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FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR STUDENTS IN
THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

by

Bruce Alan McNair, B.A., B.S., M.Ed.

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1971

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Freedom in education is an elusive goal. The concept of freedom is often discussed by theorists and philosophers with little resulting application to the world of the student. A classical problem in dealing with the concept is reflected in how one views the world. Do we have the autonomy to make decisions which set the paths of our lives, or are we the automata of some predetermined computer-like program? At one end of the spectrum of opinion are those who believe that fate is the determiner of all man's actions; that regardless of how we think of ourselves as decision makers, our actions have already been decided for us. On the other end of the continuum stand those who profess that man has the freedom to choose his destinations; that freewill is a matter of fact.\(^1\)

It may be that the nature of compulsory education directs the outlook of educators toward the deterministic

position. "You are free to choose, but must attend," is a contradiction which illustrates this perplexing problem. Unless one agrees with some of the more radical critics that the entire educational system should be abolished, one would hope that alternatives for choice within a restructured system could be reached. Is it necessary for a student to attend classes at predetermined times? Is it necessary for a student to be directed entirely by a teacher? Obviously not.

What choices do students have in the average elementary classroom? Unless choice is interpreted in a narrow sense, such as a pupil choosing to complete ditto A before ditto B, one would have to admit that freedom of choice for students is not a primary goal. Unfortunately, many educators are involved with predetermined linear or sequential steps of curriculum development. Choice making as a curricular goal, therefore, can be ignored because it is not linear and is often unpredictable. Watching a caterpillar inching across the grass, sitting in a quiet corner, staying home to celebrate a birthday do not fit neat patterns of curriculum, but certainly it seems these choices ought to be honored.

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Recent literature on the new schools, free or open schools, and British Primary schools hold promise for a new workable freedom in education. These departures from the conventional American schools may well prove the forerunners to more widespread useful change in our total system. As exemplary schools, they place a higher value or priority on student choice making within the educational setting, not only by their written philosophy and objectives, but more importantly, by their operational practices.

If a school intentionally and primarily honors freedom of choice on the part of the students, one might therefore expect to find some fundamental differences in the behavior of their students as compared to the behavior of students within a more conventional school. How would these differences in behavior appear? Could it be possible to observe the actions of children in two classrooms and verify from those observations that one classroom nurtures more student freedom of choice than does the other?

The Problem

This study represents an attempt to treat the initial stages of the above questions, that is, to analyze the observable behaviors of students in the classroom within a conceptual framework of freedom of choice. As such, focus is on several pertinent questions:

(1) What are the conceptual considerations needed to describe student freedom of choice in the classroom?

(2) Is it possible to observe specific behaviors of students in an elementary classroom which are reflective of freedom of choice?

(3) Can a practical and applicable observational system be developed for observing freedom of choice in a classroom?

Importance of the Study

Jackson points out that "Considered singly many aspects of the classroom life look trivial. And in a sense, they are. It is only when their cumulative occurrence is considered that the realization of their full importance begins to emerge." The development of a conceptual framework and observational system would provide a practical means of clarifying choice-making by students in the classroom. With the identification of

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student behaviors in the classroom which are reflective of freedom of choice, it might become more evident to an observer just what aspects of the daily school activities would lend themselves to furthering and expanding options not presently available to children in the conventional school.

Assumptions

This study assumes that freedom of choice for the student ought to be a primary goal of any educational system. It is further assumed that some schools or classrooms advocate and promote more freedom of choice for the student than other schools or classrooms.

Limitations of This Study

A random selection of student or class population was not required for this study. Rather the focus was on the development of an observational method which evolved from direct observation of two first-grade classrooms. These observations were then compared to a developed conceptual framework. The two classes, one representative of the British Primary Model and the other a conventional classroom, were used only as an empirical test on the possibilities of student behavior. No generalizations are or should be made to the larger universe of classrooms.
The categories of behavior developed in this study are representative of some of the student behaviors found at the primary school level. No attempt was made to define and categorize every student behavior in the room.

**Description of Method**

One major part of this study is to clarify the concept of freedom of choice as it applies to the educational setting. Related literature of a historical and philosophical nature and writings concerning the implementation and operation of student choice-making within the classroom have been reviewed to gain a clearer understanding of the concept.

The second part of the study deals with the observation of students in two first-grade classrooms. A descriptive research methodology was employed; that is, the observer viewed assessed and described certain behaviors within the classroom. Data were gathered by using a time sampling of selected behavioral events. This observational method was used during a number of typical school days.

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Categorical statements describing pupil behavior are made in specific and observable terms. Some categories were developed from the previous work of Anderson and Brewer. Other categories were taken from teacher suggestions. Some sample behaviors were not discernable, on the part of the observer, as choice-making behavior, and these samples were categorized as neutral.

The observer viewed pupil behavior only and did not attempt to include the activities of the teacher within either of the two classrooms.

An observational form was developed with twelve selected categories of pupil behavior that were described as either pupil choice or teacher-institutional control. This form was given a preliminary tryout before the observer used it in the specified classrooms. Some refinements in language and examples of behavior in the various categories were required as the method was applied. This refinement is consistent with the below mentioned "fluid enquiry" approach.

Two first-grade classrooms were chosen for observation. Both classrooms were in Title I funded schools, reflecting the economic make-up of the attendance area.

One classroom typified the conventional elementary school design, and the other represented an adaptation of the British Infant School Model. In each case, the principal described the observed room as a good example of that particular model, and both teachers were praised by their principals as effective in their respective roles.

Each teacher, in turn, selected for the researcher, three pupils whom they classified as most productive, average productive, and least productive. In addition to viewing these selected six pupils, the observer applied the observational method to each child in the class for consecutive periods of time.

The following schedule was utilized for the descriptive data gathering. The three selected pupils, in each class, were observed for alternating twenty-minute periods throughout each observation. Lunch, recess, physical education, and music were excluded from the observation time. The observations took place over a four-week period. Also accomplished during the four weeks were the consecutive observations (three minutes) of child present in the classroom. The observer made records for one child at a time recording for three minute periods the behavior of the particular child under observation. In this way, all pupils were observed to help determine the overall picture of pupil choice-making behavior in each of the two rooms.
Overall, the study is carried on under the approach referred to by Schwab as "fluid enquiry." This approach allows that the subject under investigation is probably an imperfect image, and that inadequacies and limitations exist in both the data and terms used to describe the subject. The results of the two differing procedural methods will be compared to gain a clearer understanding about student freedom of choice in the classroom.

Definitions of Terms

Conventional Classroom. In this study, conventional classroom refers to any classroom which does not use for its basis of operation a design or model which those responsible for its operation consider to be new, experimental, or innovative.

Open Classroom. The open classroom in this study represents those classrooms (sometimes referred to as free, new or informal, or British Primary Model) which are organized with a primary emphasis on wide pupil choice or initiative. More specifically, the open classroom used for data gathering in this study was an adaptation of the British Primary Model.

Student Choice-Making Behavior. Student choice-making behavior for the classroom observation portion of

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this study refers to those observable verbal and non-verbal expressions and actions of the student which are inferred to be resultant from his own impulses, desires, preferences, and/or values.

**Teacher-Institution Controlled Behavior.** In this study, teacher-institution controlled behavior will refer to those observable behaviors, actions, and verbal expressions of the student which are inferred to be resultant from the direction and control of the teacher or institution.

**Summary**

Much has been written concerning questions of institutional authority and freedom of choice. Current interest in student freedom of choice seems to be a significant trend. This study attempts to clarify and observe aspects of student freedom of choice as it operates in the classroom.

**Outline of the Study**

Chapter I has presented an introductory statement, the statement of the problem, a brief discussion of the importance of the study, statements of assumptions and limitations concerning the study, a brief description of the methods used for the study, definitions of terms used in the study, and the outline of the study.
Chapter II presents a review of the literature in areas considered by the investigator to be pertinent to the study.

Chapter III offers a detailed description of the approach and procedural methods used in the study, as well as a description of the observational instrument devised and the situational aspects of the observations made in the classroom.

Chapter IV presents a conceptual framework for observing student freedom of choice and the results of the classroom observations.

Chapter V includes the summary, discussion, conclusions, and implications and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ideas of freedom, democracy, and self-determination for students in an educational setting are of relative recent origins. Although the principles of Lehrfreiheit—the freedom to teach—have been well adopted from their nineteenth century German University origins, the accompanying notions of Lernfreiheit—the freedom to learn—have not been so well received.¹ It should be noted that the terms Lehrfreiheit and Lernfreiheit have been tradition ally applied to the university setting, and that academic freedom for the public school teacher has never been a major issue in American education; however, the concept of freedom for the student at all levels of learning has been, is, and will continue to be of major importance.

Chapter II is divided into two sections. The first section traces the tenets of Lernfreiheit from a historical and philosophical viewpoint. The second section deals with the efforts of researchers to develop scientific observational studies of the classroom. In the latter

¹Nash, op. cit., p. 97.
section, only those observational research studies which are in some way pertinent to viewing student freedom will be considered.

Historical-Philosophical Background

The Early Advocates

To begin an account of the major advocates of freedom for students in education, one would have to start with Rousseau. Mayer points out that we can divide the history of education into two periods: before Rousseau, and after Rousseau. The impact of Rousseau's romantic educational ideals were felt not only through *Emile,* but in *The Social Contract,* and *Origin of Inequality among Men.* These works became a unifying theme for many later progressives.

No single work of Rousseau's stands in isolation since his life was so inextricably involved in his writing.

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2 Mayer also refers to some other progressive contemporaries of Rousseau such as the Jansenists, Basedow, and Abbe de LaSalle, who also believed child and not adult interests should become the center of the curriculum. Fredrick Mayer, *A History of Educational Thought* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1960), p. 238.

3 *Ibid.,* p. 244.
To study his writing is to follow the man as he wrote of his frustrations at the hands of fashionable society whom he felt did not recognize merit in his work. He eventually turned on his group of mentors and tormentors and produced a radical proposal for the reworking of all society and within that framework the exultation of a "natural education" for the child.\(^4\)

The "natural" may simply imply an unfettered education, that is, the child most certainly will be taught at times, but conditions do not exclude the child's choosing his own time and place to be educated. It puts the restriction on the side of the adult rather than the child. This again captures the underlying intent of *Emile* that man is trapped by society and can do nothing; therefore, in order to change society the child must not grow in the ways of affectatious, powerful man, but in the ways of simple man and nature.\(^5\) To follow the corrupt adult is to perpetuate an already warped society. Rousseau proposed this premise early in *Emile* when he wrote:


\(^5\) Ibid., p. 14.
God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil. . . . He destroys and defaces all things; he loves all that is deformed and monstrous; he will have nothing as nature made it, not even man himself, who must learn his paces like a saddle horse, and be shaped to his master's taste like the trees in his garden.6

Although Rousseau's nature supplied the child with necessities, he did realize the need for assistance since a child does not have sufficient strength to meet all the demands of nature. In setting forth the guidelines by which a mother can assist, but not serve the child, he also laid the groundwork for all of education.

(1) Far from being too strong, children are not strong enough for all the claims of nature. Give them full use of such strength as they have; they will not abuse it.

(2) Help them and supply the experience and strength they lack whenever the need is of the body.

(3) In the help you give them confine yourself to what is really needful, without granting anything to caprice or unreason; for they will not be tormented by caprice if you do not call it into existence, seeing it is no part of nature.

(4) Study carefully their speech and gestures, so that at an age when they are incapable of deceit you may discriminate between those desires which come from nature and those which spring from perversity.7


7Ibid., p. 35.
This groundwork underlies Rousseau's plea for freedom for the child: the more one does for the child, the less the child does for himself which stifles the very possibility of free growth and independence. By allowing the child a free environment, he becomes self-sufficient and capable of making natural (right) choices.

While admonishing the overpowering adult, Rousseau acknowledged that the presence of a tutor is necessary to assist the education of the child. This person acted as a good parent in following the above maxims. Rousseau delineated the teaching duties of the tutor and appealed to the quality of relationship between the pupil and tutor as the essence of good education.

Rousseau deplored the general acceptance that the passing of infancy into childhood demanded the onset of formal schooling.

With our foolish and pedantic methods we are always preventing children from learning what they could learn much better by themselves, while we neglect what we alone could teach them.

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8Ibid., p. 58.
9Ibid., p. 17.
10Ibid., p. 42.
He further adds:

Now is the time, you say, to correct his evil tendencies; we must increase suffering in childhood, when it is less keenly felt, to lessen it in manhood. But how do you know that you can carry out all these fine schemes; how do you know that all this fine teaching with which you overwhelm the feeble mind of the child will not do him more harm than good in the future?  

Instead of formal schooling for childhood, Rousseau appealed to the aspect of play and encounters with nature as a means for self-discovery and governance. The child who is restrained by things rather than the will of man soon learns the limits of his strength.

Nature provides for the child's growth in her own fashion, and this should never be thwarted. Do not make him sit still when he wants to run about, nor run when he wants to be quiet. If we did not spoil our children's wills by our blunders their desires would be free from caprice. Let them run, jump, and shout to their hearts content. "A1 their own activities are instincts of the body for its growth in strength."  

Freedom to grow and live, and to make mistakes was the necessary condition for Rousseau's education. In this manner the child becomes a truly free man who wills what he is able to perform and performs as he desires.  

Like many of our contemporary authors and critics,

11 Ibid., p. 43.
12 Ibid., p. 50.
13 Ibid., p. 48.
Rousseau went beyond the concept of school meaning only intellectual pursuits, and encompassed all of nature as the context for education. Certainly many of our free schools are based upon this notion.\textsuperscript{14}

Like Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi believed in the encouragement and development of the inner active forces of the child, and denounced the artificial training of his day. He also was an advocate of freedom based upon the natural development of the child. Pestalozzi was, however, far more scientific than Rousseau about the primitive nature of man. He did not glorify nature because he felt it was far too careless of the individual.\textsuperscript{15}

Love was a key word in Pestalozzi's work. He felt that love should be unrestrained, even to the poorest student. Such love would eventually lead to the ultimate test of education; that is, is man more tolerant, compassionate, and able to practice brotherly love.\textsuperscript{16}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{14}The popularity of the free schools on the west coast can readily be seen in the number of schools (76 in the Bay Area alone) dedicated to such universal tenents as "joy and free play." Louise C. Brown, "Considering the Alternatives," San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle (April 11, 1971), p. 7.


Pestalozzi held that each man's own self-perfection was reached through the perfecting of his brothers.\(^{17}\)

Freedom for the child was advocated by Pestalozzi because the child learns best from his own experiences with nature.

Lead your child out into Nature, teach him on the hilltops and in the valleys. There he will listen better, and the sense of freedom will give him more strength to overcome difficulties. But in these hours of freedom let him be taught by Nature rather than by you. . . .

I would say to the teacher, be thoroughly convinced of the immense value of liberty; do not let vanity make you anxious to see your efforts producing premature fruit; let your child be as free as possible, and seek diligently for every means of ensuring his liberty, peace of mind, and good humor.\(^{18}\)

One of Pestalozzi's main attacks on the education of his day was aimed at the immense amount of verbiage, abstraction, and memorization.\(^{19}\) He stressed the importance of concrete situations and learning by doing. His primary emphasis was on the accumulation of sense data out of which concepts are formed.\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\)Gutek, op. cit., p. 63.

\(^{18}\)Mayer, op. cit., p. 268, citing Johann H. Pestalozzi, Diary.

\(^{19}\)Gutek, op. cit., p. 166.

Pestalozzi's stress on love, freedom for the child, and learning by doing was ultimately tied to his belief in the natural goodness of children—a belief which he tried to propagate with the nineteenth-century educators. How basic this sounds and how unused in many conventional schools of today when control rather than freedom is the main theme, with the student needing constant supervision.

Another early and well-known advocate of freedom for the pupil was Friedrich Froebel. His most important contribution to education was the establishment of the kindergarten in 1837. Like Pestalozzi, who influenced him, Froebel made his impact from his own teaching experience.

Froebel's plea for freedom was based upon his belief in the innermost connections of the mind which he equated to the religious and natural goodness of man. "For the living thought," he states, "the eternal divine principle as such demands and requires free self-activity and self-determination on the part of man being created.

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for freedom in the image of God."\textsuperscript{22} From this premise, he felt that education should be "passive, following, not prescriptive, categorical, interfering."\textsuperscript{23} He wished not merely for the attainment of facts, but for the free self-active development of the mind from within. Self-conquest, according to Froebel, is the only basis for true freedom.\textsuperscript{24}

Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel all represented a type of romanticism which proposed that the dignity of the student is to be cherished and safeguarded in education. The teacher is to be an example of understanding, warmth, and restraint. The pupil should be free to learn, and thus grow into a natural awareness of his duties to his fellow man. This aspect is placed above the accumulation of facts which sometimes leads to self-assurance of the most vain type. Knowledge without compassion and direction for good is useless.

Early Twentieth-Century Proponents

Two of the most influential educators championing freedom for students were developing and expounding

\textsuperscript{22} Friedrich Froebel, \textit{The Education of Man}. Translated by W. N. Hailmann (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1901), p. 11.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 7.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 136.
their ideas at the turn of the twentieth-century. John Dewey, whose writings covered a span of sixty-five years, is more than any other person synonymously linked with progressive American education. Maria Montessori, on the other hand, while spending much of her career in the Roman slums, certainly has become well-known in America through the adoption of her methods in many early childhood "Montessori" schools. Although A. S. Neill has only been recently noted, his work at Summerhill may prove to be the most eloquent and powerful testimony to student freedom during this century.

Dr. Montessori cast the role of the teacher in the direction of a "non-teacher" or directress. Rambusch tells us that Montessori felt the foremost message a child gave to the teacher was, "Help me to do it myself." The directress or "non-teacher" was to use observation as her primary teaching tool. Montessori stated:

When you are in a Casa dei Bambini to observe the children, you are working and laboring to learn something which I do not give, which an assistant does not give, which no one else gives. If you do not possess this capacity, this sensitivity which permits your learning the intimate facts which the children reveal without warning anyone as to which is an important thing or which is worthy of claiming attention, then this sensitivity, this capacity of observation is the labor you must accomplish in yourselves. . . .

You well know that the teacher in our method is more of an observer than a teacher, therefore this is what the teacher must know, how to observe.26

Her methods were child-centered, and she believed, as Pestalozzi and Froebel, that children must learn through their own senses. Sense awareness nurtures the uniqueness of the individual, and she believed that "sensory education" could only be accomplished through liberty for the pupil. She wrote:

We must not, therefore, suffocate the spontaneous actions of the child: these are the manifestations of individuality and if we stifle them we do irreparable harm to the child's development. Educational acts should help the unfolding of the child's unique life. To help in this process it is necessary rigorously to avoid the arrest of spontaneous movements and the imposition of arbitrary tasks.27

Elsewhere she stated, "It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience."28


28 Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, op. cit., p. 131.
However, Montessori did differentiate between acts which could be harmful to the pupil or other pupils, and those acts which were creative. "The freedom of the child," she pointed out, "should have as its limit the collective interest." She also distinguished between acts of disorder which are bad, and that which is orderly and good. It was in this sense, that Montessori blended freedom for the child with the organization of work.

Although Montessori was not generally regarded as part of the American progressive movement, her ideas about freedom for the student were the same as those being advanced by the progressives. The case for student freedom during the progressive years was becoming extensive, and the man who best championed the progressive cause for freedom was John Dewey. Dewey, more than any other American educator, clarified and expanded the "natural education" of Rousseau, the concrete to abstract of Pestalozzi, the compassion and humaneness of Froebel, and the non-interference of Montessori. It should be noted that Dewey wrote critically, although not negatively, concerning the work of all of these educators.


30 Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, op. cit., p. 187.

Dewey's writings were voluminous, his intellectual pursuits immense, and his career long; however, his position changed very little over the years. His open-ended view of education has alternatively been considered as too permissive, too anti-intellectual, or too demanding. It might be that Dewey himself contributed to these misunderstandings because of his sometimes unclear style, and due to his exhaustive study of all sides of a problem. Much of the misunderstanding is also due to the close association of his name with the progressive movement which itself was manifested in a great many dissimilar practices. Dewey's Experience and Education is a critical analysis of the aimless wanderings of the progressive educators who often took what they desired of Dewey, and attached his name to endeavors which clearly did not satisfy the man himself.


See also: Boyd H. Bode, Progressive Education at the Crossroads (New York: Nelson and Company, 1938). Bode, who was also a leading progressive, nevertheless criticized the movement which he said was a revolt against adult domination, but failed to provide a well-thought-out program of alternatives.
In *Schools of Tomorrow*, Dewey and his daughter, Evelyn, set forth reasons for pupil freedom within education. They wrote:

If education demands liberty before it can shape itself according to facts, how is it to use this liberty for the benefit of the child? Give a child freedom to find out what he can and can not do, both in the way of what is physically possible and what his neighbours will stand for, and he will not waste much time on impossibilities but will bend his energies to the possibilities. The physical energy and mental inquisitiveness of children can be turned into positive channels. . . . Besides preserving qualities which will be of use to the man and developing habits of independence and industry, allowing the child this freedom is necessary if pupils really are to learn by doing.34

We can see an indication in the above, that Dewey considered responsibility a necessary parallel for freedom. It is in this parallel that he delineated two senses of freedom and responsibility: the negative or external, and the positive or internal.35 Responsibility is a liability in the external sense because the individual has to account for his actions to others; however, this does lead to positive inner responsibility because one who is sympathetic and reasonable recognizes the justice


of community interests. In the same sense, the external freedom is negative because it emphasizes the aspect of freedom from control and servitude; on the other hand, in the positive sense inner freedom is the freedom to do, to be effective with one's own resources and mental equipment. In a later writing he pointed out the relationship between inner freedom and self-control.

The alternative to externally imposed inhibition is inhibition through an individual's own reflection and judgment. The old phase "stop and think" is sound psychology. For thinking is stoppage of the immediate manifestation of impulse until that impulse has been brought into connection with other possible tendencies to action so that a more comprehensive and coherent plan is formed. . . . Thinking is thus a postponement of immediate action, while it effects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being the heart of reflection. What has been said explains the meaning of the well-worn phrase "self-control." The ideal aim of education is creation of power and of self-control.36

Dewey's freedom is heavily demanding of the individual to act in ways consistent with the ever better society. But he felt the rudiments for self-control came within the child and he castigated the traditional school which stood for the teacher as an agent of repression. Dewey would probably be happy in today's open or free school. He enjoyed the activity of a progressive

classroom and likened it to a busy workshop. No external control is necessary if the child is interested in his task and moved around the room to accomplish his work.\textsuperscript{37}

We see again how important play and physical movement are to freedom for the child.

But because these are the mental phase of behavior, needed play of individuality—or freedom—cannot be separated from opportunity for free play of physical movements. Enforced physical quietude may be unfavorable to realization of a problem, to undertaking the observations needed to define it, and to performance of the experiments which test the ideas suggested. Much has been said about the importance of 'self-activity' in education, but the conception has too frequently been restricted to something merely internal—something excluding the free use of sensory and motor organs.\textsuperscript{38}

However, Dewey warned against accepting the freedom of physical activity as the most desirable freedom. Indeed, he stated, "The only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth while."\textsuperscript{39} Again, we see the parallel Dewey created between the external

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 72.


\textsuperscript{39}Dewey, \textit{Experience and Education, op. cit.}, p. 69.
and internal aspects of freedom. It might be said that freedom for physical activity is a necessary condition for freedom of intelligence, but of itself not a sufficient condition.

Dewey considered the classroom a community with all the components found in a democratic society. If this is true, then it is necessary to create an environment based upon democratic principles, and not just teach about these ideas which would then be used at a later time in life. Nash tells us that Dewey was opposed to any extreme in authority or freedom, but saw a need for a positive relationship of the two through the scientific method.  

A. S. Neill would probably not agree that authority needs to be considered in relation to a child's freedom. No other educator has institutionalized the ideas of freedom for the student with such astonishing results. The freedom of Summerhill has become more absolute. His often quoted statement, "freedom without license," does qualify the limits of student freedom, but not with an appeal to adult authority. As his book indicates, the school is a radical approach to child rearing.

At Summerhill, freedom is not diminished by the

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40 Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
overt or covert control of adults, but the children see their freedom affiliated with the self-government of the school. He points out, "You cannot have freedom unless children feel completely free to govern their own social life. When there is a boss, there is no real freedom. This applies even more to the benevolent boss than to the disciplinarian."  

Children are not made to feel guilty by any physical or mental coercion, but are free to grow and experience education without fear. With the elimination of these negative means of control, the children of Summerhill are free to pursue their own interest which is equated by Neill to the true aim of education—happiness. "The aim of life is happiness. The evil of life is all that limits or destroys happiness. Happiness always means goodness; unhappiness at its extreme limits means Jew-baiting, minority torture, or war."  

A sixteen-year old, Josh Popenor, writes an interesting account of his experiences as a student at Summerhill. The young writer manifests an ease of expression which Neill claims to be an attribute of all Summerhillians. A distinction Popenor offers for a proper

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42 Ibid., p. 111.
perspective on freedom includes the desirability of having a preponderance of older students for the maintenance of good self-government. This concurs with Neill's interpretation of the "gangster age" and upholds his notion that self-government seems most successful after the student reaches the age of twelve. One wonders when our public schools deem the children ready for self-government. The typical student council seems to be a travesty when compared to the equal-say and equal-vote status of children and adults found at Summerhill.

The "freedom without license" concept which conveys the essence of Neill's work denotes that the freedom of the child is in relation to the freedom of others. "Freedom means doing what you like," he writes, "as long as you don't interfere with the freedom of others. The result is self-discipline." He clearly indicates that this also means that the child is no more to infringe on the rights of adults, than the adult on the child. "In the disciplined home, the children have no rights. In the spoiled home, they have all the rights. The proper


44 Neill, op. cit., p. 52.

home is one in which children and adults have equal rights. And the same applies to school. "46

This distinction is seen by this researcher to be lacking in some of the writings of our more radical critics of today. While abhorring present pedagogical practices, they somehow feel the complete absence of any responsibilities to peers or adults will result in children choosing pathways to responsible decisions. For forty years Neill has had the courage and commitment to work with the exchange of freedom between adult and child at Summerhill.

**Existentialism**

In reviewing the literature of freedom, the work of the existentialists and its implications for education must be considered. As a major philosophical movement of the twentieth century, existentialism has contributed a substantial force to the ideas of man's freedom. Indeed, the existentialist's philosophy is predicated on the concept that man is free—free from all the constraints that other philosophies and conventional religions would place on him. Jean-Paul Sartre has written:

The existentialist... thinks it is very distressing that God does not exist, because all

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46Ibid., p. 107.
possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him; there can no longer be any a priori Good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. Nowhere is it written that the Good exists, that we must be honest, that we must not lie; because the fact is we are on a plane where there are only men. Dostoevsky said, 'If God didn't exist, everything would be possible.' That is the very starting point of existentialism. Indeed, everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to. He can't start making excuses for himself.47

Implicit in this is man's freedom of choice. Man must choose, for even in not choosing he is making his choices. Morris has pointed out that in choosing, man brings values into his life. "I discover that I am the originator, the inventor, the creator of values. And the oddness of my position is that I cannot help it; I cannot escape being the creator of values, for I cannot escape choosing in the world."48

With this frame of reference, some existentialists would seek an education for the child consisting of reflective and subjective experiences. Education is viewed


as a process of inner-stimulation for the student. "Any program of instruction..." writes Morris, "will navigate by the proposition that the child must somehow learn to feel his freedom and responsibility in the most personal terms." 49

This is where the existential position differs from the progressives. Instead of using the scientific method or method of intelligence as the basis for choice making, the existentialist would appeal to the more mystical aspects or subjective feelings of the human mind. Furthermore, responsibility for one's choices is a matter of personal reference; that is, how one chooses to live his own life. Responsibility referenced to group norms is not seen as leading to authenticity. This does not mean, however, that an existential education would emphasize a hedonistic type of choice making. On the contrary, we ascribe moral responsibility to ourselves and others because of our freedom; ethical judgments depend upon our knowledge of the existence of freedom in our lives.

**Present Day Advocates**

The present day critics of American education have described the average school and classroom as a life of

boredom, emptiness, brutality, stupidity, mindlessness, and sheer waste for the pupil. What choices does the student have concerning the important aspects of his educational life in the average school? The critics' answer is very little.

Philip Jackson observed elementary classrooms for one year and found that a good deal of the pupil's time was spent in coping with the predetermined structure of the institution. He saw the characteristics of classroom life grouped into three areas: (1) the student must learn how to live with a crowd; (2) the student must deal with the praise (or lack of it) of the teacher; and (3) the student must be able to recognize the power of the teacher. The limitations and constraints placed on the child by this "hidden curriculum" are multiple, and soon the student learns to withdraw and insulate himself in order to conform to the system.

Kozol and Kohl, in their brief teaching careers, found and depicted the hopelessness that many

50 Jackson, op. cit., p. 10.
51 Ibid., pp. 33-37.
evolved, as Herndon's work did, from his experiences with the children. Richardson's students learned to express themselves in art, design, and poetry. Freedom resulted from the willingness of the teacher to stand back while the students explored and chose their own means for expression. 55

These teachers along with other educators and parents, who are interested in freedom for the student, have been responsible for a recent remarkable growth in the "free school" movement. 56 These alternative schools have helped to give cause for a re-evaluation of the conventional schools of today. 57 The enthusiasm of a small number of participants working in close harmony is worth studying as our elementary schools reach such large numbers as eight hundred to a thousand pupils. It may be that such a large population works against student freedom and the responsible feeling that everyone is a vital and worthwhile part of the community.


56 Satu Repo, ed., *This Book Is About Schools* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1973), cites a number of articles about free schools from the periodical, *This Magazine Is About Schools.*

57 One might note that this re-evaluation seems to be taking two major approaches: (1) a deterministic viewpoint of accountability projects stressing behavioral objectives; and (2) the indeterminist point of view of the free or open classroom stressing wide pupil choice and
To be of widespread use, practical systems of student freedom have to be devised and applied. Fischer emphasized this when reviewing the educational reforms of the 1960's. He feels that the past decade was a time of little actual alteration in the schools, but did provide beneficial pressure on the system to the point where real reforms are now eminent. The experimental free schools and isolated occasions of successful classrooms foster-freedom for the student are not enough to benefit the whole educational system.

Silberman's massive study reiterates this same point when he charged that public schools are failing not only city children, but students in the suburban and small towns as well. "It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public-school classrooms," Silberman wrote, "without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere—mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of


Although Silberman's study cited many instances of the "mindlessness" of American schools, he also indicated the way toward reform by examining such schools as John Adams High School in Portland, Oregon, the Philadelphia Parkway Project, and the British Infant School Model which is being tried in many communities in the United States. Along with other suggestions for the improvement of our educational system, Silberman offers the above-cited schools as models to emulate because of their atmosphere of student freedom within a structure. "Freedom and structure are perfectly compatible," Silberman points out. "There can be, and indeed are, schools in which students have considerable freedom to set their own goals and follow their own interests without the teachers in any way surrendering their responsibilities to set external goals of their own." 61

The contemporary movement of freedom for the student in the elementary years can best be exemplified by the emphasis in the United States on adaptations of the British Infant School Model. The model has been evolving in England over the past fifty years, and has

60 Ibid., p. 10.

61 Ibid., p. 199.
received much support including the prestigious Plowden Report.62 The extensive literature on the British Infant School appeals for student freedom, and includes documentation of its implementation to the class and school.63 Continuous progress had been possible because of the reciprocal developmental work of teachers, psychologists, philosophers, and researchers whose applications further strengthen the approach that the "individual child is allowed choice and opportunity of following his own interest."64 It is this type of scientific support that is needed to serve the development of more open classrooms in the United States.

Brown and Precious point out that daily freedom in the classroom is a reality because the teachers do not intervene too frequently with the learning of the pupil.65 The child is given the freedom to choose the things with which he wants to become involved, and this can be


63 See Charlotte Huck and Martha King, "Bibliographies in Reading—The British Primary School" (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1970), mimeographed.


65 Ibid., p. 39.
achieved more easily where there is no parcelling out of time or directing of groups of children to different activities. The teacher is in the role of the much used term "facilitator." Shiller speaks of the importance of the atmosphere of freedom:

The most important part is the climate of thought and feeling created by those adults in whose care the children are. It is a climate which gives guidance and at the same time opportunity for choice, in which learning does not mean beating your neighbour or gaining ticks, but is a cooperative venture of all concerned.\textsuperscript{66}

When the child is free to choose, the climate is conducive to cooperation, and the child will become a meaningful part of his community with all the responsibilities which accompany his freedom. Ridgway and Lawton point out, "This springs from a noble educational ancestry from Plato, through Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Dewey, Montessori and others whose views have intermarried with those of other philosophers and educationalists of insight and experience: it reflects the high aspiration of most Infants' teachers—to give opportunity for the best possible growth to every child."\textsuperscript{67}


\textsuperscript{67}Ridgway and Lawton, op. cit., p. 23.
While the British Model has been spreading widely in England since World War II, the introduction of the Model into the United States has only taken place in the past five years. It has been started in the rural schools of Vermont and North Dakota, and in the inner city areas of Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Boston, and New York. At this time, the most wide-spread systematic adoption of the British Model is being attempted under the auspices of the New School of Behavioral Sciences at the University of North Dakota.

When reviewing the American applications of the British Model and the free school movement, the term which seems most encompassing is the open classroom. Beatrice and Ronald Gross describe the approach of the open classroom. "The term refers to a new approach to teaching that discards the familiar roles of teacher and pupil, for a far freer, highly individualized, child-centered learning experience that may hold the key to a radical reformation of primary education."
Observational Methods

As education or, perhaps, schooling evolved as a science, efforts were made to define standards of excellence and to further measure components of the complex whole of the process. Observational methods were devised as one means to do this.

Early observational attempts often contained unclear objectives, but as the research becomes more sophisticated, particular components of the classroom were observed. Morrison's studies of student behavior exemplifies a more defined approach. He focused on the "attention behavior" of the students to measure the "holding power" (effectiveness) of the teacher.71

The reason for narrowing the scope for a single study is obvious. Any visitor to the classroom soon discovers that the teacher and pupils are engaged in a profusion of activities. To make sense out of this complex scene, one has to focus on that particular aspect of classroom life which he hopes to further explain and advance through selective observation. This section of Chapter II will review the literature of past observa-

The first observational studies of a comprehensive nature were undertaken by Anderson and others during the late thirties and early forties. Emphasizing the major rubrics of dominative and socially integrative behavior, Anderson and Brewer developed 26 teacher behavior categories and 29 student behavior categories by which both the teacher and student verbal and nonverbal behavior might be viewed.72

In general, the studies pointed out that the teacher is the single most influential agent in setting the classroom climate and that the climate set by the teacher in relation to domination or social integration tended to influence the children's behavior. That is, the children's behaviors were more open and spontaneous with an integrative teacher, and more distracting and non-cooperative with a dominative teacher.73 These findings set the trend for many succeeding observational studies.


73 Harold H. Anderson, Joseph E. Brewer, and Mary Reed, Studies of Teachers' Classroom Personalities, III (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1946), pp. 96-100.
concerning the classroom climate.

Definitions developed by Anderson concerning dominative and socially integrative behavior have significant relationship to freedom and control in the classroom.

Behavior is said to be dominative when it is characterized by rigidity or inflexibility of purpose, by an inability or unwillingness to admit the contribution of another's experience, desires, purposes, or judgment in the determining of goals which concern others. ... In domination one attempts to make others behave according to one's own standards or purposes. Domination may, therefore, be regarded also as the frustration of the behaviors of someone else. As such it tends to obstruct the spontaneous behavior of another. Domination is the antithesis of scientific attitude; it is an expression of resistance against change; it is consistent with bigotry and with autocracy. It is the technique of a dictatorship.74

In opposition to dominative behavior, Anderson views socially integrative behavior in terms more in harmony with the ideas of freedom.

Integrative behavior is also consistent with concepts of growth and learning. It makes allowance in one's own behavior for differences in others. Whereas domination stifles or frustrates individual differences, socially integrative behavior promotes the interplay of differences, advances the psychological processes of differentiation, facilitates the emergence of originals. Integrative behavior is flexible, adaptive,

objective, scientific, cooperative. It is an expression of the operation of democratic processes.75

It is apparent from these definitions that Anderson's ideas of domination and social integration were compatible with those of Dewey. In both Democracy and Education and Experience and Education, Dewey writes of individual freedom within the context of social responsibility. When Anderson states, "The psychological assumptions were that the child 'learns' less arithmetic if father does all his problems for him, and he grows less in other respects to the extent that the teacher decides what is to be done and how and when to do it";76 his words parallel those of Dewey. "Any experience is miseducative," Dewey pointed out, "that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of future experience."77

Although Anderson's studies were largely descriptive of the classroom atmosphere, he also made evaluative claims within them as evidenced by the above quote. He also states in the general summary "... the more dominating teacher was again a year later more dominating... that the teacher's undesirable personality patterns

75Ibid., pp. 9-10.
76Anderson, Study I, op. cit., p. 22.
77Dewey, Experience and Education, op. cit., p. 22.
persisted with the new group of children the following year.*78

Anderson's work has been the most influential force on the direction and development of later research in observational methods. After Anderson, Withall, Flanders, and Joyce developed observational methods based upon the dichotomy of socially integrative and dominative behavior.

Withall, drawing from both Anderson's classroom studies and Lippitt's group reaction research, described the social-emotional climate in the classroom by developing a climate index. The index only contains categories for teacher behavior which is polarized along a teacher-centered to pupil-centered dimension. His categories were:

1. **Learner-supportive statements** that have the intent of reassuring or commending the pupil.

2. **Acceptant and clarifying statements** having an intent to convey to the pupil the feeling that he was understood and help him elucidate his ideas and feelings.

3. **Problem-structuring statements or questions** which proxer information or raise questions about the problem in an objective manner with intent to facilitate learner's problem-solving.

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4. Neutral statements which comprise polite formalities, administrative comments, verbatim repetition of something that has already been said. No intent inferable.

5. Directive or hortative statements with intent to have pupil follow a recommended course of action.

6. Reproving or deprecating remarks intended to deter pupil from continued indulgence in present 'unacceptable' behavior.

7. Teacher self-supporting remarks intended to sustain or justify the teacher's position or course of action.\footnote{Withall admits that more than one continuum could be identified beyond applying categories one, two, and three to learner-centeredness and five, six, and seven to teacher-centeredness. It seems logical, therefore, that the learner-centered categories would be more indicative of student freedom than the teacher-centered categories. Although it should be noted that aspects of teacher control are in evidence at both ends of the continuum, categories one, two, and three by their accepting nature, encourage more student participation, and one could infer that student freedom is more likely to exist in that climate.}


\footnote{Ibid., p. 350.}
Using some of the assumptions developed by Anderson and Withall, Flanders has developed what is probably the most manageable and widely used observational method for viewing the social-emotional climate of a classroom. Emphasizing teacher verbal behavior, and taking into account the student verbal responses, Flanders devised a ten category system to analyze the interaction of the classroom. He developed a sophisticated matrix technique for recording the observations into a sequence. The sequence allows the researcher to see what precedes and follows each behavior of the teacher and student.

Flanders used the dichotomy of indirect and direct teacher influence in developing seven categories and added two other categories to reflect the students' responses to teacher influence. The ten categories of the Flanders system are:

**Indirect Influence**

1. Accepts Feelings
2. Praises or Encourages
3. Accepts or Uses Ideas of Student
4. Asks Questions

**Direct Influence**

5. Lecturing

6. Giving Directions
7. Criticizing or Justifying Authority

Student Talk

8. Student Talk - Response
9. Student Talk - Initiation

 Silence

10. Silence or Confusion

Flanders made a conceptual connection between the direct and indirect influence of the teacher and student freedom of action. He stated, "... we hope the reader will understand that an act of direct influence restricts freedom of action, usually by focusing on a problem, and in this case, it made the student more dependent on the teacher influence..." He also pointed out that "... we hope it will become clear that an act of indirect influence expands freedom of action and usually makes a student less dependent upon the teacher."  

Initially Flanders did not value indirect influence more than direct influence, but tended to support some kind of balance of direct and indirect influence as being desirable. Later research, however, tends to support the

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82 Ibid., p. 20.
83 Ibid., p. 8.
84 Ibid., p. 9.
fact that indirect influence has the greater effect on pupil learning. "The results are similar in both field and experimental studies. In general, the more the teacher accepts and encourages pupils in contrast to directing or criticizing them, the more pupils seem to learn and the better they like it."85

Many researchers used and modified Flanders' Interaction Analysis System to obtain their own particular assessment of the classroom. Amidon's Modified Category System and Verbal Interaction Category System, Honigman's System of Interaction Analysis, Hough's Observational System for the Analysis of Instruction, and Moskowitz's Foreign Language Interaction System are cited as observational systems based on the prior work of Flanders.86 Although studies based on these systems have no direct bearing on the search for student freedom, they do further the study of student participation within the classroom.

Galloway's investigation into nonverbal communication in the classroom added another dimension to viewing the complexities of the teacher-pupil relationship. In his


86 Ibid.
conceptual model of teacher behavior, he used a continuum of encouraging to restricting interaction of the student. To emphasize this continuum, it is presented in the altered form below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Initiated</th>
<th>Encouraging</th>
<th>Restricting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congruity</td>
<td>Incongruity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectivity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Affectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inattentive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Response</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has been previously noted that the Flander's studies show that the encouraging verbal behavior of the teacher results in a more pleasant learning environment for the pupil. Galloway's work further stipulates that the affective environment is influenced by many behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal.

French and Galloway later developed a system of teacher-pupil nonverbal categories which could be used simultaneously with the Flanders Interaction Analysis System. Their system further qualifies the categories of

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Flanders in terms of the encouraging-restricting interaction continuum. One might visualize the social-emotional climate of the classroom utilizing the Flanders System as qualified by French and Galloway as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Indirect Influence</th>
<th>Nonverbal Encouraging</th>
<th>Nonverbal Restricting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greater indirect influence</td>
<td>Lesser indirect influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lesser direct influence</td>
<td>Greater direct influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essentially the French and Galloway System allows one to qualify the aspect of student freedom within the classroom. If one accepts Flanders' assumption that verbal indirect teacher influence is equated with student freedom, then that indirect influence (and student freedom) may be observed to be greater or lesser according to the encouraging or restricting nonverbal behaviors which accompany the verbalisms of the teacher. Conversely, if direct verbal influence restricts student freedom, then that direct influence may be observed to be lesser or

greater according to the teacher's encouraging or restricting nonverbal behaviors.\textsuperscript{89}

Instead of focusing on the classroom climate as the previously cited research has done, Hughes and associates have studied the functions of the teacher in the classroom in order to develop a model of good teaching. The seven major categories of teacher functions which she delineated were: (1) controlling behaviors; (2) imposing behaviors; (3) facilitating behaviors; (4) content developing behaviors; (5) personal response behaviors; (6) positive affectivity behaviors; and (7) negative affectivity behaviors.\textsuperscript{90} Some of her premises supported the idea that while there is a superior-subordinate relationship between the teacher and students, good teaching minimized the desire and urgency for teacher domination. Pertinent in her proposals for good teaching were the following:

3. The good teacher recognizes his status and acts to ameliorate, rather than to maximize his power.

\textsuperscript{89}Lail develops these qualifying aspects of encouraging-restricting nonverbal behaviors into a revised Flanders ID ratio. Sue S. Lail, "The Model in Use," \textit{Theory into Practice}, VII (December, 1968), p. 178.

\textsuperscript{90}Marie M. Hughes, et al., \textit{A Research Report: Development of the Means for the Assessment of the Quality of Teaching in Elementary Schools}, U. S. Office of Education Cooperative Research Project 353 (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah, 1959).
6. The good teacher understands himself and his needs, and does not exploit his power over the children.

8. The good teacher provides pupils opportunities for making choices and for using a wide range of mental processes.

9. The good teacher recognizes that children need opportunity to practice initiative as they work at their own problems of learning and growing.91

In a further development of the Hughes system, Miller has studied the aspect of the pupils' attempts to set procedures and standards for their own learning. "The category system has an affective dimension, which looks at how the teacher responds to pupils' attempts to develop the content and a social order dimension which looks at how the teacher reacts to the class' attempts to set and maintain expectations, decision-making procedures, and so forth."92 Observational categories for this system are placed on a continuum of directive to responsive which is indicative for the functions of setting the stage for learning, developing content, giving information to the class, appraising pupils, and maintaining social order.

Again, only the behavior of the teacher is observed, and she is viewed in the superior role. The Miller-Hughes System, however, demonstrates their concern for the manner


92Simon and Boyer, op. cit., p. 3-Miller.
in which the teacher operates within the group, and that the superior role was best used in subtle ways. Emphasis on good teaching was placed on the need to develop ways for the student to have some say about his educational life. A step beyond this reasoning would be for the teacher to relinquish her duty as the sole director of student goals, and for the student to become the dominant force in choosing his goals.

Summary

Chapter II has reviewed literature which supports freedom of choice for the student. The reasons for student choice-making as an integral part of the curriculum are apparent. In order to develop responsible persons who can help create a better society rather than submit passively to pre-set rules, freedom of choice for the student is essential. The history of student freedom goes back to Rousseau, and continues to develop through the ideas of Montessori, Dewey, and the present day critics of education. These educators all believed that man is essentially good, and will choose well, if given freedom. A better society can be built, not by knowledge alone, but by responsible choice as to the best use of that knowledge. Schools have much more to offer the young student than just imparting basic knowledge. The teacher can begin a
process that will see the student through the years beyond the classroom— that process is choice-making.

The observational studies reviewed in Chapter II which focused on the classroom climate are one means to clarify the concept of student freedom. Anderson, Withall, and Flanders all indirectly observed the climate for student freedom within the classroom. The complex structure of the classroom fosters many kinds of attitudes and ideas. Until the possibilities of choice are analyzed within this complex structure, freedom of choice for the student will remain a nebulous goal.

Chapters III and IV will describe the efforts of this study to analyze and observe aspects of freedom of choice for the student.
CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES

If students are taught in a classroom which intentionally and primarily honors freedom of choice for the students, will their behavior differ from that of students who are taught in a classroom where student freedom of choice is not allowed? In order to answer this question, one must first devise a means of observing student behavior in relation to choice making. This study represents an attempt to develop such a means. Chapter III outlines the procedures used for this development.

A fluid enquiry approach has been employed as the basic guide or pattern for this study. Schwab identifies three major factors involved in fluid enquiry: (1) "whether the subject will speak to the problem as posed," (2) "whether the data required can be elicited with the necessary accuracy," and (3) "whether data will be found for which the terms of enquiry cannot give an account."\(^1\) He states, "In the test of principles, . . . the duration of the enquiry is indefinite; what will constitute the

\(^1\) Schwab, op. cit., p. 21.
significant data is unknown; the outlines of a satisfactory outcome are vague and invisible."\(^2\) The relationship of freedom of choice and observing choice-making behavior calls for such an approach.

The procedures for this investigation under this approach are divided into two major parts: the development of a conceptual framework concerning freedom of choice, and the systematic observation of student classroom behavior in its relation to freedom of choice. The results of these two procedures are related in the consideration of furthering the observation of student freedom of choice in differing classroom climates.

**Conceptual Procedures**

The review of the related literature served as a beginning of the process to develop a conceptual framework concerning the observation of student freedom of choice. The historical-philosophical related literature showed strong support for the desirability of student freedom in the school and classroom, while the observational studies reviewed indicated that researchers were generally interested in promoting more student participation (freedom) in the classroom.

\(^2\)Ibid.
With the desirability of student freedom well grounded in the literature, it was then necessary to conceptually analyze freedom of choice and the actual process of choice-making. Here, other authorities, as well as those reviewed in Chapter II, were relied upon to help clarify the concept of freedom of choice as it operates in the classroom, and to help develop criteria for observing student choice-making behaviors. This conceptual analysis with the resulting conceptual framework for observing freedom of choice in the classroom is found in the first part of Chapter IV. The authorities, mentioned above, are introduced at this time because they have considered freedom and freedom of choice in a conceptual manner, and did not necessarily speak as proponents of student freedom.

**Classroom Observation Procedures**

This part of Chapter III describes the procedures employed for observing students in two primary classrooms. The observations were used to test possibilities of viewing student freedom of choice in the classroom setting. The writer proposed that some degree of choice-making behavior, and therefore, freedom of choice could be observed. The observations were directed toward not only finding what overt behaviors might be found, but to further
qualify these behaviors as to pupil choice or teacher-institution controlled.3

A systematic form of observation was used to view the overt behavior of the pupils as they engaged in the activities within the classroom. To find what pupil behaviors or types of behaviors might be found in a "typical" classroom, two main sources were consulted. First, primary teachers were asked for suggestions. Secondly, the categorical headings of Anderson and Brewer were reviewed.4 Teacher suggestions and some relevant Anderson and Brewer categories were then revised and incorporated into systematic observational forms. These forms appear in Figures 1 and 2.

The system used for collecting data in the classroom adhered to the principles of behavior observation set forth by Hayman5 and Kerlinger.6 Since all behaviors cannot be recorded, sample behaviors were taken following one individual pupil during each observational period.7 A combina-

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3The meaning of these terms as used in this study will be found in the definition of terms, Chapter I.

4Anderson and Brewer, Study II, op. cit., pp. 22-30.

5Hayman, op. cit.

6Kerlinger, op. cit.

7Ibid., p. 504.
## Twenty Minute Observation Form

**Pupil:**  
**Date:**  
**Observer:**  

### CODE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Movement In and Around Seat</td>
<td>WLTT</td>
<td>Watches and/or Listens and/or Talks with Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Movement In and Around Room</td>
<td>PhyP</td>
<td>Physical Contact with Another Pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOut</td>
<td>Moves Out of Room</td>
<td>PhyT</td>
<td>Physical Contact with Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GatM</td>
<td>Gathers or Returns Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WkT</td>
<td>Works on Task</td>
<td>RH</td>
<td>Raises Hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLTP</td>
<td>Watches and/or Listens and/or Talks with Another Pupil</td>
<td>HabUn</td>
<td>Habit or Unconscious Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Performs Maintenance Task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STUDENT CHOICE | TEACHER-INSTITUTION CONTROL

Code marked at every change in the student's behavior

---

20 min.

---

**Notes:**

---

**Figure 1**  
Twenty Minute Observation Form
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Observer:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CODE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Movement In and Around Seat</td>
<td>WLTT - Watches and/or Listens and/or Talks with Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Movement In and Around Room</td>
<td>PhyP - Physical Contact with Another Pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOut</td>
<td>Moves Out of Room</td>
<td>PhyT - Physical Contact with Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GatM</td>
<td>Gathers or Returns Materials</td>
<td>RH - Raises Hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WcT</td>
<td>Works on Task</td>
<td>HabUn - Habit or Unconscious Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLTP</td>
<td>Watches and/or Listens and/or Talks with Another Pupil</td>
<td>PM - Performs Maintenance Task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT CHOICE</th>
<th>TEACHER-INSTITUTION CONTROL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code marked at every change in the student's behavior.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2**

Three Minute Observation Form
ation of event and time sampling of behavior was the most useful for this study.

Kerlinger states:

Event sampling is the selection for observation of integral behavioral occurrences or events of a given class. . . . Time sampling is the selection of behavioral units for observation at different points in time.8

Kerlinger goes on to list the merits of event sampling as natural and life-like continuous behaviors. Although both of these methods may be used independently, Kerlinger explains drawbacks of each sampling and suggests:

Time samples, as implied earlier, suffer from lack of continuity, lack of adequate context and perhaps naturalness. This is particularly true when small units of time and behavior are used. Still there is no reason why event sampling and time sampling cannot be used together.9

For purposes of observing choice-making behavior, both of the above suggestions were incorporated into the method. Individual students were observed for rather long periods (twenty minutes) to capture a natural and more complete picture of their behavior, and later, three minute observations of every pupil in the class were obtained to gain a more complete picture of student choice within that classroom. In addition, a list of behavioral events to be observed were used to give a more systematic dimension to the observation period.


9Ibid., p. 513.
### The Categories

The twelve categories used in the classroom observations are listed below. Each category contains an overt behavior; the code used for that behavior as listed on the observational form; the dichotomous terms, Student-Choice and Teacher-Institutional Control; examples or model cases of behavior found under these two terms; and notes of where needed.

1. **MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND SEAT**
   - **Code:** MS

   **Student Choice**
   - Pupil chooses the position to attend to something such as pupil stands to draw a picture. Puts head down for quick rest. Kneels to write.

   **Teacher-Institution Control**
   - Teacher indicates how a child uses his seat by establishing correct posture. Sit up straight to write. "John, sit quietly." "Stay in your seats."

2. **MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND ROOM**
   - **Code:** MR

   **Student Choice**
   - Pupil moves to some other area of the room on his own such as walking over to the easel to paint.

   **Teacher-Institution Control**
   - Child moves only as allowed or directed by teacher. "John, you may go to the easel and paint." "Come to reading circle." "Line up for lunch."

**Note:** Movement contained to room area only.
(3) MOVES OUT OF ROOM
Code: MOut

**Student Choice**
Pupil leaves room without asking permission or signaling teacher.

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Pre-scheduled events such as gym time, music period, lunch time, or teacher informs child he may leave for restroom, lunch, or other places.

**Note:** Only completely free movement out of the room on the part of the pupil is considered student choice.

(4) GATHERS OR RETURNS MATERIALS
Code: GatM

**Student Choice**
Pupil selects, gathers, or returns materials as necessary for a project of his own choosing. John is making a model of a truck and chooses paints and cardboard. Pupil picks up book to look at or read.

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Teacher requests the pupil to take paper and paints for an art project. Teacher tells John to use only cardboard and paint for his model. Tells pupils it is time to put materials away so they can do something else.

**Note:** Student choice if pupil gathers things when he needs them and/or puts them away when he is through with project.

(5) WORKS ON TASK
Code: Wks T

**Student Choice**
Continues (uninterrupted by teacher or music or gym period) work such as a game, book, picture, math puzzle that was originally initiated by pupil. Continues to read book to self.

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Continues to work on teacher requested activity such as finishing three math pages before recess. "Do all the problems on page six." "Paint a picture." Reading circle.
### (6) WATCHES, AND/OR LISTENS, AND/OR TALKS WITH ANOTHER PUPIL

**Code:** WLTP

#### Student Choice
- Pupil watches another pupil paint and is interested in it. Watches a group play outside window. Two or more pupils discuss something of interest to them.

#### Teacher-Institution Control
- Teacher asks child to watch another pupil. "Watch John make a capital Y on the blackboard." Expects pupil to watch as John writes on blackboard. Teacher requests pupil to listen as John talks. Teacher requests pupil to answer John's question. "Tell John what 2+2 equals."

**Note:** Any of these behaviors may be used alone such as student watches another pupil or group of pupils.

### (7) WATCHES, AND/OR LISTENS, AND/OR TALKS WITH TEACHER

**Code:** WLTT

#### Student Choice:
- Pupil chooses to watch teacher activity and seems to show interest. Pupil listens to teacher as she talks to others. Pupil volunteers story or idea to teacher. "Look at the red leaves." "Please draw me a straight line."

#### Teacher-Institution Control
- Teacher asks pupil to watch her write a sentence on the blackboard. Teacher expects pupil to listen to a story about farm animals. Teacher asks question or initiates talk such as "What color is this leaf?"

**Note:** Any student answer to the teacher's question is considered teacher control when there is only one acceptable answer or answers.
(8) **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PUPIL**  
Code: PhyP

**Student Choice**
John throws arm around Bill. Pupil jostles another pupil. Pats another pupil on back.

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Requests pupils to hold hands in a circle. Tells pupil to keep hands to himself.

(9) **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH TEACHER**  
Code: PhyT

**Student Choice**
John sits very close to, hugs or pats teacher.

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Teacher restrains child with hand on arm.

(10) **PERFORMS MAINTENANCE TASK IN THE ROOM**  
Code: PMain

**Student Choice**
Pupil puts chairs in order. Pupil cleans gerbil cage without directions.

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Teacher says, "John, put the chairs in order." "It's time to clean the gerbil cage." "Clean up."

*Note: Student choice if pupil seems to do maintenance task to gain some order for his own satisfaction.*

(11) **RAISES HAND**  
Code: RH

**Student Choice**

**Teacher-Institution Control**
Understood by pupil as a means to gain recognition, or teacher says, "Raise your hands please."

*Note: At no time does the pupil have a free choice in this matter. It is an institutional signal.*
**HABIT OR UNCONSCIOUS BEHAVIOR**

**Code:** HabUn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nervous habit such as sucks fingers, twists hair, or unconscious behavior, such as randomly gazing about room or swinging foot.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** No direct teacher involvement, but nervous habit might increase with teacher pressure, such as "You must finish all your reading work before you go home." Then it might be teacher control. Only in extreme cases should it be marked as teacher-institution control.

**Discussion of Categories**

Observational methods reviewed in Chapter I were helpful in gaining a sense of the process involved in devising an observational system. Although the studies were useful in general, very few specific categories were found directly applicable for the observation of student freedom of choice. Some previously established criteria were used in the establishment of the categories, and specific criteria were also added by the investigator. Useful to this study were the following criteria: (1) contains overt behavior, (2) only student behavior examined, (3) verbal and/or nonverbal behavior, (4) behaviors related...

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10 Simon and Boyer, eds., *op. cit.*
to activities found in a primary classroom, (5) behavior that can be further dichotomized into Student Choice or Teacher-Institutional Control, (7) one observer during a live observation period could record said behavior.

With these general ideas in mind, teachers' suggestions were accepted or rejected. It was an arbitrary decision to accept teachers as the most resourceful group in listing behaviors that commonly occur in the classroom. One behavior suggested by the teachers was disruptive behavior. This was not used as a category, not by virtue of never seeing this type of behavior, but rather by the fact that student choice was difficult to infer under this heading. Similarly, Anderson's category of non-conforming behavior was eliminated. It was felt that both of these behaviors occur in opposition to a restrictive climate rather than being fostered in an open classroom. Furthermore, both of these categories carried negative ideas of behavior, while the study sought to find positive oriented behavior involved in freedom of choice.

One category from Anderson's work was added because of the high degree of frequency found in a conventional classroom, although the category did not follow criteria 6 (dichotomized further into Student Choice or Teacher-Institutional Control). The category was Raises Hand.\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\)Anderson, Brewer, II, op. cit.
This category was unique in that only one source of control or choice was found and that was the Teacher-Institution Control. Although there were times when it appeared as if the child chose to raise his hand, it was arbitrarily decided that this phenomena was a reaction to an institutional precedent only and had to be marked in the T.I.C. column.

Anderson's work also contributed to two other categories which were used. Listens and Talks to Teacher was adapted into category 7 which is Watches, and/or Listens, and/or Talks with Teacher. Anderson's category of Nervous Habit was expanded to include Unconscious Behavior which could not be described as "nervous." An example is a pupil swinging his foot, day-dreaming, or rubbing an eraser over his desk absent-mindedly. All of these were listed under category 12, Habit or Unconscious Behavior. If a behavior was not directly involved in teacher control and was not a direct pupil choice, a third column was used—Neutral. Again criteria 6 was not applicable, but frequency of this type of behavior required the category to be added. Another aspect was involved and that was the possibility of teacher institution control, in

\[12\] Ibid.

\[13\] Ibid.
rare instances, such as "John, you can not go to recess until your work is done," and John bites his fingers at a noticeably increased rate.

As mentioned previously in some of the notes in the discussions of categories, Teacher-Institution Control was exerted not only by direct verbal request, but also by precedents set by institution and/or teacher as, for instance, in restroom or recess time. Another type of control taken into account was the "list of approved activities." By placing contingencies such as "You may color your rabbit picture after your writing lesson is complete," the teacher controlled at a distance. Although the child then initiated the coloring activity at a later time, it was marked teacher control since the teacher has given previous permission. Careful observation was necessary to pick up the aspect of pre-controlling on the part of the teacher, otherwise the viewer might think the child was choosing his own activity--coloring the rabbit picture. Conversely, the observer needed to be aware of the teacher not pre-controlling, and therefore, the child choosing to color the picture.

Two Classrooms Selected for Observation

One room was representative of conventional teaching and the other room was an experimental adaptation of the British Infant Model. These two diverse rooms were chosen
to view student choice in two different climates. Each room was part of an urban school. Both of the schools qualified for Title I funds and both had children from similar home backgrounds. The conventional class contained twenty-five pupils while the British Model room contained thirty. Both rooms were at the first-grade level.

Some reflections of the two teaching philosophies were viewed in the organization of the two classrooms. In the conventional class the children were assigned seats; in the open classroom there were no assigned seats and not enough desks to go around, but rather, work areas designated throughout the room. The open classroom contained some areas which were assigned activities such as the reading area, painting area, cooking area, and math area. In this way, children had access to all areas of the room. Diagrams for each room are found in Figures 3 and 4, respectively.

Both rooms contained similar equipment found in many first-grade rooms. Shelves, teacher's desk, children's desks (see above), tables, blackboards, listening stations, and record players were present in the two rooms. There was an easel in the British Model room. In addition to the hardware, software consisted of art materials, books, writing materials, games, and some toys. The British Model room also contained dress-up clothes, cooking utensils, hot plate, food stuffs, pillows and area rug, and large
FIGURE 3

Diagram of Conventional Classroom
图 4

开放教室图
building blocks. A music table with instruments was also available in the open classroom. Each room was pleasant and colorful in appearance.

Each teacher had previous experience in the classroom and both were named by their respective principals as excellent teachers. Both teachers readily agreed to allow the observer to view her class. The students were told by the teacher that a person would be present on various days during the month to watch what goes on in the classroom and see what the students do during their day at school.

**Pupils Observed**

The teachers each selected three pupils for the first part of the observational study whom they felt were most productive, average productive, and least productive in the classroom. These students were viewed for alternating periods to gain a continuous view of their choice-making behavior. Later, all pupils in both classes were observed for shorter periods of time to gain a look at overall pupil choice-making in that particular classroom.

**Time Schedule for Observations**

Classroom observations were made over a period of four weeks during the month of May. It was felt that by May, the classroom climate was firmly established. The number of observations were divided evenly between the two
rooms and obtained on an alternating schedule so that each classroom was visited a number of days throughout the entire four-week period.

In each room, the three pupils who were chosen by their teacher were observed in succession on a fixed time schedule of twenty-minute periods. The first, second, and third pupil were observed during each observation cycle, and then the observation returned to the first pupil to begin another cycle. Some changes were allowed in this time system if a pupil left the room for an extended period such as speech therapy or to run an office errand. This schedule was followed for the duration of a visit which lasted one-half, or one whole day each time. In this way, considerable data were compiled on the choice-making behavior of all six pupils.

In addition to recording behaviors for the six pupils, all pupils in each classroom were observed during three-minute intervals. Observations were made according to the alphabetical order of the children's first names. These observations were made during a one-day period with each child being observed three times.

The observational forms used were set up to record the choice-making behavior of a pupil for twenty-minute periods. A code was employed for ease in recording behaviors: Movement in and Around Room was coded MR, Moves Out of Room was coded MOut. Each of the twelve cate-
gories was coded in this manner. The codes were then marked under the appropriate column of Student Choice or Teacher-Institution Control. In most cases only the code letters were used. For clarification purposes, Works on Task had a brief note attached as to what the task was such as painting, workbook, or math ditto. Below is a brief example of the form. Parentheses are added in this case to show what the code stands for, and an example of when the code was recorded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MR (Movement in Room: pupil goes to easel)</td>
<td>MOut (Moves out of Room: restroom time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR (Movement in Room: pupil returns to easel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GatM (Gathers or Returns Materials; pupil gets paper and paints)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WksT (Works on Task: Pupil is painting</td>
<td>GatM (Gathers or Returns Materials: teacher tells pupil to put paints away because it's reading time)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three-minute observations were done in a similar manner, but in order to keep up with the frequent changes of pupils being observed, slight alterations were made in the form.
Summary

Information in Chapter III contains a description of the procedures used in developing a conceptual framework of freedom of choice, and in developing a method for observing pupil choice-making behavior in the primary grades. A description of the twelve categories of behavior observed are presented. Also presented is a description of the two classroom populations, and the settings in which they were observed.

The categories do not represent a final system for observing freedom of choice in pupil behavior. Rather, this part of the study is the initial work done to formulate possible ways of studying choice-making behavior. The results of the observations, as well as a developed conceptual framework, will be presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This study is concerned with three significant questions. These questions are:

1. What are the conceptual considerations needed to describe student freedom of choice in the classroom?
2. Is it possible to observe specific behaviors of students in an elementary classroom which are reflective of freedom of choice?
3. Can a practical and applicable observational system be developed for observing student freedom of choice in a classroom?

These questions were considered in applying the procedures outlined by Chapter III, and will serve as the boundaries for the discussion in this Chapter.

Chapter IV is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the development of a conceptual framework concerning freedom of choice as it operates in the primary classroom. In this section, the investigator synthesizes the ideas concerning student freedom reviewed in Chapter II, as well as those ideas of other writers who have dealt directly with the conceptual analysis of classroom freedom. This framework is a necessary part of developing a system to observe choice-making behavior. The second part of the
chapter presents and reviews the data gathered from the classroom observations which were described in Chapter III.

The Conceptual Framework

Two years ago, the investigator first became aware of the need for the above type of questioning when he served as a consultant in a compensatory education program at the primary level. While writing case histories of five children considered by teachers to display "atypical" behavior, it was noticed that many atypical or disruptive behaviors were those behaviors which did not comply with specific directives of the teacher, or had violated some institutional norm. That is, John did not keep quiet when requested; Joe did not do his assigned math paper; Harry did not stay in line for the drinking fountain; and Mary did not remain in her seat in the cafeteria. From this experience, the researcher began to consider some basic conceptions of student freedom. How much direct control should a teacher or institution have over the children? Does student freedom of choice have any place in the classroom?

Basic Assumptions

This study proceeded on two basic assumptions. First, it was assumed that student freedom of choice ought to be a primary consideration of any school curriculum.
This assumption is supported by the normative data which was reviewed in Chapter II. Berman speaks of decision-making as a major process to be accounted for in the curriculum. She points out that "all persons are process-oriented to some degree and can become more so through planned experiences." Nash writes, "It is foolish to expect a young person to make wise decisions immediately after graduating from school if his school experiences have not given him the opportunity to make all sorts of decisions in an atmosphere where unwise or immature decisions do not carry disastrous results."

A second assumption was that some schools or classrooms foster more freedom of choice than do other schools or classrooms. One of the common charges leveled by present-day critics is that there is very little choice offered to students. In a study of 260 classrooms in 100 elementary schools in thirteen states, for example, Goodlad states, "We were unable to discern much attention to pupils needs, attainments, or problems as a basis of beginning instruction nor widespread provision for individual opportunities to learn. . . . Teaching was pre-

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1Louise M. Berman, New Priorities in the Curriculum (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1968), Chapter 7.

2Ibid., p. 9.

3Nash, op. cit., p. 132.
dominantly telling, and questioning by the teacher, with children responding one by one or occasionally in chorus. In all of this, the textbook was the most highly visible instrument of learning and teaching."\(^4\) With the introduction of the open classroom, educators have been taking another look at what choices the young student should have in an educational setting. Attempts are now being made to encourage the student to choose his more immediate goals and to employ a workable means to reach these goals. Long-term planning, such as the student will read, is a goal set by the adult, while the means and interest of the student are honored as the short term goals on the road to reading. As important, or more important, than the achievement of reading is the process of student choice in getting there.

**Conceptual Considerations**

The word freedom in our society carries a strong evaluative sense of all that is good and right. Historical references to the concept of freedom in our nation's development are as basic as they are numerous--it is appropriate to say that our nation was founded and exists on the ideas of freedom. The review of contemporary criticism finds that none of the critics are against free-

dom, but all of them speak of freedom in positive, emotional, and sometimes vague terms. Authority, on the other hand, has a general negative connotation. Here, the critics are more sure of their case, and outline in great and precise detail the evils of our bureaucratic and authoritarian school system.

It seems likely, though, even the most extreme libertarian would in some way qualify the extent to which he would grant another person freedom. So it is with the educators who have advocated freedom for the student. Rousseau felt that the child would best learn the limits of his freedom by interacting with the world of nature; Dewey and Montessori both stressed the social responsibilities of freedom; and even Neill, who has gone far beyond the conventional limits of freedom for the child, draws the line when the child begins to trespass on the freedom of others. Peters writes:

A person who believes in freedom as an independent principle is not, of course, committed to it as an absolute principle. He may also believe in justice and the consideration of interests. He is committed to such principles subject to the condition that in any situation other principles may be more pressing. It seems reasonable, therefore, to speak of degrees, gradations, or qualifications of freedom within a classroom

or school. This idea again affirms the notion that some schools or classrooms promote more student freedom of choice than do other schools or classrooms.

A further qualification of freedom could be made in terms of the preposition one uses along with the word. It is quite common to talk about "freedom from," "freedom to," and "freedom of." Dewey, as cited in Chapter II, makes the distinction between "freedom from" (a negative external sense which leads us to think in terms of the restraints or limits placed on our freedom by others), and "freedom to" (a positive inner sense which leads us to consider our own powers and responsibilities). "Freedom of" delimits the concept of freedom to a particular topic or area, such as freedom of speech or freedom of choice.

To create "freedom from" is not the only essential element of advancing freedom for the student. Just because the child is not directly controlled by the teacher is not, of itself, a sufficient condition to foster freedom of choice. To choose is a process which must be encouraged and practiced. If a teacher wants to have freedom of choice for students, she must set the stage for choice-making; that is, she must promote a climate conducive to choice.

The investigator has made little differentiation between freedom in general and freedom of choice up to
this point. Obviously, we do talk of different kinds of freedom in both a political-social and an educational sense. Freedom of speech, freedom to assemble, and freedom from search and seizure are just a few of our political freedoms, while freedom of thought or intelligence, freedom to grow and develop, and freedom from the tyranny of the teacher or other children are freedoms we talk about in an educational realm. These above-listed freedoms seem of little consequence, however, unless one first talks about freedom of choice. One has to choose to speak before freedom of speech becomes meaningful. Frymier points out that, "A free society is characterized by the opportunity of individuals to exercise personal choice... Choice is the essence of freedom." To say that one has the freedom to speak or assemble without considering that he must first choose to speak or assemble ignores this important aspect of freedom. Similarly, to say that a child ought to have the freedom to grow and develop without allowing for his freedom of choice over the direction of his growth and development, seems equally neglectful. It is in this sense that the investigator sees freedom of choice as the meaningful aspect of freedom for the student.

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Also consciously avoided in all prior discussion has been the use of the term "decision" when talking about choice. In many ordinary language uses, decision is used almost synonymously with the word choice. One important difference, however, lies in the area of freedom. We would find it strange to hear someone speak of "freedom for decisions," or, on the other hand, to think of choices made without freedom. Indeed, we might say, "He could have only made that decision, but he chose to do it in his own way." As choice seems to be the essence of freedom, so is freedom the essence of choice.

Choice-making is a complex behavior, and some inference is necessary to decide whether or not a choice has been made on the part of the agent. To make this inference more valid, a classroom observer needs to have a conceptual framework encompassing a set of criteria concerning choice-making. One can begin to set these criteria by asking, "What does choice-making presume?" Three essential components of choice-making are delimited by Clark:

First and most obviously, we can say that to choose is to do something, less obviously, to do anything in the appropriate context. Second, we can say that alternative is joined to choice with hoops of steel. Where there is no alternative, there can be no choice. Third, we should note with Webster, that, in contrast to a synonym
such as "prefer," "choose implies a decision of the judgment." To choose, thus, is to do something for which we can give reasons.7

In the case of the student, it becomes clear that some aspects of choice may be beyond any observational means. Clark points out that not all doing is resultant of choosing, but that within an appropriate context, "deliberate action or restraint from action... would seem to be involved in every case where choice is made."8 To eliminate a great deal of inference on the part of the observer, one must concentrate on the overt (both verbal and nonverbal) actions of the pupils. This does not discount "restraint from action" as part of choice-making behavior, but considers it to require more inference than is reliable for direct observation and recording. Thus deliberate actions (not restraint from action) become a criterion for observing choice-making behavior.

Alternatives must be open to the student if choices are to be made. This criterion is a necessary part of choice-making. Clark writes, "... that the agent sees himself as having alternatives and that what he sees as an alternative truly be one."9 To satisfy this

8Ibid., p. 80.
9Ibid., p. 82.
criterion when observing student choice-making, it is essential to describe the classroom climate. Whether or not the student knows what alternatives are open to him (who can see what is inside one's mind?) requires more inference on the part of the observer than seems warranted. Although "agent sees himself as having alternatives" is not completely possible to ascertain by viewing student choice-making behavior, it is possible to infer that there are alternatives or, conversely, narrow limits in the classroom. By polarizing the behavior of the student into "student choice" or "teacher-institution control," an indirect measure is made of the climate of the classroom. This polarization seems justified in view of the classroom climate observational studies reviewed in Chapter II.

Clark lastly explains that choosing requires that the agent "should be able to offer a justification" for his choice. "When we say that an element of judgment is involved in making choices we mean that the chooser should be able to explain his doing."\(^{10}\) He further states that this criterion would eliminate children and animals (using Aristotle's argument) as irrational creatures from a role in choice-making.\(^{11}\) Peters essentially confirms this by

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 83.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
pointing out that "There is all the difference in the world between choosing between alternatives and 'opting' for alternatives on the basis of what is immediately attractive."¹² The criterion for judgment for choosing as seen by Clark and Peters would thus seem to discount the possibility of young children making choices.

One might first question at what age these writers would see children becoming able to make judgments and, therefore, choices. Clark offers no definition, but Peters, interpreting from the work of Piaget, does give the age of seven as a dividing line.¹³ Does this mean that a child of six is incapable of choosing? Although we might, in general, agree, the apparent difficulties of this generalization are obvious. Furthermore, the restrictions that Clark and Peters place on the criteria of judgment breakdown at the point of deciding what is choice and what is preference. One might offer model cases for preferences such as liking chocolate more than vanilla ice cream, and model cases for choices such as judging one work of art to be better than another; however, there seems to be a great middle-ground where a decision between what counts as a choice and what counts as prefer-

¹²Peters, op. cit., p. 120.

¹³Ibid.
ence or opting is arbitrary. On what grounds do we describe a first-grade child liking or disliking a teacher or school--as preference or choice? Certainly, we should expect him to be able to give reasons for his liking or disliking.

Green points out, "It is impossible to maintain a rigorous and thorough separation between value judgments and expressions of preference or mere personal likings." In a similar manner, Dewey speaks of the formation of purpose which springs from desire and impulse. Allowing a logical connection between the formation of purposes and value judgments, the former starting from desires and the latter based upon preferences, one can envision choice operating at different levels. To speak of choosing in relation to desires or preferences may be an extended sense of the word, but, none-the-less meaningful, when speaking of children choosing.

Unfortunately for children, most adult requirements for justification do not fit the child's capabilities; that is, the child does not have the language to explain his reasons. Does this mean, nevertheless, that the child does not have reasons? To discount the possibility of children choosing, to dismiss them as irrational creatures

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15Dewey, Experience and Education, op. cit., p. 79.
makes it mandatory for the teacher to control or decide everything for the child. Clearly, we do not want this. Nash states, "Unless the child is encouraged to choose as much and as soon as he is able, his security will enable him only to be a comfortable vegetable." 16

Looking at whether or not the young child (first-grader) chooses, although important, has diverted attention away from the major task; that is, what does the criterion of judgment for choosing offer the observer of choice-making behavior. Unless the observer is able to talk with the child or hear him explain his actions to another person, inference about this criterion seems highly speculative. Therefore, the criterion of judgment does not offer the classroom observer much help in discerning student choice-making behavior.

What criteria have we then, to observe student choice-making behavior? Choosing implies (1) action in a context of (2) alternatives which involve the (3) judgment of the chooser. Of these three, the action and alternatives seem to offer the best possible means for viewing choice-making. In order to make this clearer, it is necessary to investigate more closely the relationships between the doing and the alternatives.

16 Nash, op. cit., p. 234.
Dewey points out that freedom of intelligence is a supreme consideration of education, and he further states that freedom of outer movement is a means to this desired end. Regimentation and restriction of movement imposed on the students by the traditional classroom do not assure normal growth for the pupil who must subvert his physical and mental impulses behind an attentive facade. When students are allowed to follow their physical and mental impulses, they are in the process of developing their freedom of intelligence.\(^{17}\)

Using Dewey's idea, one might view student freedom of choice in two dimensions—the dimension of goals and the dimension of means. A clearer picture of student behavior concerning goals and means can be illustrated with the model shown in Figure 5.\(^{18}\)

On this model, the apexes are fixed as "teacher-institution controlled means" across from "student choice means," and "teacher-institution controlled goals" opposed to "student choice goals." In quadrant one, the teacher sets the goals while the student is free to choose the means to reach these goals. Quadrant two shows that the student determines his means and also sets his own goals.


\(^{18}\)Adaptation of original model developed with Donald Uhlenberg in *Education 865* under Dr. Paul Klohr. Winter Quarter, 1970.
Quadrant three indicates that the student sets goals with the teacher determining the means. In quadrant four, the teacher-institution completely determines the goals and means for the student.

In practice, the most diametrically opposed programs would appear in quadrant four and quadrant two. Programs such as Individually Prescribed Instruction determine, for example, goals in reading and then proceed to prescribe the means for attainment of the pre-set goals. This program would be considered complete control over the student and assigned to quadrant four. Probably the best known, and most freely organized exercise in education is Summerhill, where the pupils have a choice as to
what they do (goals), and how, when, and where they do it (means). This type of program would be included in quadrant two. Summerhill would be in quadrant two for other, more practical, reasons; the school is completely self-contained and answers only to itself, thus dispensing with some of the community restrictions and responsibilities placed upon most public schools.

Students choosing all of their goals and means is a powerful teaching method, however, there are limits to this type of education when the school cannot contain all the effects of extreme freedom. Public schools send their pupils home every afternoon, and the effects of the daily program are somewhat controlled by outside expectations. This does not mean the institution should control all, or even most of the students' means and ends. In a freer classroom, some teacher-institution controlled goals are desirable, but more emphasis is evident in the areas of "student choice goals" and "student choice means."

Using flexibility between these two quadrants (one and two) makes the "give and take" of the daily classroom life more reflective of the choices the student will face outside the school.

The means dimension plays an important part in the daily activities of an elementary classroom. It is possible to classify means as "when," "where," "how," "with what materials," and "with whom." In the conventional
classroom, the means dimension is often controlled by the 
teacher-institution. The reading circle is one example 
of classroom activities with which the teacher controls 
not only the goals, but also the means. The student 
reads *Down the Willow Road* (reading - goal), and he reads 
the book during Blue Bird reading circle (when, where, how, 
with what materials, and with whom - means). The book, 
*Down the Willow Road*, represents more than the general 
goal of reading; it can be classified as teacher control 
of materials which the student uses. "How" is another 
controlled means, as the student is requested to read 
orally or silently, and use either phonetic or sight word 
attack skills. If the pupil is assigned to the Blue Bird 
reading circle, the teacher further dictates with whom, 
the place, and the time that the student will read. 

In the more open classroom, reading still remains 
an overall goal for the pupils, but they have more potential 
alternative means available to reach that goal. Children 
can chose a wide variety of language oriented means, and 
also employ their own interests as more immediate goals 
in moving toward reading. The students have the freedom 
of choice over the means and more immediate goals, but 
this is not to imply that the teacher has no control. 
Rather, she has a supporting instead of a leading position. 
The student may choose to make a costume and put on a play. 
During this activity, many reading-related areas are open
to the student—name cards, title cards, script sheets, etc. The teacher may make suggestions at any time, especially to help the student see alternative means and to help the student make judgments about those means.

Alternatives in the classroom, when seen in the dimensions of goals and means offer the teacher a wide range of opportunities to free the student for choice-making. The student, as he engages in means and ends activities, has his behavior either controlled by the teacher-institution, or directed by his own impulses, desires, preferences, and values. The classroom observer, who is interested in freedom of choice, needs to be fully aware of the interplay between the student's self-directed behavior and the ends and means activities of the classroom.

**Conceptual Framework Summary**

From the above discussion, certain points and criteria need to be summarized to delimit the aspects of student freedom of choice in an elementary classroom. These are:

**Points**

1. **Freedom for students in classroom is qualified.** We generally qualify freedom with the reference to responsibility toward others. Complete freedom is not sought, but rather freedom to choose more of one's educational activities.
(2) Freedom of choice is the most important aspect of classroom freedom. Freedom from restraint is not a sufficient condition to foster freedom of choice. Choosing is a process which must be encouraged and enhanced.

Criteria

(1) Choice-making presumes action (or restraint from action) on the part of the agent. To choose is to do (or not do)—doing is the observable part of student choice-making.

(2) Choice-making presumes judgment on the part of the agent. In a primary classroom, the criterion of judgment needs to be expanded to include impulse and preference as well as purpose and value judgment.

(3) Choice-making presumes freedom. To speak of choice necessitates having alternatives for choice-making available and known to the students. The classroom alternatives may be seen more meaningfully in the dimensions of means and ends.

Results of the Observations

The systematic observations completed in the open and conventional classrooms followed the procedures outlined in Chapter III. Using the observational form, the investigator categorized the behavior of the pupils into the twelve developed categories, and listed the categories into either the "student choice" or "teacher-institution control" columns. The results of the classroom observations are descriptive of the student choice-making behavior found in both classrooms. The three-minute observation results are separated from the twenty-minute observation results since the two types of observations
served different purposes. Three-minute observations of every child in the class in successive order gave an overall picture of choice-making found in that particular room. Using twenty-minute observation periods for three different children in each class gave a more comprehensive picture of the choice-making behavior of the student being observed. Table 1 and Table 2 present the results in terms of frequencies for each category in the two dichotomous headings—"student choice" or "teacher-institution control." Four groups of results are presented: (1) three-minute open classroom, (2) three-minute conventional classroom, (3) twenty-minute open classroom, and (4) twenty-minute conventional classroom.

Results of Three-Minute Observations—Open Classroom

Seventy separate three-minute observations were taken in the open classroom. Data are presented in descriptive statements under each category to clarify the context in which the choice-making behavior was observed. The number of behaviors found as either "student choice" or "teacher-institution control" are also given under each category.
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(1) MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND SEAT
Student Choice - 18 Teacher-Institution Control - 1

Since there were no assigned seats, movement in a seat was almost always student choice, and they sat in whatever comfortable position they chose when attending to a task, as for example, counting blocks or writing a sentence. The teacher did not request the students to use seats, except in the one instance of signaling a child to sit quietly while the group was listening to a story.
MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND ROOM

Student Choice - 25  Teacher-Institution Control - 1

Movement around the open classroom was very evident as the pupils displayed many active behaviors. There was continuous student movement by individuals and groups while they performed the various activities. Viewing one student at a time was somewhat difficult with the constant flow, but it was profitable in gaining a sense of physical choice-making on the part of the pupils. Movement was frequently used as a means to gather materials for a student project.

MOVES OUT OF ROOM

Student Choice - 5  Teacher-Institution Control - 2

The two teacher-controlled events were recess periods and were placed under the controlled column since the institution had a pre-set plan for recess. All the students were required to attend recess at the same time. The five times "student choice" was indicated in leaving the room, the teacher was in no way signaled by the pupil.

GATHERS OR RETURNS MATERIALS

Student Choice - 33  Teacher-Institution Control - 2

As indicated by the 33 times "student choice" was marked, the students in the open classroom moved about freely to gather materials such as books, paints, food stuffs, crayons, paste, scissors, paper, games, cloth,
and costumes for the projects they initiated. Access to the materials was completely "student choice" as the pupils did not seem to be required to ask permission from the teacher to use any of the materials, nor were there restrictions on any area of the room (with the exception of the music table) from which they could gather their materials. A typical example of the freedom the children enjoyed in this category was observed when a number of boys, who were interested in making "mystery man" costumes, each consumed one or more large (18"x24") pieces of black construction paper to make their masks and capes. The two cases of "teacher-institution control" happened when the teacher requested two boys to get their math books.

(5) WORKS ON TASK
Student Choice - 54 Teacher-Institution Control - 10

Many of the tasks the students engaged in were chosen by the pupils themselves. The teacher directed small groups or talked with individuals, but the majority of the class was left on its own. Moreover, the students seemed to know their many alternatives, and chose a wide variety of projects from reading to playing with the guinea pig, from doing arithmetic sums based on the cost of a recipe to building a playhouse out of blocks of wood and old clothes. At times, the teacher did direct some
of the activities, especially when a pupil seemed engaged in aimless activity. It was noted though, that the teacher was willing not to intervene when a pupil was quite content to leaf through a magazine, paint a block of wood, or use the rest area for a period of time.

(6) WATCHES AND/OR TALKS AND/OR LISTENS TO ANOTHER PUPIL

Student Choice - 17  Teacher-Institution Control - 1

There were also six times the investigator was unable to discern if the student chose to watch or listen to another pupil. Each of these six instances were interaction between more than two pupils, and the teacher was in no way involved. The times a pupil initiated a conversation were the easiest to use, but when the student rather passively listened to another pupil, it seemed unwarranted to infer the interaction represented student choice.

(7) WATCHES AND/OR TALKS AND/OR LISTENS TO TEACHER

Student Choice - 11  Teacher-Institution Control - 32

The students were often listeners as the teacher read to the group or explained and made suggestions on the pupils concerning their particular project. These were listening behaviors which were controlled by the teacher, since no help was requested by the students.
It should be noted that the help which the teacher volunteered was often needed, at least from the investigator's viewpoint. Students chose to interact with the teacher in such ways as volunteering information, asking questions, going over to watch and listen as the teacher demonstrated something to other students.

(8) **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PUPIL**

Student Choice - 1 Teacher-Institution Control - 0

There was only one marking in this category. A girl hugged another student while they were playing house. It was thought that this category would be used more often in the freer atmosphere. Although there was more occurrence of this type of behavior in the open classroom, it did not happen during the three-minute observation periods.

(9) **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH TEACHER**

Student Choice - 0 Teacher-Institution Control - 0

No behaviors which fit in this category were observed during the three-minute periods.

(10) **PERFORMS MAINTENANCE TASK**

Student Choice - 6 Teacher-Institution Control - 12

Taking care of the surroundings in the open classroom requires frequent maintenance because of the large variety of projects and materials for these projects. The
teacher sometimes used this type of exercise or direction to find something of interest to the pupil who was not otherwise engaged. Physical involvement in such a task was a strong means to develop the pupil's interest. It was suggested that someone straighten the book or storage shelf areas. One interesting task, which three or four boys performed without prompting was the cleaning of the guinea pig cage.

(11) RAISES HAND
Teacher-Institution Control - 2

Infrequent use was made of this category in viewing the open classroom. In this room, the entire group was brought together very few times. The lack of total group instruction or discussion did not necessitate raising hands. The class did meet together to listen to story time, or have discussion on the day's events, or plan future activities such as inviting clowns from a visiting circus to come to the first grade room.

(12) HABIT OR UNCONSCIOUS BEHAVIOR
Neutral Behavior - 7 Teacher-Institution Control - 0

Five of the seven times this category was used represented one particular boy wandering around the room sucking his thumb. At no time was he admonished or told to find something to do.
Results of Three-Minute Observations - Conventional Classroom

Sixty-eight separate three-minute observations were viewed in the conventional classroom. The data are presented in the twelve categories of behavior in descriptive statements. The number of "student choice" or "teacher-institution control" are also given under each category.

(1) MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND SEAT

Student Choice - 1        Teacher-Institution Control - 8

Most of the pupils' daily activities were carried out in their own seats. However, few indications were made during the observation periods that the pupils were to stay in their seats. By May, evidently, it was the expected place for the pupils to be and they took this for granted. The teacher did remind them about their postures for certain activities such as writing. At other times, individual pupils were asked to sit in their seats.

(2) MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND ROOM

Student Choice - 10        Teacher-Institution Control - 20

Student movement in this category was observed to be short trips around the room; that is, the student went to get a book or puzzle, and then returned to his seat. The teacher often requested groups and/or individuals to
to get such things as books for reading circle, or particular work sheets for seat work.

(3) **MOVES OUT OF ROOM**

Student Choice - 0  Teacher-Institution Control - 1

During the three-minute observations, only one incident was marked in this category. The particular student being observed left for recess.

(4) **GATHERS OR RETURNS MATERIALS**

Student Choice - 5  Teacher-Institution Control - 22

Most tasks or activities in the room were assigned by the teacher, and when the pupils were requested to take their crayons out, or get writing paper, these events were marked as teacher control. The five times the students chose to gather their own materials occurred when they sharpened their pencils or gathered some material for a free art period.

(5) **WORKS ON TASK**

Student Choice - 8  Teacher-Institution Control - 90

The students spent a great deal of time working on subject-oriented tasks such as ditto sheets with number on color blanks, or reading assignments in books, or using word builders to copy sentences from the board.

A large percentage of the daily activities were under the
direction of the teacher. The eight times the pupils made a choice to work on an activity or a task took place during a free art period.

(6) **WATCHES AND/OR LISTENS AND/OR TALKS WITH ANOTHER PUPIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were nine incidents of behavior in this category when it was not possible to discern whether or not any choice was made on the part of the pupil being observed. This category proved more difficult to use than the other eleven categories. The easiest events to record were the times a pupil initiated a conversation with his neighbor. Students listening to other pupils recite during "show and tell" were seen as controlled by the teacher.

(7) **WATCHES AND/OR LISTENS AND/OR TALKS WITH TEACHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>

It was decided that when a student asked permission, he did choose to ask and so the action was marked under "student choice." The resulting action taken by the student, however, was marked in some controlled area. For example, if a student chose to ask to leave the room, the behavior of asking was student choice, but when he then left the room, that behavior was marked as teacher-institution control.
In total group work, it was necessary for some of the pupils to be asked by the teacher to pay attention to the task at hand such as watching the teacher write a word or sentence on the blackboard, or listening to her explain the seat work for the morning period.

(8) PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PUPIL

Student Choice - 1 Teacher-Institution Control - 0

Outside of one boy putting his arm around another boy while he looked at the other boy's work, no physical contact between pupils was noted during the three-minute observation periods.

(9) PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH TEACHER

Student Choice - 0 Teacher Institution Control - 0

No physical contact between the teacher and pupils was noted during the three-minute observation periods.

(10) PERFORMS MAINTENANCE TASK

Student Choice - 0 Teacher-Institution Control - 4

Most maintenance tasks which the teacher assigned were connected with the "room jobs." Children performed such things as passing out paper, cleaning the blackboard, and straightening up the book shelves. Children enjoyed these jobs which required moving about the room. A favor-
ite assignment was going down to the cafeteria for milk and cookies for the morning snack.

(11) RAISES HAND

Teacher-Institution Control - 11

The children raised their hands during work or instruction groups. The teacher also requested a student to raise his hand after he gave an answer without using this signal.

(12) HABIT OR UNCONSCIOUS BEHAVIOR

Neutral - 16 Teacher-Institution Control - 0

As previously mentioned, a large amount of the students' time was spent at their desks. When seat work was finished, some children gazed about the room aimlessly. If the teacher noticed him, she would suggest another activity. Converse cases of the pupil gazing around were found when a student did not work on the assigned task.

Results of Twenty-Minute Observations - Open Classroom

The teacher selected three students for the investigator to observe. The three pupils were observed consecutively for twenty-minute periods. Each was designated by the teacher to be a "most productive," "average productive," or "least productive" pupil in the class. A total of thirty twenty-minute periods were
taken in the open classroom: ten observations of the most productive pupil, ten observations of the average productive pupil, and ten of the least productive pupil. In the data below, the pupils are listed as "A" for most, "B" for average, and "C" for least productive pupil. Teacher recommendations were taken for the status of each student, and the rank of the pupils was not otherwise substantiated. Descriptive notes follow each category to clarify the context of the particular behavior being observed. Frequency tabulations for each student are made in the columns "student choice" and "teacher-institution control" for each category.

(1) MOVES IN AND AROUND SEAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 8</td>
<td>A - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 4</td>
<td>B - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 1</td>
<td>C - 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most productive pupil was an active girl who, even when she used a desk, moved around in the seat to get situated as she worked on a task or project. The least productive pupil did not sit in a seat for most of the day, but spent much of his time wandering around the classroom as will be indicated in category 12. At no time did the teacher tell any of these pupils to sit down or to use a certain posture while in a seat.
(2) MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND ROOM

Student Choice | Teacher-Institution Control
--- | ---
A - 51 | A - 9
B - 45 | B - 7
C - 22 | C - 7

All three pupils moved freely about the classroom. Pupils A and B used much of their movement to gather materials or put them away. Pupil C did not use his movement as the girls did. His movement about the room was directed toward talking to or watching another student or the teacher. The teacher did control the movement of the students if trouble became evident, or other times she requested Pupils A and C to come over to where she was standing.

(3) MOVES OUT OF ROOM

Student Choice | Teacher-Institution Control
--- | ---
A - 7 | A - 1
B - 1 | B - 2
C - 2 | C - 3

Pupil A chose to leave the room more frequently than the other two pupils. The controlled moves out of the room were for recess or lunch time, and one incident when pupil B went into the hall with a tutor for a reading group.

(4) GATHERS OR RETURNS MATERIALS

Student Choice | Teacher-Institution Control
--- | ---
A - 18 | A - 4
B - 37 | B - 3
C - 19 | C - 2
It is fairly evident that the three pupils gathered materials of their own choosing more often than the teacher required them to gather or return things. It was stipulated that the student project for which they collected materials must be an originally student choice project. If the teacher directed the original project, then gathering materials was listed under teacher control. Students had access to many types of materials from books to costumes and used this wide variety of things to choose items they felt helpful to the task at hand.

(5) WORKS ON TASK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 32</td>
<td>A - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 35</td>
<td>B - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 18</td>
<td>C - 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this classroom, the least productive pupil did not choose to work on many tasks, and the teacher gave him more direct instructions to help him start and continue on a task. But he was given a wide latitude not to do anything if he chose not to do it. The most productive pupil and average productive pupil spent much of their time on chosen projects such as painting, typing, listening to records, cooking, and reading. During the observation periods, the average productive pupil was quite self-sufficient and chose many of her tasks without any interaction with the teacher at all.
The three pupils engaged in frequent talks and discussions as they moved around the room or worked on tasks. Every child in the class was just as active verbally, and the noise level was above that of the conventional classroom. When teacher control was marked, it was usually during small group reading instruction or discussion time when she requested the pupil to watch or listen to what another pupil was saying.

The most productive pupil chose to interact with the teacher frequently. She (A) talked freely with the teacher and the teacher often began conversations with Pupil A. The average productive pupil was somewhat more inclined to go about her business without asking the teacher for help or advice. The teacher did direct the least productive pupil in more specific terms. This was
partially because of his wandering around the room. Most of the teacher control was verbal control.

(8) PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PUPIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 6</td>
<td>A - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 4</td>
<td>C - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 5</td>
<td>C - 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The physical contact noted was affectionate or, at least, not hostile. The students were casual about putting an arm around or touching someone else. The one case of control resulted from the teacher asking Pupil A to help another girl with a costume the girl was wearing.

(9) PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH TEACHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 3</td>
<td>A - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 0</td>
<td>B - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 1</td>
<td>C - 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher sometimes guided Pupil C to a seat or activity with her hand on his arm. Pupil A was the most affectionate with the teacher, but none of the students had a great deal of physical contact with the teacher or any other adults in the room.
(10) **PERFORMS MAINTENANCE TASK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 0</td>
<td>A - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 2</td>
<td>B - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 0</td>
<td>C - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupil B was the only one of the three pupils to choose to clean up some area of the room. She straightened items on shelves and used paper towels to wash off desk tops. The teacher requested the children to do all other maintenance tasks.

(11) **RAISES HAND**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three pupils were not often engaged in large group activity with the teacher, therefore, they did not have to raise their hands for recognition. As mentioned, all hand raising is an institutional requirement. Pupil C raised his hand three times during a group discussion period which was led by the teacher. Class discussion periods took place on the oval rug in the center of the room.
The least productive pupil spent much of his time moving around the room aimlessly. He did not seem to have any particular destination or activity in mind, but wandered throughout the entire room without paying particular attention to his surroundings. All three pupils displayed an unconscious behavior in gazing or daydreaming for short periods of time.

Twenty-Minute Observations—Conventional Classroom

The investigator gathered descriptive data from thirty separate observation periods: ten observations of Pupil A, ten observations of Pupil B, and ten observations of Pupil C.

All three children worked on most of their assignments at their desks, but unless Pupil A, B, or C chose some unusual position (which sometimes seemed to indicate
they were tired of the sitting position) this category was not used. The least productive pupil was requested to stay in his seat a number of times. He did not stay seated long if there was another alternative open to him.

(2) MOVEMENT IN AND AROUND ROOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 13</td>
<td>A - 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 11</td>
<td>B - 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 12</td>
<td>C - 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Movement in the room was often controlled by the teacher when she called for different reading groups or individuals to come to the reading desk to read to her. A "room job" assignment provided another means of controlling movement as pupils were given jobs which called for moving around the room, such as passing out papers or books, erasing the blackboard, straightening out the bookshelves, or collecting the assignments. Instances of movement which represented student choice happened when the student went to sharpen his pencil or gathered some materials after he had finished his assigned tasks. In all cases, movement around the room seemed to be of short duration; that is, the student left his seat, got something, and returned to his seat.
(3) MOVES OUT OF ROOM

Student Choice  Teacher-Institution Control

A - 0  
B - 0  
C - 0  
A - 8  
B - 2  
C - 3  

The most productive pupil was sent to read to the kindergarten class. The children also left the room for recess and restroom and lunch periods. Children left the room at other times after they asked the teacher's permission.

(4) GATHERS OR RETURNS MATERIALS

Student Choice  Teacher-Institution Control

A - 14  
B - 8  
C - 7  
A - 14  
B - 15  
C - 16  

The most common materials found in the room were crayons, pencils, scissors, paste, paper, and coloring sheets. These materials were kept in the student's desks until the teacher called for them in an assigned task. There were free periods designated by the teacher, and during these periods the students could choose to use the listed materials more freely. Pupil C was requested to get a particular item to use when he became idle. Pupil A sometimes finished her assigned work and then had free time to choose her own activity. She invariably chose a book to read and enjoyed this activity.
(5) WORKS ON TASK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 10</td>
<td>A - 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 9</td>
<td>B - 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 5</td>
<td>C - 44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher assigned a wide variety of activities to the children. Different reading groups had different seat work to do during the morning period. The teacher seemed aware of the various ability levels and assigned the work accordingly. Each child had around three or four mimeographed sheets to do plus other requirements. Word builders (small alphabet cards) were used to copy sentence work. Other manipulative educational items such as stringing beads or magnetic letters were also used. This was a daily routine. The most productive pupil had additional requirements since she finished her seat work very rapidly.

(6) WATCHES AND/OR LISTENS AND/OR TALKS WITH ANOTHER PUPIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 20</td>
<td>A - 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 18</td>
<td>B - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 32</td>
<td>C - 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupil C talked frequently with his neighbors and chose to watch his neighbors as they worked on their assignments. He did not stay with his own work for very long periods. The teacher used the "quick" responses of
the most productive pupil and asked her to help other children with their work.

(7) **WATCHES AND/OR LISTENS AND/OR TALKS WITH TEACHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 19</td>
<td>A - 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 11</td>
<td>B - 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 8</td>
<td>C - 52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupil A listened to teacher directions and seemed to carefully follow whatever instructions were given. The teacher also provided for individual reading time. She instructed Pupil A individually because Pupil A was reading on a more advanced level than the other pupils. The least productive pupil did not choose to talk to the teacher but the teacher spent time talking to him and asking for his careful attention while she showed him how to do a particular task. The teacher also frequently requested Pupil C to do his seat work assignments or return to his work. During the observation periods, Pupil B did not have as many contacts with the teacher as the other two pupils. He continued at his work close to the prescribed schedule, and did not often ask the teacher for assistance. When he chose to talk to the teacher, it was usually for permission to do some activity or to leave the room briefly.
(8) PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PUPIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 0</td>
<td>A - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 0</td>
<td>B - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 5</td>
<td>C - 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupil C chose to touch and throw his arms over his neighbors with whom he seemed to have a warm relationship. There were not many chances for physical contact since the students were separated at their desks most of the day.

(9) PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH THE TEACHER

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 0</td>
<td>A - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 0</td>
<td>B - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 0</td>
<td>C - 1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The only event to occur in this category was an incident when the teacher led Pupil C back to his desk with her hand on his shoulder.

(10) PERFORMS MAINTENANCE TASK

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Choice</th>
<th>Teacher-Institution Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 0</td>
<td>A - 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 0</td>
<td>B - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 1</td>
<td>C - 1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pupil C chose to straighten up games on a table without being assigned that job previously or having the teacher suggest he do it. Pupil B was "paper collector" during one day he was observed, and performed this task under the direction of the teacher.
Pupil A raised her hand in response to just about any question the teacher asked. Pupil B did not raise his hand often for recognition of any kind. Pupil C raised his hand for teacher questions, but could not always give the required answers when he was called on by the teacher.

As mentioned before, Pupil B spent much of his time working at an even pace on his assigned work. Pupil A sometimes gazed around the room when she finished her seat work very quickly. She also sometimes displayed a nervous habit of pulling on her hair. Pupil C gazed about the room or daydreamed frequently during the observational periods.
Summary of Observation Results in Two Classrooms

There were many controlled student behaviors observed in the conventional classroom although the teacher dealt with the children in a positive manner. The physical plan of the room—assigned seats—provided some of the restriction since activities were confined to the small area of the desk. Work assignments were individualized, but the children had little say about what they were to do, or when, or how they were to do it. The most productive student in the room seemed to use the few alternatives open to her and chose some activities, but Pupil C did not finish his assigned work and, therefore, did not have as much chance to choose other activities. Since more total group instruction was used in this room, pupils were required to watch and listen often to the teacher's lectures and questions.

The open classroom provided more alternatives for the pupils to choose a task to work on, and to gather whatever materials the student felt helpful in working on his project. When the teacher interacted with individual pupils, she suggested many ideas, but also occasionally gave controlled instructions to certain pupils. Movement and verbal interaction were very much a part of this
room. The noise level was higher than that of the conventional classroom. The students were free to choose many of their tasks in this room, and made many mistakes on the way to the development of their work.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter of this study is divided into four sections. The first section contains a brief review of the entire study. The second section presents a discussion which compares the results of the two procedures of the study. Conclusions of the study are drawn in section three, and the final section presents some implications and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

This study focused on the observation of student freedom of choice in the primary classroom. It was an effort to (1) develop a conceptual framework for observing student freedom of choice, (2) determine if specific behaviors of elementary school children are reflective of student freedom of choice, and (3) decide if a practical and applicable observation system could be developed for observing student freedom of choice in the classroom. Both a conceptual framework of the choice process and classroom observations were used to gain a clearer picture of student behaviors which are reflecting of choice-making.

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Review of the literature supported the idea that student freedom of choice should be a central goal of education. Previous classroom observational research studies looked at freedom in the sense of more student participation and less teacher control as a better climate for student learning. This review, plus the ideas of other authorities who have dealt with the concept of educational freedom helped the investigator to develop a conceptual framework concerning student freedom of choice. Two points and three criteria were made within this framework. Point one stated that freedom for students in the classroom is qualified, and point two designated freedom of choice to be the most important aspect of classroom freedom. Criterion one is that choice-making presumes action or restraint from action on the part of the student. Criterion two stated that choice-making presumes judgment in terms of preferences, as well as values, for the primary school child. Criterion three is that choice-making presumes freedom to select from alternatives which may be seen in terms of the means and ends dimensions in the elementary classroom.

Two different classrooms were chosen for observing student behaviors related to freedom of choice. It was assumed that the different climates of these classrooms would offer a varying picture of student freedom of choice. Pupil behaviors, marked as either 'Student Choice' or
"Teacher-Institution Control," were used in twelve categories for observation. These categories were developed to obtain a more systematic collection of data concerning student classroom behavior. Both twenty-minute and three-minute observation periods were used to gather data.

The two research procedures (conceptual analysis and classroom observations of pupil behavior) were carried out in the spirit of fluid enquiry. The purpose of this study, under this approach, is to compare the results of the two procedures to gain a clearer understanding of student freedom of choice in the classroom. The comparison will be carried on in the discussion and conclusion sections of this chapter.

**Discussion**

From the development of a conceptual framework of student freedom of choice, certain guidelines were formulated which need to be followed when observing choice in the classroom. Most importantly, only some choice-making behavior can be observed. Some of the process called choice consists of the agent choosing not to do, and it is not possible, when observing overt behavior, to view restraint from action. Categories developed for this study focused on the actions of the students.
"Choice," as presented in the conceptual framework, was also considered to have a place on various levels. In the earlier stages of development, choice may be thought to be associated with preference. Since the process of choice is seen on a continuum, the covert behavior of judgment, which is presumed by choice, is not always discernible in the behavior of the young child. By recording the categories of student behavior as either "student choice" or "teacher-institution control," the continuum of preference through choice was accounted for under the single heading of "Student choice." Perhaps another label for this side of the dichotomy could have been "student initiated action," instead of "student choice," but such labeling would have taken the emphasis away from the primary concern of this study.

The method of observation used in this study to view choice-making in the primary classroom was successful in gathering quantitative data. That is, an overall sense of freedom of student choice was evident in the open classroom, and an overall sense of control of student behavior was more evident in the conventional classroom. In quantifying the incidences of "student choice" and "teacher-institution control," it was possible to gather data that showed differences in the two classrooms toward freedom of choice. These results tend to support the original inquiry of this study; that indeed, some differ-
ences in student choice-making behavior can be observed which reflect in classroom climate.

It should be noted that the method for recording the data, while effective for this limited study, would present problems in a more restrictive study. Recording only behaviors as they changed, caused the more active student to appear as if he were behaving more than the student who was less active. The twenty-minute observation proved to be the more effective data-gathering technique, as the observer could gain an overall sense of student behavior, which was difficult to do in the three-minute observation periods. In all, the observation technique was aided by the recording of supplementary descriptive notes. These notes were especially helpful in the category of "Works on Task."

Category one, Moves in and around Seat, was not useful since it appeared that more gross movement is necessary to determine choice-making. The difference between fidgeting and choosing to kneel or tie one's shoe is not significant. This category was originally included because the conventional classroom requires the student to be in his seat much of the time and often qualifies how he must sit in terms of posture. The student was in his seat more during the conventional classroom day but this did not show up on the observation form. This category was used more in the open classroom as a result.
of children moving in and out of seats (which were not assigned), and it appeared as though the open classroom pupils used desks more often. In practice, however, pupils used many other areas of the room to carry on their work including lying on the floor to write, or sitting on the rug while the teacher read a story.

Category two, Moves in and around Room, was useful because the overt behavior of walking across the room, etc., was easy to observe and classify as student choice or teacher-institution control. It was possible to understand most antecedents for this behavior, such as the bell ringing to signal recess. The conventional classroom had a number of incidences of movement, but it was mostly by teacher control and in small sequences, such as the student moving to the door for recess or going to the reading circle and remaining there. In the open classroom, student movement often progressed in a series, as for example, moving to the typewriter, typing a note, taking the note to another pupil, returning with that pupil to the typewriter, and working together on another note. In other words, the movement chosen in the open classroom generally reflected the many alternatives the students had in this category.

In category three, Movement out of the Room, it was necessary to know the working schedule of classroom activities to discern some of the recordings made for this
behavior. The deciding criteria for this category was that the student left the room without the permission of the teacher. In one case, this behavior was recorded as "student choice" only later to be changed to "teacher-institution control" because the observer learned from the teacher that the child had left at a scheduled time for language development class. Recess, lunch, and other activities scheduled by the school would also be marked as institutional control. It was observed that at no time did the children leave the conventional classroom without prior approval. The open classroom, by contrast, allowed the child to attend to matters outside the room as they happened to arise, such as one little girl going to visit her brother in another classroom.

Category four, Gathers or Returns Materials, was not used as it should have been. That is, it was decided that if the teacher had assigned a task, gathering material in consequence to that task would be marked as teacher control. Examination of this decision, in light of the "means-ends" dimensions developed in the conceptual framework, shows that unless the teacher asked for specific materials, the students might have had a choice open to them. This was especially noted in one instance in the conventional classroom, when the teacher assigned a "spring picture" and allowed the students to use whatever materials they could find to make the picture. Admittedly,
this is a small degree of choice, but there were alter-
natives. In the open classroom, more goals and means
(materials) were available to the student, and it was
easier to mark this category as the children carried out
their activities.

Category five, Works on Task, was not broken into
the various kinds of tasks (although supplementary des-
criptive notes revealed this) or activities because of the
danger of attaching value judgments to the different tasks.
This category revealed more incidences of task work in
the conventional classroom, and this would probably have
been the case. However, due to the problem of marking
only changes in behavior, which was mentioned previously,
these data might misrepresent the situation. The anteced-
ent in this category was usually clear, as it was possible
to see if the teacher had made the assignment or not.
Teacher suggestions in regards to the performance of any
task were not considered as control.

In Category six, Watches, Listens, Talks with
Another Pupil, it was difficult for the investigator to
decide in which column the observed behavior should be
marked. Did the child choose to listen to another pupil,
or was he doing so because of his role in the reading
group? If a student watches his neighbor, and then goes
back to a task, and then watches his neighbor again, too
much inference was necessary to decide whether it was
random looking or a deliberate action. If the category was "talks" only, it might have been easier to decide; that is, the child did choose to start conversation with another student, or was requested to talk to another in a formal lesson.

Category seven, Watches, Listens, Talks with Teacher, was important in determining how much interaction between the teacher and pupil was controlled. Less difficulty was encountered in determining whether the student's behavior belonged in the "teacher control" or "student choice" column, than in category six. Control was considered when a teacher initiated a conversation which consisted of some direction or specific order given to the pupil. "Student choice" was marked when the pupil sought out the teacher to ask a question or to ask permission to do something. A problem of this category was in trying to determine "teacher control" when she gave broad directions or asked "open" questions so that students had a variety of responses available to them. Both classrooms exhibited a greater degree of control, rather than choice, in this category. The only difference between the two rooms, was that the conventional classroom had more situations of total group or large group control in this category than did the open classroom.

It was also noted that the teacher in the open classroom effectively used the technique of "open" questioning in
much of her interchange with the pupils. More refinement of the example cases is needed to handle this situation.

Both categories eight, Physical Contact with Another Pupil, and nine, Physical Contact with Teacher, were found to be less useful than anticipated. It was thought that these categories would be used more often in the open classroom where the student felt freer to touch one another and the teacher more often. In practice, the open classroom students did have more physical contact, but it was extremely difficult to determine whether choice or preference was operating, or if the student was behaving unconsciously when touching. The inference of the criterion of judgment seemed to be lacking most of the time in the behaviors observed in these categories.

Category ten was Works on Maintenance Task. The conventional room was arranged in a more orderly fashion and the teacher assigned weekly jobs to different pupils in the class. The children had no choice as to jobs, but they did seem to enjoy listening to the assignments at the beginning of the week and then carrying out their jobs. The teacher in the open classroom also controlled most of the maintenance work in the room. This category was included to see if the children would do some job that was beneficial to the total group, if he had the choice. This did not prove to be true. In neither class did the children do many maintenance tasks unless requested to do
so. This was not a helpful category and could easily be subsumed under category five. It did not warrant a separate category of its own and would not be included in another study of choice.

Category eleven was Raises Hand. This behavior did not show any alternatives and was not helpful in determining choice on the part of the student. The group situation demanded some means of signaling and this was the means. Because of the more frequent group situations in the conventional classroom, this particular behavior was seen much more frequently in the conventional setting. Hand raising would not be included in another study of choice.

Category twelve was Habit or Unconscious Behavior. This category seemed to show that the least productive pupils in both rooms displayed more aimless behaviors, but it was not connected with choice. It was originally put in the observation form because it was known that these behaviors would be seen and it was thought that this would be a catch-all type category. It was useful in some ways, but would be more useful if another section was added to the heading—that of neutral behavior. This would be used when no particular student behavior was discernible as either being choice or control.
Conclusions

The review of the literature has revealed that many outstanding educators have designated student freedom as an important and necessary goal in education. Support for freedom is explicit in these authors' writings as they indicate that through freedom a student develops responsible knowledge. Choice-making is necessarily associated with this responsible knowledge. From the observational studies reviewed, it is clear that researchers are interested in the quality of teaching and learning; that is, they are concerned with developing classroom climates which produce better educational results. Teachers who encourage pupil participation by soliciting and accepting pupil ideas (in short, enhance student freedom) are viewed as creating climates in the classroom which produce better learning in both the cognitive and affective domains. The review of observational methods also indicates this type of procedure to be an effective means for collecting data for the study of the complexities of the classroom.

This study has used both the observational method and a conceptual development to analyze student freedom of choice and choice-making behavior. The conceptual framework determined that choice-making presumes action, judgment, and the freedom to select from alternatives on
the part of the student. It was further concluded that some overt behaviors are resultant from choice, and that enough student overt choice-making behavior is exhibited in the early school years to warrant study.

The observational method used in this study dichotomized student behavior into "student choice" and "teacher-institutional control." This method provided an overall look at freedom of choice for the student in the classroom; however, some of the categories were not seen to be helpful. Categories 2 - Movement in and around Room; 3 - Moves out of Room; 4 - Gathers or Returns Materials; 5 - Works on Task; 7 - Watches, and/or Listens, and/or Talks with Teacher; and 12 - Habit or Unconscious Behavior were useful in their present state. Categories 1 - Movement in and around Seat; 6 - Watches, and/or Listens, and/or Talks with Another Pupil; 8 - Physical Contact with Another Pupil; 9 - Physical Contact with the Teacher; 10 - Performs Maintenance Task; and 11 - Raises Hand were less useful in observing student choice-making behavior. Many of the student behaviors were clustered around three categories: Gathers and Returns Materials; Works on Task; and Watches, Listens, Talks with Teacher.

The three-minute observation periods were not useful since they failed to provide enough time to fully understand the antecedents of the pupil behavior, while the twenty-minute periods did not have this difficulty.
Recording only the changes in pupil behavior was thought to give some inconsistent data, since it implied that the bouncy or more active student displayed more choice or control with his more rapid changing of behaviors. The pupil who concentrated on a task was marked fewer times, and thus appeared to have less choice or control.

The method of observation for this study has some useful categories which, if incorporated into a more comprehensive instrument, could be systematically and reliably tested. A more comprehensive instrument would be sufficient to study the student's overt choice-making behaviors in the primary classroom. Freedom of choice is reflected in some of the behaviors of the primary school child and is observable.

There was a difference in student behavior exhibited in the two classrooms observed. The open classroom contained a wider range of alternatives for students to choose their means and more immediate goals, and student behavior reflected this. The conventional classroom did not allow as many alternatives for activities to the students, and their behavior appeared to be more controlled. This conclusion, however, applies only to the two classrooms observed. Since there was no random selection of classrooms or of pupils, the data offer tentative support to a positive answer that it is possible to observe the
behaviors of pupils in two classrooms and verify from those observations that one classroom nurtures more student freedom of choice than does the other.

Implications and Recommendations

The implications of studying and, therefore, emphasizing student freedom of choice in the elementary classroom are significant. With increasing interest, educators are considering ways to restructure the whole setting. The education critics of the sixties have challenged the schools to find better ways of attending to student needs rather than just imparting knowledge to the student. Some of the changes that may come about in the seventies will be responsive to the criticisms concerning student boredom and frustration in the classroom.

Advances have been made in teaching the cognitive skills necessary to the existence of the student in the school. However, these technological advances do not fill the void in empathy between the teacher, institution, and student. There is a need for more humane dealing with children, and not mere idolization of youth. More humane interaction calls for honoring freedom of choice for the student.

The early years are instrumental in the child's progress toward responsible choice-making behavior. The
opportunity for the pupil to practice making choices is as important as his opportunity to practice sums and the alphabet. Practice in choosing alternatives gives more than a sense of freedom to the student; practice also provides the pupil with the means to develop responsibility to others as the outcome of the pupil's choice reflects on himself and those around him.

To create opportunity for student freedom of choice, it is necessary to study this complex process. As Flanders focused on interaction as a means for describing and improving classroom climate, focus on student freedom of choice can give impetus to training teachers who will be more aware of the need for student choice, and will see possibilities for making alternatives available to the student.

It is recommended that the useful categories developed in this study be further refined into an instrument to measure the incidence of "student choice" or "teacher-institution control" in the elementary classroom. Possible expansion and refinement of the following categories would benefit the observer in viewing student choice: 2 - Movement in and around Room; 3 - Moves out of Room; 4 - Gathers or Returns Materials; 5 - Works on Task; 7 - Watches, and/or Listens, and/or Talks with Teacher; and 12 - Habit or Unconscious Behavior. Other categories
or sub-categories would be helpful in a closer study of classroom opportunities for student choice.

A change in recording the behavior of students is recommended since marking the form only on behavior change did not give a completely accurate picture of the student being observed. The form could be marked at fifteen second intervals in the twenty-minute observation period.

Continued focus on the behavior of students is suggested since the teacher is not directly involved with the student during every moment of the day. In a classroom where the teacher works with smaller groups or individuals more often, focus on student behavior would be essential.


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