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BUILDING ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF DESTABILIZING CRISSES AND THEIR COPING ROUTINES IN FOUR SELECTED MID-WESTERN SECONDARY ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

The Ohio State University

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BUILDING ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF
DESTABILIZING CRISES AND THEIR COPING ROUTINES
IN FOUR SELECTED MID-WESTERN SECONDARY
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

DISSER TATION

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

By
Timothy John Ilg, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1982

Reading Committee:
Elsie J. Alberty
Donald P. Sanders
James K. Duncan

Approved By

Elsie J. Alberty
Department of Educational Foundations
and Research
DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my wife, Mimi, who deserves to be awarded her own degree for the love, dedication and support she has given me throughout this process.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the members of my reading committee: Dr. Elsie Alberty, Dr. Donald Sanders, and Dr. James K. Duncan. Without their support, patience, concern, and valuable guidance, this research project would not have been completed.

Appreciation is also extended to: Dr. Frank W. Hale, the graduate school representative, Dr. Raymond Muessig, who has supported my educational efforts for so many years, and to the members of the four alternative schools who participated in this study.

A special word of thanks to my parents, Rosemary and Norbert Ilg, whose love, faith, and devotion to their children have been a source of strength throughout my life and to my wife's parents, Lois and C.P. Lane, whose continued support and love has made this accomplishment so much more meaningful.
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Background

The last fifteen years have witnessed the proliferation of both publicly and privately funded secondary alternative and free schools (Raywid, 1981). In spite of the lingering perception that these schools serve either disaffected or troubled students and that their curricula emphasize affective and not cognitive learning, alternative schools enjoy the loyal and even overzealous support of a small but growing segment of the communities in which they operate. One reason for the growth of alternative school acceptance has been that with the multiplication of alternative schools has come a variety of program content and philosophy (Arnowe and Strout, 1978). The general acceptance of alternative educational programs is so well established that alternative schools are being initiated in school districts that have been constrained by declining revenues and mounting inflation to reduce or eliminate athletic programs, teaching and administrative staff, and overall support services (Barr, 1975). The overriding reason for this institutional commitment to expanding the number and kind of alternative schools is that, on the whole, these schools have successfully demonstrated their effectiveness, if not superiority, in satisfying the divergent instructional, social, and personal needs (Barr, 1981 and Smith, Gregory, and Pugh, 1981). Notwithstanding the
Increasing public and professional commitment to the expansion of secondary alternative school programs, the number of alternative schools has not grown at a sufficient pace to satisfy the public's demand. In fact, as McGuire (1981) notes, these schools appear to reach a plateau and then to decline.

The reasons for the dearth of alternative schools are many and complex. In general, alternative schools are exposed to many hazards -- both external and internal -- that impede or terminate their growth within their communities. Alternative schools do not receive general social support inasmuch as American culture still accepts the values of traditional education, which holds that students should not actively participate in determining the scope and content of their course of studies. In addition, alternative programs are often underfunded and experience difficulties in locating and acquiring outside sources of financial support (Raywid, 1981); many have closed or simply did not open owing to newly developed financial crises (Duke, 1978). Because of their unorthodox structure and instructional methods, alternative schools frequently receive harassment from school and community officials (Deal and Nolan, 1978). Time after time, however, alternative schools are victims of their own organizational structure and its inability to meet or solve the problems that threaten the alternative program (Deal, 1975). Furthermore, many alternative schools in their first decade failed to cultivate a positive self-identity and thus failed to articulate a positive ideology, which would have provided philosophical stability (Gregory and Smith, 1981). The failure to
develop a positive ideology, often led to a general uncertainty as to the place of authority in the school, thus resulting in and perpetuating what Singleton, Boyer, and Dorsey (1972) labeled a "leadership vacuum."

An alternative school's ability to manage and contain crises is particularly important to its survival and subsequent growth. Financial difficulties and administrative persecution do not always contribute directly to an alternative school's instability and may even provide strength by unifying alternative school participants (Winnitoy, 1977). Yet the failure of many alternative schools to produce organizations capable of managing their special problems and objectives may have rendered the schools more susceptible to public and professional attack with the resulting loss of financial and administrative support (McGuire, 1981). Ironically, the divisive issues that destabilize alternative school organizations are common to the evolutionary development of many alternative schools and are not, sui generis, specific to one school or to one class of alternative school (Deal, 1975).

Very early in the period of most rapid growth of alternative schools, Argyris (1974) concluded that the cause of some alternative schools' failure existed within the schools themselves and not in external political, economic, or legal factors. When subjected to an organizational analysis, secondary alternative schools reveal an organizational life cycle of their own.

Typically, the development of a secondary alternative school falls into three stages. In the first stage, staff, students, and community experience a sense of exhilaration and enthusiasm. The first
stage is not long-lived and leads to the second stage, which is characterized by melancholy and dejection. The depression of the second stage gives way to the sweeping discontent of the third stage, which eventually forces the school to resolve its organizational difficulties in one of three ways: (1) disband, (2) reorganize and compromise, or (3) adopt conventional patterns (Deal, 1975).

The Research Problem

The experience of the Columbus Alternative High School, since its inception in 1978, has not been unlike the experiences of other secondary alternative schools. It has seen withering administrative and financial support and has sustained the three-stage developmental agonies common to the evolution of secondary alternative schools. Nevertheless, the school flourished and grew. Not only did the school weather these destabilizing crises, but it weathered them without sustaining significant modification. Even during the period of highest public and bureaucratic scrutiny, the Columbus Alternative High School did not need to resort to the ideological ruses played by one California alternative school (which promised compliance with the Board but continued to act as before) (Deal and Nolan, 1978) in order to gain higher levels of support. When the Columbus Alternative High School concluded its third developmental stage, it did not "hybridize" but continued to offer substantially the same program with which it began. In fact, the school was able to realize more fully the special alternative aims and programs that originally had been its most attractive
features but which had also produced the greatest amount of administrative opposition. Indeed, despite several seriously divisive problems that arose during the school's third year of operation, a survey administered by the Department of Research and Development of the Columbus Public Schools revealed that 86 percent of the parents of the school's students supported the school's program and did not perceive a need for any change. Presently, the school has achieved stability with community as well as professional recognition. As a result of the school's success, the administration of the Columbus Public Schools is now considering the establishment of other secondary alternative schools to meet public demand.

The success of the Columbus Alternative High School in preserving its identity and the integrity of its program in the face of destabilizing conditions suggests that, underlying the school's organizational process, there exists a body of articulated or unarticulated principles, or more precisely coping routines, which enabled the administration and staff to effectively solve major problems. In other words, these coping routines, defined herein as general assertions of an indicative course or courses of action to be taken in response to specific destabilizing conditions, provide a conceptual and organizational framework within which problems can be identified and defined and within which the strategies for their solution can be framed. Working within the naturalistic paradigm, this investigator believes that the discovery of a set of coping routines would be of value to teachers and administrators working in new, alternative settings. The coping
routines could furnish them with appropriate strategies to manage the organizational crises that threaten to destabilize newly established alternative schools. To be sure, this research will not describe all possible coping routines found in all successful alternative schools because of its limited scope. Moreover, the investigator may have missed many coping routines which exist subliminally within the realm of Guba's tacit knowledge. Nevertheless, the description of these coping routines, along with the definition of major common destabilizing conditions, may make a contribution toward stimulating more comprehensive research in this area.

These coping routines are by no means systematic policy formulations; they are, on the contrary, suggestions for devising policies or modes of response to destabilizing conditions. They cannot necessarily be hierarchically ordered and need not always be expressed. Nonetheless, the investigator has proposed that a set of well-understood, albeit tacitly understood, guidelines for response to crises was present throughout the Columbus Alternative High School's existence. Furthermore, the application of these coping routines or problem-solving guidelines to critical situations has provided the administration and staff with a diversified yet coherent model of approaching problems that threatened the school's stability and survival. The model is not prescriptive, although it will admit tabularization. In tabular representation, the model may not be complete in that additional ad hoc coping routines may emerge as the school continues. However, insofar as they offer a reasonable heuristic paradigm for problem solving, the
coping routines that the research yielded will be sufficient for the discussional theory proposed in this study.

Since public demand for alternative education is increasing, it is important for educational planners to identify what some of the successful principles of managing destabilizing crises are. Moreover, teachers and administrators need to know how these coping routines were applied, what the specific problems were that threatened to destabilize the school, and what the results were of the application of the coping routines. Finally, educators should know whether other successful secondary alternative schools have used these or similar coping routines in solving major crises. If other alternative schools are managing crises through the use of similar routines, then this research may point to a more generalized model for crisis management. The level of generalization of this research is intermediate and stands midway between informed intuition and grand theory.

In the past, secondary alternative schools have failed owing either to their inability to cope with severely unsettling problems or to their reliance on ineffective problem-solving mechanisms (Deal 1975). With the stepped-up demand for more secondary alternative schools, too many educators are embarking on new alternative ventures without considering the importance of including in their organizational design a means to process the complex problems that will arise. If this research can generate a model of limited transferability describing how several selected, successful secondary alternative schools responded to major destabilizing conditions, then educational planners and educators
participating in alternative educational experiences might be able to forestall dissolution or hybridization. Should more secondary alternative schools manage crises that assail them in their early years, then educators may begin to take the first steps toward evaluating the important educational ideas of secondary alternative schools per se, and not be led astray in their judgment by accidental program failures owing to flaws in the organizational mechanism for problem solving.

The problem of this qualitative research is to identify and define (1) a general set of conditions that could, if left unchecked, destabilize an alternative school and (2) describe the strategies (coping routines) that successful secondary alternative schools have used to avert or neutralize the destabilizing effects of major, internally generated crises that confront alternative schools in their first years of operation. These internally generated crises spring from the inability of newly created alternative institutions to cope with effectively the organizational dynamics of the new setting (Deal, 1975). Consequently, during the course of this study, the researcher will invoke the descriptive findings and theoretical formulations of organizational researchers both to guide the study's analyses and to frame its conclusions. Indeed, the conceptual linchpin of the proposed research rests in the fact that new alternative schools, by virtue of their being organizations possessed of a dynamic and not static orientation, share with each other parallel and (to borrow a term from music theory) "enharmonic" life cycles. As Kimberly (1981) wrote,
Research into the dynamic organizational causes for institutional collapse or conventionalization has merit beyond abstract scholarly interest, for it may yield the outlines of an empirical model that could help to reduce the rate of attrition of secondary alternative schools. An empirical model of some successfully applied problem-solving principles which guided successful alternative school staff members and administrators through the formative years of their school's existence may enable other educators to build problem-solving methods into their programs before they begin operation.

The central questions that will frame this research lie where the theory of dynamic organizations and the elaboration of the destabilizing crises and their coping routines intersect. The investigator has framed his research by the following major question and it's two subquestions.

1. What are some problem-solving principles or coping routines used by selected successful alternative schools to manage destabilizing conditions that bring about a change of the school's original direction?
   (a) What are the most common destabilizing conditions that confront incipient selected secondary magnet schools?
(b) Have selected successful alternative schools solved similar major crises through the application of these principles or have different principles been employed with successful results?

Object and Description of the Study

The object of the study is to discover and identify the major destabilizing conditions that arose at specific times during the first three years of the Columbus Alternative High School's existence and to specify the actions taken by the staff and administration in their efforts to respond to, mitigate, or preempt the effects of these destabilizing conditions. In addition, the study will attempt to discover whether three other successful, magnet-type, urban secondary alternative schools responded to the same or similar crises with a parallel set of problem-solving strategies in their first years of operation.

Magnet-type, urban secondary alternative schools have been targeted since (1) they share the same baseline standards for alternative schools in general (McMillan, 1980), and (2) the Columbus Alternative High School itself is designated a magnet high school. All magnet-type schools share with the Columbus Alternative High School the common experience of owing their formation to a future (whether potential or imminent) or present desegregation order (McMillan, 1980). Furthermore, the resemblances extend to the selection procedures used to staff the schools, to the social and racial composition of the student
body, and to philosophical underpinnings of the school. Also, as McMillan noted, "Most often, magnet schools are identifiably 'good' schools; they are well attended, parent involvement is high, and dropout rates are low" (1980, p. 45). Such schools furnish the researcher with an institutional profile much like that of the Columbus Alternative High School. Consequently, the structural and philosophical similarities will enhance the validity of the results since the objects of the investigation are categorically similar.

The analysis of the school's procedures and strategies in addressing these destabilizing conditions will yield a set of immediately generalized propositions or rubrics that may help administrators and faculty of incipient alternative schools in planning their own courses of action against similar destabilizing conditions. Moreover, the results of the study will enable educators who are preparing to establish alternative schools to include in the school's design programs for action that make provision for the eventual appearance of these destabilizing conditions.

**Significance of the Study**

The study will benefit educators by listing some of the major destabilizing conditions that have led to the dissolution or hybridization of selected alternative schools and by presenting a set of field-tested heuristic principles or rubrics that can provide educators with an organizational framework in which they can preempt or mitigate the effects of these crises with the minimum amount of change to the
alternative school's aims and programs. Alternative school participants often do not think in terms of organizational systems and structures; consequently they may lack the organizational tools to handle intricate problems when they surface. These participants not only need an overall understanding of alternative schools to think systemically about the complexities involved in creating and running a secondary alternative school (Deal and Nolan, 1978), but they also need specific guidelines to assist them in identifying the problems and in formalizing their solutions.

In 1975, Deal noted that a central element in the demise of alternative schools was their failure to deal effectively with internal problems. For Deal and others, the internal problems largely centered on the apportionment of authority. In a subsequent study in 1978, he and Nolan charted a conceptual map to assist researchers in determining whether a school is alternative and to alert alternative school planners to the problems emergent during a school's evolution. But the concern has been wholly about the definition of an alternative school and the focus has been on assisting researchers rather than guiding the developers of alternative schools. Altogether, recent research has focused on the theoretical description of alternative school problems, and little research has been conducted from the field to investigate successful management practices in solving problems without doing violence to the original alternative intents of the school. In addition, no comparative studies have been made to determine whether successful secondary alternative schools employed a common methodology in managing crises.
A study of the guiding principles used to meet and solve conditions that destabilize alternative schools will aid educators in averting the demise of future alternative schools or in accelerating their stabilization. A study based on data collected from selected secondary alternative schools of demonstrated success is significant to the planner or administrator of an alternative school inasmuch as the problems described will, in all likelihood, be similar to those which he or she is currently facing. As alternative schools develop, the problems become more complex. By having at hand a narration of the problems and methods of solving those problems experienced by other schools, the educators may be able at least to chart an approach to specific problems. The investigator does not presume that these coping routines are universally effective. As Guba cautions again and again (1981), reality is multi-dimensional and does not readily conform, to all inclusive, theoretical laws. The conclusions of this research are merely suggestive of phenomena that appear to warrant additional investigation. But this limitation does not diminish the potential value of the study. A study that is descriptive, not proscriptive, a study that suggests tactics of remediation rather than the remedies themselves, will enable educators to avoid the pitfalls of overly simplistic solutions to problems and to concentrate on developing a dynamic problem-solving process tailored to their specific situation.

The study may enable some alternative schools to survive the first years of crises and be evaluated on the basis of their program above and not on the basis of whether they were organizationally capable
of withstanding the internal shocks connatural to all alternative schools irrespective of their ideologies or the communities wherein they were born. A systems approach to problem solving has much to recommend itself to alternative schools, for alternative schools' programs will receive a fair hearing only when their organizations can endure the strain of the first years.

Methodology

The central methodological orientation of this study is that the facts of social reality are highly interactive, multiple, divergent, and interrelated. Hence, the researcher adopted the naturalistic paradigm for inquiry as the model most amenable to examining the multivariate patterns of human activity within the dynamics of complex organizations.

... the behavioral scientist works with phenomena that exist largely in the minds of people or that are strongly mediated by what is in the minds of people, for example, their values. An assumption of multiple realities is simply more credible than that of a single reality. Moreover, it is impossible to believe, on the basis of experience, that an investigator can keep an objective distance when the objects of his investigation are people, and it might not be desirable to do so even if one could. Finally, it is difficult to imagine what a context-free generalization would be like with respect to human behaviors, which are so strongly contextually mediated (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 63).

Undergirding the naturalistic orientation, is the qualitative method, which supplies the investigator with a conceptually valid and procedurally efficient system of investigation that warrants the researcher to postpone hypothesis generation and to delay formulating assumptions until they have emerged from data collected from several sources. In this study, the researcher constructed a bi-partite
methodology following the guidelines of qualitative research: Data Collection and Data Analysis.

**Data Collection:** To ground emergent theory in a sufficiently rich nucleus of data, the researcher assembled data from two operational research techniques of data collection: (1) elite and intensive interviewing, a human-to-human and interactive measure, and (2) documents archived at the Columbus Alternative High School, an evaluator-to-object and nonreactive measure. The elite and intensive, unstructured interview enabled the observer to consider the quality as well as the quantity of the informant’s experience with the institutions without undue fear of compromising the integrity of the data by manipulating the quota sample. More central to the focus of the research, however, was the likelihood of the informant interview to generate context-related data from which later, more rigorous hypotheses may emerge. Because of its high reactivity, the elite interview yielded the sensitive data necessary to measure the emerging hypotheses of this research. Moreover, the reactivity of the informant interviews provided the researcher with a procedural counterbalance to the low and even nonreactiveness of the documents that also grounded his inquiry. These data from the informant interview yielded information richly toned by the respondents emotions. The documents provided a base for triangulation to test systematically the validity of the interview data.
Data Analysis. The analytic method employed by the researcher will be the constant comparison procedure proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The constant comparative method provides a logically sufficient, analytical approach that is materially well-suited to the objective of the research, which was to test the tentative hypothesis that successful, urban, secondary alternative schools are those which have withstood the effects of certain destabilizing conditions by means of a well-stated and/or well-understood set of problem-solving strategies. The data yielded information about various processes, conditions, and results of certain specific actions that suggested a theoretical formulation that did not modify or recondition the original hypothesis and in fact substantiated it. Glaser-Strauss' procedural marriage of a phenomenological mode of analysis with a hypothesis generating and revising technique enabled the researcher to record, classify, and generalize a large body of testimony with a high degree of empirical certainty. Before the investigator began to write the theory, the data analysis was conducted in three stages: (a) incident comparison and categorization, (b) category integration, and (c) theory delimitation.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the mid-Seventies, a large body of literature describing research regarding alternative schools has accumulated, and the literature written after 1978 can no longer be exclusively characterized by what Parrett (1979) called a "hortatory or descriptive nature." Much significant work has reflected on the history of the alternative movement and has begun evaluating the alternative movement as a whole as well as individual alternative schools. In spite of the comparative youthfulness of the alternative concept, the literature has begun to move toward a tentative consensus with respect to the definition of an alternative school, to the differences between them and traditional schools, to their rapid rate of growth, and to reasons for their failure and their prospects for success.

From the late 1960's onward, as a result of American society's search for voluntary desegregation measures alternative schools were linked to the concept of magnet schools in an effort to achieve equal educational opportunity for all (Warren, 1978). Consequently, those alternative schools created to attract minority and nonminority students by specialty programs belong to a special class of alternative schools because of the importance of their unique contexts (Rossell, 1979 and
Grafflin, 1977). The magnet school phenomenon, partly because of its inherent social interest and partly because of the Federal government's underwriting it, has generated a large body of its own literature.

In addition to the literature specific to alternative schools and magnet-type, alternative schools, a significant body of literature has grown up around the organizational design of innovative institutions and the particular problems these institutions face. The conclusions of this organizational research, particularly in the area of self-designing organizations, shed a great deal of light on magnet-type, alternative schools and the problems generic to them.

**Definition of an Alternative School**

The alternative schools of the Seventies opened as answers "to an expressed need of some group in the community" (Case, 1981, p. 554). However, Smith (1974) noted that the nature of alternative schools is so varied that no one model can embrace their diversity. Smith (1974), Paskal and Miller (1975), McElhinney, Spring, Thompson, and Zumbrum (1976), Nathan (1976), Raywid (1980) and Perry and Duke (1978) have all elected to provide descriptive definitions of alternative schools. The descriptive characteristics include the following:

1. Voluntary clientele -- students and parents as well as teachers make the choice to participate;
2. Commitment to be more responsive to some community need.
3. Flexible and negotiable learning rate -- with emphasis on personalized learning in a variety of settings.
4. Openness to all students -- enrollment is more representative of the entire community and the school does not serve a selected target group of students.
5. More open involvement of students and teachers in the decision-making process.

6. Well-defined and more comprehensive goals — an extensive planning process brings about clearly stated objectives with emphasis on curriculum relevance.

7. Extensive opposition from programs to which they are alternative.

8. Singular difference from existing programs — curricula are interdisciplinary, informal teacher-student relationships, new methods of governance, more humane to teachers and students, outside resource persons used, more flexible use of the school day, week, or year.

The Difference in Alternative Schools

Alternative schools differ significantly from "traditional" programs. Parrett (1979) found that both teachers and students perceived instructional practices as being significantly different from those found in conventional schools within the same district. In addition a difference in methodology, teachers perceive a significantly different classroom environment where they experience closer interpersonal relationships with their students (Stark, 1973). Nirenberg (1977) found that teachers saw a significant difference in (1) administrative climate, (2) their personal sense of power, (3) the degree of bureaucratization, and (4) the degree of professionalism. Alternative schools have unusual differences in social climate, and those differences "run deep" (Gregory and Smith, 1981). Students are viewed as whole people, and teachers "tend to substitute bonds of affection for authority" (Gregory and Smith, 1981, p. 5). Moreover, alternative schools differ in organizational structure by emphasizing intrinsic cohesiveness (Cusick, Martin, and Palonsky, 1976). Alternative schools
tend to move away from conventional practices by providing for independent study, offering mini-courses, scheduling tutorials, and allowing for off-campus learning activities (Perry and Duke, 1978).

The Growth of Alternative Schools

Between 1968 and 1975 the number of alternative schools in operation grew from fewer than 100 to as many as 5,000 (Barr, 1975). Soon after 1975, however, the alternative school movement suffered a decline:

As the 1970's wore on, the repudiation of the 1960's grew more intense. A number of the ideas associated with the early alternatives were ridiculed and worse. Many of the first alternatives of the sixties had been private schools of a "do your own thing," Summerhillian bent. Observers of the seventies were increasingly likely to reject the "free" school concept along with the counterculture they associated with it. Many also took "free school" to be synonymous with "alternative school" and, therefore, wanted to scrap that idea as well. (Barr and Bennett, 1979)

As public systems created magnet schools to postpone court-ordered busing (Arnové and Strout, 1978), alternative schools regained ground by being co-opted by individuals who had originally opposed them (Duke, 1978). By the end of 1979, Helm noted that alternative schools had outgrown their early anti-establishment images and began to direct their efforts "toward institutionalizing the alternatives which they or their predecessors worked so diligently to establish" (p. 57). In 1981 Hamilton could claim that "alternative schools live" (p. 131) and was able to enumerate some of the characteristics of a successful alternative school.
The Failure of Alternative Schools

However, before such qualified successes could be announced, many alternative schools failed, as was narrated in chapter one. Solo (1977) summarized many of the reasons for their failure:

1. The failure to achieve a strong academic program.
2. The failure to provide individualized learning.
3. The failure to provide strong, adult leadership.
4. The failure to communicate clearly the school's programs to the parents.
5. The failure to foster student freedom without sacrificing order.
6. The failure to meet external pressures by central administration, neighbors, and public officials.
7. The failure to establish a coherent philosophy and avoid philosophical rifts.
8. The failure to prevent teacher burnout.

As early as 1973, Glines enumerated four causes for alternative schools' not remaining innovative: (1) the failure of the staff to benefit from workshop "learnings"; (2) the failure to recover from the loss of a charismatic leader or to provide for on-going change in the decision making process; (3) the failure to maintain momentum owing to the staff's self-complacency; and (4) the failure to make provisions for a change of attitudes in the community an alternative school may serve.

Deal (1975), Bosna, McCardle, and McLean (1976), and McGuire (1981) strongly suggest that alternative schools fail because of organization difficulties, especially when program managers could not exercise their directive and leadership roles. Schools that failed
passed through three developmental stages: euphoria, psychic upheaval, and dissatisfaction before the school dissolved or became conventional (Deal, 1975, see Chapter One for a more detailed description). As early as 1972, the Center for New Schools had seen that many problems in alternative schools stemmed from the decision-making mechanisms operant in alternative schools. The Center formulated forty-two propositional conclusions and questions that addressed key issues which have brought about alternative school failure but which practitioners still ignore. Some of the Center's principal conclusions are:

-- Alternative schools that are just starting are repeating many of the same energy-consuming mistakes of existing alternative schools.

-- Direct democracy through all-school or community meetings is inadequate as the primary method of decision-making. Some effective form of representative governance must be found.

-- Physical location places key constraints on alternative school decision-making.

-- No alternative operates "outside the system." Schools merely choose the points at which they wish to relate to the larger society. The school will constantly face the issue of conflict between its own agenda and the agenda of the outside individuals and organizations to which it must relate.

-- Constant appeals to the danger of external threats are inadequate to build an alternative community.

-- There is often a limited amount of trust between people in alternative schools. This is related to an extreme reluctance to delegate authority or to allow anyone to play a leadership role.

-- One of the primary means for strengthening alternative school decision-making should be to increase its clarity.

-- Without clarity concerning basic goals, continuing conflicts on specifics are likely to immobilize the school.
Schools should clarify what external constraints they operate under. Any student or teacher joining the school should understand that at that point in time, these external constraints are a reality of the school's operation. (Deal and Nolan, 1978.)

Even as late as 1981, when Hamilton could matter-of-factly write that "Alternative schools usually fail by degenerating into disorganization or conventionality" (p. 147) he still felt it incumbent upon him to repeat the same admonition issued nine years before - that those responsible for developing new alternative schools to meet current needs can learn much from the experiences of earlier alternative schools.

The Success of Alternative Schools

Alternative schools need to develop a success tradition that will allow more schools to survive by warning them of past errors (Moore, 1974). Hamilton (1981) advocates that practitioners study successful alternative schools and adopt their practices. For him, success means that the school remained faithful to its original, innovative goals. Based on his study of a successful alternative school, he suggested three courses of action to avoid failure:

1. Attention to the school's goals cannot be limited to formulating and achieving agreement with them. It must include applying them in concrete instructional practices and organizational arrangements that give substance to what are otherwise merely fond hopes.

2. A useful way to confront this challenge is by attempting to clarify staff roles, keeping in mind the likelihood that staff members will conceive of their roles in different ways and look to different sources for clarification of their role expectations.
3. In order to resolve the tension between innovation and stability, there need to be some "role innovators," are able to match their personal interests and strengths with the goals of the school and to invent unconventional roles that embody those goals. (p. 147)

Case (1981) listed five factors that seem to have fostered success and survival: (1) attractive programs, (2) clear goal focus, (3) winning legitimacy from the education community, (4) finding reliable sources of funding, and (5) developing a positive school climate that enhances continued staff and student commitment. Parrett (1979) holds that "the successful tenure of the alternative school movement will be dependent upon the confrontation and satisfactory disposition" of the problems of (1) the stigma of being a "free school," (2) alternative by fiat, (3) educational faddism, (4) inadequate planning time, (5) overenthusiasm, (6) overexposure in the media and resulting resentment by others, and (7) funding (p. 40).

Barr, Colston, and Parrett (1977) conclude that successful alternative schools are more effective than conventional schools in the areas of cognitive achievement, development of positive attitudes and self-concepts, higher attendance and better discipline, and long-term effects after graduation. Smith, Gregory, and Pugh (1981) found that students felt that alternative schools came significantly closer to meeting their needs than did conventional schools.

**Magnet Schools**

A magnet school, as defined by the United States Code (201619(9)) is "a school or education center that offers a special curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students of different
racial backgrounds" and has been used since 1976 to stimulate voluntary desegregation (Royster, 1979). Alternative schools have been used since the 1960's to assist in voluntary desegregation of school districts (McMillan, 1980) and although the broad Federal court definition of a magnet school as one having a "distinctive program of study" encompasses great diversity, McMillan (1980) has listed four salient criteria of all magnet school definitions:

1. Magnet schools must offer an educational program that is different, special, distinctive, or otherwise distinguishable from the regular curriculum in nonmagnet schools.

2. The special curriculum must be attractive to students of all races, not just whites or blacks or Hispanics or other minority groups.

3. Magnet schools must be racially mixed and must have the effect of eliminating segregation of the races among the students.

4. Magnet schools should be open to students of all races on a voluntary basis, and any admission criteria that are imposed must not have the effect of discriminating on the basis of race. (p. 9).

Building on the courts' definition, Massarella (1978) viewed magnet schools as alternative schools having "specialized curricula to attract students with special interests" (p. 17), and these schools are a "magnet" in that they receive students from everywhere in the district. Sobel and Moon (1979) developed a checklist of optimal criteria for any magnet schools. The checklist items used in this study to designate the three selected schools are:

1. The percentages of minority/majority are reflective of district-wide percentages.

2. Assignment on voluntary basis should guarantee appropriate majority/minority composition.
3. Precautions should be taken to assure that the magnet-school does not become "elitist" (e.g. gifted only).

4. Precautions should be taken to assure that the magnet school does not come to be viewed negatively (a dumping ground).

5. Provisions should be made for sibling attendance.

6. The physical location is readily accessible to both minority and majority group students.

7. There is a clear definition of neighborhood (geographical, ethnic, racial).

8. Safeguards are present to insure socioeconomic mix.

9. Safeguards are present to insure that in the school and in individual classrooms, minority group isolation is not intensified.

10. Adequate provisions and practices are present for recruitment.

Basing his conclusions on a survey of parent attitudes, Comerford (1981) listed among other qualities that defined a magnet school: (1) the uniqueness of the curriculum and (2) the contentions of the literature advertising the school are supported by the school staff.

Magnet schools have paralleled the growth of alternative schools (Warren, 1978) and have been one of the fastest growing educational movements in American history (Levine and Campbell, 1977). There are, according to Levine and Campbell, four reasons for the intensive interest in magnet schools: (1) they have the potential to reduce racial isolation in districts threatened by court-ordered desegregation; (2) they provide a variety of options from informal, open schools to "fundamental" schools emphasizing discipline, dress codes, and academic skills; (3) they have the potential to improve large city school
systems; and (4) Federal, state, and local monies were available to support their initiation in financially beleaguered big-city school systems.

The results of evaluations of magnet schools have offered a mixed-bag. Some researchers like Royster and McMillan believe that they have not been particularly successful in mitigating the effects of segregation but have enjoyed considerable success in providing effective, special programs. Magnet schools with an image of excellence were more attractive than those with images of offering unique curricula (Royster, 1979). Other researchers like Levine and Eubanks (1979) and McIntire, Hughes, and Say (1982) believe that the excellent programs of these magnet schools has been responsible for promoting desegregation by providing high-quality, integrated education. However, Levine and Campbell (1977) cautioned that "There is reason to believe that decisions about the structure and organization of magnet schools will determine to a great extent the patterns of interaction among pupils" (p. 255).

The Structure of Innovative Organizations

Innovative organizations are not static entities with fixed structures. They have etiologies, memories, and emergent structures. Understanding of these organizations requires that the viewer look at them from a dynamic perspective (Kimberly, 1981). Organizations are subject to life cycles that resemble those occurring in the biological world. As Kimberly elaborated,
... one can speak of organizational birth, life, and death, and terms such as conception, gestation, birth trauma and even miscarriage and abortion are useful for describing some important events in organizational life. For organizations, as for people, conditions of birth and early infancy may shape later development in significant ways (pp. 6-7).

Under the organizational life cycle model, an innovative organization undergoes multiple changes that lead to its creation, transformation, and decline.

Decline of Organizations

Researchers have found that there are many sources of organizational decline. Whetten (1981) endorses the typology of decline proposed by Levine (1978). Organizations decline as a result of (1) organizational atrophy brought about by viewing situations as equivalent, unfit programs remain in place long after their usefulness has passed; (2) organizational vulnerability whose roots lie in the organization's failure to identify diminishing performance as a problem; (3) organizational loss of legitimacy which occurs when organizations ignore the value of cultivating political acceptance; and (4) environmental entropy that comes from the lessened capacity of the environment to foster an organization.

Zald and Ash (1966), invoking the Weber-Michels model, hold that organizations through which social movements manifest themselves will decay and become more conventional. Typically these organizations suffer from three types of change: (1) goal transformation, (2) shift to organizational maintenance, and (3) obligarchization. Goals move in a more conservative direction and are accommodated "to the dominant
societal consensus" (p. 327); the organization focus on the "requirements of organizational existence" and attempts to avoid conflict; and decision structures become increasingly less democratic and power becomes less dispersed.

Whetten (1981) observes that much organizational research has been devoted to responding to organizational decline. In particular, researchers such as Weick (1977), Staw (1977), and Bennis and Slater (1968) have argued in favor of "self-designing" organizations, which can respond more effectively to the conditions of decline. According to Weick, a self-designing organization is one that when it finds . . . a present design inadequate, it avoids having someone from the outside come in to rewire it; it does the rewiring itself . . . In self-design, the new design is underdetermined in the sense that fortuitous, arbitrary, sometimes even random elements are added to the portions of old designs and in the interaction between them new forms are generated (Weick, 1977, p. 37).

Whetten, however, doubts that organizations are capable of becoming truly self-design, "especially during times of crisis when the need to self design is greatest" (p. 367). Decline introduces effects that disturb organizational balance and inhibit innovation. Whetten observes that some writers "have argued that the relationship (between a high level of innovation and high organizational performance) is curvilinear and that either too little or too much innovation leads to low performance."

Deal, Meyer, and Scott (1974) argue that adoption of educational innovation has been unsuccessful because of a lack of organizational support. Rather than support a troubled innovation, educators tend to abandon it and select another.
One explanation for the high turnover of innovations is that necessary structural conditions either do not exist or they have been discouraged partially by emphasis on change for the sake of change. There appears to be lack of authority to manage or coordinate complex instructional or organizational innovations at a high level. This no doubt reflects another feature of the climate of innovation in which coordination or control carry negative connotation. (p. 126).

Gross, Giaquinta, and Bernstein (1971) adduced that another reason for the failure to implement innovation was the result of the inability of educators to understand the change process in general. Failure to implement is often caused by conditions existing within the organization; these conditions are interrelated and have significant influence on the success of innovative organizations. These conditions occur when

(1) Organizational members who are not resistant to change or whose initial resistance to it has been overcome may encounter obstacles in their efforts to implement an innovation which, if not removed, may make it impossible for them to carry it out.
(2) Individuals in organizations are in large part dependent upon their formal leaders to overcome these obstacles and they may not remove, or even be aware of, these constraints.
(3) Members who are initially favorable toward organizational change may later develop a negative orientation to an innovation, and, therefore, be unwilling to implement it as a consequence of the barriers and frustrations they have encountered in attempting to carry it out (pp. 8-9).

Staw (1977) proposes that researchers should not concentrate on developing or revising theoretical models based upon laboratory experimentation, but rather should offer methodologies grounded in everyday life. Laboratory experiments yield only results with internal validity:

The problem is that with each additional experimental control, the laboratory situation becomes more and more divorced from everyday life. Hence we cannot with confidence often generalize their results to the real world of the organization. The more the research participants, experimental treatments, and settings differ from the real world, the lower the external validity (p. 5).
An experimenting (innovative) organization will profit more from
a study of applicable methods with external validity. The behavioral
scientist should

... concentrate more on transferring methodological skills to
practicing administrators so that they themselves can experi-
mentally test the usefulness of various theories, including the
ones they have developed on their own. In this way, organiza-
tional researchers may make their greatest contribution to the
organizations they study -- and to the behavioral sciences
(p. 18).

A number of externally valid methodologies have been suggested
by Katz and Kahn (1966), Gross, Giaquinta, and Bernstein (1970) and
Smart and Vertinsky (1977). Katz and Kahn isolated in their studies of
active organizations several factors that can reduce organizational
decline. One method is to open communications exchange through effect
in informational techniques and skills. Another method is "to produce
individual change through the influence of the peer group" (p. 40).

Besides the major factor of influence in significant deci-
sions, there are other factors which account for the effective-
ness of group process. Discussion and decision about problems
of importance invoke powerful individual forces of self-
expression and self-determination. Not only are people
discussing important matters, but each individual is given a
chance to express his own views and to persuade others. Ideas
that come from the outside, even if significant for personal
welfare, are not as satisfying as the expression of a person's
own ideas on the problem (p. 43).

Gross, Giaquinta, and Bernstein identified in their case
studies four assumptions upon which to base the needs of organizations
for innovative implementation during a crisis. First, a staff needs to
develop a clear understanding of what innovation they intend to
implement. In other words, they must arrive at a consensus. Second,
the staff must have the skills to carry out the demands of implemen-
tation. Third, the staff must have the proper tools to carry out
Innovation. Fourth, the organization must be compatible with the "arrangements of the innovation," (Gross, Giaquinta, and Bernstein).

Smart and Vertinsky have gone beyond the phenomenon of organizational decline to analyze how crises can be managed under stress. They argue that implementation failures can be prevented by using a conceptual model of the crisis-decision process that concentrates on the patterns of developing "pathologies" and proposes means to enhance the coping abilities of organization members under stress. Stress brings about a weakening of the levels of cognitive efficiency and results in a consequent lack of decision readiness.

Under conditions of uncertainty, there is a need to develop a model of the situation with an appropriate repertoire of responses. Such a concept-formation process typically is slow. It requires simultaneous discrimination among alternate possible models of the situation and estimation of their parameters. In a familiar situation, the availability of a model for the situation permits quick convergence in reconciling new data from the surprise with existing concepts in the organization (p. 647).

Organizations need to continue to develop coping resources and create dual, specialized structures, "one for routine decision making and one for crisis decision making" (p. 655).

The literature pertinent to this study reveals that there are links between an innovative organization's success and survival and its ability to manage the crises that arise when it is troubled. The value of the research to this study rests in its corroboration of many of the phenomena that the investigator discovered in the course of this research. Magnet-type, alternative secondary institutions are innovative organizations that undergo life cycles similar to that of all
Innovative organizations. Those that survive have developed self-designing capabilities which have assisted their staffs in creating workable coping methodologies. Other organizations in search of implementing innovation can benefit greatly from a study of these methodologies.
The manner in which the researcher formulated the problem of this study and the structure of the problem itself suggested the selection of the naturalistic paradigm for inquiry as the investigative model of discovery and the adoption of qualitative methodological techniques as the means of conducting the study. The very problem of alternative schools failure to cope with organizational crises was in itself divergent, multiplex and not readily conformable to meaningful quantitative analysis: few, if any, constraints on the possible results of the study could be imposed, since the researcher had very limited a priori expectations with respect to the study's outcome. Moreover, the internal constitution of the problem and the format within which it was expressed were suitable to the boundary-establishing procedures of naturalistic research defined by Guba and Lincoln (1981):

A problem is a situation resulting from the interaction of two or more factors (for example, givens, conditions, desires, and the like) that yields: (1) a perplexing or enigmatic state (a conceptual problem); (2) a conflict that renders the choice from alternative courses of action moot (an action problem); or (3) an undesirable consequence (a value problem).

It is convenient to think of problem statements as similar in form to the logical syllogism; the two juxtaposed or interacting factors are akin to the syllogistic propositions, while the conclusion states the problem.
The multiple but interactive conditions of the problems included

1. the seeming paradox that although magnet-type alternative schools are meeting the needs of the pupils they serve, many close or drastically change while a few remain true to their original goals and survive;

2. studies in organizational life cycles reveal that similarly conceived organizations are not as structurally different as their distinct philosophies would make them appear: Hence, both "stillborn," and modified and intact and surviving alternative schools faced identical challenges to their existence, and the survival of one or the failure of the other cannot plausibly be attributed entirely to luck or misfortune;

3. in spite of strong evidence to support the effectiveness or even superiority of magnet-type alternative schools, the jury is, as it were, "still out" on the alternative movement: If alternative schools continue to be sabotaged by internal, structural problems, then educators may abandon a movement of educational promise simply because the high attrition rate may prove too costly to continue the experiment notwithstanding the demonstrated merit of such schools.

Accordingly, the problem thus framed may be stated in propositional terms: all alternative schools, like other organizations, are beset by similar destabilizing crises. Some alternative schools, however, manage to withstand the destructive impact of these crises, while others do not. Therefore, there may exist in "successful" alternative schools a common body of strategies, principles, or problem-solving approaches to cope with the crises that threaten the schools' continued existence.

By thus bounding the inquiry, the investigator chose to assume a naturalistic research posture since he could not know which, if any, were the common crises and what, if any, were the coping routines that were applied. In addition, inasmuch as the researcher had only his own experience as an administrator of an alternative school to rely on, he would have to discover whether his own organization had been successful by surviving without modification. If substantive, transferable theory
were to result from his study, it would have to be grounded in the data offered by his own organization and by other selected secondary alternative schools. Since the naturalistic paradigm bound the research, the investigator employed qualitative techniques.

The direct examination of the empirical social world embodies a comprehensive analytical, descriptive, and in-depth analysis of the data. The fabricated models of human behavior employing the lock-step research design of data collection, which are pervasive and deeply entrenched among sociologists, prevent such in-depth analysis. Validity becomes a serious problem in scientific research when a priori assumptions and artificial schemes of explanation are imposed upon social reality. When qualitative methodological procedures are employed, the problem of validity is considerably lessened . . . In short, qualitative methodology advocates an approach to examining the empirical social world which requires the researcher to interpret the real world from the perspective of the subjects of his investigation. The canons of "The Scientific Method" are not enough; sociologists need intersubjective and transobjective understanding of their data. (Filstead, 1970, pp. 6-7.)

Methods of Data Collection

The investigator used as his principal approach to data collection the "elite" interview but supplemented these data by reviewing documents archived in the files of the Columbus Alternative High School. Although Becker and Geer (1958) prefer participant observation techniques to interviewing, this researcher rejected the participant-observer posture as his guiding data collection methodology for two reasons: (1) people do relay a large amount of information about their past experiences, and that information is often as sensitive as that captured by the participant observer (Trow, 1957); and (2) the investigator's past and present role as designer and administrator of the Columbus Alternative High School has, at least with respect to that
institutions' "native speakers," acquainted him thoroughly with the syntax and vocabulary of the language of their situation. In such a role, the investigator approached a participant-observer's emotional and methodological proximity to the observed phenomena.

Of the several types of interviewing, the "elite" and unstructured interview was chosen not only because it permits the interviewee "to introduce to a considerable extent . . . his notions of what he regards as relevant, instead of relying upon the investigator's notions of relevance" (Dexter, 1970, p. 5) but also because the elite interview enables the observer to select informants who give "insightful answers because they are the ones who both know and can articulate how things are actually done" (Dexter, 1970, pp. 6-7).

**Elite and Unstructured Interviewing**

Four target populations were selected for interview. The chief population consisted of seven teachers who participated in the first three years of the existence of the Columbus Alternative High School. Originally, the investigator had identified eight teacher interviewees, but one declined to be interviewed at the last moment because he thought that he would not be able to offer any information substantively different from that provided by another male interviewee who was a close friend and with whom he had shared many similar experiences at the school. The second, third, and fourth target populations were drawn from big-city, magnet-type alternative schools located in two large, midwestern cities, and consisted of five members each (one principal and
four teachers). The schools differed in the curricula offered and in teaching and learning styles employed; however, all schools shared the common bond with the Columbus Alternative High School of having come into existence by virtue of a present or imminent court order to desegregate. The special interest alternative school offered extensive instruction in a particular subject area. Of the two other magnet-type schools, one emphasized the teaching of traditional American values such as respect for authority and patriotic and civic practices such as reciting the pledge of allegiance daily as well as dress codes and emphasis on a traditional curriculum, while the other school focused on informal learning techniques and exploratory learning. (The nature of these schools will be discussed at length in Chapter 8.)

Before administering the interview schedule to the four target populations, the researcher conducted a "dry-run" interview with four staff members from alternative schools located in the central Ohio area. Through the mock interviews, the observer was able to detect any tendencies within himself to manipulate the direction of the interviews so as to color the responses in favor of his preliminary hypotheses. Indeed, throughout the course of the initial preparations for the research, the investigator endeavored to address the threat of bias by attempting to limit his tendency to explore the informants' personal impressions of interior events through the historical intrusion of his personality. These dry-run interviews revealed that the investigator's anxiety regarding the possibility of bias actually hindered his ability to interact with the informants and mediate the information. For the
four interview populations, the researcher determined to follow the advice of Schatzman and Strauss (1973) and "capitalize on whatever sensibilities may be yielded by his past experiences" (p. 53). He furthermore decided to abandon his early hope for absolute neutrality.

As Arthur Vidich (1955) wrote:

Complete and total neutrality is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to assume even where research considerations seem to demand it. By virtue of his research, no matter how transitory and irrespective of the exact dimensions of his marginal position, the investigator must react to the actions of his respondents. Neutrality even to the point of total silence is a form of reaction and not only will be considered as such by all parties to the conflict but also implies a specific attitude toward the issue -- being above it, outside it, more important than it, not interested in it. Whatever meanings respondents attach to neutrality will, henceforth, be used as a further basis for response. This is true even when respondents demand an opinion or approval in structured interview situations. Failure to make a commitment can create resentment, hostility, and antagonism just as easily as taking a stand. In both cases, but each in its own way, relationships will be altered and, hence, data will be affected. (p. 84.)

As a consequence, the investigator elected to assume an interviewing posture that, while restrained, did not divest him of the responsiveness, adaptability, and processual immediacy characteristic of the investigator as instrument.

Columbus Alternative High School Informants

These interviews were the most susceptible to the observer's bias and the informants' positive and negative prejudices since each informant had worked closely with the observer as a subordinate, and some continue to work under his direct, administrative supervision. Some of the informants collaborated with the observer in the school's
design and share his commitment to the survival of the school. Under normal circumstances, the potential for contamination and distortion would render the data highly suspect. Nevertheless, because of the nature of the investigator relationship to the informants, covert interviewing was out of the question, and no other observer-surrogate with the sufficient professional distance to diminish the informant's past experiences was available. Yet there are five pertinent factors that militate against discrediting the data and that, in fact, recommend the investigator's interviewing the informants. These are:

1. **The exceptional variety of the informant categories of the sample.** Owing to each informant's role in the establishment and/or development of the school, the informant sample exhibits a good cross section of each type of the "more-willing-to reveal" informant: the naive, the frustrated, the "out," the needy, the "tipster," and the subordinate.

2. **The high level of educational training of the informants and their pre-alternative school status as superior teachers.** All informants have professional training beyond the bachelor's level, and all had been selected to staff the school on the basis of their outstanding teaching experience and their high level of experience in developing curriculum.

3. **The history of the investigator's relationships with the informants as their supervisor/principal.** When the Columbus Board of Education decided to establish an alternative high school, the investigator's initial status was that of a coordinator who was responsible to a principal and two assistant principals. After the stay of the 1978 desegregation order, which changed the administrative structure of the school, he was not designated as the principal but for two years was informally known as the school's "director" but was formally classified as Supervisor I, a low-level administrative title. In effect, his staff viewed him as being primus inter pares -- an image that still persists even though he was officially named principal of the school in the summer of 1980.

4. **The synchronicity of the observer's and informants' experiences.** Since both the investigator and the informants shared their alternative experiences concurrently, the value of the data were more or less equal. Of course, all these data were subject to
such conditions as the vagaries of individual memory, the attitude and orientation of the informants, and the varying definitions of the situation. In terms of ability to comment, the informants were at a considerable advantage in so far as their experience has been coterminous with that of the observer.

5. The internal verifiability of the reports. Since the experiences of all the informants and the observer are co-extensive, the information is "self-correcting" in that assertions of any one informant can be crosschecked against the reports of all informants.

While the seven informants, three women and four men, represented each curricular center of the school, the investigator selected them because of the special characteristics they shared as department chairpersons, members of policy teams, and program coordinators. Since the credibility of informants' testimony is "differentially distributed through the ranks of the system" (Becker, 1970, p. 18), the investigator selected these seven individuals from among the original fifteen staff members in order to take advantage of more highly weighted sensitivity of their testimony. As Becker elaborated the value of weighting information along the lines of the hierarchy of credibility:

In any system of ranked groups, participants take it as given that members of the highest group have the right to define the way things really are. In any organization, no matter what the rest of the organization chart shows, the arrows indicating the flow of information point up, thus demonstrating (at least formally) that those at the top have access to a more complete picture of what is going on than anyone else. Members of power groups will have incomplete information, and their view of reality will be partial and distorted in consequence. Therefore, from the point of view of a well socialized participant in the system, any tale told by those at the top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account obtainable of the organizations' workings. (1970, p. 18.)

Each interviewee received a personal letter from the investigator stating the purpose of the research and requesting an appointment
after the regular school day to conduct a forty-five minute to one hour interview. In addition, each interviewee received at least one personal, verbal request from the investigator either by way of a telephone call if the interviewee were no longer associated with the school or by way of a person-to-person contact if the interviewee were currently serving on the school's staff. At the time of the verbal request, the investigator and the interviewee negotiated an interview locale acceptable to him or her. The interviews were conducted from February to July 1982, and were tape-recorded upon consent of the interviewee. Throughout the interview, the observer took light notes to record unobtrusive comments about the informant's current emotional state, attitudes, knowledgeability, and degree of reactivity. The interview was conducted according to the following interview schedule:

CAHS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

There may be times during the interview when you believe your responses are tempered or limited because of my dual role. So I am going to leave a copy of my interview questions with you to jog your memory of what we talked about. Please go over it within the next two days and add any additional comments or observations you wish to make. Then mail it, in the attached envelope, to the transcriber and she will add it as anonymous data.

Finally, I want to assure you, once again, of complete confidentiality. The tapes will be destroyed after they have been transcribed, and the results of my research will be available to you should you wish to read them.

I. As you reflect upon the history of the school, can you identify any crises which threatened to destabilize the school? These destabilizing conditions could be crises or problems that seriously threatened the existence of the school or they could be just situations that had negative impact on the school's alternative program.
II. Now, I would like you to look at the following timeline. Is there any event that jogs your memory? Can you think of any other destabilizing conditions? When did they occur?

III. Now that you have identified certain destabilizing conditions, I would like to explore each of the destabilizing crises or problems that you have identified. Probe for:

1. When the crisis (identify the specific crisis) arose, who handled the problem? Who implemented the solution? Was there one person or a group of people making the decisions? Who were they?

2. Was the problem or crisis foreseen? Did the problem arise again in the future? If it did, did anyone anticipate the problem?

3. How was the problem handled when it arose as a crisis in the school? Was the crisis ultimately resolved? How did we deal with the problem?

4. Once the crisis was faced and dealt with as a school, what impact did the destabilizing condition have on the school program? Was the school changed as a result of experiencing the destabilizing condition? Was there a lasting change? If so, how did the school change? If it didn't have an impact on the school, why didn't it?

IV. Did any of the crises or destabilizing conditions impact on your own personal commitment to the school's program?

The schedule is open-ended and was designed to allow the informant to comment at length with few cuings or prompts from the investigator. Although the schedule items ask the informant to disclose specific dates and identify crises and solutions, they are multi-interpretable (Dexter, 1970). In addition, the schedule items were constructed along the lines of an oral history interview since the interview subjects were participants in the events under study and in fact were even shapers of the outcome of the events. Thus at the outset of the interview, the informant was free to comment in any way he or she saw fit. The time line, shown on the following page, was used as a
## CAHS Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1977 - First Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of Core Staff</td>
<td>March 1978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rendquist's Stay of Desegregation Order</td>
<td>August 11, 1978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Education Approves</td>
<td>August 1978</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CAHS Opens to 130 Students</td>
<td>April 1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government Approves</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Moves to the McGuffey Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative School Program Proposal for North High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Proposal for North High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Government Approves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnet School</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School Expansion Commitment to 600 Students</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Education Expands CAHS to Full-Day Program</td>
<td>July 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Opens to 410 Students</td>
<td>September 1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Education Staff is Reduced with Loss</td>
<td>February 1981</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School Decides not to Seek Another Government Grant</td>
<td>April 1981</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passage of Levy and Alternative School Expansion</td>
<td>September 1981</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to 600 Students</td>
<td>November 1981</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
gentle probe to jog the informant's memory as well as to assist the informant in framing or structuring his or her comments.

The timeline was not intended to lead the informants but rather to aid them in organizing their testimony; furthermore, the investigator assumed that pinpointing the time when an event occurred would provide him with another test for the external reliability (relevance) of the data at the time of data analysis. The interview instrument itself restricts the investigator's intervention into the stream of the informant's testimony but does not exclude him from probing for greater specificity.

At the interview's conclusion, the investigator informed each interviewee that he would leave with him or her a copy of the interview schedule and a pre-addressed, stamped envelope so that if they should recall additional information or anecdotes in the two- or three-day period subsequent to the interview, they would be able to annotate the schedule and forward the information to the transcriber.

**Magnet-Type, Alternative School Informants**
**Outside the Columbus Alternative High School**

The investigator followed interview protocols that were substantively identical to those detailed above; there are important differences in population sampling and in the interview schedule's format. However, the investigator rejected covert interviewing and revealed his identity as a principal of a magnet-type, alternative high school, who
was currently researching his doctoral thesis. The researcher con­
sidered, however, two drawbacks to the announced principal-investigator
status: (1) Alternative school administrators might have been more
likely to be inhibited in revealing to a peer the full details of
administrative crises; and (2) teachers at alternative schools are well
known to be suspect of formally designated school administrators
(Parrett, 1979, et al.) and may have chosen to whitewash or slant their
testimony. These reservations paled in the face of the very real
dangers presented by the possibility of "unmasking" the investigator
during the course of the research (Dexter, 1970), and hence the investi­
gator chose to reveal his identity at the beginning.

**Population sampling.** Since the investigator was not able to
predict the quality of the informants' testimony, he perforce sought a
larger sample. For each of the three schools, he adopted the following
procedures: (1) The school's administrative head was contacted by
letter or by telephone, and the observer introduced himself, briefly
explained the object of his research, and requested an opportunity to
interview her or him; (2) at the conclusion of the administrator's
interview, the researcher asked the administrator to identify four other
persons within the magnet-type, alternative school whom he or she deemed
to be good informants; (3) the investigator invited the administrator to
introduce him to the prospects, whom the researcher thereafter inter­
viewed separately.

Within the respective schools, all interviewees shared approxi­
mately the same number of years of continuous service in the magnet-type,
alternative school, and all teacher interviewees were considered to be
well-informed members by their administrators. The informant population of the special interest school consisted of one male principal, three female teachers, and one male teacher; all but one of the interviewees had been on the school's staff since its inception. The informant population of the informal school comprised one female principal, two female and two male teachers, all of whom were members of the school's "founding" staff. Included in the traditional school's staff were one male principal, two male and two female teachers, all of whom had been on the original staff.

Format of interview schedule. The interview schedule consisted of a "laundered" version of that administered to the Columbus Alternative High School informants (all references to the Columbus school were deleted). Moreover, no time-line was offered, but the informants were requested to identify the time when the events occurred. The interview schedule is as follows:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SELECTED SCHOOLS

There may be times during the interview when you believe your responses are tempered or limited because of the potential sensitive nature of some of the information. I will be happy to turn off the tape recorder at any time. In addition, I am going to leave a copy of my interview questions with you to jog your memory of what we talked about. Please go over it within the next two days and add any additional comments or observations you wish to make. Then mail it, in the attached envelope, to the transcriber and she will add it as anonymous data.

Finally, I want to assure you, once again, of complete confidentiality. The tapes will be destroyed after they have been transcribed, and the results of my research will be available to you should you wish to read them.
I. As you reflect upon the history of your school, can you identify any crises which threatened to destabilize the school? These destabilizing conditions could be crises or problems that seriously threatened the existence of the school or they could be just situations that had negative impact on the school's alternative program.

II. Now that you have identified certain destabilizing conditions, I would like to explore each of the destabilizing crises or problems that you have identified. Probe for:

1. When the crisis (identify the specific crisis) arose who handled the problem? Who implemented the solution? Was there one person or a group of people making the decisions? Who were they?

2. Was the problem or crisis foreseen? Did the problem arise again in the future? If it did, did anyone anticipate the problem?

3. How was the problem handled when it arose as a crisis in your school? Was the crisis ultimately resolved? How did you deal with the problem?

4. Once the crisis was faced and dealt with as a school, what impact did the destabilizing condition have on your school program? Was the school changed as a result of experiencing the destabilizing condition? Was there a lasting change? If so, how did your school change? If it didn't have an impact on the school, why didn't it?

5. As you look at your school's history, when did this crisis occur?

III. Did any of the crises or destabilizing conditions impact on your own personal commitment to the school's program?

Documents

As a means of triangulating the data gathered from the interviews, the investigator had recourse to a large number of documents archived at the Columbus Alternative High School. For the purpose of this study, the investigator has observed Guba and Lincoln's (1981)
distinction between "records" and "documents":

... a record is defined here as any written statement prepared by an individual or an agency for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting, and a document as any written (or filmed) material other than a record that was not prepared specifically in response to some request from the investigator. (p. 228.)

No records were used in this research since no informant returned written annotations to the interview schedule.

The documents included grants prepared for Federal or State agencies, policy papers presented by the school to the Board of Education, Board of Education resolutions and legislation, numerous proposals to the central administration, clippings from newspapers, personal letters sent parents or students, and the administrator's day book (an abbreviated journal maintained by the investigator throughout his tenure as supervisor-principal of the Columbus Alternative High School).

The chief value of the documents was their nonreactivity, for they enabled the researcher to reconstruct the history of the Columbus Alternative High School. Moreover, during the coding stage of the research, the documents assisted the researcher in cross-checking his analysis of the appropriate coping routines for specific destabilizing routines. Throughout the process of hypothesis evaluation and systematic analysis, the documents served as a source of rebuilding and revising the researcher's theoretical model, since they represented a broader data source than did the interviews. In this respect, they also provided what Dexter called an "escape hatch" for those interviews that did not yield rich data or that yielded too narrow data.
Data Analysis

To a great degree, the purpose of any research project often ineluctably imposes the method of analysis. Since the purpose of this research was not to test theory provisionally but to generate theory, the researcher chose the constant comparative approach to qualitative analysis. While the analytic inductive method appeared attractive at first, the investigator discounted it on the grounds that analytic induction was more appropriate for generating theory to describe more specific behavior than was contained in his hypotheses.

In contrast to analytic induction, the constant comparative method is concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting (but not provisionally testing) many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems (e.g., the distribution of services according to social values of clients). Some of these properties may be causes, as in analytic induction, but unlike analytic induction others are conditions, consequences, dimensions, types, processes, etc. (p. 104.)

In reviewing and inspecting the data collected from the interviews and documents, the researcher conducted his analysis in the three stages of Glasser and Strauss' constant comparative method which precede the writing of theory.

Incident Comparison and Categorization

From the transcribed testimony of the informants, the investigator abstracted each informant's testimony regarding the destabilizing conditions he or she observed and his or her identification of the coping routine used, if any. He then coded with the informant's initials and a special sign to indicate the degree of threat the destabilizing condition represented to the informant, and then recorded
on a separate 3x5-inch card. The cards then were sorted into categories of destabilizing conditions and following the sorting were encoded with the name of the category. The researcher compared the identified coping routines listed on each card within each category. Using the full transcript as a base, the researcher sifted the responses regarding each coping routine for additional attributes that may have provided the conditions under which the informant regarded the coping routines as successful or unsuccessful. As an aid to tracking the emerging properties of each noted destabilizing condition and its identified coping routine (null responses were recorded), the researcher plotted each destabilizing condition category on a matrix board identifying the school and the informant of each condition. As coping routines surfaced from the data, they were indexed on another matrix board against the destabilizing conditions that had been identified and named. (Under each category the coded, individual citations belonging to the category were annotated.) The researcher used these two-dimensional, categorical maps to correlate and further code the data as additional interrelationships became clear. At this point, the investigator ceased comparison and coding and dictated memoranda describing his tentative conclusions, observations, and theoretical notions.

In preparing his analytic memos, the researcher adopted the recording model proposed by Schatzmann and Strauss (1973). In brief, the model enables the researcher to organize his notes and memoranda into "relatively distinct 'packages' of material according to whether they constitute 'Observational Notes' (ON), 'Theoretical Notes' (TN), or
'Methodological Notes' (MN)" (p. 99). At Schatzmann and Strauss' suggestion, the researcher typed these analytic memos himself in order not to deny himself the opportunity to make inferential elaborations (Schatzmann and Strauss, p. 104).

Category Integration

Using the two-dimensional map and memoranda as guides, the investigator returned to the transcriptions and categorized cards for another round of comparison. He coded the cards for the properties of each coping routine, and compared those properties with each other. At this point, the destabilizing conditions and coping routines were not compared solely within the categories to which they had been assigned but also to all other categories in order to integrate them. The investigator included this step in the event that certain specifically differentiated coping routines were, in effect, masked reformulations of a more generalized coping routine. This second stage enabled the researcher to take his first steps toward asserting either the relationship of an alternative school's success to coping structurally with destabilizing conditions or to note the lack of correlation between an alternative school's success and its possession of a set of problem-solving strategies for destabilizing conditions. In any event, this stage supplied the initial grounded and context-bound generalizations for the third stage.
Theory Delimitation

At this stage, the investigator compared only those categories that showed definite correlations or indications that no correlations existed in order to reduce the body of data and thereby generalize them. The researcher stated his terminology and articulated his set of basic principles on which he would draw his conclusions. The object of this stage was to achieve the lowest possible number of variables while still maintaining a hypothesis with the widest extent of application possible to enhance the transferability of the limited generalization. Consequently, the number of destabilizing conditions and coping routines were reduced to a small set of descriptive categories applicable to secondary, urban, alternative schools. Only those categories that clearly showed a positive relationship to certain generalized coping routines formed the core list of conditions and routines. The investigator slated a category for incorporation into his final conclusions only upon its having achieved theoretical saturation. When the data had been so reduced and generalized, the investigator wrote his final memoranda before writing the text of the thesis. As an aid to cross-checking the delimited data and present conclusions with his original hypothesis, the researcher reviewed the documents that recorded his personal experience as an alternative school administrator. He did so in an effort to determine whether the conclusions of his research exhibit a "goodness of "fit" with the facts of his personal experience. In a final effort to assure the relevance and credibility of the naturalistic paradigm, the researcher tested the citations of the destabilizing conditions and
their coping routines through triangulation. Using the matrix boards (reduced to a more comprehensible format) he conducted a member check of his audiences to validate his interpretation.

Following the completion of the member check, the researcher collated the memoranda on each category of destabilizing crises and coping routines and prepared a brief (four page) position paper of his theory as a final analytic method of hypothesis testing before beginning to write his theory.

**Fittingness of the Theory**

The investigator's conclusion bears out that this study, limited as it is in scope and in transferability may be of signal value to educators who are attempting to establish alternative schools whose general design resembles that of the schools described in this research. The value of the study, however, will not rest on any formal generalizability of this research; the theory's fittingness lies in the individually bound contexts of the four schools studied. Hence the readers, whether interested laymen or practicing educators, must look for transferability within the specific contexts of the four schools and the institution they have in mind. The investigator makes no assumption that his theoretical propositions will apply with coordinate effectiveness to all alternative contexts. In fact, the reader will note that one of the schools studied, the traditional school, showed very few of the destabilizing crises and coping routines that were evident in the other three. The traditional school's context was upon analysis
substantially different from the contexts of the other schools. The theory of Chapter 9 is substantive only, and the investigator cautions that much more field work is necessary before a wider transferability can be claimed. Nevertheless, the theory may fit some acceptable contexts originating elsewhere. The fit is not absolute, but it may provide some provisionally known means of neutralizing or avoiding conditions that may be common to similar alternative contexts.
CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF CAHS

Pre-History      Fall, 1977 — Summer, 1978

On April 19, 1976 the Columbus school desegregation case opened in Federal District Court. Almost one year later, on March 8, 1977, Judge Robert Duncan declared that the Columbus Public School System was illegally segregated and ordered a plan of remedy within 90 days. After submitting one plan that was rejected by the judge, the Columbus Public Schools submitted a revised plan on August 31, 1977 which called for the closing of North High School. Such a plan sparked heated protests from the entire near-Northend community, which demanded that the Board of Education reconsider its original decision. As a result of intense community pressure, the Board of Education in the Fall of 1977 asked the system's administrative staff to reconsider the closing of North High School or propose alternate plans for its continued use as an educational facility. In January, 1978 a report, prepared by the administrative staff, stated that under the desegregation guidelines set by Judge Robert Duncan the board had no choice but to close North as a regular school and reopen it as a "magnet" or alternative high school. Called "Schools Within a School," the report proposed to house three specialized learning centers in the North High School building. The three "schools" proposed for North included a foreign language center,
a social studies center, and a communications center. On February 8, 1978 the Board of Education voted to convert North High School into an alternative high school and requested that the superintendent submit a funding proposal through the Emergency School Aid Act for additional monies. Portions of the Magnet School Grant are excerpted here at length since they will paint the clearest picture of the school's original philosophy and operational procedures.

Project Design

The proposed magnet high school will be housed in North High School in Columbus, Ohio. During the first year of operation, the North Magnet High School program will provide a full day instructional program open to tenth and eleventh grade students from across the city. In compliance with the court ordered remedy plan, the student body of the magnet school will be racially unidentifiable with a minority group population of not less than 20% and not more than 50%. The magnet school will have an enrollment of 650 to 675 students. A lottery drawing will be conducted to select students from all who have applied.

The North Magnet High School will be organized into three centers or "major learning areas": foreign language, social studies, and communication skills. Each center will occupy its own area of the building with a cluster of classrooms and areas for quiet study and group activity. A library learning center will be equipped to serve the three centers and will include cassette tapes, learning carrels, and computer supported instruction. Students will be scheduled to spend 1½ to 3 hours daily within their selected center, with the center becoming a base of operation for the students. The amount of time will depend on the student's interest and grade level. Thus, a student who elects one of the areas of specialized study (i.e. social studies) will have the opportunity to engage in a high interest, high intensity course of study. The course work within each center will focus heavily on individualization and the use of community resources. Students will be encouraged to carry out interdisciplinary studies so that they can utilize the resources within each center.
Although the magnet high school program will concentrate on certain areas of study, all required high school subjects will be available at the school so that students can graduate with a regular high school diploma in three years. A strong program of intramural sports and clubs will be provided and the physical education program will emphasize the development of life-long recreational and sports skill.

Underlying the structure of the North Magnet High School is a set of organizing principles unlike those in any other Columbus high school.

1. **Content-interest specialization.** The three special centers -- foreign language, social studies, communications -- will offer students a wide range of high interest, high intensity courses not available at their home schools.

2. **Individualization.** Faculty advisers will help students develop their own learning experiences within the basic framework of school-wide requirements. In addition, the centers will develop individualized learning components which will enable students to accomplish assigned tasks through independent study, self-paced instruction, learning activity packages, and computerized instructional packets.

3. **Community Relatedness.** Arrangements already made or in progress with a wide range of institutions (Ohio State University, Battelle Memorial Institute, the Columbus Dispatch and Citizen Journal), governmental agencies, and businesses will provide an opportunity for unique learning experiences within the community.

4. **Content-interrelatedness.** Special projects and laboratories will enable students to carry out interdisciplinary studies involving special staff arrangements and student scheduling.

5. **Flexible Scheduling.** Special scheduling arrangements will be made whereby students will be encouraged to explore areas of interests and competence within all the centers. The flexible schedule will also allow students to participate in community projects without interfering with the remainder of their academic program.

6. **Emphasis on life-long learning.** The program will develop skills in learning to learn, life-long recreational and sports skills, career identification and preparation skills.
Project Summary

The activities of the proposed North Magnet High School cannot be paralleled in a traditional setting. The clustering of classrooms and work areas into major learning centers that are disjunct from each other yet organically linked by interdisciplinary programs and learning activities is a physical impossibility outside an alternative setting. The social studies component can offer student-designed learning activities that utilize a variety of university, school, and community programs. The student's learning activities may be based in community learning laboratories or may comprise a sequence of non-traditional high school courses such as logic, anthropology, or archaeology. The foreign language component allows for complete flexibility in scheduling an intensive second language study program that will not interfere with the scheduling of other academic classes. The North Magnet High School will also provide an advanced placement program whereby students can earn college credit while in high school.

The project designers have solicited and received commitments from the universities, business and industry, and individual community members to assist the overall development and instrumentation of the program. The program has been designed to appeal broadly to the community so as to attract a student body that is racially unidentifiable. An intensive media campaign has been launched, and it will insure that the student body will reflect a cross-section of the community.

Specific learning activities that require small group discussion and considerable one-to-one communication between students, and teachers and students will positively and actively encourage the cultivation of interracial and intercultural understanding.

The project structure allows the student to work at his own pace and takes into account various levels of achievement by testing the student first and then determining the structure of his learning activities from the data yielded by the diagnostic component. Hence each student's program is defined by his own needs, achievement level, and interests, and not by predetermined criteria.

The student's design of his learning activities will be made in concert with his parents' participation and the expertise and cooperation of community members, who will serve on the academic councils and provide the community based resources that will frame the students' activities. Students will also serve on the academic councils and will play a role in evaluating the overall and individual learning projects and materials in the three centers.
Student Selection

The goal of this pupil selection process is to reach enrollment capacity in the North High Magnet School in a manner that results in a pupil population which is reasonably balanced by sex and race. The pupil population of the North High Magnet School will be made up from city-wide applications. All selections from the city-wide application pool will be done through the use of a lottery system.

Staffing

The staffing of the school will be the key factor in its success. The staff must be diligent, have a variety of needed teaching skills, demonstrate good human relations abilities, have a high degree of tolerance for individual difference, and have successful working relationships with minority groups. The staff will not only be carefully selected to assure specifically needed skills and attitudes, but also to reflect the social and ethnic composition of the Columbus community.

In addition to the regular teaching and administrative staff, the North High Magnet School will need additional support personnel during the initial project year.

Project Supervisor

This individual would be responsible directly to the principal. The duties will include overseeing curriculum development of the three centers, meeting regularly with the center coordinators concerning program development, liaison with the Ohio State University, Capital University and other colleges and universities in Columbus. The supervisor will be responsible for planning and implementing all community-related activities. He/she will be the primary promoter of the North program in its initial year and continually visit other public schools and educational institutions in this role. During the first year of operation, a full-time administrator is needed to assure the implementation of the entire curricula plan. Once the magnet school is in full operation, the other administrators can assume the duties of the project supervisor.
Program Facilitators

There will be one part-time program facilitator in each center who will teach one-third of the time and coordinate the activities of the center two-thirds of the time. The facilitator's job will be to acquire materials for staff members working in his center. The facilitator will assist in resolving conflicts which might arise in the complex schedule which is envisioned for the school. Working with the project supervisor, each center facilitator will conduct research work in his area of specialization which can lead toward improvement of the program in his center.

Workshops and inservice training involving instructional strategies for individualizing, organization of materials, creating instructional units, methods of utilizing community resources within the classroom and applying counseling techniques in student scheduling, etc. will be held in July and August. During these months, teachers will be given inservice training in guidance procedures and scheduling, training in constructing individualized learning components workshop experience in developing a community-based laboratory.

Teachers will be given released time during the school year for the continued development of the curriculum in the three centers.

In March of 1978 the board appointed a principal-designate, who was the current North High School principal, to begin preparations for the 1978-1979 school year. A teacher on special assignment, who would later become the project supervisor, assisted the principal in staff selection and student recruitment.

The Division of Instruction selected a core group of fifteen teachers in early spring to begin the process of identifying goals and building a curriculum. The remaining forty staff members were selected in late May and early June. The "core" group of teachers attended workshops and was given released time during the school day for program development. Unfortunately, not all the staff members could meet at the
same time due to a lack of substitute teachers. During the summer months, the core group continued to plan with the anticipation of involving the remaining staff members during the last two weeks of August.

Since the school began the student recruiting process late in the school year, the recruitment effort was time-consuming and tedious. The teacher on special assignment, who was appointed the project supervisor in May, visited twenty-seven junior high schools and seventeen high schools during the months of April and May and by June 15, 500 students had applied to the North Alternative High School.

The summer months were marked with a great deal of disagreement among staff members and administration over such questions as:

- How much freedom would the students have at North Alternative?
- How much diversification would occur within each department?
- What role would the facilitators play in the development of school policy?
- Within the framework of the grant, how "alternative" would the high school program become?
- How could we more actively involve parents and students in the school's program?

By August 1, 1978 planning for the staff workshops had been finalized and the procedures for opening school were completed. The principal and project supervisor felt comfortable enough to take one week vacations. Then, on August 11, 1978 Associate Justice William Rehnquist granted a temporary stay to court-ordered busing in Columbus.
The Board of Education directed the superintendent to dismantle the desegregation plan and return the school system to the neighborhood school concept. North High School was subsequently reopened as a neighborhood school, and the administration announced that it would delay, for at least a year, opening an alternative high school.

The First Year Fall, 1978 - Summer, 1979

Disappointed students, parents, and staff immediately mounted a grass-roots campaign to save the alternative high school for the 1978-79 school year. With the assistance of the staff and community, the project supervisor wrote and presented to the Superintendent of Schools a proposal arguing for reopening the alternative program on a smaller scale within the North Building. Excerpts of the proposal follow:

Need for North High School Site

The recent ruling which necessitates returning North to a traditional school does not obviate the need for an alternative school. Until the final court decision is reached, the most reasonable site for the alternative school remains North High School.

North High School is the ideal location for the alternative school for several reasons.

1. The alternative school is dedicated to community relatedness. The proximity to the downtown cultural and business community, as well as the university at OSU, is essential.

2. The program was originally designed to fit into the North building.

3. The neighborhood is expecting and is enthusiastic about alternative education.
Curriculum

The curriculum of the school within a school at North will encompass alternative learning approaches to communications skills, foreign languages, social studies, mathematics, science, art, and physical education. Although the program will not be directed by the previous concept of three major learning centers, its new unity will derive from a strong humanities-oriented approach that will interrelate the diverse activities of the above disciplines.

Summary

The alternative concept for a senior high school should be preserved by housing an alternative program temporarily within North High School until it can be provided its own building. While housed at North, the alternative program should maintain its unique identity by locating it in a designated area of the North High School building. Furthermore, the entire alternative faculty complement should be maintained in order to assure the strength and continuity of the alternative plan.

The administration rejected this plan, but accepted a compromise proposal to reopen the alternative high school at the Mohawk Junior High School building, a central-city site. For the first year of the Alternative High School's existence, sixteen teachers, 120 students, and a program supervisor were housed on the third floor of the Mohawk building. The school operated as a half-day humanities-based program, beginning at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 11:30 a.m. After completing their morning classes in English, social studies, foreign language, and mathematics the students returned to their "home" high schools for classes such as physical education or science.

Six out of the sixteen teachers were given full-day assignments at the Alternative High School to refine the school's program. The
remaining ten faculty members were assigned classes in neighboring high schools in the afternoon.

Because the staff had only four days to restructure the North Alternative Program to the Mohawk facility, there was a great deal of uncertainty and apprehension during the first three months of school. Students and staff would often joke that the school changed daily. Despite these "birthing" problems, the school's emerging alternative program closely paralleled the original curriculum design of North High School.

The highlights of the school's program during the first year is best illustrated by an excerpt from a published document entitled "Profile of the Columbus Alternative High School" which was prepared by students and staff.

What makes the Columbus Alternative High different from other secondary schools is its program.

Student-Teacher Relationships are marked by a remarkable give-and-take, ranging from affectionate bantering in the halls to earnest debates in the classroom and in the Activities Center. Yet the roles of the teacher and of the students, the managers of learning and the learners, are well-defined and mutually respected.

Advanced Placement programs, which allow students the opportunity to earn college credit for work done in secondary school, are found in all four centers.

Contract Learning is the basis of the Alternative School's Individualized Learning program whereby individual students and teachers make agreements about the material to be covered, the methods to be used, time to be spent, and possible grade to be earned for a given assignment. All contracts may be negotiated and may involve all the aforementioned details or only a portion of them.
Non-Traditional Structure: The Columbus Alternative High School believes that students must be actively involved in shaping their program of studies. Therefore, students determine the direction of the studies with a faculty advisor who works with them on a one-to-one basis. Furthermore, students have a choice of five modes of individualized instruction, thus allowing them to tailor their education to their needs and interests.

I.S. (Independent Study) Friday provides blocks of time for special activities, special interest seminars, community involvement, independent study, and informal discussions among teachers and students. Because of I.S. Friday's importance to the Alternative School's program, it is scheduled weekly.

Community-Oriented Programs provide released time from class to work in the community with a community-based laboratory.

Intensive Study allows students, after consulting with their faculty advisors, to concentrate on any topic for an extended period of time.

Family Group, held each week, encourages the development of close, personal ties between teachers and students.

Throughout the first year, there was an ever-present fear that the downtown administration or the Board of Education would close the school at the end of the 1978-79 school year. In an attempt to mobilize the school community, parents encouraged other parents to "get the story about CAHS" in the community. Excerpts from a letter dated February 22, 1979 will illustrate the point.

Dear Parent,

If the school is to continue to operate next year and eventually become a permanent, full-day school as originally planned, the Board of Education has to know how much we all care about the school and why. More of our friends and neighbors have to know what the school has to offer so that enrollment will grow. Contact each of the parents on your team. Most live in your part of town; some you may already know. Urge them to tell others about the school and why they think it should continue. You and the members of your group may wish to call or write individual Board of Education members.
Some of you might go in person to one of the Board's regularly scheduled "Public Participation" sessions. In addressing the Board or the Superintendent, be positive. The Board and school officials have enthusiastically supported CAHS so far. Why not thank them for giving your child a unique educational opportunity? Whomever you and your group talk to, it is important to give reasons why CAHS deserves public support.

We hope you will accept the School Council invitation to help play a special part in this campaign to build support for your school. Students and Teachers are also doing their part.

The experience of this first year is best summarized in excerpts from an editorial which appeared in the school's newspaper, The CAHSmic Herald, on June 5, 1979.

Sweet, sweet survival

We made it!

We've survived crises ranging from having no building for the alternative school to having no cage for the rats. We've weathered such storms as the failure of the school levy, the failure of homerooms, and the massive restructuring of I.S. Friday forms.

We have endured and occasionally even welcomed visitors-from proud parents to potential money-lenders, to the ants that supposedly pounce upon and devour crumbs from any food eaten outside the Activity Center.

We have struggled on, through lost films and seemingly nonexistent lecturers (not to mention some of the ones that did show up), through Town Meetings, through strange seminars (Hopi Indians?!) and even through "Spirit Week".

We continue despite condemnation of our size and our very existence, despite the loss of three-fourths of our planned student body, and above all despite bagel shortages.

But enough of such purple prose and prosaic plaints. (?) Let us remember the best thing about CAHS -- the freedom. The most shining example of this has been the teachers letting us be ourselves, however flaky. This resulted in such unique events
as the failures of various dances, and flowers in philosophy class. The air of individualism here has attracted a diverse (read "wacky") group (read "conglomeration") of people (what? people at CAHS?) to this school. Adjectives don't even begin to describe us.

Despite all of our differences (maybe even because of them), we have managed to last the whole year, growing all the while -- though into what, who knows?

The Second Year Fall, 1979 -- Spring, 1980

On July 2, 1979 the United States Supreme Court rejected the school board's appeal of Judge Duncan's decisions, and the judge subsequently ordered the school system to desegregate the schools during the 1979-80 school year.

The Columbus Alternative High School, or CAHS as it was now known, could no longer be housed at the Mohawk building since the junior high school population had tripled under the desegregation plan. The school was moved to the McGuffey building, on the near north side of the city. CAHS occupied McGuffey's second floor and portions of the first while an elementary school was housed in the remainder of the building. The school continued to offer a humanities-oriented education with the four major interest areas of mathematics, social studies, English and foreign language. Although the students continued to return for afternoon classes at their "home" high schools, the entire faculty was assigned to CAHS on a full-time basis.

Transportation problems and the move of eight miles north counted for the low enrollment figure of 150 students for the 1979-80 school year. The change in location also had a negative impact on the
community program. Students could no longer walk to downtown locations. In addition, the McGuffey building was not as compact as Mohawk and thus some students felt that the "new" CAHS was lacking the family atmosphere that was its trademark.

In response to student and faculty requests, the school was reorganized at the semester break to improve the school's atmosphere. Two excerpts from the February CAHSmic Herald not only describe the changes but reflect students' reaction to them.

CHANGES "INCREASE COMMUNICATION"

On January 28, the second semester started at CAHS, with new courses, a new daily schedule, and a thorough rearrangement of the classrooms. "We feel that there has been a breakdown in communications between students and staff," explained the curriculum coordinator. The changes, he explained, are intended to increase communication by reducing the separation involved in last semester's organization. A six period day, the move of the Activity Center to the second floor, a reassignment of teachers to classrooms, and various seminars on human relations have all been changes made for this reason.

During the first semester the Activities Center was located on the first floor and the classrooms on the second floor. Also, since students and teachers had only one period free each day, there was little time for social interaction. Therefore, the Activity Center was moved to the main hall of the second floor, where it was more accessible to everyone. In addition, the length of each class period was shortened from 45 to 35 minutes, and a sixth period was added to the schedule. Finally, there will be three periods, 50 minutes each, and 80 minutes of meetings, family group, and IS time of Wednesdays and Fridays.

Thus, both students and teachers now have a minimum of two free periods a day.

The communications, foreign language, and social studies departments each have a resource room for student study and quiet conversation.
STUDENTS AND SEMESTER CHANGES

Near the end of the first semester rumors about stopping I.S. Fridays and having a six period day began to float around CAHS. Many people were upset about the proposed changes, but in interviews with some CAHS students most agreed that the change was for the better.

One change that everyone seemed to like was bringing everything upstairs. Now we can pop in and out of the activity center and find Ms. Young without losing our breath. The one complaint is that the activity center is too small, but, as Daral Hall summed it up, "being upstairs brings everyone together."

Another change which most people liked is the six period day, although everyone liked and disliked different parts of it. Some thought the thirty-five minute periods were too short to get much done, while others felt the shortened periods were great. The 50 minute periods were very controversial. Half the people spoken to said they were too long and drawn out, while the other half said they liked having the extra time for notetaking, discussions, and studying.

Peter M. commented that spreading out I.S. time is good since "it makes I.S. time more worthwhile." Lisa Holbert said a longer block of time is needed for time-consuming activities. The majority of the people liked having I.S. time split up because they felt it was easier to handle.

Although no one really knows how the rest of the year will go, it seems like the second semester is off to a good start.

It became apparent to the school personnel during its second year of operation that the future of CAHS could not be assured unless the school was expanded to a full-day program. Taking advantage of considerable community pressure to expand CAHS into a full-day high school with an enrollment of 450-500 students, the school personnel was able to convince the superintendent to expand CAHS for the 1980-1981 school year if additional monies could be secured through the Emergency School Aid Act.
Accordingly, the staff and school supervisor prepared and submitted a Magnet School Grant to the federal government in December, 1980. There was some staff concern over a dramatic increase in student population and its impact on the school's program, but it was determined that the risk had to be taken for the long term survival of the school. The staff carefully designed the Magnet School Grant Proposal in keeping with the school's original philosophy and goals, as the following excerpt illustrates.

**Project design**

**Goals:**

The Columbus Magnet High School will be organized into five "major learning areas": Math-science, foreign language, vocational skills and electives, social studies, and communications skills. The course work in each center will focus heavily on individualization and the use of community resources, and students will be encouraged to carry out interdisciplinary studies so that they can take advantage of the resources within each major learning area.

**Location:**

The proposed magnet high school will be housed in the McGuffey Junior High School building, a facility more than adequately equipped to service a projected enrollment of 500 pupils. In compliance with the court-ordered remedy plan the student body of the magnet school will be racially unidentifiable with a minority group population of not less than 20% and not more than 50%.

**Major Components**

a. Intensively Individualized Instruction

The unity and appeal of the Columbus Magnet High School's curriculum lies in its thoroughgoing approach to individualizing all course work throughout the five
major learning areas. Individualized instruction provides all students irrespective to their individual skill levels, with the opportunity to develop their own learning experiences within the basic framework of school-wide requirements. The student might pursue his program in a variety of ways, including formal courses within the centers, classes at local colleges, guided independent study, group projects, and community learning experiences. The centers will also offer totally individualized programs, such as learning activity packages, self-paced foreign language units, individualized research programs, and computerized instructional packets.

This wide variety of choice in course work and teacher methodology, will help many students maximize their potential in mastering basic educational skills by providing them with teaching tools most effective for their style of learning.

B. Community-based and Computer Managed Instruction

The intensively individualized curriculum's implementation, management, design, and extension into the community will be carried out through two interactive strategies which will form the core components of the Columbus Magnet High School.

1. The Community-based Component calls for the establishment of four permanent Regional Satellites within the university, commercial, industrial, and governmental sectors of Columbus. These Regional Satellites will serve as "clearing houses" for students working with specific agencies, institutions, commercial establishments, or firms cooperating with the Magnet School's appropriate Regional Satellite. Under each regional Satellite, a minimum of four community-based laboratories will be established but they need not continue for a uniformly fixed duration. Rather, their duration will depend upon the needs and goals of each student participating. The underlying purpose of each community based laboratory is to afford pupils off-campus learning experiences related to their individualized course work at the Columbus Magnet High School.

2. The Computer Managed Instruction Component will integrate all phases of the total instructional process, both on- and off-campus, by organizing curricula and student-data, monitoring student progress, evaluating
learning results, and providing planning information for teachers. The Computer Managed Instruction Component will not reduce teacher participation within the curriculum; in fact, teachers will actively control the content, methodology, and conceptual objectives of the learning programs under their administration. The Computer Managed Instruction Component will form a direct link with the community based component's activities in that the computer's capabilities will be used in the identification, development, and maintenance of the city-wide network of community laboratories.

STAFFING

In addition to the regular teaching and administrative staff, the Columbus Magnet High School will need additional support personnel during the initial project year.

Project Coordinators

There will be one full-time coordinator for the Computer Managed Instruction Component and one full-time coordinator for the Community-based Component. The Community Coordinator will establish 4 Regional Satellites consisting of at least 4 community-based laboratories per Satellite. The coordinator will be responsible for working with community representatives, conducting inservice training for staff, and developing and implementing individualized, Community-centered curricula. The Computer Managed Instruction Coordinator will develop data-bases for the Community Component, assist the principal and department facilitators in training the staff in developing and writing units for the computer, and provide all data services for the effective management of the total curriculum.

Program Facilitators

There will be five full-time program facilitators. The facilitator's job will be to acquire materials for staff members working in the subject area. The facilitator will assist in resolving conflicts which might arise in the complex schedule which is envisioned for the school.
Although there were a number of minor organizational and structural changes during the 1979-80 school year, the school's alternative approach mirrored the first year program at Mohawk. During the second semester members of the school community nervously awaited the federal government's decision on funding and developed tentative plans for an expanded high school program.

With tentative approval of the Magnet School Grant in the spring of 1980, the school recruited an additional two hundred students for the 1980-81 school year. The superintendent would not give final approval to expand the school until he had received written notification from the Department of Education.

The Third Year Summer, 1980 -- Spring, 1981

The final written approval of the $302,000 federal grant was not received until mid-July. Although the project coordinators, program facilitators, and additional staff members had been selected in anticipation of final approval, the actual work on program development did not begin until late July. Throughout the month of August, workshops and in-service training involving instructional strategies for individualizing, organization of materials, creating instructional units, the use of computer supported instruction in the classroom, methods of utilizing community resources within the classroom were held. In addition the school, as it approached the 1980-81 academic year, had to confront the following conditions, which would put it under additional pressure:
-- The school population would triple from 140 students to 440 students.

-- The teaching staff would more than double from 16 teachers to 34 teachers.

-- The school would have an expanded administrative contingent; five full-time facilitators, two coordinators, and a vice principal.

-- The school would now be legally responsible for maintenance of school attendance records for reviewing and certifying graduation requirements, and for implementing and enforcing system-wide regulations. (As a half-day school without a "principal" CAHS was often exempted from the "normal" regulations.)

-- The school would experience crowded conditions since only four additional classrooms would be added to the high school section of the building.

-- The school would have to meet the rigorous evaluation procedures outlined in the federal grant.

It quickly became apparent that the successful award of the grant did not bring with it the anticipated stability that the administration and staff had hoped for. In fact, during this year, the school faced the greatest crisis of its existence. Although the grant had given the school a kind of physical existence, the grant had necessitated several sweeping changes in the school's organizational structure.

First, the grant forced a more rigid, formal structure of the school's program. Under the federal guideline, Columbus Alternative High School had to present for Federal evaluation a plan detailing the school's specific approaches toward fulfilling the grant's objectives. The rigor of the plan demanded of the school a greater administrative formalization. Under the plan individual responsibilities and duties were specifically defined for all school personnel, whereas these
responsibilities had been more informally defined when CAHS was a half-day school.

A subtle change began to develop among the relationships of the teachers and in the attitude of the teachers toward the administration. The facilitators who historically had been elected by the staff were selected by the administration after a lengthy application and interview process. In the first two years of the school's operation, the school's administration consisted of one individual, whereas the administrative structure under the federal grant was greatly expanded by the addition of a vice principal, two coordinators, and five full-time facilitators. One significant change occurred when the project supervisor, heretofore identified informally as the director, was appointed the principal. A second significant change came about when CAHS became a full-day, formal high school. As a "legitimate" Columbus high school, it lost some of its spontaneity: it had become a larger organization. With the legitimization of CAHS, the school lost the revolutionary sense that had characterized the school during its first two years. It appeared that CAHS had become a monolithic institution. No longer could even simple requests for materials or textbooks be processed informally. As an established school, the CAHS administration and staff were expected to act and perform along the lines prescribed for every Columbus school. Moreover, the school was placed under the direct supervision of central office staff whereas in previous years the central administration had operated as though CAHS were an independent satellite. The staff and students wondered whether
the school's programs were still experimental and hence "relevant."

Students sensed a difference in the school's atmosphere. They often remarked, "It's not like our first year." CAHS tried to continue some of the traditions of the half-day school, but they failed to evoke the same enthusiasm. In addition, there were notable differences between the attitude and philosophy of the older staff and students -- the "pioneers" of CAHS -- and those of the new members or "settlers." As the weeks progressed in the early fall, these differences along with the resulting frustrations grew in intensity. The administrator did not recognize the intensity of those feelings nor did he immediately perceive the felt loss of the "CAHSmic experience" on the part of the older staff and students.

By early November 1980, the signs of unrest had surfaced such that everyone sensed that the institution was in the midst of a pending crisis. This sense of unrest was further aggravated when the school system announced that CAHS was not eligible for renewal of the grant. The staff and administration had succeeded in what they had proposed to do, and yet the school was no longer eligible for ESAA funds. It was evident that staff cuts would have to be made for the 1981-82 school year. The feelings, frustrations, expectations, and changes of the third year are best tracked in the student newspaper articles, in the principal's log, and in the minutes of the Principal's Advisory Council, a master-contract mandated faculty advisory group. In the first edition of the CAHSmic Herald (November 3, 1980) the newspaper carried numerous articles and letters to the editor that underscores the
The third year has begun for the Columbus Alternative High School, characterized by over-crowding and terrible facilities. The major change over the last two years would have to be numbers; CAHS has grown from an enrollment of about 150 to about 450 students.

The large number of ninth and tenth graders has disrupted the school's balance. The behavior of the students has also changed with an overabundance of sophomoric behavior. A sign of this is uncontrollable giggling and juvenile humor in class.

Tim Ilg has stated that change is inevitable. Ilg, principal of CAHS, fails to see that change can be positive or negative and that the changes in this school have shown a negative turn.

The changes that are taking place fit a pattern, the pattern the surrounding high schools are following. The changes are caused by the large number of students accepted. A larger number of students, 450 is one of the stipulations of the federal grant which enables CAHS to function as a full-day school.

The new students are not the cause of all this school's shortcomings. A percentage of juniors and seniors are making the "CAHSmic experience" into a CAHSmic farce. The students who were initiated into CAHS last year or the year before should serve as positive examples. Some of today's seniors show a marked tendency toward apathy -- apathy for school work, apathy for the school, and a general disinterest in anything that doesn't directly affect them.

The following letter to the editor lament the lack of spontaneity and sense of closeness that characterized the first two years of CAHS.
Dear Editor:

Everyone who attended CAHS last year had a surprise waiting for them the first day of school this year. Well, I guess it wasn't exactly a surprise; everybody knew about the full day format, the new teachers, the addition of more students. The veterans of CAHS, however, found a radically different school waiting for them this year. One of the returning students summed it all up with, "This place isn't 'CAHSmic' anymore."

What is the state of being 'CAHSmic'? Well, my definition of it is the kind of school atmosphere we had last year. Teachers and students worked together on a personal, mutual-respect level rather than under the traditional student-teacher relationship. Some of the rookie CAHS teachers should be alerted to how it was last year. For example, you could call teachers here by their first names, and didn't hesitate to do so, because they were your friends as well as your teachers. At the same time, you got a lot of work done because they were your teachers as well as your friends. It illustrates that you can have a school where teachers are concerned about you personally and not about whether you are violating their sense of school rules; where teachers are comfortable enough to see students as people and not names on a class roster; where a student wants to learn because the teacher has somehow made him feel that he is as important as the lesson plan and the lesson is important to him, personally.

And what has happened to the individualization? Having more students this year has cut down on this part of the program which was one of our strengths last year. I asked Mr. W. why there is less individualization and his reasons were that the average class size is larger, the teachers are teaching full classroom loads with only one free period to help students, and there is limited library space and materials. Sounds very much like a traditional school to me.

Another thing which bugs me is that it seems Mr. Ilg doesn't have time to even smile anymore. I guess it's understandable with the larger school and all, but it's rare when students have the rapport with the administration like we had last year and it seems a shame, therefore, to lose it. Mr. Ilg was always around to trade jests with or to answer our various questions and so forth. But this year, so far, he's been hard to find at all and stone cold when you could locate him.
An editorial in the January 14, 1981 edition of the school paper points out the continued concern over the direction of the school.

Students have responsibility

One of the main differences between the Columbus Alternative High School and those of the surrounding area is the impact the students have on what the school becomes. A minority of the students here are choosing for the student body what freedoms are granted or taken away.

Having 450 students in close quarters does demand rules of behavior, if only unwritten ones. However, abuse has forced the administration into a position of spelling out and writing down what can and cannot be done.

This school has had a reputation for being more lax and permissive than other public schools because the students have been able to handle the extra freedoms in the past. Those freedoms were the tradeoff for more responsible social and academic behavior by the students. Over the past three years, however, a gradual decline in the responsibility shown by students has led to many of those freedoms being taken away, a little at a time. If this trend continues, it won't be long before there is no difference between CAHS and any other school in the Columbus system. CAHS cannot afford to have a reputation of being a place where students run wild and academic courses are looked upon as a joke. Neither can it become repressive and authoritarian. These possibilities are the exact opposites of what the "Alternative" in the school's name stands for.

Unfortunately, this, the third year of CAHS, has been marred by incidents and behavior one would expect to find in an elementary school.

Part of the problem is that out of the 450 students, less than a third attended CAHS last year. Because of this, the school attitude is unstable and lacks a firm foundation for those who need direction. But that direction should come from inside oneself or, at the very least, from one's peers. If it has to come from teachers and administrators, it is outside control, control based on the concept of power -- those on top tell those on the bottom what to do and when to do it. If you don't like that kind of situation, you can change it by developing the maturity which makes power control unnecessary.
The direction which students now choose for this school to take can mean the growth or death of the Alternative High School. This decision affects both those who are a part of CAHS and those who are just concerned about the education of today's youth. The saddest death is one that need not occur but does so because no one understands the symptoms until it is too late. Fortunately, this point has not yet been reached, but the real alternative in the Alternative High School could breathe its last gasp this year.

Not all student opinion, however, was negative, and throughout the second semester students formally and informally debated the merits and shortcomings of the school. By the end of the year, the issue still had not been settled as the following two opposing editorials from the June, 1981 edition of the CAHSmic Herald illustrate:

CAHSmic dream comes true

As CAHS' first year as a full-day school draws to a close, it seems only fitting that some mention be made of the special things that make CAHS CAHS and have kept a good number of this year's seniors hanging on for three years, when it often would have been much less trouble to give up and return to a home school.

In the beginning, there was an empty North High School and there was a dream. When the desegregation order was delayed in 1978, it seemed as if CAHS would remain a dream. Thanks to the combined efforts of Timothy Ilg, Ray Horn (a concerned parent), staff members, parents, and students, a half-day school was organized at Mohawk Junior High. That year the CAHSmic Experience began; as Principal Ilg said at the Senior Breakfast this year, "If you weren't there -- well, you missed something."

The next year saw a move to McGuffey, a growth of the school, and several changes in policy, nothing new to those who had been there the first year; changes were frequent.
CAHS has also been a place to make friends, to experience people from varying backgrounds and with varying ideas. This, along with the academics, has better prepared many students to face the outside world than they might otherwise have been prepared.

The staff and the administrators are pretty special, too. The teachers are caring, dedicated, and knowledgeable -- truly the cream of the city's crop. The administration is extremely dedicated to everything it has always stood for.

For keeping CAHS alive for three years, and making it one of the best schools in the area, we must thank everyone who has been involved with it and all who have worked to make the dream come true.

Dream becomes a nightmare

The Columbus Alternative High School has developed from an idea to a stagnating, if not dying, reality. The one thing that this school lacks is the refreshing newness which brings a creative energy that can be used to make something and to try bold concepts.

Some questions need to be asked: for whom is policy made and why? what direction is this school going? why is hard work not recognized -- only that which gets newspaper coverage? security is maintained at what price? how many of the courses are no different than those offered anywhere else? what percentage of the student body actually uses all of those expensive computers? These computers either use money that could be better spread into other ways to educate or are simply a waste of money period. How does getting a high score on the Space Invader games teach a student about life?

The envisioned utopia of CAHS is dead and the pretense that it isn't doing more harm than good. Individuality isn't nurtured here, it's stamped out. If you're not on the inside, you're NOT. Period.

I hope someone can make it work again. The CAHSmic dream doesn't have to remain a nightmare.

Throughout the school year, the principal experienced his continuing concern about changes in the school atmosphere, teacher factionalism, and student dissatisfaction in his administrative log
book. The log book provided a running record of his perceptions which
tract the growth of the difficulties.

August 26, 1980 “Potential problem with faculty workload. We might
be asking too much of teachers. Time will tell.”

September 16, 1980 “_______ was discussing problems in her class.
She wondered what had happened to CAHS. The school had changed.”

September 25, 1980 “C.E.A. representative brought up several faculty
concerns. Old and new staff are split. Serious problems ahead.”

October 20, 1980 “I met with several students about problems at CAHS.
We must adjust school to larger enrollment. Things are coming
apart.”

December 9, 1980 “P.A.C. met tonight. Teachers don’t feel they have
an input into policy making decisions.”

January 20, 1981 “School-wide study of all operations is needed.
There is no time for long, open-ended discussions. We need a
formalized review process.”

April 7, 1981 “School review is under way and seems to be going all
right. I hope it accomplishes the results.”

April 15, 1981 “Notified teachers who will be staff reduced. Bad
scene!”

June 2, 1981 “School review completed and voted upon. School year is
ending on a positive note. Thank God!”

The evidence of teacher unrest and concern for the school’s
program can be tracked through the agenda items and minutes of the
Principal’s Advisory Council. Many of the agenda items, which here­
tofore had been considered part of the perennial inconvenience of the
public school environment, now dominated the teachers’ perceptions of
the school’s atmosphere. The following sampling from the November, 1980
agenda testifies to the teachers’ heightened sense of concern that the
new structure of the school left them abandoned.

-- Faculty workspace inadequate
-- Lack of storage area for books
-- Lack of space in general
-- Lack of sources to run on effective computer supported instruction unit (undermining of success of existing program through increased student numbers
-- Lack of Board of Education acknowledgment
-- Library being locked
-- Visitors taking assigned spaces
-- Lack of healthful, pleasant, clean working environment
-- Broken P.A. system
-- Late students to first period class
-- Lack of consistency in time of morning announcements
-- Uneven heating in building

Although such concerns had been voiced upon occasion during the first two years, the staff had never considered them as major problems to be formally discussed as items of the P.A.C.

In addition to housekeeping concerns, a new apprehension regarding the lack of a consistent school philosophy soon emerged as the chief agenda items in the early meetings of the Principal's Advisory Council. The findings of a faculty survey conducted by the P.A.C. in early October, 1980 bear witness to the staff's sensitivity to the issue:
1. What was your notion of the school's philosophy at the beginning of this school year?

Most people clearly stated that they believed the school's thrust to be academic, but with a strong emphasis on individualization. Also several people indicated that they believed that the school would revolve around community input and involvement. Many teachers expected a humane, personalized environment wherein students and teachers could learn together in a "non-threatening" environment. Several indicated that they believed the school would support and enhance the humanities in particular. Several teachers said they believed more teacher input would be solicited in formation of philosophy and policy-making.

2. Has the school philosophy's, in your opinion, changed since the beginning of the school year? If so, how?

Eleven people said "yes" to this one. Four said "no". One "unsure." One "yes and no." following is a list elaborating some of the ways you said the philosophy has changed.

-- Academic expectations lowered through non-selective recruiting

-- Conflicting opinions about what school philosophy, in fact, is

-- Unsure of extent of individualized instruction

-- Teachers cannot help students with problems

-- Faculty group not functioning according to grant

-- Little to no individualization present

-- Frustrations stem from overcrowded building and lack of adjustment of teachers and students to increased staff and student body

-- Not offering what we say we offer (undermines integrity of school)

-- Grant is guideline of policy-making

-- Stress on controlling kids instead of educating them

-- Lack of consistency between what community PR says we are and what we really are
-- Numbers make individualization impossible
-- It has become very traditional
-- Co-curricular day a misguided way of helping non-academic students
-- Little individualization

3. If you feel there was a change, what was your reaction to it?

Ill at ease (not sure of expectations), not positive (new rules make consistency difficult), adjustment discomfort, basically good, frustrated, (not enough time for planning), teacher/student input into policy-making), anger, hopelessness, very negative effect on morale of teachers and students, disappointed.

In general, staff members believe these feelings could be tempered with the establishment of a clear-cut philosophy provided by all.

Following the publication of the survey results a new issue of faculty concern surfaced -- an issue that began to overshadow the staff's desire to see a coherent philosophy drafted. The issue addressed openly the staff's perceived need to become direct and immediate participants in the decision making process.

Although the Principal's Advisory Council continued to deal with issues of major curricular and administrative import for the school throughout the year, many members of the staff felt that the base for decision making had to be broader than that provided for in the Principal's Advisory Council. The concern for faculty input appeared several items on the P.A.C. agenda.

"Policies should be a result of an in-put from all factions ... Most of all, policies should not be made before teacher input."
Historically, the entire staff used to meet regularly during the afternoon to discuss problems and map out the future direction of CAHS. In April and May of the school's first and second year, the staff conducted informal school reviews to assess its performance and plan for the next academic year. (The small staff and half-day program enabled the administration to allocate the large amounts of time for the purpose of the studies.) However, the time constraint of the full-day program and the expanded faculty militated against such an informal review process. In order to enhance the staff's sense of participation in the school planning, the advisory council determined to take some action to give the staff some measure of active involvement in the decision-making process. The administration remained uncertain whether the faculty was dissatisfied with the school's program or the policy-making procedures of the school or both.

At the urging of the P.A.C., the administration decided that the traditional school review furnished the best means of sounding out the precise bases of faculty misgivings.

Based on the school's previous success with the informal school review format, a more formal school review was initiated in February of 1981 to evaluate the five major areas of the school's program over a three month period with the object of preparing specific recommendations for the 1981-82 school year.
As a result of the staff's intensive examination of the school program, they discovered that the major alternative components of CAHS -- components promised to the community -- had survived the traumatic adjustment to the full-day school (although the institutional appearance of CAHS' superstructure had undergone dramatic change). Individualization could be found in most of the school's courses. The community internship program was an unqualified success. The computer supported instruction program greatly had enhanced the classroom teachers' ability to individualize their courses. Despite offering fewer courses because of staff cutbacks, the school still maintained a highly specialized curriculum. With the loss of the grant, the full-time facilitators would be returned to the classroom, but the school system's pledge to the community and computer coordinator positions would be sufficient to preserve two of the strengths of the school's program. The faculty voted to continue and institutionalize the school review process under the auspices of the Principal's Advisory Council. Accordingly, the school review became a permanent part of the school's self-evaluative mechanism thus insuring faculty input into any long-term changes within the school's operations or directions.

In addition to the school review, students and parents had recorded their perceptions of the alternative school program in a year-end survey administered during the month of May, 1981. The conclusions of the survey reinforced those that emerged from the school review. The program, in spite of external alterations in administrative structure, was fulfilling its promises. In his summary, the external evaluator
noted that the most favorable ratings were received on items . . . regarding the advantages of the magnet school curriculum over those of more traditional schools and the belief that the curriculum offered at the Magnet High School should be continued next year. Ninety-four percent agreed with both items . . . Overall, the total program received a favorable response from the parents surveyed.

Students surveyed by the Pupil Year End Survey gave the overall program favorable ratings. The Pupil Year End Survey was designed to ascertain the perceptions of pupils regarding various aspects of the magnet school program, including the internship, co-curricular, and independent study programs. The survey was administered as part of the Student Opinion Survey with 298 students, representing 77% of the school's enrollment, responding. Like their parents, students indicated that they have benefited more from the Magnet High School program than they would have from a regular high school program. Particularly, students gave highly favorable ratings to the internship, co-curricular, and the independent study programs offered as part of the academic program at the Magnet High School.
The Columbus Alternative High School informants, by reason of their highly select characteristics, produced a great deal of data, which the researcher used for analysis. The raw data had much more to offer than quantity and density. In a memorandum dictated after completing the Columbus Alternative High School interviews, the investigator noted that the informants had been exceptionally candid and that he himself had been impressed by the precision of their terminology. For example, one teacher testifying to the destabilizing effect that too rapid innovation causes, used the term "unmodulated pace." The precision and candor of the testimony made it easy for the investigator to recognize and integrate the destabilizing crises categories as they emerged in the data analysis.

At the conclusion of the first stage of the data analysis--that of incident comparison -- fourteen categories had surfaced, all of which promised early saturation of all categories. Although several of the categories suggested (even at this early stage of global sorting) that they could be easily subsumed under other categories, the researcher was struck by the extent of their abstractness or general
formulation. The researcher had formed a hypothetical expectation that the categories of destabilizing crises would be expressed more particularly, i.e. he had assumed that the informants would identify specific incidents of crisis rather than universalized (or at least not highly individualized) descriptions. It occurred to the researcher that the teachers had already processed the individual events of crisis long before the interview and had sorted their conclusions into a rudimentarily abstract and personal taxonomy. The clue that this "pre-sorting" had occurred came when the researcher was analyzing the verbal contexts of the citations of a destabilizing crisis. Informants introduced their testimony by such phrases as "This is what I call the 'are we going to be here if the money runs out' effect" and "we called this the "turn-over" syndrome." Accordingly what appeared to be light humor at the first level of analysis turned out to be of great value to the investigator in identifying the destabilizing crises.

In another memorandum, the investigator remarked that the "pre-sorting" phenomenon would serve as a guide in providing appropriate nomenclature and in integrating analogous properties; in addition, he noted that the phenomenon would furnish a check against unwarranted theoretical "adventurism" in constructing his explanations. He observed that in almost all cases the informant articulated what he or she perceived to be a destabilizing crisis by first labeling a generalized, umbrella classification and then by recalling incidents or anecdotes that illustrated or qualified the larger grouping. A ready example
occurred when one informant identified the inexperience of the administrator as a destabilizing crisis. She said:

Of course, there's the problem of the new kid on the block. He doesn't know the ropes of the neighborhood. He doesn't belong to the in-group, doesn't know the short cuts. That's just like you were in the first year. You accepted a lot of things from downtown because you didn't know completely how to get what you wanted. Like when half the teachers got afternoon duties at other schools. If you'd had more experience as an administrator that probably wouldn't have happened.

Integrating the categories proved to be much more difficult than the researcher anticipated. At first blush, the properties of the fourteen categories appeared intractably bound to the personal categorical labels enunciated by the informants: The categories as they stood seemed to be subsistent, and militating against their further incorporation into one another was their early tendency to become saturated from the wealth of testimonial citation of particular incidents. At this point, the researcher discontinued coding for incidents and began comparing side by side each category and its incidents with each other in the hope of discovering new interrelationships that would reveal additional, latent categories. None resulted from the analysis. Several category incidents, however, were bonded closely in form to those of other categories, implying possible reduction at a later stage and at a higher level of analysis. Thus, for example, at the lowest level of analytical coding, the desegregation order emerged as a destabilizing crises. Upon analysis, it became clear that desegregation was too specific and, as a category it was accidental and not necessary to a perceived condition. The analyst progressed to a higher level of abstraction to discover those more
general properties of the desegregation order that brought about destabilization — properties that were not exclusively linked to the phenomenon of desegregation. At this level, the researcher discovered the destabilizing category of the physical arrangements of the school. Within the citations of desegregation, he noted that the teachers cited the effects of desegregation upon the school's physical arrangements as destabilizing. The fact that the arrangements were disturbed by the desegregation order was accidental; any number of other circumstances could have generated the same effects on the school's physical arrangements.

Subsequent coding efforts were directed to encoding testified incidents that had not appeared to belong to any of the stated categories. The analyst's memoranda addressed his assumption that perhaps these incidents should form the matter for additional categories, but at the same time they spoke to his suspicion that their form betrayed their kinship with other categorized incidents although their substance made them seem unrelated. Owing to his hypothetical assumption that he would encounter numerous categories, the researcher resisted the growing intimation that the categories were exhausted. For this reason, he continued to encode incidents even when other incidents were similar routine until only the testimony of code-resisting incidents remained.

Accordingly, one category emerged at the midpoint of analysis. The investigator termed it "maintaining the continuous Revolution." As it first stood, the category suggested that alternative schools must continue introducing change in order not to stagnate. Although the
terminology appeared to place the citations in a unique category, at a later analytical level, the investigator noticed that this testimony was in fact a slight variation on the Rate of Innovation Category. After all other citations had been subsumed under a category, he labeled each code resistant item by its form and substance and then returned to the taped and transcribed testimony to analyze its full context, wondering whether the informant might have indicated in her or his own language their correlation to expressed categories. Because of the precision of the informants' testimony, the investigator discounted the possibility that he may have not detected or may have ignored the informants' verbal clues about the classification of the uncoded incidents. His recourse to the full body of testimony rewarded the analyst insofar as he uncovered the category affiliations of the uncoded incidents. To his surprise, he learned in all cases the informant had linked the incident to a category. In some instances the citation came as a spontaneous recollection during testimony of an incident belonging to another category. The researcher had missed the connection because the informant, distracted by the immediacy of the remembrance of his or her present testimony failed to identify explicitly the previous category to which she or he referred. The form/substance schematization enabled the analyst to recover the category under which it belonged. In other cases, it was evident that connection between incident and category was virtually present; by that, the researcher means the informant had used either implied or weak connectives to subjoin the incident to its appropriate category. As a result, no new categories were added.
For example, one informant had cited the destabilizing effect of
the central administration's misperception of the alternative school's
purposes. Within that testimony she had added how one teacher had been
active in communicating to central administration supervisors the goals
of the school and how worthy he thought they were. Because of the
detail of the testimony, the researcher thought the incident
significant and at the first level had given it the provisional catego­
rical identification, "Need to Politicize Staff." However, on later
form/substance analysis, the researcher saw that the informant had
linked the incident to the sense of the loss to the school occasioned by
her early departure. Thus this "category" was placed under the larger
umbrella of Retaining and Replacing Staff Members.

At this stage, the theory positing the presence of destabilizing
crises as real threats to the continued existence of the Columbus
Alternative High School had solidified. The researcher moved into the
theory delimitation stage to begin reduction of the categories to
discover, in the words of Glaser and Strauss (1967), the "underlying
uniformities in the original set of categories or their properties, and
then formulate the theory with a smaller set of higher level concepts
(p. 110)." To reduce the categories the analyst searched for key words
in the names of the umbrella classifications given by the informants.

Because the analyst himself had been a part of the school's
history, he too was familiar with the informants' native language and
had employed the same language and vocabulary in his own daybook and
policy statements when recording the history of the school and his own
reactions. His analytic memoranda also revealed his surprise at how comfortable he felt with the informants' terminology. By arranging the categories by key word arrays, the researcher was able to consolidate categories by expanding the terms of their nomenclature; in so doing, he realized a parsimony of variables and a wide scope of applicability (Glaser and Strauss, 1963). The fourteen categories of destabilizing crises were reduced to eight discrete categories. Accordingly, the word "anxiety," which at first analysis had appeared extreme and even overly dramatic provide a key word for the fifth destabilizing category, Anxiety associated with the Need for Extraordinary Funding. So too the words "community perception" provided the key words for naming the fourth category. In this last instance, the category had originally been two categories but analysis revealed that the two categories were interrelated.

The eight categories that emerged are:

1. The threat of change of a particular leader's style and administration inexperience.
2. The physical arrangements of the school.
3. Retaining and replacing staff members.
4. Community and administrative perceptions of the school.
5. Anxiety associated with the need for extraordinary funding.
6. Variations in program emphasis.
7. Acquiring a suitable setting for the school.
8. The rate of innovation.
Threat of Change of a Particular Leader's Style and Administrative Inexperience

This category was the first to emerge with clarity among the Columbus Alternative informants. The Columbus Alternative High School informants testified that during the first three years of the school's operations they harbored an unexpressed fear that a change in leadership would have unalterably disrupted -- and perhaps even would have curtailed -- the growth of the school. The staff had become accustomed to the administrator's methods of directing the school and the notion of having to become acclimated to another individual's personal and administrative style in the midst of trying to come to grips with the different demands posed by the alternative school environment instilled in the staff a sense of insecurity. In fact the school was in many ways conceived to be an extension of the administrator's personality. In expressing his fear for the loss of the administrator and its resulting, destructive effect, one teacher commented the students would have abandoned the school had a new administrator been assigned:

... most of the students would have gone. And I say that because the perception of the school on the part of the community would have been so radically changed and I don't think any number of meetings and public hand holding sessions on the part of the Board and the community would have changed that perception. I think a lot of times in those first critical moments the community believed the school would keep its promises simply because you stood up on stage and assured them it would. You assured them twice: you assured them at North when you stood up there and then you assured them again at Mohawk. The community perceived the school in terms of you. I think they still do. But at that time I think the identification was even more desperate, more emotional... (Teacher 5)
Although one might view this statement as an extreme position, another teacher admitted that he relied entirely on the administrator during the first year of the school:

I think I put all my eggs in your basket. I assumed that you sat down and tried to carry the ball for us, because I certainly had nothing to do with the move to Mohawk. Until I got the phone call that said you're on the staff, come back and go to work. I was hoping that you could pull it off. I think you handled everything. I mean I don't know of anybody else unless you tell me differently (Teacher 2).

With the administrative change in the third year, the school's founder was assisted by a vice principal; the staff feared that the increase in the administrative team by a vice principal and facilitators and coordinators would alter the school's organizational stability.

We went through the organizational change now having the new vice principal also I think that there was the problem that the disruption that that caused was those of us on the older staff were used to coming directly to you and then in turn you had delegated some of it to the vice principal and to the facilitators, but most people wanted to circumvent that and come right on to you anyway. And they refused to and I think that's why we lost them. (Teacher 3)

In a similar view, another informant commented:

There was too much bureaucracy. Teachers felt that they couldn't talk to you any more because of this middle management and because of the bureaucracy that was set up. I feel we're kind of back to what it was before. If I want to go see the vice principal, go see her about something. I want to come to see you, I come to see you about it. I think you made the mistake of structuring everything so much that it really hurt. (Teacher 4)

Compounding the insecurity brought about by the addition of an administrative assistant was the change of the individual's official administrative status at the end of the school's second year: A change of title threatened to ontologically modify the administrator's style.
You also had at that point a change of the person in charge of the school going from director to principal, which is a great change and a lot of things. And there was a vice principal brought into the school which meant that CAHS truly had an administration just like every other high school in the city. You had an administration. You didn't have a director who was working with you where you felt that that person was more at a teacher level than when people move into administration there were some changes with that. (Teacher 3)

The administrator's leadership style had been central to the establishment of the alternative school and to its survival through the critical first years, and part of his success was based upon his administrative inexperience, which enabled him to interact informally with staff and the community without the need or inclination to assert definitively his control.

You didn't treat us like a regular principal would have. We could walk right into your office when we had a problem. When you came into my classroom, I didn't feel that I was under the microscope -- that my job was on the line. I think that you got these done through us because we didn't look at you as the principal. (Teacher 6)

Another staffer added:

I always recognized you as the boss, the curricular leader, but I never considered you the principal, with all the bad ones I've worked for, I don't think in that first year that I could have been as open with you if you were a principal, I mean, when you reviewed my syllabus, I don't think I would have put in the changes you suggested if you were the principal. You just wouldn't have had the moral authority. (Teacher 5)

Another teacher noted that inexperience was a strength.

I don't think a veteran administrator would have done all you did to keep the school alive. I just don't think they would have done it. I've seen what they do; they would have waited for downtown to make a decision. They wouldn't have done what you did for this school. (Teacher 6).
However, lack of experience, which in many ways was a strength, threatened the school's organization:

I think the administration was a destabilizing factor in a sense that it was inexperienced well the school itself was new with the administration being inexperienced in administrating. That of course had its setback and it was destabilizing to teachers who look to the voice of experience and they would tend to have more faith in someone who is more settled in that position. (Teacher 4)

Several staff members elaborated:

I think an experienced administrator might have helped a lot. There would have been more time for discussion and input. More people could have been involved in that part and that always makes it set better. I think if you had more experience as an administrator like now you would never have had a year like that last year; you won't ever have it happen again. You were a baby administrator. The faculty that went through it will probably never go through it again anywhere because there are other ways to deal with it now and most people will make sure they find them. (Teacher 1)

Physical Arrangements of the School

The changes in both school site and internal room assignment arrangements were cited as major destabilizing events. For all seven informants, the movement from one building to another and the restructuring of teachers' stations within the new building jeopardized the staff's sense of belonging to some place, of having put down roots, and of having established comfortably familiar routines through which they could interpret their effectiveness and authenticate their sense of personal worth:

One destabilizing condition, of course, was the moves; several moves of the alternative school from where it was originally supposed to be at North High School. The first move was to Mohawk, which was entirely a result of the desegregation stay by the supreme court justice. Then the school was moved again in the second year and so the different moves were a destabilizing factor certainly. (Teacher 3)
The changes in the building we've done that several times now and to me it always created a strain. It was probably destabilizing in the sense that the location of some people might have changed; the building location was changed from an area where people might have anticipated it. Within the building there was constant changes in classroom assignments; that to me is destabilizing because you become comfortable in one place. You have that area fixed up the way you wanted to and the next year you start all over again. In my opinion anytime you move it's like starting all over again to a certain extent. We do that here just about every year. We are continuing to do that. I wonder sometimes if the day will ever come that I will be able to leave my things here over the summer and know that I will have this room and things will be the same. (Teacher 4)

I'll begin by saying that I hope after next year we don't have to move again. It's needless in a way expenditure of energy and organizational skills that takes away from whatever else you're doing. When you constantly have to move your things in a school from building to building or from room to room or floor to floor, it's a time consuming, energy consuming sort of thing that you feel is just not accomplishing anything. (Teacher 1)

Many staff members saw the movement to a new building as more than a threat to their own sense of well being; in it they saw the moves as damaging to the students who had sacrificed to attend CAHS in the first year of operation.

I can remember just the student's reactions of having to go out to McGuffey which to them was sort of in the boon docks, out of reach of easy transport that they had enjoyed. Even when students came downtown by car or by bus, they had easy access; and even north end students had a difficult time getting up to McGuffey simply because you have to cross the freeway. I remember kids like Ray Tucker and a few others who had to come from the east end and that was really a long haul for them in the morning -- much longer than they expected. I think the move caused student number attrition; there was a dent in our east end population and only the most ardent enthusiast of the alternative school came. (Teacher 5)

The moves within the school, whether brought about by the movement of the school to a new site or by administrative design, elicited the most emotive responses:
At Mohawk we had established certain areas of the school to be foreign language, social studies, to a lesser extent mathematics. In the math department, we were all in one room so it was either this room or another room but a lot of the other centers did have a large group of rooms and a program that operated in an environment that they had gotten accustomed to and at McGuffey, new room allocations had to be made; we had to start thinking in terms of a new physical environment. McGuffey was vastly different in structure than Mohawk. In Mohawk we owned the entire third floor: It was ours; we didn't have to worry about a middle school down below ... at this time we were integrated into an elementary school, we had to accommodate elementary schedule and I thought that had its significant, influence on the school. (Teacher 6)

Another informant noted that room movement was bothersome.

The moving of the rooms bothered some people. It didn't bother me but it bothered some people. I think that we have always started programs and have made changes at mid year and then the next year we did the same thing again. It seems like every mid-year we're making some major structural changes. Maybe this is getting to bother some people and I think it's beginning even to bother me at this point. (Teacher 2)

Frequent internal and external moves discourage the staff because they cannot always understand the reasons for the move; for them moves drain their sources of creativity by forcing teachers to undergo frustration and to experience a loss of purpose.

You have to box up all your things which may be by that point and probably are set up in some sort of fashion. Sometimes boxes don't arrive with material because the movers misplace or lose them. That's minor but disruptive then you have to do the reorganizing again. It's a needless expenditure of energy and organizational skills that takes away from whatever else you're doing. When you constantly have to move your things in a school from building to building or from room to room or floor to floor. It's a time consuming, energy consuming sort of thing and you feel that it's just not accomplishing anything. It just seems to be a real tiresome thing to consider moving again all those materials to wherever they be. (Teacher 3.)
Retaining and Replacing Staff Members

While an alternative school, like traditional schools, needs to retain its staff members in order to enhance its stability, the urgency of the need is more pressing than that of traditional schools. This urgency communicates itself to the staff with particular vehemence for reasons that belong to the alternative experience and the performance expectations that arise from the school community. Every informant saw replacing and retaining staff as a destabilizing crisis. Moreover, the staff was well aware of the very real chance of alternative school burnout:

Alternative teachers are worried about burnout first of all. I remember our first meetings when experienced alternative school teachers told us to look around: in three or four years some wouldn't be here. I think the way the alternative school was presented at the time was that it was going to be an assignment that would be a document of your qualifications as a teacher: a teacher with superlative qualifications. Consequently I think I thought that if I failed then maybe that reflected on me that I wasn't really the teacher I was expected to be. And with all the horror stories of the burnout, if you can last or you can't last -- I was worried. (Teacher 5)

The apprehension was aggravated when some staff members left the school:

The staff lost a sense of stability and began to worry about who would be next. When's it going to happen to me. I think when that happens with teachers they begin to want to relax a little bit: they don't want the school to take its toll on them. You're worried about burnout and you're worried about your leaving and at the same time you're worried about the stigma of having to leave the alternative school. Does it mean you weren't a good teacher; you couldn't handle the best kids in the system? Remember many administrators believed we had a cake job and we did. What would they think of me if I left? (Teacher 5)
Citing a personal example, Teacher 2 stated:

It takes about five years to really build an alternative program and usually the original staff is not there in the end. It seems like people have to go through changes in order to grow and if people can't accept the changes then they really don't want to be there any longer . . . They couldn't cope with the changes. I think ---- was a good example. He was smart. He told you as early as October that he just wasn't going to be here next year. He was a very excellent teacher but he didn't fit into where we were headed.

The loss of staff as a result of the mandated reduction in force policy added a new dimension of uncertainty to those teachers who had successfully survived "burnout" and found their depth in the alternative schools.

The staff reduction in April when that happened that was a very destructive factor in several ways in my own department because of the teacher who was eventually reduced and didn't want to be. That was a severe disruption. So I think, yes, that staff reduction was a real sore point. I am sure it is any time the staff has to lose people. This time maybe it is because people liked it there, thought it was a special school and took it a little harder than normal. I was staff reduced at Mohawk and didn't mind it at all. (Teacher 1)

Another teacher spoke to the deeper sense that staff reductions decimated the staff and left it with a feeling of curtailed purpose:

The reductions generated a lot of bitterness because we had someone who had been here from the beginning of the school; a person who helped open the school and was very influential in it was staff reduced simply because he didn't have enough years of experience in the Columbus city schools. The person had to leave when they felt that they had a lot more to contribute. (Teacher 6)

When staff members were replaced or new members added, new difficulties emerged that shook the school's foundations.

When you brought in new people still there was a little bit of animosity between the old staff versus the new staff, the old CAHS versus the new CAHS, the half day small program and you move to a full day large program . . . (Teacher 3)
There was a core group of staff members that planned the original school and had some ownership in that school. And as the program expanded you had to bring in additional people and there was the problem of where those people fit into that school and into that staff and with the original people. (Teacher 3)

The interviews attest well to the resentment felt by old staffers to new staff members. One perceptive staff member, with considerable self-understanding, confided:

I felt last year a very strong division between old staff and new staff very strong, I tended to guess my own situation I tended to hobnob and talk to and associate with the new staff with a lot of support because the old staff with my new position that I had the old staff whom I thought were my friends turned out not to be and therefore I didn't really have much to say to them. And so I ended up feeling I felt very strongly for the new staff. They really felt left out of things in many ways and it was particularly on the part of the teachers. It was not on the part of the administration, it was on the part of the teachers. (Teacher 2)

Behind the resentment of additional faculty lay the impression that additional staff members enlarged the faculty to such an extent that intimate and open communication could no longer take place.

A lot of the free flowing discussions and conversations that went on, they're not there anymore because you can't get around and we can't get into you. That is where the departments become even more critical than ever before. But the one thing I would say is to critique; we lost a lot of staff interaction because we got so large. Where before we used to be able to sit down because there were all of us in one room and we just lost that meeting time. (Teacher 7)

Community and Administrative Perceptions of the School

The CAHS teachers were well aware that they were responsible to two separate communities: (1) the community comprised of the school's students, parents, and supporters and (2) the community of central
office administrators who supervised the school and were invested with
the authority to close the school. The teachers considered the central
office to be not only unsympathetic to the school's special needs, but
even at odds with those needs. The staff of the Columbus Alternative
High School remained sensitive to the expressed and unexpressed demands
of the social community, and often used it as a gauge to measure their
success. Furthermore, the staff took very little umbrage from the
social community's criticisms.

When parents criticized some laxness, we knew we had to get
tougher and more academic. We were under attack too for not
being academic. Yes we were academic certainly -- we offered
all the academics -- but I think that the community thought
we weren't living up to their expectations ... And if I were
to guess what was going through your mind I think maybe you too
felt a few of the community criticisms. Maybe we were too lax
that first year in some things. Too many good fun days free days
and all that. We welcomed the opportunity to change -- to suit
the community's standards.

In spite of the support provided by the central office in the way of
providing half-time released status for facilitators and grant writers,
the staff viewed the central administration's apparent reluctance
to provide active, unqualified support as destabilizing. Moreover,
they considered the central administration to be pursuing a policy of
malignant neglect toward alternative schools in Columbus. In the
staff's eyes, the central administration did not perceive the school qua
alternative school but as merely another cost center. Hence, the
central administration labored under a serious misapprehension about the
nature and purpose of the Alternative High School and therefore did not
make available extraordinary assistance that the school required. Early
in the school's history, the staff felt administrative neglect:

I think that downtown started off giving us time released but we soon found that not everybody could attend the meetings due to a lack of substitutes, which I feel was the first time we got any kind of hint that administrative interference in the program would cause some problems for us. (Teacher 4)

Another teacher observed:

The decision to reopen North and move the alternative High School to Mohawk should have been an omen of things to come as far as how the board was going to put road blocks in front of us. (Teacher 3)

One teacher concluded:

In September of 81 we opened up I had a very good year. I think our co-curricular program after the experimentation of last year is much better. We do have a problem administratively from downtown. As usual we had more students coming in, and we are not getting the increase in staff in order to maintain the programs with which we began. But I do believe that a lot of it is just simply just because the administration will not and refuses to accept the fact that an alternative program doesn't run like a normal student-teacher ratio. They cannot accept that. And I believe that administrative ignorance is the biggest problem right now that this school faces. (Teacher 2)

As the alternative school's objectives became clearer to the administrative community, staff members sensed a shift from a passive attitude towards the school to a posture of active interference with the non-standard educational program. The administration became a major force in steering the school to a more traditional program:

Over the first three years I felt we had gotten slowly more traditional -- not from internal forces but from external forces. But I think in our first year when we didn't have that so much we were left alone because downtown didn't know what we were doing, and I think that ultimately down the road they were afraid of where we were going and as we ultimately reached the folding point at the end of three years we had become very traditionalized -- not internally but externally. And I think it interfered with a lot of what we really want to do. (Teacher 7)
The lack of relative autonomy in the first three years made the school heavily dependent on the central administration as the principal decision making mechanism through which the school had to carry out its special mission. Throughout the period, the administration responded to the school's unique needs through conventional, bureaucratic terms, without taking under consideration that the school's program differed in kind from that of other schools. In reference to the first year of operation, one teacher remarked:

administration did not perceive the school qua alternative school but as merely another cost center. Hence, the central administration labored under a serious misapprehension about the nature and purposes. The year went very well except for another decision-making process on the part of the administration to say that some teachers have to go off a half day to other schools in order to make use of them. The idea was you have so many bodies, you have to place them out there. I didn't like that. It was strictly an administrative decision from downtown. I think that had a negative effect on the people that went out. I know it did on me personally. (Teacher 2)

The staff's consensus insisted that the central administration must learn to grant alternative schools a certain degree of freedom. As one staff member summarized:

... along with that line of autonomy, I think alternative schools need to be autonomous from the basic board policy of how you run a traditional school. They still want to put you into a mold and saying you have to be this way. I know that there are some limitations in taking money aside. If money isn't really the object, I think that you need to have enough staff with just enough students not that we would go along and say we had a ten to one student-teacher ratio, but I think the building must be left basically alone from board policies that run traditional schools because it still is one of the things that they are trying to do today. (Teacher 7)
Anxiety Associated With the Need For Extraordinary Funding

The emergence of this destabilizing crisis category startled the analyst. Although he knew from the literature that inadequate financing had been a historical reason for the demise or modification of many alternative schools, he did not anticipate its emergence. Throughout the first years, he thought that, as the school's administrator, he had sheltered the staff from the fear of finding or losing a funding base. In fact, the data revealed the staff was as anxious about funding sources as was the administrator. Furthermore, the staff understood that the school's continuation rested upon its winning outside monies to supplement General Fund allocations.

I know money's always been a thing for us but I didn't think it was that much of a problem when we were switched from North to Mohawk the first year simply because I looked at it that the board had to do something. But I do remember during the first year finance was a problem for us and I think that was why I was so glad when we were able to get so many of the grants. The amount of money they added up to that first year certainly wasn't enough to pay even the salaries of the people freed in the afternoon. But I think the very idea that the school was generating money and it was somehow able to underwrite itself a little bit was helpful. But I worried if our luck would hold. (Teacher 5)

Without a consistent source of funds teachers could not make stable plans for courses that required special materials.

We were told we'd have funds from someplace or another and even put in orders through downtown and then for some reason these materials would never exist. It got to the point almost where orders were sent because they must be sent but never expected to come and that was disruptive. (Teacher 7)

Teachers had become so accustomed to worrying about operating funds for the next year that after the euphoria caused by the successful
award of the magnet school grant passed away, deep concern set in. The grant had created a level of program growth that the staff believed had to be sustained if the school were to grow:

There were some conditions in the grant that could be viewed as destabilizing because of the change that the grant initiated: the naming the appointment of facilitators and the coordinator positions and just the whole team management approach you know all came from the grant. I guess you'd have to look at the fact that the following year that the Board of Education decided not to seek another grant so then you're going from all those positions that were paid by the Federal Government back to what the Board of Education is going to decide what that school is going to have. At that point you're losing some of that team management concept that you had going. Both getting the grant and then really being denied the right to renew the grant the following year were ruinous. (Teacher 3)

When the central administration decided not to seek the renewal of the ESSA grant, the staff viewed the action as a setback and a threat to the school's continuity:

The Board's decision not to seek another government grant was threatening to many staff members. It didn't look like the Board clearly supported our school and all our efforts. You just didn't know if they were going to say, "Sorry, you're gone. You don't exist." Two or three years is down the drain. (Teacher 1)

Variations in Program Emphasis

Whenever the alternative program underwent a program change or whenever one of its components received more attention than did the others, a major crisis loomed. Despite the staff's profession of being change agents when they entered the alternative school, they greeted program changes -- and especially changes occasioned by new building or room environments -- with suspicion.
I think that the first major crisis of our second year came about because we had to change the way our program was going. I think we desperately lost desperately missed the resources of the downtown community. Our program really had begun to develop itself in terms of the downtown community. We were surviving without the Ohio State concept and then all of a sudden when we had to make a few of these other adjustments: we lost our centers of resources and were forced to begin to look to the Ohio State University. Beginning as it were from square one again since we had an entire year without contact, without establishing any kind of rapport between the university and ourselves. When you couple that with the need to make a change in program with 113 students it was almost natural to go away from the classroom cluster. But we didn't see it then as natural. I thought at that time that the program would "go bust." (Teacher 5)

The environmental changes necessitating a program shift were particularly destabilizing because they upset the delicate relationship between the program and its physical ambience.

We had adapted so well our setting to Mohawk. We found that sure it had changed a little bit from what we would have had up north, but we just made a slight program shift. At Mohawk we began to see that we didn't need to have learning-center-clusters approach to the disciplines. And I think the architecture of the place made us do that gradually. Besides, we never tested the cluster approach in the North building. However, when we moved to McGuffey we had to make another shift in program which couldn't be as naturally integrated into the school because the new set of architectural criteria and the expansion of enrollment worked against what we'd done at Mohawk. (Teacher 5)

The expanded enrollment of the third year and the extension of the half-day program to a full day -- a move that had initially been received with enthusiasm -- undermined the school:

It was the jump to the full day in terms of the more students and not enough staff to maintain the type of programs we wanted was a major frustration for the teachers. We thought we could no longer communicate with the students the way we had. We had some very great communication with students in the first two half-day years. Now the teacher felt just like a regular classroom teacher: the only time you have to communicate is one minute at the end of the period or they'd be tardy for the next class. (Teacher 2)
There was a lot of noise being raised from the students about the changes during the third year. They had been used to input; they had been used to everything revolving around them. By the time the third year rolled in with all the new students and not enough increased staff to continue that interaction with the students, they felt disillusioned, depressed and upset. (Teacher 3)

During the first two years the mathematics department grew from a mere support component to a major center of study. The magnet school grant enabled the school to add a full science department and build an extensive computer information science department. The staff found a disproportionate emphasis on math and science and believed it to be a betrayal of the school's humanities base.

I don't view the shifts necessarily as negative, but they were disruptive. In a sense I consider them destabilizing. I am thinking of the school philosophy -- of what the school was conceived to be and what it has evolved to be, and they are two different things. We came in the first year talking a humanities based curriculum and during the course of the three years math gained. Math was emphasized more I think with the addition of the computers and the humanities were kind of set aside somewhat especially the social studies program which I think is down to two, two and a half teachers this year and there are no course offerings for the social studies in the ninth grade at all this year. (Teacher 4)

Another teacher added:

I think if we go back that same way to where humanities, social studies, English and foreign language are offered like they used to be. I think it will pick the morale up. It'll pick the morale up of those people who want to offer to the students courses and programs that make them feel that they are just as important as the math and science people. (Teacher 7)

Regardless of the continued humanities presence in the school, the strong math/science emphasis of the third year, there is a general feeling of overall program loss that still persists:
I really feel like that a lot of staff members misconstrued that we were going math science and when I would look back in retrospect maybe that was what I had seen that I think what we were seeing was this is what the students wanted. And I think if we'd looked behind them we were probably finding that there were still students who were very humanities oriented. There was frustration that we where going to a math science school. I personally feel none. I think we've cut the curriculum a lot from what we were offering the kids a lot of humanities; maybe that'll come back. (Teacher 5.)

Acquiring Suitable Setting For The School

This destabilizing category was mentioned the fewest times by the Columbus Alternative informants. The alternative program wedd itself to the building in which it is housed. Between the program and the "architectural geography" exists a bond that, when interrupted or severed, bring about crisis. The site actually informs the program with identity. From the frequency and density of the testimony, the move from Mohawk to McGuffey occasioned considerable trauma:

After a year in the Mohawk situation we had got accustomed to having our program centralized in downtown Columbus that was number one. All of a sudden we're looking at moving from a centralized location right in downtown where a lot of our programs with the main library and some of the other programs that we were operating we were now being pushed up to McGuffey which is up in northland and we were one facing the loss of contact of our central location. (Teacher 6)

In a similar vein, but with a integrated stress on locale and building, another teacher remarked:

I think that the move to McGuffey hurt us. We already began to work with the downtown setting and then all of a sudden we were shifted to McGuffey -- tantalizingly close to Ohio State but still off the main drag and hence hard to reach. Certainly there's a bus line that's easy to get to. No problem there. But certainly not as easy as the straight shot from downtown or even from old North. Also the location of McGuffey is still another factor. Although not central city, it was an inner city
location. As a matter of fact we were even, I think, reduced in status: Mohawk was a junior high building that at one time had been a senior high and was still going to be a senior high. But then we went to an elementary building and we shared classes with an elementary school. (Teacher 5)

But the move to McGuffey was not the first description of a school's proper setting. The staff cited the first move from North to Mohawk as equally critical:

If you remember those days at North when we went up and we mapped out on the third floor exactly what rooms each department would have, how we would cluster all the centers, and how we would have the teacher workrooms nearby. After we had set the program in our minds physically, they moved us from the north end location. At that time we were thinking of being so heavily connected with Ohio State University, and then all of a sudden we were moved down to a central city school location, to a school that had a history of problems. I thought that hurt us among the parents and hurt our identification. But it hurt even more our program, our philosophy -- the philosophy that we were going to be a school of clusters of learning in centers. Everything had been so aptly designed at North or redesigned for us, and then all of a sudden to move to Mohawk where all we had was one floor. It just didn't work there. (Teacher 3)

The fundamental problem lay in the staff's perception that every achievement for which they had labored was undone and they were constrained once more to reinvent the wheel and begin anew. Referring to the move from Mohawk to McGuffey, this staff member echoed the sentiments of all:

Specifically we had to delete some things that we had started like going to the public library, some of the occasional things such as a walk downtown with the kids to one of the let's say the courthouse or COSI and that kind of contact was lost. I viewed that as a significant crisis that posed a very valid threat to the school's existence because again we had done a lot of promising in that first year that now, of course, we won't have these problems because we solved all these in fact we were almost but not quite on ground zero all over again. (Teacher 6)
Rate of Innovation

In the first three years of the Alternative School's operation, teachers saw the rapid implementation of innovative teaching strategies and methods of school organization to be too unsettling. For change to be effective, it must be assimilated; to be assimilated, the pace of innovation must be graduated or modulated so that the staff could adjust to its effects. In the teachers' minds, two elements fused to generate a crisis of personal and professional consequences: the demands of teaching in the alternative environment and the attendant mandate to accommodate an increasing array of innovative practices were too much to bear:

We had the afternoons off. Other administrators and teachers really perceived us as having a country club school schedule and many of us did. With that being the case and if you fail then I think the penalty of failure, at least the psychological penalty, would have been even deeper. So teachers began to want to relax, not to work as hard; but at the same time they were confronted with the dilemma of this increased speed of newness, of implementing new ideas; I think that was a poisonous combination and was responsible for the sum of the problems we had our third year. I think there was a delay effect with the problem. It didn't happen right off the bat but if you were to ask me about a crisis, then it surfaced especially in November and December and all the way through March of that third year when there was loudest amount of complaints and unrest among the teachers. Their question was how are we going to implement all this change with out really burning ourselves out. So many teachers, whether it was true or not, were complaining of exhaustion. (Teacher 5)

The changes of the third year had the greatest impact:

I would see the first year changes as being on such a minor scale compared to the third year changes. The third year we're talking about massive changes, we're talking about one month from now I want you to conceive, produce, and get all the mechanisms together and begin a travel program. We want this to start in September we want a trip. So we had I recall two trips, one in September, one in October. Kaboom. That was only
one task and this was major and new. We had not done this before. We had fund raisers which we had never had to do before, but again had to plan that for the whole year right away and were depending upon our funds for our resources in many cases. The special events that had to be planned immediately and there were a couple of other categories: internships, community courses, and minicourses. (Teacher 1)

Change was paced so quickly that teachers weren't able to process it:

Then we had another major change we were going to become a full day school. This decision, however, was also not made in a timely way. It was July and the situation that most staff found themselves in when this happened was coming early and unexpectedly to work a massive amount of work to be done, no time to do it in coupled with an abrupt change in attitude and process, how we were used to working together. No time for assimilating this and no time for input as to how it might have been different. (Teacher 6)

Because of the swift pacing, techniques, programs, and practices could not be evaluated through the normal channels of discourse that the staff had developed:

The communications breakdowns occurred early and I think as a direct result of what I just said all these factors with time not being there for more communication and maybe some latent things that had started the first two years. The misunderstandings or communications breakdowns which just really came to a huge breakdown with people beginning to distrust other people, with angers, with people getting personally disturbed about various things. There became a split in the staff. These were extreme splits, these were extreme conflicts which took away from the program all the way around in every way possible and these conflicts continued the entire year which were detrimental to everybody. (Teacher 1)

One teacher seemed to be resigned to the fact that rapid change was a part of the alternative process:

There was just no real time to assimilate all the changes. It doesn't look like there is going to be time in the future either. It looks to me like there's going to be much more of those last minute decision changes in the future. You are going to have to learn to go with it or you are going to be left behind. (Teacher 3)
The pressures of the accelerated innovation process took their toll on the teachers' emotions.

They sought psychological help; some of them drank; some of them complained; some of them cried. If it was not for the staff basically having one another to lean on which is probably the difference in this building, probably in any organization that goes through as much change organizationally; people have got to lean on one another and I think that's probably been the only way a lot of the people who have stayed around have been able to do it: They've leaned on one another. All those changes were necessary; they had to be. But they were made too quickly -- we couldn't keep up.

The next chapter presents the coping routines that the informants cited as responses to the destabilizing conditions. The data of this chapter and those of Chapter 6 form the base of the intermediate theory of chapter 7.
Like the discovery of the destabilizing conditions, the discovery of the coping routines also went against the analyst's initial assumptions. At the beginning of his research, he anticipated uncovering a series of specific problem-solving strategies that would address each destabilizing crisis. Instead, what emerged was a kind of global heuristic that had multiple remedial applications over the set of destabilizing crises. These coping routines were not well-defined in the sense of exhibiting direct correspondences to the several destabilizing conditions; they were, however, well understood as a procedural means for tackling the crises as they arose. These coping routines are best understood as problem-solving attitudes rather than as strategies. The routines are not structured methods of problem solving; rather they are suggestive approaches either to confronting an actual destabilizing condition or to forestalling their appearance.

In analyzing the data, the researcher was surprised by (1) the "dispersion pattern" of the coping routines in the data and by (2) the degree of abstraction that characterized their expression. Midway through the process of comparing the data to discover the destabilizing
conditions, the analyst noted the tendency of those data to make mention of the problem-solving technique that had been employed. To be sure, the analyst expected that such would be the case because of the design of the interview schedule, but he did not foresee the recurrence of the same, abstractly stated, problem-solving techniques distributed throughout the different destabilizing conditions. Thus, as the reader will see more clearly in Chapter 7, the cultivation of the core group routine applied to the first destabilizing condition as well as to the sixth destabilizing condition with equal effectiveness. When he began coding for the coping routines themselves, the researcher, with the guidance of a memorandum note, began at that intermediate stage of data comparison to reobserve the distribution and to track its "forward" movement with the emergence of the destabilizing conditions. The problem solving incidents were embedded deeply in the testimony speaking to the destabilizing conditions. The effect might imaginatively be termed a "peppering" effect: throughout the texture of the destabilizing data, were spread the problem-solving remedies. Thus, the coping routine data tracked or ran parallel to those of the destabilizing conditions.

The destabilizing data emerged through a sifting process to achieve refinement; the coping data had to be "combed" out of the destabilizing data at its several steps of emergence before they could be refined. The analyst reread all the testimony and excerpted every quotation testifying to a problem solving technique used to cope with a destabilizing crisis. He then began to put them in groups based on the
similarity of the testimony. Thus incidents describing grant writing, publication of position papers, and writing of long-range plans were all grouped together because they all attested to the gathering of a consensus. In the same way he clustered testimony about room reassignments, adjustment of teachers' work habits, and a change in the psychological setting under the category for deliberate alteration of the physical and phenomenological structure because each incident shared an affinity with each other: They pointed to a change in conditions to improve relationships.

As the clusters of categories took shape, the analyst noted that their number was fewer than that of the destabilizing conditions. The analyst accounted for the phenomenon in a memorandum by citing the parallel development of the destabilizing and "coping" data. Owing to the "peppering" effect of the coping data and the recurrence of the coping technique in different destabilizing environments, the analyst hypothesized that of necessity the number of the categories would be reduced. In addition, he suspected that the categories' relatively abstract formulation pointed to a limited number of categories. Encoding continued to uncover additional categories, but the process was conducted with less anxiety than had been the case when the analyst found that the number of destabilizing conditions did not meet his expectation. By the end of the process the analyst could not add new categories. As the researcher moved to higher levels of analysis, all the incidents were coded under the existing categories. In this way the two early categories of Stimulating Group Process and Enhancing
Communications Exchange were united under the final category of Cultivating Communications Exchange.

At that point, the researcher returned to the categories themselves and began to compare the data in order to discover that common ground of generality between them. The analytical crux that faced the researcher had been proposed by the informants' expressive but eccentric terminology. Although the analyst had no doubt as to which categories the data belong, he was not certain whether some data formed separate subcategories or whether they were indeed identical to other data, differing only in descriptors. The analyst discounted the possibility that similar terminology meant a similar coping routine. The terminology varied not only from informant to informant but also within individual testimony. Informants tended to use terms loosely. As an instance, one teacher used the term "group process" to describe open lines of communication; later she used the term "interpersonal dynamics" to describe a similar coping routine. In another case the same informant used both terms to describe the method of cultivating a consensus. In order to discover whether the incidents attested to a similar phenomenon, the researcher resorted to the following tactic: He collated all subcategories and removed all groups patently coincident. Then he subjected the remaining subcategories to an intra-member analysis and retained only those data that described a discrete and singular phenomenon under the category. Accordingly, in the above-mentioned example, the investigator first listed two separate categories: group process and interpersonal dynamics. Then he put each
citation containing the term under their respective categories. Following that, he analyzed separately the content of both statements about group process and both statements about interpersonal dynamics. The statements that did not really describe the phenomenon of communications exchange were set aside. Then the two statements testifying to communications exchange were compared, found similar, and grouped under the communications category. The two statements that did not actually describe the process of communications were analyzed to determine whether (1) they were similar in form and content and (2) whether they belonged to one of the categories that has emerged. Both statements were found to testify to achieving consensus and therefore were categorized under the Cultivating Coherent Consensus. After each of the five categories had achieved irreducibility, the analyst adduced the category headings. The categories of coping routines are:

1. Cultivating Coherent Consensus
2. Stimulating Communications Exchange
3. Cultivating a Core Group
4. Protecting Staff Members From Unproductive External Influences
5. Deliberately Altering the School's Physical and Phenomenological Structure

**Cultivating Coherent Consensus**

An effective routine whereby CAHS anticipated crises or met them when they arose was through its practice of reducing to written form its decision and planning milestones. The rigorous and almost unrelenting policy of recording the staffs' agreements, intentions, aspiration, and
objections supplied a concrete point of origin from which to proceed. Too often plans and goals go unrecorded, leaving a staff without an operational history and bereft of an agenda from and upon which to act. In the case of the Columbus Alternative High School, the staff saw its attempt to capture in writing all its major efforts as a useful strategy for avoiding crisis. For example, the three year plans, begun in the summer of 1978, were responsible for directing the staff's perspective outward to the future instead of focusing it solely and myopically downward upon the pressing exigencies of opening a new school.

Long term planning is vital. When these alternative programs are implemented, or any program that affects people like this, you can't expect people to put programs and schools and groups together overnight because people are not machines; they need to be thought out. We didn't have the time but we tried to think them out all the time. The three year plans we were constantly generating new plans for the future. But there was just no real time to assimilate them. It doesn't look like there is going to be time in the future either. But at least we addressed key issues, it looks to me like we are because of the nature of the whole world the speed of change. Any more there's going to be much more of that midnight decision massive change thing. You are going to have to learn to go with it or you are going to be left behind. I think our school system is on a very very tragic, destructive course on this last minute decision making that they are forced to make. It is insane. This school couldn't have come together without those three year plans.

(Teacher 1)

The written three year plans formed a running chronicle -- a tangible history of the development of the staff's thought -- that kept the staff acting in a cohesive, forward-moving way to program difficulties and uncertainties.

When you don't know what to do, you want to go conservative: that's safe. And I think there was a time where we constantly met as departments and constantly threw out ideas that kept it going. I think that's what's really kept this going the first three years was there was constant dialogue within the
department, talking of what is down the road. I think those published three and five year plans were good. We may have never totally used them but there were a lot of hours that were put into those three and five year plans. And we used them a lot. They kept our thoughts going as to what do you really want to do. That's probably what I think kept us from collapsing: the constant updating of a three year plan. You have a three year plan that is always looking what's down the road for that third year. (Teacher 2).

The written three-year plans helped maintain the continuity from year to year in the course of upheavals brought on by moving and by a greatly augmented student population.

In the three year plans probably we tried though to work at our future problems. We were struggling, both staff and administration were struggling, trying to figure out what to do to keep being alternative. It was circumstances and when you've got more kids in the building in the second year, it just couldn't be quite the same. Although I think we hung in and maintained a lot of the old from the year before (Teacher 2).

The discipline of writing down impressions forced the staff to crystallize their thoughts and give them order, thereby calling their attention and that of the administration to problem areas.

It's interesting to see the cycle that a school goes through, and I suppose the strength of this school is that we have tried to follow through the sequence, and we have tried to see what's been good and what hasn't been good. We kept track of things. We wrote things down. (Teacher 6).

The school review was particularly useful:

Yes, I think that it's good to sit down about May and say hey folks what have I done, what have you done as an individual, what have you done as a department? Departmentally, what have we done right and what have we done wrong? We may sit down in May and say it's a bust and we might say it's the greatest thing to come down the road. But we got to do more than shoot the breeze. We have to react to something. The school review is an excellent idea because it doesn't let you just sit down and say well we'll change it when it comes. To know that a school review is there to be written in May, and you see it again in June before you leave sets the tone for what the administration can do over the summer to get the building operating in September. (Teacher 7).
So too, periodic position papers devoted to crises or to potential problems or courses of action served to coalesce the staff's thinking.

I think those early position papers where we were just forced to think what could happen, what's going to be the agenda, what're we going to do, how are we going to organize it, what are the things we'll achieve this week or month -- and it kept us out of a great deal of trouble (Teacher 5).

Stimulating Communications Exchange

The staff attributed some of its success in confronting and resolving crises to the presence of an active group dynamic in the Columbus Alternative High School. From the outset of the school's formation when the first 15 staff members were named in April of 1978, a variety of group process techniques were employed to assist the staff in arriving at its definition of the kind of alternative experience it wanted to offer and to enable it to prepare its curriculum. Throughout the formative summer of 1978 and the first, second and third years the staff group process orientation became more formalized through weekly staff meetings, the principal's advisory council, formal and informal group decision making conferences, a school council consisting of faculty, students, and parents, open discussion meetings, and several vehicles for direct faculty input. The school's atmosphere was conditioned by strata of intense interchange beginning from a student-to-student stratum and rising through the hierarchy of relationships to the administrator. Within this ambience of enhanced and unimpeded communication, the staff and administration managed the effects of innovation. From the group process materialized the only solid ground within which the staff's aspirations and resolution could take root:
I think it was very fortunate that during the second year the school operated as a half day school with the staff on board all day. The entire staff was there for a full day, which was not the case the first year. And I can remember that entire year, and this was before we even knew if the grant was going to be finalized, before we knew if we were going to survive the next year and what was going to happen to the program. There were lots of meetings in the afternoons, discussing just what kinds of things would have to change, in order to move the school from 130 students to 430 students in a full day program. We realized that it would be a great adjustment and we started actually at the beginning of the second year looking at the program at McGuffey and saying, what kinds of problems are we having now and how greatly are these problems going to be magnified when we add 300 kids in a full day program and additional staff members for this building and we actually experimented with some things the second year especially the second semester of the second year. We experimented with some things. It was a group process of people sitting down together and saying this is a slight problem: we can live with it now but are we going to be able to live with it next year? (Teacher 3)

The opportunity to meet frequently and intimately with an open agenda allowed the staff to form the interpersonal covenents that reduced friction between opposing viewpoints and eased the way to compromise and unity:

In the beginning, when there was a problem at least many of us (and I don't know if it was just facilitators -- perhaps the instructional coordinator and whoever else might have been there with us in the afternoons) would sit down and there would be lots of interchange, a ton of interchange, probably more than any other organization would even tolerate. But we would work it through, and usually there was something that would come out of the process that people could live with. (Teacher 1)

As one teacher succinctly phrased it,

Through the process of working with one another, we've all grown together. There's no other way I can put it. (Teacher 3)

Open cooperation produced program ownership and, with that, a sense of satisfaction that was sufficiently mature to sustain a policy defeat but still remain committed.
I think pretty much we had the staff involved in the whole school. We all had a very strong feeling that we were making decisions — that it was our program. (Teacher 1)

At the end of the second year, changes took place that required more formalized communications structures.

I still think pretty much we had the staff involved in that second year. We had a very strong feeling that we were making decisions. Toward the end of the year I think we started to lose this feeling; I don't know why, I am not sure why. (Teacher 1)

Referring to the same year, another teacher said:

I feel the principal's advisory council has been used this year to really air concerns and I feel there have been lots of constructive actions come out of that group which has changed my perception of school policy formulation. I think the PAC is being used to improve communications within the staff. And to seek faculty input I frankly don't think teachers have time for much more than this type of vehicle now anyway with the program as it is. (Teacher 5)

The staff noted that throughout the school's existence it had always had input:

I think I had it always felt I had input into things because I just made my points known to you. I've disagreed on things and I come up in the hall and I'd tell you what I think and that's where it ends. You can take my advice or you can't. I'm not going to tell you what to do. I had enough input in my own feeling. I've had enough input into this school. I feel very satisfied that what comes out, I've had enough say in it and if I really want to say something about something I will mostly. (Teacher 2)

The good communications exchange required persistent effort:

We tried though, I think we've worked at it. Both staff and administration were struggling to figure out what to do when you've got more kids in the building. It just couldn't be quite the same although I think we hung in there as a team. (Teacher 2)
In addition, good communications require that both staff and administrator remember that they share a relationship of mutual dependence.

I think it's absolutely critical for the staff and the administration to really communicate openly and honestly. As you see a new building going through changes as ours did you need to keep talking. I don't think a school can work with teachers running it themselves and I don't think a building can run just by the principals. They've got to work hand in hand. It's not a one way street I don't think any building could function just by teachers running it. There's got to be someone there to direct it, but I don't think that direction can come if the people down in the field are not willing to work with you. (Teacher 7)

Good communications, however, require dedication and talent from team leaders:

A lot of people in this building were going through some of their own personal problems and they were looking for some stability. You're not going to find a staff anywhere with any less outside problems than what we had here. Fortunately, we had people who cared and were constantly working with the staff. They were aware of their personal problems and trying to work with them. (Teacher 7)

Cultivating a Core Group

As Sarason (1972) pointed out, a core group of change leaders emerges from every setting, either by design or by nature, and without the core group -- "... the handful of people ... closest to (the administrator) interpersonally and statuswise" (p. 73) -- the setting cannot grow. This CAHS management team of facilitators and coordinators, by virtue of their interpersonal collaboration, were able to focus on meeting and resolving crises quickly. In addition, the core group furnished the transitional medium for the several departments as the school passed through its many changes in the initial years.
I don't think that this building would have gotten off the ground good without the facilitators. They were absolutely critical, and I think if all the people who are here looked back to September 1978, they would say that they kept this building going. It was important to have visionary and patient people to put up with all they had to go through. (Teacher 3)

The core group established the channels within which problems could be addressed -- a significant factor with respect to the very loose coupling of the alternative school:

Lots of positive things came from the network of the core group. There was a line of command that was established so that teachers in departments would attempt to solve problems with the facilitators in each department. The facilitators met weekly with the coordinators and the administration to discuss problems or plan programs and that type of thing. The concept was a good one; it enabled us to come up with many of the programs that we have today, because we did have people released to plan programs. It worked well. (Teacher 3)

The core group provided a vehicle to work out problems collectively:

I think the idea at the time was that the facilitator group with the administration was to think through the problems. They usually met and discussed things but then the concerns were brought back to the staff for input from everyone else. The way it was set up it came to be a fairly democratic process. Anyone who wanted to participate could. Certainly I think everyone had the opportunity to do so; I simply chose not to at the time. (Teacher 4)

Between core group members and the staff developed a mutual support mechanism, but the principal reason for crisis survival lies in the core group formation:

In retrospect, it was critical to have an element at the top because it gave the direction we needed. We didn't know where we were going; we had no guidelines; you couldn't come up and say quick form a committee we've got to sit down and talk. That would have been unworkable. We needed that core from the very beginning. I think the core was needed as long as they kept the lines of communication open. (Teacher 7)
Again another observed:

I think the strongest year we had was that third year, and I think that the proof came when we had to formally identify the facilitators who were released full time by the government. If you remember, that was the year of the greatest crisis. Now I really think that none of those crises could have been weathered had it not been for the fact that these facilitators were there to support the teachers. I mean, can you imagine what would have happened if there weren't full time facilitators to get even that drudgery work done, what would have happened with all the other problems. I think too for you the very fact that on all your major decisions you had both the informal and formal group to consult kept from making some decisions that might not have been you know right for the school. (Teacher 5)

Commented another:

I'd say that they in fact did facilitate the teaching and learning that went on within the building and they improved the interaction with the students. Most of the facilitators were teaching on small scale and were helping with the independent studies programs. In addition I think they provided enrichment activities that enhanced the various departmental programs. You know if there is any way that we could get the funds needed to get the facilitators back again I think it would be a positive activity for the school. (Teacher 4)

But the core group needed to be nurtured in order to keep going, and it was the faculty support that fostered the group's effectiveness.

With so much to get done, teachers and administrators had to delegate all that organizational responsibility to people. And so it came to a few people who had to make those decisions and they were supported by the rest of the staff. And that was the key. The facilitators just wouldn't have made it if they hadn't been buoyed by all our support. (Teacher 6)

The core group need not remain bound. It should be open-ended at the bottom to accommodate the new change leaders as they became identified on the staff. The upward and downward movement of the core group's members, its dynamic, adaptive capacity to accept new members and to replace members who were not as effective as they once had been was largely responsible for the staff's acceptance of the team concept.
The facilitators and other leaders weren't cliquish at all. It wasn't an exclusive club. We could all belong if we had ideas and wanted to get them through. I never felt, you know, left out, or that the facilitators were a group above me. I could belong—and for a while I did. I could also leave the group when I wanted to and nobody thought I was a quitter. The whole thing was stronger because new blood could come in. (Teacher 5)

Protecting the Staff from Unproductive, External Influences

The pressures from within in an alternative environment are so great that they can be compounded by pressures from without. The role of the Columbus Alternative High School administrator chose him to insulate the school from outside problems, and by such buffering, he kept the internal pressures from building to an explosive level. The administrator interposed himself between the teachers and the outside communities of central administration and parents; he assumed an advocacy posture for the staff and aggressively sought to shelter the staff from the intensity of these external demands or expectations.

We have had a growth; we have grown from each crisis. As we moved into the first crisis, some of us went out to other schools in the afternoon that first year. But the strain of two assignments and all that travel was too much. Mentally we told you we couldn't take it and you went bat for us, and it was settled. (Teacher 5)

I think that every crisis that we have had you've gone to the Board of Education. You've gone to whoever you have to go to and you've taken the ball. You've done it. I don't think there's been a teacher in this building that has really done anything about the major crises. They have been all handled by you over the four years. (Teacher 6)

Echoing the same sentiment, another informant stated:
You've taken a load off teachers backs and I really appreciate it. I think that in an alternative setting if the teachers are allowed to teach, the hardest role in the building is the administrator. You have kept many problems and annoying situations away from the teachers. You've made our job easier. (Teacher 2)

In addition to active and immediate advocacy, the administrator buffered the staff by involving himself in all areas of the school. Thus, he became identified in the community's minds as the object of first recourse, and hence he first absorbed the shock of a multitude of "urgencies." Problems did not have a chance to filter through the staff, as often is the case in traditional high schools. The staff felt only a few of the external pressures that were brought to bear on the school, since the administrator had deflected many of them by assuming a high profile.

Well I would have to say that the director of the school handled the problem of the moves basically by keeping close ties with the community -- the school community -- and when you move a program from central city to the northern part of the city, he would spend a lot of time just calling all the parents and keeping that personal contact and saying that this is what the bus schedule is and this is how your child can still attend this school and talking to people downtown and talking to transportation department, working with bus stops trying to. I remember having a large map with pins of every student's home so that he could look at that map, he had the kids put the pins on the map and he would then look at that map and determine where the most convenient bus stops would be located. So just maintaining close ties with the parents and students and of course you had a small student body at that time, so it was possible for him to do that make all the difference in those initial years as far as keeping your student body through all the moves. (Teacher G.)
Alter the School’s Physical and Phenomenological Structure

The Columbus alternative program was so closely wedded, so symbiotically related, to design of its physical environment that, when a crisis developed, it grafted itself to the setting. Very often the only effective method of coping with crisis was to resort to restructure that physical setting in order to introduce phenomenological changes that would modify the conditions of the setting and thereby remove or reduce the crisis. Phenomenological changes are those changes in the relations and values from the way in which the school shows itself from itself. They are intuitively present in the institution and are direct preconditions of any setting. The restructuring included transformation of the relationships of staff and programs to their rooms and adjustments in program layout.

The restructuring the IMC was done to support the program. I remember when we all got together; we knew that the program as then defined, with the added students, would not be able to handle them. We would not have been able to withstand the onslaught. We anticipated and dissolved a potentially damaging crisis by changing the floor plan. The crisis melted, but I think you had to plan for that, you know. Had we not planned for that thing, I think we wouldn’t have been able to handle the change that would have occurred. (Teacher 5)

When we set in our mind that McGuffey was our home, we wondered what we were going to do within the building to centralize everything. Originally, that’s what we were going to do at North-one wing for each department. Obviously the IMC evolved from that concept. We’ve always adapted the building to meet our needs. (Teacher 1)

When I look back over the first three years, I feel that we had to constantly restructure the building and organize it and reorganize it with staff input, we tried to determine the best way to organize this building so that it was easy for the students and it improved the operation of the building. I don't think the restructuring bothered anyone. (Teacher 7)
This coping routine was viewed as most effective when the nature of the problem was more sensed than defined.

I think when we saw that things could happen, maybe we were unable to predict how they would happen exactly in one form, but at least we saw that there was a problem in this area and that the moves had to be made. I think that's a point; when you had to make the move you had to or it would cause another crisis. In many ways these moves were also problems for the school, but they were also ways of solving some other problems. One of the best examples of how you handled the abrupt move to Mohawk was when you rearranged the rooms a little bit. That was the only way to meet the kind of change that we weren't able to predict as well as the ones that you could see.

Chapter 7 will offer the intermediate theory in which the researcher will present his preliminary findings concerning the interplay of the coping routines and the destabilizing crises as they occurred at the Columbus Alternative High School.
CHAPTER VII

THE GROWTH OF THEORY

After the emergence of the destabilizing and coping categories (Chapters 5 and 6), the analyst began writing intermediate theory, i.e. a theoretical explanation of the interplay of the categories at the Columbus Alternative High School. The analyst chose this step as a safeguard against integrating too precipitously the separate data sets of the Columbus Alternative testimony and that of the three other magnet schools and thus generate what Glaser and Strauss (1967) aptly labeled "crude proof" rather than substantive, developmental theory. Accordingly, this chapter's theory presents an intermediate level of generalization and makes no claim for the theory's consistency outside the context of the Columbus Alternative High School. The larger theoretical generalization and the suggestion of its transferability must follow the presentation of the other data in Chapter 8. Notwithstanding this caution, the theory herein described may be said to foreshadow the theory of Chapter 9 and may be said to be necessary introduction to it. Since this chapter must therefore be considered an exploratory stage of theory development and fluidly emergent, the theory is discusional and not propositional.
As the destabilizing and coping categories emerged from the data with their striking categorical generalization, the researcher had, with some dismay, noted that very little overt pairing of one or more coping routines with a destabilizing crisis occurred in the testimony. The coping routines were spread over all the crises, although there did exist obvious contextual and metalinguistic associations of the two data categories. Initially the researcher had expected that the informants would have identified more closely the relationship between the categories. In his memorandum of concern, the researcher concluded that his initial expectation had been naively conceived in that such a pairing would have resulted in facile, "cookbook" theory. He had designed the interview schedule purposely to avoid the artificial and even procrustean bonding of the destabilizing crises and the coping routines. Nonetheless the researcher sought at this stage to escape the danger of enunciating a relatively ungrounded theory interpreting how the coping routines were employed to avoid destabilizing crises or to attenuate their effects.

The coping routine testimony was embedded not only in the testimony of the destabilizing crises but also in the historical relationship of the informant with the investigator. The investigator found that the informants, when identifying a coping routine, appealed to the shared experiences by grounding the recollections of the coping routines in the investigator's remembrance of the crisis and the coping routine cited. For example, one informant, after attesting to the rate of innovation as a crisis, simply said, "But you know how we got over
that— the meetings and gripe sessions, and all that." During the interviews, the investigator ignored the significance of the personal reference, assuming it simply to be an expression of modesty or deference to an investigator who was the informant's immediate supervisor. Accordingly, at first analysis the investigator was struck by what appeared to be a failure to identify specifically actual coping routines. He wondered whether the informants had been reluctant to identify specific routines because they viewed themselves as subordinates not competent enough to suggest a routine and hence dependent upon their supervisor's tacit approval. Yet upon further analysis, the assumption did not agree with the aggressive honesty and forthrightness of the interviewees. The analyst then reread the coded coping routine citations and discovered that when the informants added remarks asserting the investigator's coping action ("you knew," "you determined," "you did...," etc), they were attesting to specific applications of the routines that they assumed the interviewer would remember and place in their proper context. The event or events were left uncited not because the informant could not recall the specific application but because the application was virtually present owing to the shared experience of the informant and interviewer and did not need enunciation. To a great extent the recorded comments of the investigator and to a less extent his transcribed interlocutions attested to his tacit recognition of the events or event to which the informant alluded. The applications of the routines lay within the data recording the school's history—the documents consisting of his personal journals, daybooks, proposals, reviews, and so forth.
Prior to his understanding of this phenomenon, these documents had been primarily used to triangulate the primary data source offered by the informants' testimony; at this point, the analyst returned to the coded documentary data to verify the historicity of the coping routines and their application to specific destabilizing crises. Also he reviewed the interview statements that urged him to recall an event in which a coping routine was applied and he dictated from memory summary recollections of the crisis and the coping routine invoked, using the terminology and conceptualizations that the data and constant comparative method yielded. The documents and the terminologically updated "memoirs" supplied the analyst with the necessarily grounded data from which to write intermediate theory.

As he reconstructed the application of the coping routines to the destabilizing crises, the analyst discovered that indeed there was a definite pattern of applying, albeit subliminally, the five coping routines to the destabilizing crises that arose during the first three formative years of the Columbus Alternative High School. In every instance, the "translator memoirs," synoptically read against the documents, demonstrated that one or more of the coping routines was operative in resolving or reducing each destabilizing crisis. Subsequent member checks confirmed that his historical reconstruction of the problem-solving approaches to the destabilizing conditions was in accord with the remembrances of the informants.

The format of this project's discussion of intermediate theory will follow the order, without regard to chronology or importance, of
the destabilizing conditions announced in Chapter 5. By following that order, the researcher believes that the reader will find it easier to refer to the text and its testimony.

**Destabilizing Condition 1: The Threat of Change in a Particular Leader's Style and Administration Inexperience**

From 1978, when the alternative school was formed with a principal, two vice principals, and an alternative school supervisor, to 1980, when the supervisor was appointed the school's principal and assigned an assistant principal, the organization suffered anxiety regarding the potential and real change of leadership style. As the threat appeared each time the conditions for a stylistic change surfaced, two complementary coping routines were in operation: (1) the stimulation of communications exchange and (2) the cultivation of the core group. The active group process enabled the staff to express its misgivings, anxieties, and apprehensions to one another and to the administration. The open lines of communications enabled their concerns to bubble upward and reach the leader who then made the personal adjustments necessary to meet and allay the intensity of the crisis in terms of the staff's needs. When a change in style was necessary in order to prevent weakening of the administrative structure, the strong core group furnished the continuity of leadership style so that the impact of the stylistic change was softened and the transition to a modified style was not so abrupt. Thus when Justice Rehnquist's stay of the 1977 desegregation order dramatically altered the school's administrative organization, the investigator's journal indicated how the core group stepped in
to facilitate the move from North to Mohawk and to reestablish the patterns of the staff's working relationships and to ease the trauma of reinventing the school in a new environment [August 28]: "Several teachers broke down today. Refused to redo the three year plans, asked to go to lunch with them and get them going again." With the award of the ESAA Magnet School grant and the supervisor's nomination and appointment as principal came the systematization of the school's organization -- a move that engendered the school's gravest organizational crisis. The several vehicles for group process -- the Principal's Advisory Council, the Student Senate, the Friends of CAHS, the weekly departmental meetings -- brought to the principal's attention the very large dimensions of the crisis and at the same time gave the staff a medium either to reinitiate or to adapt to and use the formal structures to make their voices heard.

Destabilizing Condition 2: Physical Arrangements of the School

Oddly enough, in each instance of a crisis generated by an internal or external move, the coping routine employed was a homeopathic one: the deliberate alteration of the school's physical and phenomenological structure. The awareness of the consequences of the modification of the physical ambience resulted in the administration's conscious recasting of the new environment to meet the crisis. A day-book entry stated, "at second semester all room assignments will be changed. Put Staff together." One telling example occurred when the move from Mohawk to McGuffey in 1979 produced a general malaise among students and staff
who complained that the then supervisor was more distant and the school had lost its intimacy and harmony. At Mohawk, the supervisor's office was situated at the juncture that formed the fulcrum of the L-shaped floor plan, placing the supervisor at the very center of school activity; at McGuffey, the school's office was located on the first floor and the classes were housed on the second floor. By the end of the first semester, the supervisor restructured the second floor to restore the architectural harmony that Mohawk had offered: first he opened a "branch" office on the second floor at the strategic center of activity; next he clustered the departments in contiguous rooms and assigned communal work areas for teachers within each department so that they could work together and share the same room rather than work in separate enclaves; and finally, he created a student activity center very much like that at Mohawk so that students could socialize (Day Book, January-February 1980).

Destabilizing Condition 3: Retaining and Replacing Staff Members

By far, this category proved the most complex for it required the application of three of the five coping routines in one way or another. To reduce failure anxiety and to integrate new teachers into the alternative school staff demanded the use of every communications-enhancing vehicle to give assistance to anxious teachers by allowing them to verbalize their fears or to authenticate their performance by sharing their experience with co-workers. The core group of facilitators and coordinators lessened clerical burdens, thus permitting
veteran and novice staff members to concentrate on instruction (Journal entry: "(math facilitator) told me he was typing all the tests and assignment sheets for Algebra I and II so others could work on individualization.") Moreover, the core group formed a mechanism for new staff members' entry into the decision-making process of the school as well as a support for veteran teachers who were beset by doubts. In every instance, the group process and core group routines operated as described above in Destabilizing Condition 1. The most useful routine in this category was the third -- protecting the staff from unproductive external influences. Teachers new to the alternative school found some routine duties unbearable in light of the increased performance and time demands placed upon them by the students or by the nature of their program. In these cases, the administration with the aid of core group members relieved the teacher of these external pressures. Similarly, veteran teachers who were in demand to offer independent study experiences for students or who were leading members of the core group were given reduced loads to increase their effectiveness by removing external obligations, the time and emotional demands of which could diminish the proven quality of their contributions. Thus, for example, the supervisor argued in several proposals to the central administration in late August of 1978 that facilitators and a grant writer should not be given an afternoon assignment upon completion of their half-day stint at the alternative school. These actions represented major departures from standard administration operating procedures not so much in kind as in degree. In each instance, central office administrators had opposed the lightening of teachers loads, freeing key persons from afternoon
assignments and releasing staff from extracurricular duties. The teachers union representatives made several inquiries regarding "more favored" treatment of alternative school personnel and apparent exceptions to contractual obligations (8 telephone log entries in 1978, 1980, 1981). The same coping routine rationale was applied when the supervisor met with HEW representatives in November of 1979 to defend a budget item in the ESAA grant application requesting almost $100,000 in salaries for full-time released coordinators and facilitators.

Destabilizing Condition 4: Community and Administrative Perceptions of the School

Two coping routines were found to be especially effective in alleviating this destabilizing condition. The first and most efficacious routine as far as the school staff was concerned required the protecting of the staff against the unproductive external influences of both the community's and the central administration's attention. The administrator was able to cushion the staff from inconsequential parental complaints -- influences that tend to demoralize teachers who are attempting to accommodate themselves to the foreign, often difficult and experimental alternative environment. In like manner, the administrator became an advocate for individual teachers' programs when middle-level central administrators objected to or balked at implementation.

Through the presentations of proposals, position papers, and school reviews, community and administrative perception of the school was altered in favor of the school's continuation. Documents forwarded
to the central administration kept the school's name alive and concurrently convinced school system officials that the alternative school did indeed have a direction and had arrived at consensus. The end result was less interference from the central office and greater autonomy once they were assured that the school offered a program of substance and of structure. One letter from an assistant superintendent praised the "accountable structure" of the independent study program. The documentation gained for the school several administrative "guardian angels" who were more than willing to defend the school against attack and they had the necessary paper support. School reviews and position papers helped to gain support within the social community by demonstrating to it that the school was reflecting on itself and was moving self-consciously toward creating a program worthy of the community's hopes and vision.

Destabilizing Condition 5: Anxiety
Associated with the Need for Extraordinary Funding

As the researcher observed in Chapter 5, the administrator had not been able to shelter the staff from the pressure to acquire additional funding to maintain the school's special program and curriculum. He found that the principal reason for their not being sheltered lay in the active group-process vehicles that enhanced staff communication on all subjects, including the pressing need for extraordinary financing. In his day book he had observed that any attempt to buffer or shelter the staff in this respect would have "set off a crisis of confidence" in
the leader's willingness to be honest with his staff and at the same
time would have aggravated the staff's anxiety. Only one coping routine
was functional: The Cultivation of Coherent Consensus. The vigorous
pursuit of grant monies and aggressive submission of proposals to the
central administration produced much more than the comparatively meager
funds that these efforts generated: The documents reassured the staff
that the administration was as concerned as they were about acquiring
funds to support a program to which they too were deeply committed. In
addition, the influx of grant applications for approval and proposals to
the central administrative offices convinced school system officials that
the alternative school was making an earnest effort to underwrite its
untested, non-traditional program (A journal entry from a telephone
conversation with a central administration executive).

Destabilizing Condition 6: Variations
in Program Emphasis

Essentially, this destabilizing condition involves a crisis of
individual and collective staff egos, and its remedy is therefore more
complex. The shifts in program emphasis or the temporary dominance of
one program were largely the result of students' expressed or unex-
pressed wishes that found form in their class selections. Many of the
staff's humanities instructors found it difficult to accept the trend of
the students to select courses in higher mathematics and computer
science rather than more intensive programs in literature, social
studies, and foreign languages (minutes from a Principal's Advisory
Council Meeting, May 1981). It was also difficult for teachers to
abandon the original concept of major study areas when the school was moved to Mohawk with a substantially reduced student population whose goals and needs were different from the larger population which would have attended the North site (Social Studies department position paper, September 1978).

To forestall the effects of this destabilizing conditions, two coping routines were invoked in every instance: (1) the core group and (2) the deliberate alteration of the school's physical and phenomenological structure. When a shift occurred, the core group worked cohesively to design supplementary programs or activities for departments or individuals that felt slighted. For example, when the new micro-computers arrived, causing a lowering of interest in humanities courses, the core group supported the humanities oriented events such as literary festivals, foreign language days, and social studies symposia to help restore the humanities' profile in the school. The environment was also altered to support programs with eclipsed interest. The larger, more attractive rooms were assigned to programs needing support, and their resources centers were placed in more central locations to encourage denser traffic (April 1980 report to Division of Instruction).

Destabilizing Condition 7: Acquiring a Suitable Setting for the School

In his analysis of the raw data, the researcher discovered that the alternative school's program was limited by the architectural constraints of the physical plant in which it was housed. Consequently,
he was not surprised to discover that the appropriate coping routine utilized was that of altering the school’s physical and phenomenological structure to create the proper setting for the program. The successful award of the ESAA Magnet School grant gave the Columbus Alternative High School different programmatic bearings since it transformed the school into a comprehensive high school. The building had to expand to accommodate state and locally mandated programs. Yet a real danger was present in the possibility of the added programs’ not being integrated into the core alternative offerings (In-house concerns paper from the Electives department, April 1980). To achieve the proper setting, the administration reformulated the structure of the classrooms: Departments were no longer clustered but were dispersed throughout the building in an effort to graft on to them the newly added programs. Accordingly, some social studies classes and the social studies resource center were planted in the fine and practical arts wing of the building; language arts classes were assigned to the performing arts addition, and a math and science resource center was incorporated into the English and foreign language resource centers. Furthermore, the building’s foyer was transformed into a showcase area for fine and practical arts projects, and the displays in the new areas were converted to showcases for the math, science, and humanities areas.
Destabilizing Condition 8: The Rate of Innovation

The school's administration made exclusive use of the group process vehicle in coping with this destabilizing condition. Without innovation a magnet-type alternative school cannot long survive (Warren, 1978), yet its staff cannot assimilate change if innovation proceeds too swiftly. The administrator of an alternative school rides this fine line between doing violence to his staff through an oppressive innovation schedule or damaging the school's growth through hesitant implementation of change. He must, therefore, have a means to gauge or sound out the staff's true reaction to the pace of innovation he has set. This researcher's day books repeatedly attest to his bewilderment regarding the proper pace of innovation. At times, staff members' complaints about the pace of innovation reflected their veiled bravado and pride in their achievement and hence represented affirmations that the innovative pace was well modulated; however, at other times, the staff's failure to complain mutely spoke to their discomfort with the pace. Only through the group process mechanisms did the actual consensus come to light, to the surprise of the administrator and sometimes to the surprise of the core group members (minutes from Facilitators' meeting, February 1981). As if by some psychosociological alchemy, whenever the schedule for innovation moved too far apace, the staff distress surfaced simultaneously in each individual group process vehicle within the school. A particularly apt instance took place in the spring and summer of 1980 as the staff prepared for the inauguration
of the ESAA magnet School's organizational and curricular structure. As individuals, the staff seemed enthusiastic and committed to innovating the entire school's program. Nevertheless, at Principal's Advisory Council Meetings and during departmental meetings, the staff's message clearly revealed that the pace was too swift for them to bear. Assured of the faculty's true reaction to the pace, the administration negotiated a reduced implementation schedule for the three-year plan to allow the staff to assimilate innovations that they have previously incorporated (Principal's Advisory Council minutes, October 1980).

In the next chapter, the researcher will present the results of the analysis of the data from the three, selected, magnet-type, secondary alternative schools. The reader should read chapter eight with the data of chapters five and six in mind. Only by means of such a synoptic reading can the reader determine the degree of similarity between the Columbus Alternative High School context and the contexts of the three selected schools.
CHAPTER VIII

FINDINGS OF THREE ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

This chapter continues the data analysis of chapters five and six. Its data base, however, is limited to that generated from the interviews conducted at three selected Midwestern alternative, magnet-type secondary schools: a special-interest school, an informal school, and a "traditional" school stressing skills mastery acquisition of conventional moral values, and codes of conduct and dress. The chapter stands midway between the intermediate theory announced in the previous chapter and the substantive theory of the next and final chapter. The reader may consider the chapter's contents as a kind of "data bridge" originating from the specifically localized phenomena of the destabilizing crises and their coping routines at the Columbus Alternative High School and leading to the more generalized theory of chapter nine. The data of chapter eight do indicate, at least in two of the three selected alternative, magnet-type secondary schools that similar destabilizing crises did exist. Furthermore, the data show that the staff and administration of two of the three selected schools applied similar coping routines to avoid or reduce the negative impact of those crises on their institutions.
Chapter eight is divided into three sections: the first contains "thumbnail historical and programmatic sketches of the three selected schools; the second briefly details the methodological differences between this data base and that of the Columbus Alternative High School; the third section presents the data testifying to the existence of the destabilizing crises and their coping routines in two of the three selected schools.

Historical and Programmatic Outlines

A. The Special Interest School

The special interest school, accepted by its board of education in 1977, as part of a large city's extensive alternative school program created to stimulate voluntary desegregation, had originally been proposed to the board by the alumni of the local chapter of a national fraternity. Sharing an elementary building with another school, the special interest school opened with 54 students in grades 4, 5, and 6, two academic instructors and one special interest educator. By the third year, the school, consisting of 450 pupils and 17 teachers moved into a modern school building that had been modified for the school's special program. By the fourth year the student body grew to 756 students and the ranks of the staff had expanded to 32 academic teachers and 9 special interest instructors. In 1981, the school received permission to schedule classes for students in grades nine through twelve. The principal has served in his position since the school's inception.
B. The Informal School

Opened in 1972 in an old hotel, the informal school has undergone several changes of location but has retained its original principal. Its sojourn in the hotel was short-lived, when six months after opening the school moved into the nine-story, professional office complex adjacent to the hotel. A one-million-dollar private grant enabled the school to remodel the office building to create an open setting with each academic area occupying a floor. Originally populated with 500 students reflecting the racial composition of the city, the school moved to a vacated school building in the center of the downtown area after eight years of operation in the refurbished office building. Since its inception, the school serviced pupils in grades 3 through 12, but in 1981 the school added first and second grade classes, thus expanding the school population to 560 students.

C. The Traditional School

Conceived by parental reaction to the informal school, in 1974, the traditional school opened with grades 6, 7, and 8 in 1975. In 1976, the school was moved to a school building that had been closed by the 1975 desegregation order. The building, which had accommodated a prestigious, public boy's school whose history stretched back to 1856, was selected because it had been the seat of a rich academic legacy befitting the traditional school's "structured and time-tested academic climate" (as the traditional school's 1981 concept paper phrased it). During the two years of the first administrator's tenure, the school
grew from 600 to 900 pupils; in the four years since the second administrator took over, the school's enrollment has expanded to 1500 students.

Methodological Remarks

The investigator subjected the data from the three selected schools to the constant comparative method used in the analysis of the Columbus Alternative school data. However, there were two differences that bear mentioning. One difference involved the treatment of the data during the first two stages of the constant comparative analysis; the other differences occurred during the data collection process. The first difference lies in the manner of treating the data during the stages of incident comparison and categorization and of category integration: throughout these stages the data were kept segregated from those of the Columbus Alternative School. Thus, while the selected schools' data underwent concurrently the same analysis as that of the other data universe, the investigator treated these data as a separate entity in an effort to immunize them from contamination by the Columbus Alternative data. This procedure became more necessary as the Columbus data began to suggest the specific destabilizing crises and their coping routines: an indiscriminate handling of all the data may have led to a bending of the selected schools' data to fit too nearly the emerging, grounded theory.

The second difference is one of interviewing technique. In the first series of elite and intensive interviews, the investigator
interviewed half the selected informants in order to be able to sift through the first group of data and check to see whether his interviewing techniques were eliciting sufficient data. The investigator had assumed either that his interview protocols might have been weak in the first series or that the phenomena already beginning to take shape in the Columbus data were unique to that institution. In either case, the investigator decided to return to the field to gather more data from the remaining interviewees of the three selected schools.

**Destabilizing Crises and Coding Routines in the Three Selected Magnet-Type Alternative Schools**

For ease of comparing the citations of chapter eight with those of the Columbus Alternative High School, the testimony below follows the same order as that of chapters five and six.

A. The Destabilizing Crises

The special interest school and the informal school interviews exhibited good quantities of data testifying to the presence of the destabilizing crises. The data from the traditional school, however, was often silent about their existence. The member checks with the interviewees at the other two selected schools proved conclusive, but intensive exploratory probing of the traditional school interviews still failed to bring about testimony of all the crises. By no means was any testimony absent, but even that which was present was not as rich in structure and detail as the testimony from the informal and special
interest schools. Throughout the data analysis, the investigator dictated four memoranda about this anomaly. In each memorandum he explored the possible explanations for the informants' singular barrenness of testimony. The explanations ranged from poor selection of informants to a flawed interviewing style. The investigator rejected these explanations on the grounds that (1) the informants all had been deeply involved in the creation or administration of the school and that (2) his interview protocols had brought about abundant testimony from all other informants. After closely reexamining the histories and philosophies of all the other schools, the investigator concluded that the traditional school, by virtue of its conventional program, was insulated from the effects of situations that destabilized the other magnet-type, alternative schools. For example, the move to another building in no way forced the staff to translate or modify its program to another setting; the staff merely resumed the traditional program, which never required a special setting. Also, the program never encountered the kind of community and administrative psychological resistance met by the other schools. The traditional program was really a reaffirmation, albeit with special and even exaggerated emphasis, of programs that had also been present in the school system. The data were by no means useless since they do testify to the presence of some crises even within a strongly supportive environment.
The Threat of Change of a Particular Leader's Style and Administrative Inexperience

That staffs of the special interest and informal schools affirmed the importance of a particular leader's role in maintaining a school's alternative integrity. More importantly, they stressed the positive effects of a dynamic leader on the school's continuation. They also presumed that the school would revert to a more conventional program should the particular leader leave. A teacher from the special interest school noted:

If we did not have somebody who was pushing constantly for the changes that were needed or the things that were going on pushing and fighting downtown in a lot of the areas we may not be at the size that we are today.

Another staff member of the same school added:

His (the principal's) influence is all pervasive throughout all the building because of his personality. He is the public person and the role he has as a principal is defined by his job description but his personality also comes with it. You live in the shadow of the person. Everybody knows the influence that that person has on the building is tremendous. The program really becomes an extension of him.

The fear of losing the leader was very much on the minds of the informal school's staff.

The biggest change that will come about will be when (the principal) retires or otherwise leaves the school. I don't know how you bring somebody in to fill that position because they don't know what the . . . school is all about. I think we'll have a difficult time as a faculty trying to tell anybody what it's all about, to tell an administrator what it's all about, unless somebody like her took over. I think that will be the biggest trauma from my perspective it would be to lose her because she's been with the continuity; she's held us all together.
Even the two principals of the school’s viewed their departure as destabilizing. The special interest school’s principal spoke for both when he said:

If I left tomorrow, the school would become just like any other high school in the system. I think some of the real key people would start to leave because they’re interested in the same basic things I am. Within five years you would not be able to see the difference between this and any other high school. Except that it would really depend on who they brought in though.

Because of the administrators’ previous experience in managing the schools or programs, no informant cited administrative inexperience as a crisis.

The Physical Arrangements of the School

The changes in building site and in program assignments were traumatic for both the special interest school and especially for the informal school. A staff member of the informal school recalled:

Moving into this building was a tremendous change. It changed our original style. It subjected us to difficulties some of which we anticipated and others we did not anticipate. Sometimes what we thought would be a problem was less of a problem. It took us a year of living here and making it our own. That’s true of each teacher that had to move from a large floor with an arrangement of furniture and a working style that they had slowly developed with their peers on that floor while the kids had to get used to having hallways and not large open spaces. We had to get used to seeing kids in areas of the building that we did not have before. We had to adjust our behavioral expectations; we had to rethink what was appropriate and what wasn’t appropriate. We had to look at our curriculum to see what we could do given the kind of building we had as opposed to what we did automatically within the other building.

The effect of moving twice in one year was particularly hard to sustain for one teacher, but the move to a different context was worse! 
I made two moves that year. I moved into the hotel classroom and then in the middle of the year into another classroom. Now that's unsettling. But our move to this building was even more unsettling. I think one of the problems that year was when people were not comfortable with each other -- they lost contact, I guess. People had lost the ability to confront each other. I think we'd been at the old building about eight years and people had established their territory and their space and the way they related to people and the way the kids moved. The team seemed to be functioning fairly well. Then all of a sudden they switched into a new situation that called for a whole new set of dynamics. People had lost the ability to confront each other and express negative feelings and I think there was a lot of grumbling and complaining that I could see from the outside and not a lot of direct confrontation in a sense honest confrontation with people.

One move for the special interest school was especially harmful since it placed the school in a setting unsuited to its specialized program.

The facilities were just absolutely unbearable. I got one room probably about 12 by 12, maybe 15 by 15. I had to run classes in it that year, and my kids just passed out because it had no ventilation. So they ended up doing whatever they could they'd go anywhere they could find a space in the building, in the library in the hallway, when it wasn't being used by the phys. ed. in the back. We taught band in one of the bathrooms. The back of the stage is where gymnastics was set up. The industrial arts room, when it was not in use, was used for archery and something else. All my health classes my tenth grade health were taught in the auditorium and there were two other classes one on the stage and one in the back of the stage. It was impossible.

**Retaining and Replacing Staff Members**

The informants from all three selected schools gave ample testimony to the destabilizing category losing good teachers who weren't able to adapt to the new program was disconcerting for one special interest school teacher.
I'm afraid we lost some really good teachers because they couldn't deal with all the other things that went along with the program. I'm not saying that's good or bad, I mean everybody has their own limit like some people want to just dedicate their entire time to the teaching of their subject. And that's not wrong. But some people were coming from a high school situation where they only taught five periods a day, and just that change discouraged them from coming back.

The new program's demands are often too strenuous to handle and even the best teachers burn out. In addition, the change of environment is often too drastic for new teachers coming to the school. The following comment from a special interest school staff member was echoed many times:

We have a very high burn out extremely high very high turnover from year to year. One of the factors for comfortable teaching is teaching the same subject each year. We have teachers who have not taught the same subject for five years; we have some teachers who have not taught the same grade level for five years. This is very difficult you know for people to come in and change year to year. You can't get anything stabilized that way. You have to leave, you can't take all the change. It's absolutely killing when you can't keep good people around.

A major problem is the inability to retain strong staff members who cannot be replaced. Such a loss is very destabilizing as the informal school principal noted:

We had lost some of the original people who were the strongest people on the staff. I had a nun who was the most brilliant woman I had ever known, she and a young man from Indiana University set up a thing called senior program in which they literally worked with the seniors on their total program and between them they had the resources to teach anything or to help kids get into anything so it was a very fluid, wonderful program. Those youngsters went off as national merit scholars and everything else. But then I lost those people and when you lose people with those capabilities you can't get replacements.

Retaining key staff members and assisting the replacements for departing teachers has been a problem for the traditional school. The school has experienced many difficulties in assisting new staff members to adapt to
the increased work load. Referring to new staff members' problems, the traditional school principal observed:

It makes a difference when teachers have to learn how to teach all over again and it takes time. So one problem with the program is that we ought to have the same program when you have new teachers coming. I know I have eight teachers coming in this year and four of them are new to this type of program, and two are coming back to the program. We ought to have some kind of program set up where you can explain what they've got to do, how they've got to change, how they'll have to change in teaching the needs of these youngsters now. We need an answer soon.

Community and Administrative Perceptions of the School

For the special interest and informal school community and administrative perceptions created severely destabilizing conditions that harm the schools' growth. Too often the administration or "the system" misjudges the schools' motives and directions. The special interest school instructors viewed, as did the staff of the Columbus Alternative school, the relationship between the administration and the school as adversarial:

I draw fire as I go from place to place and the main thing that we harvest from that is this phenomenal adversary relationship that seems to go all through the system where instead of people with the common goal of working and educating kids sitting down and working things out rationally, you have this highly animated, acrimonious relationship between us and downtown.

The principal was even more brutally frank:

They hate our ass. They tried to stop us. This school was never intended to go past the eighth grade and they claim they've got commitments from everybody that we should never have athletic activities, but by the grace of God and an awful lot of politicking I managed to get it in, which was tantamount to treason in this city.
But for the informal school, the misperception of the school's mission was as destabilizing as central administration animosity:

Our biggest single problem was that we used the term gifted and talented and we used another term "creative." We thought, in house, that we clearly defined them from our point of view, from a fairly broad perspective to be gifted in a variety of ways and talented in a variety of ways and creative in one of several ways. And we didn't limit the definition of those terms. We found that the public and the Board perceived them different than our understanding of them and because we were an alternative to the regular school program. The public perceived alternative from a wide range of viewpoints. And so it was obvious soon in the start of our first year that we had more people expressing an interest through written applications to the school than the school could accommodate.

Like the staff of the Columbus Alternative school, the informal school staff responded to the demands of the community and adapted their program to the desires of the parents, even at the expense of modifying the school's original direction. The following anecdote told by the principal is illustrative:

Years ago I had a bright young woman who taught math and physics and all kinds of things. She was just a very idealistic person with a very strong sense of integrity. At a faculty meeting when we were beating our gums about what we were not doing well or what have you, she said to me, "I'm going to give it one more year and if this school doesn't come closer to my ideal, I'm going to leave teaching." And I said, "You may as well leave right now. We are at our peak and we are moving increasingly in a conservative direction. We were forced to because the parents who were with us were changing also. A lot of our parents were flower children and they were militant, but they don't want that for their kids and they'll be the first to tell you."

The community is a kind of barometer against which the school can measure its effectiveness. As long as the school functions with the wide parameters of the community perception, it can avoid harsh reactions brought on by disappointed expectations.
And it's important to deliver what those parents want, as long as it's educationally sound and good for the kids. But I'm the biggest realist on the staff and I was from the beginning. You know I could spot immediately when we had gone so far out that we were hanging ourselves in the parents' eyes.

Anxiety Associated with the Need for Extraordinary Funding

The need for special funding to continue these alternative programs weighed heavily on the minds of all the schools' informants. One teacher at the special interest school declared:

In the future I see money as the big problem. Funding the program is going to be hard. The idea of desegregation versus the money aspect is a big question that the board is going to face. Is it worth the extra money we're spending on these types of schools. I think that's going to come down to be an issue very shortly because we do spend a lot more money than a normal school does. We have more teachers per children because of the phys. ed. end of it.

One teacher bluntly stated that the extraordinary costs incurred by the special program have jeopardized its continuation.

The school could fail because the program's going to become too expensive.

The reduced teacher/pupil ratios so important to an alternative school often create the largest budget crises. As the informal school principal commented:

We are staffed different. We are staffed at 1 to 20, and our other schools are staffed at 1 to 26, 1 to 27, 1 to 27-1/2, so we have a running start before we go in. I fought like a tiger to hang on to that ratio every year. For three years I had to appear before this budget committee made up of people from all the other schools and central office and justify my staffing levels.
The traditional school, owing to its favored status, has continued to enjoy the financial support necessary to maintain its programs. However, its staff worry about the eventuality of reduced budgeting support. One staffer observed.

If someone ever gets the bright idea to crunch out the numbers on this school, they're going to see just how expensive it is to run this place. We can't do the job on a regular high school budget. If the money dries up, we're in trouble. No federal program's going to pay for a traditional school. We'll have to close shop.

Variations in Program Emphasis

Changes in program emphasis were problematic in the informal and special interest schools but not in the traditional school, which has never sustained any programmatic deviation. Survival is not always the central issue of staff concern, but survival without significant modification is more often the question. Variations in program philosophy are real threats to surviving without hybridization or a modification of original goals.

I think this school will probably definitely survive. The problem as I see it is will it maintain its philosophy. That's what I see slipping out the door quickly. I see us going from a school with physical education to a school of athletics. And on a high school level that's probably to be expected. You want to point it toward the athletics. But I see decisions being made, monies being spent in areas that don't coincide with the philosophy of the school. The school will be hurt by this.

Program variations occasioned by the needs of the students were destabilizing for the informal school staff.
When we started out we were open, really trying to individualize everything. We were trying out some things, some trendy topics like ecology and environmental pollution — things the kids were interested in. We found out the kids didn't have the background to be really able to make headway in the stuff they thought they wanted to learn. So we retreated to a more structured, more formal approach, more traditional kind of teaching. It was hard getting used to it. You know, we'd all planned so well and developed special materials we couldn't use now. Some have never gotten used to the move to a more conservative approach. It took a psychological toll on everybody.

**Acquiring a Suitable Setting for the School**

Alternative schools flourish in settings that nurture their identity and wither in unsupportive environments. When the traditional school moved into a building that once accommodated a prestigious, academic high school, the program grew. Noted the principal:

Being in this school sort of helped our program because of the rich heritage it has.

Conversely, the informal school's move to a vacated, downtown school created havoc with its open individualized program:

When we moved down here the building was filthy. It has been vandalized. The teachers had the most traumatic year that you can imagine. They were suddenly isolated from each other. They had lost their support system. They hated the walls; they were strung out all over this big building. It was dirty, it wasn't carpeted there were just a thousand things that could go wrong and did.

Although the move to a new school helped give the special interest school identity, the site's unsuitability is a constant source of vexation for staff and administration alike.
This building was built for 700 kids. We'll have 960 some in here and 210 down there. We have one gym, a standard junior high school gym, and we have 12 sections of physical education every period. The problems are in the hallways outside. We don't have any problems, but for two quarters, the two indoor quarters, it's just chaos because the classes are in the halls.

Rate of Innovation

Innovation may be the lifeblood of alternative schools but if its rate is too quickly paced, innovation can cause destabilization. Rapid innovation in the first year is at times too much to manage for teachers who are learning to live within the demands of a different instructional philosophy. As one informal school educator said:

Open education, the whole bag of names, of ideas, philosophies that really none of us had ever experienced, and we went about trying to do these things and when I say we tried to do these things we really didn't know what we were trying to do. It was a very frustrating experience overall.

Again, another informal school staff member commented,

Myself and one of the other teachers, we had so much frustration our first year and we pretty much got to the point where we were going to quit. And we went to the principal with that, you know, we're just ready to quit you know you're going to have to do something about this new change.

The special interest school has always fostered change in each year of its existence:

When teachers come in here to this school, they're not used to the changes where the principal announces over on the PA and says you know we're going to do such and such and we're going to change the schedule around this way to meet these needs today or this group of kids you're going to do this and do that. In the beginning a lot of that was very difficult for people to come in and watch what we did and you know you had to go with the flow;
I mean you'd walk in and with a set of plans set up for the day and sometime during the course of that day those plans were changed. You know maybe the whole structure of the whole thing was changed at a moment's notice.

But in spite of the students' and some teachers' delight in continuous change, the swift rate of innovation in that school has had its effects on veteran staff members.

The main problem is that we're just exhausted because we've been running ragged for many years to get this to work and we need a few more workhorses. I believe two of the people you're going to talk to later were workhorses initially, and then we were told to take every burden off the teacher that we could, so that they can spend all their energy and all their time being the best teacher they can, providing the best program because that's what's going to sell us. You know the PR's going to come out of the kids and the parents, so that if the teachers are exhausted and not excited about what's going on then that's going to be the downfall.

B. The Coping Routines

The informal and special interest schools revealed a striking similarity to the Columbus Alternative High School in their reporting of coping routines. Particularly worthy of note is that the testimony of both schools was of the same weight for each routine. The data from the traditional school were thin because of the school's unusual institutional insulation from difficulties.

Cultivating Coherent Consensus

Both schools charted the decisions arrived at by their staffs as an effective technique for getting people to work in a cohesive, forward moving way. The written decisions provided the base for future work and long-term planning. A staff from the special interest school saw such chronicling as a means of projecting consensus into the future.
How do you get people that are working this hard together to talk about the growth and the future and the plans for the future when one the person might not be there a year from now six months from now three months from now and how do you keep this whole conglomerate working unless you make some internal decisions of where it's going and put them on paper, making a kind of agreements contract.

Another staffer asserted that under the special circumstances of the school, the staff must cultivate consensus more intensively:

Folks don't have time to sit down and talk about what they're doing and what they're goals are what worked and what didn't work and I think that if this school is going to survive they're going to have to develop a lot more relationship from one teacher to another in terms of what's been decided and where we're going.

Consensus is essential if the school wishes to make long-term plans without repeating the mistakes of the past.

You have to have long-term planning going on. We know some things that we would like to do a year or two from now. We have implemented some things over the last ten years that we knew we couldn't do the first two years.

**Stimulating Communications Exchange**

Informants from both schools concurred that survival of crisis often depended upon the school's having an effective group process mechanism in place. As the principal of the special interest school advised:

The thing is I have a total open door policy. I don't care what it is, come in and yell at me. I do not get upset when people disagree with me because I think that's their role, and if they can come up with a better way of doing it, more power to them, because that's less work for me. Also if they originate it, people do a better job of doing it than if I come up with it.
One staff member cited the ability to communicate openly with fellow teachers or administrators had contributed to the school's stability saying:

I've always felt that if I wrote something out, if I had a concern I wrote it out or talked to other teachers, to the academic coordinator or even to the principal or one of the assistant principals that I would be heard fully or at least my concern would be addressed.

Interacting intensively with other staff members and the community facilitated the development of consensus in the informal school.

In the midst of all that we had to in those early years have weekly faculty meetings, daily meetings, team meetings, small group meetings, large faculty meetings, parent meetings. Where with every turn of the wheel everything was up for discussion to where you go. We would slowly work toward some consensus. If there was a problem, the resolution came through consensus. If some policy wasn't working and needed some changing, we were open enough to change it quickly but to do it after all role groups had some input into the process, including kids. It meant in the process everybody had their agenda; it meant we slowly had to filter out through the normal way of competing ideas that are going to let the stronger more effective ideas survive and the weaker more ineffectual ideas will slowly be pushed to the side. The practical application of those ideas did the same thing in terms of school practice. It meant that parents began to learn from each other and so we had PTA meetings that were doing for white and black parents from various parts of the community what we were doing as a staff, one teacher to another teacher. The open group process allowed direct confrontation between staff members, which, in turn, fostered interpersonal negotiation and arbitration of individual differences.

There was a lot of direct confrontation, team meetings where my teaching style did not mesh with your teaching style as a staff member. Instead of everybody running to the director and getting some adjudication of that, we kept it in staff meetings and the principal consistently steered a very objective, open ended course. She was able to say I think this is the direction we ought to go in when there was some leverage we had. Staff had input into that when we sensed some commonality, we tended to move into that direction. We also knew at the same time that there were a lot of things we couldn't arbitrate. Every group in the school had an agenda and had a reason for pushing that
agenda. The thing that saved us was that we had the openness and the directness to let everyone find a way of resolving those values, differences, and goals.

As a staff member of the special interest school concluded,

You've got to have teachers having time to get together regularly and I'm not talking once a month; I'm talking of minimally once a week; and if they could get together regularly once a day and sit down and talk over what they're doing in their classroom you know they could use it.

**Cultivating a Core Group**

The staffs of both schools cited the inestimable importance of developing a core group to assist the leader in resolving crises. More significantly, the staffs did not view the group as closed or exclusive and noted that it was open at all times for new membership. An informal school teacher recalled:

I think the core group was a positive thing. I don't think it was cliquish, I don't think it was exclusive. I think that it was just people that just gathered and anybody would really be welcome.

The core group is especially valuable when the staff grows:

At the very beginning that the original seven teachers planned their own program. When you get as large as we are, I think there are some administration decisions that have to made that you can't just call the whole group. We're not seven people anymore; you can't call 60 people or 70 people together and tell them we have to talk about this. There's got to be some people in between, like the coordinators we have to filter all that information upward. Those people have got to be in on the decision making to make sure the information gets interpreted right.

The core group needs to be given a certain degree of independent authority if it is to function properly. The special interest school principal explained:
They have the ability to make decisions: I think that's the key. Because they can make decisions, they've got their own monies and they can make their own decisions, within that. They'll usually clear it with me. Sometimes they don't, depending on what those decisions are. I have given them great latitude to implement what they want to do with the teachers. There is no clearing it with me before you do it. You have the authority, and you can do it. I have to have faith that it's going to work and it has. Turn them loose and they'll do a better job than I could.

Protecting Staff Members From Unproductive External Forces

The principals and their staffs attested to the need for the leader to protect the staff from outside pressures: Said one informal school instructor about his principal:

Throughout our first year, she has fairly well insulated us as a faculty and as a school from any of that real upheaval. Another staffer asserted that her special knowledge of the school enabled the principal to defend the staff from external assaults:

... protected us in a sense because there was nobody out there who really knew what we were about for sure.

Although the administrator may protect the staff, in the words of one teacher, through "the rapport she had with the decision makers," the protection extended may at times be more assertive, and even aggressive,

I literally go down and fight over some of the things that happen. Literally I argue with the assistant superintendent, the superintendent. I argue with every department. I coerce. I go in there with a show of force. There are times when I back off when I think I'm going to lose. But if I think I can win I go in, I go in like gang busters.
Deliberately Altering the School's Physical and Phenomenological Structure

Alternative schools are bound up in their settings, and sometimes it is necessary to alter the setting in order to cope with crisis. By restructuring the physical setting the staff and administration can introduce phenomenological changes, i.e. changes in the relations and values of the organization, that modify the setting's conditions. The change in physical structure generally takes place in the form of a move to another locale. The resulting change from the 1980 move of the informal school. The new set of values and relations along with the altered physical environment created a new setting more conducive to the kind of educational and psychic activity that the school needed. Commenting on the new conditions, one teacher said:

Now they can function because we have a different building, a different format and we've got some storage places and some other factors that have gradually coalesced to allow them for cooperative, collective planning, better team work than before. So I feel they are mutually more supportive, with a clearer idea of where they are going from grade 6 through grade 12.

For some the change in physical structure brought to realization previously gained insights:

The move has been good because it has helped us improve many things and do better what we learned in the earlier years in the old building.

Another staff member noted enthusiastically,

I got my energy back and it coincided with the move here!

The responsibility for deliberately altering the structural conditions rests with the principal, especially when the alteration involves actions less drastic than a building relocation. To keep the
alternative program from fossilizing, a leader must keep making alterations when she or he sees the danger. As another staffer summarized:

I'd say that you have to have the leadership that is always pushing, it won't let anything settle. When you get something settled, it's hard to take it out of its mold. The program must be kept moving, doing something different, changing the atmosphere. Once people get themselves locked in, you can't move people. You've got them running and you can keep them running. But once you let them stop, they don't want to get back up and run. Many times you can keep them running just by changing their room assignments or shifting the class groupings around.

The data revealed the presence of similar destabilizing conditions and their coping routines at least in two schools whose history and broad programmatic outlines parallel those of the Columbus Alternative High School. The correlation of the data between the Columbus Alternative phenomena and those of the informal and special interest schools warrant the investigator's writing the substantive theory in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION

The testimony recorded in chapter eight forms a kind of "data bridge" that spans the gap between the intermediate, developmental theory of chapter seven and the more generalized substantive, developmental theory of this chapter. By "generalized" theory, the writer does not mean theory that can encompass the entire range of all secondary, magnet-type alternative schools. Theory possessed of that abstracted a level of applicability lies far beyond the scope of this research and will require extensive field studies and the application of systematic and rigorous testing before it can be formulated even in hypothetical terms. The theory presented in this chapter is less ambitious in scope than such theory and occupies the midground between informed or inspired intuition and tested, formal theory. In fact, the level of applicability of the theory is relatively low, being more suggestive of richer and broader implications than descriptive of all or of many cases. As it stands, the theory describes similar destabilizing conditions and their coping routines as they were found to exist in at least three of the four schools under study and are implied by their absence in the fourth. Hence from a narrow sense, the theory of this chapter may be said to apply only exclusively to the specific schools studied, viz, how
four, magnet-type secondary alternative schools coped with similar destabilizing crises. Under the naturalistic paradigm, the theory asserts that it may be applicable to other similar alternative school settings. In the naturalistic paradigm there are multiple realities and those realities are context-related. Indeed, there may be another set, or even four different sets, of theoretical descriptors of the phenomena studied in this research. Furthermore, there may be many more sets of descriptors — all of equal importance and none having theoretical pre-eminence. That is, there may be as many different descriptors as there are realities.

Notwithstanding these naturalistic concerns, the researcher can make several claims for the theory's warrantability and hence its value to educators beginning or hoping to begin innovative, alternative schools. The reasons for this assurance of limited generalizability or transferability lie in the naturalistic paradigm's basic assumptions. As Guba wrote in his review paper, *Criteria for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquires* (1981), the naturalistic paradigm does allow "the possibility that some transferability between two contexts may occur because of certain essential similarities." (p. 12). The determination of the transferability of this theory rests with the readers. If the readers discover that their contexts resemble the contexts of the three magnet-type alternative schools, then they may suppose that the findings of this study are likely to hold in their contexts (Guba, 1981). The readers must judge for themselves whether the theory is applicable to their
contexts. The reader makes no claim that the theory will be applicable in all similar alternative contexts. Even if the degree of fit is quite high -- even congruent -- the level of applicability will remain the same: the theory presents working hypotheses (Guba, 1981) that may help other practitioners to avoid or soften the effects of some destabilizing crises that may arise in an innovative organization.

For ease of reference, the format of presenting the summary of the researcher's findings will follow the order of chapter seven: the researcher will cite the coping routines used by the schools to address the destabilizing crises. As in chapter seven, the theory of this chapter will be discussional and not propositional, since the reality it attempts to explain is multiple and emergent. The theory represents one, limited, initial effort to expand upon the researcher's tacit knowledge that similarly structured organizations pass through similar "life cycles" (Kimberly, 1981, et. al.) and that preventive measures to increase the coping ability of decision-makers may be developed (Smart and Vertinsky, 1977). The researcher's citing of the coping routines is descriptive and analytical; he has confined his recommendations to the final portion of this chapter in his concluding remarks.

Destabilizing Condition 1: The Threat of Change in a Particular Leader's Style and Administrative Inexperience

With the exception of the traditional school informants, all informants perceived that the loss of the leader or a change in his or her leadership style would greatly affect their schools' structure and
program. The principals themselves supported their staff's perception and indicated that a change in the leader or his/her role would more than likely result in the loss of innovative direction in the school. It is important to note that not all the teachers were supporters of their principals, and some were adversaries of their principal's leadership style, yet they felt that any change in the leader or his/her style would destabilize the innovative program. Of all the schools, only the Columbus Alternative High School respondents identified the inexperience of the administrator as destabilizing; the administrators of the other three schools had come to their alternative assignments with several years of administrative experience, while the Columbus Alternative High School principal had been named the school's principal after he had served two years as the school's supervisor. Prior to his appointment as the school's supervisor-director he had had no experience in managing a large organization. (For more details, see chapter four). In meeting the threat of the crisis, the alternative school chiefly used two coping routines: (1) the stimulation of communications exchange and (2) the cultivation of the core group. The special interest school met the threat primarily through the use of the core group which served as an extension of the principal himself and acted with broad authority. No one identified the stimulation of communications exchange as a coping routine. The informal school informants identified three coping routines: (1) the stimulation of communications exchange, (2) the cultivation of a core group, and (3) the cultivation of coherent consensus. The
vigorous group processes enabled the staff to confront openly the possibility of the loss of the leader or the modification of her style, which did occur as a result of the changing expectations of the school's local community. The core group consisted of individuals who possessed an administrative style and personal vision much like those of the principal. In fact, the principal hedged her prediction of the school's traditionalization by adding "unless they put somebody like [name of core group member] in (as principal should she be replaced). By cultivating a coherent consensus, the staff liberated itself, to a degree, from dependence upon its leader. The consensus of goals and future policy insured that the leader's presence would remain intact in many important parts of the program, even if she were to leave.

Destabilizing Condition 2: Physical Arrangements of the School

In all the schools except the traditional school, movement to new settings sparked severe crises, the effects of which continued in one school up to the time of the informant interviews. To address this crisis, the Columbus Alternative High School deliberately altered the school's physical and phenomenological structure. The informal school resorted to deliberately altering the school's physical and phenomenological structure and to stimulating communications exchange. Their move to an old, vacated school building from a remodeled office tower induced severe crisis because the new setting changed staff relationships by not enabling them to interact as highly as before. In their
new setting they could no longer "confront" one another directly. By rearranging the classroom structure, the staff was able to interact more closely simply because they were physically closer to each other. Nevertheless, the limitations of the building were severe enough to warrant the use of stimulating communications exchange to enhance further the positive confrontational environment to which the staff had become accustomed. The special interest school did not employ the deliberate alteration of the physical and phenomenological structure of the school -- probably because of the building's restrictions and inadequacies. The informants principally cited the use of the group process (communications exchange) to make the decisions that enable the school to survive the on-going crisis of unsuitable physical arrangements. The move of the traditional school to another building actually helped it since the building's association with a former public preparatory school matched the needs of magnet school. The move in itself was an effective coping routine in that it altered, favorably, the school's physical and phenomenological structure and helped it to thrive.

Destabilizing Condition 3: Retaining and Replacing Staff Members

The more innovative the school's program, the more severe were the effects of this condition. Moreover, none of the schools has completely solved the threat of this crisis; they have only softened it from year to year, although the informants seem sure of which routine(s) should be applied more persistently. The Columbus Alternative High School, the special interest school, and the informal all identified
three coping routines that were applied to meet this crisis: (1) the stimulation of communications exchange to permit teachers to express misgivings or personal doubts about their performance and to harvest the experience of other staff members; (2) the cultivation of the core group to help the new staff members enter into the decision-making process and to support burdened veterans before burnout sets in; (3) the protection of staff members from unproductive, external influences by having the schools' principals assume teacher advocacy postures when dealing with the central administration. Owing to the traditional school's conventional program, staff members have had comparatively little difficulty in adapting to the new surroundings although some confessed a slight disagreement with the school's emphasis on such overtly patriotic acts as the salutation of the flag. Such standards, however, were not considered substantive to the teachers' program. Accordingly, few teachers have left because they could not or were unwilling to adjust to the "alternative" environment. The traditional school has, according to its statistics, a low teacher-turnover rate.

Destabilizing Condition 4: Community and Administrative Perceptions of the School

All four schools are products of the aspirations of special interests of the communities in which they exist, and informants from three of the schools sensed that at times their mandates to serve their respective communities were not in line with the wishes of the central administration. The informants of the Columbus Alternative High School, the special interest school, and the informal school possessed almost a
"siege mentality": they saw themselves beleaguered by central office forays into the kind of program they wanted to develop, and felt that the overall impact of administrative intrusion was negative. On the other hand, the informants did not regard input from the community as negative, and they agreed that it was of value to adapt to their communities' concerns. Only two negative reactions to the community surfaced: (1) when the community as a whole misperceived the school's mission, as was the case with the Columbus Alternative High School and the informal school; or (2) when individual community members began to take problems directly to the staff, as happened at the Columbus Alternative High School. The informal school and the Columbus Alternative High School both employed two coping routines: (1) protecting the staff by direct administrative interposition between the staff and the community and (2) cultivating a coherent consensus, so that the schools' mission could be well understood by the community and the central administration. The special interest school informants indicated that originally their purpose was well understood and was not threatened by community misperception of its purpose. Currently the school is suffering from a change in community and administrative perception of the school's mission but have not developed a coping routine to meet the crisis. In a suggestive remark one staff member indicated that the staff itself is split in its perception of the school's purpose and has not arrived at a consensus. The special interest school relies on the administrator's protecting the staff from adverse policies made by the central administration. The traditional school has just begun to
publish its consensus to the community, although apparently it has never experienced administrative antagonism or community misunderstanding of its mission.

**Destabilizing Condition 5: Anxiety Associated with the Need for Extraordinary Funding**

All four schools' informants were acutely aware of their extraordinary funding needs, and as a group they showed an awareness that this condition is ongoing and has never been effectively resolved. Much like the house in Lawrence’s *Rocking Horse Winner*, the informants' testimony echoes the urgent need to get more money to keep going. The coping routines applied by three of the school were mixed. The Columbus Alternative High School cultivated consensus and translated that into grant applications and in-system proposals to generate additional monies or support services. The special interest school has been protected by its principal who aggressively advocates the school's needs by confrontation with the central administration. The informal school has chiefly been protected by its administrator, whose powerful associations with state and local officials have enabled her to generate monies and support services. The use of the cultivation of consensus appears, from remarks made by two of the informal school informants, to be well-rooted in the school: since the staff has come to agreement about the school's mission, it has been easier to present a coherent picture of the school's extraordinary needs. At the time of this writing, the traditional school has not been threatened by an imminent loss of funds, although two informants thought that a "day of reckoning" would come.
Destabilizing Condition 6: Variations in Program Emphasis

Both the Columbus Alternative High School and the informal school experienced the effects of variations of program emphasis and both responded by using parallel coping routines: (1) a routine is a process not an entity cultivating the core group and (2) the deliberate alteration of the school's physical and phenomenological structure. In both school's, the core group facilitated the transition from one setting to the other by taking on additional responsibilities to relieve the burdens of a classroom teacher or by fostering interest in programs that were being deemphasized because of the new conditions. By rearranging rooms, making new assignments, and encouraging through scheduling more intense contact between teachers, the physical and phenomenological structures of both schools were modified to reduce the negative effects caused by new settings. The special interest school is just at this time beginning to feel the upheaval caused by a shift in program emphasis, and has not had time to respond since it is of its presence. No responses were recorded from the traditional school informants since they did not report any shift in program emphasis.

Destabilizing Condition 7: Acquiring a Suitable Setting for the School

The testimony of the informants from all four schools directly or indirectly links an alternative school's program to the building in which it is housed. A change in building brings about a change in programs, either favorable or unfavorable to the mission of the school.
In the case of the traditional school, the move to a new site infused with associations of educational excellence helped the school grow. The Columbus Alternative High School, on the other hand, was battered by two moves to buildings not entirely suited to its purpose or programmatic structure. The special interest school has been hurt by being placed in unsuitable settings and still hasn't been able to overcome completely the negative influences of its current setting. The informal school's first move enhanced the school's program by placing it in a compatible setting, but the second move to another building put the school into an inappropriate setting that set the program back briefly. The schools that were negatively impacted by moves actively used the deliberate alteration of the physical and phenomenological structure of the school to attenuate the destabilizing effects of the school. In the cases of the Columbus Alternative High School and the informal school, the alteration resolved the crises successfully. In the case of the special interest school, however, the severe limitations of the settings in which it has had to operate have to a large degree hampered the effectiveness of this coping routine. The school has not attempted, according to the testimony, to employ another coping routine.

**Destabilizing Condition 8: Role of Innovation**

In the three innovative schools (the informal school, the special interest school, and the Columbus Alternative High School) an unmodulated rate of innovation quickly destabilized the schools' staffs. Too much change, too many demands to implement change with too little
time to absorb the changes already in effect put undue pressure on the
staffs and helped to generate another destabilizing crisis by inducing
teachers to leave the alternative setting. The Columbus Alternative
High School and the informal school used the stimulation of communica-
tions exchange and the core group to sound out the staff's perception of
the rate of innovation and to convey that information to the principals
to act on. To date, the special interest school has relied on communica-
tions exchange between the staff as a vehicle to express discomfort or
disenchantment. From his own remarks, the principal has committed
himself to maintaining a very rapid, innovative pace and believes that
continual change is beneficial for the school. Two informants revealed
that the rate of innovation was oppressive ("a killer" or "killing") but
they were aware that the principal fostered the swift rate. No
informant in the special interest school identified the core group as a
coping routine, and one core group member said he could only present
concerns but did not have much say in seeing them implemented. By the
nature of its stability and unchanging nature, no traditional school
informant identified a coping routine for this condition.

Conclusion
The applicability (transferability) of the findings of this
research lie in how similar are the contexts of these school with the
contexts in which the reader practices. If there is fit, then it is
possible that this researcher's findings may be of service in avoiding
or solving some of the many organizational problems that threaten to
destabilize new, innovative schools before they are given an opportunity to discover whether their programs are of educational value to the children of their communities.

In using these findings, the reader should remember that they are tentative and that they do not offer a cookbook formula for resolving any one of the eight destabilizing crises. Furthermore, it may be possible that none of the eight crises will occur even in a setting whose context fits precisely clearly seems to resemble any one of those described in this study. This research is an abstracted summary of the discrete experiences and reactions of staff members in four magnet-type, alternative secondary schools. Their reactions to the crises are by no means definitive of the right course of action: they are merely suggestive of courses of action that have worked for their specific contexts. The practitioner should feel free to try different combinations of coping routines or to ignore them all when confronted with a similar destabilizing condition and look for a different, more individually effective routine. This researcher, however, would recommend, in those instances in which the practitioner has no idea of where to begin to solve one of the eight destabilizing crises should it present itself, that the practitioner attempt to use one of the routines described above to cope with specific crises. The practitioner should have recourse to this text not in the hope of finding a definitive solution but rather in the pursuit of a possible direction as to an initial approach to a severe problem.
This researcher hopes that this study finds merit in the eyes of other professional researchers who may wish to examine more systematically its working hypotheses either in an effort to discover new hypotheses or to elaborate upon a fuller description of the kinds of problems that affect alternative schools. A description of the means used to resolve those problems would be of signal value to educators, students, and citizens alike. Such a description would enable evaluators of alternative programs to judge the success or failure of them on their internal merits alone and not base their judgments on extrinsic accidentals. Should the programs be found worthy of continuation, then students -- and their parents -- would be able to enter an alternative setting with greater confidence and less uneasiness about the stability and quality of a program that would meet individual needs.
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