-class grade six students?
8. What is the nature of resistance? In what ways does it express itself? What purpose does it have for the person expressing it? When does it serve a positive function? When is it a negative or counter-productive force?
9. What are the benefits of this pedagogy?

Some partial answers to these questions are addressed throughout the thesis, as reflections are expressed at various points. These questions are also discussed further in the conclusion at the end of the paper. Out of these questions and reflections, can come many more questions. I hope my questions and reflections can inspire others to formulate more



questions of their own, in order to conduct further study in this area.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY

This thesis is based on Freire's dialogue and incorporates the Freirean problem-posing methodology used by Nina Wallerstein (1987). I believe that this methodology is relevant to all educational environments in general and knows no boundaries in terms of age and locality. For this thesis, I chose to enter this methodology by way of the Health curriculum because it seemed the least restrictive, under the present school system, of design and organization. The Health curriculum is less structured than other areas of curriculum, thereby offering more opportunities for individual interpretation in creating a pedagogy that is learner-centered.

#### The Setting

I chose an environment that was convenient and that I thought would offer the greatest number of learning opportunities. Thus, a school that I taught in for the past several years was the site of this research.

The school serves a rural, generally white, middle-class community, several kilometres from a major city and it houses about 400 students. Visible minorities represent a very small percentage of the population in the community, an overt manifestation of the racist structure of schooling. Although

there are few overt conflicts of race or class visible, racist remarks originated from the subjects in this study, directed against individuals in other classrooms.

In this area, there are summer recreational activities, two nearby shopping areas, a pharmacy , a couple of small restaurants and a two year old skating rink and gymnasium. There is a nearby pre-school and there is an after school program for children of working parents at a community centre. There are Saturday night dances here for the elementary school children as well as for adults.

In the school itself, there are usually two classes at each grade level and sometimes three depending upon numbers of children, which fluctuate at times. This elementary school feeds into the junior high which is separated from it by a parking lot. Most students are bussed and all stay for lunch.

There were no particular features that made this grade six classroom a target for this research, but rather it was chosen informally because it was opportune. The classroom teacher expressed an interest as did another grade six teacher in the school, but when this particular teacher also volunteered to video the session, the die was cast. All but one of the children who participated in the experiment are white and middle-class. Both parents of many of these children do paid work outside the home. Family break-ups, while not common, are a factor in some of these students' lives.

### Time

I chose 1 1/2 hours a week for the dialogue session which was held during the first period every Tuesday morning. Occasionally when there was some problem with a particular Tuesday, we held it on the Thursday morning instead. As I was teaching full time and running this program in another teacher's classroom, it was difficult, at times, to manage the work involved around the project. It was my intention to do the analytical work alongside the actual experience but due to time restraints, it had to wait until after the dialogues themselves were over. There were 13 dialogues which ran from October 4, 1990 to March 8, 1991.

### Physical Space

The dialogue sessions were held in the grade six classroom and their student desks were arranged in a circle. I sat between two of the students in the circle, while the regular classroom teacher volunteered to take the role of video recorder for all of the dialogues except for the last dialogue day on March 8 when a student from the class volunteered to do this.

The circle is an important organizational strategy which concretely reinforces the nature of this pedagogy and is recognized by Nina Wallerstein (1987) who discusses the role of the teacher in group dialogue. She states that,

the physical arrangement of the room, placing students in a circle or in small groups, reinforces students' self-image as co-learners and co-teachers. Group listening, trust exercises, and cooperative learning or action activities further bond and encourage people to rely on each other for learning, and for effecting change. (p. 41)

In the beginning session, I started out at the centre of the room, but then joined in with the students sitting as one of them in the circle. This was a concrete way to encourage them to consider me a co-learner and I tried to reinforce this as much as possible throughout the dialogues.

### Past Experience with the Methodology

I first experienced an interpretation of this methodology in a graduate course in "Critical Pedagogy" at Saint Mary's University. The procedure held a lot of interest for me and I thought I would like to try it in a grade six classroom. This is one of several of the Freirean approaches that I tried in classrooms that year and the one that interested me the most.

As I experimented with the various approaches in the classroom, I began to focus on this area. A year later this interest had developed enough that I made the decision to do the thesis on Freire's dialogue and to try an interpretation of the problem-posing methodology first used by Nina

Wallerstein.

### The Method

The Freirean method used was one suggested by Nina Wallerstein (1987) and she sums it up well.

A problem-posing methodology involves three phases: listening (or investigating the issues or generative themes of the community), dialogue (or codifying issues into discussion starters for critical thinking, and action (or strategizing the changes students envision following their reflections). (p. 35)

### Listening For Generative Themes

The first phase Wallerstein describes is that of listening for generative themes to learn about what is important and relevant to the learners and to use that information in developing the pedagogy. Therefore I had to learn as much as I could about the students themselves. Some of the beginning codes are excerpts of stories out of the student Health book, "Becoming Myself." I used codes which contained stories of general interest for students of this age until I got to know the students better and could focus in on their particular concerns.

To discover the generative themes, I would read their journals, called "Daily Reflections," to try to identify

student concerns. On the first day of the research project I explained that each student would use a notebook to record thoughts on the dialogues and could include questions they might want to ask me. I felt that this might bridge some gaps between their public voices and their private voices, especially those who are reluctant to speak out in a large group setting. Also, I could keep track of the needs of those quieter members because there would be insufficient data from the dialogues over the short time frame of this research project.

The journal helped to make expectations concrete for the students so that they would be encouraged to reflect upon their experiences in dialogue, as part of the Freirean approach.

Viewing the video tapes also gave me a good opportunity to study student concerns. I was surprised to learn that there was a wealth of information available from these sources and it took very little effort to compose codes based on this information. Furthermore, I took every available opportunity to make observations of the students in this class. I observed them at play on the school grounds when I did "duty." I supervised them occasionally when their teacher had another commitment. I watched and listened to them during band practice at noon and while they worked away at times on the library computers, which was just outside my Resource room. I listened to other teachers when they spoke about these students. I observed and studied these students so that I

could better understand the context of their remarks in the dialogue. I became increasingly more aware of the benefits of being an "insider" type of researcher.

From these sources of information I would chose themes which showed concerns and would codify them. The "code" is an important strategy used in the dialogue method. The code is useful in that learners can observe social problems from a psychological distance. Nina Wallerstein (1987) defines a code this way:

A code is a concrete physical representation of a particular critical issue that has come up during the listening phase. Developed by teachers initially or by students as they learn the process, codes can take many forms: a written dialogue, a story, a photograph, a skit, a collage, or a song. No matter what the form, a code represents the students' reality back to the class and allows them to project their emotional and social responses in a focused fashion. An effective code should have these characteristics:

It should represent a familiar problem situation immediately recognized by the group

It should be presented as a problem with many sides or contradictions to avoid conveying a good or bad point of view

It should focus on one concern at a time, but not in a fragmented way: the historical, cultural, and social connections in students' lives should be suggested



It should be open-ended and not provide solutions: any resolution or strategies should emerge from the group discussion

The problems should not be over-whelming, but should offer possibilities for group affirmation and small actions towards change. (p. 38)

The code is one phase and in this particular research project, issues were codified in stories, movies, newspaper articles and a skit. Although the first dialogue on October 4 was an unstructured discussion about friendships, the remaining dialogues which followed were discussions on problems which were posed using the Freire code.

Some examples follow which illustrate the process of gathering generative theme information. I composed stories (codes) that encompassed their concerns on the November 6 dialogue on "Karen's Education" because of student remarks that came out of the code the week before. I composed the code, "Jenny and Peer Values" because I wanted to encourage the students to gain an insight into their own classroom values as a reflection on the greater society around them and it was discussed in dialogue on November 15. I composed the code, "Jenny and Peer Pressure" for all of them, but for one student in particular, whose learning was being negatively influenced because of problems dealing with this issue and it was discussed in dialogue on November 27. Students were resisting looking at the issue and I came to recognize that the issue needed more time. Because it was such an important

issue for this class, I composed another code on "Fred and Peer Pressure," which was discussed in dialogue on December 3. "The Sandwich" code [the play] was chosen because of the whole class's need to examine their own classroom leaders and the part they all played in maintaining the status quo in their classroom.

Students needed to be encouraged to look at the values in their own classroom as well as those in the greater society around them. Codes on sexism and racism were chosen to encourage them to explore their thoughts and feelings in this regard. The issue of classroom status and social groupings came up indirectly in a couple of the dialogues.

#### Dialogue - The Small Group Setting

The small group discussion offers students a support system so that they can feel more comfortable sharing their ideas and getting feedback on them in the security of the small group setting. This gives them more confidence in approaching the large group setting with their ideas and opinions.

The small group discussion was not open-ended but rather was structured around five questions suggested by Nina Wallerstein (1987):

1. Describe what you see here. What has happened?
2. What do you think the problem is here?
3. Share similar experiences.

4. Why do you think there is a problem here?
5. Tell what can be done to work out the problem.

#### Large Group Setting: The Dialogue Circle

Freire calls the large group discussion a "culture circle." Nina Wallerstein (1987) quotes Freire as saying that "A culture circle is a live and creative dialogue in which everyone knows some things and does not know others, in which all seek together to know more" (p. 41). Wallerstein continues to describe how the culture circle may initially feel uncomfortable about taking initiative and therefore that it is best for the teacher to provide structure and to ask questions to encourage critical thinking, but warns that they should be careful not to impose their own views but rather to let "strategies emerge from the group as students analyze their reality and come up with new ideas" (p. 41).

In the dialogues, I took on this role of teacher as "facilitator." My definition of this role included direction-giving in which expectations were discussed. These include an acceptance of each other's comments in the dialogue as valid representations of a person's experience, but still open to question under analysis by others. Students could agree or disagree in terms of having different experiences and therefore different opinions. However, they were not to judge other people's experiences in a negative way. Students were expected to follow general rules of politeness and to be

respectful to one another in the dialogues. Also, there would be more directions and suggestions as the dialogues proceeded, depending on needs that would be identified by all of us. I specifically asked students to address their remarks to each other and not just to me. Rules for the procedure were discussed and became part of the lesson content as the process evolved so that all students could experience first-hand the need for the rule.

I wanted to encourage the development of a risk-taking environment, although I knew that the students themselves had to share in that responsibility. I hoped that such acceptance would foster a respect and appreciation for the differences between people which make us all unique and all the more interesting because of it. The aim here was also to get students to accept as valid, their own responses as well as those of their peers and the teacher. This would develop the self-confidence necessary for their own sense of empowerment and encourages students to want to participate in their own learning. The discussions also provide students with the opportunity to critique their own experiences and interpretations as only part of a reality and students were given the opportunity to watch a couple of tapes in our last session together.

### Action

Paulo Freire's pedagogy involves not only reflective,

critical thinking, but very importantly taking political action outside of the classroom into the larger society. Freire (1985, p. 50) refers to this duality of reflection and action as "praxis." I chose codes taken from newspaper articles to encourage students to express their opinions on society's issues and to develop confidence in suggesting strategies to work through social problems for the purpose of changing current undemocratic practises and values.

During the short span of this project there was one incident, in particular that expressed "action," in an overt way. This occurred when Joseph wanted to write a play to change the events around one of the code plays. Action was also demonstrated in the risks that many students took over the period of the dialogues in challenging the class leaders.

I feel confident that these dialogues made a tremendous impact on these students and have already made changes in their lives, both personal and academic. I know from their responses and through observations that friendships changed over the course of these dialogues and, from my analysis, I feel confident that the dialogues were positively influential in that regard.

These dialogues affected me, in that I engage other teachers in conversations about inequities in the system and such discussions literally transform the staff room.

### The Procedure

Expectations for behaviour were previously made explicit

in an introduction to the students. The aim was to get students to accept as valid their own experiences as well as those of their peers and the teacher in order to develop confidence in themselves and in their peers in the participation of their own learning.

I explained to students, that new procedures would be considered, as we identified new needs in the process of the dialogues. I also expressed that they were to be responsible for their own learning and were expected to take responsibility for identifying needs and suggesting procedures.

Each student was given a copy of the code which described the problem and we read it aloud. I gave students a couple of days before the dialogue day to think about the problem and on the day of the dialogue we read the code aloud one more time.

Before breaking up into small groups, students were made aware of their responsibilities to discuss the problem posed in the code and also to prepare themselves to report their perception on the problem when all groups would come together again in the large dialogue circle.

It was suggested that one group member could be the "recorder" and record the information that was collected from the discussion. After the code was read and responsibilities were discussed, students formed groups for a 20 minute discussion of the problem. At first, students were randomly placed in small groups as I felt that this good mixture would give more opportunity for the exchange of ideas. As time went

on, students expressed the need for wanting to be in groups of their own choosing. I explained my reasons for wanting random selection, but by October 30, they held a vote on this issue and they made up group memberships of their own choosing until the end of the dialogues. I did suggest, though, that they consider changing group members periodically, as I still felt they would learn more that way.

After students dialogued in small group settings, all groups came together to form one large dialogue circle. There, each group took a turn to report their perspectives on the particular problem to the whole class. In the dialogue circle, this was called, "The Reporting Period."

Groups handled the recording and reporting roles differently. Some groups were represented by a single person who read the group's findings from the recorder sheet. Others split the task of both recording and reporting so that all members contributed. The groups soon learned from each other and before long, most groups decided on the more democratic way of dividing the responsibility evenly among the group members.

After the reporting period, "The Open Dialogue" began. At first, I began this part by directed them by a question or a comment, but after several dialogue sessions I would just wait for them to take the initiative for the open dialogue and eventually they began this process themselves. During the open dialogue students were free to comment without seeking permission from an authority. This meant that they did not

have to raise their hands but could comment as long as they did not interrupt another who was speaking at the time. This took a lot of skill and some students became increasingly more confident through practise and reflection, while others requested help from me.

From my own observations and reflection on the dialogues and also from student feedback, I became conscious of some difficulties with the procedure. Some students indicated in their journals that others were not contributing ideas in the small groups and in the open dialogue, I became aware of the how domination by some limited the "voice space" for others. When one or two people are always talking, others don't get a chance to comment. Right from the beginning dialogues, I observed how the voice space was soon dominated by a couple of individuals and I realized that procedures had to be created to encourage a more democratic approach.

I discussed these concerns with my thesis advisor who recommended that one student in each group be a "facilitator" to ensure that work got distributed more evenly and in the large dialogue circle one student from each group volunteered to be a "voice monitor." In the large dialogue circle the voice monitors could raise a hand when voices got too loud. This role did make students more conscious of the need to control this problem.

Also by late October, many students were expressing their frustration in their journals with not being able to say anything in the dialogue because so many others were talking.



I had also felt the need for still yet another procedure to guarantee them a space to call their own. In her journal one student made a suggestion for taking turns to give all students the choice to speak or not to speak, so we implemented the "round robin" for this purpose and this procedure was implemented in the November 6 dialogue along with the facilitator and voice monitor roles. Students were enthusiastic about these procedural adjustments and volunteered to try out these new roles.

Now immediately after the reporting period in the November 6 dialogue, students took turns voicing their opinions in the round robin. We went around the circle and listened as each student would have an opportunity to comment about the issue. During this period, others were not to interrupt, but were expected to listen and to wait their turn to speak. Because of the Freirean concern that students be given the right to remain silent about an issue, students would have the option to say, "Pass," when their turns came up in the round robin. Freire (1987) converses with Ira Shor about this right.

A dialogical setting does not mean that everyone involved in it has to speak! Dialogue does not have a goal or a requirement that all people in the class "must" say something even if they have nothing to say! . . . one had the right to be silent! Nevertheless one does not have the right to misuse his or her participation in the development of the common exercise. (p. 102)

After the round robin, we went into open dialogue when the dialogue space was then open again to whoever wanted to speak. Again the more assertive speakers dominated this part of the discussion. At these times, I tried to inculcate a need for all of us to consider rules of general politeness not to interrupt a speaker and to encourage a consciousness of the importance of listening to the voices of others.

After the open dialogue we had a final round robin which would conclude the dialogue for the day. However there were times when there would be more conversation following the last round robin because speakers were so impassioned with an issue.

These procedures seemed to fill our needs up to the end of this research project. It offered space to those who wanted it. Also, it did not hamper the spontaneity and spirit of a free and open discussion, although some individual students [those who dominated the voice space in open dialogue] would, of course, disagree with me on this point.

### Method of Analysis

Specific data for this analysis was taken from several sources: the code transcripts from the video tapes of the dialogues, the youths' journal comments and periodic feedback requested for statistical information, as well as the many and varied opportunities I had for informal observations and conversations.

Each week I would prepare for our dialogue sessions by choosing a code to dialogue and by responding to their journal comments on an individual basis. Also, I wrote a general letter to the class, providing feedback on my perceptions on our dialogues. A copy of this general letter was stapled into each of their notebooks for their own reference. Their journal notebooks were passed back and forth each week and they were given back to the students at the completion of this study.

### CHAPTER 3

### CASE STUDIES

#### Preface to the Case Studies

Because of the enormous amount of data from this study, I chose only representative remarks made by six students to illustrate the more general patterns of their attitudes and behaviours in the dialogues.

There were 27 students in the class and of the 6 students chosen for the case study, 2 were class leaders. One of these, Jack, demonstrated many of the characteristics often attributed to traditional male leadership roles. Throughout the dialogues, and often operating behind the public scene, he showed his expertise in trying to maintain a position of power within the class.

A second leader, Samantha, wanted to be popular with those in positions of authority and this meant Jack, in particular. Therefore she worked together with Jack, to maintain their status. In this way, she shows how the powerful may exert their influence over others. Also, Samantha was the most vocal when it came to participation in the dialogues. However, as the dialogues proceeded, Samantha's ambivalence grew over the assumption of power and traditional female attributes deepened her resistance to this pedagogy.

Two students, Janet and Edward, had aspirations for

leadership and were also very vocal in the dialogues. These two students show the need most have to be appreciated and accepted by the group. Janet is a reflective thinker who tried hard to understand her relationship with the class. She was more open than most others to challenging and changing the class values. Edward, on the other hand, wanted to fit into the power structure unchanged, but with himself in a more powerful position within the group.

Joseph, a visible minority, represents the difficulties involved in trying to find a respected space with others in the classroom. In his desire to become more acceptable to others, he tried to hide his own cultural roots so as to appear more like the others. Peter McLaren (1989) discusses John Ogbu's (1986: 22) work in studying this phenomena when black students, engaged in "acting white" (pp. 212-213). Joseph's situation shows how difficult a process it truly is to be accepted as a valid member of the society which values conformity. The notion of the "them versus us" ideology rather than the valuing of diversity affected Joseph's acceptance into the group.

Lastly, Shawna played out the traditional women's role, as defined by her fundamentalist Christian religion. This had greatly affected her critical thinking skills in the dialogues. She is an example of how intellectual and social development can be subjugated to religious and family beliefs.

It is important to remember throughout the reading of these case studies that these youths exhibited individual

responses according to the ways in which society is conditioning them. I think that it is the researcher-teacher's responsibility to engage students in activities to illuminate the conditioning effect of that society. I do not hold any of these six students totally responsible for the attitudes that they portray here. Rather, my present perspective on this issue is to see how we all are dehumanized in one way or another because of our conditioning. Each case study shows the individual struggle in coping with society's expectations.

However, this position is not to deny that all of us, including these students, share responsibility in this process. While we are all conditioned by the society of which we are a part, we are also all capable of reflecting upon these conditioning factors and can accept the potential for change that comes from our expression of free agency. In this regard, we must accept the responsibility for that challenge by effecting change, or accept the consequences thereof.

### Case Studies

#### Samantha

Samantha, a passionate, energetic, 12 year old, is both intelligent and ambitious. Admired and perceived by her peers to be a leader, Samantha claimed friendship status most frequently with Jack, the self-acclaimed hockey star,

immediately upon entering the dialogues. She told many stories about herself and Jack and their companionship extended beyond the classroom. In the reporting period in the dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse," (December 3) she shared an experience, to tell the class about her close friendship with Jack: "Me and Jack went down on the pond skating and a person came up to us and asked us if we wanted a cigarette."

Also Samantha would use the dialogues to advertise two class values, popularity and sports. In the first dialogue on October 4, "Friendships--Getting to Know Each Other," Samantha publicly discussed her friendship with Sally, who is also competitive and shares her interest in sports. This gave Samantha the opportunity to advertise two class values, popularity and sports in the dialogues.

### Sexism

Because she believes in the superiority of males in the culture, Samantha subjugates herself to Jack, and the beginning dialogues showed how extensively Samantha had come to be under his influence. Most of the dialogue transcripts are, in fact, peppered with examples of his influence over her. She tried to copy many of his strategies for group control and echoed his comments in dialogue, thus making herself very useful to him in dialogue. Also, he had a great deal of influence over her performance in analysing the codes.

This influence may well have been perceived by Samantha herself because in the dialogue on "Sexism and School Curriculum: Sex Role Stereotyping," (October 30) which she claimed to have been interested in, she placed herself in a different group than Jack.

Samantha aspired to be an accepted member of Jack's all boy group and initially used the dialogues as one way to do this. She knew that to be accepted, she had to exhibit similar values and she went to great lengths to exhibit traditional male values and attributes throughout the dialogue period and the following are some examples. In the October 9 dialogue, "Sibling Conflicts," she gladly told the class about her father playing hockey with her. She was not content to be on a Ringette team for girls, but rather challenged the system by being the only girl on the hockey team. In this same dialogue, she said:

Jamie didn't make the hockey team and one time I made the hockey team, but I was a girl so they tried to kick me off, but I got back on again . . . I got upset cause . . . the coach kicked me off . . . he called some of the other defense men . . . not to pass to me and stuff so I got upset when playing hockey.

Samantha is fully aware of society's devaluing women's athletics, as was evidenced when she got upset with Kathy's comment that women have made record achievements. Samantha knows that being rated second best, is not good enough for her ambition and screamed back, "Women are not allowed in the NHL



[National Hockey League]. Think about that! They don't have any really serious practise to do with that! They think girls are wimps and they are not allowed in the NHL because checking's gonna hurt them" (October 30).

She wore a boy's baseball hat on the school grounds, although her long, reddish blond hair hung down behind it. On recess duty one day, I saw Samantha, the lone girl among 12 boys, playing a ball game. She frequently joined in the boy games.

Therefore, it was not surprising to me, that Samantha began the dialogues espousing the male view, and in the first dialogue on sexism (October 30) she supported the male viewpoint. In the small group discussion, Samantha described her frustrations dealing with sexism when she was the only girl on the hockey team. Yet in the dialogue itself, she colluded with Jack to undermine the seriousness of the gender issue. Samantha felt the need to maintain the group's [males] values of toughness, power, physical strength, and competitiveness in an attempt to gain respect.

It also means she had to reject the traditional women's role and in a small group discussion with other girls, she said, "Women have dumb jobs like cooking and sewing" (October 30). She heard Shawna say that her father works and her mother does all the housework. Samantha knows that Shawna, unlike herself, intends to stay home and assume this traditional women's role. Later in the dialogue, Samantha took an opportunity, when the discussion turned to "goody-

goods" to make a point of telling her classmates about the difference between herself and Shawna. She wanted everyone to know she's not a Shawna.

Also in the dialogue, "Sexism: Pressure on Girls to Conform to Societal Expectation," Samantha wanted her classmates to know that, in her mother's absence, she does not adopt the cleaning role. "My mom went away to Toronto for a couple of weeks . . . I didn't do any of the cleaning. Dad did all the cleaning except in my room" (November 6).

Jack challenged Samantha at times, in an attempt to put her in her place, by using her gender. In the dialogue on sibling conflicts she told the class how tough she is by recalling an incident with her sister, who was bitten by a dog. She described her sister's gross overreaction and said the bite was just a "tiny scratch." Jack attempted to trap her, by asking her whether she or her sister got favoured more by her parents. She replied, "When me and you play hockey and stuff, Jack, our fathers, I think, would probably favour us a bit more" (October 9).

Jack continued the challenge and questioned whether the father favours the boy, and the mother favours the girl and Samantha replied, "No, I think dad kinda (sic) favours me cause I'm so, I have his personality sort of, right? And my mother might favour my sister because . . ." Others tried to help her, but Samantha finally admitted she didn't know why.

Samantha did not acknowledge Jack's motive when he challenged her in this regard, nor did she do so when he so

often interrupted her, mid-sentence in the dialogues.

This kind of disrespect shown by Jack and the way that Samantha attempted to rationalize it, was recorded in one of her journal entries. "Another reason why we might get excited is because maybe we feel that our own point is not getting through or that no one else is listening to you. Therefore we speak or yell louder" (October 25). The problem was not that she didn't get heard, but often she would get cut off by Jack, so there is legitimate reason to support her feeling of being devalued. She doesn't get the same kind of respect that Jack gets from others, because of her gender, although she resisted acknowledging this overtly, for reasons of her own.

Samantha was again confronted with this issue in the dialogue on sexism on October 30, when she literally screamed to be heard as Jack and several boys interrupted her repeatedly. Finally Samantha screamed, "Just listen! Listen, you guys, O.K.? I'm not stupid! Jack, listen" (October 30). Samantha went through this all over again 5 minutes later.

Although she did not overtly acknowledge it, Jack's challenges had a great effect on Samantha. She admired leadership qualities in the traditional sense, and yet she played out a role that is subservient to Jack. She felt comfortable challenging Janet, another girl, in the dialogue on "Sibling Conflicts," but she never really engaged in a challenge of any intensity with Jack. In fact, at times, she willingly handed her power over to Jack and didn't see that she was doing this.

She gave no overt notice to the support that some boys in the class gave her during the dialogues and she might have been playing out a gender role, in that she feels only boys can have real power and in this way she undervalues herself. She may believe that the only power that she can have is through association with power which, to her, is embodied in Jack.

Many times throughout the dialogues, she spoke of her friendship with Jack, whereas never once did he return this gesture. Indeed, he has no need to do this. Nevertheless, she may feel that, perhaps by assuring his power, she assures her own.

Rather than question the values behind male authority, Samantha supports these values, particularly that of strength. In dialogue she tried to compete with boys at their own game. The boys knew they had the upper hand on this tact, and humoured Samantha in the October 30 dialogue on sexism. When Janet tried to treat the issue of sexism seriously, Jack began by cutting her off. He bated Samantha with his statement about boys doing anything that girls can do. I would guess that he already had worked out what Samantha would say. "And I think girls can do anything that guys can do. Why don't you think that girls can do anything that boys can. I played hockey." Carl and Jamie reminded her that she got kicked off the boys' team and had to play on a girls' team, while other boys made mock battle noises at her.

In this way, Jack directed the conversation from the

beginning, along lines that he wanted to discuss. Samantha went along with it, initially, because to her, it was a way to prove that she can do what any boy can do. Also, she may have been trying to deny that there was really no place for her in Jack's group because of her gender.

Despite several attempts by Janet to treat the sexism issue more analytically, Samantha was caught up in her own agenda and worked with Jack to undermine the analysis. When Jack accused Samantha of making a sexist remark, it was as if she felt complimented because she had no difficulty admitting it. In fact, she felt that if men are sexist, then so also can women be sexist. In her journal she wrote, "I knew that it would be a good discussion because it was on sexism. I really went at it with Jack. We really got upset. I think that both men and women are sexist" (October 30).

Although Jack and Samantha tried to undermine the seriousness of the issue, this dialogue had an effect on Samantha's previous perceptions. Despite her initial denial of the put-down by Jack and the boys, on October 30, this dialogue on sexism marked the beginning of Samantha's perception that she was being rejected from the boys' group because of her gender, regardless of her athletic ability and performance. I think that she had initially believed that if only she performed equally with them, she would be accepted by them. At this point her previous perception on this point was now being seriously questioned through her experiences in the dialogues.

By early November, I tried to push Samantha further in her thinking about the issue and she wrote back, "I do not know who gets hurt more by sexism, but I do know that a lot of people get hurt both mentally and physically by it" (November 4).

Although Samantha continued for some time to use the dialogues for her own purpose of getting accepted by Jack's group, the dialogue on "Sexism: Pressure on Girls to Conform to Societal Expectations" also had an impact on her thinking. She came to an increased realization that the boys' group did not really have a place for her. Once she realized she was fighting a losing battle on the issue of strength, she looked further into the issue of sexism. When Jamie brought up about how fast a woman can make a slapshot, Samantha responded, "It doesn't matter . . . you don't have to be stronger to be better . . . you're yourself and that's what counts" (November 6).

As the dialogues continued, Samantha moved more and more towards the women's side of the issue, and was less and less under Jack's influence. After the Hamburger character was analyzed in the dialogue on the code "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Hegemonic Pressure and Control," on November 22, there was more room for challenging his autocratic control and in the December 3 dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressures and Drug Abuse," Samantha challenged Jack directly, as she had never challenged him before. He tried to deny that he was affected by peer pressure. This time,

others, too, were gaining in the power that comes with critical thinking and they supported her in this challenge.

In the December 11 dialogue, "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education," Samantha looked still more seriously at the women's issue. She moved more under Janet's influence and supported her in taking a position designated by the class as a female position. The issue was about what should be done if it is discovered that friends are taking drugs. The boys felt that they would talk with their friends about the problem, while the girls felt that they should tell someone in authority about it and Samantha said,

if I tell the teacher and they stop them [from taking drugs], they're gonna thank you later when someone else knows because they'll find out what they've been doing . . . you have to care about their lives . . . I'd rather lose my friends for about a month.

When Jordan challenged her by saying that you would lose your friends forever if you told on them for taking drugs, Samantha said it didn't matter. "I know it's not that easy to tell on him, but you gotta (sic) think deeper than that!"

There was a great difference in the role Samantha took in this dialogue, compared to the two previous dialogues on sexism. Samantha and Janet were increasingly supportive of each other in the last couple of dialogues. Also Joy and Samantha came together on an issue. With genuine support from other girls, Samantha felt more comfortable in challenging Jack. When he said that women weren't forced to quit school

and marry, she said,

I think that . . . what Mrs. McDade said, about why they did the research on the women because women tend to worry more than men do, at a younger age like high school and I think the men wouldn't worry about getting a wife, so early like the women do. Maybe that's one of the reasons. (December 11)

However, Samantha's growth in seeing her reality more clearly was a jagged movement forward, with much ambivalence, and she continued to move back and forth between the agenda of being, "one of the boys," to taking seriously the women's issue.

#### Classroom Status and Social groupings

Jack was the leader of the high status or most popular group in this class. For purposes of this discussion, this most popular group is referred to as the "in-group." Its membership was all male, except for Samantha. Because of her femaleness, her membership in this group was precarious and even questionable. The tension this created for Samantha was considerable.

In one dialogue, Samantha described herself more humbly as "medium" in popularity. Yet, she recognized herself as being a very privileged part of the in-group. Comments made in the dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Hegemonic Pressure and Control," illustrate this point. In



the first round robin, Bill said that usually the "best kids play with the best kids," and Jamie said, "Everyone should give everyone else a chance to prove themselves," and Samantha replied, "And I agree with Jamie and Bill. I feel . . . you should let them [the others] play with you and . . . give them a fair chance" (November 22).

Samantha's leadership capacity became clear in the beginning dialogue, when she took on the role of recorder and was the first person to speak in the open dialogue. Although friends and co-conspirators in maintaining the status quo, there was a definite competition going on between Jack and Samantha. They completely dominated the beginning dialogues and used the platform of the classroom to express their bid for leadership, as well as to reinforce class values.

One of the outward signs of leadership is the way that peers respond to the ideas of the leaders and while others put their ideas forward in the dialogue from time to time, in the beginning dialogues, only Samantha and Jack's ideas got commented on by others.

One way that Samantha excelled at asserting her leadership, was the way she entered and took control in the open dialogue. She was the most competent when it came to creating a space for speaking up in the dialogues and dominated, by using her strong voice, almost all of the dialogues.

There is reason to believe that Samantha was aware that she used her voice to gain control of the conversation. On

November 6, the voice monitor role was specifically introduced to control Samantha's domination over others and this provided more space for quieter members to give their concerns. Ironically, Samantha made herself voice monitor. If there was any checking to be done, she would check herself, rather than let someone else do it. Her anxiety relaxed about the voice monitor role's threat eventually and on November 6, she wrote in her journal that no one really paid attention to it. There is no doubt, however, that she was sensitized to her voice dominance because of this voice monitor role.

Samantha had a talent for reinforcing cultural values in this classroom. She recognized that sports were important to gain power and respect in this class. In the November 30 dialogue, she told about the importance of sports and also about her close relationship with her father.

Dad asked me if I was going to [smoke] when I get older and I said, "No way!" Sports mean too much to me . . . I play soccer. I play baseball. I play every sport there possibly is almost . . . and I like sport. Me and Jack, sports mean too much to me, us.

At the same time, Samantha reinforced certain values, she undermined other values. Despite having a good learning potential to be a strong academic student, she down-played this in the dialogues because academics were not perceived as being as valuable with this class. This was due largely to Jack's influence, but also it got supported by Samantha.

For example in the dialogue, "Meeting Societal

Expectations," Samantha did not really want to discuss academic ability. In the story code, one of the characters, Timmy, felt badly about making an 80 in a mathematics test. When I commented that 80 was a pretty good mark for a mathematics test, Samantha added, "Yeah, 30 could be a good mark, if you try your best" (October 25).

Also, Samantha grew silent and unresponsive to Janet's continuing to discuss academics. Then the dialogue space was filled by Sally, Joseph, Barry, Janet and Jamie. Samantha and Jack withdrew from this dialogue into a conspiracy of public silence, but whispered back and forth, as Janet ended the dialogue with her elaborations. Later, Samantha felt she had to ensure that classmates did not see her as an academic. She gave a nervous laugh as she said, "Mom and Dad really want me to get good marks and stuff and I try really too hard and I don't get so good marks . . . and you're gonna get worn out" (October 25). This comment is not consistent with Samantha's school records which show she was down-playing her actual achievement in the dialogues.

Samantha's position in the in-group placed her in a prime category to show resistance against analysing codes on issues of classroom status. However, her sense of fairness resulted in a lot of ambivalence, in terms of class consciousness. Under the guises of the codes, she showed her discomfort about rejecting certain people from their group, especially after listening to Janet and Edward's feelings about rejection. In the November 15 code on "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining

Peer Values," she tried to say that the rejection of Jenny [in the code] came from just one person and I wonder if she was referring to Jack. It is possible that Samantha was beginning to feel more uncomfortable at this time about her collusion with Jack and would try to disengage herself from Jack and the boys' group. This discomfort may have increased when she heard speaker after speaker in the dialogue criticize Hamburger for dominating the vegetables. During the dialogue on "The Sandwich" play, Jack quietly listened as Samantha was very critical about how Hamburger was a bully who dominated others.

I think hamburger's . . . the bully of the lunch crowd because like it's O.K. for someone to own the place . . . but it's not O.K. to go in and say, "I'm the best in this town," or "I do everything right," and . . . it's kinda like Hamburger's conceited . . . he thought he was too good . . . didn't think anyone was good enough for him sort of, except for the people he knew . . . he judged too quick, like when Onion came along, he would say, "Get out of here, kid. You stink," because the other guys just plugged their noses. (November 22)

Also Samantha may have wanted to criticize Hamburger to disassociate herself from the identity of the Hamburger character and in this way, deny her own domination over others. I find it interesting that she chose to play the character of the rejected one, Pickle, in the play. These comments and actions on her part show how she tried to hide

this oppressive characteristic that she recognized within herself. However, for purposes of getting into Jack's group, her comments might have had the unfortunate effect from her perspective of further alienating Jack.

When Jack saw Samantha trying to deny the Hamburger identity, he followed suit and said that Hamburger didn't want to take a challenge because someone could beat him. Jack knows that he is perceived by others as being more than ready to accept any physical challenges. Therefore, in saying this, he hoped to prevent others from associating Hamburger with his own identity. Samantha very likely might have been discussing Jack and her own class situation when she said,

It's his [Tomato's] first time meeting Hamburger and he knows Hamburger's kinda like a bully and he doesn't want to get beaten up or anything and get kicked out of the group . . . like some people brag because they feel uncertain of themselves . . . . (November 22)

Samantha was very possibly demonstrating her knowledge of Jack here. Also, she could have been reacting out of her own anxieties about feeling unpopular or rejected from the group, if she recognizes the oppressor within herself. Certainly, in the dialogues, Jack frequently bragged about his athletic ability and his ability to fight. Samantha knows, too, that Jack does not like to be isolated from his group. She continued, " . . . But I think Hamburger maybe really liked Onion, but . . . maybe he really said that ['Get lost, kid!'] just to show the other people that he can boss people around

. . . that you know who will listen to him probably."

Again Samantha was demonstrating knowledge of Jack's strategies. I have certainly been witness to Jack's using others, Edward, in particular, in this fashion, by keeping them posted on the edge of his group, at times letting them enter and, then, at other times, distancing them from the group. Samantha's own motive in saying this, might have been to condone Hamburger's action, as well as her own and Jack's, by saying that it was alright because Hamburger really liked him, and he just had to do this to show them who's boss.

Also, it may have been a form of damage control on her part, as she came to realize that she was talking about Jack and herself because she, then, tried to distance the class from Hamburger by bringing up a political analogy to remove the issue from the classroom into a broader social context. "Just like in politics . . . Brian Mulroney . . . [people] know that it's wrong . . . but one by one they're too scared . . . so they go along . . . unless it's a big group because they can't put a million people behind bars."

In the November 30 dialogue, "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure," Samantha, along with Edward and Janet, directly challenged Jack on the issue of peer pressure. "Jack, pressure bothers everyone! It's really hard to say, 'No.'." This was the first time Samantha directly confronted Jack. It was all the more difficult for Jack to accept because others sided against him also, another sign of the change in power relations in the classroom. A challenge of this type appeared

for the first time in the dialogues and the Jack-Samantha bond was starting to wear thin.

When Janet talked about rejection, Samantha may have rationalized why she participated in the rejection of others. Samantha said,

Maybe she [Jenny in the code story] feels . . . that if she gets into the group [in-group] and then she makes other friends and she's gonna get rejected [from the in-group] . . . and if she gets rejected from that group, maybe all the other people trying to get into the group won't like her any more either because they're trying to . . . get themselves into that group and they won't want to hang around anyone else. (November 30)

This attitude and being a part of the in-group, makes Samantha very susceptible to peer pressure and once she got her own fear articulated, she also admitted to its influence.

Those commercials that tell you to say, "No" to drugs . . . they're dancing around because . . . it's not that easy. You can't just say it! It's like right hard. If someone came up to me and asked me . . . to have a cigarette . . . and they're real popular and stuff . . . I'd probably say, "Yes" because . . . if you don't . . . you'd be unpopular and you won't have any friends. (November 30)

Jack challenged her, but she counter-challenged with, "I'm just saying it's hard to say, 'No' . . . if you [Jack] were in the situation, it'd be really hard . . . Jack,

pressure bothers everyone!"

Also, to Samantha, peer pressure is directly proportional to the status of the person doing the pressuring. When Edward asked if she'd smoke she said, "Say someone like medium popular came along . . . I'd say, 'Well, not really.'."

Although she acknowledged her own power over some people, Samantha is insecure. She struggled to be one of the boys, and yet, knew she could not truly fit in here where the power really was. She distanced herself from the girls who did not possess the same values, (toughness, etc.) that Samantha aspired to possess. When Jane, generally one of the quieter girls in the class, talked about getting the group back on the Jenny story again, I asked if Jenny has any options. Samantha said, "She has them, but she doesn't see them because . . . her mind's on this group."

Having admitted to peer pressure, Samantha denied that this was a bad thing. She tried to rationalize that peer pressure is not bad because good friends won't try to influence you to do bad things. Janet challenged her thinking, by saying that maybe Pete [a character in the code who was Fred's best friend], thought he was doing Fred a favour, by offering him drugs. Samantha resisted Janet's interpretation, as it would have meant the examination of her own values.

Nevertheless, the dialogues on peer pressure had an impact on Samantha. By the end of November, there was a definite shake-up in power relations in this class since the



beginning of these dialogues. Samantha moved away from under Jack's influence, although she was still very much influenced by peer pressure in general.

In the January 15 dialogue, "Racism: Examining the Issue," Samantha rationalized her own economic status. "If you could make everyone equal, like there's enough money in the world right now to make everyone upper middle-class." As she spoke, Samantha studied the sceptical look on the regular classroom teacher's face. However, she chose to ignore the scepticism registered here. Perhaps, Samantha said, "upper middle-class" because that's where she may perceive her own status at present or else it may have embodied her future ambition. Therefore, she may have been denying that equality for all people, might affect her own economic status, as it presently exists, or that to which she aspires. In this way, she prevents herself from feeling guilty for having all the things that others could have, if the world's resources were distributed equally. Freire (1970) discusses this kind of false perception of the perceiver this way:

. . . intervention would contradict the class interests of the perceiver . . . the tendency is to behave "neurotically." The fact exists; but both the fact and what may result from it may be prejudicial to him. Thus it becomes necessary, not precisely to deny the fact, but to "see it differently." This rationalization as a defense mechanism coincides in the end with subjectivism. A fact which is not denied but whose truths are

rationalized loses its objective base. It ceases to be concrete and becomes a myth created in defense of the class of the perceiver.

Herein lies one of the reasons for the prohibitions and the difficulties . . . designed to dissuade the people from critical intervention in reality. (p. 37)

### Racism

Samantha felt much more comfortable discussing racism, than she did issues of classroom status, perhaps because she brought to the dialogue some background knowledge about racism. Her grade 5 class last year was involved in a joint project with a school of Black students and Samantha had benefitted from this experience. Perhaps for this reason, she was very vocal in the January 15 dialogue, along with Janet.

She had moved away from Jack's influence, by this time, and therefore ignored his silence in the dialogue. Also, she did not chose to place herself in with his small group for discussion. In this way, she benefitted by a more enlightened analysis.

In the small group setting she told other girls about how she met Joseph who was a Baptist. When she told him that she was a Catholic, he said that was too bad because the Baptist religion was the **only right** religion and that she should change religions. Samantha went on to say in the open dialogue how she recalled in her past readings, that Blacks

are not allowed in some places and said this about racism in general.

Racism still goes on . . . probably it's always gonna go on unless they find a way for everyone to be equal in rich and poor . . . if everyone was [legislated] equal, there might be a bit less racism because some people say that there's more Blacks that are poor or some people say that there's more Whites that are poor and that starts a whole . . . new fight . . . on racism . . . so I think if everyone was equal money-wise and everything . . . there'd be a bit less discrimination, but if they have a law against discrimination . . . like you'd get sued . . . if you called a Black person an unpleasant word . . . that might stop it, but people would still have their own feelings about it.

In this way, Samantha showed a good sense of the interconnection between race and class consciousness. When I asked others to share their similar experiences with discrimination, Samantha surprised me with, "[They] might have experience where Black people are discriminated against. It's almost the same thing . . . some Whites think that Blacks . . . aren't any good and some Blacks think that Whites aren't any good." However, no one responded immediately. After a few moments of silence, Janet spoke about some people being scared of differences between people, and that they want to think that different people are bad so they won't have to feel guilty about not meeting them and Samantha said,

Well that's it because . . . everybody has their own opinion and everyone is different and it's usually the way that they're brought up, like say someone's grandfather . . . was the start of the generation that . . . was raised to not like Black people . . . he just didn't like them for one reason or another, like one of them punched his friend . . . he might raise his kids . . . to think that way and then it would go on for generations, just because of one person . . . it gets really serious . . . brawls.

I began to feel that Samantha was rationalizing why some people are racist and accepting this as valid because they were entitled to their own opinion.

When Janet said that you can't really say something about somebody until you know them, Samantha said, "People do sometimes, though . . . They don't think that Black people . . . are as good as . . . they are, so they make up stories . . . why they hate . . . some people need to feel that way about them."

Samantha continued to talk about why people try to hide their racism. "Maybe . . . they think that all Black people are foreigners . . . don't like foreigners coming into . . . their own country to take over . . . they're scared they're gonna be outnumbered."

When I said that maybe we all have a touch of racism in us, Samantha said this:

Because all of us have our own feelings . . . about

everyone else and you have to respect another person's feelings whether you don't like it . . . if someone looked me straight in the eye and said, "You're racist!" . . . say I really was, it'd be easy for me to say, "No!" right now, but it wouldn't be easy for me to say that, if I was in the situation. But I don't think racism is right because you're just the same as another person, even though they got a little tint in their skin . . . or live a bit differently. I mean God put us on this earth to live, not to fight about different colours . . . so I don't think racism is right.

It took Samantha a lot of courage to say this, especially with Jack's silence, but lacking courage was never one of Samantha's limitations. We can see why she is held in high esteem by many of her peers, despite her alienation by some of the girls who are moving along the more socially acceptable feminine lines of behaviour [make-up, etc.].

### Resistance

Samantha resisted an open examination into some of the dialogue issues, especially sexism and issues of social classroom status because of her aspiration to become an accepted member of Jack's group. To understand Samantha's resistance to this pedagogy, it is important to see how her perception of the value of the dialogues changed over time. In the beginning, Samantha saw the dialogues as being

advantageous to her intent to affirm her relationship with Jack and to collude with him to reinforce specific cultural values which affirmed their power positions.

Jack used the dialogue to push for more group control, using sports interest as a main cultural value for this group. At the same time, Samantha was using sports and her participation in the dialogues, as a way of entering the boys' group; She would often affirm Jack's discussions on sports.

Popularity is important to Samantha. Because of this, she was very susceptible to peer pressure in general, and to Jack's influence, in particular. While she was under Jack's influence, his resistance became her resistance. Both Jack and Samantha colluded to reinforce certain values and to undermine others. In the October 25 dialogue, Jack used silence to undermine the value of academics, when the topic under discussion was threatening and Samantha's silence was considered a sign of loyalty to him.

In this dialogue, Janet emerged in full form, under the topic of academics and Samantha became silent. Her silence under this circumstance contrasted drastically from her dominant vocalism in the earlier dialogues. Even when she was invited into this dialogue, specifically by Janet, she did not respond. Because the round robin was not yet implemented, I interpret this resistance to be content related.

Samantha's resistance deepened when I implemented strategies on November 6 to ensure a more democratic process. Although the voice monitor role was specifically designed to

put a control on Samantha's voice, I think Samantha felt far more restricted by the use of the round robin, which guaranteed everyone voice space in the dialogues. If she or Jack gained control of the conversation, it was not for too long. Also, I was more perceptive of their tactics for domination by then, and intervened more. Before long, other students were feeling more confident about adding their voices to the discussions. Joseph, Edward, Jamie, Barry and especially Janet, were gaining in power at this time.

Samantha was quick in challenging back. In the first dialogue where these strategies were used, she immediately broke the rule by interrupting the sequence of speakers in the round robin. The class intervened to remind Samantha of her mistake and Joseph, who was the next speaker, could voice his opinion. She tried this again in the December 3 dialogue, when she spoke out of turn a couple of times and the regular classroom teacher held her in check. However, it is interesting to note, that Jack's short, snappy remarks went unchecked.

At first, Samantha showed no overt signs of antagonism towards being restrained by these procedures. However, in the November 15 dialogue, "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Peer Values," Samantha's resistance on this code surfaced immediately, even before the open dialogue. She was the only girl in a group with Jack and his friends. No one had a copy of the day's code, indicating to me that the group had no intention of discussing this agenda on peer values. Instead,

the group talked about how to sabotage the day's discussion by turning it into a mock battlefield with the boys on one side and the girls on the other. They planned to do this by using Margie's comment from the previous week about all men being lazy. Therefore, because I felt they were attempting to sabotage a serious examination of the issue of peer values, I directed them to stick to the day's agenda as planned.

When they returned from their small groups into the whole class dialogue circle, Samantha worked with Jack to undermine the seriousness of the issue of peer values in other ways throughout the rest of the dialogue. In the reporting period, Jack denied there was a problem in the code and Samantha "blamed the victim," Jenny, for over-reacting. "She [Jenny] can calm down a bit . . . she's a bit over-reacting, because when I don't get invited somewhere's like, I don't take a hairy." (November 15) All others in their group followed suit and, in this way, both Samantha and Jack prevented other members who had been in their small group discussion from doing further analysis into the problem of group values.

After the reporting, Samantha and Jack continued to use their influence. Because the round robin gave others an opportunity to voice opinions, there were remarks that were considered threatening by Jack and Samantha. Throughout the open dialogue, Samantha entered at points where it appeared threatening to try to distract analysis of the issue. Jack watched approvingly of her actions.

Finally, Samantha entered a different level of resistance



when she challenged my authority in the last round robin, by directly confronting Margie. She spoke with a nervous laugh. "I'd just . . . wondering about . . . doesn't have anything to do with today's, wondering still about last week's and Margie's comment. I was wondering if she still feels that way." Samantha looked over at Margie, who made no response and I motioned to the next person beside Samantha to voice his response. This is in keeping with round robin rules and Samantha's remark fell on barren ground. Also, Margie chose to ignore the remark, when her turn came in the round robin. Samantha and Jack were becoming increasingly aware of their dwindling power over others.

Samantha's relationship with Jack was winding down somewhat and, with change, comes fear. In the November 22 dialogue, she talked about "spreading out to meet new friends." By the November 30 dialogue, there was no doubt that the dialogues did not foster Samantha's agenda to get bonded more closely with the Jack group. Rather, the dialogues forced her to focus more directly on the issues. This caused her to examine in a colder light what issues are sometimes behind friendships.

It is interesting that Samantha wrote that she enjoyed the play (November 30 journal). This might have been another way that she wanted to deny identification with the Hamburger identity, by showing me she had nothing to fear. However, I feel that she is fully aware of her own part in the assumption of power over others and also saw herself in the Hamburger

character, which intensified her resistance to the dialogues.

I consider the dialogue on Jenny and peer values to be mostly about Samantha, who admitted to being influenced by peer pressure. Her resistance showed up in subtle ways, sometimes by noncompliance, sometimes by recording very little when in the small group, and also by trying to deny that peer pressure was the problem in the code story in the beginning of the dialogue.

Her conversation with the regular classroom teacher showed the full extent of Samantha's resistance at this time. After the dialogue on peer values, Samantha asked the teacher when the dialogues would be over. When he told her in two weeks time [which was the original plan], she replied, "Good!" Nevertheless, she participated a lot in this dialogue and I had to wonder, at the time, if her resistance had to do with the dialogue content.

Finally, Samantha openly advertised her disenchantment with the dialogues. It was so acute because I think she had been taken unaware at the beginning of the dialogues. Whereas Jack had anticipated from the beginning that the dialogue agenda was antagonistic to his position, I think Samantha was not aware of this, in the beginning. Rather, she saw it initially as a format to extend her influence over the group and to be able to challenge Jack. She was not as seasoned as Jack in terms of understanding power relations, and therefore did not have the advantage of anticipating the agenda and preparing herself for it from the beginning.

Also, Samantha's resistance became more overt than Jack's because our culture accepts the display of emotion by women. She is more demonstrative of her emotions, because she does not have to hide these feelings or keep them under control, like Jack is expected to do. Therefore, while Jack remained secretive about his feelings, Samantha got very vocal at the end about her antagonism towards the dialogues and because she was taken unaware, she was even more alienated.

On January 15, Samantha expressed this resistance in another way, by describing the dialogues as boring. "I thought today's dialogue was O.K., but I do not like dialogues because I find them boring, but I would find them very interesting to watch. It doesn't matter which one I see." Yet after watching two of them on the last dialogue on March 8, "Self-Evaluation," Samantha was still not very happy. "This video, I found it very boring because I do not like any of these dialogues. I don't mind contributing to these dialogues . . . " Samantha added this last sentence because I challenged her earlier, on this issue when she started to express her resistance overtly in December. She continued with, ". . . but they are really boring and long. Actually, I hate these dialogues. I really, really, really [find them] boring . . . but I did find that a lot of people changed."

At the end of the dialogues, Samantha's resistance was in full bloom, with ambivalence intensified. Her growth away from Jack's influence was inconsistent, as evidenced when she supported his lie in front of the class in one of the

dialogues to protect him, but she no longer seemed sure of what she wanted. From the dialogues, she had learned more about herself and Jack and how others perceived them and her discomfort grew accordingly.

Resistance is definitely a factor in Samantha's calling the dialogues boring. However there is value in reflecting upon this resistance from a more legitimate standpoint, which makes her resistance understandable. My agenda was in direct confrontation with Jack's and Samantha's. They operated from their viewpoints of power and control over others and felt that they should have been allowed the freedom to express their own agenda. They also felt that they were curtailed in doing so, by my use of the authority position that I occupied in the classroom, and this was a legitimate complaint, if you take it from their perspective of how the rules should operate.

This issue became problematic for me on November 15 when Samantha tried to change the planned day's agenda on examining peer values to the agenda that she and Jack wanted to pursue. I knew I was overturning their agenda for my agenda when I gave them the directive in the small group discussion to discuss the present day's agenda. We all knew I was asserting my authority to do this. I perceived their intent as being anti-dialogue on this issue of peer values and I passed out new copies of the day's code and hoped that was the end of it.

I was fully aware of my controlling the situation here to assert my own agenda. Initially, I felt discomfort about this

but, at the same time, I felt that I was a full participating member in this pedagogy and therefore, I could occupy this position. I had rationalized that this was in keeping with my goals of encouraging equality of opportunity for all classroom members. I reminded myself that Freire's position on this is that, as an active participant myself, I also have an agenda, too, that I can bring forward. But with later reflection, I recognized that the problem was not my agenda, nor the fact that I had every right to express this agenda. Rather, the problem that was bothering me at the time was my use of authority to push my agenda and place it above their own. Still later, I was reminded by my thesis advisor that this was a positive use of authority because their agenda was "to sabotage," in which case I, ethically, had to use my authority to prevent this.

Admittedly, at the time, I hoped that Margie would not address it when her turn to speak came in the round robin. I felt the group wanted to use her remark, not only to trivialize the issue under discussion, but also to categorize her as not being capable of having a valid opinion. Margie responded to the present day's agenda and did not choose to address Samantha's "wondering," and the issue fortunately got dropped.

Later reflection on this whole issue taught me to consider that, even though Samantha and Jack would bring in their own agenda, there were others in this class, including myself, who had different agendas and this would have surfaced

throughout the dialogue. In this way, I came to recognize the vestiges of traditionalism still operating within myself, and also to appreciate the effect that reflection brings to bear upon such a problem. Reflection brought me to a new position of self-analysis and an appreciation for the importance of having faith in learners. I am grateful to Samantha and Jack for presenting me with yet another challenge to my thinking, although at the time I was, admittedly, somewhat annoyed.

There are many things to ponder with this pedagogy, as issue after issue becomes problematic for the teacher's role, and the process of reflection continues.

### Learning

Samantha learned a great deal from the dialogues. Even in the beginning dialogues when she was under Jack's influence, she benefitted. After her debate with Kathy, she knew that she had moved her original position somewhat, although the argument was never resolved. In her journal she wrote, "It is really neat when we combined our thoughts together."

Much of Samantha's learning was uncomfortable, especially as she moved away from her own initial agenda and more into the issues, as the dialogues progressed. I feel that these dialogues impacted greatly on Samantha, given the extent of her resistance, and they helped her question the values that she previously took for granted.

Of particular concern to me was the effect that the dialogues had on getting her to focus on her own ambivalence. Trying to maintain certain traditionally male-defined values created many internal conflicts within Samantha. She knows that real power is male associated and being the leader of the girls was not good enough for her.

Although Samantha did not overtly state it, I felt because of her actions and statements, she wanted the same kind of power that Jack wanted, but knows her femaleness does not allow her to possess it because it is culturally unacceptable for a woman to possess it like a man can. Therefore, Samantha does not possess the same comfort about obtaining power that Jack does. It interferes with her feminine identity and this was the biggest source of her ambivalence.

This ambivalence was expressed when she played at being a male and identified with the boys. It might also affect her female identity. She switched her name frequently from Samantha to Sammy to Sam. The cover of her journal notebook drawings was of 5 male figures on the front.

From the dialogue on the November 22, Samantha came to a better understanding of her relationship with Jack. She realized that she could never become one of the elite because of her gender and Jack was making this increasingly clearer to her at this time. To Samantha, this was interpreted as oppression by Jack and the boys. At the same time she recognized her own role as being oppressor as well. It may

have seemed to her that as the dialogues proceeded, she was getting the worse of both positions--feeling guilt over her collusion with Jack and still not being accepted by him. This tension might well have been the major factor in the Samantha-Jack bonding wearing thin and also might have been instrumental in her gaining a new perspective of their relationship and for maybe in this way she was able to see her own oppression more clearly.

This recognition that came to Samantha through the dialogues was in its first stages near the end of the dialogues and it was also a jagged, back and forth progression. Before Samantha can develop a better understanding of her position in terms of power relations in this classroom, she must change the way she is still perceiving her relationship with Jack. She must not only acknowledge that she is indeed oppressed in this classroom, but also begin to see the ways in which she also oppresses others.

Freire (1970) observed a similar phenomena with Brazilian peasants and calls this situation the "oppressor-oppressed contradiction."

The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and a libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to transformation . . . . in the first stage this confrontation [between the oppressed and the culture of domination] occurs



through the change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; . . .

The pedagogy of the first stage must deal with the problems of the oppressed consciousness and the oppressor consciousness, the problem of men (sic) who oppress and men who suffer oppression. It must take into account their behaviour, their view of the world, and their ethics. A particular problem is the duality of the oppressed; they are contradictory, divided beings, shaped by and existing in a concrete situation of oppression and violence. (p. 40)

Although, as Freire says, the duality in the oppressed is a problem, this also means that there is the same duality in the oppressor and this is a sign of hope. The oppressor, too, is oppressed, in some aspect of his relationship with others in the world. Freire (1970, p. 42) recognizes this when he says that the oppressor is also dehumanized. He says that, furthermore, it is up to those who are oppressed to humanize their oppressors by striving for freedom.

Samantha perceived the necessity for the oppressed to collude with their oppressor in some way for the oppressor-oppressed relationship to exist. In open dialogue on November 22, Samantha discussed how Hamburger really needed the others [Bun, Tomato, Lettuce, Onion and Pickle] and she reminded the others that the vegetables, too, played a role in Hamburger becoming a bully. "If the gang left Hamburger, he'd feel like he was left out and he wouldn't try to act so big. He'd

[Hamburger] say, 'Well, this is getting me in trouble and I don't have any friends if I do this, so I better not do it.'."

This may be an indication that Samantha was aware that the oppressor cannot exist without the oppressed either and in this spirit of blame the victim [the gang of vegetables, in the example cited above], Samantha exonerated the bully from responsibility for his actions. But also she recognized here the influence that the oppressed do have on the oppressor if they support each other and that everyone had shared in the responsibility in Hamburger becoming the bully in the first place. However this growing change in perception that Samantha was going through is not enough for her emancipation. Freire (1970) says that the perception of the oppressed-oppressor alone is not enough for a transformation to occur. And because of Samantha's increased resistance after this dialogue, I am given the impression that she was recognizing the dilemmas that were opening up to her, but not yet to the point of making a commitment. Insight into Samantha's ambivalence and why a commitment is difficult for her to make at this point can be gained by what Freire (1970) says.

In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation; it must become the motivating force for liberating action. Nor

does the discovery by the oppressed that they exist in dialectical relationship to the oppressor, as his (sic) antithesis--that without them the oppressor could not exist--in itself constitute liberation. The oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves. (p. 34)

As Samantha was not yet actively engaged or committed in freeing herself, such a perception that was now unfolding before her only caused her to feel increasingly more uncomfortable with the dialogues, leading to increased ambivalence and resistance to this pedagogy. Samantha may have felt that if she was not accepted into Jack's group, there was really no other group in the classroom that she felt a part of because of her own unique values which had developed over a long period of time. Because she can see no way out of her dilemma, she may have felt that she had no other choices. Freire (1970) discusses this predicament that the oppressed are faced with.

However, the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires. (p. 32)

Samantha recognized this risk and the importance of peer support. At the end of the dialogues she was unsure about how others were feeling in regards to the kind of leadership

operating in their classroom. She knew that her social status in the group could get affected in a negative way if there was a change in the power structure and that she could alienate others if she tried to free herself. This was observed in the early dialogues when Samantha challenged Jack even in minor ways, other class members would neutralize her remarks to maintain the status quo. She also knew that others knew these things, too. Freire continues to discuss this fear. "Moreover, their struggle for freedom threatens not only the oppressor, but also their own oppressed comrades who are fearful of still greater repression (p. 32).

However, Freire sees a way out of this difficulty and offers a way for us to transform our reality because of our need to be free, creative individuals.

When they discover within themselves the yearning to be free, they perceive that this yearning can be transformed into reality only when the same yearning is aroused in their comrades. But while dominated by the fear of freedom they refuse to appeal to others, or to listen to the appeals of others, or even to the appeals of their own conscience. (p. 32)

The Freirean dialogue provides a way for us to know how others feel and think about issues. In this way, we can gain the power over our lives that comes with acting in unison with others. Samantha recognized this power in group support when she expressed in dialogue that everybody must work together because "they can't put a million people behind bars"

(November 22).

Without this kind of freedom and control over our own lives, we can never be satisfied, which is why there will always be conflict as long as some individuals try to dominate others and this conflict takes place within the individual as well as between individuals. Freire (1970) describes this kind of conflict.

The conflict lies in choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting him; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account. (pp. 22-33)

Samantha's perception gained through the Hamburger code (November 22) dialogue and those preceding it, had a positive effect on her future decisions. She became more independent in her thinking, as she moved away from Jack's influence. She also came to know herself better. In the December 11 dialogue, Samantha took positions alongside another girl, to challenge Jack and the boys, not in the superficial way that she did in previous dialogues on sexism, but rather in a more serious discussion of the issues. On December 3 she agreed

with Janet on an issue and more generally showed a greater acceptance of ideas generated by others as well as by Jack.

Also, she became aware of my knowledge about her remark to the regular classroom teacher about wishing the dialogues were over and she wrote, "I think that today's dialogue was fun. The reason I asked when this would be over is because I am a little bored of it" (December 3). I challenged Samantha on this "boredom" because her participation in the dialogue registered resistance perhaps but certainly not boredom. Also, this contradiction showed in her journal writing on the December 11 dialogue that "it was fun . . . interesting," and she asked me why the boys wanted one [a research article] on men.

I think Samantha will continue to think about these things. These dialogues made a huge impact on her perceptions and will continue to affect her decision-making. Her friendships changed and I saw her more with Sarah and Sally near the end of the school year. She holds Janet in higher regard now. She still admires Jack, but now more from a distance. I would imagine that the two of them will be in different classes next year in junior high because Samantha plans on entering the French Immersion class in junior high school.

### Pedagogy

To enhance Samantha's learning, future pedagogy could

include dialogues on codes which she designs herself. She has a flair for drama and was picked to be Santa Claus in the Christmas concert play. She enjoyed acting in "The Sandwich" [Hamburger] play and I think if she were encouraged to compose and to dramatize, she might be more open to accepting change.

I designed codes from analysing what I perceived to be student needs and this might have been too intrusive, at times, as she may have been rushed into perceptions too quickly. Rushing her would increase her resistance to analysing them as effectively as she might otherwise have done. I perceived the power structure in this classroom very quickly and may have responded somewhat heavy-handedly at times by choosing codes to challenge their thinking. I will continue to challenge thinking in the future, but I will monitor resistance levels more sensitively now and try to encourage all class members to accept the responsibility for creating their own agendas for discussion.

Although Samantha was critical of the dialogues at the end, her ambivalence surfaced again in May, when she told the regular grade six teacher, who in turn told me, that the class should have done a dialogue on a particular issue instead of discussing it in their usual classroom manner.

I think codes that illuminate society's values can help Samantha to strategize with others on alternatives. Thinking and talking about other possibilities will help her out of a state of hopelessness and into an analysis of present values. We have seen how important it is to be able to see new

possibilities, before one can critically analyze present values. Samantha, like all of us, needs to experience the Freirean hope in the ability to change values.

Future codes can include those which examine issues of popularity, leadership and peer pressure as part of power relations in the issues of sexism, racism and issues of status in social groups.

The class can also benefit from reading alternative reading material that includes the history and culture of other races throughout their curricula. Also, the whole class needs to approach the reading of all texts with a critical thinking approach. If learners are to read at all, it should always be done critically--valuing and matching their own knowledge and experiences with the perceptions of others, including book authors.

Also, part of the problem for these youths was the limited exposure to a variety of people. They had been together since Primary and values are firmly entrenched. Even so, this is not a "close-knit" class: Most feel like outsiders. All were insecure about their position in the class. Some had one good friend, but even Samantha herself, considered by most to be very popular, didn't know who her best friend was. If she didn't aspire to Jack's group, given her present value system, she may have believed that she had no place anywhere. What place could she occupy in this class unless she changed her values?

This makes me wonder why she had these values in the



first place. Certainly, Samantha feels the sting of being oppressed because of her femaleness. This was how Jack always put her in her place. Her response may have been to develop along the way Freire (1970) describes when he quotes Eric Fromm (1966) in his work, "The Heart of Man." Freire discusses how the view of education as a banking system also oppresses people and how people can respond to the process of being oppressed.

The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power.

When their efforts to act responsibly are frustrated, when they find themselves unable to use their faculties, men (sic) suffer. (p. 64)

Freire then quotes the work of Fromm, to add, "This suffering due to impotence is rooted in the very fact that the human equilibrium has been disturbed" (Fromm, 1966, p. 31). But the inability to act which causes men's (sic) anguish also causes them to reject their impotence, by attempting, ". . . to restore [their] capacity to act. But can [they], and how? One way is to submit to and identify with a person or group having power. By this symbolic participation in another's life,

[men (sic) have] the illusion of acting, when in reality [they] only submit to and become a part of those who act." (Fromm, 1966, p. 31)

. . . . Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression. (p. 65)

Samantha had not yet examined the values in the larger society for promoting inequality among people and therefore did not find a way out of the hopelessness she at times portrayed. Nor can she fully grasp her place in it, without this reflection. She worked her arguments, astute as they sometimes were into circles because of this limitation in her analysis.

If Samantha doesn't examine the values of her society, then she will still be trapped and limited by them. Maintaining her present value system will undermine her own sense of identity for the purpose of pursuing male-defined ambitions and her ambivalence towards her feminine identity will only grow more and more entrenched. The fact that Samantha had been moving further away from Jack's influence is the greatest sign of hope that I had seen since the dialogues began.

It is important to encourage Samantha to see her dilemma at her own pace throughout the dialogues. The decisions that she makes on her own directions in life will be more informed

and she will have a greater sense of knowledge of the consequences of those decisions.

### Jack

Jack is a healthy, athletic and energetic 13 year old boy of slight build who is the youngest of three children. Both parents work and he had been in this elementary school since Primary.

Even after the first dialogue, I became aware that the study of Jack is a study in power relations. He dominated and exerted his influence over the others in the class in a variety of ways. I once heard a past class teacher say that Jack could be a religious guru because the rest of the kids would follow him anywhere. Jack is very political in his dealings with both classmates and with perceived authority figures including the regular classroom teacher and myself. He reigned almost unchallenged as a leader throughout most of the dialogues, especially the earlier ones, and his strategies for domination in the dialogues were an educational experience for me to study. Jack defined and regulated the values in this classroom and he was the ruler of the in-group.

Jack can be charming at times and he exercised a selective sensitivity to the needs of most individuals in the class, except where his position was threatened. Although he was careful not to look too over-bearing and allowed some space for individual expression, he monitored situations

carefully, always ready to intervene, either by support or challenge, where necessary, to maintain the status quo.

This sensitivity is part of the basis for Jack's being liked and respected by his peers. He uses charm to his advantage. I had to smile when he noticed my being omitted from the round robin on a couple of occasions and he gracefully offered his space to me. No one else seemed to notice that I had been skipped over until it was Jack's turn to speak. This kind of sensitivity gave Jack support from the group. It also had another advantage. Jack always wanted to know my opinion before espousing his own, and would use my authority as teacher whenever it was opportune for him to do so. Also, by offering me space in the dialogue, he affirmed his image as a leader who can direct a teacher, as well as his peers. Many of Jack's strategies are, like this one, multifaceted and therefore very effective.

For the most part, it seemed that everybody accepted him as the leader and in the dialogues they waited for him to speak and they listened carefully to his responses. Jack's leadership was generally uncontested which lays the basis for assuming that he has some very good leadership qualities and a high degree of social intelligence. There are many qualities that Jack possesses that make his leadership very successful and this earns him the admiration of peers.

In the dialogues Jack's friends supported his goals and values. His closest friends were Stanley, who is passive and accepting of everybody, and Jordan, a quiet rebel who operated

from the sidelines, but nevertheless also liked to be associated with power. David was his quietest friend and said little to anybody. Because these friends were quiet, they didn't offer vocal support for Jack's ideas in the dialogue and there were times when his ideas fell by the wayside, unless Samantha intervened to support him.

### Sexism

Jack wears his sexism as a badge of honour. He was careful about what he said initially in the dialogues because of my presence, but he operated behind the scenes to advertise his sexism. When he was more assured of male support, he risked showing his attitude more openly in the dialogues. His sexist attitude is not just verbalism, but rather, as the data will show, it embodies his perceptions and beliefs as well.

Because he did not acknowledge Samantha's support, or even their friendship, in any of the dialogues, Jack did not see how his agenda benefitted greatly from her vocal support. Because both Jack and Samantha share the devaluating of female power, they both perceive that, as a female, she has little to offer him in a power struggle, except as a subservient, supporting person. As early as October 9 in the dialogue on "Sibling Conflicts," Jack's attitude that females should be passive and subservient was observed when he worked constantly trying to dispel the competition between Samantha and Janet. To Jack, this is the kind of competition that should be

reserved for males only. By ignoring Jack's influence and continuing their argument beyond the end of the dialogue, Samantha and Janet challenged this myth and set the stage for future challenges.

In the dialogues, Jack interrupted Samantha repeatedly and he did not treat her challenges very seriously. This contrasted sharply with his reaction to challenges from another boy. Whenever Edward made a remark, Jack was quick to follow behind it with a challenge or comment.

Jack reacted to Samantha's advertising her friendship with him with an amused, patronizing type of tolerance and Samantha seemed to accept this. In the first two dialogues on sexism, (October 30 and November 6) Jack treated the issue by trivializing it. In the small group discussion on October 30, during my presence, he whispered with Carl and they laughed over the thought of a male home economics teacher. In this same dialogue, he influenced Samantha to undermine the discussion and turn it into a competition between the girls and the boys.

Every time Janet began a more serious analysis of the issue, Jack intervened to reduce it to a competitive sports event. He did this by using the remarks of other students, again reinforcing to others that these were class values, and hiding his own part in influencing their opinions and decisions. For example, he used the Carl remark, "Girls are more goody-good than boys" (October 30), the Margie remark, "All men are lazy" (November 6) and also the Charley remark,

"Men are smarter than girls . . . [girls] don't deserve to go to college" (November 6) to bate Samantha and the girls to undermine the seriousness of the issue.

Jack 's reluctance to give the topic on sexism any credibility, was also apparent when he wrote no opinion at all in his journal notebook on the October 30 dialogue on sexism. This was the only incident of noncompliance of this type shown by any class member.

However, in the second dialogue on sexism, "Sexism: Pressure on Girls to Conform to Societal Expectations" on November 6, and especially the third dialogue on sexism, "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education" on December 11, Jack had already lost much of Samantha's support. He didn't particularly value this, anyway, and tried to replace her with Edward. Edward was more vocal than Jack's usually passive male friends and Jack probably felt this was an adequate substitution at the time. Together, he and Edward mocked Janice's aspirations to be a lawyer. When she said she'd sue if a law firm wouldn't hire her because she was a woman, they insulted her.

Samantha, still ambivalent over being replaced as Jack's cohort by Edward, colluded with Jack when she responded to Janice, that a man would be hired instead of a competing woman only when she is not as qualified as a male lawyer. Jack attacked Janice more viciously, "You can go to a different place, if you're mature enough" (December 11). I interpret this to be an attempt to intimidate her into silence and to

put her in her place. Freire (1970) comments on the motives behind such a statement:

It is necessary for the oppressors to approach the people in order, via subjugation, to keep them passive. This approximation, however, does not involve *being with the people*, or require true communication. It is accomplished by the oppressors' depositing myths indispensable to the preservation of the status quo: for example, the myth that the oppressive order is a "free society;" the myth that all men (sic) are free to work where they wish, that if they don't like their boss they can leave him (sic) and look for another job; the myth that this order respects human rights and is therefore worthy of esteem; the myth that anyone who is industrious can become an entrepreneur . . ." (p. 135)

When Jack openly confronted Janet with what she would do, if she didn't have enough money to go to college, Janet said she'd work awhile in something until she could afford it. Jack and Edward shared a private joke over this. At this point, Samantha recognized that sexism was a value being put forward to the class, by Jack. Because of this, she had no problem admitting that girls can be sexist, too and lost no time in doing just that.

However, Edward did not turn out to be the support that Samantha was, and Jack felt uncomfortable at this point. It is interesting to note that Jack's position weakened considerably when Samantha moved away from his influence.



Because Jack undervalues, and therefore underestimates, how important Samantha's support really means to his role of leadership, he ran into a major problem with his image in January. Samantha was not present to help him out of a challenge by two girls in the class that back-fired on him. This delivered a very serious blow to his leadership in the class and despite his accurate appraisal of his dwindling influence over others, he was at a loss in terms of understanding that this happened because of his devaluing Samantha's support. Jack's entrenched sexism prevented him from appreciating this critical factor.

Because Jack devalues the power a female can have, he did not perceive that this is one of the major problems in his losing power himself. Instead, he blamed it on other factors. He complained in his November 7 journal entry that we were getting off the topic, yet it was mostly through his influence that this occurred. He wrote the longest piece of writing ever.

When were (sic) in the dialogue (sic) circle our minds get off the dicustion (sic) when someone says something about (sic) sexism so maybe it shulden't (sic) be brought up. talk (sic) to the class because each week we get more and more off the storey (sic).

I did not follow Jack's directive, but rather addressed the issue of Margie and Janice and the right that they had to express their opinions in the November 6 letter to the class. I invited student reactions and Jack stated that he felt that

the boys should have a code in which it said that all girls are lazy and check out Margie's reaction to that. The regular classroom teacher confronted the boys with their defensiveness on the issue.

In the December 11 dialogue on the code, "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education" taken from the newspaper article on girls' aspirations, Samantha had been moving away from Jack's influence. She took the issue more seriously now and challenged him more directly. Jack tried to influence her in the small group setting by saying that women expected too much of men. Jordan agreed and added that the writers of the article were "just feminists." Jack supported his comments and suggested that they write a letter recommending that a similar research study be done on males.

### Classroom Status and Social Groupings

As leader of the in-group, Jack supported current practices. He also knew that he was expected by the group to maintain the status quo. Maintaining the status quo by supporting current practices means respecting accepted lines of authority and Jack graciously courted the two authority figures, the regular classroom teacher and especially myself during most of the dialogues. He made frequent eye contact with me, attempting to study me as I studied him. He was always monitoring my reactions. When this was difficult, he would ask me outright what I thought about things, both in the

dialogue and on other occasions. Jack was constantly trying to read me and I think that this was a fairly typical response that Jack has of anybody in his circle of influence, especially those with authorized influence over him.

Maintaining the status quo also meant that Jack had to keep everyone in their place. In the dialogues, Jack continuously kept others in check. He especially checked and undermined Janet's contributions in the dialogues. She, like Samantha, is a verbally assertive and capable girl who challenges everybody's thinking. He used Samantha's gender and her aspiration for membership into his group to keep her in her place.

Jack kept other girls in their places, as well. In the November 15 dialogue on peer values, Jane, a quieter class member, tried to talk about a topic that was threatening to Jack. This was the only time she voiced a comment in the open dialogue. Yet, Jack felt it necessary to put Jane in her place in the dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse" on December 3. When Jane told about smoking from her father's cigarette, Jack tried to humiliate her in front of the class. This sensitized Jane to Jack's intentions and she registered her indignation over the incident in her own journal entry.

Jack kept control over the boys in general and Edward, in particular, by making them "sit on the fence" when it comes to being accepted into his group. He would alternate between accepting them and then rejecting them when it came to

membership in his group.

Numerous examples exist that show his sophisticated knowledge of power relations and of how he controls others, both in the small group and individually. Jack does most of his influencing behind the scenes. As leader, he knows that it is important to know what group members are thinking and feeling and he did not like to be separated from friends who supported him the most. For this reason, he likes the small group setting where he could coach and influence his supporters, particularly Samantha, who would echo his views in the dialogue while he remained the silent and protected on-looker and approver.

Jack influenced others in such a way that they thought that his ideas were really their own. This was just one example of how Jack showed his expertise in exercising control when he wanted the group to perceive that he was standing behind them. Yet, he knew how to get them to do what he wanted, even when it was not what they themselves might otherwise have chosen.

An example of this is the way Jack got others to take ownership for his desire to have his own designated group. On October 5, Jack reported in the dialogue that his group thought there should be, "different groups with each other." In other words group members felt that they should be in different groups each week, so that everyone would get a chance to work with different people. This would be done by a random selection of individuals each week, so no one would

know ahead of time which group they would be in for that particular week. This was the opinion that his group had decided upon when they were in the small group discussion. However Jack, himself, felt differently about this issue because he wanted his own friends to be in his group for the small group discussion.

Jack did not openly challenge this decision at the time. Being somewhat familiar with my agenda of letting them make choices, perhaps he felt that I would use my authority position to allow them to choose their own members for the small groups, regardless of what they reported from their small group discussion. At any rate, he appeared to go along with the other members in the group.

When I did not respond as he expected, he pushed this issue with me both in his journal on October 9 and again in the classroom, with Samantha backing him up on October 15. However, I had already recommended mixed grouping as the best possible learning situation and was pleased that others seemed to feel this way also.

When Jack realized that I interpreted choice, as choosing a procedure of random selection of groups as group members reported, Jack worked behind the scenes to influence others to his own way of thinking. By October 25, the class had voted 17 to 5 for groups by choice, and not by random selection. Sally tabulated the results in her journal and claimed that she and Rose organized the survey. Yet the idea really began with Jack as far back as October 5.

I knew that the choice of the students was really Jack's choice, but his peers were yet to recognize this. I hoped that, in time, this would become apparent to them. From this day on, they chose the members in their own group. Actually, it became a greater learning opportunity for me because I grew to understanding their relationships with each other much better when they made these decisions on their own.

After this observation, I became aware that Jack was an expert at developing controlling strategies. There is a lot of evidence from observing his practises, to suggest that he learned, through careful observation of teachers, how to control groups of people. He watches authority figures, especially teachers, and copies their controlling strategies, like the use of questioning to guide and control conversations. In his lack of tolerance for divergent opinions in the October 9 dialogue on sibling conflicts, he reminded me of the traditional teaching practitioner of trying to gain class control.

It is also interesting in the December 11 dialogue on "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education" to observe how Jack was not happy with views expressed in the reporting period and he said to the class, as if he were a teacher, "I think that some of the comments today were off. I think some of the people that made the comments today should have thought a bit more because some of them weren't well."

Several times in dialogues, Jack would tell classmates he felt their arguments were missing the point or were

inappropriate or "off track." This was an attempt to silence them and rob them of their participation in the dialogues.

Jack seems to prefer to influence peers behind the scenes, but whenever this doesn't work, he loses his charm, and has to be a bully, to keep other people in their places. He feels uncomfortable with any disruption to the status quo. For this reason, he disliked arguments between class members that were not of his own making. In fact, the only conflict he tolerated was that which only he initiated.

Jack had to face quite a few challenges in the dialogues to try to maintain control. Samantha was intrigued with his power, but differed from him in that she enjoyed the challenge of a competition. This was Jack's biggest headache when it came to Samantha and he told her so at the end of the dialogues on March 6. "Is it the only reason you like the dialogue because of the arguments, cause all this year, since we been having the dialogues, all you been talking about is arguments and that's all you like." Samantha registered a very surprised expression at this criticism of Jack's and I felt further distancing occurring between the two of them.

He kept harmony as a way of maintaining the status quo, as long as classmates possessed his values and he reinforced them repeatedly in the dialogues, especially the beginning ones. As leader of the in-group, Jack assumed responsibility for setting and maintaining the group's values and this meant preventing challenges to these values.

Jack is an expert in this area of setting class values.

Not only did he take every opportunity to reinforce his values in the dialogues, but he also managed to get others, especially Samantha to do this for him. Jack reinforced the values of physical strength, athletics and aggression. It was not really difficult for Jack to maintain these values because they are values that are endorsed in the society as a whole. In the dialogue, "Sibling Conflicts," he expressed to the class how tough he was. He told them he could even beat up his older brother who was afraid of him. "I'm the youngest and I don't get favoured, believe me. You see my brother . . ."

(October 9) Here, Samantha, always looking out for Jack's interests, as well as her own, finished this story for him and told others what he wanted them to hear. She laughed as she spoke, "I was down Jack's house one time. Jack and his brother got in a fight and Jack beat him up."

In the October 25 dialogue, he took the presentation time to reinforce his ability as an athlete. "Me and my friend both tried out for the A team [hockey]. I got on the A team and he didn't. He was mad at me."

Jack's status as a hockey star and a good fighter gave him an excellent opportunity to be a leader with this group. He put good hockey ability forward as a critical value in this classroom and imposed it upon others. Freire (1970) discusses this kind of "cultural invasion" on others:

Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the



world, and the imposition of one view upon another. It implies the "superiority" of the invader and the "inferiority" of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them. (p. 159)

Jack not only acts to promote values along his line of interest, but he also does not want the class to uncover his controlling of class values. He intervened to undermine the examination of a group's values in the "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Peer Values" (November 15) and "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse" (December 3) codes. He did not want the class to look too closely at these values because he was the one mostly responsible for determining which values had priority in this classroom.

Jack has many strategies for controlling the actions of others. He works hard to get everyone feeling and thinking his way because he can control them more easily that way. There was little, if any, controversy in the first dialogue where no problem was identified or codified on October 4 and learners talked openly about making friends. This would pose no threats to the class. Nor would such a discussion pose any challenge and it was the one that Jack identified in both November and January as the dialogue that he liked best. It was also the only dialogue where there was no problem posed, but rather there was an unstructured discussion for me to listen to them and learn more about their interests and relationships.

Jack's attitude towards those he considered inferior became very apparent in the dialogue, "Sexism: Pressure on Girls to Conform to Societal Expectations" (November 6) when Edward challenged Patrick, a Special Education student. Patrick differs from others in the class also because he is from the working-class and a newcomer to the school. In the November 6 dialogue, when Edward challenged Patrick, Jack cut him off, assuming this role for himself, "Let him [Patrick] answer that! Is there a reason why it's a good thing for a woman to stay home than to go out and get a job?" Later, when it looked like Patrick was breaking down under pressure and was tempted to withdraw his remark, Jack got condescending. "Stick to one, boy. I'm getting mixed up." The regular classroom teacher stopped this challenge by saying Patrick didn't really mean to say that, but Jack's use of the word, "boy" connoted an air of superiority that Jack assumed over Patrick.

There was also another situation involving Patrick. On January 15, Jack tried to gain control over the group in the small group discussion and wanted ownership for the remark that women expect too much from men. It is obvious that Samantha disagreed with the remark and didn't want to record it as coming from the group. Jack insisted that the remark be recorded and said that he himself would read it aloud in the presentation.

However, in the dialogue, when Patrick said that women should stay at home and that a woman should leave a man who

wouldn't want to go out to work, there was some giggling and a private conversation went on involving a connection between Patrick's remark and Jack's remarks made earlier in the reporting period. Jack didn't like his opinion being placed in the same category with Patrick's and he tried to bail out fast. Jack not only changed his position on the issue entirely, but denied taking that position in the first place. "I didn't say that! I just got put down to say that!"

To Jack, perhaps, telling a lie was the lesser of two "evils." He would rather lie than have an attitude similar to a Special Education student. This may also account for Jack's use of silence as a response to these kinds of challenges that came up in future dialogues. Even though Samantha knew that Jack originally wanted ownership for this remark in the small group, she came to his defense in the open dialogue [in public]. She supported his lie, by lying herself, when she told everyone that it was the group's remark and not Jack's.

Not only did Samantha support Jack's lie, but she also attempted to place the blame for the remark on Jordan, a quiet, but close supporter of Jack's. He, surprisingly, did not openly deny it. In this way, Samantha and Jordan colluded to protect Jack's image in front of the large group. Only those who were present in the small group setting and, luckily, that happened to include me, this time, would have knowledge of this lie and cover-up by Samantha and Jordan. My presence on this day was accidental and I had to wonder how often this kind of thing occurred.

After this crisis, Jack continued to challenge Patrick on his position to try to prove to the class how their positions differed. Jack wanted to ensure that everyone knew that he and Patrick were not on the same side, whatever side that happened to be. This seems to be discrimination, either of Special Education students, or else of students from the working-class, or quite possibly a combination of the two. Jack started with Jordan, from a position of women expecting too much from men, and then suddenly turned on Patrick when he advocated the same position.

Because of Jack's opening remarks in the dialogue, Patrick had been led to believe that he would get support from other males for this remark. You can imagine Patrick's surprise when everyone, especially Jack, jumped on him for this remark. Patrick was new to the school and to this class, and therefore was not aware that some of these youths viewed the issue differently, at least publicly. Also, because he is from the working-class, he represents that class's values which contrasts with the middle-class values expressed by many of the others in this classroom. He registered his frustration over this situation with me later and I grew to understand the silence of many Special Education students in the grade six classroom where discrimination, although subtle, was not only perceived, but generally well understood by most students, as evidenced by Jack's response in the dialogue. In this way, Jack made it very clear that Patrick, and others like him, would never be part of his group.

Jack made deliberate attempts to obscure reality. He was silent on the codes designed to look directly at power relations, which were related to his resistance in examining the issue. However, in practise, Jack is a study in power relations himself and there was a wealth of information available by observing his control of others in the dialogues. Often, he affected the thinking of others, but was also careful to hide this fact and he became a very good myth-maker in the process.

Jack got upset with others, besides Samantha, who tried to generate critical thinking. When Janet said that some people [Samantha and Edward and others] found viewing the tapes on the dialogues boring because they were inattentive, Jack accused her of trying to start an argument. "Janet, all you're trying to do is get something going!" When so many others tried to explain that it's more fun with arguments, Jack replied.

But it's a dialogue. It's not a fight unless you take it outside . . . as in previous times we've seen on that [video] when we start to argue it goes right off course that we're trying to stay on, so it's not always good to have an argument.

I interpret this to mean that Jack feels he has less control over a conversation when the participants were impassioned and critically thinking in an argument situation. He couldn't possibly have been interested in keeping a conversation on course, as he claimed, because he was the one

most responsible for distracting others when he was not comfortable with the dialogue content. Also, note that, again, he was trying to define the nature of a "fight" for the group. His classmates ignored this and maintained their interest in a steamy, thought-intensive discussion. Jack knew he was losing control and his resistance deepened with each dialogue.

### Racism

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In the January 15 dialogue, "Racism: Examining the Issue," Jack was so silent that it was almost like he was not there. This silence was one form of his resistance to the topic. I learned later that Jack had made a sexist remark to a new, Black female student, who, fortunately, had the confidence to drag him into the principal's office for it. Unlike the dialogue on sexism where he showed a pride in being sexist, he knew there was even less room in this classroom, or in this school, for exhibiting racist remarks publicly, at least. Therefore, he was unable to make overt his true feelings about this issue in the dialogues.

Silence was his only option. He was in a small group with Stanley, Joseph, David and Jamie, and they treated the code superficially, as was usual for Jack's group. Jack picked "similar experiences" for his reporting response and reported, "We didn't have any." Other members of his group said the Natives were stripped of their culture and weren't

getting their rights and weren't being treated as normal people and they thought they should leave the Natives alone with their own culture.

Jack assumed a generally bored stance and drew pictures in a notebook, as others talked. Occasionally, he would try to distract others beside him. These went ignored by everyone else, including myself, but then Jack tried to interrupt Barry by saying, "I think . . ." in the reporting period. This was highly unusual and I wonder if he got distracted with his own thoughts and forgot that it was not an open dialogue because he immediately checked himself.

Jack passed on his turn in the round robin and was also quiet in the open dialogue. He wrote this response in his journal, "I didn't like it. Today was one of those times that we needed a voice monter (sic). Today was a chenging [challenging] dieolog [dialogue]" (January 15). The dialogue was, in fact, quiet and controlled with ample opportunity for anyone to comment.

By stating the need for a voice monitor, he showed his disapproval of Samantha's having played such a dominant role in this dialogue, despite his own silence. Jack is an astute enough observer to realize that I created the voice monitor role to keep Samantha in check. To Jack, this was more confirmation of his decreasing influence over Samantha. He had expected her to be silent in the dialogue, like himself, as she had followed his direction in this way in earlier dialogues. Also, this added more confirmation that Jack used

his silence to make a statement that he didn't approve of the content of the code.

### Resistance

In the beginning dialogues, Jack's resistance was subtle and expressed mostly through quiet forms of noncompliance and silence and a general lack of interest in analyzing the codes, which he treated superficially. Jack is politically astute enough to have anticipated that this type of pedagogy could affect the power relations already established in the classroom. Problem-posing codes threatened his position as leader and he resisted this pedagogy from the beginning. Jack is anti-dialogue and he tried to control what others would say throughout the dialogues. Freire (1970) comments about oppressors who set the values and controls the voices of others. He says that,

the one who is doing the decreeing defines himself (sic) and the class to which he (sic) belongs as those who know and were born to know; he (sic) therefore defines others as alien entities. The words of his (sic) own class come to be the "true" words, which he imposes or attempts to impose on others; the oppressed, whose words have been stolen from them. Those who steal the words of others develop a deep doubt in the abilities of the others and consider them incompetent. Each time they say their word, without hearing the word of those whom they have



forbidden to speak, they grow more accustomed to power and acquire a taste for guiding, ordering and commanding. They can no longer live without having someone to give orders to. Under these circumstances, dialogue is impossible. (p. 129)

The Freirean dialogue is about a confrontation of, and changes in, power. To empower some people means that others must give up power, so that the power is more evenly distributed and people gain in power over decisions that concern and involve them. Jack, therefore, rightfully interpreted the growing confidence of others [empowerment] as a sign of his dwindling power over them. Therefore, Jack's resistance to this pedagogy was expected. It was expressed in many ways and took various forms as the need arose.

Initially, he felt confident in his own ability to handle the problem of the dialogues. The first one was on friendship and he welcomed the opportunity to reinforce his values and exercise his control strategies in this new context. But even as the agenda became clearer to him, he felt that he was still in control. He had worked it so that the class could choose members in their own groups. Whatever small group Jack was involved with, whether it was of his own choosing or not, he exerted a very definite influence over that group's performance in analyzing the code. Also, he had excellent skills in guiding and manipulating the conversation in the open dialogue. His usual style was to get Samantha to deliver his viewpoint. He would then monitor the conversation to

ensure that it proceeded along his lines of interest.

Jack showed noncompliance mostly through his journals. He was atypical in being very brief with his written comments in his journal and he made no attempt to answer any question asked. On October 30 he made no journal response at all. I specifically invited Jack to write any concerns in his journal because he had a lot of them. However, Jack chose not to address it here. He made it clear from the beginning that he would ask the questions, rather than answer them.

Another way Jack showed his resistance was through the use of silence. He was the class leader and, as such, set the values. His silence, then, had the specific meaning of not giving the issue his official seal of approval. Samantha understood this and at times colluded with Jack in his silence. The first time I noticed Jack's silence was in the October 25 dialogue, "Meeting Societal Expectations" when Kathy talked about how important academic marks can be. This topic would have been threatening to Jack because he does not define himself as an academic and would gain no status from this kind of discussion. His silence gave others the message that academic achievement was not a value that received his official endorsement.

When democratic controls were introduced on November 6, Jack was the recorder for his group and he passed in a blank recorder sheet with only his name and Charley's on it. I find it interesting that he bothered to pass it in at all, but I chose not to address it openly with him, although I pondered

his intent in this regard. He did not like the newly introduced roles but was careful not to be overt about it in his journal. "Today we went by new idieas (sic), coment (sic) and sagestions (sic). They worked prety (sic) good I gess (sic)" (November 6). Jack did not get too upset about these roles in the beginning as he still exercised control in the small group discussion and at least could control a part of the open dialogue between the round robins.

However, after the dialogue, "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Hegemonic Pressure and Control," Jack became very concerned. He did not volunteer for any of the acting parts in the play, "The Sandwich" and he said very little in the dialogue itself. He passed in the round robin, but in the open dialogue, as soon as Samantha began to comment on Hamburger, Jack cut her off, "He's [Hamburger] a bully!" Jack, like Samantha, wanted to say it before anyone else did, so he could protect his own image by distancing himself from the Hamburger identity.

He did this again in another way. He heard classmates tell about how awful Hamburger was to others and when I raised the issue of why others didn't challenge him, Jack said in a soft voice, "I think he just doesn't want to take a challenge because [some] one could beat him." Jack tried to show the group that he, himself, unlike Hamburger in the play, was always ready to take a physical challenge.

When the group persisted in discussing Hamburger, Jack turned silent and listened as Samantha said that Hamburger

needed Lettuce and Tomato. The last thing Jack did was to blame the victims, Onion and Tomato, for their lack of initiative in getting into the group and in this way he attempted to use myth-making to influence the others. "They [a lot of people] haven't made friends with them [the in-group] but they've wanted to, but they've always been scared to like, 'Oh, he's too cool,' or, 'I'm scared what he'd say . . . ' stuff like that" (November 22).

I ignored this to say how unfair it is of Hamburger to make all the decisions. Jack said no more in the dialogue, but wrote that he learned from this dialogue that we "should give people chances." Jack lost a lot of power over this particular dialogue. For the first time he heard others discuss how they felt about being bullied.

Jack also was upset with this dialogue for another reason. There was no small group discussion which could have given him more control over his group members before the dialogues began. He recorded his disapproval in his journal. "Today was like a day without the fun parts. Today we never had the small group discussion (sic) or we never had a code" (November 22). It is interesting that he did not recognize the play as the code.

The dialogue on November 30 was "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure" and by this time, Jack recognized that the round robins also interfered with his agenda and generally passed on them. He complained to me in his journal. "Today was not the best either. I think we don't have the open

duscution (sic) for to (sic) long. Maybe we could have it longer" (November 30). Having the open dialogue longer, as Jack suggested, would give him more opportunity to control the discussions, indirectly, through Samantha.

Also, Jack was not comfortable with any of the code contents. He did not want to discuss peer pressure because he, himself, used it to control the behaviours of others. Therefore, he worked hard to deny the existence of peer pressure in codes (November 30 and December 4) which were designed to examine these issues. In the November 30 dialogue, at first, the class denied that peer pressure was a force here, but eventually everyone, including Jack, came to recognize it.

The class took this agenda more seriously than any other. The regular classroom teacher said he felt it was the best dialogue class yet because more students got involved. Jack felt more comfortable in the small group discussion because his friends, Jordan, Samantha, Carl and Diane were present. He said he didn't think Jenny [in the November 30 code] should smoke and had contempt for her because she'd do anything to get into the group. In this way, he directly challenged Samantha. He may have been trying to put her in her place again but this backfired on him. Samantha, Edward and Janet joined forces for the first time in the dialogues and challenged Jack.

In this dialogue on Jenny and peer pressure, there was a significant change in power relations and Jack took the

position of denying peer pressure in the face of challenges from others. No one defended or supported him, but he wouldn't budge from his position during this dialogue. In the small group discussion of the next code, "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse" (December 3) Jack said that Fred [in the code] never really got asked to do drugs and that he didn't really have to drink, thereby denying peer pressure again. I'm not sure what happened in the small group discussion, after I left, but I suspect he couldn't move the others on this issue. In the large dialogue circle, he decided, instead, to change his own position completely and admitted that, "If your friend's taking drugs . . . the pressure on ya (sic) is gonna be like you've never had it before . . . gonna force you into saying, 'Yes.' . . . like once you get into it, you're not going to be able to get out."

This was the first time Jack had backed down on an issue publicly in front of the class and it heralded the development of a number of other, new and more aggressive strategies by Jack to regain lost status. He had, by now, perceived a loss in power and, after several dialogues of silence, had decided to forgo his silence as a noncompliance tool and, instead, focused his energies on developing new strategies to deal with his problem.

He missed Samantha's vocal support, still present but dwindling, and he actively recruited Edward who was also vocal. Other members, like Carl, David, Stanley and Jordan supported him in quiet ways, but were not vocal and Jack did

not feel comfortable about the dialogue on Jenny and peer pressure. He wrote, "today was not the best either" (November 30).

Jack showed his resistance to the dialogue, "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education" (December 11) by making no journal entries in his daily reflections notebook and did not respond on the typed-out question sheet provided for this purpose. He was the only class member who did not respond as requested.

Jack's resistance took on a very concrete, physically aggressive form in January when he challenged Edward directly, and, therefore, me indirectly, in a calculated move to undermine my authority. On Friday, January 25 the regular classroom teacher asked me to supervise half his class. I welcomed this as an opportunity to observe the work habits and social interactions of his grade six students.

All was quiet, until Jack entered from the class next door. He was upset with his female social studies teacher during a testing situation, as he whispered something to another student upon entering the classroom. He then blamed Edward for losing some notes he had placed in a book before the test. The class had been working in groups on a project and Edward had borrowed Jack's book, while Jack was out of the room. There was no evidence to support Jack's claim but he threatened Edward physically anyway. I focused Jack's attention on his lack of evidence but he wanted to ignore this.

Then, surprisingly, two girls, Rose and Diane, Jack's ex-

girlfriend, intervened by drawing his attention to his unfairness in this regard. When Jack found himself outnumbered, he lost control by calling Diane names. I confronted him with this:

Jack, it appears to me that you have two separate rules of conduct operating here, rules for others and rules for yourself. It's alright when you insult other people [Diane] by calling her names, but it's not alright for her to do it to you. (January 25)

And Jack's reply to me was, "Yeah, I like that set of rules!" This was the only time that Jack openly admitted to being unfair in his dealings with others. Generally, he did not put himself at risk like this. He is usually careful about expressing his views openly. He prefers to influence others to do this for him and, in that way, they could, and did, accept the consequences for him. Perhaps on this occasion, he felt safer to take this risk because this incident did not occur during a dialogue class [my turf], but rather during a class project [his turf].

Nevertheless, this caused Jack to lose respect from peers and he realized it too late. When I confronted him with the consequences of his actions, he tried to drop the argument by telling me that the argument with Edward was over now that he said his temper had settled down. Then, in a calculated move, he actually got Edward to help him move a table for him. When I asked Edward why Jack would suddenly make this peace offering to him, Edward had no idea. He was just happy that



Jack didn't want to have a physical fight with him any more and readily accepted this peace gesture.

When I told the regular classroom teacher about the incident, he said, "You can't rationalize with Jack when he's in a bad temper." It appears to me that Jack's bad temper had become a useful tool for him to manipulate situations like this to his advantage. I came to the conclusion, through this analysis, that Jack uses his temper as a manipulative tool to achieve his goals. However, he still wanted this disguised [myth-making] as he said aloud, "My temper's beginning to calm down now." The class settled into a calm, but I let Jack know that there would be consequences to his actions.

### Learning

Jack is not a strong academic student. He spent an additional year in Primary and still his writing responses would indicate that he is quite unskilled in reading and writing, despite a strong learning potential. Therefore, it would be to Jack's advantage to function within the group setting, rather than through individual effort. Jack was aware of this as is evidenced by his statement in the beginning dialogue (October 4) about how important it is to work in groups and to share learning.

The codified issues in the dialogues run counter to his own agenda to maintain power over the others. Whereas Samantha switched back and forth between the two agendas--

one, of maintaining the status quo of domination and the other, of examination of the particular issue--Jack had a clear vision. There was really only one agenda for Jack, and he was consistent in maintaining this vision throughout the dialogues. His participation in the dialogues gives testimony to his high social intelligence.

One of my concerns involves the effect that maintaining power over others has on Jack's social and emotional development. What price does he pay for being the class leader? I wonder how it affects his choice of friendships. All of Jack's friends were quiet, except for Samantha and I wonder if she would be considered a friend if she were male, or whether she would be considered a rival for the leadership position. Also Jack might be so dependent upon the group for his identity that, without it, he can not survive. In this respect, his development is uneven, having lost the balance between his own individuality and the social identity of being part of a group. This increases Jack's vulnerability in a very real way.

To maintain his position of power, Jack had to maintain a particular image of power and control to the group. He had to pretend he is a superhuman being and invincible. This took concrete form in bragging.

Hiding his vulnerabilities had the effect of actually increasing Jack's vulnerability. Because he could not afford to show vulnerabilities, this means that he had to maintain an artificial image of strength and power, or else, he would lose

status with the group. This image was so important that a crack in it would have had a devastating effect on his ego and self-esteem. Jack's outward image always had to be protected and Samantha took great effort to protect his fragile ego, for reasons already discussed in her case study.

Also Jack was always in the lime-light. Others watched him at all times, and to keep his image in high regard, he had to constantly monitor all reactions of others. He was constantly on guard. He never missed a dialogue group. He wanted his supporters with him in the small group discussion and he hated to be separated from them. For example, on March 7, Jack tried to distract several boys from watching the tapes. However, when I told him that since he was bored with watching the tapes of the dialogues, he could go find something more interesting in the library, he immediately pulled himself in line in order to remain in the classroom.

This type of leadership role exerted a great deal of pressure on Jack and certainly the strain could be seen in Jack's face. Not being permitted to show his vulnerabilities was a huge price for Jack to pay. He had to learn when to control his feelings and also to express them only in socially acceptable ways that are culturally defined.

One of these acceptable ways, as culturally defined by the group, that came out in one of the dialogues, was the ability to withstand pain. Also Jack would express his emotion in the form of a bad temper and this was an acceptable

trait to his classmates, which reinforced Jack not to accept responsibility for managing his emotions [bad temper].

Recall also how Jack really believed in the superiority of males [sexism] such that he underestimated Samantha's considerable support--a lethal mistake, as it turned out. From this it can also be assumed that Jack believes in his own superiority over others and in this way, he gets caught up into thinking that the artificial image he tries to portray to others is also a fact--that is, he begins to believe in his own myth-making and this can have very serious effects on his self-esteem eventually, as he drifts further from perceiving a more accurate sense of reality.

Jack not only distanced himself from affective growth potential, but has channelled himself further away from academics and, therefore he becomes less able to make choices, the further that he proceeds along this path. In this way, as alternative options become more limited, he will become more rigid or fixed in pursuit of a particular pathway of development.

### Pedagogy

For Jack to become more humanistic in his relationships with others, it is important to try to encourage him to understand the root or origin of his attitudes. His decision to exert power over others has definite consequences that affect him in all facets of his growth and development. For

change to occur, it is important for Jack to understand why he has this need to control others and where the attitude comes from. He needs to learn to understand his situation when he doesn't always measure up to group standards and what pressures occur when group standards change. He needs to see his own victimization under the system and how it robs him of being humanistic. What kind of a self-perception is nurtured from being in a power position? Is he caught in an all or nothing situation? That is, if he loses his leadership to another contender, what are the implications for his self-esteem, his life? Certainly, Jack, despite his high social intelligence and his position as leader, does not impress me as a happy youth. He frequently appears tense and, at times, explosive. He refers to this himself as his "bad temper," but it may mask his own frustration with the role of oppressor that he has been conditioned to assume.

As to consequences, he needs to know what pressures this attitude brings with it, and how others perceive him. For example, the Hamburger character in the play was necessary to show Jack how others resent being bullied. Once Jack gains an insight into the consequences of his actions and aspirations, he might, then, make a more informed decision on just how to proceed with his life rather than to play out a role that has been culturally defined for him. Gaining more insight into what he finds motivating might provide him with a heightened degree of decision-making capacity.

The important thing to remember when working with Jack is

not to try to take power directly away from him. This leaves him with nothing, but rather in the process of empowering others, it is only fair to Jack that he, too, becomes aware of alternative ways, other than to have power over others, to feel good about himself.

It might have happened that his quest for power over others resulted from an ego that was hurt by an attempt to achieve in a particular value system of schooling that offered fewer opportunities for his success and therefore he needed to get self-esteem in other ways.

I think one way of involving Jack in the curriculum is to let all of the students make up or bring a code to the class for discussion. However, I would also create a code to specifically address the concerns that I have for Jack's welfare. Societies define sensitivity along gender lines by encouraging a gender response to the same emotion. For example, many males express their emotion through temper tantrums and many females through crying. The class could benefit on codes that would encourage this kind of analysis.

Jack needs to value the quality of sensitivity in himself instead of seeing it as a weakness. Samantha reinforced his fear about crying in one of the dialogues. Also, Jack perceived Edward as reacting very coolly under pressure from several girls in the class when he confronted Janice and she broke into tears. This cool detached attitude impressed Jack and his admiration for Edward's lack of emotion was considerable in the light of his own, more emotional

responses. For this reason, he perceived Edward as more of a threat than he actually was, because Jack sees his own sensitivity [being emotional] as a handicap or vulnerability to be controlled and hidden rather than to be appreciated.

### Janet

Janet is an intelligent, independent thinker with a lot of ambition. She has a younger sister in grade four and both parents work in professional careers. Janet enjoyed the dialogue discussions. She feels very attached to her ideas and enters into debates over them, regardless of any support from peers. I saw Jack roll his eyes when Janet spoke, and he expressed general indifference to her remarks, that is, when he was not openly antagonistic. Whether Janet was overtly aware of Jason's attempts to undermine her or not, is not known, but at any rate, this did not seem to effect the way Janet responded in dialogue. In this regard, she is very different from Samantha.

Jack might be threatened by Janet, and for good reason.

As an opponent, she is strong, vocal and intelligent. She made a formidable foe at times as she took on both Jack and Samantha in the dialogues and occupied the antagonist role with either, or both, of them, as issues came up in the dialogues. She would have been even more powerful, except that she was isolated from others in this classroom. However, because she is female, Jack would underestimate her potential

for leadership. From his position, he already has to keep Samantha in check and the thought of another assertive female would be a source of aggravation to him, but no great concern.

He did not get a full opportunity to perceive just how powerful Janet was, for basically two reasons. Firstly, Samantha always held Janet in check, as evidenced in their argument in the October 9 dialogue over the issue about whether Samantha's argument was a reasonable one. A further description of this incident follows shortly.

Secondly, because the in-group was male, neither Janet, nor Samantha could gain entrance to it. Whereas Samantha did not acknowledge this until later in the dialogues, Janet had an understanding of this from the start. Should it ever have occurred to these two girls, Samantha and Janet, to join forces, Jack would have been in deep trouble, sporting his attitude and values in this classroom. However, Jack was not aware of this danger. He was only concerned about the challenges from other males, like Edward, who envied and coveted his leadership position in the classroom.

In the dialogues Janet stood alone, most times, to express her opinions, and was not particularly popular with her peers. Very often, Janet took the role of challenging her classmates thinking in the dialogues. She questions other people's assumptions, and this did not always make her popular. However, it did stimulate their thinking and they probed more deeply into the issues, because of Janet's involvement.



Not only was Janet not afraid of challenging others directly, but she sometimes expanded her role to include that of being the class conscience. She pointed out to various class members when they stepped out of line. This nobility escaped Jack's and Samantha's admiration.

In the beginning October 4 dialogue on friendships, Janet reminded others, when discussing the art of keeping friends, about how important it is not to talk behind their backs. In the dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Peer Values" after the round robin, Janet focused in on a classroom problem.

Jamie, you know how you said you don't think you should be making fun of other girls in front of other people . . . I don't mean to say that you're doing it all the time . . . but a lot of people are being teased, such as Janice . . . they shouldn't be saying things like this in front of people . . . I don't think that's really fair.  
(November 15)

I frequently got the impression that others viewed this as Janet feeling superior to them both in an academic sense as well as in a moral sense. This attitude could have also contributed to Samantha's and Jack's lack of respect for her.

Although this friction was evidenced in many circumstances, it became most visible in the dialogue on "Sibling Conflicts" when Samantha and Janet debated an issue on responsibility. Samantha said that it's not unreasonable to assume that Mrs. Cullin [Joey and Casey's mother in the

code story] liked the sound of Casey's drum and Janet responded in an indignant tone of voice, "Well, it's not reasonable! You don't make comments like, 'Here, play these drums really loudly so that you can get your brother up for school!'" (October 9).

This incensed Samantha, who literally screamed back, "You were saying that my opinion was unreasonable!" To Janet this may seem like a very inappropriate strategy for a parent to use, and the insult that Samantha may have felt might be two-sided. Not only was Samantha's argument being called "unreasonable," but perhaps her parents' parenting skills were being called into question here, if Samantha considers that this is a reasonable response by a parent. The tone in Janet's voice might have conveyed this message to Samantha because, certainly, Samantha's reaction conveyed insult. This may account, in part, for her refusal to back down until she got Janet to accept her assumption as just as "reasonable" as hers. However, Janet was only willing to concede that there were 2 different opinions here, and Samantha was not willing to drop the argument either. The argument remained unresolved to the end of the dialogue.

Janet is flexible in her concept of friendship and includes adults as some of her closest friends. As a matter of fact, I think Janet is much more comfortable conversing with adults than she is with peers. I suspect that, being the elder of 2 children in the family, she is probably in adult company quite a bit. On many occasions in the dialogue, I

felt Janet supporting my ideas and she often took the dialogue in directions that supported my intent.

Janet's friends were Janice and Carol. Janice has a history of difficulty with peer relationships and was really only vocal in one dialogue when she challenged Edward on his lack of understanding about a problem that was very close to her. She took the stance of challenging any patriarchal system that would stand in the way of her getting a good education and threatening her career options. Janet would admire this in Janice because she is ambitious herself.

Carol is a very pleasant, quiet girl who has very little to say about anything in public. She is quiet and passive and therefore takes direction from Janet without complaint or challenge. However, she is a very good listener and wrote freely of her thoughts and feelings in her journal to me. The journal was one tool that really worked for Carol. Without it, I would have learned a lot less about her.

### Sexism

Janet ignored Jack and Samantha's attempts to trivialize the dialogues on sexism and worked hard at trying to discuss the issue seriously. Also, she tried to influence Samantha. Time and again, she tried to involve Samantha in the discussions. In the October 30 dialogue on "Sexism and School Curriculum: Sex Role Stereotyping" Janet described her own experiences with sexist attitudes, despite frequent attempts

by Jack and Samantha, in particular, to distract her from the seriousness of the topic.

Janice talked about Janet's experiences with sexism when boys and girls took different tests in horseback riding. Despite frequent interruptions by others, Janet told about a boy in gymnastics whose sexist attitude about forbidding girls to work on the rings, was held in check by Janet's female gymnastics teacher. Also, she told about a male friend of hers making fun of her when she was proud of her knitting. Despite her difficulty projecting her soft voice, Janet took every opportunity to show her own attitude towards the issue. She showed contempt for society's expectations of the female role.

You gotta learn to cook . . . sew, but you can't learn to do horseback riding because that's what boys do . . . Girls are supposed to sit there looking amazed at how well the boys can ride horses . . . supposed to sit at home and cook the meals for a husband . . . supposed to make him comfortable. (October 30)

Janet is very ambitious and keen on getting a university education. She described her attitude towards education.

I, for one, intend to go to college and learn . . . if anyone tells me . . . you shouldn't be going . . . you're a girl . . . [I'm] not going to listen . . . I just don't think that's fair . . . they can learn just as well as boys can . . . I think people who say that women don't have to go to college should take a look at Eugenie

Clark. . . she's solved a lot of mysteries and she's trained sharks . . . a lot of her knowledge came from college. (October 30)

Yet, in this same dialogue, Janet fell into the trap of trying to compete with the boys on the value of strength. Instead of questioning male superiority because of physical strength, she tried to infer that women are as strong and as brave as men.

Some people think that men are more capable of heavy labour . . . and the men should do all the heavy work no matter what . . . . Some people might be brought up to think that men are better than women. Eugenie Clark often has to weigh her sharks alone and let's see . . . some men . . . trying to lift a great white shark . . . I read this in a book . . . women are a little bit stronger per pound of body weight, but men are stronger overall because they're heavier than women, so if men and women were the same weight, then women would probably be a tiny bit stronger than men.

The boys had a good time with this issue as they discussed male superiority because of physical strength. They gave examples of hockey slapshots, etc. Janet tried to question the value again, but showed her confusion over the equality issue. Because it is common knowledge that women's sports are undervalued and held in lower esteem compared to their male counterparts, she was at a distinct disadvantage in pursuing this argument.

Eventually, Janet became more articulate as she struggled throughout the dialogue to work through her confusions and came around to questioning the value.

Women and men are just equal in their feelings . . . how well they do things in different areas. They're not different at all, if you count everything that people do. If you count everything, not just sports, not just strength, they're about equal.

In the dialogue on "Sexism: Pressure on Girls to Conform to Societal Expectations" she spoke again about girls' education. "A girl's education is just as important as a boy's and Karen's parents can split the cost of the college education between the two children . . . I don't think it's fair to say . . . that women don't need a college education" (November 6).

Later, Janet described for the class what can happen when a woman doesn't get the education she needs, and her husband dies or divorces her, leaving her with children to raise. The topic on sexism held great interest for Janet. In her journal she wrote about a movie she watched and brought it in for the class to view.

I watched a movie on the way children are brought up. It seems that, in our society, we teach children different roles from the day they are born. I wonder why we do this. I think maybe we do this because people like it that way. They like girls to be more dependent and boys less emotional. If that's true, though, why do we like

it that way? That's something to puzzle out sometime.

(November 6)

Despite her sensitization to the issue of sexism, Janet was observed acting and still thinking along gender lines. In the dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure and Drug Abuse" when Fred learned about his friend's drug problem, Janet espoused the female's viewpoint. "Fred should tell an adult right away about what was happening at the party" (December 3). This was an interesting strategy proposed by Janet and the types of strategies suggested in this dialogue seemed to be separated along gender lines. All the girls, including Samantha this time, thought Fred should tell an adult about it. They expressed their sense of personal responsibility to intervene, and I wonder if this is not part of the nurturing role expected of females. Furthermore, it is as if they felt more powerless than their male counterparts, and therefore would refer the problem to a higher authority.

The male position on this strategy was to handle it themselves, by talking directly to their friend instead of "telling on him." Joseph, eventually, labelled Janet's reaction as "sissy," making it apparent to all that this is a girl's way of handling the problem. And Edward defined it as a male thing when he said, "You just can't do that! . . . you wouldn't have the guts . . . it's hard to tell on your friends."

Samantha was influenced by Janet's argument and moved closer to the female line. When Edward challenged, Janet

inferred female helplessness. "I have no idea what I'd do. I'd probably panic, leave it alone." However, moments later, when Janet heard Edward's remark about having nothing to do with it, she got more on tract again, with her own feelings and brought in another female attribute, that of guilt. "You'll feel a little less guilty . . . it's better [to tell an adult] than knowing you didn't help at all."

On the dialogue on "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education" Janet described how she thought the ambition of girls got undermined with age.

The girls want good, high-paying jobs, but . . . a lot of the girls get married . . . got to stay at home or sometimes the agencies think that the boys are more capable . . . more likely to hire boys . . . the girls should be given . . . jobs they actually want. (December 11)

Janet showed some of her own feelings of discouragement on women's roles and future prospects,

I think that the comment we made about girls having a very high picture of reality is actually most of the problem because . . . I'm sure a lot of the girls . . . have pictures . . . of doing really important jobs . . . But the problem is, that often [this] just isn't true, and I think that if women just lowered their expectations of what . . . the real world will be like when they actually get out there . . . then maybe it would be a lot easier for them when they discover they can't get this



certain job.

Perhaps Janet does not recognize that this reality is not fixed. Therefore she showed a sign of general hopelessness in dealing with this issue. To her way of thinking, if you can't change the reality, then the next obvious solution is to change your expectations, that is, to reduce them. Perhaps Janet echoed the opinion of many of the individual participants in this research study, who, in fact, lowered their expectations the more they aged. In fact, the newspaper article itself has this component of myth in it, when it reads in part, "The change may be because of, 'a healthy sense of reality gained with age,' or more negatively 'an increase in the awareness of the barriers that young women face in achieving their aspirations.'."

Janet may have believed the myth that this article is implying, that is, that the reality is unchangeable, and that as women age, they learn to accept their reality with maturity. Part of Janet's problem here may be that she has too high a regard for the printed text--a common problem among aspiring academics. Because it is a newspaper article, she may have assumed that it is the complete truth and therefore drew her analysis from this. Until Janet assumes a more critical approach that includes reading articles and books more critically, she will limit her understanding of some of these issues. Freire (1990) speaks about this category of perception and describes it as being adaptive, rather than creative or "integrated."

Integration with one's context, as distinguished from adaptation, is a distinctly human activity. Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality. Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality *plus* the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality. To the extent that man (sic) loses his (sic) ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his (sic) decisions are no longer his (sic) own because they result from external prescriptions, he (sic) is no longer integrated. Rather, he (sic) has adapted. He (sic) has "adjusted." Unpliant men (sic), with a revolutionary spirit, are often termed "maladjusted."

The integrated person is person as *Subject*. In contrast, the adaptive person is person as object, adaptation representing at most a weak form of self-defense. If man (sic) is incapable of changing reality, he (sic) adjusts himself (sic) instead. Adaptation is behaviour characteristic of the animal sphere; exhibited by man (sic), it is symptomatic of his dehumanization. Throughout history men (sic) have attempted to overcome the factors which make them accommodate or adjust, in a struggle--constantly threatened by oppression--to attain their full humanity. (pp. 4-5)

Janet shared her own aspirations with me in her journal writing. "If you are wondering what I would like to do when I grow up, I'd like to be a vet . . . I'd also like to get

several college degrees. I don't think I will get married, but you never know" (December 11).

### Classroom Status and Social Groupings

Janet was not a member of the in-group and she was aware of it. In fact, Janet did not really feel appreciated by her peers at all, in this classroom. She easily identified with those rejected vegetables in "The Sandwich" play. Janet believes that there is a place for everyone and she said this in dialogue:

I think that the play means you should always let a variety of people join in, or anybody who wants to join in . . . because they could have a lot more to contribute than some people did in the group or they could just make it almost perfect. (November 22)

In this dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Hegemonic Pressure and Control" Janet's energies were focused, for the most part, on issues of rejection and she shared her difficulty in trying to understand why certain people are rejected from groups. Janet said she thought there was something significant about Jenny [in the code story] being new to the school and that this was the reason why she was rejected. Janet's superficial analysis in this case is believed to be connected to a resistance on her part to look beyond this surface analysis and to critically search for reasons behind Jenny's rejection. This will be discussed

further in the section describing Janet's resistance.

Janet is still quite naive in some respects and I get the impression that a lot of her knowledge is book knowledge, which she values over her own experience. In the open dialogue Janet said:

I'm kinda wondering if Hamburger was a real person . . . how he could have kinda gotten (sic) like that because most people realize that everybody is equal in life . . . if you total up everything that they do, everybody is equal in life and most people realize that. I'm kinda wondering how if Hamburger was a real person, . . . he could not realize that? (November 22)

There are at least two possible interpretations of Janet's statement here and I would like to share them both. Janet may still have had difficulty recognizing the basis for discrimination and for the motivations behind assuming power positions. She recognized that there was a contradiction but, because she is inconsistent in the questioning of values, and who determines the values, she didn't take this analysis any further than a theoretical statement of the equality between people. She acknowledged that people are all saying discrimination is bad, but she also knew people, like the Hamburger character in the code, deny that his underlings are equal to him. She put the total blame on Hamburger for having turned out wrong, instead of looking more globally at the values and how everyone participates, in one way or another, in supporting these values. However, Janet's "wondering"

about how Hamburger got like that, is a good example of the depth of her reflective practises and adds more evidence to her desire to understand the problems that she was perceiving.

Another possible interpretation of Janet's statement above is that she is more politically astute than I, at first perceived and this interpretation came to me much later in the analysis. Her "I wonder" statements in several dialogues had the effect of getting others involved in following up her own statements and it is just possible that this may have been Janet's intention. It is also possible that Janet, through using these "I wonder" statements was attempting to feel out how others felt about Hamburger in this regard. Her apparent naivety may be a just a cover for her to feel out her own political space in this classroom.

At any rate, others agreed with Janet, that it was Hamburger's problem in that he was probably brought up in a tough neighbourhood. Janet, in fact, went further to deny the responsibility of others in this situation and to single out Hamburger as the only villain. "Maybe that's how Jenny got rejected in the group in the last dialogue group. It was one main person . . . Hamburger did that with Onion and everybody else rejected Onion." Janet was referring to someone, with too much power and this is interesting because Samantha also inferred this in the last dialogue when she spoke about being rejected by "a singular person."

Also, Janet herself might have felt better if she thought her own rejection came from one person and not from a lot of

class members. By blaming Hamburger alone, she also absolves herself and others from having any responsibility for Hamburger being the way he is. However, when others took a risk, Janet, too, ventured forward. Edward said Onion and Pickle should have stuck up for themselves, and others should have stuck up for them, too. This gave Janet more confidence. She said, "I think Hamburger is kind of a coward . . . kinda scared of that happening . . . he's just one person . . . if the other people like Pickle and Onion . . . decide to challenge Hamburger, he's probably not gonna beat them."

Jack was noticeably quiet during all this. While Edward took a tough approach and said Hamburger will be rejected and beaten up, Janet showed a softer approach. "Well, not necessarily rejected out of the group . . . they might just say . . . you should just stop this."

In this way, Janet's response was more humanistic. This stance contrasts with the oppressor stance taken by Edward. Freire (1970) describes how important it is for true liberatory leadership to consider that all people, including past oppressors, have a place in the new order, not as oppressors, mind you, but as participants in a new democracy.

Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors, but rather

restorers of the humanity of both. (p. 28)

Janet was deeply involved in this November 22 dialogue, as she struggled with her own resistance to learn more about rejection from groups. When I brought up a new consideration that some people make club rules for aspiring members because they want to see if these new members will allow themselves to be controlled by authority [established members], Janet shared some personal experiences which may provide more insight into why she was not an accepted member of this in-group.

She told the class about refusing to play a game at a birthday party where she was expected to do whatever she was dared to do. Janet showed her independent spirit, once again, in not going along with the group and I came to a better understanding of why she had not been accepted in the in-group, or at least Janet's rationalization for it. She described a long history of independent spiritedness with this family story.

My mom was in one of those group initiations . . . she realized she hated this stupid group . . . started another group . . . when I was trying to get from a Tweenie into a Brownie . . . for the initiation I had to dance around a stupid mirror . . . so eventually I quit Brownies. (November 22)

### Racism

On January 15 Cultural invasion was the discussion issue

and Janet seemed very interested in it. From the sophisticated nature of her comments, I would guess that she had talked with her parents about the issue. During my presence, in the small group discussion, she said that White people think they are all wonderful and they think that the White culture is best. Also, the White culture was forcing the Natives to adopt a White culture, just as Adolph Hitler said the whole world should be German.

Aloud in the dialogue, she said, "The White man . . . didn't realize that all cultures are equal . . . the Indian (sic) culture is just as good as theirs." To illustrate her point, she told a story about a conversation between a White leader and a Native leader, discussing why each felt his own house was better.

When I asked if the article [code] changed any of their perspectives on Christian missionaries, Janet brought up the important issue of choice.

Well, it's good . . . [to] spread the Christian faith if the people wanted to have the Christian faith, but if they didn't, they should just . . . leave the people . . . they knew perfectly well that most of the Indians would say, "No," but they went anyway . . . they forgot about the . . . people without religion in the cities where they live and they weren't doing as much about these people as they were about the people who . . . didn't want to be [Christian].

Janet showed a high level of analysis here. She not only



expressed her opinion, but she was also able to substantiate it well with a critique of Christian missionary policy. Others listened intently. The room was silent and there were no distractions this day, as Janet spoke. This atmosphere of respectful silence contrasted sharply with that which characterized her contributions in the early dialogues, which had been controlled by Jack. The class had a new respect for Janet, whether they agreed with her or not and whether they liked Janet or not. With this kind of recognition, it is no wonder that Janet liked the dialogues as much as she did.

Janet compared the two cultures for their values and spoke about the Native culture living in harmony with nature instead of polluting it. She also said that it was good that the White culture had advancements like medicine.

She made some good connections between racism and social group status when she responded to Samantha's remark, "People don't have to be Black and one White for one of them to . . . think that the other is inferior because one's richer . . . you can be racist to that person."

When I asked why racism exists, Janet said that racism existed because most people are scared about the differences between them, "so they're a little nervous about going up to see them, so they turn that into thinking that they're bad, so that they don't have to feel guilty about not going up to them." When I said about focusing on ways that we are alike, instead of our differences, Janet agreed that would help, "Because until you know somebody personally, you can't really

say anything about them."

I asked why people hide their racism. Samantha said it is because of a dislike of foreigners. Janet brought up the fact that lies and myths are created to justify and keep racism alive from generation to generation.

Racist children . . . have no idea why their parents feel this way and they know their parents taught them to feel this way, but they've got no reason for them to feel this way, so they make up a reason . . . kind of need some reassurance that this is a good reason . . . because they're unsure that they should be doing it.

I asked if people are not getting to express how they feel about racism and that this is part of the problem. Janet said that educated, middle-class people do not want to be perceived as being racist.

Yeah, I think some of it is that they don't want to admit it, really . . . they know that those people are different . . . they don't really want to make friends with them, so they give them reasons . . . also, because, well, just like Samantha says, there are more nonracist people now . . . they want to fit in and hide their feelings that they don't seem like bad guys to all of those people . . . that person who's racist.

This statement was made before the round robin and I challenged everyone in the class to respond to my suggestion that we are all racist to some degree. Only Samantha and Janet responded openly. In the round robin Janet said,

I would kinda agree with her [Mrs. McDade], because . . . probably most of us has looked at a new person and said, "Well this person . . . over there with the younger kids . . . looks real stupid. I guess, I don't want to play with her." I think everybody has done something a little like that, you know . . . once or twice in their life.

Janet got very involved after the official ending to the dialogue, saying that everyone should, "go home tonight and just think about what we were talking about today!" Janet's passion for this dialogue showed in her journal entry.

I think today's dialogue was a very good one, possibly the best! It stirred up our thoughts, especially the question you asked. Do you think my point about everybody shunning somebody once in their life is letting us know there is the roots of racism in everyone is true? I do. Goodbye and I'll miss the dialogues.

Except for the opportunity to view a couple of their tapes on March 7, the dialogues were now over. Janet was unhappy about this and signed her last journal entry with an unhappy face.

### Resistance

Resistance was present in all learners as we all shared the difficulty in uncovering what is not comfortable. Janet was no exception. She didn't wear her resistance as visibly

as Jack or Samantha, but it was there. Resistance in the dialogues on social issues was a necessary part of the growth and development of all who participated and we all showed it to varying degrees.

Janet's resistance first became apparent in the November 15 dialogue, "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Peer Values." In the small group discussion preceding the dialogue, Janet's group [Carol, Janice, Margie, Jane and Rose] admitted that Jenny was rejected from her group. In the reporting period of the dialogue, this group felt that Jenny was rejected just because she was not new any more and they defined this as the problem. This superficial treatment surprised me as it was not typical of Janet's analyses. I did not recognize this as resistance at first, but thought that possibly they felt that they had solved the problem already and that this was what prevented any further analysis.

Even in the round robin that followed, Janet wondered why others didn't react to her "solution." Because she received no feedback on this, she felt that she was having a communication problem with others and therefore she tried to explain it further, "If anybody's wondering what we said . . . once she's not a new girl any more . . . not bother with her any more because they don't really like her." Again, this clarification got no response from others.

Then Janet surprised me again. In the small group discussion, she had admitted during my presence, that Jenny was rejected. When she got no response to her "solution" in

the dialogue that the rejection was because Jenny was new to the school, she had to rethink her argument. Therefore, instead of analyzing Jenny's rejection from a deeper perspective, she changed her position on the issue of rejection completely and in the open dialogue, she went along with Samantha, to deny Jenny's being rejected from the group. She said, in a spirit of comradeship to Samantha, "And Samantha, you know how you said that she's got really excited, for example over-reacting, about being rejected for that one mall trip? I agree with you."

I was very surprised at Janet blaming the victim in this code and wonder if the discussion got too close to the core of a personal problem, and she felt she had to distance herself from it. It was, at this point, that I suspected that there was resistance at work here and that Janet's discomfort about being rejected from some classmates made it uncomfortable for her to discuss this issue publicly. I realized that Janet's rejection from the group must have been a lot more painful to her than I had initially recognized.

Samantha's reaction to this budding comradeship was to grasp, thankfully, at Janet's remark, by repeating that Jenny was taking the rejection too seriously. Also I wondered if this could have been Janet's ticket to admission to the in-group. I had decided to intervene before I lost both of them. I reviewed the data with them to confirm that there was no doubt that Jenny was rejected from the group, "That's three refusals right there in that one week."

However Janet still persisted, "I think that they're taking the mall trip a little too seriously . . . maybe . . . they couldn't invite Jenny along because there is no more room for her [in the car]." Jack, always perceptive when it came to seeing a vulnerability and also, perhaps, in the spirit of trying to put her in her place, was quick to react. He challenged Janet, "Yeah, but it didn't say that!" Janet challenged back, "Yeah, but it could! . . . that Jenny hasn't considered the fact that could be behind why she couldn't go."

It is interesting to note that the closer Janet got to a more powerful position herself, for example, in the last two dialogues, the more she seemed to be under the influence of peer pressure. In the November 15 dialogue, Janet was being influenced by peer pressure. She brought the issue of peer pressure up with her group in the small group discussion, but then worked hard to deny it in the dialogue itself.

Listening to the comments of others in the dialogue helped Janet to sort through some of these difficulties. After Edward and Sally strategized on what alternatives they had, Janet added her way of coping with rejection from peers by discussing other alternatives for friendships, "They [Children] got parents . . . friends who are adults . . . dozens of friends . . . just because one rejects them, they don't have to worry about it . . . doesn't have to sit alone all the time." (November 15)

Joseph and Edward analyzed it further and I intervened to channel their thoughts, "Do you think it's important for her

to understand why the group rejected her?" Sally thought maybe Jenny was over-reacting which was also Samantha's position. At the time I wondered if I had come on too strongly with this issue and that perhaps the code was too intrusive right now for them to handle. But, then, Janet showed some growth in her thinking on this issue.

I think that Jenny is dealing with this . . . two years ago I saw this . . . show . . . she wanted to get in . . . hottest group in the entire school . . . They were just taking her kinda (sic) for an initiation into the group and they didn't like what they seen, so they weren't going to let her into the group.

I pushed Janet, through further questioning, into deeper analysis of the group's values, and she may well have been talking about her own situation when she articulated why Jenny in the code was not part of the in-group in her class.

Probably . . . whether she was willing . . . to laugh about kids that are . . . fatter or have different clothes or . . . seemed cool . . . and I don't think she was "in" the way she was supposed to be according to this [group] . . . so they didn't want her in the group . . . I think it's what kind of activities she did out of school . . . what kinds of things she talked about when they were sitting together. Maybe, if they were sitting together, she started talking about, oh, say, a visit from her grandparents [I observed Jack rolling his eyes when Janet spoke about her grandmother in one of the past

dialogues.] . . . that group was always taking about clothes, make up, jewellery . . . everything you do counts . . . in these group. . . . they're going for the things that don't count most.

I supported her with, "So you're saying that the values of this group are questionable?"

Rather than challenge the class's value system directly, Janet changed gears and instead rationalized why Jenny would find it irresistible to try to become part of this in-group again.

Jenny was feeling sorry for herself . . . doesn't have any new friends in the school . . . going to be bored this entire school year . . . then she got . . . instant acceptance from . . . the hottest group . . . I don't need to make any other friends because I'm one of the most important people . . . I'm just going to try to stay in this group because it's a really great group.

Such rationalizations, Freire (1970) says, are part of the middle-class's way of dealing with "limit-situations." The limit-situation in Janet's situation is the examination of peer values. Limit-situations are clarified and analyzed by Professor Alvaro Vieira Pinto (1960, Vol. 11, p. 284) as "not the impassable boundaries where possibilities end, but the real boundaries where all possibilities begin"; they are not "the frontier which separates being from nothingness, but the frontier which separates being from being more." (p. 89)

Freire (1970) is helpful in my speculating further about



why Janet responded this way in confronting this limit-situation.

In general a dominated consciousness which has not yet perceived a limit-situation in its totality apprehends only its epiphenomena and transfers to the latter the inhibiting force which is the property of the limit-situation . . . . Individuals of the middle-class often demonstrate this type of behaviour, although in a different way from the peasant. Their fear of freedom leads them to erect defense mechanisms and rationalizations which conceal the fundamental, emphasize the fortuitous, and deny concrete reality. In the face of a problem whose analysis would lead to the uncomfortable perception of a limit-situation, their tendency is to remain on the periphery of the discussion and resist any attempt to reach the heart of the question. They are even annoyed when someone points out a fundamental proposition which explains the fortuitous or secondary matters to which they had been assigning primary importance. (p. 94)

In the dialogue on peer values Sally, a classmate, described her own way of coping with rejection from Jack's group, when she said Jenny could meet new friends through sports [like she does] but Janet explained that the problem was more complicated than that.

But Sally, there's a problem with that because if she [Jenny] goes and makes friends with people in sport

groups . . . the problem is that she could make a lot of friends which are out of the group she's in, [the classroom?] and who are the group [that gets made] fun of and she'll feel really rotten knowing that these people are making fun of her and she'll also feel really rotten knowing that if people find out that she's making friends with these people [the rejected ones], then she might be kicked out of the group and the group is the most important thing in her life right now.

Janet brought the problem directly into the classroom, despite her initial resistance to do so, by describing her own feelings of being rejected in the classroom. She had examined her own rejection in light of her friendship with Janice [one of the girls who gets made fun of by class leaders] and the fact that she is not athletic. Although Janet said she copes, through outside friendships, obviously she was not feeling secure enough about this situation in the classroom, where she and her friends were mocked by the in-group. I got the impression there were a lot of ways the in-group exerted its influence behind the scenes.

Still, Janet was not completely satisfied, either with Sally's evasion of the problem or with her own rationalization of it. She wanted to pursue the analysis further. There were some good points made in the round robin and Janet then tried to figure out why a person gets rejected from a group. She rationalized it this way:

I'm kind of wondering why . . . they don't want her in

the group any more . . . if I had been dropped by the group, I would ask [why] . . . and if they gave me an answer . . . it was an unreasonable one, . . . then I just wouldn't get involved in . . . any group like that.

In this way Janet assumed a superior air above the in-group. The dialogue ended when Samantha tried to blame the victim, Jenny, by saying she didn't even try to ask the group. This could be interpreted to mean that Janet didn't deserve to be a member because she didn't even try to become one. In the general class letter that followed, I said that it was my experience that, most often, the particular reason behind rejection is deliberately made obscure to hide the group's values to nonmembers.

Janet 's resistance initially obscured analysis of the issue of rejection because it was painful to her. Yet, in the process of the dialogue, she worked through her difficulties to a great degree. She came to the point, by the end of this dialogue, of making a decision not to be a member because she did not share the same values. In a way, she partially overcame the limit-situation of examining peer values, although she has yet to work out the limit-situation involving her air of superiority. Nevertheless, through the dialogues, she began to inch her way to a greater understanding of the problem of her rejection.

She needs to learn more about how she is perceived by others as being moralistic and superior-feeling, and how this affects her acceptance into certain groups. This will be a

tremendous challenge that lies ahead for Janet and would represent a greater limit-situation for her to work through. However, given this present experience of having worked through a limit-situation already, on this day, I feel that Janet will eventually come to this kind of self-analysis.

### Learning

Janet was open to learning through the dialogues and embraced the opportunity to express her views. She took a very active role, both in the areas of verbal participation and in the listening part, as well. She benefitted greatly from this participation. In the dialogues, her seriousness about the issues was apparent. She took a position from the beginning without being totally influenced by others. She has well-defined opinions and many times she knew where she was going with an argument.

Janet likes to take on the role of teacher, and in the October 9 dialogue on "Sibling Conflicts" she not only told what she thought, but she also tried to explain to the others why she thought the way she did. In this way, she taught others about her experiences and how to account for an opinion. She reads extensively and shared information. In her December 4 journal, she wrote, "Do you know how Coca-Cola got its name? . . . My theory is that when the cocaine was taken out of Coca-Cola, it was too late. Lots of people were addicted."

Janet's high expectations of herself became visible when she shared her concerns about marks and high standing in the October 25 dialogue. Janet turned silent when others claimed an 80 in a mathematics test was a good mark. Samantha challenged Janet further. She said that maybe Timmy [in the code] expected too much of himself. Janet's parents are both successful professionals and she may worry about her own talent or academic potential. She responded to Samantha's challenge:

Maybe he just doesn't have natural talent, like in horseback riding if you don't have a natural seat, you're going to have to work really hard with lots of practise hours . . . Maybe . . . his dad was really good at baseball or his mom was the star of the women's baseball team . . . For my parent's sake, I've just got to be good . . . like what I went through a year ago. Every time I did something wrong, I would just go down in the dumps and I would sit in my room for hours, just taking things and throwing them [She's laughing now.] against the wall . . . and my sister would say, "Oh, Janet must have done something wrong again."

I think we all got to learn more about Janet from remarks like this, in this dialogue. I know that Janet is a very high academic achiever, with excellent potential and, yet, through this statement and others like it, I learned that she harboured great fears. Janet may need a lot of attention to talk through her thoughts and feelings and she may feel that

she isn't getting enough of this kind of reassurance and attention from the adults in her life.

Janet listened to Jack and Samantha explain to Joseph that the code stories were meant to get them talking about things, and that not everything was mentioned in the story. Then Janet directed everyone back to the code to explore another possibility for Timmy's [a code character] difficulties.

Maybe . . . his father was a great baseball player and he says, "Dad can you help me . . . and his father says "Not now, I'm b'sy," and anytime he asks, he says, "I've got to do this. I've got to do that . . . He's always putting it off . . . possibly Tim's parents aren't encouraging him enough . . . he should go and tell someone he knows everything he's feeling, why he's depressed . . . if you talk to someone, it would help you . . . if he just wouldn't take everything so hard, he would do a lot better . . . he's too busy feeling sorry for himself. (October 25)

Perhaps, Janet also feels that she needs more attention from her teachers as well. She said about Timmy's problem, Maybe . . . [he] doesn't get enough attention from the coach . . . and he says, "Oh well, if I'm not going to get the help until next week, then I'm not going to bother to get help at all . . . the coaches are so busy or they don't pay attention to him.

I commented positively about this being logical because

we know that Timmy has a negative feeling about himself and this attitude has its roots somewhere. I commented more about the 80% mark that was previously discussed. I said that I thought 80 was a good mark. Several classmates added that maybe Timmy's parents were expecting too much because he was used to making higher than 80. Sally talked about making the principal's list in Junior High and Janet said that,

maybe he says, "Gosh I just ruined my math average . . . I'm going to have to stay back or go into another class and I won't know anything" . . . [He needs] extra help all the time . . . maybe he thinks 80 % is the worse mark he's gotten . . . [He may think] "if I get an 80 %, it'll ruin my math average."

Then Samantha challenged Janet with the fact that maybe Timmy is too much of a perfectionist, who always has to make 100%. This challenge was good for Janet to consider, and after a few moments, Janet gave us more insight into the extent of her anxieties.

Maybe . . . if he likes math a lot he thinks he should be able to get a 100% on all his tests . . . and then he doesn't . . . so he feels really bad . . . it's his favourite subject . . . would get into his permanent record card or maybe . . . my I.Q. is gonna be way down . . . all because I got 80 [%] on that test . . . it sounds silly . . . just because he got these questions wrong, he's gonna have a really low I. Q. . . . Samantha, remember how you said, "Why did he depend on baseball?"

Maybe he depends on baseball to escape from problems that he's having with big kids . . . at school . . . maybe his parents are having problems . . . and he plays baseball so he can get away from arguing . . . [Timmy might say], "when I'm away from home so much, they can't yell at me," and they're yelling at each other, so maybe that's why he's playing baseball.

Although possible, it may be too much to assume that this came directly out of Janet's own personal experience. but I have knowledge her close friend's parents are, presently, going through a divorce and it is more likely that she is representing some of her friend's concerns in this analysis, as well as her own. Maybe every time her own parents have a disagreement, she fears a divorce could happen in her own family as well.

This dialogue on October 25 provides some insight into Janet's possible perfectionist anxiety and concerns. It also lays the foundation for understanding her difficulty in developing into a team player. Wanting to be successful and being somewhat of a perfectionist interfered with her being a team player. Many times, throughout the dialogue, she wanted to accept full responsibility to ensure an excellent product. The data showed that Janet did most of the recording work for her group, week after week. She did not mind carrying less motivated people in her group, and it did not seem to bother her that other groups shared the recording responsibilities more equally than her own. Many times during my presence, in



the small group discussions, I could see Janet directing the group, while others took a passive role with her.

Janet felt comfortable with the concept of leadership and, in theory, seemed to understand the need for group member participation. In the November 22 dialogue when the issue came up about Hamburger making all the decisions, Janet said, "Having a group leader is O.K. . . [but] not O.K. . . . making all the decisions . . . and the friends don't give any contributions, it can really turn out rotten . . . just no fun." Although there was evidence to indicate that Janet had difficulty sharing work with others, it was good to see that this has come into her consciousness, where it was eventually being worked out. Starting with the November 30 dialogue, there was some progress with Janet's social development, as she entrusted the recorder role to others and tried out other roles herself.

Janet's political knowledge grew with her experience in the dialogues. She wanted to gain a voice in the October 4 dialogue but she knew she could not compete with Samantha's voice. Instead she made good use of the space that became available by waiting until there was a quiet period at the end of a more vocal speaker. In this way, she strategized about ways to compensate for her soft voice, as she grew more sensitive to a knowledge of political space and political consequence. She expressed her consciousness of the consequences of her speaking out and hoped it would be a positive experience when she wrote,

I think the play means that you have to let everyone show the talents that they have. Also, everyone should be allowed to give their opinion, feeling safe, that they won't lose people as friends because of it . . . My comments differ now, [after the dialogue] than before in the fact that I now think people should not lose friends because they speak up . . . The dialogue helped me to learn more about the play by hearing other people's feelings and opinions. (November 22)

I could offer Janet no assurances about making and losing friends through risk-taking in dialogue. Such risk-taking is involved in the reality of learning about political space and accepting the consequences of one's actions. Janet learned about such a reality and she grew in her social and political knowledge because of these experiences in dialogue. In the December 3 dialogue, she showed more awareness of how to redirect the conversation on to her own interest areas.

Whereas Jack made use of the question, not only to control the direction of the conversation, but also to ensure follow up by his peers, Janet used a variation of the same idea by beginning with "I wonder" statements. This wondering of Janet's got support from Joseph and others who followed up with responses to Janet's thinking. In this way, Janet had successfully manoeuvred the conversation along lines that supported her interests.

Janet gained more respect in the dialogues, as her political strategies grew. She began showing a greater

influence over Samantha in the December 3 dialogue. She had even managed to encourage Samantha to move her position on an issue. Janet discussed away Samantha's rationalizations and managed to get Samantha to change her former position about the possibility of friends influencing you to take drugs in the December 3 dialogue.

Janet's growing sense of political motive and strategy brought with it a greater sensitivity to the influence of peer pressure. However, with more time in the dialogues, I feel Janet would have learned to come to terms with this, as well, because she is a very reflective thinker.

In her beginning journal entry, Janet wrote about her own learning. "I really like dialogue. The discussions really help me see through other people's eyes." (October 4) In the final journal entry, she wrote,

I think the dialogue is a terrific way to learn. I think that the topics were terrific and I learned that by watching myself [on video tape], I can find things that would be interesting to think about and discuss. I think that the things that interest us most are things that will probably involve us in the next few years. I wish we could have more dialogues. I think that when you are challenged, you learn twice as much as when you just listen or when everybody agrees with you. I wonder why some people think they were boring? I think they're terrific. I wonder what the people's reasons are and I wonder, are they the real reasons? Like you said, some

information people keep quiet . . .

I think that we can learn stuff about ourselves by watching ourselves because you can pick up little things, and then you start thinking, "Gee, I wonder if I could think about that a little more and maybe find something else about myself or about someone else," and also I think that the things that interest us most are stuff that might actually involve us in the next few years, during junior high, and maybe into the first part of high school, because you want to know about that sort of thing . . . . I think that some people may have felt that watching it [March 7 video tapes] was boring, but I think that if you really paid attention to it, you could hear an opinion that you used to think, "Oh, . . . I don't think that's right," but then when you look at it again, later, you might say, . . . but if you really think . . . about certain comments, you can find out that you agree or disagree with them . . . people actually learn more . . . twice as much when you're arguing with someone because you see their point of view and you see your point of view. (March 7)

The code Janet was describing involved watching themselves in dialogue with each other and she recognized its tremendous learning potential. Freire (1970) discusses why and how codification of a particular theme leads to the individual's increased understanding of their viewpoint and perception of reality.

In the process of decoding, the participants externalize their thematics and thereby make explicit their "real consciousness" of the world. As they do this, they begin to see how they themselves acted while actually experiencing the situation they are now analyzing, and thus reach a "perception of their previous perception." By achieving this awareness, they come to perceive reality differently; by broadening the horizon of their perception, they discover more easily in their "background awareness" the dialogical relations between the two dimensions of reality.

By stimulating "perception of the previous perception" and "knowledge of the previous knowledge," decoding stimulates the appearance of a new perception and the development of new knowledge. (p. 108)

### Pedagogy

It is possible that Janet didn't get an opportunity to flex her academic muscle too often outside of the classroom environment because she was excluded from many social groups. Dialogue offered Janet a rare opportunity to get involved in an agenda that is as much social and affective, as it is academic. It is the kind of agenda that Janet needs to develop social skills with people her own age. Janet seemed to be aware of this herself and she remained positive about the dialogues to the very end. In fact, she functioned as my

most vocal supporter.

From analyzing Janet's responses, and understanding her needs through this analysis, I have come to see that it would be beneficial to include codes designed to enhance her perception of how the assumption of certain roles affects acceptance by groups. For example, a code designed with this in mind might enable her to see the consequences of being the "conscience" of the group and how others view any kind of superiority, whether it be academic or moral or both.

Janet may have developed into this role of class conscience because she didn't feel successful competing in the sports area [this group's values] and needed to feel respected and appreciated. It may be that, when these basic human needs get thwarted, that less desirable qualities [superiority in Janet's case and domination in Jack's] surface that complicate the resolution of these problems.

In reference to the particular limit-situation which Janet encountered, and the one which she needs to encounter in the future, in order to understand her position with entrance into groups, Freire (1970) says:

When men (sic) lack a critical understanding of their reality, apprehending it in fragments which they do not perceive as interacting constituent elements of the whole, they cannot truly know that reality. To truly know it, they would have to reverse their starting point: they would need to have a total vision of the context in order subsequently to separate and isolate

its constituent elements and by means of this analysis achieve a clearer perception of the whole.

Equally appropriate for the methodology of thematic investigation and for problem-posing education is this effort to present significant dimensions of an individual's contextual reality, the analysis of which will make it possible for him (sic) to recognize the interaction of the various components. Meanwhile, the significant dimensions, which in their turn are constituted of parts in interaction, should be perceived as dimensions of total reality. In this way, a critical analysis of a significant existential dimension makes possible a new, critical attitude towards the limit-situations. The perception and comprehension of reality are rectified and acquire new depth. When carried out with a methodology of *conscientization* the investigation of the generative theme contained in the minimum thematic universe (the generative themes in interaction) thus introduces or begins to introduce men (sic) to a critical form of thinking about their world. (pp. 94-95)

The growth that Janet made in perceiving her situation of rejection from the in-crowd [her limit-situation] was made possible through her involvement in commenting and listening to the comments of others in the dialogues.

Janet is a very bright and gifted youth, who articulated many of the class's problems, and this class benefitted greatly from her input into these dialogues. Janet blossoms

with positive feedback and she reaches out to help others in any way she can. Her basic need is to be accepted and appreciated for her own strengths. I think her air of superiority would have dissipated had she received this acceptance, and that perhaps, she has developed it due to trying to cope with this specific class's values. Future generative themes could include those which encourage students to appreciate and value individual differences that each of us possess. They need to seriously question the present system of hierarchy, in their classroom, as well as in the larger society.

Until Janet and her peers look more critically at values themselves, and feel the possibility for functioning as change agents, they are stuck in a superficial state of analyses. They will not move beyond the contradictions that they see as long as they feel powerless to create change. Critical thinking will occur when Janet and her classmates can see a vision of what is possible. Janet had gained insight into this area through the dialogues and her preoccupation with the Jenny code showed that she is still searching and reflecting.

Janet absorbed as much as possible from the dialogues. She needs a lot of time to talk about issues--more time, it appears, than she got from traditional teaching practises.

#### Edward

Slightly built, like Jason, but also healthy and



energetic, 12 year old Edward comes from a middle-class family in which both parents work. Edward shared little about his personal life in the dialogues. Unlike Jack, whose emotions showed in his flashes of temper, there was a cool, emotionally detached veneer to Edward's personality in the dialogues.

In the classroom, Edward sat with Charley and Bill and, at times, Jamie was a part of this group also. Jamie drifted between Jack's group and Edward's group and seemed to support Samantha, mostly in the dialogues. It may be that Jamie wanted to belong more with Jack's group, but when that group was not open to him, he joined Edward and other boys.

Edward was the most dominant one in his group, but he didn't get a lot of overt support from his friends because they are quiet. However, they affirmed their allegiance and cohesiveness, through secret conversations and by sitting together. For the most part, it was a loose-fitting group and several members, including Edward, himself, aspired to belong to Jack's group. However, Jack kept all the boys sitting on the fence and this especially applied to Edward, who aspired to have the power that went with Jack's position.

### Sexism

Edward missed the first dialogue on "Sexism and School Curriculum: Sex Role Stereotyping" on October 30 and he did not seem to be very interested in the issue of sexism at later times. He used dialogue as a vehicle to display what are

usually considered male attributes, like aggression and toughness to ingratiate himself with Jack, as seen by his participation in the November 6 dialogue, "Sexism: Pressure on Girls to Conform to Societal Expectations."

Edward saw a new receptiveness for acceptance into the in-crowd by Jack in the dialogues on sexism. Samantha had been alienated from Jack, after reflecting on the October 30 dialogue and Jack perceived the need to recruit a new, vocal member to take her place. Edward was more than obliging. For this reason, Jack put himself in a group with Edward, Charley and Scott in the dialogue on sexism on November 6. It came as no surprise that the group did not pass in the recording sheet as Jack was the recorder and the group did superficial treatment of the subject.

In this dialogue, Janet tried to move the agenda on sexism back to a more serious one, and Edward, like Samantha had done in previous dialogues, represented Jack's voice, while Jack was the protected on-looker. Edward brought up Margie's remark about all men being lazy, "I don't agree with Margie because we go out and we work just as equal."

Jack and Samantha both supported this, and Edward felt as if he was one of the gang, but again the space got dominated by Jack and Samantha as they talked about Margie's remark and Edward found it difficult to keep up with them. On one occasion, Samantha rewarded Edward by including him as part of the group with her remark, "O.K. maybe she [Margie] did grow up in an environment like that . . . all of us, me and Jack,

Edward, Tom, all of us."

Edward was affected by this comradeship and did all he could to support Jack and Samantha in their attempt to trivialize the topic. He did not interrupt when Jack and Samantha dominated the space with comments to prove that men aren't lazy. I tried to refocus the conversation for a more serious treatment, by asking what the problem in the code was and Edward, again assuming Samantha's usual role with Jack, challenged me directly. He tried to bring in the trivial agenda. "She's [Margie's] saying that all boys are lazy." I maintained a challenging gesture and my tone was serious, "Is that the problem in this code?"

Edward backed down and the conversation turned serious once again, as Janet represented Janice's circumstance in disguise. Jack interrupted her and asked what she'd do if she couldn't get enough money to go to college. When Janet said she would work for awhile, Jack and Edward, in true comradeship this time, laughed at a private remark. Then Edward tried to dilute the seriousness of Janet's remark in the round robin that followed.

Janet, it's only a ten per cent chance that a woman . . . doesn't half way through the year . . . drop out . . . get married and then divorced and end up having to have to go back to college . . . I don't see that happening a lot. There's only a . . ."

Jack supported Edward by adding, "Ten . . . percent chance. I don't even think ten."

Janice was angry about being undermined by Jack and Edward, and responded in emotional tones,

Well what if one of those ten percent that you just said happened right now, to my family . . . To my parents, Edward! My mom went to a half year of college. She got married, divorced [Janice started to cry.] and now she wants to go back to college, but she can't [crying hard now] and I really feel hurt at your comment. (November 6)

Janice left the room with Joy, at the request of the regular classroom teacher who motioned to Joy to assist Janice. The two girls left the classroom to go to the washroom, where Janice could gain composure in private. This occurred near the end of the dialogue, but not before several other girls expressed their indignation at what they perceived was Edward's insensitivity. Rose confronted Edward directly about the accuracy of his statistics. Edward was still cool and replied, "That's just an average guess. I'm not actually sorta (sic) positive, but that's just a guess," as if that was the issue involved here.

What I also find interesting about this event is the way Edward took the heat for Jack, just like Jordon did later in the January 15 dialogue. Also interesting is the fact that classmates seem conditioned to put the blame on Edward and left Jack completely out of the criticism, although there is no doubt in my mind that everyone present knew that Edward was just doing Jack's bid in this dialogue. Willingness to collude with Jack may be the price tag for acceptance into his

group and I wonder if Jack's temper keeps classmates under control.

I spoke briefly with Edward, when I met him in the hall, just before lunch on the day that this upset happened. He seemed somewhat perturbed about the whole event with Janice. He didn't want to talk about it at the time and excused himself because he said he wanted to go and eat his lunch. I asked him to express his feelings in his journal but he wrote back that he wanted to say nothing about it.

His reaction reminded me of what Janet wrote in her journal that day. "It seems that in our society we teach children different roles from the day they are born. I wonder why we do this? I think maybe we do this because people like it that way, they want girls to be more dependent and boys less emotional."

Although Janice's home life had obvious stresses during this time, this situation confirms more than ever that there were youths in this classroom, including Janice, who were social outcasts. As Janet said, there were "hurtful things going on behind the scenes." Earlier in this dialogue, Janice talked about being a lawyer and suing if she ran into sexism when trying to get into a law firm. Edward and Jack laughed at this, and in this way, undermined her feelings, aspirations and perception of reality. This undermining was their way of putting Janice in her place. Furthermore, their attitude towards Janice is not atypical or unusual. Sally Cline and Dale Spencer (1987), in "Reflecting Men at twice Their Natural

Size," write,

and society in general and men in particular have ways and means of pressuring and punishing women who will not take their proper propitiating place and help protect an enhanced image of men. Girls in school who will not recognize the no-go areas are not in a pleasant position: they are generally neither popular nor protected.

Sometimes it is the boys in the classroom who put on the pressure. (pp. 53-54)

Girls like Janice and Janet learn that expressing their feelings about their ambitions conflict with the best interests of the boys in the classroom. As long as they persist in trying to find a respected place in the society, they will meet with tension and conflict. I have been witness to Janet's, and especially Janice's, exclusion from social groups in the classroom because Janice confronts the boys openly with her indignation at the injustice surrounding issues of gender. Kathleen Weiler (1989) explains that we can expect this kind of openness about conflict in this kind of pedagogy.

In these schools [those which struggle against patriarchal hegemony] and the classrooms of these feminist teachers, the complexity of social sites in which individuals of different class, race, and gender subjectivities come together is illuminated. These schools are not isolated from the dynamics of the wider

society; quite the contrary, they magnify the contradictions and tensions of a society so marked by inequality and oppression . . . . Because of the conflicts among them in terms of gender, race and class, it is inevitable that these classrooms are marked by tension and conflicts, as the competing subjectivities of teacher and students come into play . . . . In fact, it is precisely because the goal of feminist teachers is to raise questions and to make their classrooms places where accepted social reality can be questioned that allows these tensions to surface and to be expressed. In more authoritarian classrooms, students may simply reject what is offered as knowledge and not engage in dialogue . . . . they [feminist teachers] constantly struggle to address these issues and to make their classrooms, in the words of one of the teachers, places where, "it's okay to be human." (pp. 148-149)

At the end of the dialogue, I addressed the situation regarding the conflict between the boys and Janice.

"I noticed that some people are laughing here and there when people are talking. This undermines what a person is saying . . . this is a very serious business. It's not a joking matter." (November 6)

On November 14 when I read my November 6 letter to the grade six class, Edward wanted to talk about the incident with Janice. He seemed a little more concerned about it and said he just had not known about Janice's situation.

In the December 11 dialogue on "Sexism: Limiting Girls' Education" Edward showed potential for growth in his thinking. He was in a small group with Barry, David and Charley. In the reporting period before the open dialogue, Edward reported his group's contribution, "Women are not being given a fair chance at life."

Unfortunately, Edward's position changed once he came under the influence of Jack in the open dialogue. Jack and his group took the position that women expect too much from men, and that the writers of this research were just feminists. Their solution to the problem was that men can "help out" with the housework. In the first round robin, Edward used his available space to echo the comments from Jack's group, rather than his own group's thoughts, "I kind of agree with Carl. I think that they should make one [research paper] for the boys and you'll see that they're just as equals as the girls." This remark first came from Jordan in the small group discussion and was raised by Carl in the round robin.

#### Classroom Status and Social Groupings

Edward was not an accepted member of the in-group, although he aspired to belong to it. He had a definite role that he wanted to play in the politics of the classroom and that was to get into a power position. Initially, he believed that the best way to do this was by getting into Jack's group.



He thought he could gain credibility by acting aggressively, a value that was endorsed by Jack and Samantha. Also, many times in the dialogues, he supported Jack's comments in order to try to ingratiate himself.

In the first dialogue on friendships on October 4, Edward was viewed as a secondary character who nevertheless tried to make his presence felt. In his journal entry, he wrote about feeling important. "I found the today (sic) went very quiet (sic). I found that everyone lisened (sic) to me when I made a stantment (sic) and that makes me want to say more" (October 4).

Edward experienced a sense of power, in spite of having said very little in this first dialogue and I wonder if he also felt unappreciated by his classmates. In the dialogues that followed, Edward assumed a more aggressive role. At first, I thought he was a contender for the leadership role, but later, with more data, I interpreted his actions as those of one, who wanted power through being a respected member of Jack's group.

However, Jack is no fool and realized that Edward's desire for power could threaten his own position. He would cut Edward's comments off and in this way "checked" him many times in the dialogues, even if he and Edward began from the same starting point.

Jack also exerted pressure during social times to keep Edward in check. In fact, before Samantha's departure from his group, Jack made Edward downright uncomfortable. On one

occasion, by random selection before students could form their own groups, Edward and Jack found themselves in the same small group for discussion. Edward registered his intimidation by Jack when he wrote in his journal that day, "I liked today's talk about being favered (sic). I would like to change groups." When I questioned him to be more specific on the grouping, he responded on October 25 to pinpoint Jack as the area of difficulty. Edward was also absent for the next two dialogues after this uncomfortable experience (October 25 and October 30).

Another incident attests both to Jack's skill in dividing class members and setting them against each other, and also to the strength of Edward's aspiration to ingratiate himself to Jack. In the small group discussion, on November 6, Jack entered Edward's group voluntarily. Charley, a quiet boy in this group, tried to impress Jack by making sexist remarks. Later in the open dialogue, Jack got Edward to do an unkind task--to humiliate a friend. In the open dialogue Jack said, "In our group we were talking, you [Edward] tell them," and Edward complied all too willingly.

"In our group Charley said that girls are not as smart as boys." Here, Edward had violated a trust. He had publicly humiliated his friend, Charley, at Jack's request. Jack not only asserted his authority over Edward, thereby enhancing his own image as leader, but he also created a situation where Edward would alienate a friend, leaving himself without support, which also furthered Jack's advantage. This showed

the extent of Edward's desire to ingratiate Jack. After Tom repeated Charley's remarks aloud, Edward continued, with Jack smiling on, " . . . and that they don't deserve to go to college."

Charley was embarrassed and upset about this breach of trust and pleaded forgiveness from the regular classroom teacher for making this remark. In an effort to save his reputation, he explained, "I was just joking . . . I was just joking." But Edward remained detached and was merciless, "It was no joke. He said it real serious to us" (November 6). The situation went without mention in Edward's journal and he wanted to be in this same group with Jack for the next dialogue.

Freire (1970) describes the predicament of Edward and Charley and also provides a possible motivation behind Jack's actions.

All the actions of the dominant class [Jack] manifest its need to divide [Edward and Charley] in order to facilitate the preservation of the oppressor state. Its interference in the unions, favouring certain "representatives" of the dominated classes (who actually represent the oppressor, not their own comrades); its promotion of individuals [Edward] who reveal leadership capacity and could signify a threat if they were not "softened up" in this way: its distribution of benefits to some and penalties to others: all these are ways of dividing in order to preserve the system which favours

the elite. They are forms of action which exploit, directly or indirectly, one of the weak points of the oppressed: their basic insecurity. The oppressed are insecure in their duality as beings which "house" the oppressor. On the one hand, they resist him (sic): on the other hand, at a certain stage in their relationship, they are attracted by him (sic). Under these circumstances, the oppressors easily obtain positive results from diversive action. (pp. 140-141)

This analysis applies equally to Samantha's predicament in regards to being accepted into Jack's group. Because she is so aggressive, Jack had to tolerate her aspiration, despite putting her in her place from time to time. It might also serve to divide Edward and Samantha from working together which would pose a threat to Jack's position and so it was important to keep them in competition with each other for the role of his ambassador and presenter of his word in the dialogues.

It may, at first, seem ironic but Edward was not in the least respected by Jack for humiliating his friend. In fact, it appeared that Jack had contempt for Edward and Edward did not seem to understand why. Unlike Samantha, he was either totally unaware of Jack's motives, or didn't care. Edward did not appear to reflect upon the fact that Jack used him to do his bidding for himself in the dialogues. Freire (1970) accounts for Jack's contempt of both Edward and Samantha, who do his bidding in the dialogues.

The one who is doing the decreeing defined himself (sic) and the class to which he (sic) belongs as those who know or were born to know; he (sic) thereby defines others as alien entities. The words of his (sic) own class come to be the "true" words, which he (sic) imposes or attempts to impose on the others: the oppressed, whose words have been stolen from them. Those who steal the words of others develop a deep doubt in the abilities of the others and consider them incompetent. (p. 129)

Edward became more talkative and confident in the November 15 small group discussion on the code "Issues of Classroom Status: Examining Peer Values" in the belief that Jack now supported him. He was verbally more aggressive in trying to gain power in the dialogues. Through this, Edward showed that he was more interested in becoming a member of Jack's group than in establishing a group of his own when he accepted direction from Jack to humiliate Charley. Freire (1970) discusses this kind of emotional dependency that he first witnessed with the peasants.

Within their unauthentic view of the world and of themselves, the oppressed feel like "things" owned by the oppressor. For the latter, to be is to have, almost always at the expense of those who have nothing. For the oppressed, at a certain point in their existential experience, to be is not to resemble the oppressor, but to be under him (sic), to depend on him (sic).

Accordingly the oppressed are emotionally dependent.

The peasant is a dependent. He (sic) can't say what he (sic) wants. Before he (sic) discovers his (sic) dependence, he (sic) suffers. He (sic) lets off steam at home . . . . He (sic) doesn't let off steam with his (sic) boss because he (sic) thinks his (sic) boss is a superior being. (p. 51)

Jack kept Edward in his place by playing a back and forth game, of seeming to admit Edward into their group, and then rejecting him. Edward's knowledge of the experience of rejection became visible in the November 15 dialogue when he challenged, first Janet, and then Samantha, on the issue of rejection. In the opening round robin, Edward acknowledged Jenny's rejection from the group and said, "I think they should accept the person the way they are and not go around calling them names."

Edward brought in his own experiences of feeling rejected from the group under the guise of the code because he felt the problem in the code was one of rejection. When Janet said that Jenny was not invited to go with the other girls to the mall because there was no more room left in the car, she denied that rejection was the problem. Edward challenged her with, "If there was a problem with the car, Janet, they'd probably say in the story." Then Samantha tried to say that Jenny was over-reacting. I challenged this to emphasize the rejection, as apparent, and Edward supported me, "That's true because . . . right after the second one [rejection], she

should have got this thing that she's not wanted and she shoulda (sic) went out and . . . try to find some new friends."

Perhaps Edward was trying to tell Samantha to find some new friends which would give himself more access to Jack's group. When Joseph added a new dimension by saying Jenny shouldn't let them, "slap her around." Edward responded, "You know, if that were to happen to me, I probably would leave and get the hint . . . just go off and make new friends." Further along in the dialogue Edward added,

Just because she [Jenny] found the hottest group doesn't mean that she can't go around making other friends . . . she wouldn't be by herself and she's probably got a lot of stuff inside her that she wants to say, but she doesn't have anybody to talk to . . . Maybe she [Jenny in the code] was . . . not very good at making friends and . . . she just saw this group and . . . then she got into the group and then when they didn't want her in the group any more, she . . . didn't know what to do. She's so angry with people that are in the groups.

Edward might well have been bating Samantha because he did not seem to perceive how he, himself was being oppressed in this way, but, rather, he could see Samantha's rejection from the group. Time and again, Edward sat on the fence waiting to be invited back by Jack, but he did not appear to see this as oppression. Freire (1970) describes a predicament similar to this when he talks about the oppressed peasants in

Brazil.

But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or "sub-oppressors." The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men (sic), to be men (sic) is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity . . . But their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression . . . For them, the new man (sic) is themselves become oppressors. Their vision of the new man (sic) is individualistic: because of their identity with the oppressor, they have no consciousness of themselves as persons or as members of an oppressed class. It is not to become free men (sic) that they want agrarian reform, but in order to acquire land and thus become landowners--or, more precisely, bosses over other workers. (p. 30)

Perhaps part of Edward's cool veneer is the unrecognized and therefore pent-up anger connected to his lack of acceptance into the group. Edward wanted to belong to Jack's group, regardless of what the values were, and possibly, even because of them. In this dialogue on peer values my turn came up in the round robin, and I asked if Jenny wanted to leave the group when she saw that they were unkind to others and he said, "No, she wanted to stay in it."



Edward had experience with rejection from the group and he brought this experience with him into the dialogues. Like Janet before him, Edward tried to work out why the group rejects a person. ". . . because their personality . . . don't like what they wear . . . looked at you and doesn't look like a nice guy and they don't want to be with you."

I said that I felt that it was important for Jenny to know the reason for her rejection because it would give her a choice as to whether to try to belong or not. Edward continued to try to work out why the in-group would reject a particular person. This time he may have been working past earlier rationalizations by focusing in on new reasons behind his own rejection from the group. He said this:

They're in the same class and she [Jenny in the code] might have failed a test or she's real bad in a subject and they said, "Oh, she's not very good in school. She's not like . . . I don't want, we don't want her in our group no more, cause she's not cool, something like that."

I was privy to some private information about Edward which is one of those advantages to being an insider researcher. Edward went to Resource for several years for reading and writing skills and his mother complained to me, one day, about Jack calling him stupid because he had difficulty reading. Jack used Edward's insecurity as another way to keep him in his place. Freire (1970) adds this about the oppressor-oppressed situation:

Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the

oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything--that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive--that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. (p. 49)

Edward, still struggling to try to find out the reason behind his own rejection, looked at surface factors, like appearances, school performance, etc. instead of the political agenda which remained a mystery to him. At such times, when he was sitting on the fence, Edward tried out power positions of his own and I was fortunate enough to observe one of them during the November 15 dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Values." He tried on the role of a traditional classroom teacher by asking direct questions to students he considered his inferiors, like Special Education students and the more passive, quiet students in his class. After studying this trend briefly, I intervened to let Edward know he was violating the rights of the privacy of others by "putting them on the spot."

In the November 22 dialogue Jack was threatened by the content and was silent. Therefore Edward was given more of an opportunity to grow mentally and socially through more active participation. Edward had been physically challenged by Jack to fights on more than one occasion and he would always back away from these challenges with Jack. However as Jack remained silent in the dialogue, Edward grew confident enough

to articulate his problem as he saw it and gave his opinion of Hamburger.

Like he [Hamburger] could go in and just say, "Oh you have to listen to me now," and they all say, "No, we're not," and he's a big, tall bully [He laughs.] and he starts . . . pushing them around and then they just start listening to him . . . and they knew that if they didn't that he would probably beat'em up or something.

Edward did not question the need for a leader or an authority, but rather accepted it as necessary. When asked why the others tolerate domination, he said,

Maybe they think that if they challenge Hamburger, that Hamburger will say, "Oh, I'm not hanging around with you guys any more. You're just . . . a bunch of lettuces," . . . then they won't be able to make the hamburger because the paddy will be gone.

Edward defined the paddy as the main guy and the rest are "just a bunch of lettuces." When I asked how the rejected vegetables felt, Edward said, "They feel left out." Edward was lost as to why Hamburger rejected Onion and Pickle. "It's just because they don't look like him." Samantha analyzed a good political motive behind Hamburger's actions when she said maybe Hamburger really likes Onion, but rejected him anyway just to show everyone who's boss. Here it is clear that Samantha is much more intuitive when it comes to understanding Jack's motives than Edward, although her remark, also, smacked of rationalization. Edward challenged Samantha,

I think he really meant it, though, when he did it with Pickle because Pickle came over and he pushed him and then . . . they needed him in the Hamburger and he came over and he [Hamburger] pushed him away and said, "Not so close!" I think that he really . . . didn't like Pickle at first, at all.

Edward's description of this situation came very close to Jack and Edward's relationship. Jack needed Edward but did not want him too close. Jack had been silent throughout this whole part of the dialogue. I tried to take Edward into further analysis, and asked him why he thought that Hamburger changed his mind and decided to accept Pickle. Edward said, "Because he wanted to make a hamburger, I guess."

The "I guess" part meant Edward did not feel content with this answer himself. Samantha played the part of Pickle in the play and this may have been Edward's way of putting Samantha in her place but inferring that Jack didn't really like her.

Jamie added that Hamburger wanted a bigger gang, but Janet pointed out, that if that was the case, then he would have picked everybody from the beginning. I wondered why no one had expanded on Samantha's good lead, which offered a very logical explanation for Hamburger's motive and practice of putting people in their place. When Jamie said that maybe Hamburger wanted a bigger gang at the end, this sounded logical to Edward who said, "Yeah, when he asked them all to come over."

When I pushed them further, Sally came up with the fact

that it was not Hamburger who suggested they come over but, rather, Pickle and Bun. When I said that Hamburger maybe just put up with it because the rest of the gang wanted it, Edward said out loud,

He might have thought . . . "Well, everybody else thinks there's something missing. I might as well play along . . ." cause if all of them were to gang up on him [He laughs.], I don't think he'd be able to beat them all, so . . . he'd be hurt.

The whole class came closer to understanding the peer pressure on a leader, and the responsibility of those oppressed to exert their influence. Samantha raised the issue about the need for group power to challenge authority and that they [authority] can't put a million people [the challengers] behind bars. Edward responded:

They don't have enough room . . . I think that Onion and Pickle should have stuck up for themselves . . . and the other people stuck up for them, too . . . I don't think that he [Hamburger] should push him [Pickle or Onion] around any more cause . . . one day he's gonna turn on him and he's [Pickle or Onion] gonna come back and push him [Hamburger] around and then he's [Hamburger] gonna get rejected from the group.

From this Edward showed that he shared the same value system as Jack, except that he would replace Jack as Hamburger and reject him from the group. He had come to recognize group power by listening to others, but he still thought along the

lines of domination because his revenge was to bully and reject back. This was a challenge to Jack, but Jack knew that Edward was all talk. Nevertheless, Jack was silent, as the group discussed the motives behind such a leader.

If Jack threatened Edward or Samantha now, the identity of Hamburger may have become more apparent. At this moment, most class members appeared to be still speaking abstractly, under the cover of a code. Edward tried to sound tough, when he said that he wouldn't let a person boss him around, unless that person had group power.

I wouldn't like it . . . bossing you around and . . . These are the kind of people that you don't want to be friends with . . . usually when it's in a group, you go along with it . . . so that . . . you don't get kicked out of the group.

Edward, like Janet, tried to explore the reasons behind his rejection from the group. Edward would do anything to prevent a physical fight with Jack, and this bothered him. On a couple of occasions, Edward talked about a person lacking "guts" in the November 22 dialogue when he gave his interpretation of how initiation into groups happens.

The only reason they want you in the group is if you're strong . . . if they ever get in a fight, you'd stick up for them . . . if they're just these . . . small people [who] . . . can't fight for beans . . . and they're not the bravest one . . . don't have any guts to do anything . . . if they get in a fight, they're just gonna stand

there and watch.

Again, in the December 3 dialogue about, "not having guts" to tell on your friends if they are taking drugs. I began to wonder if part of Edward's anger is directed towards himself, in that he feels insecure because he is small and can't fight and yet, he wanted to be held in high regard by the in-group, whose values are strength, athletics and fighting abilities.

A more sophisticated knowledge of social relations would have informed Edward that Jack, although a good athlete, is smaller built than he is, and yet, is able to get respect from the class more because of his social knowledge. This is because the person with the power is the one who is able to convince the others of what the rules are, that is, he tells the others what the values will be. Of course, it always helps that the society also reinforces these same values, and this was the situation with Jack.

This kind of knowledge became available to Edward during the dialogue on peer values through the analyses of others. One example is when Jamie came up with a good political motive. He said the head person [authority] might try to get a person to do more than one task in initiations into their clubs because the new person might be good at one thing, and be able to beat the head person. Therefore, the head person will get the new person to do something else that's harder for him. Jamie was inferring that the leader determines the values.

Edward, however, ignored this and began to take authority over others by asking them questions, beginning with his friend, "Charley, what do you think about this story? . . . Do you think it's fair that Hamburger's pushing all his friends [He laughs.] around? . . . Pickle and Onion."

Charley responded, accepting leadership from Edward, but Janet ignored Edward and talked about her mother's experience with initiations and how disappointed her mother was when she got into a group and it turned out to be no fun at all. Edward echoed this same theme as he expressed his own sense of reality.

People . . . just see kids in the hall . . . acting cool . . . and they just say, "Oh I'd love to be in their group . . . they get to use the tires [swings on our school grounds] then they go . . . work their way on this group . . . and then when they get in the group, it gets right boring . . . and then they find out people aren't really what they . . . are, like they look like they're having fun, but they're really just . . . sitting there being bored. (November 22)

This might have been a "sour grapes" response on Edward's part and, perhaps if Edward felt more appreciated, he might not need to be domineering. His thinking remained superficial to the end of the dialogues because he did not want to look at the class's values as long as he aspired to become part of the dominating group.

By November 30, it appeared that Edward was considering



becoming a leader of his own group or, at least, he threatened Jack with this alternative. In the small group discussion with Barry, Tom and David, Edward suggested that the losers [in the code] should become a group of their own. Edward was very motivated with this topic and in the dialogue, he began to lay the foundation for why the rejected one [Jenny] should form her own group. Edward said, "She [Jenny] is being influenced by smoking just to belong to the group," and in the round robin, Edward said, "She should just leave the group alone for awhile and not have anything to do with them because they're not very good friends if they want you to smoke cause it . . . just keeps going on and on." When Bill suggested she just walk away from the group that was rejecting her, Edward was first to say:

Bill, usually when . . . it's hard to say, "No." . . . There's a lot of pressure on you, especially . . . one of the cool boys is asking you . . . She [Jenny] sort of has to say, "Yes." It's kinda hard to say, "No," . . . People go around . . . saying, "Oh, you're a chicken," and stuff like that, and then she'll [Jenny] think, "If I don't do this, I won't be cool and no one else will like me . . . Like if six teenagers came up to you and . . . they're all smoking away and they look like they're having a good time . . . you're gonna usually say, "Yes."

Besides enjoying support from others, including at times, a leader like Samantha, Edward felt that this was a good argument for not trying to get into the in-group, but to make

your own group. In his journal Edward admitted to peer pressure and wrote, "I lurned (sic) that it is very hard to say no when it comes to smoking and drugs. I hope that I will be able to say no if it happens to me."

Edward gained more and more confidence as he perceived an acceptance from Jack, although he didn't know why. During my presence in the small group discussion on December 3, Edward assumed a power position and took control. The others in the group waited in silence, as Stanley recorded what Edward dictated to him. Edward's ideas were the only ones that were recorded.

Jack, being the astute observer that he is, might have strategized that, by encouraging Edward to feel more and more a part of his group, it would discourage Edward from forming a group of his own. Anyway, now that Samantha was drifting away from his influence, he had a need for Edward. In the December dialogue, Edward happily complied. Jack has a formula for keeping everyone in their place. With Edward, this means keeping him on a tightrope, balancing him between rejection and acceptance into the group. This would understandably make Edward resentful at times. However, I sensed a personal dislike that Jack had for Edward and hence Edward's belief that personality is a factor in rejection, as he mentioned earlier. However, Jack overlooked that dislike, on this occasion, because he needed him. Edward supported Jack in the December 11 dialogue, especially in the challenge to Patrick, who said that the woman should stay at home while

the man goes out to work. Interestingly enough, Samantha also joined with Jack and Edward in this challenge and may have resented Edward's assumption of her role.

Edward joined Jack in challenging Patrick because he wanted to support Jack. Like Jack, Edward saw that Patrick was vulnerable [exposing his unpopular belief that women should stay at home] and he probably felt that a Special Education student was easy prey, especially when vastly outnumbered. It also gave him that feeling of comradeship that he so desperately craved from Jack and Samantha.

Edward passed in the last round robin. In his journal on December 11 he wrote, "I lurned (sic) in today's dialogue that people have all kinds of ideas. I think that it went very well. I don't have much to say."

### Racism

In the January 15 dialogue, Edward was in a group with Charley and Bill. When I questioned them on finishing their discussion early, Edward said, "We didn't fool around. We got right to work." I interpreted this to mean that the group, under Edward's leadership, did a perfunctory job with this content, indicating Edward's boredom with, or resistance to a discussion on the topic. Edward gave lip service to Native rights, but it is obvious his heart and thought were not really into it. In the dialogue, his group said the "White men are running the Indian's (sic) life and aren't letting

them do what they want and have their freedom." Edward said, "We are not letting them do whatever they want to do."

Edward had little to say in this dialogue and I wondered if Jack's silence in the dialogue had anything to do with Edward's lack of response, or whether he was intimidated or bored himself by the content. Perhaps he also saw Jack losing power, and was not sure what to do about it. At any rate, he could not echo Jack's comments, since Jack didn't make any. In the round robin, he basically said what others were saying.

I don't think it's right because . . . we're just coming in . . . they've been around longer than us and they know a lot more than we do probably and we're just coming in and destroying their lives . . . say we were there first, and they just came in and took over . . . make us do all their own ways. We wouldn't like it either so I don't think that we should be doing it to them.

This argument might also provide a rationale for the White culture to show antagonism against new immigrants or "foreigners," as Samantha described them earlier in the dialogue.

Edward did not think this dialogue was worth seeing on tape, as it did not portray Jack or him in a flattering light, in regards to looking powerful. In his journal he wrote, "I lurned (sic) that white (sic) people are not giving black (sic) people and Indias (sic) a fair say in things. I think the black (sic) people are just as equal as us. I would not

like the class to see today's (sic) dialogue" (January 15).

### Resistance

Edward showed his resistance to this pedagogy by treating the issues very superficially. He tried to use his participation in the dialogues to ingratiate himself with Jack to get into his group. Even when he started to analyze the problems in small group discussions, he would change his position and echo Jack's once he got to the open dialogue. This ingratiation of himself to Jack included alienating his friend, Charley, and undermining Janice and Janet in the November 6 dialogue.

In the November 15 dialogue, Edward discussed rejection from the group, but it was distasteful to have to think about it and he registered his disenchantment in the November 15 journal entry. "I thought today went very bad. There was no fighting between people today. I found it very boring." He made this statement despite the fact that he got quite a bit of space in the dialogue, due to Jack's silence on this topic, and yet, he claimed to have found it uninteresting.

Edward seemed to need the very concrete to feel stimulated. If this is the case, anything after the Janice situation would be a let-down. He interpreted his more active involvement in the dialogues as his getting more used to the camera. On November 18 he wrote, "I talked a lot in the dialogue and did not mind the camera." In truth, his

confidence came after his comradeship with Jack in the November 6 dialogue.

Edward used rationalizations to escape responsibility for others. In the December 3 dialogue, he challenged Janet's response to tell on a friend taking drugs for his own good. He said, ". . . if you tell on him, his parents will soon find out and if he's doing something real bad . . . you could put him in jail for it." And when Samantha said that it's better to go to jail than to lose your life to drugs, Edward replied, "Still you'd think that it would be horrible. You wouldn't be thinking about that." Samantha challenged him, ". . . I know it's not that easy, but you gotta think deeper than that!"

When Janet said about how hard it is to decide what to do about helping a friend who is into drugs, Edward showed his position of not wanting to take on this responsibility. "You'd want to have nothing to do with it." And when she said about making anonymous calls to parents to warn them, Edward said, "You wouldn't leave your name."

Many of his comments in the dialogues were "off the cuff" remarks with little thought and no preparation. At times, he contradicted the data, especially in the October 9 dialogue, which complicated the debate between Samantha and Janet, and he showed little concern for this. At first, I thought he was intimidated by the dialogues, but later recognized that his agenda went counter to his aspirations and held little interest for him.

Even up to the end of the dialogues, Edward resisted

thinking more critically and reflectively. On March 7 on the dialogue which followed the watching of the two tapes, he wrote briefly, "I found it very boring watching myself on T.V. I did not learn (sic) anything in this dialogue (sic) because I already know what I said." He saw no value in watching the videos because he "already knew" what he said. Also, he saw no value in watching or listening to others or reflecting on any of this. Further along in this dialogue, after Janet spoke about the value in viewing herself and others, he still maintained, " . . . all the stuff that was in the dialogue, we already learned."

Besides showing resistance here, it may be true that Edward perceived the dialogue like a course content approach whereby there is a certain body of knowledge that one consumes, instead of the Freirean view that we can learn and learn again (relearn) through dialogue and reflection.

### Learning

In the dialogues, Edward did not think reflectively on the issues and lacked the careful patience that made Jack a keen social observer. Edward is impulsive in his approach to learning. This impulsiveness cost him. It had been responsible for his placement on the Resource caseload for reading and writing because he missed skills that needed a more systematic and thoughtful application. He rushes his work and does not take the necessary time to learn more

accurately. In the dialogues, this impulsiveness also affected his listening carefully and learning from others.

Edward also restricts his learning in another way. He is not a risk-taker and backed down quickly when there was a challenge. Although verbally aggressive, he is not one to take action. He did not follow through on an argument in the dialogues. This could be observed in the October 9 dialogue, when Jack began to confront Janet and support Samantha. Edward indicated that he was ready to stop the discussion. Very shortly after Jack's confrontation, he said, "Why don't we just break the drums and drop the subject?"

Nevertheless, some learning did occur throughout the dialogues involving the Special Education students. On November 14, after Edward directed a question to Patrick about feeling rejected from groups, Patrick, with a lot more confidence than Edward had ever shown, went on to discuss, at length, his experiences with this problem from other schools. Edward was surprised and impressed by Patrick's response. He whispered to me upon leaving the room that he was surprised by Patrick. Edward was learning to unravel some preconceived notions or assumptions about Special Education students.

Also, Edward was beginning to show more interest for the ideas of others, including myself. In his December 4 journal he wrote, "What did you think of the dialogue?" Edward had shown most growth in learning when he was not being directly influenced by Jack.



Pedagogy

Edward thought concretely and superficially, for the most part, in the dialogues. His lack of reflective thinking, I feel, is the reason behind most of his difficulty understanding the motives behind his own actions, as well as those of others [political knowledge].

This lack of reflective thinking became evident, many times, in the dialogues. Edward concentrated so much on getting into Jack's group that it occupied a lot of his thinking space. He resisted my attempts to encourage him to develop his thinking in this area. One example is when I responded, at considerable length to him in his journal. Yet, in his November 22 journal, he wrote, " . . . can you not make the next right (sic) back so long."

Edward lacks the patience to work through lengthy explanations of ideas. It is important to try to learn what is behind Edward's quest for power, and I feel that part of it is the fact that Edward resents someone telling him what to do. Perhaps, he needs to feel more in control of himself and that may be instrumental in changing his attitude towards power over others. On November 15 he made this promising statement:

I don't like the idea of someone going around and telling people what to do . . . thinking that they're the big shot around the place and owning everybody . . . no one should [be] telling other people what to do and they

should be able to make decisions by themselves.

Future pedagogy in the dialogues could include codes to directly challenge Edward's concept of power and domination. As well, he needs to be encouraged to take more responsibility. Knowing that he resents being bossed or told what to do indicates that he needs more space to make his own decisions and to learn to accept the consequences for them. He needs more probing on all of these issues to become better able to articulate his needs and frustrations, which are considerable, since he had experienced an inconsistency with being accepted in this classroom. Many times he went between sitting on the fence and feeling a part of the in-group. This frustration may be the driving force behind his strong desire to dominate others.

Therefore, he also needs to be encouraged to build a stronger relationship with other boys, and especially with the girls in the class, in order to decrease his dependence on Jack's whims. Hopefully, with more feelings of control over his social relationships, he might be able to turn his energies to more constructive enterprises.

Also, like Jack, he can be encouraged to look at the consequences of such a leadership, especially how dehumanizing this kind of power is for other people. Certainly, his lack of sensitivity to having hurt his good friend, Charlie, and, also, Janice, is a testimony to what this kind of dominance can do to a person. Understanding this, would make his decisions more informed.

## Joseph

Joseph, who came to Canada from Lebanon when he was 6 or 7 years old, spoke to me privately of his native country with affection and pride. He comes from a close-knit family and is very fond of his younger sister in grade two. As a matter of fact, Joseph seems to be gifted with that warm, sensitive personality that appeals to everyone. He has no known enemies.

Understandably, Joseph wanted to be part of the class and aspired to be one of the boys. He sat beside Stanley a lot. It may be that Joseph's appearing to be with Jack's group was more indirect, that is, through his association with Stanley, a somewhat passive boy. On October 30, when students could pick their own groups, Joseph was in a small group setting with Jack, Jordan, Carl and Jamie. At all other times, when he had a choice, Joseph joined groups other than Jack's. However, Joseph always chose groups which had exclusive boy membership.

Sexism

In the October 16 dialogue on "Parent-Child Conflicts" Joseph and other male classmates in his group, showed that they expected that certain tasks belong to girls. On one occasion, Joseph got into a group whose members were selected randomly and not by choice. Included in this group was one

girl, Janice. The others were the boys, Doug, Jordan and Jamie. Members of this group decided to arrange for one group member, the only girl, Janice, to do the recording and reporting for the group. She took on the task of directing their attention to the questions, when various members discussed other issues. Joseph responded conscientiously to Janice's questions and Bill supported Joseph with a "Yeah."

Joseph's wanting to associate solely with the males in the class was exhibited in several ways. When given the choice to be in a group, he chose groups that were all male. Also, on November 30 Joseph asked me to help him write up a different ending to "The Sandwich" play. He wrote in his journal, "Could you help me with the store (sic)?" I wrote back to Joseph that Jane and Sally were interested in helping him rewrite the play and to let me know how I could help. I wanted him to take the responsibility for it, but it never got any further. I wonder if it was because only girls showed any interest in revising the play with Joseph.

Joseph was amused, for the most part, about the issue of sexism. In the round robin part of the dialogue, on November 6, he chuckled when Margie said that all boys were lazy, and he passed on his round robin turn. Joseph liked to use the dialogues to affirm his masculinity, and he commented, as one of the boys, when Carl made a sexist remark and when Samantha joked that she'll "handle Carl at recess." This provided Joseph with the opportunity he was looking for and he joked that Carl would end up, " . . . with a black eye, after." In

this way, he affirmed Samantha's status as a fighter.

Joseph was quiet during most of this dialogue, but he seemed to be actively listening to the remarks of others. Sometimes, it seemed as if he wanted to say more in dialogue. When Edward had been absent on two occasions, Joseph had more voice space in the dialogues. However, with Jack, Samantha, Janet, Edward, Jamie and Sally all actively competing for voice space, the only available time for quieter students, like Joseph, was the round robin and even here, Joseph chose to pass during many of those times. He denied the present day existence of sexism in his October 30 journal after their first dialogue on sexism.

Today was one of the best discutions (sic) because there was action. I think that men and women are the same. I wonder why people in the olden days thought of being so sexist. I don't think stranth [strength] has to do anything with sexist people. I [know] some do, but that doesn't bother me a hole (sic) lot.

For the most part, Joseph stayed out of the conversation on December 11, like most of these youths whose mothers did not work outside the home. However, he did share his thoughts about it being wise to talk over role expectations with the girl you plan to marry.

When you're getting married . . . you should make a little talk with your bride, or you know, the other guy . . . if the bride really wants to work at home, she can and if the groom wants to work at home, he can.

This posed no great threat to Joseph, since his parents' home and work is the same location. They operate a local grocery store and live in a different part of the same building. In the December 11 dialogue, Joseph listened closely and in his journal entry, he wrote:

Today I learned a lot because you brought (up) a very interesting subject. I think that people should share their work in life, don't you? I think that the Mail-Star should do another research. I think it was the most interesting dialogue.

Joseph's understanding of the issue was limited probably because he had never really questioned it. He did feel that it is important to be fair and honest in relationships between the sexes and his warm behaviour towards the girls was apparent. Therefore, Joseph gave a softer and more humorous response to challenges. This approach was not appreciated by Jack, who frequently cut him off in the dialogues. Only when the circumstance was opportune in furthering his own interests did Jack accept Joseph into his group.

Samantha recognized that Joseph was not really appreciated by Jack. On October 30, when the group tried to change the topic away from sports, Samantha was persistent. She used Joseph as part of her argument that some women can be more athletic than some men. She said she was stronger and a better hockey player than Joseph, but that Joseph could be smarter and that would make them equal. This is a mixture of truth and untruth. She is definitely a better hockey player,

but not stronger than Joseph who possesses a strong, muscular build, although, by nature of his personality, he is not a fighter. Also, she is a higher academic achiever than Joseph and so the insult to Joseph was double-edged. This was also her way of playing down academic achievement in front of the class. Joseph objected strongly with, "No! No! No!"

Jack immediately confronted Samantha with her air of superiority and she denied it. In this case, Joseph was being sanctioned as one of the boys and Jack was defending his own. He must protect Joseph's image. He knew also that Samantha, like him, values strength. Therefore, this was a slight against Joseph and his maleness, but still did not sway Jack from, temporarily at least, accepting Joseph into his group. Again, it was Jack's way of putting Samantha in her place. Jack went on to preserve Joseph's image and said that, if Joseph had practised as much as Samantha had, then he would probably be a better player than her because he is male. He added, "Joseph may not even know what hockey is! He may not even have a pair of skates." This also was insulting to Joseph and he was silent about it. However, when Jamie talked about a woman not being able to survive a check by a professional hockey star, Joseph admitted, "Neither a guy could."

After these insults, Joseph had a need to reaffirm his manliness in front of the class and he looked for an opportunity. He had to actively push for it on December 3, in dialogue, when the only thing he said in the whole dialogue

was when he challenged Janet on the boys' value of telling on a friend,

I kinda got a problem with what Janet said earlier. Janet, well, no offense or anything, but what if your friends were on drugs? Would you go and tell on them? Wouldn't they think you're kind of a sissy?

It's interesting that Joseph used the word, "sissy." It's usually an insult to a boy inferring that the boy is "girlish." Joseph recognized that telling on a friend is more a girlish thing to do. By challenging Janet, he asserted his own maleness in front of the group. After the episode with Samantha in which she told him he couldn't play hockey, he felt this need to assert his maleness in other ways. Once Joseph had established this affirmation, he relaxed, then, and passed on the last round robin.

#### Classroom Status and Social Groupings

Joseph, like everyone else, had a need to feel part of this class. Coming from a different cultural background accentuated that need and Joseph did not share in all the same values as the in-group. Therefore, his position was precarious in the group. Joseph is not dominating and he is considerate and, at times, compliant. Furthermore, Joseph is not competitive. These personality traits were not valued by Jack and Samantha.

During the October 30 dialogue, I overheard Joseph



talking privately about his lack of hockey ability. "Samantha . . . if I practised, I might be good, but I don't know." Yet, he did not want to be perceived as being opposed to sports. When some class members began to question why the conversation had switched to sports, Joseph tried to account for it. "I think I know why someone brang (sic) in sports was because of strength. They think they can play sports better than women."

Also, Joseph may get pressure about his lack of competitiveness from his father as well. Two years ago, he told me about a school friend of his who came into their grocery store. After his friend left, Joseph was criticized by his father for not being more assertive with this friend. There were hints of this kind of pressure also throughout his dialogue contributions. Joseph is the only boy in his family and on November 22, commenting on why Hamburger is the dominating kind, he said, "Maybe he was the oldest of his family and so . . . he had to show his way of being a leader around the house, and boss people around, so that's probably why." Joseph feels the family expects him to be more dominating, and to look upon this kind of domination as acceptable.

These pressures at home, and also at school, make it hard for Joseph to question the underlying value of dominance. Also, he may be self-blaming when it comes to these so-called inadequacies which, at times, in the dialogues, took the form of blaming the victim. In the October 25 dialogue, Joseph may

have been speaking from personal experience when he interpreted why Timmy in the code was too hard on himself. He had been stating this at various times throughout this dialogue and repeated it again and again. "It's like he dropped his change on the counter or something and he goes, 'Oh, darn!' Something little like that and he gets so hard on himself."

Contrary to this class's in-group values, Joseph also feels that it is quite alright for a person, male or female, to show feelings. His Lebanese culture might encourage this attitude more so than the Anglo one. In his December 3 journal, he wrote that Fred [in the code] was dumb because he didn't show his feelings. On November 6 in his journal, he expressed his concern for Janice's feelings, "I felt kind of sorry for Janice because of Edward. I know that Edward didn't mean it if he did, it was afile [awful]."

Joseph's lack of understanding about the political happenings in this classroom added to his confusion at times. He was not always aware of why Jack did what he did. In the October 30 dialogue, when Samantha asked the boys if they were saying girls are weaker than boys, Joseph challenged with, "We're not even saying that. We're just wondering how . . . she [Eugenie Clark] could hold a great white shark and we probably can't hold it. I'm not saying we can. Are we?" The "Are we?" at the end of his comment is interesting. He was aware that, in speaking collectively, he may not be speaking for the entire group. Also, he may not be totally aware of

the group's values and was sensitive to the problems of inclusion. Although Joseph wanted to be part of the group, he still held on to much of his own individuality.

Although a warm personality who is well-liked, these factors contributed to his difficulty being fully accepted into the in-group. Also the insults mentioned earlier may possibly be attributed to racial discrimination. Because of his warmth, Joseph, although not fully accepted, did seem to find a somewhat comfortable place within the group. Certainly, he did not seem to wear the coat of frustration that Edward did. Another reason why Joseph was somewhat comfortable was also due to the role he played in the dialogues.

Out of his motivation to be a part of this class, Joseph had a definite role to play in the dialogues and this role had the sanction of Jack and Samantha. From the beginning dialogue (October 4), Joseph supported Jack's comments. He would often echo Jack's remarks, "If you have the same thoughts, it's all the better cause . . . ." Also, in this first October 4 dialogue, whenever there was challenging of some sort going on, Joseph moved in to smooth things over. At first, I thought he was distracted, or just not paying attention when his comments would deny what was previously stated in dialogue. His intervention took the conversation in a different direction. However, as I studied the dialogues further, a pattern emerged that suggests that Joseph handled conflict for the group and that this was one of his main social roles in the class. On October 4, Samantha challenged

Jack, who tried to say you only have friends who are like you. Then Joseph denied the controversy with a neutral statement, "You can try to, you know, you can try to meet new friends."

The fact that his topic always denied what was previously said, indicated that his intention was to deliberately dissolve the challenge and to prevent any attempt at criticism. This was a welcomed role, endorsed by Jack and the others because Jack saw this as a good opportunity to ignore the challenge, when it was to his benefit and to continue the discussion along Joseph's new direction. Joseph may have been quite perceptive in seeing the limit-situations in this classroom and he avoided conflict by these divergent actions. However, they were also lost opportunities for growth and such strategies prevented much needed analysis into new areas.

Joseph's intervention in the October 4 dialogue had the effect of trivializing Samantha's comment and she dropped the challenge. In this way, Joseph joined with other class members to become part of the peer pressure to maintain the status quo in the beginning dialogues.

Joseph did this also in the October 25 dialogue, when Janet silenced the class through her use of the word, "hormones," when she described how she sometimes got into bad moods. Into the silence wandered Joseph, who denied the existence of the statement with, "Maybe he's [Curt in the code] trying to please someone . . . maybe besides his parents." Sally, and then Jack, were quick to support this diversion that Joseph initiated. When the topic got too heavy

for the class to handle, Joseph would always initiate the change in direction.

From Freire 's (1970) discussion of limit-situations, we can see Joseph's attempt to halt critical thinking may have been a way to prevent any disruption to the status quo which assured him a comfortable position in this classroom.

In sum, limit-situations imply the existence of persons who are directly or indirectly served by these situations, and of those who are negated and curbed by them. Once the latter come to perceive these situations as the frontier between being and being more human, rather than the frontier between being and nothingness, they begin to direct their increasingly critical actions towards achieving the untested feasibility implicit in that perception. On the other hand, those who are served by the present limit-situation regard the untested feasibility as a threatening limit-situation which must not be allowed to materialize, and act to maintain the status quo. (pp. 92-93)

In some respects, Joseph's attitude towards domination was similar to Edward's. He feels that leaders are inevitable, but knows he does not have the desire to be the boss, himself. Yet, he needs to be accepted by fellow males, and colluded with Jack to do this. However, Joseph feels that leaders do not have to be mean and rejecting. Unlike Edward, Joseph does not try to dominate others. Nor does he brag about any of his assets. Like so many other boys in this

classroom wanting to be part of the boys' group, Joseph was left sitting on the fence at various times because Jack exerted ownership over this group. However, he did not seem to resent this as much as Edward did. Nor did he feel that motivated to join Jack's group directly. Rather, his motivation came from a desire to be generally perceived, by other males in the class, as manly. He wanted to be accepted by all the boys, not just Jack, in the class.

As a matter of fact, I don't think Joseph really approved of Jack's style, although he did not want to aggravate him either. Joseph showed increased sensitivity to being dominated as the dialogues proceeded. In the November 15 dialogue, Joseph's comment about being "slapped around," that is, disrespected if you let others push you around, influenced Edward, who talked about what he'd do if he was rejected. Janet focused in on group values, and Sally discussed dressing codes. Janet talked about how some people aren't interested in some values, and Joseph shared his interpretation of Jenny's feelings,

She probably felt that she wasn't wanted anywhere and so she . . . might have started off at the wrong group, maybe and thought, "Hey I got these friends so I met these people . . . so I try to keep them as friends so I won't have any problems."

I wonder if this is how Joseph saw his association with some class members. Janet explained why Jenny stayed in the group because it made her feel really important. I wonder if

they were rationalizing why people stay in groups with questionable social values. Joseph's concept of a leader is one who has the power to "slap" others around and he registered his feelings about this in his November 5 journal entry.

On Thursday I was surprised about how people were interested. I think Jenny is going to let the two girls slap her around because the two girls probley (sic) knew that were being kind of a leader. I don't think it's fare (sic).

Because of the particular class values, Joseph, like many of his classmates did not feel appreciated. Evidence in the dialogues shows that Joseph, and many other classmates, felt rejection from the group at various times. On November 15, he was in an all boys group with David and Carl [supporters of Jack] and Jamie [supporter of Samantha]. This group treated the problem as one of a friend being rejected but did not go beyond that. In the reporting Joseph said the problem was that, "Her friends didn't pay attention to her."

Many times in the dialogue, there was the indication that Joseph did not get enough respect from peers. In the first dialogue on October 4, I observed how Joseph had taken great pains to properly prepare his group's report, only to have to speak aloud, through the distraction of several people in the class talking at the same time he was giving his presentation. This kind of disrespect never happened with Jack.

Also, Joseph, who was conscious of not interrupting

others in the dialogue, never got this consideration from the more vocal members in the class during the open dialogue. They interrupted him frequently. This left him with voice space only during the quieter lapses in the open dialogue and also during the round robin times to express his ideas.

Joseph did not appear to recognize class distinctions directly, but in the dialogues on November 22, he showed more of his feelings about being dominated. He really got involved in "The Sandwich" play and felt that Hamburger unfairly rejected Onion and Pickle from his group.

His sense of fairness triggered off some thinking about new possibilities. When Janet talked about leadership in a wolf pack and I asked if people are like that, Joseph said, "No, it don't have to be, but it can be." Here, Joseph showed good insight in that he recognizes not only what can happen in human communities when one person gets too much power, but it also hints at a recognition that it doesn't have to be this way, and that there are more enlightened alternatives. Joseph said in the round robin, "I think that everyone's kinda the same because I mean, even though if someone looks different . . . it doesn't matter."

When I asked the class if Hamburger's the boss, Joseph showed contempt for this autocratic ruler and said, "Thinks he's the boss." Joseph's feelings about being rejected came out in his attitude towards Hamburger. In his journal, Joseph wrote:

I think the play means that people like Hamburger are



really mean. Everybody should have the same rights. I think the play was good. My idea was to change the play just a bit, like having Hamburger rejected and the team leaving him.

I was interested to know what the students thought about accepting dominance by supporting a leader with bad values. I asked why the others didn't challenge Hamburger when he rejected Onion and Pickle. In dialogue Joseph said, "I think they don't want to start arguing with Hamburger because they think he's so big and they don't want any trouble and stuff and they don't want everyone else to start rejecting that certain person maybe."

Joseph took a giant step forward in his thinking by making a suggestion, "I . . . have a kinda idea, maybe. If we could do the play over, but instead of being friends with Hamburger, maybe reject Hamburger . . . to see what he might feel." Although, like Edward, he felt Hamburger should be rejected, he had also recognized that things can be different and wanted to initiate a change. This is an example of Freire's Pedagogy for critical thinking and action, "praxis."

I thought it would be good for the group to work through this so that more opportunities would come up for them to examine power relations and group values. I suggested that Joseph get together with others for this purpose, and although he never did get it off the ground for reasons already discussed, my support seemed to give him new confidence in the dialogues that followed.

Racism

Besides the fact that Joseph's nature is gentle, unassuming and uncompetitive, being Lebanese posed other difficulties for his trying to find a place with this group of children. He is caught between two cultures, sometimes with similar values but, at times, conflicting ones. Joseph may feel pressure to prioritize Lebanese values whenever there is a conflict.

On October 9, Joseph's group was the second one to report and they felt that children should obey their parents and parents need to give children space. Later, in the open dialogue, Joseph talked about the control that parents have over their children to make them obedient. He said that if you don't obey them," . . . you don't get to play at your friend's house." Joseph told me this before, in private, that if he upsets his parents, this is a frequently-used punishment.

In the code on racism on January 15, Joseph was in Jack's group with Stanley, David and Jamie. As usual, Jack influenced the group to treat the code very superficially. The group said the Natives were stripped of their culture and weren't getting their rights and also that the "White culture could leave the Indian (sic) culture alone. Joseph read, "The Indians (sic) aren't getting their rights."

Otherwise, Joseph had little input into this dialogue. When Janet said the Indians had little medicine to treat

diseases, Joseph reminded her, "But, Janet, remember . . . we brang diseases over." I found this remark very interesting.

Joseph is a new immigrant and came to this culture only 3 to 4 years ago. Therefore, he is not from the White Anglo culture that originally brought over measles and other diseases that killed many Indians and yet he said we brang diseases over." To me, the "we" shows the strength of his desire, not to distinguish himself from his classmates. Rather, he tried to deny the distances between himself and his classmates by making their history, his history. Also Joseph may have been responding to the kind of school curriculum that would reinforce this tendency to treat the white, Anglo history as everyone's history. Implicit in Joseph's response was the negation of his own background, or subjugating it to that of his peers.

The topic changed from a discussion on Native peoples' rights to one on Black people and Joseph listened uncomfortably until the round robin. Here he said, "I wonder what happened to the . . . Indian (sic) discussion? All of a sudden it just got . . . Black people and stuff." This was an attempt on Joseph's part to restrict the definition of the race problem to Natives. Samantha tried to explain that the conversation was on racism and that included Black people. However, Joseph protested, "Well . . . more Blacks."

Edward told him it was just all the same, and Joseph was quiet as the round robin proceeded. Whereas Samantha and Janet and some others were seeing more globally the

connections between discrimination whether it was about Native peoples or Blacks or so-called "foreigners" of any type, Joseph wanted to keep the definition narrower and limited to Natives. This can be interpreted as a form of resistance. By taking this narrow view, Joseph insulated himself from the perils of racism himself.

There are certainly some members of the White culture who are racist towards his culture, but Joseph did not want to look at this. He did not want to see his own oppression under this system. Instead, he aligned himself with his White Anglo peers in looking at this issue today.

It is significant that Joseph said little in this dialogue, but he did manage to get in this particular myth that he is a part of the White culture like them. The inattention that Joseph felt from fellow classmates might have been partially motivated by his being from a different culture.

### Resistance

The above incident illustrates the best example of Joseph's resistance. Joseph enjoyed the earlier dialogues. He had a definite role and for the most part, he felt supported by Jack and Samantha. Despite earlier statements supporting the dialogues, Joseph registered his discomfort with the January 15 dialogue. In his journal he wrote, "I think the dialogue was O.K. . . . O.K., so I lied. I found it

kind of boring because it kept getting off the subject, and not much to talk about, and also too many stories."

In reality, the participants kept to the topic very well and brought the issue down to more personal levels. This was threatening to Joseph, who just wanted to talk about the Native peoples because, otherwise, it got dangerously close to his own situation. This is the strongest example of Joseph's resistance and the word, "boring," used by so many students, many times, seemed to be an overt indicator of their resistances.

Mostly, Joseph showed resistance to any topic that challenged his acceptance by the boys in his class. He supported Jack and the boys when they tried to divert the girls from probing more deeply into the issue of sexism. In this way, Joseph felt more a part of the group to which he wanted to belong. In the October 25 dialogue, Janet started talking about a mark of 80% ruining a mathematics average. Joseph, like Jack and Samantha, wanted to refocus the conversation, "What's this about math? We're talking about a baseball team right here."

Here, again, Joseph showed the class that the issue was sports, not math and his desire to prove he was one of the boys, at times, encouraged him to challenge Janet whenever she tried to bring in her own experiences.

Resistance may also have been involved on November 30, when Joseph's group recognized that Jenny was rejected. He defined this as the problem and took the position of blaming

the victim, Jenny. He was in an all-boys group discussion with Stanley, Charley, Bill, Jamie and Doug. Joseph gained in confidence and organized this group to address the issue. In the presentation, Stanley said that Jenny was letting her friends control her. Bill added that Jenny was trying to be like Janet and Marlene, by smoking and being cool and wearing different clothes in order to be in a special group so people would like her. Joseph said, "Jenny could make new friends."

Joseph could see the possibility for change for Jenny, but in blaming her solely, he stopped further analysis of the problem from taking place. Incidentally, this was Jack's position also. If Joseph looked more closely at Jenny's friends, he could also have come to a greater examination of the group's values and to see that this was also part of the problem.

Joseph's group did recognize that peer pressure was involved as part of the problem here. Yet, Joseph himself denied it personally in the dialogue. Unlike Janet, Edward, Barry and Samantha, Joseph himself did not come around to eventually admitting that peer pressure affected him. Yet, there was evidence in the dialogues that his wanting to be part of the boys' group had influenced him to speak out about affirming his manhood. Also, his role in maintaining the status quo had hegemonic endorsement. He told the class he did not give into peer pressure when a stranger offered him a cigarette. In denying peer pressure, he may have wanted to align himself with Jack, who took the same position on peer

pressure and might appear tougher than peer pressure, thereby, again asserting his manhood.

Joseph comes from a very conservative patriarchal culture. In the dialogue on "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure" Joseph and Jack worked together to deny peer pressure on Jenny and to therefore blame her totally.

However, there may have been a legitimate aspect to Joseph's reaction to deny peer pressure in the above mentioned dialogue. Joseph was not as prone to peer pressure as were Jack, Samantha and Edward and therefore was some legitimacy to this claim. For example, Joseph is part of a culture that has a very close-knit family unit, especially as they are apart from their homeland and living amidst a second culture. Therefore, Joseph may, in fact, not be as susceptible to peer pressure here, in Canada, as he would be to family pressure. If he were living in his country of origin, Lebanon, I suspect that he would be more susceptible to peer pressure there, than is the case here. Resistance came when he tried to deny peer pressure totally.

For the most part, Joseph liked to listen to different opinions in the dialogues and he did not appear to be threatened by most of them. This allowed Joseph to grow through the dialogues, despite some instances of resistance.

### Learning

Joseph performed consistently in the average range

academically. He had some difficulties in the past with writing skills that were believed to be related to learning English as a second language. However, he works conscientiously and is very responsible about doing what was expected of him, both at home and at school.

Joseph did not begin the dialogues as a critical thinker. Often, he began the discussions by an over-simplification of the problem. In open dialogue, he usually echoed comments in support of Jack and Samantha. During the group presentation part on October 4, I observed Joseph, as the only one who was taking the roles of recorder and presenter seriously. He was organizing and practising his performance for the task of presenting, instead of listening to the presentations of others. This self-conscious focus on his own participation, in the beginning, led to missed opportunities for learning from others. However, as the dialogues progressed he relaxed, and became very comfortable listening to others, thereby gaining more confidence in presenting his ideas.

In his beginning presentation on October 4, his lack of confidence in expressing himself in front of a group became apparent as he spoke in a quiet voice. Despite a lack of listening from his peers, he continued to report his group's findings. Joseph wanted his voice to be represented and this was evident from the beginning dialogue on October 4 when he attempted several times to speak during the open dialogue. I encouraged Joseph's participation in the dialogues, through the journal initially, and he became more vocal in the



dialogues on October 25 and on October 30.

Joseph took some important steps forward in his learning throughout the dialogues. Originally, he did not understand how this pedagogy differs from other more familiar, traditional ones and therefore he seemed to think that they were to follow directions to get a "right" answer. The assumption that Joseph had was that there is only one answer and it is the students' task to discover it. This led to some confusions about concepts that through the dialogues were addressed. The dialogues offered Joseph a new way of looking at ideas and because he was open to expressing his confusions, he reached a higher level of understanding.

For example, on October 16 he seemed to have the idea that the discussion had to be restricted only to the information that was available in the code, and that they could not make assumptions from it. I think he thought the code was some kind of test, that I had composed. Joseph voiced his concern with, "I felt the story didn't [doesn't] really give enough information to argey [argue]. I like argey (sic) sometimes to prove other people wrong." I addressed this in the October 14 letter to the class,

Some of the group said during the dialogue (October 9) that the story didn't give us enough facts. Do we need all the facts to have an opinion? I think that to have as many facts as possible is great, but in real life, I wonder how often it occurs that we do have all the information we feel we need before we can have an

opinion? In real life don't we frequently have opinions without hearing all the facts?

Jack and Samantha worked together to state their perspective on this issue in the dialogue, thereby teaching Joseph how they had interpreted the pedagogy. Eventually, Joseph came around to a better understanding of the issue's complexity.

Another example of how Joseph struggled to work through mistaken or limited perceptions was when Joseph totally blamed the victim in the Jenny dialogue (November 27) but in the Fred dialogue (December 3), he wasn't as quick to do so. In fact, both Jenny and Fred were responding to peer pressure. He admitted that Fred had done something wrong, after listening carefully to others speak about it. "I think that Fred is doing something wrong because if he doesn't want to smoke or it's up to him, but I think that most of us agree that he is . . . doing something wrong."

However, he did not totally blame Fred, like he did Jenny, in the dialogue just a week earlier. He did not see anything seriously wrong in Fred going along with things, even if he doesn't agree with them. This hit too close to home, I think, and Joseph got defensive about it. When I said in dialogue, that Fred had a responsibility, and he was influencing his other friends by participating in taking the drugs, Joseph questioned me about Fred's involvement, ". . . but he didn't start it though, right?" Joseph wanted to establish reduced responsibility for Fred because he only went

along with it, and he was not really to blame because he didn't start it. However, I indicated that Fred was responsible for his part in it. "He was part of the group that was doing it." This seemed to be a new way of looking at responsibility to Joseph's way of thinking. In his journal, Joseph wrote, "I hope that we learn more about drugs. If I could, I would make a Nintendo game about drugs . . . I think that Fred is dum (sic) because he is not showing his feelings." From this statement I felt that Joseph was beginning to look more closely at the issue of collusion.

Joseph had been open about the dialogues and interested in learning more from the beginning. On October 4 and 9, Joseph wrote in his journal about his own learning,

Today I thought it was really neat. Is this how it's going to be? The best part (sic) about how it is when we showed our thoughts . . . I think it's [the dialogue] a great idea because some people and I learned alot (sic) . . . Today was so interesting that I herd (sic) arguymnts (sic). I kind of like those discaictions (discussions) because I did [the] same thing like this in grade five.

Joseph is really one youth who truly took the dialogues seriously and tried to understand the issues. He was also the one who most often offered strategies for change. In addition to the example cited previously when Joseph suggested creating a revised play on Hamburger, he offered another suggestion in the October 25 dialogue, "If I was him [Timmy, in the code],

what I would do was go see Kurt and all the people who didn't make the team and try to make their own baseball team and go play out in the park."

Another occasion to observe Joseph's learning was on October 17, when I had extended the invitation to Joseph and others in the general letter. I wrote, "If there is a special topic that interests you, let me know because maybe the whole class may be interested in discussing it."

On March 7, Joseph took on a teaching role himself, "Well, you [referring a student who complained about not getting a specific interest discussed] should have said something earlier because, like she [Mrs Mc Dade] said, to write something." This gave me the opportunity to reinforce expectations for them to show this kind of initiative, by suggesting topics of interest in their journals.

Joseph was just warming up to a more active role in the dialogues, when they ended. For youths, like Janet and Joseph, who were not in a specific in-group, the dialogue sessions seemed to offer them an unusual opportunity to express themselves. They got feedback from peers in a social agenda that was otherwise lacking in a school system that is not providing enough of this type of social exchange.

### Pedagogy

Joseph needs more experience with the dialogues. He was becoming a better, more critical thinker as they progressed.

He is genuinely interested in learning more about the issues and how others think about them. His confidence in taking more of a leadership role was developing. When he watched the tapes on March 7, he could see a change for himself. In the round robin, Joseph said, "I kinda got a little embarrassed watching myself on T.V. because I've changed so much, and I feel like I'm a little boy there and now I feel more like I'm real different now."

Joseph responds very well to encouragement, but needs more structure to get going. He wanted to write a new play on "The Sandwich" about Hamburger getting rejected, but he needed help getting it off the ground. With more time, I could work behind the scenes, to encourage others, boys and girls, to develop this with Joseph.

Joseph had experienced discrimination, but is either not aware of it to the point of being able to articulate it, or he was uncomfortable confronting it at the time. He was gaining in confidence through the dialogues and, in time, I feel that Joseph could have made excellent contributions to bring this class forward in their thinking on issues of equality. He showed his growing confidence, when he challenged me on November 22 in the open dialogue, "I sort of got a problem with what Mrs. Mc Dade said because you're saying that everyone is the same . . . should be nice to everyone, but not everyone's like that and that's it." Joseph recognized that discrimination exists. He thought that because I was saying everyone should have equal rights, that I was implying that

they did get equal rights. We eventually cleared up this misconception. In his journal he wrote, "Today I learned a lot because the word 'same' and 'equal' are not the same."

Part of Joseph's difficulty in looking critically at the society was that he tended to blame the victim totally [Jenny] or not at all [Fred]. While we all must share in some degree of responsibility for a problem, his response was only a partial analysis. Joseph stopped before taking the analysis further by viewing the issue of responsibility from the aspect of several contributing factors. This was because Joseph has, yet, to examine the society's values, including those in the classroom and those at home. Joseph would benefit from more codes on values and peer pressure, as well as by being encouraged to participate in creating or finding codes of his own for the class to do.

#### Shawna

Passive and quiet, 12 year old Shawna, would not have been part of this research study if I had not come to know her better through her journal writing. She is always very pleasant, well-liked and accepted by her peers. She helps her mother dutifully with household chores and cares for her 5 younger siblings. The family are members of a fundamentalist, Christian religion.

In dialogue, Shawna often sat with Samantha, Sally and Carol, and was an accepted member of this group of friends.

In the October 24 journal entry, she voluntarily listed her friends as Sally, Carol, Barbara, Janet and her friend, Janice. However, she never sat with Janet in the dialogues and I felt her closest friend was probably Sally. It is interesting to note that Shawna's friends were part of two different, and often opposing, groups. She was friends with Sally, who was Samantha's friend and she was also friends with Carol and Janice who were Janet's friends.

### Sexism

From the beginning dialogues, Shawna knew that she stood apart from her peers because of her family's strict religious values. In this way, her values differ from those of her classmates and this became most noticeable in the codes on sexism.

Shawna played out what at first appeared to be a passive, subservient, traditionally feminine role in her lack of dialogue participation. For the most part, Shawna was an observer in all the dialogues and was uncritical in her thinking about the issues. She did not venture into the competitive world of the open dialogue. Even when space in the open dialogue was given to her by Sally, Shawna was not comfortable with it. She is responsive to the needs of the others, and although she did not initiate, she followed the lead and direction of peers, including other females. Many times, throughout the dialogues, I heard someone telling

Shawna to do something.

There were signs of hope regarding her ability to overcome this apparent passivity and timidity. On October 9, after Jack's group did their reporting, Shawna then felt comfortable enough to read her group's response. Her initial reluctance to speak, eventually became secondary to her duty as a group member to report her share of the group's findings. This may have been one of the reasons for her acceptance into the group. Shawna began by reading her group's presentation in a very low voice, and when she got stuck, Sally tried to encourage and help her out with, "Do you want to read yours now?" Here, Sally was referring to the sharing of similar experiences about conflicts with siblings. Shawna responded to this directive, "O.K., I wake up. Mary [Shawna's baby sister] is crying and my brother's taking too long in the bathroom and we have porridge for breakfast and my brothers get to the bus stop before I do."

Here we got an insight into some family expectations for Shawna and her frustration over this. Her younger brother was in the bathroom before her. It is possible that she lost time in the morning due to responsibilities she had, that her brothers don't share because they make it to the bus stop before her. Sally showed surprise when Shawna held back information about her home responsibilities and she challenged Shawna's silence on this issue. Still, Shawna did not feel comfortable to respond to this encouragement.

Sally had an insider's view of Shawna's considerable home



responsibilities and tried again to get Shawna to discuss these in the dialogues. On October 9 Sally brought Shawna into a discussion in an attempt to involve her in the dialogue. "Shawna, you have how many brothers and sisters?" Shawna answered, "Five." Sally continued to ask her who got favoured more, but Shawna smiled in embarrassment and replied in an aggravated voice, "I don't know!" In spite of what she implied in the presentation part about her brothers getting favoured treatment, she didn't want to discuss it openly in the large group. Sally tried, in vain, to get her to admit to discriminating treatment in her family. She tried again, later in the open dialogue, when Joseph said that sometimes parents pick on the older sibling. At this point, Sally spoke out loudly, "Shawna!" trying to get Shawna to admit to having experienced sexual discrimination because of the family's increased expectations for girls to assume a lot of home responsibility.

Shawna's attitude towards issues of sexism also became visible in those dialogues pertaining to it. To her, there seemed little reason to argue about sexism, since there is only one way to look at the issue and that is that women are meant to be subservient to men because the Bible says so. She thought it was just a silly game, but amusing at times. On October 30 she wrote,

I don't see how anyone could spend so much time arguing about that [sexism], but it was fun to listen to . . .  
I think I might like to know how some people think the

world was created. I know that "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth."

This remark aroused my curiosity and I questioned her further on it. She wrote back, in reply,

I would rather the boy get an education. The girl mightn't need an education unless she planned to stay single . . . . The Bible tells us that woman was fashioned from man and that the man ruled over the household. This means that a wife is to submit to her husband. (November 15)

Shawna was more open in the small group discussions and in the one on October 30, she told more about her family. She said that her father worked and her mother did all the housework. She said her father would not even do the vacuuming but that when her father did cook, he did a better job than her mother. Later in the group presentation, in front of the large group, Shawna read her group's report, "The father could learn more about the course [Home economics] and at home he could start helping out." This probably was a compromise for Shawna, made in an attempt to make herself more like her peers, but it appears as though she was uncomfortable even with this and, as usual, Shawna did not participate orally in the open dialogue.

Shawna's discomfort grew as the dialogues on sexism continued. On November 6, Shawna was in the group with her friend, Sally, Samantha, John and Bill. She read her group's report, "Karen's parents won't give her freedom, or let her

get a higher education. They think that her brother should go to college and girls shouldn't." She read this, as if it were her opinion also, along with the group and she passed on the first round robin.

I learned later that, privately, that Shawna felt very differently about this issue because, on November 15, she wrote in the privacy of her journal, "I didn't feel anything when I was speaking out about my ideas. I would rather the boy get the education. The girl mightn't need an education unless she planned to stay single." I questioned Shawna further on this and she replied, "If I were in the situation you stated, [about the husband dying], I would trust in the Lord for his help in raising a family without a husband. I am sure the Lord would not allow me to marry someone who would divorce me."

It became apparent to me, through the analysis, that Shawna spoke her opinion only when she felt comfortable with peer support. Peer support comes when the speaker says what others want to hear in terms of having their values verified. Therefore, in the second round robin, on November 6 when the class challenged Margie on her comment that all men are lazy, Shawna felt no hesitation in voicing her opinion then. With group support, she joined in with the others to challenge Margie's comment. She responded in the second round robin.

I don't think you can say men are lazy, cause they go out and bring all the money in, and you might not even have a broom to sweep with, or a stove to cook on, if

they didn't bring, didn't have money to buy it.

She exercised a choice to participate when she shared values with peers. The particular comment illustrated her reality and you can detect a note of gratitude that men deserve a lot of credit because they "bring home the bacon." Again, she seemed to miss the point that women can do this, also. It may not have occurred to her. However signs of hope in raising Shawna's consciousness became visible. Her interest in the dialogues on sexism existed, despite her resistance, because on November 30 she wrote

When are we going to see one of the discussions? I would like to see the discussion about when there was a P.T.A. meeting, and a man said he didn't want his son to learn cooking and sewing because it is a woman's work. I want to watch that one because I thought it was very interesting, and I enjoyed it a lot. It's fun to listen to another person's ideas.

It appears as though these dialogues became an area of curiosity to Shawna. Although her entrenchment into the passive female role appears to be deeply rooted, she did show growth in her desire to look at the issue more than she had before. Like others, her growth was a jagged one back and forth, as she attempted to work out the layers of contradiction surrounding the issue. On December 3 she, along with the other girls in the class, espoused the female position to solving the problem. In the reporting period, Shawna said, "Fred can talk to a counsellor at his school and

try to get his friends to stop drinking and smoking, and make, or put, a lock on the cabinet [liquor cabinet]. This was the girls' position of taking responsibility--by talking directly to a counsellor, rather than taking the boys' solution of dealing with the problem--either by taking direct action or by just walking away from it and minding your own business.

Shawna did not contribute to the rest of the dialogue and passed on her round robin turns, but in her journal, she wrote something and then scratched it out. She was beginning to have new thoughts which she feared to share overtly. On the last code on sexism, Shawna challenged the boys' opinions in her journal and wrote in defence of the female writer of the article, "I think they shouldn't blame it on the writer of the paper that there's no survey on men because the place that held the survey is responsible for that" (December 11).

A question that Shawna asked about the dialogue was, "Why do women react according to this manner?" [get less ambitious as they get older].

#### Classroom Status and Social Groupings

Shawna was an accepted member of the girls' group and seemed unconcerned about the in-group. To her, it was a boys' group and, as such, held no interest. Therefore, she extended little energy thinking about it. She was quite comfortable, sitting with the girls and relied on her friends for support. She seemed comfortable with her status in the classroom and

from the beginning, she impressed me as being a warm and caring personality. Sensitive and accommodating, she responded to all of my questions and asked me how I felt, too. It is not remarkable at all that Shawna felt that she had a lot of friends, possibly because she did not openly challenge them in any way.

However, some of this status is illusory, and I suspect that Shawna felt, on the inside, like an outsider in this class. In her October 9 journal, she wrote, " . . . I can't help but wonder how I got so many friends and how I first met them and how I kept them through the years. It seems remarkable." Regardless of this self-perception, my concern for her future welfare began with the very first dialogue. I wonder if Shawna's idea of "sharing thoughts, ideas, etc." meant listening to those of others.

Although she was liked by her classmates, she remained at a distinct distance from them socially. On the school grounds, she was most often in the company of her 3 younger siblings, rather than that of her peers. Shawna accepted this uncritically, as a natural way of being. Classmates liked Shawna, but they did not seem to encourage her presence among them. They, too, accepted Shawna's way, as natural for her and did not question her choice to be with her siblings.

Because Shawna's values distanced her from her peers, she tried to keep these values as low key as possible. This perception of being different from her peers may have accounted, in part, for her appearance of shyness.

Keeping this a secret from others was very difficult for Shawna, because her parents are very proud of their different values. The following is one example. The principal expressed concern to Shawna's mother, one day, because Shawna was wore a dress in gym class and should have worn shorts or jogging pants because of the nature of the gymnastics activities. Shawna's mother replied that, "All my girls are ladies and will wear dresses, like ladies." The problem was eventually resolved by Shawna and her sisters wearing pants under their dresses in gym class. Incidents like this were a daily, concrete reminder to Shawna and her peers about their different values.

One advantage of having values different from peers is that it allows a person more objective distance from which to view the problems relating to them. In the code on Jenny and peer values, Shawna examined the values of Kathy and Marlene a lot more closely than did Samantha, Jack and some others. Although she didn't express her opinions about peer values outright in the dialogues, she wrote to me about her feelings privately in her journal.

Shawna enjoyed seeing her classmates act out the play, "The Sandwich" on November 22, but the dialogue discussion, itself, bored her. Because she lacked class consciousness, she did not see the relationships of power, either in the play, or in her classroom. In this dialogue, there was no small group discussion, and Shawna's contribution was limited to a remark made in the first round robin, "I think the play

means that you shouldn't make fun of people for looks and if you get to know them better, you may be friends with them."

About Hamburger, the autocratic ruler in the play, she wrote,

I think that Hamburger should have let Onion play with them the first time and found out what she was like before rejecting her. Maybe if Hamburger had accepted Pickle and Onion at the start, he would have found out what they were like and they would already be part of the group. (November 22)

To Shawna, the problem was simply Hamburger rejecting people before getting to know them. There was a great deal of resistance that came with Shawna's examination of these topics and she generally expressed it through silence. Shawna was comfortable with her place in the girls' group and therefore there was little to encourage her to look into the issues in "The Sandwich" play. She worked hard to deny her own oppression because she believes that her present position in life is God's will and, therefore, unalterable. Freire (1985) accounts for the role of the traditional church in fostering this fatalistic attitude.

The traditionalist church, first of all, is still intensely colonialist. It is a missionary church, in the worse sense of the word--a necrophiliac winner of souls: hence its taste for masochistic emphasis on sin, hellfire, and eternal damnation . . . . In despising this world as a world of sin, vice, and impurity, they are in one sense taking their revenge on their oppressors, its



owners. It is as if they were saying to their bosses, "You are powerful--but the world over which your power holds sway is an evil one and we reject it . . . .

None of this resolves the real problems of the oppressed. Their catharsis actually alienates them further, for it directs their anger against the world and not against the social system that is ruining the world. Thus, seeing the world itself as the antagonist, they attempt the impossible: to renounce the world's mediation in their pilgrimage. By doing so, they hope to reach transcendence without passing by way of the mundane; they want metahistory without experiencing history; they want salvation without knowing liberation . . . . The pain of domination leads them to accept this historical anaesthesia in the hope that it will strengthen them to fight sin and the devil--leaving untouched all the while the real cause of their oppression. They cannot see, beyond their present situation, the untested feasibility, the future as a liberation project that they must create for themselves. (pp. 131-132)

### Racism

Shawna was unfortunately absent on January 15, the only time she missed a dialogue. The dialogue was about government agents who abducted Native children from their homes in order to strip them from their culture and most importantly, from

Shawna's perspective, it involved Christian missionaries who also colluded in this racist act. A discussion on this true situation would have greatly affected Shawna's perception of Christian institutions. Therefore, given its religious content, it is not too far fetched to suspect that her absence may have been deliberate.

The newspaper article was given to students a week before the dialogue. At the time, I did not think about Shawna's reaction to the newspaper article, and it was only later on, in the analysis, that I came to believe that her parents would probably have wanted her to miss this dialogue because the issue was connected with Christian missionaries.

### Resistance

It took me awhile to learn different forms of resistance from the dialogues and writings, but what I at first mistook as shyness in Shawna was, in fact, resistance from the start. Shawna's hesitancy in speaking her views, came from a gender view that women and girls should be quiet, submissive, obedient and not critical. This view became a comfort to Shawna because her values were different from her peers and she worked hard to try to conceal this as much as possible. She used silence to do this.

Many of Shawna's views came out of her religious convictions. She knew that her female classmates and friends, Janice and Janet, felt differently about women's issues than

she did because she had listened to their opinions in the three dialogues on sexism. Yet, she remained silent about her feelings.

It was on October 16 that I first began to understand that Shawna's silence was resistance and not necessarily just a shy personality. In fact, this reflection on Shawna led me to question the shy personality as such to the point of wondering if, in fact, it exists at all or whether the shyness is a symptom of an individual's response to their environment in some way. On October 16, when all groups returned to the classroom for the groups' presentations, Sally assumed a leadership role and directed Shawna to respond first. Shawna, at first, declined and another group member spoke. Then, she read next, to state what the problem was. "Paula [a girl in the code] is stubborn and she won't clean up her room and listen to her parents."

This provided some insight into how Shawna feels about obedience to parents and it contrasted sharply with how her peers perceived the problem. When Sally and Joy and Barbara all shared their experiences of frustrations with parents, Shawna was noticeably silent. This was the first time I observed that Shawna kept quiet about issues that separated her opinion from those of her friends.

Try as she might to hide her different values, they were very apparent to classmates. It was obvious to everyone, that Shawna played out a passive, female role and this made her an easy target for Samantha to exaggerate a class value. In the

October 30 dialogue, Samantha called Shawna a "goody-goody." She said, "Some girls and some boys, O.K. Carl, there's a real big difference between you and Bill, and Carl, there's a real big difference between me and Shawna." Given this class's values, this was a slight against Shawna and Bill. Bill was quick to openly express offence. Shawna did not perceive it as an insult, as such, because to Shawna, it is good to be good, whereas to Samantha it is "sissy" to be good. Because Shawna did not address Samantha's singling her out in the dialogue, I wondered what she thought about this. On November 4, I wrote to ask her directly. She wrote back.

When Samantha said that me and her were very different, I don't know what you mean, what I felt like. I think she meant things like she has one sister and I have 3 sisters and 2 brothers. She's taller than me. We have different interests, different homes and different friends.

It surprised me that Shawna did not perceive Samantha's attitude, or resisted thinking about it. However, Shawna's curiosity was aroused and sensitized, possibly by my questioning her about it. Although uncomfortable, in her October 30 journal, she wrote,

I found that there was quite a discussion today over this topic. I think I would really like to see this one at the end of the year. I think that picking our own groups made the discussion more interesting, but I don't know about you.

Like Joseph, she did not want to draw attention to the differences in values between herself and her peers and she resisted dialogue on certain codes. She expressed her boredom with dialogues on codes which were designed to get the students to examine societal values. Her expression of boredom may have been her way of trying to influence me to change topics. On November 30 she wrote, "I don't know why I found last day's discussion (sic) was boring" [Jenny and Peer Values].

Shawna's resistance was noted in her denial that the code contained a situation in which different peer values were operating and creating conflict. On November 6, I witnessed her growing confidence to speak up in challenging Margie's remark. It occurred to me that, perhaps for the first time, Shawna agreed with classmates on an issue, when Margie said in dialogue that all men are lazy and the whole class united against Margie. For once, she felt a comradeship with her peers and this gave her confidence to speak up when she got a turn in the round robin.

Note that Shawna reacted quite differently, in the very same dialogue, when her opinion varied from classmates. In her journal, she told me that she felt that boys need an education more than girls. Yet she was silent about this, both in the small group discussion where she was usually more relaxed, and in the large dialogue circle as well.

Shawna herself attributed her budding confidence to the round robin procedure. Although partially true, she was

partaking in a rationalization that prevented her from perceiving the most important reason why she really felt safe in making a verbal contribution. In her November 6 journal entry, she wrote, "I enjoyed today's disscussion (sic). I felt different when I was talking in the round robin. I like the round robin idea. I also like the idea of having voice monitors and facilitators."

Shawna's crediting the round robin and other roles with her speaking up, and giving no credit to the fact that she shared a viewpoint in common with others, furthers my belief that she did not want to think about how she is different from her peers. To her, this would be a limit-situation, which she was not ready to work through yet. Although the round robin and other roles may have been a help to her in this process, she focused on this as the only contributing part of her increased self-confidence to participate in the dialogues.

Eventually, Shawna's silence in the dialogues gave way to overt resistance. With others, especially Samantha, now openly registering resistance, Shawna felt that she had the support she needed to become more vocal about her own resistance. By November 22, Shawna's resistance reached the point where she was, now openly, opposing the dialogues, "They were fun and exciting, at first, but they are getting to be dull and boring. Sometimes you can enjoy something for awhile, but the enjoyment only lasts for a certain period of time." She may have been trying to influence me to change the focus of the discussions. I interpret this to be Shawna's way

of expressing resistance to the content in the dialogues by offering rationalistic remarks for why she found them boring.

When Shawna complained of boredom with the dialogue topics, I invited her to take more responsibility for her own learning by asking her to suggest topics that might be of more interest. On November 30, in her journal, she made this reply, "I don't know what I'd find more interesting . . . I liked the play last day, but the discussion wasn't very interesting, probably because there wasn't as many things to discuss. How many more discussions will we be having?" Here, she tried to pinpoint the difficulty as being the "discussion" and critical thinking aspect to the learning. She felt it was alright to have the play, as long as we didn't think about it or talk about it too much.

Because of the need for the class to examine values, I designed another code, "Issues of Classroom Status: Peer Pressure" to push the issue further on November 30. Shawna showed her resistance, this time, through superficial treatment of the code. She was in a group with Sally, Barbara, and Carol. The group treated the issue superficially and provided some moralistic views. During my short visit, Sally and Shawna were offering "they should" suggestions, while Diane did the recording. Their response was that of doing a perfunctory task.

In the presentation, Shawna's group claimed to have no similar experiences to share with the class, but there were several perspectives on what the problem was. Carol and Joy

both said Jenny was rejected, even though she tried to impress the group with new clothes and make-up. Also, Jenny was hanging around with people she didn't like, and smoking even when she didn't want to do this. Shawna said the problem was just that she was new. "There's a problem because Jenny is new and Janet and Marlene took her into the group and they shouldn't of (sic) took her, if they weren't going to keep her."

This might have been Shawna's way of fearing for a lose of her own position from the group, that is, her own status in the group was being examined. Her statement may have been her way of reminding the group of its responsibility to keep its commitment to its present members. Both she and Janet had said that Jenny was rejected from the group in order, perhaps, to undermine an examination of peer values that excluded both of them from the group. Shawna was less excluded from the group than Janet because she posed no threat and played out a passive role that was more acceptable to the group. Therefore, Shawna had more to lose than Janet did from this examination of peer values and this, possibly, accounted for her increased resistance. Note also Shawna's assumption of the helplessness of Jenny in this statement--that she was an object with no control over the situation involving her. This may have reflected Shawna's perception of herself under the same circumstance.

Shawna said she enjoyed this dialogue. This may have been because she treated the issue superficially, instead of



examining the underlying values. This dialogue gave her an increased perception of her ability to be a subject and to express herself by reminding the group of their responsibilities towards their members. It also gave her the opportunity to exercise some of her views on the issue. In her November 30 journal, Shawna wrote briefly, "I liked today's topic." [Jenny and Peer Pressure].

Shawna believes if only one does the "right" things, there would be no problem. In this way, Shawna would often blame the victim. On December 3, in the small group discussion, Jane said, "What if it [taking drugs] was against his [Fred's] religion?" to which Shawna replied that he's a copycat, that everyone was drinking, and that he didn't want to, and that he didn't "stick up for himself." Shawna recognized how important it is for a person in her situation, not to give in to peer pressure because it would be going directly against family values. Right now, being a copycat is very threatening to Shawna, who must maintain her difference from peers to preserve family values. She blamed Fred [in the code] for giving in to bad values. It was alright to be able to see Fred's contribution to the problem, but, like Joseph, she failed to take the analysis further in examining other factors that victimized Fred, that were also contributing to the problem. Also she did not perceive the possibility that maybe Fred was questioning certain values that he had taken for granted in the past.

By December 4, Shawna was feeling uncomfortable even

expressing some feelings in her journal. She wrote something and then scratched it out. Then, she wrote,

I think it's terrible that someone would actually like drugs. I don't have any idea at all how people could use them all the time and like them so much. That is very horrible. I hope that a lot of people can stop.

As expected, Shawna's resistance to the dialogues deepened with each dialogue and on December 11 she was quiet, even in the small group discussion with Barbara, Carol and Sally, who felt that women were expecting more than what they were going to get. Sally said women expect less as they face reality, and Shawna reported the problem for her group. "Some men do not respect women enough." It is interesting to note that she did not read the last part of her prepared text, that the group had prepared together. She omitted to read additional information from the recorder sheet saying, "Women expect more than what they get."

In this code, Shawna felt the problem was with certain men only who did not respect women, and if everyone respected one another, everything would be alright. She passed during the two round robin opportunities, but said that she enjoyed the last dialogue on sexism.

Start: g with the second dialogue on sexism (November 6), her resistance became tempered with some curiosity and an ambivalence was developing. She was torn between her resistance to new, threatening ideas and wanting to learn more about different ways of thinking about issues.

If Shawna's absence from the January 15 dialogue on racism was intentional, this reaction by her parents would nevertheless have a great effect on Shawna's curiosity. With this in mind, Shawna's remark in her journal on the previous dialogue becomes more significant. She told me she was glad that I didn't pass out the code the day before as I usually did. On December 11 she wrote, "The paper you gave us about the (Sexism - girls' aspirations) dialogue should have been out before but I'm glad you didn't put them out for us." I wonder why she was glad that I did not give them prior access to the code, like I usually did. Perhaps if she had received a copy beforehand and her parents had seen it, she might have missed the December 11 dialogue as well. This was when I first came to recognize the beginning of an ambivalence that Shawna experienced with the dialogues. Her curiosity had definitely been aroused, despite her parents' disapproval and perhaps even because of it.

More evidence supported the belief that Shawna's confidence, in expressing an opinion in dialogue, was related to her feeling the same way as her peers did. When the class leaders were expressing their feelings of resistance openly to me, Shawna joined in on March 7 and she said aloud in the round robin as well as in her journal,

I'm glad we don't have dialogues very much any more because some of the articles were extremely boring. I think that they are way too long. I wish the topics weren't the same nearly all the time. It was boring and

it was boring to watch the tape of the dialogue.

Because Shawna felt the same way as the more vocal class leaders, she spoke up in the round robin to express her view with more confidence than I had ever seen her speak with before. Yet, she softened her criticism with, "I found it more interesting to be in a live dialogue cause you can look around more and when you're watching it, you can only see what's on T.V."

Shawna's resistance was registered very firmly in her last journal response on March 7. It might have had something to do with the content of the last code because it was so unusual for her to be this demonstrative, and to disregard her usual politeness and tact. She wrote with phrases borrowed from Samantha and with the confidence gained from the knowledge of her support,

I'm glad we don't have dialogues very much any more because some of the articles were extremely [underlined five times] boring. I think that they are way too long. I wish the topics weren't the same all the time. It was B-O-O-O-R-R-R-I-N-G!"

### Learning

Shawna was hesitant to challenge anyone's ideas, to speak her voice in dialogue, to expect an education equal to her brothers, and to critically analyze her parents' perceptions. She lacked initiative, and instead, only did what others told

her to do. Yet, she showed her potential for being a creative subject when she expressed her resistance, openly, near the end of the dialogues. This, however, was done only when others, too, especially Samantha, openly expressed their own resistances. Shawna, who felt resistance earlier in the dialogues and was silent, did not become overt about it until she was assured of group support. However, over the course of the dialogues which challenged the status quo and, therefore, her own comfortable, if somewhat illusory, position in it, Shawna showed the first signs of growth and critical awareness which became concrete in the form of an ambivalence. She was interested. She wanted to view some dialogues again. And in the very end, she expressed her ambivalence again when she was concerned over what could possibly replace the dialogues. This ambivalence that Shawna showed became a sign of growth and it continued to surface to the end of the dialogues. Whereas once she knew exactly where she stood on issues, she is now questioning prior knowledge and attitudes. On December 11 she wrote,

I'm glad that next week will be the last but now we'll be uncertain about Tuesday morning activities. Do we get to keep our "Daily Reflections" scribbles or do we have to give them to you? I mean when we're done dialogue.

She may be trying to disguise the fact that she will be missing the dialogues. She wanted her dialogue journal with the codes stapled inside and was concerned about what

curriculum would replace the dialogues, yet at the same time she told me aloud that the dialogues were boring.

Through her experience with the dialogues, Shawna had been confronted with the knowledge that, in reality, people have different opinions about what's right because of their own unique experience with the problem. Shawna had no way to deal with this, since in her life, the "right" is defined and unchangeable. Given this as predetermined, then, Shawna had to cope with this problem through truisms, and the data shows that she did do this. With the lack of critical analysis, Shawna missed a lot and it was little wonder that her writings were full of words like "strangely" to describe her feelings. She didn't know why she felt the way she did about a dialogue, and she said she found some dialogues boring. When Shawna could not explain something, she delegated it to the area of mystery or other-worldliness and would cease thinking about it.

Shawna has good academic potential and is very conscientious about meeting academic and social expectations. She is obedient and does all that is expected of her. She performs well academically, but at times, would cry easily over her work because she took it so seriously. There are no academic concerns with Shawna's work and no reason, other than resistance, to account for her superficial examination of certain codes, a superficiality that shocked her regular classroom teacher.

Before Shawna became personally challenged by the

dialogues and before her resistance was recognized, she herself acknowledged the potential that the dialogues had for developing growth socially and emotionally. On October 4, she said nothing in the dialogue itself, but wrote in her journal about her own learning.

I think the dialogue circle is an excellent way of sharing thoughts, ideas, etc. I found today's discussion very interesting. I think it is very important to have friends and to get to know classmates better. I like the idea of getting into groups [to] discuss articles with classmates. I think that group discussions are very good to get to know people better. The discussion did help me to think more about friendships . . . I enjoyed today's discussion quite a bit.

On October 16, she described the social benefits of the dialogues:

The dialogue discussions are helping me to feel more comfortable around my classmates. This is the first time some of them are in my class. At the beginning of the year I felt I'd never have the courage to go up in the front of the class and present something, but the dialogue discussions that everyone has a free word too, have helped me a lot and my classmates seems not as a part of a place I have to go to everyday, but as the people I live with, talk and play with. I think I'm enjoying the discussions more as time goes on.

This mode of discussion seemed to have had particular appeal to Shawna, when she described the environment in its totality, now that dialogues were a part of her school day. It impresses upon me how little opportunity there must be for students like Shawna to express themselves with their peers in a social context outside of the dialogue curriculum.

Although Shawna was reluctant about speaking out in the open dialogue, she was an active listener and said she was beginning to feel more comfortable with the class. However, by October 25, she was no longer comfortable with the dialogues and it was the beginning of her resistance to them. Although she was still learning from the dialogues, the learning was no longer comfortable, but rather challenged former attitudes and perspectives.

Shawna's approach to learning in the beginning was not critical. Early in the dialogues, she told me in her journal that she did not like to challenge. She felt education was listening to information and giving it back on the test. Therefore, Shawna tried to retain information in an open, accepting and uncritical manner. Because of this, many concepts seemed to go over her head. It is little wonder she said they were boring. At other times, however, she was recognizing on some level that she was beginning to think differently and, at first, felt this as discomfort.

On October 30, Shawna felt no need to delve into what motivated Samantha to say she was so different from her. Without understanding the motives of others, Shawna would live



in a world in which she understands very little. While this shields her from some pain and self-consciousness, it also distances her from developing an intimate knowledge of others, as well as herself. This may be one reason she filled this gap with truisms, lectures and "one should's" which were so common in her writings.

Another example of a lack of critical analysis occurred in the November 15 dialogue when Shawna reported, "Jenny is starting to feel left out and doesn't think that she's welcome." Shawna articulated a feeling of rejection here but did not analyze anything. This treatment did not show a critical thinking of the subject matter. Contrast this with what Barbara, another member of the same group had to say, "[There is a problem here because] . . . she [Jenny] picked the wrong people to be friends with. Her friends have bad attitudes towards other people."

Even after this exposure, Shawna passed in the round robin and instead, in the privacy of her November 15 journal, made comments about characters in the code story.

I don't think it was fair to Jenny that Marlene and Kathy tried to be friends with her if they didn't plan to keep up the friendship. Someone should take Marlene and Kathy aside and explain to them that it isn't very nice to talk about people behind their backs. I don't think that people should make mean comments about other people whether they can hear it or not. If somebody doesn't like somebody else, they should try to keep their

feelings to themselves and then at least they won't hurt anyone's feelings. I think that really it's too bad that Kathy and Marlene hurt Jenny but still they shouldn't act the way they do. It's really too bad that Jenny didn't get a chance to make other friends or even try to look for other people to chum around with.

Note that Shawna comments on the responsibility that Marlene and Kathy have in maintaining the relationship with Jenny when she says, "to keep up the friendship." In this way Shawna showed resistance to a change in the present power relations in the classroom. She wants to maintain the status quo because she feared for her own position in the present order. She knew that her present position was a precarious and fragile one due to the fact that she does not share similar values with most and her energies went to preserving the status quo.

Shawna wasn't as interested in the dialogue on peer values because her resistance triggered off rationalizations resulting in her missing the point. In doing so, most of the dialogue may have just seemed like others were belabouring a point of no great significance or relevance to her.

My first and last impression is that Shawna's ability to question critically was related to the restrictiveness of her environment, especially regarding her religious values. From her journal remarks that women should submit to men, I think that Shawna feels that girls are expected to be obedient and not to question, especially when it comes to a man's opinion.

(November 5)

When she allows these attitudes to control her learning, it affects all of her critical thinking skills. Learning cannot be compartmentalized. Restricting one part, restricts the whole. Through her traditional values, she is being taught to be accepting rather than questioning, to be obedient rather than to be challenging, and to be passive rather than to be an active and inquisitive learner.

Nevertheless, throughout the dialogues, Shawna had been listening to the ideas of classmates and was being challenged, whether she was silent or not. Despite her resistance and silence, exposure to the ideas of others had a positive effect on Shawna's learning. New ideas were being examined and she found this experience uncomfortable because she stated that she liked the play but not the dialogue on it. About the dialogue on the play, she wrote:

There is (sic) other things that I didn't feel before and I think that I know more about now. It helped me to learn learn because other people talked about different things and it mixed up my thoughts . . . I think it helps me learn by other people sharing and it mixes up the ideas already in my mind and new thoughts develop and I learn more. (November 22)

### Pedagogy

Shawna's resistance and ambiguity has impressé upon me

how important it is for the teacher to try not to be perceived by the students as judgemental in order that they may be free to express their true feelings. I felt it was important for the students to be able to get their ideas out so that they can be worked through for emotional growth to occur. This thinking informed my reasoning to listen to their words, before expressing my own. I did not want to hear students verbalize what they thought I expected to hear from them because they would be undermining their own feelings and perceptions about their own experiences. I was also cautious not to judge comments or put my own comments above theirs, although I recognized that I also had an opinion, a voice and an agenda.

Reflection on Shawna's dilemma brings me to the present thinking that it would be unwise to confront Shawna directly and immediately with the knowledge that I have of her situation. To do so would take away from her the only way she has, presently, of coping with this new information, and it might lead to an understandable alienation between us. Most importantly, it would be a lack of faith on my part in her own ability to discover for herself, her own agency in her process of transformation. In this role, I would still be acting as the expert, who dispenses knowledge, and not as one working with her to encourage her to discover for herself and to see through the myths which surround all of us. Reflection of this issue brings me continuously into confrontation with my own vestiges of traditionalist thinking. Kathleen Weiler

(1988) states this also.

What we (conscious feminists) need to do is to be very clear about the specific meanings of class, race, and gender for people in differing relationships of control and power in a society dominated by capitalism, racism, and patriarchy. We need to locate ourselves in these complex webs of relationships and then attempt to act at whatever sites we find ourselves, in ways that will encourage both resistance to oppression and the building of a counter-hegemony through critical understanding. (pp. 54-55)

Shawna's continued experience with dialogical processes would expose her to the contributions of many others and she, herself, would come to the point of dealing with the contradictions that she sees in her own reality. Kathleen Weiler (1988) describes Henry Giroux's thinking on this.

Central to Giroux's discussion of ideology is his insistence that ideology also implies the capacity for critical thinking and a transformative consciousness. In many ways, this is the most important single assumption in Giroux's formulation, since it is upon the belief in each person's ability to understand and critique his or her own experience and the social reality "out there" that any project of pedagogical and ultimately social transformation rests. (p. 23)

Only when the real world is perceived critically can the visions for a better one exist, as I feel that there is a

dialectic relationship between empowering accurate perceptions of the present reality and the necessary visions for a better society.

Shawna, like all of us, must feel some tension and stress which can lead to intellectual, social and emotional growth. Recognizing this, it is important not to shield her from the reality around her, but to encourage a supporting and stimulating environment where she can work it out, on her own, and in her own time and with the knowledge that others support her in this growth.

For this reason, I questioned her to be more articulate, and to clarify her thoughts and feelings, and told her what I thought when she asked it of me. But I was also very cautious not to impose my own thinking upon her and not to judge her for her own opinions. Instead, I tried to understand how her thinking was a product of her total environment, and to encourage her to understand herself, historically, in the context of the society at large. At the same time as I was trying to understand her, I was also learning more about myself and my own historical development.

In planning for future dialogues, it would benefit Shawna, if she had access to all the dialogue tapes, to view whenever she wished. Tapes could be placed in the classroom for students to view whenever they wished, such as on rainy in-door recesses, or they could take them home overnight. In this way, Shawna could have been exposed to information on a deeper level than the first time around.

It might also be helpful to view a tape with the class with the expressed purpose of learning anew from it and then to leave them to do it alone and at their own initiative and to be available to the students both orally and through their journals to discuss any comments, concerns or questions.

## CHAPTER 4

## TOTAL LEARNING

## A Brief History of Group Empowerment

In the beginning dialogues class members exerted a definite pressure to maintain the status quo as several students gave their support to the two leaders, Jack and Samantha. Others put their ideas forward in the dialogue from time to time but, basically, only Samantha and Jack's ideas got commented on for the most case. The October 4 dialogue illustrated not only how Samantha got support for her ideas, but also how she and Jack competed for support from the group. In these beginning dialogues, most students who verbally participated just echoed the statements of these two individuals.

Also, in the spirit of maintaining the status quo, the class would pressure Samantha specifically not to challenge Jack. This became very visible in the second dialogue on October 9 when Janet and Samantha were debating and Jack was trying to end the conflict between the two girls.

Jack and Samantha had a great deal of power over the rest of the class. Yet, in subtle ways, others resisted their domination. As early as October 9 and again on October 25 when Samantha and Jack had turned the conversation to sports and hockey, in particular, several students complained, openly in the dialogue, about how the topic switched to hockey. In



this way, they registered their objection over the class leaders' overemphasis of the importance of this value.

As the dialogues progressed, other students became increasingly more involved themselves. They began to support each other more and more as they came to recognize the strength of numbers to gain support for an issue. We all learned, gradually, how to gain a voice through the dialogues, and many students shared their struggles with me in their journal writing. In the second dialogue on October 9 Bill said, "When I tried to speak everybody else was talking, so I couldn't say anything." By October 14, he began to look more closely at his difficulty, "I could relate to the story . . . I learned that it is not easy to talk in a big group," and by October 27, he wrote proudly, ". . . when we got into a circle, I tried to talk when nobody else was talking and succeeded." Bill also acknowledged the successes of others in gaining a voice. " . . . a lot of people came up with more information than just a few people."

By the end of October, students were becoming more conscious of the domination by Samantha and Jack. On October 15, Joy said, "I was more comfortable in the dialogue today and I spoke out more. I guess that is because I am getting used to it." By October 30 she became cognizant that some people were dominating the voice space, and wrote, "I kept wanting to say something, but I was always interrupted. Jack and Samantha did most of the talking (or yelling, I should say!)."

It has already been mentioned how Joseph found enough space in the dialogue to assert his maleness. Others, too, found their own niches to protect their self-esteem. An example of this is when Jamie challenged Samantha. In the October 25 presentation, Samantha shared a similar experience and, in so doing, she insulted Jamie. "Jamie didn't make the hockey team, and one time I made the hockey team, but I was a girl so they tried to kick me off, but I got back on again."

Jamie did not confront her immediately, illustrating the power of her status in the class. But by October 30, he became a prominent member of the boys' group that hurled challenges at Samantha, whenever they got the opportunity.

Also, in the October 30 dialogue, when Carl taunted Samantha with, "Girls are more goody-goody than boys," she went to great lengths to prove she was not a goody-goody and she insulted Shawna and Bill. Bill recognized the insult, and when I challenged Samantha, by asking what was wrong with being good, she said that nothing was wrong. Bill, then, felt more comfortable confronting Samantha. "Then why are you calling me one"? In the wake of Samantha's silence to this, Jack headed off Bill's challenge. Bill and I had directly challenged a value here that Jack and Samantha used to keep control over others [their "goody-goodness"] and Jack was first to recognize its threat. Nevertheless, this example does show how others, in this case, Bill, resisted dominance and, through the dialogue, were given an opportunity to challenge their domination.

On November 6 few students, still at this point, had the confidence to venture into the open dialogue, where they would have to compete for space. Therefore, the round robin facilitated the entry of quieter, less assertive students into this part of the dialogue, guaranteeing them a voice space, if they wanted one. On October 25, Barry, a quiet boy said, ". . . [I] really didn't have enough time to speak," but on November 27, he said, ". . . I got a few words in today's . . . I hope we will have more round robins like today."

Other still quieter students also recognized and appreciated the way the round robin helped to give them a voice. The following are some journal remarks from several other students specific to the round robin:

" . . . the round robin is a good idea because everyone gets a chance to speak" (November 16).

"Today's discussion went very well indeed. All the people done (sic) round robins. I think the round robin is a good idea" (November 15).

"Today's discussion went very well. The way people talked about what happened in the story. It was interesting how we went in the discussion dialogue and then went in the round robin and back into the discussion again" (November 6).

" . . . interesting since we were experimenting with a few new things. I thought that the round robin . . . and facilitator, speaking monitors were very good ideas and very successful" (November 5).

". . . enjoyed today's discussion. I felt different when

I was talking in the round robin. I like the round robin idea. I also like the idea of voice monitors and facilitators" (November 6).

"I really like the new way we are running the dialogue circle. It's a great way to make sure everyone gets a chance to say something" (November 6).

In November, only one student, (3.7%) said she was silent because it would not make any difference to other people, what she said in dialogue. Over the issue of their silence, seven students (25.9%) said they were too shy. Four students (14.8%) said that they were not interested in the topic. Samantha's (3.7 %) comment took the form of denial that she was ever silent, while Joy (3.7%) felt she had nothing to say. Janet (3.7%) rationalized that she liked to listen to others and Joseph (3.7%) got defensive over the issue with, "I like to comment sometimes," and Shawna (3.7%) did not respond to the question.

Some students were still feeling a lack of voice at this time. Six students (22.2 %) disagreed with what was being said in dialogue but didn't want to argue about it, while four students (14.8 %) disagreed with what most people were saying, but said they were silent because it was their own private business. Combining these last two figures, there were 37.0 % who said they disagreed with opinions voiced, but were silent on the issue.

Also in November only 7 % of all students felt that it was important to speak up when they didn't agree with what was

being said because their opinion counted and others could learn from their experiences, while 88% of students felt this way in January. This increased confidence in their ability to teach others showed also in the increase from the November (29.6%) to January (46.2%) figures in the outright statement that others could learn from them.

However, the majority wanted to exercise their voice and 66.7% of the students said they wanted to share their own story in dialogue. This appeared to be accurate given their contribution through the round robin when it allowed them voice space. They were not only more open to expressing their opinions, but also, they were no longer echoing comments made by Jack and Samantha. Instead, they responded freely in the round robin, expressing their own opinions out of their experiences. This was one of the reasons Jack and Samantha disliked the round robin so much. Many students were beginning to feel the same interest in gaining a voice, as Barbara did. On November 16 she wrote,

I think what my dad says is true. If you start to get up in front of a group to speak and do it quite a few times, then you'll get used to it and won't be afraid. From now on, if I have something to say, then I won't whisper it to my neighbour, I'll just say it out loud to the class . . . I'll try.

By November 15, further resistance to the status quo was becoming more pronounced by usually quiet, non-assertive persons in the class. When Jack and Samantha didn't want to

talk about Jenny and peer values, they took the conversation into a direction that was more conducive to their comfort. Jane, usually a very quiet student, challenged this direction, and requested that the class get back on the Jenny story again. I supported her and so, too, did Samantha. Other students, also, were beginning to gain confidence, and despite resistance shown by the leaders, Samantha and Jack and their supporters, three of the five small groups were now confident enough to make an attempt to analyze this code on peer values.

During the dialogue on Hamburger, on November 22, Samantha challenged again for the purposes of self-preservation, as did others. The depth of this challenge surprised even Samantha herself, and her resistance to the dialogues deepened at an increasing rate. It is possible that she began to see, not only Jack's identity in the Hamburger character, but perhaps some aspects of her own identity, since they shared similar values. In the November 22 dialogue on Hamburger, Samantha described Hamburger to the class as Jack listened in silence. Jack perceived the challenge and perhaps Samantha did also, but under the guise of a code, others didn't challenge her remarks to maintain the status quo, as they had in earlier dialogues. Instead, they supported her efforts and participated in this exercise. In this way, they left behind their observer's role and really came to life during this play, "The Sandwich." Jack and Samantha found out, perhaps for the first time, how others really felt about being dominated by a bully, as the class held little back in

depicting Hamburger's character.

By the November 30 dialogue, there seemed to be a change occurring in the class power positions. Also recall that in this dialogue on peer pressure, Samantha, along with Edward and Janet, directly challenged Jack on the issue of peer pressure. This was the first time that Samantha directly confronted Jack, and it was all the more difficult for Jack to accept because others had sided against him also.

More active participation played a role in helping some very quiet students to gain a voice. Consider David's growing confidence, as evidenced through his journal writings. David admitted openly that he felt very uncomfortable with the dialogues in the beginning. On October 8, he wrote, "I do not like talking in great big groups . . . it's just not me at all," and added on October 16, ". . . [I] get all embarrassed." Yet, after the round robin was introduced on November 22, he felt more comfortable. On November 14, he wrote, ". . . I found that I spoke out more and learned a lot too." After the November 22 dialogue, when he played the role of Hamburger, he wrote, "I don't need any help [from others] because I feel more comfortable talking out in dialogue now."

Later, in the December 3 dialogue, Jack was feeling threatened enough, even by Jane, to feel the need to put her in her place. He tried to humiliate her when she told the class about her father letting her have a puff on her cigarette. Jane recorded her surprise and indignation to me on Jack's response through her journal. Jack had never

previously challenged her in this way.

By December 11 quieter students were even entering the voice space in the open dialogue. One such student said, "Today's dialogue was very interesting. I liked the way people jumped into the conversation and I would jump in too." This, of course, would greatly concern Jack who was so upset with the way things were going that he even tried to make people feel insecure about their opinions when he was first to speak in the round robin. After the reporting period, he said that their comments were off and that they should reconsider them. Samantha was first to challenge Jack directly on this, recalling what I had said initially in the dialogues, about having respect for the opinions and experiences of all students. She said, "I don't think you can really say that they're off, or anything because that's their opinion and that's the way they like to think." She recognized when Jack did this, but made the same mistake herself when she commented shortly thereafter, " . . . but Jane's comment that the men give the housework to the women because it's easier. I don't think that's right . . . because a lot of men . . . don't do that."

Despite pressure from the class leaders, the dialogues seemed responsible for the growing empowerment of others. The following adds to the above evidence in this regard and gives some accounts of the collective and individual struggles of students in resisting dominance by trying to gain a voice in the dialogues. In November 80% felt their comments were just



as important as anyone else's and in January all [96.2%], except for one girl, felt this way.

Student empowerment showed a steady progress throughout the dialogues and students began to develop strategies for controlling the direction of a discussion. Whereas in November, only 22% of students said they had no control, this figure rose dramatically to 74.1% in January.

The best example of class empowerment came when the two quiet girls, Diane and Rose, challenged Jack directly, in January, confronting him with his bad temper and bullying. Samantha was absent and therefore unable to support him. Jack, who undervalued her support, was taken totally by surprise. He backed down completely and tried to make peace with Edward and myself.

Both class leaders responded to a loss in power, along traditional gender lines. For a while after the dialogues, Jack had many discipline problems, as he scrambled to gain lost territory and control of his classmates. Samantha tried to make new friends with other girls in the class. However, neither could turn back the tide of change.

Although students were encouraged to gain a voice in the dialogue, some students did not venture into the open dialogue over the duration of this project. However, most spoke briefly in the round robin and they all learned a lot from active listening in the dialogues. In November, 96.3% of students said they liked to listen to other people's ideas and 81.5% of students felt they were good listeners.

This did not affect the student desire for a choice in whether they wanted to voice their opinion. In the round robin, students who wished to exercise their right to privacy could say, "Pass," and students wanted this choice to stay open to them. Most (74.1%) of students felt this way in November, and 84.6% of students felt this way in January. In fact, in January none (0%) of the students felt that the teacher should pick certain people to talk.

Student confidence in gaining a voice from November to January, was measured in another way, also. In November, 63.0% of students felt that it was not right to share someone else's story in dialogue because it was up to that person to know what they want to keep private and what they want to share. In January, 84.6% of students felt this way. One logical interpretation of this could be that there was an increase in the confidence of students to tell their own story, instead of having to rely on others to do it for them. Therefore, they no longer saw the need for this alternative strategy to gain a voice.

Students acknowledged that active participation increased the learning potential of the dialogues as 85.2% of students stated that the dialogue was more effective when everyone gave a comment or shared a thought. They also agreed with the importance of gaining a voice in the dialogue and 73.1 % of students stated that, by telling their ideas only to a friend sitting close by, they were affecting the learning of everyone else by not sharing in the dialogue.

Students who remained quiet to the end of the dialogues would need more exposure to them over a longer period of time to find their voice. In time, I feel confident that it would eventually come, but for now, the challenge of the elite in this class, embodied in Jack and Samantha, was still too overpowering for them, by the end of January. Jane ventured forward and was openly challenged. Yet, this challenge had more effect on her friend, Anne, than it did on Jane, herself. When Anne saw this challenge to Jane, she rationalized her own silence on January 15. "A lot of people disagreed with Jane's comment. I don't talk much because it is better for me to listen than talk." Actually, it was only Samantha who challenged Jane's comment, but to Anne, this was challenge enough to remain silent.

#### The Dialogue and Student Perception of Learning

Students themselves acknowledged that the dialogues are a unique learning experience. In November, 96.3% stated that they were learning a lot through the dialogues. The one student who answered negatively felt that she could have learned more if random selection was used to determine members for the small group discussion. As many students became increasingly challenged with issues on sexism, racism, and classroom status and social groupings, they showed increased resistance.

An attempt was made to learn, more specifically, the

nature of their learning, and when asked if the dialogue helped them to learn more about themselves and their feelings and motivations, 77.8% in November replied affirmatively. All 6 students who answered negatively were quiet students. Five of six of these students, never spoke at all in the open dialogue and very rarely in the round robin. It seems that those who participated vocally were more aware of their own learning through the dialogues.

When asked whether the dialogue helped them to understand others better, 85.2% replied in the affirmative. Those who replied in the negative were again quiet students who spoke rarely. In Freire's words, they were "anti-dialogical" because they remained essentially silent throughout the dialogues. Therefore, rather than contradicting the theory that the dialogues are a major vehicle for learning to occur, their perception that they learned little from the dialogues only strengthens the argument that it's an excellent learning vehicle. Their perception that they learned little from them can be connected to their limited participation.

Note also that the issue, here, is about their perception only, on this issue, because in my opinion, they learned from listening to the perspectives of others throughout the dialogues. This raises a question as to whether meta-cognition is affected by an active participation in the dialogues. All students (96.3%), except one, expressed an interest in listening to the ideas of others, and this involves learning, but this fact did not enter the

acknowledged consciousness of the students in this case.

### Learning Content

The grade six students learned a lot about the content involved in the dialogues. I, too, was impressed with the content of their learning, from the very beginning dialogue on friendship on October 4 when I compiled their data on ways to meet, make and keep friends. There is no way that I could have compiled as comprehensive a list of strategies on my own that would have met the needs of these particular students, in a way that came out of their own dialogue. The dialogues were examples of student-centered learning at its best. Students, also, claimed they learned strategies for making and keeping friends by listening to others talk about the topics and issues we discussed. Often, it is taken for granted that kids know naturally how to make friends, but student reaction dispelled this myth through their journal writings.

Students learned a lot, through examination of all the issues we did in dialogue, and their resistance served as a testimony that their present values were challenged over the course of the dialogues. They learned about power relations at the experience level in their own classroom with peers. This concrete and personal experience allowed them to understand the larger issues in society. It is reality-based learning that occurs in a connected way.

With this pedagogy, textbooks are viewed as a kind of

second, or third hand knowledge, with all the biases that come with this knowledge and they must be viewed critically with this in mind. Therefore, textbooks are meant to supplement the students' own experiences, but never to replace, or deny them. Nor is textbook knowledge to be placed above the knowledge students gain from their own experiences. This pedagogy, also, states that both student experiences and knowledge, as well as all book knowledge, must be read critically.

#### Learning About Perceptions Different From Their Own

Students were stimulated by listening to different perspectives and enjoyed controversy in the dialogues. This increased, in time, as they became more accustomed to, and less threatened by, challenge. In November, 29.6% of students liked arguments (53.9% in January) and active participation (29.6%) over personal stories (3.7%) and the teacher talking (11.2%) or giving an opinion (11.1%).

The presence of the integrated Special Education students made a huge impact on the total class learning. Two of the three students are from the working-classes and represent different views which they brought to the discussion. The others were very interested in these views. Shawna said of Patrick, the most vocal and confident of the three, that she wished he had said more so that she could have better understood why he felt the way he did.

Edward said he was very impressed with Patrick when he spoke confidently about feeling rejection. Margie had the whole class in an uproar the day she said all men were lazy and refused to back down, showing the kind of confidence in her own opinion that few of them exhibited. Margie also impressed Diane in their small group discussion, when she spoke openly about herself and her feelings.

Doug was the quietest of the Special Education students in the dialogues, but he listened intently to the discussions and communicated to me through his journal. He wrote this about the dialogues:

I was a little bit scared . . . we are not good in talking together . . . we can learn . . . nobody is perfect at everything . . . I like working in groups. . . Margie got the people to talk around our group . . . was a good discussion because everyone participated . . . didn't really understand why Janice was crying . . . found it confusing . . . the worse [part was] . . . standing waiting until the camera looks at you. Some people make fun of you. The discussion is good for all of us. We all learn a lot from this discussion when we (get) older . . . Some parts are good and funny . . . embarrassing when you got to . . . (talk) . . . difficult to speak out without getting ready for it and you change your mind sometimes.

When I heard this from Doug, I realized how even the quietest member of the dialogue class had learned so much,

just from listening and responding in his journal. He understands the discrimination against him and was very quiet because of it. He took pride in the accomplishments of other Special Education students who had the confidence, unlike himself at this point, to speak out. He had the courage to articulate to me in his journal writing his difficulties in participating in the dialogues and gave me valuable feedback on factors that were inhibiting his participation.

All three of these students have a great deal to contribute to the learning of the others and gave as much as they got from the dialogues. They have been integrated into the regular classroom for several years now, but when Edward and others shared comments in their journals about how surprised they were that these students have so much confidence in themselves, it suggested that, not until the dialogue sessions, did others in the regular class begin to perceive them differently. Furthermore, these Special Education students also impressed each other, and their perceptions of themselves as well as others were changing.

#### Understanding the Teacher-Student Relationship

I explained my role as facilitator of learning and direction-giving at the outset and it took a little while before students understood this in practice. In fact there was some initial resistance as I stepped back from direction-giving, once they became familiar with the procedure, and



expected them to start the open dialogue. They eventually learned to start the round robin themselves and then to go directly into open dialogue. They began to understand that I was a part of the dialogue circle and when I was passed over by mistake, certain students would intervene to correct this, thereby reminding peers of my role. In November 74.1 % of students felt that the teacher should be part of the dialogue circle and that the teacher's comments were no more important than the students.

### Responsibility For Their Own Learning

Students took responsibility for their own learning in a variety of ways. After the first few dialogue sessions, they learned the procedures and would go from their small group discussion directly into the dialogue group discussion, without needing any input from me to do so. They organized themselves into small groups and cued each other, in terms of who spoke when, and what information each member was responsible for. Often, I would hear remarks like, "I was voice monitor last week. Now I want to be facilitator," and remarks like those from Doug, the Special Education student, when he objected to being told he would speak first in the reporting period, "I always speak first. Let someone else do it this time."

Yet, all this was handled behind the scenes and only on one occasion did I have to intervene to encourage Patrick and

Doug, two Special Education students, to get themselves into a group. All other procedures were done quickly and efficiently by the students themselves.

Students also showed responsibility for their own learning by volunteering suggestions to make the learning experience more effective. Some of their programming suggestions came from these journal samples:

About the round robin, voice monitor and facilitator roles, this student said, ". . . [I] liked the idea of having those jobs for kids to keep the group organized . . . to do" (November 6).

One very quiet student, Diane, was anxious about the lack of control of certain students who dominated the open dialogue. She came up with a very important procedure, as early as October 9, that eventually became the round robin. Diane wrote,

. . . [the discussion] went a bit out of hand . . . fighting about who was right . . . both had different opinions . . . shouldn't have fought about it . . . I think we could go right down the rows of the tables and everyone that would want to talk back could.

It is interesting to note that despite the fact that the class was organized into tables for their daily small group work, and that for the dialogue we were seated in a circle, Diane still spoke about being in "rows." Her conditioning from previous years was still so deeply entrenched.

Students provided me with feedback on the procedures

through their journal writings.

"I learned a lot. I do not like watching myself on camera. It is embarrassing to watch myself" (March 7).

Others also said this and I wonder if it might not be a better idea to let them borrow the videos to take home to watch in privacy rather than for the group to view them together. The experience of viewing themselves on video collectively met with a great deal of resistance from most of the students. In retrospect, I don't think they were prepared enough for this yet. It was, perhaps, too intrusive for them to deal with openly and publicly. There were other comments about procedures:

". . . at the beginning of class if you could start us off with a comment or question . . . to get the class going" (November 16).

"Last week you didn't respond to my entry so if you don't mind I would like you to respond to both of them" (November 27).

"They [peers] would share their feelings more if they weren't on camera . . . I'm the same way" (October 4).

". . . a day before maybe ask people about the subject" (November 13).

"I found that it was a lot quieter and I could work all by myself and then read it to our group." [This was about writing his own responses to the questions alone at home first before doing them at school and being influenced by others in the small group discussion.] (October 29)

". . . and I like the idea of the stories being short so we have more to conference about" (October 23).

Many students suggested the dialogue would work well in language, science and mathematics, and in November 85.2% of students felt the dialogue would be good for other subjects besides Health. One comment was: "I think dialoguing in language arts would be good or in math (sic)" (October 25).

Some students wanted certain topics to be discussed.

"I would like to do a session on child abuse and handicapped people" (November 6).

". . . do some sessions on child abuse and adoption . . . know that some other people would like to do it too . . . . Please answer that"! (November 27)

". . . would like you to do a follow up story about the Fred story" (December 4).

". . . could do a small unit on fears and how we would over come them (October 25) . . . . topic on child abuse" (November 5).

"I am interested in history and the Middle East Crises (October 23).

"I would like to do a session on Black discrimination (November 22) . . . . I would really like to do a dialogue on child abuse, racism, and handicapped people" (December 4).

Others offered feedback in efforts to improve the dialogues.

"Some of the things I didn't understand" (December 11).

". . . about the dialogue . . . please write back and

suggest a few ways that I can get over this fear" [of speaking up] (October 17).

". . . problem trying to write to you . . . I wonder if you could help me . . . " (October 25).

"There was not enough information" (October 6).

Some suggestions demonstrated Freire's "praxis" in operation, as students wanted more input into composing their own codes. This did not get beyond the proposal stage in the time frame of this project, but was present in their consciousness.

You can pick someone to chose a code 2 weeks beforehand and then you can see if it's alright the next week . . . . that will save you (time) to look for a code every week. I can help you and Joseph to make up a play on the Sandwich. (November 27)

Several students had recognized the importance of the social agenda and requested more of it, through writings in their journals, as well as in the beginning dialogue responses. They requested group work and sharing over individual work, and although I feel there is a place for both, by the overwhelming responses from the students, I get the impression that they felt that group work was undervalued in their traditional curriculum. One comment came from Doug, a Special Education student. He said, "I like working in groups because you learn how to do this well. . . . I really like the discussion group."

Students were asked what they felt about sitting in a

circle, and in November, 77.8% felt that arranging the group into a circle was an effective arrangement for the dialogue and most (74.1%) enjoyed communicating through the journal.

Students also provided feedback on the roles that were introduced in the November 6 dialogue. The following are examples:

"I was facilitator and it worked out pretty well but on the last question Edward and Charley were talking about baseball and I couldn't get their attention."

"I didn't really care about being the voice monitor because whenever I put up my hand to say it was getting too loud, no one listens."

"My role as facilitator was easy because everybody had something to say on our topic."

"I liked my job as facilitator but everyone in my group was already speaking a lot."

"It started to get loud, and as soon as I put my hand up, it started to get softer" [about the role of voice monitor].

Students also gave me feedback on the value of the journals to support the dialogue. The journals were like a dialogue in themselves between the students and me, and they enabled me to build their confidence to gain a voice in the group dialogue. At times, students used them to vent their concerns when they wanted a private forum to register their concerns or complaints.

". . . . I hope you don't mind me telling you about this but I haven't told anyone and after today I just had to get it

out of my system. P.S. Thank you for listening" (December 2).

"I see people thinking and believing they are not good for anything . . . some on T.V. take punches at the walls . . . that could become dangerous" (October 24).

"I found people want to do all or nothing of the work" (November 6).

". . . my mom and dad don't even know . . . my sister's boyfriend had a friend who takes drugs" (November 30).

Some students wanted to share their opinions more privately and they did this through their journals rather than to risk doing so in the open dialogues. I encouraged this as I saw it as the first stage in their trusting and feeling comfortable with the process of expressing their thoughts and feelings. Often, I found that this stage heralded their entry into the dialogues themselves. Therefore I saw their journal writing as a step towards their growing empowerment that became visible once they entered the actual dialogues. This was certainly the case with Edward, Shawna and Jane, but also several others. One such comment was:

Wearing makeup and new clothes won't buy a good friendship. It will make a terrible mess because you will hang out with people you don't like. You will do things bad and stupid because they want you to but in the end nobody will want to be friends and . . . will not be your friends. (November 22)

Other students used the journal to clarify their

intentions and to safely register their complaints about their experiences in the dialogues. This one came from Patrick.

I was not pleased. They all said that I said the mother should go to work and the father has to stay home and cook! I said the father should go to work and the mother should stay home and cook. (December 11)

Patrick wrote this statement to register his objection to the perception that classmates had that he made a mistake and didn't mean to say what he said. The class had previously done this to a female Special Education student, Margie, who let the insult pass, without comment. The regular class teacher had said, "It's just the way Patrick said it," inferring that Patrick really did mean what he was saying. The class teacher said this because he wanted to intervene to prevent the class from ganging up on Patrick. However, from this statement in Patrick's journal, I get the impression that it is more important to him that the others know his standing on the issue than the challenge from the rest of the class.

Students also offered me feedback on procedures they found effective. One student reinforced with me the value of coming in to read and to discuss the general letter in which I shared my own thoughts and perceptions of the dialogue and their learning. On October 25 she wrote, "I love when you come in and talk to us. Thank you." On October 9 another student wrote to reinforce the effectiveness of the small group in offering the students a setting to experience their thoughts, and to gain feedback from peers in the safety of the



small group setting before presenting them to the whole class in the open dialogue. She wrote, "I am a little bit shy to share my ideas in class. I'm better in small groups, but I think you have a good idea." Another student wrote how it was best if everyone participated in the dialogues. On October 16 she wrote, "The discussion we had today was the best! About everyone got to talk and no one interrupted . . . today's session was good. Lots of people gave their ideas" (November 30). Still another student wrote this: "I thought today's dialogue was good. Everybody gave their opinion but I wish Patrick gave his reason why every woman should stay home and clean" (December 11).

Many students indicated that the play was an excellent way to do a code and there was overwhelming support for this, as can be seen from these comments:

"I thought the people who played those characters did a very good job" (November 22).

"Today I thought we would be yelling or something. The play meant a lot to me. I just wanted to tell you that" (November 22).

"I think the play was interesting, and if Joseph writes a play, I hope that I can be in it" (November 22).

"The play was an interesting way to have a discussion. If you chose another, I would like to be in it. Pickle [Samantha] was really funny."

Some students made comments and suggestions about how we could consider handling the grouping procedure.

". . . different group every 5 classes" (October 23).

". . . I liked picking our own groups because you are with people you feel comfortable with" (November 4).

"We shouldn't change groups as often" (October 17).

"It would be better if we changed groups each week because you could get to know more people" (October 16).

"We should pick our own groups. That way we know each other better and we will talk more openly" (October 16).

"I'd like to suggest a few things . . . about selecting groups . . . using register numbers."

I followed many of their program suggestions and learned that most of them were excellent. In this way, we learned together about ways to improve our learning together. For example, the round robin and ideas for future programming, such as the making of their own codes came out of these students' suggestions.

### Assessing Their Own Learning

Six students were described already in the chapter on case studies and many other students were much quieter, but, nevertheless, did participate in the dialogues vocally, from time to time, mostly through active listening, and talking privately with each other and, also, by a written dialogue with me in the privacy of their notebooks. I came to recognize the learning of quieter students in the dialogue experience through their journals. This is not to say that I

am satisfied that this is enough. I wanted to take them further, to more active participation, by encouraging them to gain a voice through the dialogues. Nevertheless, in this six month period, they showed a tremendous growth in their social, affective and cognitive learning through this agenda.

The following are some sample remarks from the journals of students, other than the six done in the case study, to provide information on these quieter students. Also included is some statistical data from feedback from the students. I omitted repetitious remarks and remarks that were considered "resistance" remarks like "boring" by certain class members that surfaced in late November, after codes on issues of sexism, racism and classroom status and social groupings were introduced.

All students without exception on several occasions stated that the dialogues were "interesting" and "enjoyable" and great because they "shared ideas." Here are some other remarks taken out of their journals:

"... everyone can look face to face and talk and share their feelings,"

"I really like these dialogues because the dialogue has taught me all kinds of things,"

"... a good way to get to know your group ... fun,"

"... get to express your feelings and ideas out loud,"

"... good way to share our feelings and our knowledge,"

"... learned a lot about keeping friends, how to make new friends and how not to get into fights,"

". . . a great way for us to talk about our ideas,"

". . . can bring us closer together,"

". . . learned that we all have different ideas,"

". . . I spoke out more and learned a lot too,"

"The dialogue was good cause it teaches us to plan before" [that is, to know our values so we won't give in to peer pressure when the time comes],

"The dialogues were good to review. It brought some new thoughts to my mind,"

"I was never in a big group discussion before and I found it very interesting,"

"I liked the topic we were doing because I had to make new friends when I came to the school,"

"I liked this story because . . . I know what it is like,"

". . . good because we can see some of the ways that people can get into drugs and alcohol,"

"I enjoy when some people get going on a particular detail of a story. . . . talked about how our emotions can take a big part in our life,"

"I hope there will be some more dialogues like this some time in the year,"

". . . a neat experience," [understanding others]

"It helped me understand how to get to know someone,"

". . . fun having you come in on Tuesday mornings,"

". . . there weren't very many questions but lots of ideas,"

"It did surprise me that there were so many thoughts from just one question,"

"I am going to miss the dialogue sessions because this is the last one,"

". . . learn from different kids in the discussion group . . . fun to talk,"

" . . . learned a lot about how two different people can read the story and end up with two different opinions about it . . . this Tuesday's session I wanted to go on forever"!

"The discussions help me to see through other people's eyes."

Lengthier remarks were:

. . . useful for us . . . will help us when we are in the higher levels . . . I will use the dialogue work to make decisions in life . . . wish it would never end . . . learned that when I go to junior high it is gonna (sic) be a whole new ball game, . . . learned a lot about other people in our class and a lot about how to deal with some problems at home and at school and I also found it interesting to take in different ideas from the same story, . . . last week was a very emotional time for me. I think I taught a lot of people to respect these feelings . . . I wish today wasn't our last day for dialogues . . . I learned so much about other people and their feelings towards racism . . . I feel I have matured some and I got to know people a bit better.

Margie [an integrated Special Education student] was in our group. I thought she wouldn't understand what we were doing but she did and she talked about herself more than other people did and she didn't feel shy at all. I think this is a good idea what we're doing and it's fun.

Today's session helped me realize what was going on with "groups" of kids. I don't think it's kind and should stop. I don't think that people should use other people . . . don't think you should reject them either . . . think it's terrible that people have to do bad things . . . just to impress somebody else . . . it will probably be very hard to admit what you believe . . . people should respect other people's feelings, thoughts and ideas . . . people should have equal rights and nobody should be left out. (November 22)

Students showed that they were not only capable of evaluating themselves but they also took the initiative to evaluate this pedagogy. There are many journal remarks evaluating the dialogues and every student did so to some extent. One student evaluated the small group discussion when she reported on what effect a small group of two students had on their performance. Usually groups had four or five members to them, and on this particular day, two best friends wanted to be alone for the day to discuss the questions. On December 3 she wrote, "You can't leave it [the work] to the other member. You have to respond a lot more and you get things

done slower." After this self-evaluation, the two students decided to join in with others to make a larger group.

Also, students self-evaluated other procedures and through experience, began to question previous choices about procedures. One example of this is when Rose, unwittingly, had been Jack's agent about the grouping in the beginning dialogues and she recorded and presented to me in October why they should have their own groups and not be randomly selected. Yet, in her December 11 journal Rose came around to a different view through her experiences. "I think that we should pick different people to be in your group so that you can see what it is like with different people because I find certain people keep having the same people each week."

By going with what she thought were the wishes of the majority, in the beginning, Rose herself later perceived the need for reviewing an earlier chosen procedure. Feedback requested from all students suggested that she was not alone in this analysis. In November most students (70.4%) said they felt that they wanted to pick their own group members for the small group setting. However, fewer students (63%) felt this way by January. Some of the more astute students were telling me as early as October that they felt random grouping was the best option. For example, Janet and Joy felt strongly about the groups being randomly chosen, right from the beginning. Joy wrote:

. . . I thought that being able to pick your own groups was nice but I didn't learn much. For instance, I

already knew Samantha was kicked off a hockey team. Besides I think that being changed to different groups every Tuesday would be fun. I say this because I know that our group this Tuesday would be the same every Tuesday. I'd and a few other people would probably get bored. (October 30)



## CHAPTER 5

## MY OWN LEARNING

My own learning, like that of the students, has been immeasurable and especially difficult to record, but I present here some reflections in this regard.

## Learning From the Students

Every student in this class taught me a lot, but I would like to state something specific about the six students on whom case studies were done.

From Edward I have learned more about the importance of reflective thinking and resistance. Because he was resistant to thinking reflectively, his analysis never got beyond the very superficial and the very concrete. He helped me to understand how this resistance plays a part in this lack of reflective thinking and the consequences of it. He does not understand the motives of others, and unless he changes, he will always respond to the impulses of others and never really feel in control of himself. Nor will he grow to understand himself, or others as he goes through life, unless he gets in the habit of reflecting upon his learning environment and his behaviours and those of others.

Because Janet is in the habit of thinking reflectively, her thinking contrasted sharply with Edward's. She thinks much more critically about all issues and is also more

motivated in developing a knowledge of herself and others. Also, Janet reminds me about how feelings of superiority, either moral or cognitive, get received by others. In fact, I see how her self-righteousness generally turned others off and unfortunately made them unreceptive to the good that she could, otherwise, offer. Janet was so motivated about the dialogue experience because it gave her a unique opportunity to show her considerable knowledge and to learn more about how others feel about issues. She gained peer respect over the period of the dialogues and her optimism never faltered. This respect helped her to feel more appreciated by classmates.

Janet also showed me how she and Edward could have replaced Jack and Samantha by dominating the dialogue space themselves when Jack was silent in the last few dialogues. Janet and Edward competed with Jack and Samantha for dominance in the class. The intent of democratic teaching is not to displace some members only to replace them with others but, rather, it is for power to become more evenly distributed among all class members. In time, I feel this would have worked itself out as controls would be introduced to handle each new problem of this sort, as it arose.

From Jack, I have learned a lot more about power relations in the classroom. I respect his knowledge of power relations. He taught me so much about how political a space the classroom environment is, and how effectively he had learned how to manipulate it. It is a skill and Jack is

highly talented at developing it. Although the school system does not reward this skill directly, Jack benefits from this in many ways that continue to feed his motivation.

From Shawna, I have learned how a very intelligent girl subjugates her thinking skills to a set of values which oppresses her intellectual development. The effects of this were seen, firsthand, in the dialogues. Although she said little, there was enough information to know that, in most cases, she seemed to miss the point entirely. Although it could be argued that she had a different perspective from most others, including myself, it is my opinion that she didn't think critically about these life issues beyond the very superficial, as least in the beginning dialogues. She taught me the effects of a environment that is restrictive of her decision-making skills and, therefore, limits her possibilities for the future. From this project, I interpret her fundamentalist religion to be the most important contributing factor to restricting her ability to become a critical thinker. I tried to search for other contributing factors that may have accounted for this, but given the present data, could find no other.

Shawna made little contribution in the dialogues themselves. She would only read her notes in the reporting period and she spoke once at the end of the dialogue in the round robin. In the open dialogue itself, where she would have to compete for voice space, she made no remarks. She was a little more vocal in the small group discussions with

friends. This limited involvement in the dialogue made me realize how important it was to have the reporting period where she could read her notes aloud, and also how important the journal was for me to be able to get to know her thoughts and feelings and to provide feedback to the quieter members of the class, like Shawna. Shawna also taught me a great deal more about resistance. A discussion on this follows shortly in, "As a Researcher."

Joseph reminds me of a Lebanese friend that I had in high school and college. Because of this friendship, I understood, in part, his difficulty in operating out of two cultures that are sometimes different in their values. In some respects, it might make it easier for him to see the values in both cultures since he can maintain some distance from each of them. I have also learned from Joseph, how important it is for all students to connect with others and feel a part of the group. Most of his comments were made in regard to ensuring his position in the group and, in this way, I had a better understanding of the resistance that the whole class exerted to maintain the status quo. He taught me that the overpowering agenda for him was fitting in, and that if teachers want to motivate students, they need to look at the students themselves and see what it is that is important to them. Sometimes I think teachers and students work at cross purposes to each other and all that results is alienation, with both parties losing.

From Samantha, I have learned so much that I cannot

articulate it all, yet. She taught me about how a youth can get caught in an identity crisis because of an aspiration to those values in the larger society that are perceived to be so important. Just as Shawna subjugates her intellectual development because of religious and family pressures, Samantha's feminine identity is subjugated to her male-defined values. It may have been "cute" for Samantha to have been a "Tom-boy," as one teacher described her to me when she was younger, but it is becoming increasingly more painful, psychologically, to her, as she is getting older.

From the "integrated Special Education students" I see how a different perspective that came out of their own unique experiences affected the other grade six students. These students challenged the regular grade six students' middle-class perspectives and, thereby, helped provide a more balanced view of reality. It influenced and sparked me to address issues to the class about trying to understand different perspectives that come out of realities different from their own.

Patrick, in particular, gave the class insights into how certain people feel quite differently about things and that parents' reactions to events differ among different social-economic groups. He held the interest of the whole class and challenged their thinking about how some parents really don't care all that much if "kids are out drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes." This represented his own past experience with the issue and it hit the grade six class hard,

emotionally, as they became very indignant about this reality and therefore rallied to challenge him. This provided me with the opportunity to reinforce the importance of trying to understand why a person thinks the way they do.

Also, these students had the potential of teaching the others about ways of coping with expectations. For example, Margie's sharing her thoughts about Timmy's [in the code] sense of failure could have helped Janet cope with her anxieties over such high expectations. These students know more about failure in their present schooling experience than others and can share a lot of insight on strategies into coping with disappointments from which higher achieving students could learn so much. A lengthier exposure to the dialogues might have brought these perspectives to light.

Patrick told the class how he handled rejection from new class mates when he started at a new inner-city school where a bunch of "toughies" hung out. Edward was fascinated with Patrick's confidence and sophistication and I could sense how Jack would see Patrick as threatening his power position and felt the need to put him in his place as quickly as possible.

Doug, too, was very articulate with me in the privacy of his journal, about his feelings of rejection. Being on the outside was no new feeling for him and he could share insight into his way of coping with it. Many youths, like Samantha, Janet and Edward could learn a lot from him.

From students in the dialogue circle who skipped over me thereby not giving me my turn until I objected, I learned that

just physically occupying the space in the circle does not guarantee that you will be perceived as a member of it.

### Learning From Participation in the Dialogues

Through participation in, reflection on, and analysis of the dialogues, I not only learned about the students, I also learned more about myself and my own strengths and limitations. It took a while for me to feel comfortable participating in the dialogues. It was all too easy for me to sit back and assume an observer's role. It is one that I have been comfortable with for a long time. Yet, I knew that this was not what I wanted to do, so it was a difficulty I had to work through.

I tried to analyze the reasons behind this reluctance or resistance and many rationalizations surfaced, similar to those I heard from students so many times in dialogue. I told myself that it was probably best not to intervene too much, so that I could give the students the impression that they were to take more responsibility. I thought about ruining the more objective data if I participated.

However, as time went on, these rationalizations decreased as I moved forward in my thinking to understand better the nature of objective and subjective knowledge and the arguments surrounding this distinction. I gradually moved into the dialogue with more and more intervention and I learned how important my role was there. There are past

regrets about not challenging more here and there, but there are past successes, too, about having effectively challenged students when and where they needed it, and I have come to appreciate that this is all part of learning.

Reading more about Freire's distinction between authority and authoritarianism also helped me to clarify my role in the dialogue discussions. In conversation with Ira Shor, Freire (1987) states:

In some situations, the democratic goal of liberating education can lead to irresponsibility if the students perceive it as expecting less from them. The responsible educator has to be at least six people as the teacher, leading as the professor and learning as the student, making an open atmosphere in a number of ways, but never, I repeat never an atmosphere of "laissez-faire," never, but a democratic atmosphere, yes. Then by doing that, the students begin to learn a different way. They really learn how to participate. But what is impossible is to teach participation without participation! It is impossible just to speak about participation without experiencing it. (pp. 89-90)

Ira Shor responds to this.

This is an important departure point between traditional and liberating education. The official curriculum constantly lectures us about democracy without allowing students the freedom to practice it. (p. 90)

Freire continues to distinguish between authority and



authoritarianism.

But look, Ira, for me the question is not for the teacher to have less authority. The issue is that the democratic teacher never, never transforms authority into authoritarianism. He or she can never stop being an authority or having authority. Without authority it is very difficult for the liberties of the students to be shaped. Freedom needs authority to be free. It is a paradox but it is true. The question nevertheless is for authority to know that it has its foundation in the freedom of the others, and if the authority denies this freedom and cuts off this relationship, this "founding" relationship, with freedom, I think that it is no longer authority but has become authoritarianism. As well, if the freedom side of the dialectic does not meet authority because authority renounces itself, denies itself, the tendency is for freedom to stop being freedom in order to become licence. In both cases, we cannot speak about democracy, we cannot speak about discipline, we cannot speak about creation, democratic re-creation of society, no. We have licence from below and we have imposition from above. (p. 91)

The round robin was a help not just to the students but also to me because, as time went on, I became more comfortable with active participation and I began experimenting with ways of obtaining voice space and involving other, quieter students. All the time, I was conscious of not

wanting to take away their choice to be silent. I became increasingly more aware of the skills that I needed to develop, through practice, reflection and reading, to become a better discussion leader. I recall from my readings of Freire that someone asked him how to do something and he said, "Just do it." This simple quote gave me a lot of encouragement in this regard because it recognizes that experience is the greatest teacher.

As I became more of a participant, I realized how important it is to become focused in terms of the points I wanted to make, without foregoing my agenda of encouraging all students to participate and share their "voice." Many times, when I reviewed the dialogue, I found myself wishing I had intervened here or there to make a point or to have shared an experience. This kind of reflection helped me to prepare for future dialogues, and provides good reason to analyze the data as soon as possible after the dialogues. Due to the intensive work load when the thesis was being done, I did not have as much time available to do this as thoroughly as I would have liked.

However, because I transcribed the video tapes into written form and read and responded to each of their journal notebooks each week following the dialogue, I did acquire a better understanding of their needs and was able to share many thoughts and impressions with the students in the general letter I read aloud each week.

As I continue my work with dialogue, I hope to become a

more active participant and to sit as a member of the small group setting as well, taking my turn with them in the groups. I found it useful to give the students choices because it optimized my learning about them. When they chose groups, it told me more about their social connections. Resistance could be measured in this way also. I did not realize these things, at first, but have grown to appreciate them now.

Also, I will continue to let the curriculum needs unfold naturally, as I did in this present dialogue, in full acknowledgement that education is after all a process. I will continue to encourage the students to take more direct responsibility for composing or choosing codes of their own. For example, they can pick out articles from newspapers. Joseph came close to this, when he wanted to make up a play of his own, but he didn't follow through. In retrospect, I feel that Joseph needed more encouragement here.

I also learned about the effects of the roles of facilitator, voice monitor and round robin by comparing the classroom dynamics before their operation and afterwards. I was not the only one who observed these effects. Students responded in their journals. Most really liked them, especially the round robin. A couple of the more vocal students felt restricted by them and voiced their objections.

#### Limitations

I felt that not being the regular classroom teacher

limited this research project. I think that part of the problem with my hesitation to participate was the fact that this was not my classroom and my relationship with the students was affected by the piecemeal aspect to the project. I walked into their lives 1 1/2 hours a week, for a scheduled event, and the lack of continuity had an effect on our relationship.

Also there were times when I felt I was intruding upon their private domain by recording data about their social connections, attitudes and aspirations. Whereas traditional teaching practise discourages this kind of disclosure, the present pedagogy encourages it as the process of dialogue proceeds and this was a new experience both for the students and myself.

I certainly felt the pressure when Janice broke into tears over Edward's remarks, but I knew that emotion in this pedagogy is a natural outcome of discussion on the issues and therefore, to be anticipated. While I value this reality-based learning and understand how important it for all of us to work out these feelings in a protected environment where support can be offered, I also know how difficult and emotionally demanding such a pedagogy can be. It is a process that requires a very sensitive handling and one in which the students and I worked hard at developing. The relationship of trust is crucial to its workings and not being there regularly was a disadvantage in this regard.

Also I wondered how students perceived this intrusion

into their social lives. I had an agenda that was affecting their relationships with each other and the power structure of the classroom. Changes most definitely occurred because of it and many students knew this. Some welcomed these changes and others were upset. All in all, I felt uncomfortable about how I was being perceived at times and this led to a great deal of reflection on my part to try to understand the nature of our relationship. Such reflection impressed upon me the importance of allowing others free choice over decisions which affected them. This was for the sake of my conscience as well as for their sake. Students seemed to hold me in respect, but I felt an undercurrent of suspicion at times, from Samantha, in particular, but also from some of the quieter students.

Although the project was segmented from the rest of their day at school and there were effects from this, I was surprised at their general openness and candid comments, both verbally and in their journals.

Very importantly, I found the time restraint very limiting. It was taking all of my after school and weekend life to transcribe the tapes so that I couldn't do the analysis on the dialogues after each session as I had previously planned. This means that when I went into the next dialogue I didn't have as much information as I could have had otherwise in order to challenge more effectively. However, over the course of the dialogues, I learned to focus more appropriately on information that was more significant and, in time, I hope to become more efficient at this.

## As a researcher

As a researcher, I learned the value of having faith in the project, and in myself as a researcher. Also, I learned to appreciate those flashes of insight that come with "reflective thinking" about the practice of teaching which can come into consciousness at any time. Such flashes seem to leave almost as fast as they come, but I did manage to capture some of them.

Experimental teaching can cause a teacher to feel quite vulnerable at times and I learned the importance of support from colleagues. Certainly, at the school level the principal and grade six teacher of this class were very supportive. My thesis supervisor provided encouragement and insight into this pedagogy, as I went along, indicating to me that resistance was to be expected and was not to be interpreted as a problem with the research itself. This support was necessary as feelings of anxiety surfaced when students told me they were "bored" as the dialogues made them focus in on power relations in their own classroom. It is one thing to read about resistance in a textbook and another to "feel" it's sting in your own experience.

Also, at first, I wondered about losing respect from students who expected a more authoritarian role from a teacher. I am still pondering this and the reason for this is because I don't have sufficient data to more fully assess it. I had no "discipline" problems, during any of the dialogue

sessions themselves, but the classroom teacher was also present during most of them as the video recorder person.

I learned that it is important to collect as much data as possible, because if I had stopped at various places, I would not have seen the necessary patterns in order to recognize their resistance when shifts in power were occurring in the classroom or when the content of a particular code was too threatening. Sometimes, when students didn't seem as involved as I wanted them to be, I would think there was a problem with the code, and the classroom teacher would try to encourage me by saying the students were tired from a certain project they were doing or because they had a lot of tests that week. I accepted this, at first, until I started the analytical work and learned to recognize the role that resistance played here. At times, students told me they were bored. I think if I had responded to this at face value, I would have lost important data.

### Understanding Resistance

There are different types of resistance and it takes many forms. Resistance to domination is a sign of hope. Resistance to a new way of learning can reflect the fear of change in the status quo and of the possibility of a loss of stature in the new order and of the anxieties that come with new responsibilities. I observed student resistance to the liberatory pedagogy as students resisted changes to the status

quo. I observed their resistance to the domination of Jack and Samantha. Also, I observed what might be termed, "resistance to resistance." An example of this is when Shawna exhibited ambivalence about participating in the dialogues. She did not want to get prior notice of a code because she was afraid her parents would not allow her to participate in the dialogue if it questioned her family's values. Yet she had told me very emphatically that the dialogues were boring.

As I reflect further on this issue, I come to view resistance as showing human agency whether it gets expressed in traditional education or in a liberatory one such as this. Such agency gets expressed depending upon the understandings and aspirations of the particular individual expressing it. This dispels the myth that so often entered Shawna's consciousness, that if we can just find the "right" answers, the "right" pedagogy, then all our problems will be solved. However, the "right" answers are bound to human aspirations which vary amongst us and in the end, there will always be a variety of perspectives on every issue imaginable. Visions for a better society must encompass this variety of perspectives as part of its inherent ideology, not in terms of tolerance for differences, but in terms of a "celebration for differences."

As an expression of individual agency by all of us, resistance is a very positive and creative force, even as it challenged me and made my life difficult, at times. When I felt that resistance was affecting a student's growth in a



negative way, I learned to "reflect" more deeply on this to see what was missing from my analysis. At times like this, I learned more about how my own rationalizations about the program would surface. This would situate me back into a learning situation, as I examined my rationalizations more closely. In the end, I think it advantageous to present their resistance back to them, that is, to "problematize" their resistance [in coded form] so that they can see the problem, with its consequences and then make more informed choices. That is, after all, all that I can do for them. It is up to them to make their own choices. My intervention in the dialogues operated from the assumption that my role is to encourage students to understand that, by having an informed choice, they become possessors of a broader range of choices. Also, it is important for them to become aware of the consequences of their choices.

Reflection on student responses taught me more about the variety of ways that students will "resist," when challenged. Students have their own unique ways of registering this "resistance" and as I got to know students more through the dialogues, I grew in my understanding of their resistances. It has encouraged me to examine the reasons behind their resistance and how to work with them in getting all of us to look closely at our lives and to find new possibilities for growth and development.

This curriculum requires a lot of faith. The background readings on Freire and those connected with his work, as well

as discussions with my supervisor, were a great support here. One can get easily discouraged because, at the present time, there are very few doing this kind of pedagogy in schools and, certainly, none were known to me.

### Resistance and Special Education Students

I learned more about resistance from the presence of three "outsiders," Margie, Patrick and Doug, each of whom is an integrated Special Education student, and how regular classroom students perceive them in the classroom. It appeared that others did not want to be identified with them and that peer pressure from the leader, in this case had a lot to do with their acceptance or rejection. When the opinion of Jack, the leader mirrored Patrick's, Jack bailed out fast and even lied to deny a remark that was like Patrick's.

Doug had been gaining more confidence before Patrick arrived at the school, but after Patrick's episode in the dialogue, he grew quieter than ever. I grew to understand their general silence as it came from a lack of acceptance and trust from peers in this classroom.

Another situation which showed signs of discrimination involving these students came after groups were not randomly assigned any more but, rather, members chose their own groups. Margie was not left out, as the girls were sure to include her in one of their groups. This could be viewed as a gender response as girls identify with a more caring role, but on one

occasion I saw Doug or Patrick wandering without a group and I had to urge them to be more assertive to get into one.

Patrick, especially, felt more out of place. He was a new student who ventured to risk comments in the dialogue and was challenged by everyone, even those who held a similar opinion to his. Although eventually impressed by Patrick, Edward at first patronized him and tried to bate him as they tried to do with Margie in a previous dialogue.

Such instances made me realize that partial integration does not help these students. I feel that the evidence in this project points to them benefitting more by being treated fairly in regular classrooms, and that we, as teachers, need to learn more democratic teaching strategies that reach the wide variety of needs in the classroom. This may mean smaller classroom size or a different way of organizing students together other than just by age, but I'm sure there are other alternatives that can be explored to better the education of all students.

I reflected on the incident when Patrick recorded his indignation in his journal about being told that he really didn't say what he meant to say and from this, I learned the danger in trying to shield learners from accepting the consequences of their actions. This would represent a lack of faith on our part for learners and Patrick certainly responded very emphatically to this kind of intervention, letting me know that he did not appreciate it.

## Learning About Curriculum

Social and Emotional Agenda in the Classroom

I have learned to appreciate the importance of the hidden agenda in the classroom. I was aware of it before from several sources, but due to the specific nature of this project, I have a renewed impression of the intensity of its significance. It seems to me now that the subject areas, the visible curricula that everyone thinks are so important are secondary to the agenda that is really operating in the classroom. I now see the classroom as a miniature world, a little piece of society, that is reflective of that society, with all its own social and emotional problems that are present in the world as a whole.

As teachers, we need to look more closely at the social and emotional needs of children and to value this development in our curriculum, not as the subject matter in a course which would separate it out of the fabric of life, but rather as a part of everything that we do together in our school life.

I have grown to appreciate the intensity of the social agenda in classrooms, through the dialogues, and I have wondered about the dichotomy between what we teach and what students learn in traditional educational practise.

Although researchers have long recognized the phenomena and call it the "hidden curriculum," through the dialogues, I came to realize that it's really not that "hidden," unless

it's suppressed and I wonder if traditional educational practises suppress the social aspect of learning to keep control over students. Through observing Jack's use of traditional teaching practises, I have witnessed how control works with the group, more specifically, how it prevents individuals in the group from making their own decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning. Social learning does happen in the traditional curriculum but it is really incidental, whereas the dialogue pedagogy focuses on it, as a valid and acceptable part of the overall agenda. This is what makes it all the more valuable to the learners.

From this dialogue experience and reflections on it, I learned some valuable tools to take into future dialogues with students and I am anticipating how to become a better intervener with experience. I have a renewed appreciation and faith in the students as learners and as teachers, themselves. I have been witness to their trying to teach each other and caring and supporting each other. Along with the students, I have become witness to their pressures, at home as well as in school, and I have learned how open and caring they can become to each other. I have learned to value this as the most important part of the curriculum and not to view it as a distracter from the traditional "lesson."

I have also come to appreciate how important it is for teachers and students to take ownership over their own curriculum. Curriculum that is passed down to others cannot compare to that developed by teachers and students themselves

as they try to meet their specific learning needs.

### Future Development of the Pedagogy

There are several changes that I would make when doing this pedagogy again. As mentioned earlier, I would involve myself personally in the small group discussions as a participant, rather than oversee them as I had done previously in this particular project. This would have overcome the confusions some students had about the questions themselves, and it would have also reinforced my role as co-learner.

Also, I would become more active in the open dialogue, by sharing more stories and experiences, and I would state my values and opinions and tell what led me to these conclusions.

Student surveys might be created by students and be used to give them more control over programming decisions and to let them tabulate the survey results.

Furthermore, it would be more advantageous to do the analytical work on these dialogues, as the research project is occurring. This would affect the quality of my dialogue participation, journal responses and would also result in some procedural changes.

I have come to recognize the important responsibility for this curriculum. It is not easy. It is a lot easier to operate out of a pre-packaged curriculum that has the official seal of approval and carries no risk. This curriculum is not for the faint of heart but, rather, carries with it a

tremendous responsibility. It does not deny or control students' emotions but, rather, it involves students' social and emotional lives and openly deals with this in the classroom. There may be many who don't feel comfortable enough to do this, but would prefer to maintain the distance between themselves and their students by operating safely behind a technically applied program and certainly each teacher needs to decide for themselves whether or not they feel comfortable enough in terms of administrative support to handle such a pedagogy. Ira Shor (1987) discusses this in conversation with Paulo Freire.

This kind of grounded research [liberatory education] has little market value in the academy. It's unfortunate because grounded intelligence is one thing teachers need to animate students. It is the base information for reinventing knowledge in the classroom. This research-teaching has a high practical value. It educates the teacher in designing a curriculum which is intrinsically motivating. It also closes the professional distance between the teacher and the students.

The first researcher, then, in the classroom, is the teacher who investigates his or her students. This is one basic task of the liberatory classroom, but by itself it is only preparatory because the research process must animate students to study themselves, the course texts, and their own language and reality. I think this kind of classroom can produce "unsupervised or unofficial

knowledge." This would challenge the schools' marketing of official ideology. We will not sound like the textbooks, syllabi, and mainstream media swarming over the students. I try to sound natural instead of professorial, critical instead of disapproving, enthusiastic instead of ceremonial. Critical inquiry can produce a literature from the grass-roots, a parallel education or parallel classroom in contention with the official ones. Teaching like this can produce dissenting knowledge and alternate ways of using knowledge.

Education is much more controllable if the teacher follows the standard curriculum and if the students act as if only the teacher's words count. If teachers or students exercised the power to remake knowledge in the classroom, then they would be asserting their powers to remake society. The structure of official knowledge is also the structure of social authority. That is why the syllabus, the reading list, and the didactic lecture predominate as the educational forms for containing teachers and students inside the official consensus. The lecture-based, passive curriculum is not simply poor pedagogical practice. It is the teaching model most compatible with promoting the dominant authority in society and with disempowering students. (p. 9 - 10)

As mentioned previously, I felt the tremendous impact of the responsibility that comes with liberatory education firsthand when a student broke into tears over another



student's remark. I spent one-half hour talking with this student, in the washroom, and I tried to understand both students' perspectives over this episode. These experiences can be emotionally draining, at times, but it is the most meaningful experience a teacher can have. I think once you, "just do it," as Freire says, you learn ways around the problems, even this one. There may be times when you will have to "stand back" from the pedagogy, when you need that space or when the school's political space demands it, and then go forward when you feel more confident again.

### My Teaching Role

I see my teaching role now as a change agent and I look forward to the many possibilities to develop curriculum with this in mind and to encourage others to do likewise. Through my experience with this pedagogy, I have become increasingly more sensitized to the role of "change agent." I have become more capable of discriminating between policies which maintain the status quo, those which "reform" the status quo to accommodate it, and those which advocate true transformation.

I understand more fully the nature of contradiction and can distinguish between mere verbalization and action which leads to transformation. Most importantly, I now realize that the kind of change necessary for transformation must occur at the classroom level and cannot be initiated by a top-down management system.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Addressing the Questions

In the introduction, there are several important questions on which to reflect. I had asked myself if this particular grade six class was typical of other classrooms in terms of a hierarchy of power relationships. From informally asking a variety of classroom teachers this question, it would seem that this is so. None of the five teachers who operated in this grade six classroom, including specialist teachers like French, physical education and music, felt that this class was in any way different from past grade six classes.

Most teachers asked felt that these power relationships exist in all classrooms. However, I definitely have the impression that most teachers are unaware of the intensity of these relationships and the influence that these relationships have over the lives of the students. Moreover, I doubt that few teachers are aware of the intensity of the social and emotional agenda that operates in classrooms today. It is my perception that it was not just an important agenda for most of these students, but perhaps, the most important agenda. It is one that encompasses their feelings of self-esteem, this despite the fact that many of these youths were very academically ambitious. More research into this area of perception might place a higher priority on the need for

student-centered learning approaches.

The second question I ponder is how the power structure gets established in the first place. I suspect that Jack and Samantha acted quickly to dominate others and practised their control mechanisms, most often, behind the scenes of the official classroom, during social times, such as like recess, lunch and unstructured work activities. Certainly, comments made by particular class members verified how Jack operated behind the scenes to influence the decisions of others. Research into how a power structure gets initiated and established would help to debunk the myth of the magical or taken-for-granted nature of such a hierarchy that occupies much of today's current thinking about "natural leaders." The dialogues gave me a lot of insight into how these power relationships get established in the classroom, but research into the social lives of the students, as well as their classroom lives, would provide yet another source of information on how the power structure gets established.

The third question involves how a newcomer affects the hierarchy of power positions already established in a classroom. Through pondering this question, I come to understand better what motivates a group to exert pressure on class leaders to maintain the status quo, and how a newcomer's attempt to fit into this "pecking order" would, in fact, risk everybody's placement in the group hierarchy. It can be compared to a line cue where everybody lines up in order of arrival, that is, with the "first come, first served" type of

rules in operation, and a couple of newcomers enter the scene. However, we know that unlike the visible line cue, in social arrangements new-comers do not automatically go to the end of the line, but instead, depending upon their attributes and the society's assessment of those attributes, they will occupy some position in front of others already present in line. This always creates resentment and frustration for those who were there before them. With this frustration comes added stress to all members of the group who exert pressure to maintain the status quo. This may also be part of the foundation for the mistrust and resentment of "foreigners," as Samantha described them in dialogue.

In this way, the dialogues made me more aware of the nature of this hierarchial order within classrooms. With further study of these particular classroom relationships, I am certain that I could orderly position each student into a hierarchy of power at a static point in time. Therefore, as students become increasingly more aware of their power position in the classroom, so, too, do they learn more about what they can lose when a newcomer would arise and disrupt the present system. While each student might not be completely happy with a particular position, at least it was safe and acceptable one. A newcomer, or even a challenge to the present leaders from a regular, would upset this order and many would be unhappy with the ensuing disorder and chaos and would be tense about the insecurity of their position in the hierarchy.

There is a lot of stress on the newcomers, also. I saw how newcomers went about handling problems such as trying to fit into the classroom power structure. Although the dialogues are a very good learning situation for these new and partially integrated Special Education students, they were not always comfortable with it. One such student just ignored the regular class students, when she was present, and more often than not she tried to be absent from school as much as possible on the dialogue days.

Another took on the role of silent observer and communicated with me only through his journal. The third transferred into the school, after the dialogues had started and, initially, felt he could get into a good position in this hierarchy. He was from a working-class background, whereas students in this class were all middle-class. His lack of initial understanding of the differences between himself and the established members in the class was responsible for his risk-taking in his first dialogue, where he took great risks in being verbal about his opinions before getting to know his audience. Group reaction was swift and unrelenting. They united to put him immediately in his place. This had a very strong effect upon him, as he struggled to try to understand what went wrong. He never again tried to assume he would be easily accepted by this class. It is safe to say that during the six month period of this study, none of the newcomers were truly accepted.

However, it is important to note that, through the

dialogue process, several of these Special Education students expressed their agencies in different ways and gained more respect because of it. Again, with more focus in this particular area, future research might study the relationships of newcomers to the group and its effects on the status quo. Such factors, as the study of how students of multi-ethnic groups and mixed social classes attempt to "fit into" already established classes might also be included in this area.

Because these grade six students are middle-class and still in the process of trying to fit into roles in the general society, little energy or opportunity exists in the traditional curriculum to really examine the society without there being a resistance to this examination. These middle-class students were comparatively privileged in this society and they had the perspective that as long as they learn to follow the rules, there is a comfortable place for them. Unless, or until, they are alienated by the society to some degree and can articulate and account for society as being responsible for their oppression, they will not likely see a need for change. Rather they will continue to engage in such ineffectual activities such as "blaming the victim" which occurred so frequently in the code analyses.

Altruistic feelings do exist but, for the most part, they are not enough for the privileged to make any sacrifices on the behalf of the less fortunate. Dominant forces create charitable institutions to handle the guilt of the more privileged in the society and also, in this way to continue to

keep the oppressed in their present positions of needing charity. Freire (1970) points to the fact that we all, including the oppressed, are "hosts of the oppressor." He says, "The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization" (p. 33). He goes on to say that even when we discover that we are oppressors, it doesn't mean that we will join forces with them for the purpose of liberation.

Discovering himself (sic) to be an oppressor may cause considerable anguish, but it does not necessarily lead to solidarity with the oppressed. Rationalizing his (sic) guilt through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them fast in a position of dependence, will not do. Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture . . . . The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor--when he (sic) stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plentitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis. To affirm that men (sic) are persons and as person should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation

a reality, is a farce. (pp. 34-35)

This raises questions as to whom this pedagogy would serve. On the surface, it would appear that this pedagogy would be most successful with underprivileged or oppressed classes as a way for them to assert their rights. Also, it might appear that here, too, in the working-classes, there is resistance to the pedagogy due to the hopelessness that often accompanies working-class thinking. In informal conversations, I have heard this hopelessness sometimes referred to as the "poor mentality," and that it operates to keep oppressed people in their place. The oppressed are often not aware that they are not responsible for their position in the society. They, like the more privileged middle-class, sometimes believe that somehow, it is their fault, or their parents' faults. Despite these prevailing myths, Freire's thinking has led to a new understanding of the oppressed and the obstacles that impede the regaining of power over their own lives. Most importantly, his thinking offers new hopes in that direction because it recognizes and focuses on their agency, how they can and do resist dominant ideology which oppresses them.

My research was done in a middle-class setting and I constantly found myself questioning the pedagogy from this perspective. What was I offering these students through this pedagogy? I came to feel very strongly that I was helping them to illuminate their reality, by putting them in a position to examine their options for making more informed



choices. Throughout the pedagogy, I came to understand their resistances and their struggles, as well as my own. This struggle included the questioning of the relevance of this pedagogy in furthering their welfare, as they perceived it and as I perceived it, which in some cases did not coincide. This would create some antagonism, at times, between us and it furthered my perception that this is not an easy pedagogy, by any means. Further readings helped me to understand some of these tensions on the relevancy of this pedagogy for middle-class society. Richard Shaul (1970) describes how he feels about the relevancy of this pedagogy to our North American society.

Our advanced technological society is rapidly making objects of most of us and subtly programming us into conformity to the logic of its system. To the degree that this happens, we are also becoming submerged in a new "culture of silence."

The paradox is that the same technology which does this to us also creates a new sensitivity to what is happening. Especially among young people, the new media together with the erosion of old concepts of authority open the way to acute awareness of this new bondage. The young perceive that their right to say their own word has been stolen from them, and that few things are more important than the struggle to win it back. And they also realize that the educational system today--from kindergarten to university--is their enemy.

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world. The development of an educational methodology that facilitates this process will inevitably lead to tension and conflict within our society. But it could also contribute to the formation of a new man and mark the beginning of a new era in Western history. For those who are committed to that task and are searching for concepts and tools for experimentation, Paulo Freire's thought may make a significant contribution in the years ahead.

(pp.14-15)

Considerable effort has gone into discovering the relevance of this pedagogy with the more privileged middle-classes and I would like to add another perception to this issue. The present society is one which inculcates superiority and inferiority into its membership and, in this way, it also defines success for its members. I feel that the discussion of success is an important one here in analysing this issue because the search for success is the aspiration of so many, and this had particular bearing upon these grade six students. They all wanted to be successful in one way or

another and their aspirations had directly influenced their self-esteem.

Through the dialogues, I witnessed how the society, through its present value system, inflects so many struggles upon all of us. I witnessed the students' identity struggles, their rebellions, their conflicts, their parental separation anxieties and I ask myself how different these struggles might be with a different sets of societal values. These youths have many problems and rather than accept these as natural outcomes of the adolescent period, I question instead whether most of these difficulties are society-bound. With different values in place, many of these present difficulties would be non-existent.

Furthermore these youths are not the carefree, happy-go-lucky individuals that the society likes to portray them as being. Scenes of teens hitting the popular beach sites, enjoying the "good life" flash through our minds via popular advertisements. Yet we know this is myth-making. This knowledge leads to questions such as, "How many of us, even those supposedly privileged, really thrive under such a system? What is success? Who defines it? What price do we, as humanistic individuals, pay for success, as defined by this present society? A very important question to ask is, "Is this the kind of society we truly want"? Especially in regards to the last question, how many of us are ready, at this point, even to ask this question?

Because of these struggles with self-esteem and identity,

the privileged middle-class has impetus to examine the values of the present society and the power to transform these values and therein lies the relevancy of the Freirean pedagogy to this middle-class.

Many of the middle-class do not see their own victimization under the society, and it is most important that we not be led astray by the myths in the society. If we are to truly participate in the society, as knowing and informed members of it, then we must be fully knowledgeable of what kind of a society it was, what kind of society it is, what kind of a society it can become, and also how we can participate in this action to transform it.

It is important to work together with students to understand the ways that we can resist domination and become active participants in the society at large. In this way, we can view ourselves as subjects to act upon our world, and not as objects to be manipulated and acted upon by others.

We need to examine the oppression out of which privilege and advantage comes because privilege masks our collusion with the present system of hegemonic control. As long as we are uninformed about how the system works and why the problems exist, we cannot fully participate in the decision-making process necessary for a better and more equal society.

This pedagogy offers all of us that hope. It will encourage us to decide what kind of a society we want, instead of being led blindly and helplessly along, by the dominating forces in the society. This pedagogy does not encourage its

members to designate responsibility to a few people who make all the decisions. Also, it is not a democracy if people are uninformed about how society functions.

There is a genuine need for a vision in this society, but Freire's theory does not put one person's vision over another. Rather, it encourages us to explore many visions, many truths, many perceptions and many experiences, together with all people in the society. Freire's pedagogy offers new hope in that direction. It does not isolate education to a classroom, a school, or a school district, but rather situates it in our everyday lives and our world. This goes beyond our own country and its artificial and human-made borders to the entire world.

Another question involves the issue of how we can change society. Freire believes that the kind of change needed to create a new society requires a different kind of revolution, one that starts with the power of the people and not the power structure at the top. He defines a new kind of leadership and a new concept of power. In conversation with Antonio Faundez, Freire (1989) quotes some comments concerning power made by Brazilian workers' leaders about not accepting a "predetermined pattern imposed from above":

This level of political awareness, of class consciousness, being displayed today by wide sectors of the Brazilian working class, is highly significant. It shows the need for a qualitative change in the struggle to change society . . . . I am convinced . . . that we

are experiencing and being confronted with certain challenges which in the closing years of this century are coming over very strongly. Basically, they are historical issues, which in almost all cases come down to us through the years, but which now require to be confronted in new ways.

One of these issues is power: the question of power. I am quite sure that the basic problem facing us today in the struggle to change society is not that of simply gaining power, but a gaining of power which is prolonged creatively in a rediscovery of power, creating a new power which does not fear to be called in question and does not become rigid for the sake of defending the freedom already achieved which, basically, should be a freedom constantly being achieved. (pp. 62-63)

In this dialogue, Antonio responds, to affirm and extend Freire's thinking.

I think that power and struggle for power have to be rediscovered on the basis of the resistance which makes up the power of the people, the semiological, linguistic, emotional, political and cultural expressions which the people use to resist the power of domination. . . . when you begin with that concept of power [shared with the masses], the struggle changes completely. It is no longer a matter of taking over the power of the state in order to change society, but rather of changing society from the base so as to build a new society in which power

and the struggle for power manifest themselves in a different way.

Power will begin in the everyday struggles, in the everyday actions of men, women, children and teachers: in every one of the various professions and occupations human relationships will change and become democratic, relying on participation by all. Power will belong to all; each individual will claim his or her portion of power as a human being, and this will enable a society to be built in which power will be of all and not just of a few. (p. 64)

I have concluded from this study that the Freirean dialogue is an excellent pedagogy in that it attempts to meet the social, emotional and intellectual needs of all children and it does so in an integrated, true to life way. It does not segment learning into isolated and artificial pieces [subjects] and then try to put things together again to try to make meaningful connections. Rather, by its very nature, it is already integrated into the very fabric of life.

To the grade six students and myself, who experienced this pedagogy to a somewhat limited degree, I feel it has had a great impact upon our perceptions of power relations, both in the classroom and in the society at large. Also, it fostered a greater understanding of ourselves and others and we all developed in our confidence as learners.

To me, personally, it has been the most meaningful educational experience that I can ever recall having.

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## Appendix A

A brief synopsis of each code will help give the reader background knowledge necessary to understand the beginning content of the issues that students were to analyze. These codes were meant to be stimulus for further discussion and students were to identify the problems in each situation.

## FRIENDSHIPS - GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

On October 4, the class was introduced to the philosophy and nature of this pedagogy and was asked to meet in small groups to discuss friendship, how to meet friends, how to make friends and how to keep them.

## SIBLING CONFLICTS

On October 9 the general procedure took on a more formalized structure. Students were given a code and on this day it was an excerpt out of a story called, "Finding My Feelings" from "Becoming Myself" (pp. 3-4) about 11 year old Joe Cullen and his younger brother, Casey who were fighting early in the morning. Casey wanted to practise his drums in the bathroom because of the loud echo and he awakened Joe who was annoyed and threw the drum out the door of the bathroom. He pinched Casey at the breakfast table when their mother took Casey's side.

**PARENT-CHILD CONFLICTS**

On October 16 the class used an excerpt from the story, "My Feelings Are Divided" (pp. 33-34) in "Becoming Myself" as the code. The excerpt from the story told about a conflict between Paula and her mother. Paula's mother wanted her to clean up her room and Paula got upset with her mother and her mother's expectations and she began to criticize her parents and to fantasize about her life.

**MEETING SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS**

On October 25 the code was an excerpt from "Living With Me" in "Becoming Myself" (pp. 66-68). The problem was about handling disappointments and centred around Timmy who didn't make the baseball team and felt very discouraged about it. His negative reaction was compared to Kurt, who recognized his limitation and took positive action to deal with his problem.

**SEXISM AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM: SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING**

On October 30 the code was an excerpt from "My Growth Into Adolescence" about sexual identify in "Becoming Myself" (pp. 164-166). The story was about the father who argued with the home economics teacher at a Parent and Teacher Association meeting because he didn't want his son to take home economics because he felt cooking and sewing was women's work. The

controversy on sex role stereotyping was discussed briefly.

#### SEXISM: PRESSURE ON GIRLS TO CONFORM TO SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS

On November 6 I made up a code called, "Karen's Education" in which I described a situation in which a family of limited financial means had decided that their son's education was more important than their daughter's and that they would finance the boy's education, but not Karen's. They exerted pressure on Karen to date boys and admonished her for being unreasonable in pursuing academic ambition.

#### ISSUES OF CLASSROOM STATUS: EXAMINING PEER VALUES

On November 15 the code was an excerpt from the story, "My Social Growth" in "Becoming Myself" (pp. 171-172). The story was about Jenny's being new at Whittier School and one difficulty she had being accepted by the in-crowd, headed by Kathy and Marlene. She was accepted automatically by the group in the beginning and noticed that they made fun of other girls and restricted their membership. The big disappointment came when Jenny herself got rejected from the group. The code was chosen to examine peer values.

#### ISSUES OF CLASSROOM STATUS: EXAMINING HEGEMONIC PRESSURE AND CONTROL

On November 22 the code was a play called "The Sandwich,"

from "More Short Plays For the Classroom." Students chose roles and acted out the play for fellow students. The play centred around Hamburger who was the leader and a bully. He had a select few friends, Bun, Lettuce and Tomato but rejected Pickle and Onion.

#### ISSUES OF CLASSROOM STATUS: PEER PRESSURE

On November 30 I constructed a code by expanding the story on Jenny. In this story I discussed how desperate Jenny was to get back into the in-crowd and on some reasons why she felt it was so important. Peer pressure to get into this group influenced not just Jenny but also other classmates as well. At the school dance she went out back with a boy, Tony who was admired by the in-crowd girls and had a cigarette with him just to ingratiate herself with Kathy and Marlene.

#### ISSUES OF CLASSROOM STATUS: PEER PRESSURE AND DRUG ABUSE

On December 3, I constructed a code on Fred's difficulty with peer pressure. Fred was considered a leader in their group and his best friend was Pete. In junior high Pete met a new girl, Sally, and they began dating. Eventually Fred saw less and less of Pete until Pete invited Fred and their other friends to Sally's party. At the party Fred found himself under a great deal of peer pressure to drink alcohol and take drugs with little or no time to think about his decision first.

**SEXISM: LIMITING GIRLS' EDUCATION**

On December 11 the code was an article called, "Girls' dreams, reality clash," in the Mail Star on December 1, 1990 by Pamela Sword. It discussed the report "by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and is entitled Young Women in Nova Scotia: A Study of Attitudes, Behaviour and Aspirations." It is based on a questionnaire survey of 1,655 female students in grades 10 and 12 during the fall of 1989. The article described how the girls' ambitions decreased with age and they settled for less ambitious careers than what they had originally wanted.

**RACISM: EXAMINING THE ISSUE**

On January 15 the code was an article called, "TV [television] movie focuses on destruction of Indian (sic) culture," written by The Canadian Press in the Mail-Star on October 28, 1989. The grade six students had the opportunity to watch the movie on this issue called, "Where the Spirit lives" on the Sunday before our dialogue session. The true story told about how an agent from the government abducted Native children who were stripped of their Native culture and forced to live the White culture "under the guise of a Christian education." The school was run by an Anglican priest and ran from the 1880's to 1988. The director of the film, Keith Leckie, estimated that one million Native children

were involved in this process.

#### SELF-EVALUATION

On March 8 the code was the viewing of the taping of two dialogue tapes, October 25 and November 15.



## Appendix B

Permission to gather and use information was granted informally from students and parents of the thesis. The thesis was explained to the students at the beginning. This included an explanation that comments from the dialogues and "Daily Reflection" notebooks would be cited and analyzed as part of my research. All students seemed actively interested in the project at its commencement and even when resistance by a couple of students surfaced near the end of the project, none withdrew their permission for the use of their comments in the thesis.

Permission was granted by the school principal who was invited to observe the dialogue sessions at any time during the research. Both the principal and regular classroom teacher offered their support throughout the duration of the thesis and their support was greatly appreciated.

A notice went home to each parent explaining that I would be available in the grade six classroom on "Curriculum Night" to address any questions or concerns. There were none. This is a copy of that notice:

Dear parent/s,

October 3, 1990

Mrs. McDade is our Resource teacher at (the name of the school) and she will be presenting part of the Health program in cooperation with myself in a team-teaching capacity for a specific time period this year. She will be gathering information for her university thesis. The topics will be taken from our Health Guide and include:

Self-awareness

Nutrition

Drug Education

Safety

Puberty

Dealing with Emotions and Family Life

Dealing with Problems

If further information is required, both myself and Mrs. McDade will be available Thursday night (curriculum night) or you may phone the school.

Thank you for your support, in advance,

Yours truly,

(signed by the classroom teacher)