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The dialectical nature of success in college: Identifying motives and confronting contradictions

Rittenhouse, Wayne Randall, III, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1988

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THE DIALECTICAL NATURE OF SUCCESS IN COLLEGE:
IDENTIFYING MOTIVES AND CONFRONTING CONTRADICTIONS

DISSERTATION

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

By

Wayne Randall Rittenhouse III, B.A., M.A.

* * * *

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Teacher, Colleague, Tennis Partner, Letter Writer,
But Best of All, Friend
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INTRODUCTION
A PSYCHOHISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE DIALECTICAL PROCESS
OF RESEARCH AND LEARNING

It is not enough to learn the words, not enough to understand the words, not enough to understand even the thoughts and feelings contained in them; it is necessary that these thoughts and feelings should begin to determine personality internally. (A.N. Leont'ev Activity, Consciousness, and Personality 146).

Life is not constructed like a sentence, subject acting on object. In reality many events affect each other simultaneously. ...We construct all of our explanations on a linear model that exists only as an ideal. (Marilyn Ferguson The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformations in the 1980s 149).

Although excited by psycholinguistics, especially in relation to composition theory, I decided that heading a dissertation in this direction made little sense when the college students I was working with couldn't get themselves to sit down and write. Knowing that reading and writing skills are essential to success in the academic world, aware that consistent and extended practice are the only way to improve these, I chose to study why students
couldn't get themselves to do what was necessary to be successful in college.

More mystified than angered by Developmental Study students (freshmen with below average college board scores and/or high school grades for those attending college) who wouldn't take time to read assignments and prepare for classes, I learned early-on that I couldn't 'motivate' these students: one-on-one talks, if they were successful at all, worked only temporarily—and I felt silly threatening these eighteen year olds (who had probably been threatened before) with "You're going to flunk the test if you don't study!" (and you'll never make anything of yourself).

Because motivating students requires more than a compassionate teacher, beginning this dissertation,¹ I chose the Theory of Activity from Soviet psychology as a tool to analyze human behavior since it argues, in contrast to a stimulus-response paradigm, that although motives spur activity, they are only one component—interrelated and interdependent with others—contributing to behavior. Activity is a social-historical category and

...in the analysis of needs as the foundation of motives, we must begin not with the abstract individual, but with the way the individual is incorporated into a system of social relations, and how this system is reflected in his (individual) head. To uncover the motivational sphere of an individual (its composition, structure, and dynamics), his ties and relations with other
people must be taken into account. (Lomov "The Problem of Activity in Soviet Psychology" 70)

What was missing from the discussions of "Activity" in the quarterly Soviet Psychology (readable translations of current Soviet research), and from A.N. Leont'ev's Activity, Consciousness, and Personality, the most thorough presentation of "Activity" translated into English--though the translation could be better, were practical applications of the theory, especially in relation to motives. (Readers also need at least a general understanding of dialectics and a sense of Marxist ideals.) The "problem of activity" was discussed almost solely as a scientific concept and although American scholars of Soviet psychology, Michael Cole and James V. Wertsch (the most prolific), often provided introductory comments, more context was needed.2 Leont'ev, although making certain applications throughout his book, includes a final chapter, "Supplement: Psychological Questions on the Consciousness of Learning," which is a strange mix of activity-related theory concerning how students learn, and, at the same time, void of any discussion of what they should learn. Ironically, avoiding the politics of what should be learned avoids addressing motives, since motives and learning are inseparable (as the Soviets would argue).
Although the Theory of Activity offered a scientific explanation of human behavior, it didn't tell me why students wouldn't sit down and study. It did help me to understand the complexity of behavior, that motives are an integral part of this movement, and that students arrive at college with socially and historically defined motives. It confirmed my sense that I (or any person) couldn't motivate another to read, write, and study, day after day, quarter after quarter; it also helped me to see that to understand my students, I was going to have to understand how societal and historical forces contributed to motives.

Choosing John Blitzenwicz to interview, a senior and the best student I had ever had in a class at Midbind College, I wanted to see how sociohistorical factors contributed to his motives. John was unique: not only did he study regularly for several hours each day, but he was always asking the "right" questions and he searched for the answers both in and out of the classroom. In three different taped interview sessions over a three week period, each lasting approximately two hours in length, John and I worked together to discover why he could get himself to sit down and study when so many others couldn't. He talked about his past and his present schooling experiences, his friends and their experiences, and he talked about his parents and grandparents and their schooling, as well as the work they did and the lives they
led. The biographical sketch of John, after three sessions, was interesting and illuminated hypotheses concerning motives; I had a detailed picture of why John did what he did in relation to schooling.

Yet, both the Theory of Activity and the Blitzenwicz sessions forced me to ask "So what?" I had gained a better understanding of motives and how certain social and historical factors contributed to these, and my sessions with John proved that motives could be discovered through language activities such as an interviewer/interviewee process (which was important to me at this time since I had already finished a chapter titled "The Nature of Language and Its Relation to the Investigation of Motives in the Examination of An Activity"). Yet, at the same time, I questioned if entering freshmen had the self-knowledge to uncover motives producing insights. John was four years older and probably knew himself differently and better than an eighteen year old would know herself; I wondered about the logistics of interviewing incoming freshmen in several different sessions knowing that part of what I accomplished with John was because he was comfortable with me and we could meet at his convenience; and I wondered how the discovery of motives was going to help the Developmental Study students chances for success in college.
Somewhere in this dialectical process as I researched, wrote, and talked with my advisor, along with teaching full time and counseling not only Developmental Study students but other Midbind students (as I was usually the one who students had to see when re-admitted after being kicked out because of grades), some of my original assumptions surfaced and needed questioning: I realized that uncovering motives and understanding one's past didn't necessarily mean that a person could change. Also, I hadn't recognized (or at least articulated) that my goal from the beginning was to change the behavior of these students and saying that I wanted to help them was not the same as saying that I wanted to change them. Another realization that shifted the focus of my dissertation was that even though I, as teacher/counselor, could understand, at least to some extent, sociohistorical factors contributing to motives, this didn't make any difference to the students and the struggles they were facing. So what if I could explain some of the reasons for their behavior? How would my understanding help them to sit down and study?

Critical to the evolution of this dissertation was my growing awareness of the nature of the politics of schooling and the role I play as a participant in these politics. I continue to learn that the questions I've
asked since I started teaching (What's important for these students to know?, What should happen in a classroom?, etc.) are answerable—at least for me—only if I recognize and work toward understanding the political nature of these questions.

At an early stage, before I began writing this dissertation, I began to understand some of my schooling and teaching experiences from those who were writing about the politics of schooling. Beginning my teaching career ten years ago, moving from Columbus, Ohio to New York City, living in Orange, New Jersey and then in Greenwich Village, working on an M.A. in English Education at New York University, teaching high school in Brooklyn and Queens, and teaching at Brooklyn College, I found it impossible—as I saw lives much different from my own—not to question what I was teaching as opposed to what the students seemed to need. Should what happens in the classroom have anything to do with life outside the classroom?

I had read Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age*, Herbert Kohl's *36 Children*, and, several years later, after moving back to Columbus, I read John Holt's statement in the *New Schools Exchange Newsletter*, in which he said that,

...truly good education in a bad society is a contradiction in terms. In short, in a society
that is absurd, unworkable, wasteful, destructive, secretive, coercive, monopolistic, and generally antihuman, we could never have good education, no matter what kind of schools the powers that be might permit, because it is not the educators of the schools but the whole society and the quality of life in it that really educate. (20)

Holt's statement shocked me--yet he clarified some of what I had been feeling, passing the same New York City street people day after day, heading to the subway on my way to teach remedial reading to students at Brooklyn College, most of whom would disappear from college in a year or two.

Questioning what should happen in a classroom, another critic, Kozol, in Prisoners of Silence, captured my experience as a student, explaining: "The school, as Whitehead long ago perceived, is built upon inert ideas, ideas which lead to nothing--not to action, not to compassion, not to transformation, but (at most) to good term papers and examinations" (92). Holt, Kozol (and others) provided criticisms that helped me to see schooling differently than I ever had.

And, as I was learning, the politics of schooling were not separate from the politics of culture. I struggled to see how I fit into all of this: Richard Shaull's statement, in the foreword to Pedagogy of the Oppressed, "There is no such thing as a neutral educational process" (15) was much easier for me to
comprehend that Donald R. Bateman's statement that "School is not neutral politically; nor is the culture it serves or the products of that culture that are selected for the curriculum" ("The Politics of Curriculum" 61); yet, at the same time, I knew each were part of the same whole.

I was learning that what I taught in the classroom, and how I taught it, were politically motivated. To understand what I had been teaching and why I had been teaching it that way, I had to understand the relationship of schooling-curriculum-culture, each to the others, and I had to understand the political nature of these forces.5

Other critics, some outside of the American culture, not necessarily writing about schooling, also helped me to see the interrelationships between politics, power, and day-to-day life.6 Most influential was Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator/theorist. Freire, working with adult, illiterate peasants, jailed after a military coup in 1964 and "asked" to leave his homeland, provided for me the most insightful and articulate examination of the inseparableness of politics and education.

Awakening to the politics of schooling and rediscovering Freire (since I had read and studied him before beginning this dissertation) added a seemingly
new, important direction to this dissertation. Knowing motives were social and historical, knowing they could be discovered, and believing that students needed to learn what they could about themselves and about schooling to be successful in college, Freire provided a goal for the discovery of motives: to gain control over one’s life. Freire believed the goal of learning should be liberation—gaining freedom by gaining control over one’s life. His belief alerted me to a contradiction in my thinking that had guided much of this dissertation: I assumed that I could learn what was important for my students to know (and then teach this to them in some way). In contrast to Freire, I was defining learning as gaining control over my student’s lives.

Gaining control over one’s life may lead to passing courses and receiving a college degree—my original definition of success in college. But since seventy-five percent of the Developmental Study students don’t graduate, and, in fact, because one out of every two who enter college as “regular” students don’t finish, Freire’s definition of learning is more appropriate than my original. As I came to understand: gaining control of one’s life is more important than passing courses and receiving a degree.
The interviews I conducted mirrored the dialectical progression throughout the rest of the dissertation. They were an attempt to discover motives and socio-historical explanations; however, these goals were mine—not the students; it was what I could learn to make a difference in my life—not what they could learn to make a difference in their lives. This focus inevitably affected what was discovered. At the same time, I collected important data that provided a contrast and offered insight into the different behavior of college students (see Appendix). Wanting a more specific focus, I chose four students who would offer a contrast.

Interviewing John Blitzenwicz, who enjoyed this kind of introspection, produced interesting biographical data, but didn't offer much insight into how I could get students to study (I couldn't take his reasons for studying and tell other students these were the ideal). Interviewing Danny Webner, who began as a Developmental Study student, was expelled twice because of grades though finally graduated five years after he started, produced a more detailed sketch than I had of John. The Webner sessions, three meetings with two tape recorded ninety minutes interviews, were more successful than the Blitzenwicz sessions. Having interviewed John six months before, and since then, having analyzed these
sessions, thus understanding motives differently (also in part because of Freire and discussions with my adviser), I was able to get Danny to respond to contradictions that were evident (unlike the Blitzenwicz sessions where they weren't as evident). Also, the Webner sessions were more successful because they offered a contrast: I learned about Danny from what I knew about John and, after the Webner sessions, I learned about John through Danny.

Still, the Blitzenwicz and Webner sessions didn't produce the insight I had hoped they would: the sociohistorical information was interesting and I felt important, but I could only make broad generalizations and I wondered how this information would be useful to current developmental students. As I eventually learned, one importance of discovering motives is to see if a pattern emerges as the student compares her past and present. With John and Danny, since they were making it--because they were studying--it wasn't possible to ask them how they were going to get themselves to do the work college demanded.

I also interviewed two freshmen, Charles Presky and Bud Dutz, since I wanted to see if they could identify contradictions as they were going through their freshman year. Each was my advisee and I met with Charles at least six times, taking notes twice after he left, and I
met with Bud twice. Unlike statements in this dissertation from Blitzenwicz and Webner, most of the statements I've included from Presky and Dutz are from memory. More sessions with Charles and especially Bud would have added more information and provided more contrast. These sessions also should have been tape recorded. Also, different language activities, perhaps along with the interviews, would have produced different results (which is why, as I discuss in the conclusion to this dissertation, the classroom setting and students sharing with each other—along with individual interviews outside of the classroom—offers more potential for discovery).

There were also other factors that limited what I was able to discover as I talked with each of these students. Even though John and Danny were ex-students and I felt there was a mutual trust and respect between us, I was not an outsider—I wasn't an "objective" researcher who had come from outside of Midbind College nor would I leave Midbind when the interviews were done. I felt they were open and honest with me, but I'm sure they would have answered my questions differently and told me some different things if my role wasn't that of a professor at the college they were attending. And Charles and Bud probably felt even more restricted in what they felt free to discuss with me since as their
advise I play a role in their future at Midbind, and as a faculty member I represent the authority and status quo of the institution. Moreso than John and Danny, I felt Charles and Bud were more likely to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. Charles became more open and honest with me as the year progressed, but I didn't feel that Bud and I were able to talk to each other on any other level besides that of a rather formal adviser-advisee relationship.

Along with these students' ability and willingness to be open and honest with me, another factor limiting the discoveries made was the history I had with each of them which inevitably affected not only what they would tell me, but also my ability and willingness to be open and honest with them. Because they saw me as an instructor/faculty member/adviser, they each had gotten to know me in different ways and this had to influence how they answered the questions I asked. At the same time, as I had gotten to know them primarily as students, I had also drawn certain conclusions and this had to affect the kinds of questions I asked and what I "heard" (in contrast to what they might have actually been saying) when they responded.

Ideally these kind of interviews should be as "objective" as possible and take place over a longer period of time. The interviewer needs to be able to
return to an interviewee once certain discoveries are made which inevitably change the questions that were originally asked. There should be more interviews with each individual as well as more interviewees, and these should be combined with other language activities in which a group of interviewees work together to come to some conclusions (without the interviewer there). Students, without the interviewer/instructor there, will bring up different ideas in relation to their behavior in college. An especially important goal for future studies of this kind is that there must be a flexibility allowing for questions to change since the relation of theory to practice is a dialectical one: when I interviewed John almost three years ago, I didn't understand the Theory of Activity and Freire's concept of "conscientization" as I do now. My questions for John (or any other interviewee) today would be different than they were then.

Not surprisingly, considering I ventured into a new area--the relationship between the Soviet's Theory of Activity and Freire's conscientization--there are contradictions throughout this dissertation. These contradictions represent my struggle to transcend a society and culture that promote college--at least for most of those of us in the middle class--as a minimal
requirement for a "successful" life; I am grounded in this middle class world, the son of school teachers, having grown up surrounded by grandparents, friends and their parents, who never seemed to question that there were alternatives to college. At the same time, I am now recognizing that college is an invented reality and that "success," as I argue throughout this work, equals taking control of one's life with the goal of gaining freedom--of liberating oneself. Containing multitudes--I contradict myself! However, I am working toward liberation through conscientization--learning that I must change what I believe, in order to change others and what they believe.

Thus, the following work is both a final, polished product, and a work in progress. It answers and raises questions I will continue to confront as I teach and as I live. I am aware that the task of understanding theory, deriving a methodology from this theory, and the task of testing this theory through the methodology are each interrelated and interdependent. Reaching a clearer understanding of each depends to a large extent on what can be learned through the applications of all three areas.

This dissertation evolved dialectically as I discovered the interrelationships of those things important to me.
CHAPTER I

MOTIVES: SOCIOHISTORICAL FORCES GUIDING HUMAN ACTIVITY

Something happened.

Danny Webster did what only twenty-five percent of Developmental Study students do: he survived his college education and graduated with a degree. He was kicked out twice and it took him five years, but something happened his third time around and he received B's or better his last six quarters at Midbind College. What changed? Danny says, "I started keeping a schedule of everything I needed to do for classes and frat stuff. I'd write down everything and go to the library every night to study. I talked to my professors too, and found out what they wanted me to do." Three and a half years after he sat in my Developmental Study classroom, three and a half years after being dismissed twice, Danny was finally applying what I hoped he had learned his first quarter as a college freshman. Something had finally happened—somehow he had pulled things together.

Charles Presky charmed his way through his first year at Midbind receiving, with a minimal effort and, because he
dropped three courses along the way, a 2.1 grade point average. "He's fun," a psychology professor says, giving John a "D" fall term. "He doesn't read anything," his girlfriend says, and, because he doesn't read, he receives "D's" on both midterm and final exams in freshman composition and literature winter quarter. But John learns early on that dropping a course means saving his G.P.A. despite losing the credit hours, and his goal is to come back in the fall to play soccer: "That's why I came here."

Bud Dutz survived his freshman year by two-hundredths of a point: his cumulative G.P.A. is 1.72 and he needed a 1.7 to avoid getting kicked out. I am surprised when, at the beginning of spring term, he comes to see me (his advisor). Despite the four or five notes I've sent him throughout the year, Bud hasn't dropped by. Now, at the beginning of his third quarter, he needs to know what time his education course meets. I tell him--he has missed his first class by four hours--so I walk him down the hall to the instructor's office, since I believe the first day of classes is a critical one. His instructor is out to lunch and Bud says he'll call her later. But at the end of the second week of classes she walks into my office and tells me he's missed four out of the first six class meetings: "He said he couldn't find the room." A couple of days later, after I send him a note to come and see me, he tells
me, "I couldn't find the room where that class was." I believe him.

Danny survived, Charles charmed, and Bud flunked. Each looked the same on paper, similar A.C.T. scores and high school grades, but numbers only allow an admissions sub-committee to guess at who might succeed in college -- numbers don't show who will meet the demands. In fact, while seventy-five percent of the developmental students don't make it, approximately fifty percent of non-developmental students also don't graduate from the college where they began as freshmen: only one half of those entering with good-to-excellent college board scores and high school grades survive their college educations.

What's so tough about college? Why don't more students graduate? In today's world, in American society in the mid-1980's, where it seems that a college education is a necessity, why did it take Danny three and a half years (and probably an extra $10,000) to learn to budget his time and go to the library to study? Why can't Charles sit down and read for a couple of hours each day (or even for an hour each day)? And why can't Bud find the classroom he's looking for after six months as a college student?

In contrast to Danny, Charles, and Bud was an all-star student, John Blitzenwicz, who graduated with a 3.7 and rarely had any problem sitting down to study. He graduated on time -- yet he spent a year studying abroad on a Rotary
scholarship. At Midbind he not only put in at least three hours a day preparing for his classes, but he also was involved in many activities and put time and effort into a wider variety of campus life than the majority of Midbind students. John served as a student representative to the Board of Trustees; a member of the Governing Council, the Core Curriculum Committee, the Speakers' Series Committee; a member of three different honorary organizations; a resident assistant for two years; and an active member of a fraternity and its assistant chaplain. After one meeting with John, he was rushing off, in the pouring rain, to coach an intramural football team; at another time, when we were planning to get together, he asked if we could meet around 2:00 P.M. so he could play basketball at noon. John is an atypical college student: busier than most--playing hard and studying hard.

Motivation must be understood, not in the way that we often think of it as the step prior to action, as if we're motivated first and then act, but as part of an entire activity: "Motivation takes part in the action. It is the moment of the very action itself. That is, you become motivated to the extent that you are acting, and not before acting" (Shor and Freire *A Pedagogy for Liberation* 4-5). To say Danny wasn't motivated and Charles and Bud aren't motivated, treats motivation as if it happens
"outside" or "before" something takes place instead of "at the same time" the activity is occurring. Treating motivation as a separate entity implies that it can be understood in and of itself, implying that it can be treated and somehow repaired. ("All we have to do is to motivate these students and then they will learn!")

We must realize that the aspirations, the motives, and the objectives implicit in the meaningful thematics are human aspirations, motives, and objectives. They do not exist 'out there' somewhere, as static entities; they are occurring.

(Freire Pedagogy of the Oppressed 98)

Teachers (along with advisors, parents, peers, and others) may influence students and spur them to take action, and even students like Charles and Bud may perform well in certain classes in part because of what an instructor does. Yet, this kind of influence confuses motivation, a social and historical phenomenon, with a behavioristic, stimulus-response paradigm in which the remedy is, at best, only temporary: the student likes the instructor so she does the work so the instructor won't be disappointed; the student is afraid the instructor will yell at her and does the work to escape this kind of embarrassment, etc. Developmental Study students, their first quarter in college, almost always make a strong effort in this course, a class of ten to fifteen students where the instructor monitors closely their behavior in this class and others. And these
instructors at the end of the term invariably conclude, "If so-and-so will just keep working as hard as she has for me, she can be successful here at Midbind." Yet, most of these students vanish in a year or two.

Why did Danny finally turn himself around after flunking out twice? Why did it take him three and a half years to get going? "I don't know," he says. Why is he finally managing his time, studying, and talking to professors? Didn't he know these kinds of things would lead to success—didn't he know this was what I was teaching him five years ago? "I know," he says. But he can't explain why he's doing it now. What changed? Is Danny a different person now than he was five years ago?

In some ways, yes. Motives are social and historical, invariably influencing and influenced by the activity of the individual. Five years ago Danny couldn't make it to the library to study—other things took precedence; however, these past two years he spent his weekday evenings there. Five years ago as a freshman the one place he felt comfortable was his frat house; even as a lowly pledge, he felt like he belonged there: "Even when school wasn't going well, I was productive and respected over there." Ironically, Danny probably spends even more time there now. As his fraternity's president, he's more involved with more responsibilities than ever before. He also, as a result of a campus-wide effort, is spending extra time trying to
improve the image of Phi Phi Phi and other Greek organizations. Some see Danny as a leader on campus and he even presented a eulogy at a campus-wide memorial service for a student who had committed suicide. Danny has less time now than ever before to study—but now he studies and his grades are better than ever.

Soviet psychologists would say that the hierarchical structure of Danny's motives changed (A. N. Leont'ev Activity, Consciousness, and Personality 133-134). This change can only be guessed at—we can't really know why Danny changed. Yet, the category of activity in Soviet psychology requires human behavior to be viewed in its complexity. In its broadest sense, the word "activity"—despite all of its possible meanings—may be synonymous with the expression "an active state" and, in Soviet psychology, activity is used to describe numerous phenomena (Lomov The Problem of Activity in Psychology 56). Human activity, however, is not a psychological category:

Activity is a socioeconomic category that is studied and represented as a special concept, with its own categorical structure, in Marxist political economy. Actually, activity is a specific mode of human relations, with its own purposeful and technological structure: activity occurs through and for the satisfaction of human needs.

(Zabrobin "Methodological Problems in the Psychological Analysis and Synthesis of Human Activity" 26)
Activity is studied throughout the social sciences in the Soviet Union, and the field of psychology, without a specific claim to it, "must collaborate with other social sciences in working on the problem of activity" and "draw on the broad context developed by these other sciences..." (Lomov 57).

The Theory of Activity evolved from the belief that human practice is the basis for human cognition. (Leont'ev Activity 12). As a category of historical materialism, activity, as it was originally used in Soviet psychology, accepted the principal that mind and activity constituted a dialectical unity and that while "the human mind is formed, developed, and becomes manifest in the process of activity" (Lomov 57), activity would not exist without the mind as a directing and organizing agent (Zabrodin 26).

Activity takes place in a social world--this social context is:

...a system of historically developing social relations--economic, civil, political, ideological, etc.--in which he (the individual) participates directly and of which his individual activity is a function, whether that activity be practical or theoretical, productive or nonproductive, etc.

(Lomov 61)

To understand activity--to understand the individual--the social context and its relation to the individual must be analyzed: "It is the task of psychologists to understand how all of these realities existing around us--nature,
society, things, people, their relationships, etc.—are reflected in the mind...and how they regulate behavior" (Zabrodin 27). An individual, her activity, must be studied within the context and complexities of real life relations. Activity is a complex concept which cannot be reduced and understood as if it were a simple concept, as if behavior results only from a single action, from only one part of life. From the point of view of Soviet psychology, "...what is important is the study of individual activity within a system of social relations established in a particular society at a particular stage of its historical development" (Lomov 60).

Human activity is provoked by a need which may be material or ideal, recognized or unrecognized: "Need is an object of psychological cognition especially in its directing function" (Leont'ev Activity 54). Need is both "...an internal condition...one of the necessary precursors of activity..." and "...that which directs and regulates concrete activity of the subject in an objective environment" (Leont'ev 53). Initially needs appears only as a condition of the organism, and, at this point, does not direct activity; however, need impels the subject to begin searching and:

At this point the plasticity of activity becomes manifest: the way it assimilates the properties of objects that are independent of it. In this
process of assimilation, need gropingly 'dis-
covers' its object, becomes objectified. ...The
activity of the subject is always directed
toward the transformation of an object that is
able to satisfy some specific need.

(Davydov, Zinchenko, Talyzina "The Problem of
Activity in the Works of Leont'ev" 32).

Need, material or ideal, is the object of activity and
becomes the activity's true motive (Leont'ev Activity 62).
Motives are formed in the life-activity of the individual:
"In a word, the activity of the child appears more and more
as realizing his connections with man through things and
connections with things through man" (Leont'ev Activity 126).

In some instances motives may be very similar, yet
produce very different actions: a student like Danny who
wants to feel good about himself may turn to a fraternity
where he is respected; while another student, wanting to
feel good about herself, may put her energy into getting
good grades. Both are "motivated," both may even have
similar goals, yet each takes different actions to reach
these goals: "It is self-evident that the activity of
every individual man depends on his place in society, on
the conditions that are his lot, and how this lot is worked
out in unique, individual circumstances" (Leont'ev
Activity 51).

Motives are part of activity, a system having a
structure, its own internal transitions and transforma-
tions, and its own development: it is not a reaction nor a
totality of reactions to a stimulus (Leont'ev Activity 50). Danny didn't get involved in fraternity life because a single person or a specific incident inspired (motivated) him in some way nor does a student sit down and study day after day inspired (motivated) solely by the thought of how proud her parents will be when she graduates from college: "Activity is only a factor, a component part, of the joint activity of people in society as they interact. Individual activity simply could not exist apart from social relations and bonds" (Lomov "The Problem of Activity..." 59).

Activity is comprised of various components, interrelated and interdependent in a dialectical movement: an action, elicited by a motive, directed toward a goal (produced by a motive which was shaped by a need or needs), translates activity into reality (Wertsch "A State of the Art Review of Soviet Research in Cognitive Psychology" 59-60). Each person with various motives and goals may take different actions to satisfy their needs (and individuals with similar motives and goals may also take different actions). "Sense-forming" motives, because of their own personal sense for the individual, always occupy a higher, hierarchical position (Leont'ev Activity 124). Motives, actions, and goals are part of the dialectical movement of activity, each interrelated and interdependent,
inseparable since activity is "multimotivational," responding to two or more motives (Leont'ev Activity 123).

Danny graduates because his hierarchy of motives changes. Although he is finally successful in the academic part of college, he has been successful since his freshman year in the social part of college which matches some of his reasons for coming to Midbind. Danny's list of reasons why he came to college is not unlike the reasons many freshmen give: high school was over, all of his friends were going to college, what else was he supposed to do?; his tuition is paid (for four years) because his father is a Protestant minister; he wants to get a decent job someday; he visited, liked the campus, and knew he would get individual attention; he wanted to go away from home but he didn't want to go too far away. He also came to Midbind because most of his family (his parents, sister and her husband, and his grandmother and her second husband) are Midbind graduates; he knows and likes the dean of students (she has been a friend of the family's for years); he knows Midbind has a radio broadcasting major and he wants to be a disc-jockey; and he has a chance to play on the soccer team. Danny's reasons for coming to Midbind, at least these that he can articulate, and even his academic field of interest (Speech Communications), give evidence that his concerns are mostly with the social aspects of colleg--especially in contrast to the academic part of
college. These reasons, their relationship to motives and goals, give evidence that Danny was quite "motivated" throughout his time at Midbind (though not in relation to the academic part of college until his final two years).

John, the all-star student, came to Midbind primarily because he was offered a Midbind scholars' scholarship that paid most of his tuition for four years. He had visited twice, sat in classes, talked to professors, and liked what he saw. And Midbind was only 45 minutes from home although he never considered commuting. While John says, "I didn't work as hard in high school as I probably should have," when I push him further he admits that he was working just as hard as the other students—seventy-five percent of his classmates also went on to college. He goes on to say, "I think there was a laziness, too, you know..." but his high school 3.6 G.P.A. gives evidence that he wasn't coasting even though he feels that he could have done more.

Comparing homework in high school to homework in college John said that it was "more like a chore" in high school, "especially since [now] you're getting to areas that interest you... it's something you want to look at and really want to go after."

John arrived at Midbind as a good student yet still demands more of himself: "I think I picked up momentum here (at Midbind), but I'm still not satisfied with the momentum I have now." In contrast, Danny arrived as an
average high school student and improved from a poor to a good college student. Maybe for Danny the most important reason he changed was that after being readmitted for his third try at Midbind, both the dean of students (his family's friend) and the associate academic dean said there was no way he would be allowed to return if he flunked out once more. Danny also said that he wanted to graduate for his grandmother who was now paying for his tuition since his "free" stipend had almost run out. He had also, in between the first and second expulsions, taken a sociology course (criminology) which sparked his interest as radio broadcasting had several years earlier. Pursuing this newfound interest, he spent one day with a Midbind graduate who is a district supervisor of prisons and reformatories, and Danny was encouraged to consider sociology as a major and a possible future of working in prison reform: "He said he could get me a job and the pay's like $23,000 to start." Along with knowing this was his last chance at Midbind, wanting to graduate for his grandmother (and his parents who Danny said had supported him both times he was kicked out), and becoming excited about an academic area that looked like it would head toward a good job and a possible career, Danny was also asked to run for president of his fraternity and he was surprised that his brothers had approached him: "They really thought I could do it." And, as well as these things falling into place, Danny had
started getting good grades—better than ever before—and was finally rewarded in this way for his time and effort. He was finally gaining confidence in himself as a student: "I knew if I did the work I could get good grades."

Of course I had told him this five years earlier as had many others from faculty members to administrators to family and friends. I watched him fall into a pattern his first two quarters at Midbind which he apparently continued throughout his first two years until he was expelled the first time with a 1.45 G.P.A. Danny worked very hard fall term in Developmental Study the first five weeks and winter term in Composition and Literature he worked hard for the first three or four. His effort was stronger the first quarter, but in both classes he was keeping up with the work and receiving average and good grades. Fall quarter he seemed to burn himself out after the sixth week (which isn't too unusual for a first quarter freshman) and winter term he could only do the minimal to get by once pledging started to take up more and more of his time. Danny said he wasn't very "thorough"—he couldn't get himself to make the effort—at least after the first several weeks of each quarter in his first two years at Midbind. He also said he believes that a student needs to be on "probation" and "needs to be threatened" when his grade point average begins to head toward a 2.0.
Danny, aware of this pattern and still unable to do anything about it until three and a half years later, apparently was fulfilling certain needs by not pushing himself to do more than the minimal to get by throughout each quarter. Given the evidence that he could be successful for half of the term, he wasn't overwhelmed by the academic demands. However, maybe the attention he was getting from instructors, administrators, parents, and friends as he received the low grades was more than he would have gotten if he had passed his courses and perhaps he wanted this attention. Danny is laid back, somewhat aloof, and likes to be seen by others as being different and it could be that his lack of effort fit more easily into his personality which his fraternity brothers had accepted from the beginning. Perhaps, since most of his family had graduated from Midbind, Danny didn't want to be like everyone else or at least didn't want to do it like everyone else--maybe he wanted to fight his way out of a corner. He was expected to go to college and graduate--this was a given--so maybe he wanted to do it with a different kind of flair. Perhaps he was rebelling against his family and especially his parents who he said were very supportive even after the second time he had gotten expelled--maybe with his father being a minister Danny wanted to do something the "wrong" way for a change. It might be that once Danny realized he could be successful in
college, and maybe he learned this his first year (possibly even his first quarter), he invested his energy into other things knowing that he would buckle down when he had been threatened for a final time, and then, all eyes would be on him.

Something happened. Regardless of why Danny couldn't meet the academic demands throughout an entire ten week quarter, he was finally sitting down and doing the reading, writing, and studying the academic part of college required. When he finally became a successful student there were hierarchical changes in his motives; yet, it's impossible to say which reason was more significant than another in his motivation since motives are web-like, interrelated and interdependent, in contrast to a linear hierarchy:

The fact is that neither the degree of proximity to biological needs nor the degree of capacity to stimulate nor the affectiveness of one motive to another determines the hierarchical relationship between them. These relationships are determined by the connections that the activity of the subject brings about, by their mediations, and for this reason, they are relative.

(Leont'ev Activity 124)

Of course there are probably other factors, too, contributing to his change that he's not aware of or that he couldn't articulate or didn't want to (Goffman The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life 15).11 Maybe seeing his friends graduate and leave Midbind forced him to get on
the ball—maybe seeing that there was life after college pushed him to become a better student—perhaps knowing that he could take control of his life and, in fact, was taking control of it, urged him along.... When he began to turn himself around, Danny was almost four years older than when he entered Midbind, and he no doubt saw himself and his world differently than as a freshman when "getting radio" time to disc-jockey was as close as he would get to getting involved in an academic subject.
CHAPTER II
MOTIVES AND CONSCIENTIZATION:
IDENTIFYING SOCIOHISTORICAL FORCES

Danny was fortunate that he was allowed to return to Midbind twice after being kicked out. He came to Midbind excited about radio broadcasting, soccer, and about moving away from home. When the fraternity rush parties started in the fall, Danny became excited about Phi Phi Phi and when he pledged winter quarter of his freshman year, he felt as if he had found a place for himself. Even though he was losing interest in a speech communications major (especially tired of the time-consuming planning meetings), even though he wasn't getting to play as much soccer as he wanted and would quit after his sophomore year, and even though he was doing poorly in his classes, he still felt good about himself and what he was giving to his frat and the respect he felt he was getting back in return. Things fell into place for him: if he hadn't been asked to run for president of his frat, he may not have gained some of the confidence he needed. (He said, "If you take responsibility for more than just yourself, it gets you
motivated."); if he hadn't taken the criminology course and hadn't talked to the supervisor of prisons and reformatories, he may have never considered that field nor would he have thought about majoring in sociology (thus finally finding an academic area that interested him). And even when Danny finally made the effort, had he not gotten only better than average grades, he would have been expelled for the third and final time. With social goals being fulfilled (though not necessarily consciously), Danny was able to satisfy some of his important needs, and, along the way, he did enough school work to give himself two years worth of college credits until he finally was able to sit down and do what the academic part of college required.

John, unlike Danny, Charles, and Bud, took control of the academic part of college right from the beginning. Ironically there seems to be a kind of fear that drives John despite his success throughout his schooling. John saw himself as having no choice when it came to going to college: "It was a matter of which one--it wasn't whether I was going or not." Asked what might have happened if he had decided he didn't want to go onto higher education and had told his parents this: "Ah jeeze!..." he exclaimed, indicating this scene is almost impossible to imagine, "...it would be like telling my parents I got some girl pregnant...". John apparently felt a tremendous amount of pressure throughout his life to go to college. His parents
and relatives had contributed to his (and his sister's and brother's) college fund as the Blitzenwicz children grew up and John, Karen, and Steve also had been taught and encouraged to save their money, too. Sacrifices had been made. And John's friends and their parents were also saving for college: ninety percent of John's graduating class at Burden Catholic High, comprised primarily of blue collar families, went on to schooling past high school.

Of course Danny and Charles also grew up in environments where college was the next breath after high school; yet, their friends were from white collar families and getting a college education was expected, but didn't necessarily hold the same kind of importance that it did for John and his friends. Danny's and Charles' parents had college degrees, but John was the first to graduate from college from either side of his family. John's father was forced to quit college two years after he had started because of a football injury taking away his scholarship and John's mother never seriously considered college and became a stewardess, eventually working in the front office of a major airline. John said "I don't know why they (his parents) expected it (their children going to college) so much--maybe because they didn't do it themselves--because they couldn't do it themselves" (financially). These pressures contributed to John's motivation: even though his parents hadn't gone to college
John says they try to do their best at whatever they do and expect their children to do the same.

It was evident from the beginning that John would be successful at Midbind. However, in contrast, Charles and Bud may not be as fortunate as Danny—most students can't afford (financially or emotionally) to hang around a college until things fall into place for them (if they ever do). And, of course, it's impossible to predict what may or may not fall into place for students once they get to Midbind: a variety of experiences, circumstances, and happenstance affect their present and future. At the same time, students should be able to gain some control over their lives to prevent being kicked out twice and having to spend the extra time, effort, and money to graduate. And, at the very least, students should recognize what college requires and decide what they can do, what they will do, and what they won't do. Confronting these kinds of issues should help students understand their reasons for coming to college, and they can examine their motives so they can decide where they're headed.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator/theorist,\textsuperscript{12} extends the Theory of Activity from Soviet psychology through proposing that by examining a person's behavior,
contradictory motives may be discovered and change can occur if the individual takes control:

Men... because they are aware of themselves and thus of the world--because they are conscious beings--exist in a dialectical relationship between the determination of limits and their own freedom. As they separate themselves from their own activity, as they locate the seat of their decisions within themselves and in their relations with the world and with others, men overcome the situations which limit them: 'the limit-situations.'

(Pedagogy 89)

"Limit-situations" or contradictions may be identified through the process of "conscientization." Conscientization, according to Freire, is both a permanent process each of us is involved in as thinking beings in a dialectical relation to objective activity, and also a process that can be sharpened and used as a tool to gain control over one's life: "Individuals who were submerged in reality, merely feeling their needs, emerge from reality and perceive the causes of their needs" (Pedagogy 110).

Charles says the reason he came to Midbind College was to play soccer, and Bud says the reason he came was to play baseball. Neither apparently had given a whole lot of thought to the academic part of college. "I did good in high school," Charles says implying that there was really no reason to think he wouldn't do just as well in college (and by "good" he means good in the classes he enjoyed.) College was a given for Charles. His parents and sister
are college graduates. His father has done post-doctoral work and his sister is working on her second master's degree while working full time (which exasperates Charles). Academic subjects come pretty easy to them Charles says and maybe Charles rebels against their success by not putting more effort into his studies.

Unlike John, Danny, and Charles, college wasn't a given for Bud. When the Midbind baseball coach called him last July, Bud was working full-time after he graduated from high school, was considering working at John Deere for nine dollars an hour (which is also where his father works), and had also talked to an army recruiter. Bud thought he'd give college a try and at least he'd get to play baseball in the spring.

Charles and Bud, although unlike John who came to Midbind saying, "I want to learn, learn, learn" and unlike Danny who was at least excited about Speech Communications when he first entered, aren't of course, the only students who go to college with other goals in mind besides studying. If success in college is defined as passing courses and receiving a degree, then even though most students say they came to get a college education, many come for a variety of reasons and diverse goals that often conflict with the academic demands.
Contradictions may occur immediately as students are given assignments and they decide whether to do them or not: so many things can get in the way. There's so many other things to do... so many new people to meet... so many people to do things with... there are no parents... no curfews... total freedom... college is great except for the classes. Some students have no problem putting their homework at the top of their list of things to do, and others put it on their lists, but never get around to doing it.

"It's boring," Charles answers when I ask him why he doesn't do the required reading, "I'll read it fifteen or thirty times and still won't know what it's about." I also wonder if Charles isn't discouraged because he knows regardless of how hard he works, he will never achieve the academic success that his father and sister have. Why work real hard if you're not going to achieve some recognition--especially from those closest to you? The night before the final exam in his composition and literature class he reads half of an autobiography the class has spent the prior two weeks reading and discussing. He confesses to me, the instructor of this course, a quarter later "...you know, that was a good book." How is he going to get himself to do the reading in future classes next year? "I don't know," he says the last day of classes spring quarter when he comes to see me about dropping a class he is failing. He has, however, been reading his textbook for his
criminology course and he seems excited: "It's the first I've ever read." He's encouraged and maybe it's no accident that he is attracted to subjects (creative writing in high school and now sociology) that he says his father thinks are important—but not that important. Charles tells me that his dad is really interested in him making money. Despite his new interest in criminology, one more time I remind him that a liberal arts education demands that he read a bunch of things he probably isn't interested in. "I know," he says. We both wonder how he's going to get himself to sit down and do the work next year; yet, the fact that he is questioning his inability to sit down and study is a positive sign. Charles seems to be beginning to confront contradictory motives: "What will I do with my life if I can't get myself to study next year?"

Conscientization is occurring.

In contrast, Bud tells me, "Yes, I'll do that," but never shows up at the Tutoring Center for help. Needing a 2.9 G.P.A. spring term to return in the fall and having not received more than a 1.4 his first two terms at Midbind, he knows his back is against the wall, which is one reason he has finally made it to my office. He even must sign a form in front of me from the academic dean's office saying that he realizes he is in the process of flunking out. But, after we sit and talk about what he should do to try and survive this quarter so he can come back next year, when I
checked later with the Tutoring Center, Bud never made it there. He did, however, go straight from my office to make an appointment with the associate academic dean. Forced to drop his education course after missing the first two weeks of class, he was one credit short of the 12 required by the N.C.A.A. for eligibility, and Bud wanted to petition the academic appeals committee, meeting in a week, to allow him to pick up a physical education activity course at mid-quarter, even though the college rule is that courses can't be added after the third day of the term. Bud went straight from my office to schedule this appointment.

Things get in the way. Charles and Bud both avoid doing what is necessary to make a good, consistent effort to pass courses and receive a degree. Charles concentrated on his soccer in the fall, planning to work harder in the winter when he had more time. However, in the winter, when he's not doing any more studying than he did in the fall, he says, "Coach thinks I probably have too much time now." (Charles often uses others to assess his situation which frees him from some of the responsibility--he is always talking to someone else about what he should do. Charles gets angry with me, as his adviser, when I tell him my job is to "advise"--but his job is to make the final decision.) Charles also fell in love fall quarter, saying that he told his parents, "You guys paid ten thousand dollars for me to find a girlfriend!" Charles' soccer, girlfriend, and
pledging winter quarter are his top priorities throughout his freshman year.

Like Danny, I believe Charles knows that he can handle the academic part of college and that he believes he eventually will--but not until he needs to (and maybe not until, like Danny, he is threatened for the final time). Unlike John, he doesn't seem to be afraid of not making it and maybe this is because he hasn't seen examples of people who get stuck in nine-to-five jobs, doing the same thing day after day, with few options to change their lives. Maybe the adults he's seen are "successful" (at least financially and with some control so they can change jobs if they aren't happy) and possibly Charles believes this will happen to him once he figures out what it is he really wants to do and then applies himself. For Charles, the future seems a long way off, and his lack of effort and attitude toward academics in his freshman year suggest that he's not too worried about it--things will probably fall into place as they always have and college will eventually be a part of this.

Bud's priorities his freshman aren't as evident as Charles' since I didn't have him in class and didn't have the chance to get to know him as well. Bud appeared in my office only twice, both times early spring quarter, despite the three or four notes I sent him throughout fall and winter terms when other advisees were also being summoned.
(although Bud received one or two extra because he was doing poorly). Bud finally shows up when he can't find where his education course is meeting (but perhaps the real reason he comes to see me is because after returning from spring break there's a letter waiting from the academic dean saying, "You're flunking out—you must see your advisor"). Not too long after this he reappears again wanting to see what he can do to remain eligible for baseball. "He plays real dumb," an administrator says who has talked with Bud, and when pushed further she says that she feels "He is dumb."

But I'm not so sure: Bud came to Midbind to play baseball and, when his eligibility was threatened, found whom to talk to (although the baseball coach was probably behind this). Bud also wrote a letter to the academic appeals committee and even called me to make sure he had addressed it correctly. Because baseball means something much different to him than academics, Bud took action following his coach's advice, yet ignored mine when I sent him to get tutoring.

Charles and Bud have, as Danny had, needs not being fulfilled by the academic party of college at this time in their lives. Perhaps neither would be successful at Midbind even if each sat down and studied and maybe this is one reason both avoid doing it; yet, there's evidence indicating that each can do college-level work. They do
pass some of their courses and their Developmental Study instructor, at the end of the course that is at least as demanding as most freshman-level courses, wrote in their final report that if a grade were given (in this pass/fail course) both would receive a "B." Regardless of having the potential to make it in college, Charles and Bud found it almost impossible to sit down and do the work college required. Charles may be finally confronting this. It is, however, difficult to tell whether or not Bud had already confronted the fact that he wasn't going to do what was needed to make one last stab at a respectable G.P.A. I get the sense that Bud hasn't confronted the contradictions—I'm not sure if he had any idea that he could control what happened to him at Midbind. I'm not sure if he had any sense of what college is, what it requires, how one does it, and why he had come. This lack of reality, at least toward the academic part of college, is possibly the result of a socioeconomic background where Bud's association with adults has been primarily with workers like his father who has made a career out of working at John Deere. Why spend money going to college when you can stay home and make more than many college graduates? In contrast to Bud's experience, John, Danny, and Charles grew up in worlds surrounded by adults who had gone to college or who were making sure their children were going to go.
Things get in the way. From my point of view as their advisor and as someone who found the academic part of college rewarding, I realize that Charles and Bud don't see college in the same way I do—as a necessity in today's world. Rationally I understand that college really isn't a necessity; this is my reality more than theirs, and this is the reality of someone with a different hierarchical arrangement of motives, someone who found reading, writing, and studying satisfying and worthwhile. At the same time, however, even though the realities of students as opposed to their advisors' are inevitably different, aren't students aware of the contradictions and resulting consequences—that they aren't studying in an environment that demands it? Can't they see that if they don't study, they won't make it academically which means that they'll have to leave (thus relinquishing baseball, soccer, parties, freedom, etc.)? It seems like most students who discovered that they liked college for whatever reasons would make more than a minimum effort just so they could stay and take advantage of what they liked. Why can't students do what they need to do to be successful in the academic part of college?
CHAPTER III
MOTIVES, CONSCIENTIZATION, AND LIBERATION: USING SOCIO-HISTORICAL FORCES TO GAIN CONTROL OF ONE'S LIFE

Motives are social and historical, formed by life-activity and producing life activity. The process of conscientization is an attempt to take control of one's life through confronting and understanding the "present, existential, concrete situation" (Pedagogy 85). Contradictory motives may be discovered through conscientization as we struggle to overcome situations that, according to Freire, keep us from becoming more human, that keep us from gaining freedom. This is the struggle for liberation and "Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of people upon their world in order to transform it" (66). Conscientization, with liberation as its goal, contributes to motivation in the dialectical movement of activity.

A student who will admit to herself that "I can't get myself to study" is taking an early step toward liberation. If she confronts this and takes positive actions, she is light-years ahead of many other students.
What is at stake in Freire's notion of liberation is that people should be able to generate their own meanings and frame of reference and be able to develop their self-determining powers through their ability to perform a critical reading of reality so that they can react on reality.

(Giroux Ideology, Culture, and the Process of Schooling 130)

It took Charles three quarters to admit he couldn't get himself to study (at least admit it out loud to me). Both fall and winter terms he had told me, "I'll just have to work harder next quarter." The next to the last time I saw him before summer break he said, "I'll just have to do what it takes next year"; but this time, unlike the others, he seems less convinced that he will be able to get himself to study. I confronted him: "But what if you can't get yourself to read any more than you did this year?" He looks at me and I get the sense that this is a question he has finally asked himself. "I don't know," he says, "I'll just have to do it."

Charles is beginning to confront his behavior in relation to his lack of effort in the academic part of college. Charles seems to have believed (although maybe he didn't think about it at all), that the academic part of college would just take care of itself as it had in high school. Now, maybe, after three quarters of avoiding homework and dropping classes to save his G.P.A., he is ready to confront the contradictions produced in the
dialectic between the college-world that says, "you must study" and his personal-world that says, "I don't want to study." Taking control of his life at this point in relation to the academic part of college, liberating himself through confronting the contradictions conscientization may help to illuminate, Charles contributes to motivation in the sphere of studenting activity. Charles may never be able to sit down and study, but by recognizing and confronting this he can liberate himself and gain more control of his life at this point. Gaining control may mean making a decision to drop out of college at least temporarily; regardless, Charles needs to understand what he's doing, why he's doing it, and the probable consequences. He also needs to understand that his motives are social and historical and don't result from some kind of individualistic, character flaw or from something he cannot necessarily control at this point in his life. Wanting to sit down and read but not being able to get himself to do this, doesn't mean that he's too lazy or not intelligent enough to be successful in college; it does mean, however, that he isn't doing what is necessary to survive his college education. And after a year of not getting around to studying, after a year of heart-to-heart talks with me, other instructors, his soccer coach, his girlfriend, his parents, as well as with different administrators on campus, and after a year in which he has avoided getting kicked out (primarily by
dropping classes), he should be aware that he isn't doing what he needs to do to pass courses and receive a degree.

Success in college needs to be defined more broadly than just passing courses and receiving a degree: it's not just the accumulation of knowledge.

Knowledge... is not neutral; it should be regarded not as the body of information, but as the result of human activity situated in human norms and interests. ...Knowing is not a matter of the best way to learn a given body of knowledge, but a theoretical-practical issue designed to distinguish between essence and appearance, truth and falsity.

(Giroux 131)

Yet, "knowledge" is often presented as a body of material to be learned:

Knowledge is often lying outside, above, beyond both teacher and pupil. The more teachers and pupils 'spend' themselves working on knowledge (usually discrete subject areas separated from the real world), the more powerful and coercive this reified knowledge seems to become. The pupil's knowledge is taken away from him, or to be more precise, he dissociates the knowledge from himself. This is not difficult to understand because the knowledge did not belong to him in the first place but was set up for him by others.

(Sarup Marxism and Education 142)

In contrast to Charles and Bud, who can't get around to studying, is the student at the other end of the spectrum who does everything he is supposed to, receives good grades, and graduates with a degree. He knows how to study and when to study in order to pass tests; he knows when to visit his professors for extra help; and he may even be
interested in various academic subjects; yet, "the act of study" is "a discipline of ingenuity in relation to the text, rather than an essential critique of it" (Freire *The Politics of Education* 2). Freire argues that "the act of study...is an attitude toward the world" (3) and "to study is not to consume ideas, but to create and re-create them" (4). A student who receives good grades may be (although is not necessarily) one who "behaves passively and becomes 'domesticated' trying only to memorize the author's ideas..." (2). Education for liberation vs. education for domestication involves different practices and produces different results:

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Education of a liberating character is a process by which the educator invites learners to recognize and unveil reality critically. The domestication practice tries to impart a false consciousness to learners, resulting in a facile adaptation to their reality; whereas a liberating practice cannot be reduced to an attempt on the part of the educator to impose freedom on its learners (102).
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Ironically, a student who gets good grades, one who his instructors would say is very motivated, may be more passive than the developmental student--yet he is rewarded for this passivity regardless of what he is learning (which may be only to do as he is told and everything will be fine).

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Generally speaking, the good student is not one who is restless or intractable, or who reveals one's doubts or wants to know the reason behind facts, or one who breaks with pre-established
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What is the goal of a college education? Redefining success in college is more than just passing courses and receiving a degree requires questioning the goal of a college education: Is it domestication or liberation? Should we help students to try and see that "doing what you're told" may be necessary and appropriate in some ways, but also has certain consequences--some that will eventually backfire in one way or another? Can students learn things in the college classroom that will enable them to ask questions like "What kind of future do I want and need?" as opposed to "How do I make $30,000 a year?" Can we help them to understand that they can't memorize the answers to pass Life 101?

John understood from the beginning that he couldn't pass Life 101 by memorizing the answers. His strength as a student is not the fact that he studies three hours a day, but that he asks questions and searches for answers. There were three professors on campus who he stayed in touch with, finding them when he wanted to talk about something related to their academic areas/interests and his evolving concerns in related matters. And John's questions are almost always linked to his life in some way. It's as if he knows Freire's concepts of conscientization and liberation and has accepted education for liberation as his goal.
While he has done his share of memorizing in order to pass tests, he also seemed to have a different sense about studying, approaching it more critically than most. During his junior year he walked into my office, discouraged, after taking a test. Used to getting "A's" and now receiving high "B's" in a business class, he was sure he was doing something wrong. He had even gone back to his notes from another class, "College Reading and Writing," he had taken from me the summer before he began at Midbind.

However, instead of talking about some new memorization techniques which he said he needed when he first walked in, we talked about tests and the politics of testing--how guessing what someone else thinks is important is often impossible. Many students wouldn't have understood what this means in relation to studying; most would have listened politely and still asked for the techniques. But John was able to understand this, having a sense about how he learns, a sense not learned from the notes I had given him, but from somewhere else, seemingly resulting from his "liberatory" approach to learning.

Confronting contradictory motives is the beginning step to empowerment and success in college is gaining this empowerment to do whatever is necessary to pass courses and receive a degree. However, education for liberation vs. education for domestication extends this definition: success for the individual means gaining control over the
dialectical struggle between freedom and determinism. Ironically, education leading toward domestication can be temporarily liberating; yet, conscientization creates a restlessness and the struggle between freedom and determinism is constant and life-long.

Freire's concept of conscientization will not save every developmental student from dropping out or failing out; it does offer, however, an alternative to ignoring what should be the most important questions students need to begin to answer when they arrive at Midbind: "Will I do what it takes to pass courses and receive a degree?" And conscientization should force students to confront this question sooner than they might, if, in fact, they confront it at all: Through sharpening the process of conscientization an individual goes "beyond the level of real consciousness to that of potential consciousness much more rapidly" (Freire Pedagogy 110). Learning about herself through identifying the contradictions invariably affecting motivation is as important as anything she'll copy in her notes from a classroom lecture: "What I want to do" as opposed to "What I should do" produces contradictory motives one struggles with throughout her lifetime.
The world, as Freire sees it, is not "a static and closed order, a given reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust," but "it is a problem to be worked on and solved" (Pedagogy 13). His concept of conscientization views learning as a dialectical process with its goal of liberation as opposed to domestication. Freire says "I never, never could understand the process of motivation outside of practice, before practice..." (Shor and Freire 4). At the same time, however, implicit in his understanding of how people learn to read and write is the understanding that learners must recognize why they need to learn to read and write. In this sense conscientization is the motivation for learning: peasants discovering they could take control over their lives worked hard to become literate to gain more control. Motives, conscientization, and liberation are dialectically related, because, as Freire believes, people are "'searchers' and our ontological vocation is humanization" (Pedagogy 93).
Friere's classroom, offering a contrast to college classrooms, was often the fields or villages where the workers were. Working with illiterate adults, he used "culture circles" to educate in contrast to the "banking" method as if students were empty vessels to be filled: "Instead of a teacher, we had a coordinator; instead of lectures, dialogue; instead of pupils, group participants; instead of alienating syllabi, compact programs that were 'broken down' and 'codified' into learning units...we attempted through group debate either to clarify situations or to seek action arising from that clarification" (Education for Critical Consciousness 42). The lives of the members of the circles became the curriculum. One incident discussed was the peasant who works hard day after day to earn a living, but spends his money on booze while his family tries to scrape together enough money for a meal (Pedagogy 112). This scene was discussed and group members agreed that this man, although "a souse like us," was "a decent worker" and, in contrast to those who wouldn't work, he was "the only one who is productive and useful to his country" (111).

There are two important aspects to these declarations. On the one hand, they verbalize the connection between earning low wages, feeling exploited, and getting drunk--getting drunk as a flight from reality, as an attempt to overcome the frustration of inaction, as an ultimately self-destructive solution. On the other hand,
they manifest the need to rate the drunkard highly. He is the "only one useful to his country, because he works, while the others only gab." After praising the drunkard, the participants then identify themselves with him, as workers who also drink--"decent workers."

(111-112).

The culture circle, discussing themes from their lives, identified and confronted the contradictions. The peasants see that through examining themselves and their behavior, that conscientization—with liberation as the goal—offers the potential for them to take control. A thematic investigation, a "codification of an existential situation they could recognize," not only allows people to see themselves, but also allows them to say what they really feel (111). In contrast, there can be no comparison to the impact a culture circle may have on its members versus the impact a government official, social worker or minister might have on this group presenting a lecture on the "evils of alcohol" or on the "responsibilities of being a father and husband."

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry.

(58)
Like the peasants resisting an "expert" filling them with "important" information, even though they may be sitting quietly appearing to listen to the lecture, the Developmental Study student sits quietly and takes notes as the instructor lectures on how to take notes. Students learn from a very early age that if they can somehow figure out what teachers think is important and can give this back to them on a test or in a paper, then they will survive their education. It's not that students don't have their own questions or ideas, but, like the peasants trying to earn a living, most students discover that it's safest to learn what they need to do to get by--that is, to figure out what others want them to do--and then do it. Once this is done they can go off and do whatever they need to do, which may mean getting drunk like the peasant to escape the tediousness of the academic world (at least from their point of view) or it may mean putting their energy in athletics, the arts, or a job in order to feel good about themselves outside of the classroom.

Regardless of the good intentions, years of experience, and hours of effort by those who determine curricula, the nature of curriculum--inevitably implying "this is important!"--must be understood as a political act. Not unlike peasants who have little say over the
kind of work they do, the wages they make, the places they live, etc., students generally have no say in the development or implementation of a curriculum, and yet, they are expected to follow it and carry out its demands. They have little choice if they want to pass the course. Examining the recent history of Developmental Study and its curriculum illuminates the politics of curriculum grounded in "education for domestication" and raises important questions in relation to what the students are learning in the classroom.

How Developmental Study Has Been Taught: A Skills Approach

The Developmental Study curriculum fails the students. Although Developmental Study instructors' intentions are good ("There are so many things these freshmen need to know and only ten weeks to get through to them!"), they assume they know what the students need. Yet, year after year, students continue to disappear and seventy-five percent leave Midbind before their class graduates. Through lectures, class discussions, and homework assignments, professors try to help students improve reading, writing, vocabulary, and study skills, rarely questioning, however, if this "skills" approach is what students really need. Developmental Study forces the students to practice skills important to academic success in college and students may become better readers and writers; however, the irony is
that the "skill" most students need to improve is getting themselves to sit down and study. And this is true with many non-developmental students, too.

Probably the one truth the three of us who teach Developmental Study at Midbind could agree upon (even though we approach it from different philosophical backgrounds and teaching experiences) is that these students need more practice in reading and writing skills (and, of course, it can be argued that most freshmen need more practice, too).\textsuperscript{14} Other than college board scores, high school grades, class rank, high school attended, and possible major in college, we don't really know anything about the twelve to fifteen students we greet in each developmental class on the first day of fall term. Although we do know that only one out of every four of these students will complete their educations at Midbind, we don't know why the others won't make it.

The teaching of Developmental Reading is grounded theoretically in what might be considered a "skills" approach methodology. This approach has changed from six years ago when I first began teaching at Midbind, growing from a workbook-mastery methodology where reading, writing, studying, and vocabulary skills were taught primarily through rules, exercises, and weekly testings, to a curriculum that now offers diverse materials and activities including three novels, a reading and study
skills workbook, and a college-level reader offering a variety of articles and essays from different academic disciplines. Unlike six years ago, writing assignments are now connected to the novels and the reader, and a research paper is done step-by-step throughout the quarter through individual conferences with the instructors. The transformation from the workbook/mastery approach to the current skills-in-varied-contexts approach is an important one: students now are challenged by a diversity of materials and they practice reading and writing through materials and activities similar to what they encounter in other courses. The current Developmental Study curriculum is not unlike other freshman-level introductory courses that provide a certain subject matter/context, asking students to read and write about the topic, generally emphasizing the improvement of writing skills; however, Developmental Study differs in that it emphasizes reading as much as writing along with the improvement of study skills and vocabulary development.

It can be argued that the current curriculum in Developmental Study is valid and our approaches to teaching certain skills, though varied, are adequate; in fact, our skills approach is grounded theoretically in a system of language acquisition based on a sender-receiver model—a model which has become the tradition for teaching language skills. This, however, does not mean that our
approach is necessarily the best or the only way to help these students.

Reading, writing, vocabulary, and study skills assignments force the students to practice certain skills and developmental instructors feel that with practice students will improve; at the same time, however, study skills' assignments, unlike the others, give less evidence that certain skills are being practiced. While instructors can often get students to read and write by giving assignments, it is difficult to assign study skills in the same way and it's especially difficult to monitor and evaluate who is managing their time, who is using test-taking techniques, who is using note-taking techniques in their lecture courses, etc. A quiz on part of a novel will probably show who has been reading it; a written summary of a social science article will probably show who has read and understood it; but a detailed time management schedule does not mean that a student is following it; a "B" on a history test does not mean a student has used the test-taking strategies; nor do good classroom notes from a lecture mean that the student will be able to pass the midterm. Even if study skills could be better monitored by instructors, there is no guarantee that a student who reviewed lecture notes daily would get a better grade on the exam than a student who stayed up the night before and crammed. While Developmental Study instructors can
monitor through quizzes, tests, class discussions, and writing assignments who has been doing the assignments--who has been practicing the reading and writing skills--it is more difficult and often impossible to monitor who has been practicing study skills.

Regardless of what instructors can monitor, at the root of the skills approach methodology is the belief that certain skills are critical to success in college and that these skills can be improved through practice. Underlying this belief are at least three assumptions: the first assumption is that developmental instructors know what contributes to success in college; the second is that students will be motivated to practice these skills; and the third is that the mastery of certain skills is what makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful students. These assumptions are not based on hard evidence: If any were true, wouldn't more students be successful? If developmental instructors knew the secret to success in college, wouldn't other instructors know this and couldn't we pass this onto students? And, if graduating from college only required mastering certain skills, wouldn't the retention rate over a four year period be better than a national average of 55%? Motives are at the root of success in college--not skills. But the discovery of motives may not lead toward success in college when success is defined as passing courses and
receiving a degree--although the discovery of motives may lead toward success when it's defined in terms of liberation.

From a Skills Approach to an Activity Approach
With the Goal of Liberation: Implications for the Development of Curriculum

Certainly a skills approach may benefit (at least to some extent) those students who practice these skills; however, improving skills is rooted in motives (which may or may not lead to graduating from college) and motives can only be understood through examining the activity of a student: "Activity does not exist without a motive; 'non-motivated' activity is not activity without a motive, but activity with a subjectively and objectively hidden motive" (Leont'ev 62).

Studenting activity is comprised of many factors, each interrelated and interdependent, and the academic part is only one part of this. Doing the academic part of college for many students is hardly as simple as going to the library after supper to study. Students who do this may or may not be successful in the classroom; however, the implementation of this study strategy (going to the library) results from motives which are only one part of studenting activity. Even when a student is motivated and the goal is to study in the library, motive and goal may change because of a variety of reasons and circumstances:
arriving at the library the student finds it too noisy (or too quiet) to concentrate; or maybe she never makes it to the library because she must work thirty hours a week to help pay for her schooling; or maybe she heads toward the library and runs into friends and goes off with them; or maybe she never made it out of the dorm because someone dropped by; or maybe she has taken the wrong book with her and walks back to the dorm but doesn't want to go back to the library again.... Many things can get in the way of a student studying in the library: studenting activity is comprised of not only motives and goals, but also actions, operations, and conditions.

A motive impels a human being to set a task and to define a goal, which, being posed under definite conditions, requires the accomplishment of an act (action) aimed at the creation of the procurement of an object that satisfies the motive and need. The nature of the act carried out to resolve the task is determined by its goal, and the conditions of the task determine the operations necessary for resolving it.

(Davydov, Zenchenko, Talyzina 36)

Critical to activity is the concept of consciousness: "Consciousness in its directedness is a picture of the world, opening up before the subject, in which he himself, his actions, and his conditioners are included" (Leont'ev Activity 75). Consciousness, characterized by psychological multiplicity, is a "subjective product...a transformed form of a manifestation of those relations,
social in their nature, that are realized by the activity of man in an object world" (Leont'ev 78).

Activity and consciousness are dialectically related, each existing as separate entities, though neither existing without the other: what becomes an activity is determined in part by consciousness; what consciousness recognizes is determined in part by the activity. Motives play a critical role here as part of this dialectical movement: they spur the activity and are determined by consciousness. The dialectical relationship of activity to consciousness shows the complexities of carrying out any act. The student with good intentions, though with conflicting motives, may not make it to the library to study for any number of reasons.

If, as instructors of Developmental Study, we feel the best way to lead students toward success in college is through a skills approach methodology, we are ignoring our major struggle which is getting the student to read, write, and study which is also the students' major struggle. The issue, however, isn't what we can get our students to do, but what they can get themselves to do and identifying and confronting contradictory motives begins to get at the root of the problem.

Our struggle, then, as instructors, instead of trying to teach specific skills and saying that students are "unmotivated" when they won't do what we think is
important, must be centered around the relationship of activity to consciousness and the role motives play in this dialectical movement. And consciousness must be understood as more than the reflection of reality: "In a dialectical position," Freire argues, "it is impossible for me to accept the ingenuous separation between consciousness and the world" ([Politics] 106). Freire believes that if we accept the role of consciousness as one of only reflecting reality, then we are not recognizing, and, in fact, are underestimating the ability of individuals to understand and transform their present world. Consciousness, however, in and of itself, while more than a mere reflection of reality, does not serve in the role of directly transforming reality. However, it is in the dialectical relationship between consciousness and the world where Freire sees the potential for conscientization: "...the process by which human beings participate critically in a transforming act..." (106).

The Politics of Curriculum

Conscientization extends the role of consciousness in the liberating practice. It is an explication of theory through pedagogy and "educational practice and its theory cannot be neutral" ([Politics] 12). A curriculum must be centered around what students need to know, not what their instructors think they need to know.
The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action. For the learner to know what he did not know before, he must engage in an authentic process of abstraction by means of which he can reflect on the action-object whole, or, more generally, on forms of orientation in the world.

(50-51)

Conscientization, oriented toward "liberation" in contrast to "domestication," understands education to be more than transferring knowledge from teacher to student and recognizes that "a knowledge that merely describes reality...will prevent critical consciousness from emerging and thus reinforce political illiteracy" (104). Most students who do what they are told will survive the educational system and most who don't will fail. Most, however, regardless of success or failure in the classroom, will not have much of a sense of why they did or did not make it nor will they be aware of what it is they have done. This political illiteracy doesn't prepare students for the classrooms they find themselves sitting in nor does it prepare them for life outside the institution in which doing what they are told as opposed to questioning what they should do may have grave consequences throughout their lifetimes.

The politics of curriculum demand that liberation or domestication be chosen as a goal, and if liberation is chosen, then the skills approach changes from one of
instructors deciding what skills are important for students to learn and attempting to convince them of this, to one of conscientization, where literacy skills are dialectically related to liberation--a person critically examining her life and world in order to gain control: "Conscientization refers to the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality" (Politics 93).

Ten weeks of study strategies and skill practice didn't do much for Danny, Charles, and Bud. Even though each was a good student in Developmental Study, each probably receiving a "B" if it were a graded course, and even though each passed a test on study skills along with doing the required reading and writing assignments, none of these students, after the quarter ended, could get himself to sit down and apply with any consistency what he had "learned" for ten weeks. Knowing why budgeting time is important--regurgitating this for a test as opposed to actually budgeting time to fit in study hours leads to very different consequences. Developmental Study, like many college courses, presenting skills and content to be mastered, forgets that "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of contradiction so that both are
simultaneously teachers and students" (Freire Pedagogy 59). Charles doesn't need to know how to budget his time if he's never going to try to plan a schedule with study hours; he doesn't need to know how to underline important passages in a textbook if he's never going to open one. As his instructor I must learn these things so I'll stop standing in front of the room lecturing on "time management" and "reading techniques." And, also, I must learn that Charles will teach me what he needs to know if he is allowed to say "this stuff is boring" or "I cram the night before a test." As I learn from Charles, he must learn from me: he must begin to learn why he can't sit down and study and I can help him here by helping him understand the relationship between motives, conscientization, liberation, and learning, and what each has to do with the college student struggling to survive her education.
A curriculum must help students discover and confront contradictory motives that get in the way of their chances for success in college. Discovering these contradictions should offer students the chance to see and understand their behavior, particularly in relation to schooling, and students should be able to gain more control over their lives in order to take positive actions. Considering that seventy-five percent of the Developmental Study population (and fifty percent of the rest who enter college) don't graduate, the discovery of motives, their contradictions, and probable resulting consequences seem critical to improving their chances for success in college.

Language is the tool needed to unfold and unravel ourselves from our histories, from our pasts, and from our motives:

It is because of language that humans can delve into the essence of things, transcend the limits
of direct impression, organize their purposeful behavior, unravel complex connections and relationships which are not accessible to direct perception, and transmit information accumulated over generations to other persons (Luria Language and Cognition 199).

"Delving into the essence of things," "unraveling complex connections and relationships," and "transmitting information accumulated over generations" shows the complexity of the relationship between language and consciousness (200). Unfolding one's history, one's past, one's motives through using language as a tool is not a linear, step-by-step process since language (and life itself) is not a static, complacent object:

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing... language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker get his words!) but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it his own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and now who speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves into quotation marks against the will of the speaker. Language is not a neutral medium
that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated--overpopulated--with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, it is a difficult and complicated process. (Bakhtin The Dialogic Imagination 293-294).

Bakhtin believes that words are not ours, but always shared, and he sees the relationship between a person and a word as being a constant struggle as she tries to make the work hers; this struggle of trying to take what is not ours and trying to make it ours is the relationship between language and consciousness. And it is this constant struggle that Bakhtin believes creates multiplicity which adds richness and vitality to language and "a higher level of consciousness evolves" (Zebroski "Writing as Dialogue [and Quarrel]" 5).

In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half ours and half someone else's. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses from our words within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. It is not so much interpreted by us as it is further, that is, freely developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. More than that, it enters into an intense interaction, a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses. Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions, and values. The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open: in each of the new contexts that
dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean. (Bakhtin 345-346).

Language, according to Bakhtin, is a living, changing thing with more sharing than ownership, more sense than meaning, more continual energy than definition, more struggles between ideologies than acceptance, and more of a starting place revealing "newer ways to mean," offering a tremendous potential as the tool to uncover and unravel past and present behavior.

To discover and confront contradictory motives, a variety of experiences and language-based activities need to take place, and the classroom can be the center for many of these. Perhaps most important is that students understand from the beginning the kind of search that is going to take place along with the underlying reason for this search: "As a class we're going to try to improve your chances for passing courses and getting a degree by examining what college is and how people do it, along with examining what you're doing in college, why you came, and your chances for success considering your history as a student." With this as the primary goal throughout the quarter, specific questions can be raised and discussed during the ten weeks:
In relation to defining what college is:

1) What is college? What happens in the classroom and outside of the classroom? What have parents, teachers, friends, etc., told you about college? How is it similar to high school? How is it different?

2) Midbind is a liberal arts college: what are the liberal arts? What kind of courses will you have to take throughout your four years here? What is the core curriculum? Why did you choose a liberal arts college?

3) What are the academic demands of Midbind? How many courses do you have to take a quarter? What grade point average do you need to graduate from here? What majors are offered? Are there any that you are interested in? When do you have to declare a major? What is a C.C. (Core Curriculum) course? How many C.C. courses do you have to take? Why do you have to take these? If you decide to transfer to another college, what kind of grades do you need for courses to transfer and what courses will transfer?
4) What is a syllabus? What kind of information does it contain? What kinds of assignments and tests are required? When are these major assignments due? When will these tests be given? What percentage of your final grade is made up of these assignments and tests? What are other requirements for these courses and how do these add into your final grade? What can you learn about your professors from a syllabus and from other students who have had them before?

5) Midbind is on the quarter system. How long is each quarter? How often do classes meet? When are the busiest times in the quarter?

In relation to defining how students approach and confront the academic demands of college:

1) What does success in college require? What advice have you been given by parents, teachers, and friends?

2) How are upperclassmen successful at Midbind? What kinds of things do they do to make sure they're going to pass courses? How do they manage their time? How do they decide what courses to
spend the most time on? How do they decide when
to study and how to study? How do they fit in
other things they want to do?

3) How do students get themselves to study
subjects they don't find interesting? How do they
get themselves to read something they don't want
to read or write a paper on a topic that is boring
to them?

4) How do students get themselves to deal with
the demands of the quarter system? What are some
of the problems students face with this kind of
system?

In relation to discovering what they're doing in
college and why they came:

1) What are some of the reasons different people
go to college? Who do you know who has graduated
from college? How did college make a difference
in their lives? Who do you know who didn't go to
college? What are their lives like compared to
the others who went to college? What are
alternatives to college?
2) Why did you come to Midbind? Why did you choose a four year, liberal arts school? What other colleges did you consider and/or what other alternatives to college did you think about? What do you think you will gain from this kind of college? What would you like to get from Midbind both in and out of the classroom?

3) Was the decision to come to college mostly yours or did others play a major role in your attending college? How did others influence your decision?

In relation to their histories as students:

1) Who were the most successful students in high school? What kinds of things did they do to get the grades that they did? How would you compare yourself to the very successful students? In relation to the academic part of high school, what were your successes? What are your strengths and your weaknesses as a student?

2) As a high school student, were you able to do your homework most evenings or did you tend to put it off and do just the minimal to get by? If you
didn't have the self-discipline in high school to do more than just cram the night before a test, why do you think you'll be more disciplined now that you're in college?

3) Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) go to college? Why do you think they went (or why didn't they go)? What did they major in? What are they doing now? In what ways are these people role models for you? How will they feel and what will they say to you if you fail or drop out deciding that college isn't for you right now?

The above questions are critical in examining motives to expose contradictions. The last two sets of questions, "What are you doing in college--why did you come?" and "What is your history as a student?" are more directly concerned with students' motives; at the same time, however, the first two sets, "What is college?" and "How do students do college?" are equally important since the goal of this curriculum is to not only discover what students are doing in college and what they've done in the past, but also to try and discover what it is they've gotten themselves into and their chances for surviving these new demands. The relationship between success in college now and success in schooling in the past is a
dialectical one: the discovery of motives helps to illuminate both past and present, enabling the student to see and understand her behavior toward schooling and hopefully to better predict the future. The very final question in these four sets asks the student "Can you change? Can you get yourself to do things you didn't do in high school?"; students invariably say "yes, I'll just have to study harder than I did in high school." Most students do have to put more effort into college. Rarely, however, will students who couldn't get themselves to sit down and do homework before college be able to sit down and put in a consistent effort day after day once they reach college.

The questions above are important ones; yet, they are my questions, not necessarily the students'. The real value will come from the students' discoveries and resulting questions they raise as they confront the contradictory motives that are revealed. According to Freire, "The educator's role is to propose problems about the codified existential situations in order to help the learners arrive at a more and more critical view of their reality" (The Politics of Education 55). In approaching this curriculum in a problem-solving format, with instructor and class working together, students will be freer to ask different kinds of questions and discover different kinds of answers rather than merely copying down
what the professor is saying as he lectures on "Success in College."

With these questions to begin the problem-solving process, language activities must also be included to assure a dialogue occurs. The goal of dialogue as methodology is to engage students in approaching "reality scientifically in order to seek the dialectical connections that explain the form of reality" (55). Language activities aiding the discovery of motives must include reading, writing, speaking and listening to uncover and unravel motives. If true dialogue occurs, students will be able to not only reveal many of their own experiences and draw upon these and experiences of the classmates, as well as my experiences with "high risk" students, but they will also be able to learn from the experiences of others outside of the classroom through interviews, assigned readings, and other resources I make available or resources they discover in their own research. To make important discoveries, to examine existential situations in order to arrive at a more critical view of their reality, the students must be involved in various language activities, helping them to dig beneath the surface. Some of these activities should include:

1) classroom discussions
2) writing related to this problem-solving
3) sharing writings and then rewriting to go deeper
4) interviewing upperclassmen outside of the classroom
5) interviewing faculty and/or administrators
6) reporting research conducted outside of the classroom through written and oral presentations
7) reading critically experts offering advice to freshmen
8) reading about others faced with contradictory motives and how they confront and handle these

Two important objectives of these language activities would include long-term projects: in one, the class would select students' writings along the way to compile in a publication offering what they decide would be the most helpful to next year's group of Developmental Study students; and in the other, individuals would work toward a written self-prescription of their futures as college students, both in and out of the classroom, including possible and realistic alternatives to college, based on what they've learned about themselves and college during these ten weeks.

Much of the content of this curriculum, non-traditional in its appearance, would come from the student's own experiences along with the research they conduct with other students and others outside of the
classroom. In this sense the students are the experts, having the potential and tools to discover what they need to know to understand what must be done and what they will do (or what they won't do) to be successful in college. Some of the other content for this course would come from more traditional sources such as textbooks and other assigned readings although students would be encouraged to read, examine, and discuss this content in a critical manner: "The act of study assumes a dialectical relationship between reader and author, whose reflections are found in the themes he treats...to study is not to consume ideas, but to create and re-create them" (Freire Politics 4). The more traditional course content, to be addressed critically rather than memorized for a midterm exam, would include articles and chapters from texts, novels, short stories, poems, essays, and plays selected from the following:

ARTICLES/CHAPTERS

Paulo Freire's writings are the logical starting place since they offer the theory and philosophy guiding this curriculum. His work that deals directly with important ideals to be implemented such as the problem posing concept, dialogue as a methodology, and the liberated vs. the domesticated classroom, includes: "The Act of Study"
(chapter 1 from The Politics of Education); "The Banking Concept of Education" (chapter 2 from Pedagogy of the Oppressed); "What is the 'Dialogical Method' of Teaching?" (excerpts from chapter 4 in A Pedagogy for Liberation).

These writings would be read and discussed by the class, not only at the beginning of the term, but at different times throughout the quarter, reminding the class that the "...act of study should not be measured by the number of pages read in one night or the quantity of books read in a semester" (Politics 4).

Gerald Corey, a professor of psychology and counseling psychologist, has written a text, I Never Knew I Had a Choice, for college freshmen and sophomores. Especially important and relevant is the "Prechapter Self Inventory" and the two sections in each chapter titled "Time Out for Personal Reflection" where questions and writing exercises help students make connections between their lives and the text. Selections for this curriculum would come from the most relevant chapters in Corey's book: "Education and Personal Learning" (chapter 2, first edition); "Reviewing Your Childhood and Adolescence" (excerpts from chapter 2, third edition); "Adulthood and Autonomy" (excerpts from chapter 3, third edition); "Meaning and Values: Putting Life in Perspective" (excerpts from chapter 12, third edition); "Resource Guide" (available to students to use
independently, selections include "getting the most from your courses," "assessing and controlling your weight," "monitoring stress," "problem drinking," "self-directed change," "sex-role inventory," "making wise vocational choices," "self-assessment of work related values, "counseling as an avenue to personal growth.")

Editors John N. Gardner and A. Jerome Jewler in their text, *College is Only the Beginning*, provide "experts" discussing what college is and what needs to be done in order to be successful. The primary value of these will be the contrast these articles will provide in relation to what the students are discovering as they research college through interviewing upperclassmen. Students' discoveries will generally be more insightful and more important. Too often the experts in *College is Only the Beginning* are talking *to* and sometimes *at* the students instead of *with* them. The most appropriate chapters are: "Making the Transition" (chapter 1, authors: Jewler, director of freshman seminar program and professor of library and information science, and Gardner, codirector of freshmen seminar program and professor of journalism, both at the University of South Carolina); "Discovering Your College Catalogue" (chapter 2, author: Ed Ewing, Advisor, University of South Carolina); "Decoding Your Professors" (chapter 3, Gardner and Jewler); "The College Experience:

*Real World 101: What College Never Taught You About Success* by James Calano and Jeff Salzman, college graduates in their mid-twenties, offer a guide which is not as non-traditional nor as cavalier as the authors would like to think; yet, they do offer a different perspective in some instances and an interesting contrast to *College is Only the Beginning*. Especially relevant:

"The New World; the New Us" (chapter 1); "How We Did It" (chapter 2); "College Daze: The Young Professionals" (chapter 3); "Knowing Where You're Going" (chapter 4); "The Basics: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening" (chapter 8).

The above articles address many of the issues important to success in college. At the same time, however, most of these articles would be supplementary to the students' research. With the exception of Freire's writings explaining some of the reasons why this course and curriculum will operate the way it will, the rest of the above will be used to offer an additional resource for the student. Those which offer a contrast to what the students have discovered may provide the most illumination of contradictory motives.
Also, two study skills texts may be used as supplementary resources on closed-reserve in the library. *College Reading and Study Skills* by Kathleen T. McWhorter and *How to Study in College* by Walter Pauk both offer some useful suggestions for those students who are willing to try some of these. Both McWhorter and Pauk deal with success in college related to time management, learning and memory skills, effective reading techniques, comprehension skills, textbook reading skills, note-taking, test-taking, and vocabulary development; however, neither author goes further than saying "The will to learn can count more than all the techniques this book can teach you" (Pauk 5). Thus, study skills, when presented in textbooks as techniques to be learned, may help the student become more efficient when reading a text or studying for an exam, but these techniques do not get at the root of the problem most students suffer from—sitting down and opening a book.

Because motives are social and historical and because they are intertwined and interrelated, discovering and confronting contradictory motives cannot be limited to only "success in college" issues. A curriculum designed to help students expose the contradictions of their motives would benefit from viewing the lives of others outside a college campus using literature as a way of viewing motives, their contradictions, and resulting
consequences. Novels, short stories, poems, drama, and essays might be used to look at behavior, to try to discover motives, and to see what happens to people when motives clash. In some instances literature mirrors the struggle of the eighteen year old.

Three novels, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *Ordinary People* by Judith Guest, and *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin, are especially appropriate for this curriculum. Each novel concerns young people and their struggle for contentment and happiness in worlds where their motives and actions are in conflict with others: Holden, in *The Catcher in the Rye*, has gotten kicked out of four schools, seems to detest almost everyone he has ever known, and is telling his story having been institutionalized after an emotional breakdown. Conrad, in *Ordinary People*, is receiving counseling and trying to put his life back together after attempting suicide, blaming himself for his brother's death. Tish and Fonny, in *If Beale Street Could Talk*, are in love, planning marriage, when Tish becomes pregnant and Fonny is framed by a police officer and jailed for a crime he didn't commit. Each novel presents different worlds, different struggles, and offers the potential for motives to be discovered and examined through discussing the characters, their actions, and consequences of their behavior.
Themes throughout these novels mirror the struggles Developmental Study students face. Like Holden and Conrad who avoid doing what is necessary to get decent grades, Danny Webner, Charles Presky, and Bud Dutz also avoid making a consistent effort: schooling isn't important to their lives at this time and place and each excels in avoiding it (although for somewhat different reasons and some very valid reasons). Holden's and Conrad's lack of effort allows the reader to examine "why?" and both Holden and Conrad have good excuses for not paying more attention to their schooling. And like Tish and Fonny, who have little control over their futures, Danny, Charles, and Bud (and Holden and Conrad, too) also don't see themselves as having much control. They do, however, excel at what's important to them--that which gives something important back in return: Tish and Fonny's love grows and strengthens; Holden grows through his relationship with his younger sister; Danny excels as a fraternity brother as he gains respect; Charles and Bud excel at soccer and baseball, respectively. Young adults, faced with trying to figure out how they fit into worlds where they seem to have little control, often avoid confronting contradictions and put their energies into things that will reward some of this effort. Most young people (like most adults) work tirelessly at things that are important to them and that will reward them in some manner.
It's important for struggling freshmen to identify where their effort is being channeled and to decide what this means in the present and predict what it might mean for their future. Discussing Holden, Conrad, Tish, and Fonny as young people with futures, developmental students can see how their current behavior may affect their futures and they can also examine how these characters might gain control over their lives and how there are some things they can't control, particularly social, economic, and political forces: Holden, although he needs his parents' love and attention, can't stop them from sending him to another boarding school since they seem to believe this is where he'll get the best education for the future. This belief is, of course, part of their socioeconomic world; Conrad, who needs to have his mother's love and attention, can't keep her from leaving. She can't confront her other son's death and is a victim of a society that teaches one to keep her feelings and problems inside, pretending that things are fine as long as one doesn't acknowledge the conflicts; Tish and Fonny face a lifetime of restrictions, "permitted" to live in a white society where the rules and thus advantages are controlled by those in power: a white cop--at any time--can frame a black teenager and destroy evidence if he wishes.

Like the novels, short stories, poetry, and drama also show people living their lives, facing inevitable
contradictions, offering students different ways to make sense out of their lives through viewing the lives of others. In "The Greatest Man in the World" by James Thurber and "'Repent Harlequin,' Said the Ticktockman" by Harlan Ellison, the main characters are not willing to change to fit into society and in the end one is pushed out of a window and killed and the other is brainwashed—the life drained life out of him. Students need help in making the connection between these stories and the society they live in through examining the society they know. Along with discussing the characteristics of the societies portrayed in the literature, students will better understand the similarities between these "fictional" societies and the world they know: even in the 1980's, society requires their heroes to be role models for the youth and also demands the regimented, lock-step acculturation to "time" (as a linear concept). Both characters in these stories were victims of politics from those in power who wanted to keep control and maintain the status quo. Similarly "Five Ways to Kill a Man" by Edwin Brock and "The Unknown Citizen" by W. H. Auden are poems addressing the harmfulness of society. Brock says "placing" a person into the middle of the twentieth century is enough to destroy her and Auden questions the point of living when one plays only by society's rules. Willie Loman in "The Death of a
"The Salesman" and William Faulkner's "Dry September" give further evidence that conforming, without questioning, leads to disasterous results.

Students are faced with "conforming" to the academic demands of college, brought up in a society that promotes college as the bare minimum one needs, to get ahead in this world. Many students end up in college because they see it as the next step after high school--many don't see any other choice. Through examining the characters' motives in the literature and gaining a better understanding of the forces contributing to behavior, students can begin to figure out why people do what they do, deciding if the choices the characters made were worth it. Using the literature students can also look at what they might do in a similar situation and then examine what conforming means at this point in their college careers. In the literature discussed above, the actions the men take have severe consequences, more severe than most students will face even if they drop or fail out of college; at the same time, motives are identifiable and some of them are not unlike motives students have as they are faced with certain decisions to be made. Students must decide to what extent they will conform--to what extent they'll be able to get themselves to sit down and study. They must also recognize the consequences of both studying and not studying. The student who chooses to
leave Midbind after deciding college isn't for her at this point in her life, is more liberated than the one who stays and doesn't question what she is doing.

Less "sensational" literature providing more common experiences (at least in terms of what the college freshman has experienced) also contributes to students understanding themselves through examining the lives of others. Short stories such as "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker, "Here We Are" by Dorothy Parker, and "Return Trips" by Alice Adams, and Tennessee William's play "The Glass Menagerie" depict day-to-day life. Each deals with ironies that result from certain contradictions: Walker shows two sisters who have taken very different paths, their resulting consequences, and their mother's feelings toward each; Parker shows newlyweds who after a fight decide they won't argue anymore (as if deciding upon this is all that it takes to make everything all right); Adams unfolds a woman's past and her various relationships, especially with men, illustrating inevitable conflicts; William's shows a family in turmoil and most tragic of all is the young woman who escapes into a make-believe world to avoid confronting day to day life. Because this literature provides more realistic portrayals (in terms of the students' experiences) than the ones discussed above, the social, economic, and political forces contributing to some of the contradictions may be more evident to the
students and may be examined in more depth. Students will see and discuss why one daughter went to college and why the other chose to stay home, how these decisions were shaped by certain forces, and where these women find themselves at this point in their lives as a result of the decisions they made: the college graduate has money and appears more worldly and sophisticated while the other has gained a different kind of contentment. Both are "educated," but each seemed to have learned very different things. The college graduate believes the answers to her future are "out there" and she wants all she can get, while her younger sister seems to believe that the answers are "inside" of herself and she doesn't see the need to change the world in order to get what she wants. Students should be able to identify with these women's motives and an important issue for them to confront is the ongoing struggle an individual faces as she tries to decide what she wants and what will bring contentment into her life. Freshmen, many away from home for the first time in their lives, are inevitably struggling with what they need for the future and what they need from their pasts--how do they break away from life as they've known it throughout their first eighteen years while still holding onto what they need from those eighteen years?

In "Here We Are" students will question why the couple got married in the first place and these reasons may be
hypothesized (to get out of their parents' houses, to save money by living together, to do what everyone does when they're "that" age, etc.)--reasons inevitably influenced by class and cultural forces. Marriage is also another issue many college freshmen are thinking about and some see it as an alternative to having to make certain other decisions. Some people, both men and women, believe if they can just find the right person then everything else--college, careers, the future--will somehow take care of itself. Searching for the right person can be used to avoid other questions individuals might need to confront.

"Return Trips" also offers students another chance to examine why people marry, why they choose to live the way they do, and how these choices are determined by socio-economic factors. Students can examine why the female character made certain choices, what kind of control she had, and how these choices and control were related to certain privileges determined in part by having the money and the power that come with this. Students will also be able to see the "mistakes" the woman made and they can discuss why she made certain decisions. And although it deals indirectly with marriage, "The Glass Menagerie" affords students the chance to examine the behavior of a family from a working class world, a lower middle class environment, limited in some ways by this because there aren't that many options available when the son works to
take care of his mother and sister. Contradictions are produced and everyone seems trapped as the adult-children try to fit into both the world they see in front of them and their mother's idealized world and her expectations.

The short stories, poems, and drama, unlike the novels, don't mirror the developmental students' experiences as closely, in part because the stories are dealing mostly with characters older than Holden, Conrad, Tish, and Fonny (and thus older than college freshmen); however, this literature offers the opportunity for students to see and examine themselves and worlds familiar to them without having to talk directly about themselves. This usually helps students to be more open and, of course, it's generally easier to see and understand one's own behavior from a certain distance. Literature provides a "mask" students can use to raise questions about their actions without having to say out loud "this is who I am" and it's also easier to be critical of the behavior of others than of one's own behavior.

This kind of literature also forces students to look toward the future and to see that decisions they make today affect what will happen tomorrow and that identifying contradictions and confronting these are a way to gain some control over their futures. Students want to know how they fit into all of this and what's going to happen to them. Poems such as "I'm Nobody! Who Are You?"
by Emily Dickinson and "Cinderella" by Anne Sexton give
the student the chance to question her identify and where
she fits into the world. "We Wear the Mask" by Paul
Lawrence Dunbar discusses the price—concealing one's
identify—some people must pay because of society's
prejudices. And other poems, "Patterns" by Amy Lowell,
"Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost, and "nobody loses
all of the time" by E. E. Cummings provide a look at
differing consequences throughout a person's lifetime.
Lowell's poem is especially poignant: the pattern of the
young woman's life is a tragic one through no fault of her
own—yet she doesn't seem like she will take any action to
change her future. Literature tells us "this is what life
is like" and gives us a chance in the classroom to discuss
what we might do about it which is especially crucial to
the college student who needs to take control of her life
at this point.

Literature also provides opportunities for students to
see the consequences of certain actions. Students
hopefully will also see that individuals must continually
face questions throughout their lives, resulting from
contradictions produced from social, economic, and
political forces. Finding the "right" person to marry,
making $45,000 a year, or choosing the "right" career and
climbing up the corporate ladder doesn't solve conflicts
for a person's lifetime and recognizing this may help
students look at a variety of options based on personal needs and wants in contrast to societal pressures such as getting married, making a lot of money, and killing oneself to get to the "top" of her profession.

One other kind of literature which is effective in helping students examine their motives are essays. Essays, in part because of their testimonial quality (students understand that these are "real" people writing about their "real" lives), provide a kind of contrast to much of the fiction already discussed. Alice Walker in her essay "Brothers and Sisters" shows some of the struggles of growing up in a male world and the hypocrisy of her father in this male dominated world. Richard Rodriguez in "Going Home Again: The New American Scholarship Boy" shows the consequences of working very hard for something and yet never knowing if he got what he wanted because he was more qualified than others or because he was Puerto Rican (and thus a member of a minority group). And Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter From the Birmingham Jail" also, like Walker and Rodriguez, shows an adult who in one sense has it made, but still must struggle with the consequences produced by his actions in a world where he has decided to right against the status quo. These essays afford the students the chance to continue to question "why" people do what they do and students should gain a sense that they will
continue to face contradictions, as these writers have, throughout their lives. Unlike the novels and short stories where analysis often leads toward speculation ("what might have happened if...") essays are at least as effective, and sometimes more so, because they say "this is what did happen and I'm here to tell about it."

Determining the Sequence and Organization of this Curriculum

What's extremely important in presenting a curriculum based on a problem-solving methodology, centering it around the students' experiences, and creating a classroom where an authentic dialogue takes place, is the somewhat predictable, yet unstructured movement throughout the ten week term. It is critical that a certain organization exists and the prediction of possible directions seems necessary; however, the search for motives and the places this will take the students and instructor should be determined through the evolution of experiences, from what they've learned together to what they want and need to know, rather than from a syllabus that programs week one through week ten. Problem posing education, in contrast to "banking education" where the teacher fills the student with information to memorize and regurgitate, argues that the role of the instructor must be that of both student and teacher and the role of the students must be both
students and teachers (Freire Pedagogy 67). The educator "constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflections of the students" and "the students--no longer docile listeners--are now critical co-investigators in the dialogue with the teacher" (68). This dialogue determines the movement and direction of the class throughout the quarter.

The primary goal of this curriculum as stated earlier is also the primary problem to be solved: "As a class we're going to try to improve your chances for passing courses and getting a degree by examining what college is and how students do college, along with examining what you're doing here, why you came, and your chances for success considering your history as a student." At the beginning of this chapter I divided this goal into four groups of questions, What is college?, How do students do college?, What are you doing in college--why did you come?, What is your history as a student?, and each section offered questions seemingly important for the students to answer. These questions predict where I feel the class needs to go, and, they may or may not end up being central to the discovery of motives throughout the entire ten weeks. Also, it should be noted that the discovery of motives, through searching for answers to these kinds of questions, will show that these groups of questions are each related to the other which means that
answering one question will require knowing some of the answers to others and that these parts will illuminate the whole. At the same time, students will be able to search further beneath the surface as they engage in language activities, understanding better what they're after, and becoming more comfortable with sharing themselves with each other as the quarter moves on. Also, as the term progresses, students should be able to give more explanation and better developed answers as their reasons for their behavior unfold and become more evident. The search for contradictory motives must be a kind of dialectical movement where the problem posed gets looked at in different ways, from various answers, and where certain questions get asked again and again. These questions then do not fit neatly into a time frame—it's ludicrous to say that the class will spend two and a half weeks on each group. On the contrary, it seems best to introduce these questions at the beginning of the term and then to put them aside; students need a sense of where the class is headed, but they shouldn't keep returning to these questions instead of raising their own.

One way to approach organizing a curriculum of this kind may be through the two major objectives in relation to long-term assignments suggested earlier: one was that the class would compile their own writings, those writings class members judged as most important, to provide a
handbook for next year's developmental students; and, the second long-term assignment was for each individual to write a self-prescription for his/her future as a college student or possible alternatives. Both of these assignments may be due at three different points in the quarter: at the beginning of the second week of the term, the beginning of the sixth week, and at the beginning of the tenth week. This would provide the students with a sense of what they have learned, as each writing produced a more complete, in-depth presentation related to "success in college," and it would also force them to confront similar kinds of questions more than once. Also, while ten weeks isn't a very long period of time, students could still see their progression—whether positively or negatively—from the beginning of the term, when most are energetic and ready to study hard, to the end when they are tired and have had enough of college. Students could measure their behavior throughout the ten weeks and use this measurement to predict future success in future quarters.

The goal of the handbook for next year's developmental students would be for current developmental students to offer advice in surviving college. Early-on in the quarter these writings might focus mostly on such things as roommates, dorm life, and being away from home for the first time, but later on these writings could address
surviving the academic part of college. As they worked on these for possible publication they would be asking themselves "What is important to me?, How am I surviving college?" and they would be sharing these with classmates and getting answers and ideas from others who are also faced with similar questions. Surviving college is centered in part around contradictory motives: "College would be great if you didn't have to go to class." The advice then would address how freshmen deal with contradictions. (It would be ideal to be able to bring in ex-Developmental Study students whose writings are a part of the "new" freshmen's handbook and who are successful at Midbind. These would also be good students for current developmental students to interview.)

The goal of the self-prescription would be exposing motives, their contradictions, and confronting them. Students would have not only to include a discussion of their histories as students and contradictory motives, but they would also have to document their current behavior during this first term as a college student as they're faced with sitting down to study as opposed to doing whatever else that might get in the way. Students would be asked to keep track of the number of hours, the study methods used, their regularity in class attendance and class participation, and the results of this behavior (at least measured by tests, quizzes, papers for the courses
they're taking, etc.). Students often believe that they can pull an "all-nighter" before an exam and get a good grade and many are often surprised when this doesn't work (although it does work for some but these usually aren't Developmental Study students). Doing this self-prescription at different times during the quarter forces students to look at their behavior in relation to schooling, and, from their high school histories, many should be able to see a pattern. For some who are still working as hard or harder as they did in high school, they may be encouraged by this; for those who didn't do much work their last four years, but are finally able to get it done now, they would also be encouraged; for those others, however, this pattern should help to convince them that they haven't changed and that saying "I'll just have to work harder next quarter" is probably not realistic.
CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

What should happen in a classroom of college freshman—seventy-five percent of whom will disappear in a year or two? I'm not sure I know—I have a much better sense of what shouldn't happen. The proposed curriculum, an ideal, grounded in theory, is the beginning for future research. Its success depends upon many factors. As important as any of these is my ability to continue to de-mystify schooling—to combat my years as a student, sitting quietly, listening intently, regurgitating, and being rewarded for this kind of behavior. This, of course, means I must continue to work toward changing myself. It means continuing to grapple with many of the illusions of the Leave-it-to-Beaver world I was fortunate to grow up in. It doesn't mean denying them, but confronting them. It means coming to terms with the past, understanding myself sociohistorically, and, facing the different realities of the world around me. As Denis Goulet says in the introduction to Education for the Critical Consciousness, "Freire insists that methodological failings can always be
traced to ideological errors" (xi). To guide a curriculum toward the goal of gaining freedom, if I can discover contradictions and work to resolve them, as I am asking my students to do, then I will continue to, as Freire says, "become more human"...a goal as important as any that I can see at this point in my life.

A future curriculum will be based on the successes of the ones before it. Because of the nature of the curriculum I've proposed, its constant evaluation is built-in and an important part of the process. Students searching for "What's important to me?" (which is really the guiding question as they discover motives and try to understand themselves in relation to schooling), will inevitably evaluate each task to the extent of its meaningfulness. With the goal of trying to learn things that will help them be successful in college, a student is more likely to assess why she learned (or why she didn't) and how she learned, if, what she can discover will lead her toward what she needs to know. In this sense, the curriculum gets evaluated as it unfolds and this evaluation should control the direction of the next task.

An on-going evaluation after a task has been completed and an end of the quarter evaluation, through writing, small group work, a class discussion, and possible one-on-one conferences with the instructor, would reveal much of what the students felt was important. Evaluating specific
tasks, materials used (articles and texts), and methods used (reading, writing, discussions, and interviews) would also help the students decide what they felt was important (and may help them recognize that summarizing an article in writing or discussing a novel with others are important to learning and these "habits" may carry over into other classes). "What have you learned and how did you learn it?" will focus the students' evaluations of the course. Like the discovery of motives through various language activities, more and more will be revealed as students work on this question in various ways, independently, and also with others.

"What have I learned about these students and how did I learn this?" is the question the instructor needs to answer (and if others are teaching this course it would be helpful to work on this question as a group). During my five years of teaching Developmental Study, I was always surprised at how little I could say about each student, after spending ten weeks with twelve or fifteen students, in relation to their chances for success in college. With some students it was evident that they were doing what was necessary and would continue to do so. With the majority, however, because most did okay in tests and papers when they spent time reading, writing, and studying, all I could say on their final reports was "If so-and-so keeps working, she should be successful at Midbind." A future curriculum,
thus, must not be based only on what the students and instructor see as successful throughout the course, but it must also be based on what the instructor has learned about her students, since this curriculum is "self discovery" oriented in contrast to "skill" oriented and "subject/content" oriented. An instructor can learn about a student through the progress she makes (or doesn't make) and also from her contributions in the classroom.

Another critical evaluative measure would be the assessment of the dialectical struggle to discover motives and make connections between past and present. At the root of the self-discovery of the students is their confrontation with the contradictions that surface. In the instructor's role, it's critical to help students recognize these and to see if these would reoccur (which may be difficult in a ten week quarter--although there might be a pattern from the past). A student would have to see if these were a part of her past and she would have to question if these would be a part of her future. A student's explanation ("I'll just have to study harder on the next test" or "Next time I'll get myself to do the reading the night before the paper is due") can be accepted--but not dismissed. Essential to the success of this curriculum and students gaining more control over their lives is the question, "What are you going to do if you can't get yourself to sit down and read, write, and study?" It's a
question that has to be asked more than once, at different
times and in different ways, probably beyond the quarter
they're taking Developmental Study, and probably by differ­
ent people. Ideally, the student would ask this question
to herself; however, the instructor, her classmates or
perhaps someone out of the classroom might help her under­
stand the importance of this question. Students avoid
asking themselves this question--sometimes intentionally,
but quite often, until a student realizes she can't get
herself to study, she believes "that once pledge season is
over" or "once she finds a work-study job" then she'll get
her mind back to her school work.

A future curriculum, analyzing the past curriculum and
the success students had asking themselves these difficult
questions, would have to be based on the success students
and the class had confronting contradictions, recognizing
possible consequences, and, at the very least, projecting
different ways to resolve the contradictions. (What do
people do who drop out of college?) Students could be
asked to evaluate this, the instructor could analyze how
individuals and the class dealt with contradictions, and a
student's progress after the course might be monitored
since it may take her more than a quarter to face the
contradictions in her behavior. Monitoring a student's
progress could be done through asking the student to return
to her developmental instructor three times a quarter
throughout the rest of the school year, through talking to her "new" instructors to see how she is doing, through checking with other Development Study students, Resident Assistants, coaches, advisers and others she comes in contact with regularly.

Discussing characters' motives from the literature will help students identify and confront contradictions and possibly ask themselves questions they feel that are too personal or no one's business in a classroom setting. The literature will help to illustrate sociohistorical forces and students will gain a sense of how their pasts affect their future. And, the literature will show consequences, the fact that there are no right answers--that people must take actions in order to control their lives. Students often seem to be waiting for "the right time" to study, for "the right person" to walk into their lives, for "the right course" to motivate them, for "the right instructor"--and avoid taking any action. The literature may help students to realize that taking action, even though one may make mistakes, is important and necessary to growing.

Future research must continue to include the discovery of motives through diverse language activities, respecting the dialectical movement of research as discoveries unfold: behavior must be understood as a social and historical phenomenon. Future research should include Developmental Study students who are juniors and seniors and have beaten
the odds and are making it through college; it should include following the progress of current developmental students and trying to find out what happens to them along the way, why they're successful or why they leave, and how they feel about their experience; it should also include discovering motives of students who don't have any trouble sitting down to study in order to provide a contrast to others who do.

Future research should strive to find commonalities of those who do make it and, if possible, of those who don't make it. Knowing that seventy-five percent of the Developmental Study students will not complete their education at the college where they began, the goal—if we care about these young people—should be to help these students discover what they can about themselves, their pasts—especially in relation to the culture of schooling—in order to try to help them make sense out of the present, so they can gain more control of their lives and make good decisions as they continue to grow.
NOTES

1Also at the beginning, throughout Fall Quarter 1985, I collected numerous responses from my Developmental Study class mostly asking them to explain what they were doing and why they were doing it in relation to their schooling (see Appendix).

2Soviet psychology and psycholinguistics continue to gain popularity in the United States. Along with Wertsch: Luria's *Language and Cognition* was especially important to me as I began to study this field; Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* (newly revised and improved in 1986) and *Mind in Society* are important texts since his work is the basis for much of this field; Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* is revolutionary to the field of psycholinguistics; Sarup's *Marxism and Education* helped me to understand some basic Marxist principles and Freire's work illustrated the application of these; dissertations at Ohio State by Zebroski, Mack, Sharpe, and Bolotta provided important information; *Soviet Psychology* provides a diversity of topics; also see Cole (*The Making of Mind*), Clark, and Holquist; and see Valsiner for the most recent work, at least that I'm aware of: *Developmental Psychology in the Soviet Union*.

3This chapter, along with two others, one on the Theory of Activity and the other on the political nature of schooling (which was near completion), do not appear in their original form in this dissertation. However, information and insights from each have been included and each were necessary, developmentally speaking, for me to write, as I struggled with different concepts in order to understand certain things along the way.

4See Bateman, Bowles and Gintis, Freire, Giroux, Illich, Perkinson, Sarup, and Shor.

5Bateman's article, a psychohistory from Bruner through Freire, provided important connections for me.
See (along with those in note #4) Bohm, Capra, Chomsky, Ferguson, Harrington, LaFeber, Parenti, and Zinn. Two weekly publications, The Guardian and The Nation, also helped me to see and understand various interrelationships.

According to a Midbind admissions department staff member (August 12, 1988) the national retention rate for all colleges is 55% (although Holt in How Children Fail xiii) says it's 33%. The national retention rate for those labeled "Developmental" or "remedial" averages 25%. Generally speaking, larger public universities have lower retention rates than small, private colleges. Midbind is on target with these national averages.

Holden Caufield understands this. After his breakdown in The Catcher in the Rye, disgusted with his psychoanalyst (and everyone else) who keeps asking him if he is going to apply himself in school next year says, "It's such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you're going to do until you do it?" (213).

"Soviet psychologists" refer to L.S. Vygotsky and his followers (I was most influenced by A.N. Leont'ev, A.R. Luria, and B.F. Lomov) who challenged the "Psychological scholarship in the 1920s (which) fell into a number of schools--behaviorism, reflexology, psychoanalysis, gestalt psychology, and so on...", see Kozulin, "Vygotsky in Context," xi-lvi.

Leont'ev, winning the Lenin Prize in 1963 for scientific research, gained "the status of Vygotsky's official interpreter" and "gradually Vygotsky came to be regarded as a mere predecessor of Leont'ev...", see Kozulin, "Vygotsky in Context," lli.

Goffman concludes: "To summarize, then, I assume that when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation."

"Freire is deeply indebted to Marx, Husserl, Buber, and Sartre, among others, for his intellectual heritage" (Giroux 129).

Giroux's chapter "Paulo Freire's Approach to Radical Educational Theory and Practice" offers an important discussion of this.
Considering I developed much of this skills-approach curriculum five years ago, my criticism throughout this chapter is certainly not directed at my colleagues who teach Developmental Study any more than at myself.

Fiore and Elsasser conclude: "He (L.S. Vygotsky) postulates that learning to write involves the mastery of cognitive skills and the development of new social understandings. According to Vygotsky, we categorize and synthesize our lives through inner speech, the language of thought." (and) "Freire maintains that the goal of the literacy program is to help students become critically conscious of the connection between their own lives and the larger society and to empower them to use literacy as a means of changing their own environment. Like Vygotsky, Freire believes the transformation of thought to text requires the conscious consideration of one's social context" (116).
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Zebroski, James. "Writing as Activity: Composition Development from the Perspective of the Vygotskian School." Diss. The Ohio State University, 1983.


The following were given to two Developmental Study classes (23 students in all) fall quarter, 1985. Responses were collected and an informal analysis was made.

SUCCESS IN COLLEGE: WHAT DO YOU NEED? WHY DO PEOPLE GO TO COLLEGE? WHAT IS COLLEGE? HOW IMPORTANT IS COLLEGE TO YOU? (Given as homework assignments during the first week.)

Directions: Please answer each part to each question. Be sure to explain your answers and be as specific as possible. Use both sides of this page and attach additional sheets of paper if you need more room.

1. What do you need in order to be successful in college?

A. Remembering yourself as a student over the past twelve or thirteen years, what are your strengths and weaknesses in relation to being successful in the classroom?

B. What kinds of subjects and skills are you good at? What aren't you so good at?

C. What kinds of things--both in and out of the classroom--might get in the way of you being successful in college?

2. College is different things to different people and people go to college for many different reasons.

A. What kinds of reasons do people have for going to college?

B. What are the reasons you came to college?
C. What percentage of your close friends from home went to college? What were their reasons for going or not going to college?

3. What is college? What do you know about college life both in and out of the classroom?

A. Although you're just beginning college, describe as best you can what you think college will be like including 1) academic life, 2) social life, 3) extra curricular activity life, and 4) just general day-to-day life.

B. What are you looking forward to? What aren't you looking forward to?

4. College is important to people for different reasons. Some people feel college is a must. Others just want to try college and see what it's like and still consider other alternatives if college doesn't work out for whatever reason.

A. How important is it for you to survive four years of college?

B. Why is it very important or why isn't it so important?

EVALUATE YOUR FIRST WEEK OF COLLEGE (Given orally at the end of the first week.)

"You have just finished your first week of college. How do you feel at the end of your first week? What went especially smooth? What kinds of problems did you have? Discuss both of these in relation to life in and out of the classroom?"

HOMEWORK BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE (Given the beginning of the second week.)

A. Today five chapters of McWhorter should have been completed. Please check the statement which best describes your effort in relation to this assignment.
I read each chapter and underlined or highlighted important ideas.

I read each chapter but I didn't underline or highlight anything.

I only read ___ chapters and I only underlined or highlighted ___ of these chapters. (Put number in blanks.)

Other. Please explain if you did something other than one of these above statements:

C. From your syllabus you know that on Sept. 30, one week from today, you will have a test on Catcher in the Rye. Please check the following statement which best describes your effort in relation to this assignment.

I have begun reading Catcher and I have completed ___ pages so far. (Fill in approximate number of pages.)

I can read approximately ___ number of pages in this novel in a half hour. (Fill in the number per half hour.)

I haven't begun reading Catcher yet.

D. Why have you already started or why haven't you started reading Catcher in the Rye? Explain briefly:

E. How do you feel about the amount of time you have spent studying and doing homework over the past weekend? Did you get more done than you thought you would? Did you get done what you wanted? Did you make a schedule and follow it or were you able to get assignments completed without making a schedule?
SOCIOHISTORICAL SURVEY (Given during individual conferences the second and third weeks.)

The information you supply below will help me with a project I am currently working on at Ohio State. All information will be kept confidential and at no time will your "real" name appear with your answers below. If you feel the information is too personal and would rather not complete the survey, you have that option.

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions. If you need more room please use the back of this sheet.

1. Where were you brought up? Name the city or town and describe briefly what your neighborhood was like? (If you lived in more than one place name each, describe each, and list the number of years you lived in each place.)

2. Who are the people who raised you? What is their relationship to you?

3. How many people lived in the same home or apartment you did? How is each related to you? Where do you fit age-wise?

4. Who worked and supplied the family income? If more than one person worked state this and describe the job or jobs each person had and has.

5. Many students are often the first ones in their families to go to college. How far in school did your parents or the people who raised you get in their schooling?

6. Where did your parents or guardians grow up? How did your first eighteen years compare to theirs?

7. How much schooling did your grandparents or grand-guardians complete?

8. What kind of job or jobs did they have and do they have?

9. Where did they grow up?
Check the statement or statements which best fit you.

____I was expected to go to college so I really never thought about not going.

____I was expected to go to college, but those close to me wouldn't have been surprised if I hadn't.

____The people close to me wanted me to go to college, but I wasn't expected to.

____The people close to me didn't play a major role in my decision to come to college.

____The people close to me were surprised when I decided to go to college.

Please explain briefly why you chose what you did. If none of the above seemed appropriate to you please explain.

QUESTIONNAIRE: CATCHER IN THE RYE TEST AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (Given in class the third week.)

A. I was impressed that almost everyone identified each of the five characters in question one on the test. Please explain briefly how you did this. Was it from your notes? Was it from your memory? Did you note each character in some way as you read the novel?

B. Almost everyone received most of the points for question two. How were you able to answer this question? Was it from memory or from notes? Did you have this passage in the book marked before the best?

C. Most people had trouble with the essay question. Did you find it especially difficult? Did you divide it into parts and answer each part? How much experience have you had with essay questions?

D. Did you read and underline/highlight chapters 13, 7, 24, 8, 6, and 23 in McWhorter? Please explain what you did and why you did it in relation to this assignment which was due last Monday.
E. Have you started *Ordinary People*? Explain why you have or haven't begun. If you have started how many pages have you completed? How many pages can you read of this novel in a half hour?

EVALUATING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF COLLEGE (Given at the end of the third week.)

You are just completing your third week of college; you have finished almost one-third of your quarter. How are you feeling about college life both in and out of the classroom? What do you feel especially good about? What are you especially concerned about? Be specific in answering these questions.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (Given at the end of the third week.)

What is the title of the book and the title of the article you read for today's assignment?

Why did you choose this book and this article?

Would you recommend this article to a classmate? Why or why not?

For this assignment in the future, will you read another article in this book or will you find another book to try? Why will you stay with this book or why will you make the change?

STUDENTING BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST (Given the fourth week of the term.)

Directions: The following are things you should be doing in order to be successful at Midbind. If you are not doing these things, please plan to do them immediately. Please check "Now do" or "Plan to do" or don't check either of these if you don't plan to do one or the other.

1. Talk to each of my instructors individually.

2. Seek out help from a specific instructor concerning his/her topic.
3. Keep a record of all my grades in every course I am taking.

4. Use a weekly "to do" list.

5. Use a weekly study schedule.

6. Participate regularly in each of my classes.

7. Made at least one office appointment with each of my instructors so far this term.

8. Know how much assignments, tests, quizzes, and papers count toward my final grade.

9. Work on difficult subjects when most alert.

10. Have a good calendar showing when major assignments are due and major tests for the rest of the term.

11. Am positive my instructors know who I am.

12. Have talked to my instructors concerning my grade.

13. Plan to talk to my instructors within the next two weeks to see how I am doing and to see how I can get the grade I want in each course.

14. Ask questions in each of my classes.

15. Seek out help in the Writing Clinic.

QUESTIONNAIRE IN RESPONSE TO THE STUDY SKILLS TEST (Given the sixth week of the term after students had been given back their tests. Out of 55 different statements, the following produced the most useful information.)

Directions: Everyone has different reasons for studying McWhorter (the study skills text which the test was over) the way they did. What were your motives for approaching McWhorter the way you did? In other words, why did you do what you did? Check the statements that best describe your reasons:

A. ___ I studied McWhorter only to pass the test.

B. ___ I studied McWhorter to get a high grade on the test.
C. ___ I read and underlined/highlighted McWhorter because I was told to.

D. ___ I didn't spend a lot of time reading McWhorter because most of it was common sense and I knew it already.

E. ___ I studied McWhorter because it seemed like it might help me in other courses.

F. ___ I studied McWhorter because I thought it might help me to bridge the gap from high school to college.

G. ___ I read only the parts of McWhorter I felt were important.

H. ___ I would have read more of McWhorter if it hadn't been so boring.

I. ___ I knew I could pass the test without studying hard so I didn't spend much time reviewing for it.

J. ___ I spent more time cramming for the test than I did reading and underlining/highlighting McWhorter.

K. ___ I knew college meant more studying so I spent a lot of time with McWhorter.

L. ___ I tried to apply McWhorter as I read it.

M. ___ I feel that many of the suggestions in McWhorter will help me throughout my college career.

N. ___ I had a lot of work in my other classes so the McWhorter assignments weren't my top priority.

O. ___ I should have spent more time studying for the test.

P. ___ I have good study skills already so I really didn't need McWhorter.

Q. ___ I feel McWhorter is an important book for all college freshmen.

R. ___ I would have read McWhorter even if there wasn't going to be a test on it.
BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE IN RESPONSE TO THE FINAL EXAM (Given the last week of the term.)

I am curious as to why you did what you did in relation to Part IV of your final exam which allowed you to do the proofreading outside of class (and counted for one-fourth of your final exam grade).

1. How many times did you proofread your paper?

2. What was the method or methods you used? Explain.

3. How many other people did you get to read your paper? Why did you choose each person that you did? What is their relationship to you?

4. What methods (or method) did this person or these people use to proofread your paper? Explain.

5. Some of you did an excellent job of proofreading; others did a very poor job. Why did you do what you did in relation to this very important assignment? Please explain. (Use the back if necessary.)

WHAT KIND OF STUDENT ARE YOU NOW COMPARED TO THE KIND OF STUDENT YOU WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR FIRST NINE WEEKS OF COLLEGE? CAN YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN COLLEGE AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO BE SUCCESSFUL? HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU ORIGINALLY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE? (Given the last week of the term. These are similar to the questions given at the beginning of the quarter.)

Some people feel that a person's first quarter of college is the hardest. Other people feel that other quarters are just as difficult, but in different ways. What many college students agree on is that the amount of work and effort required remains about the same quarter after quarter; in other words, most students would say that there is no simple way to avoid the time and effort college requires. Knowing yourself as a student, especially in relation to having a quarter's worth of college behind you, please answer the following questions:

A. Are you a different student now than you were in high school? Explain how you have stayed different and/or how you have stayed the same?
B. In general, how do you feel about your first nine weeks of college? What do you feel especially good about both in and out of the classroom? What don't you feel so good about in and out of the classroom? What would you change if you could? Explain.

C. Do you feel that you can be successful in the classroom at Midbind? What kinds of things both in and out of the classroom might get in the way of your being successful? Is it as important for you to be as successful in college as it was at the beginning of the term? Explain.

D. Is college easier or harder than you thought it would be? How is it different from what you originally thought? Discuss these in relation to A) academic life; B) social life; C) extra-curricular activity life; and D) just general day-to-day life.