

**THE STORY OF THE DA VINCI PROGRAM: A NARRATIVE STUDY
OF AN ALTERNATIVE LEARNING APPROACH**

by

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**We accept this thesis as conforming
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Abstract

In the spring of 1991 I read *The Walkabout Papers*, by Maurice Gibbons (1990) in which he posits an alternative curriculum that includes experiential learning along the lines of the Australian aborigine walkabout tradition. This profoundly affected me and lead me in August of the same year to write a paper entitled “The da Vinci Files” which was the beginning of my attempts to bring about some radical changes in the way we undertake the education of adolescents. My intention was to implement Gibbons’ ideas that academic year. Following a staff meeting where this paper was presented and input was solicited, a group of four other teachers became actively involved with me in further developing the ideas. The group became known as the da Vinci team and the ideas eventually became clarified and solidified as the da Vinci Program.

In the da Vinci Program the student undertakes six passages over the course of the final three years of secondary school in conjunction with course work, thus incorporating the student’s experiential learning in the curriculum. A passage is a particular learning event. The six passage categories are philosophical inquiry, physical challenge, practical skill, creative endeavour, career exploration, and community/global awareness. For each passage, the student must present a written proposal and negotiate it with a teacher/advisor and maintain a journal in order to document the experiences during the passage completion from which s/he will conclude the experience in a wrap-up. The culmination of the passage is a public celebration after completion during which time the passage experience is shared with the audience.

The da Vinci Program is about learning in as complete a manner as is currently possible in the public school system. I contend that schooling is not complete, that it tends too much toward mastery of subject matter and that it tends to neglect the learner as an experiential and interactive being in the realm of daily existence. It is largely out of this frame of thinking that the da Vinci Program developed. Nonetheless, the inception, development and attempted implementation of this program at Chugalong (name altered) Secondary School, British Columbia, have been experiences of diverse proportions for me as the initiator and as a participant-observer.

The foundation of this program (Gibbons' [1990] Walkabout concept) helps students to articulate better their goals and to pursue personal interests that aid in the achievement of those goals while it demands greater interaction between school and community members (Gibbons, 1990; Bogard, 1992; Langberg, 1992; Horwood, 1987). The da Vinci Program, the adaptation of ideas from Gibbons' writings (1990, 1991) and materials from Jefferson County Mountain Open School near Denver, Colorado, is innovative and radical in the context of the traditional approach to schooling that is prevalent in most public schools (witness the British Columbia Ministry of Education curricular innovation, *Year 2000: A Framework For Learners* [1989], which attempted to address public concerns about the nature of schooling).

As the da Vinci Program developed and moved into the timetable as a curricular offering, difficulties arose that confirmed issues and concerns in implementation as noted by Gibbons (1990), Miller & Seller (1990), Eisner, (1985), Doll, (1989), and Pratt, (1980). The problems due to the attempted implementation of da Vinci that I chose to examine were the challenges of change (personal, pedagogical and socio-political) as well as the curricular orientation of the Program in comparison with traditional schooling. As a teacher, the effects of these changes caused a shift in my thinking and approach to learning and living. Personal and pedagogical changes that I noted included my outlook on educating, interpersonal relationships with students, and a more critical interest in schooling.

Socio-political changes that I documented and reflected upon confirmed Miller & Seller's (1990) findings concerning temporal, social and institutional workings affected by an innovation that proceeds to implementation. Teacher reticence to change, structural alterations in the school program, community uncertainty about curricular offerings, and administrative ambiguity (in terms of roles, responsibilities, interests and actions) were difficulties that I noted and found supported by the literature (Provost, 1993; Hansen, D., 1992; Migyanko, 1992; Miller & Seller, 1990; Cornbleth, 1990; Doll, 1989; Mitchell, 1989; Steger & Leithwood, 1989; McCutcheon, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1987; Martin, Saif & Thiel, 1986; Brady, 1985; Knight, 1985; McNeil, 1985; Carson, 1984; Cuban, 1984; Eisner, 1983, 1985; Giroux, 1983; Wilson, 1981; Aronowitz, 1980; Baldrige, 1977; Gibbons 1976, 1990; Pratt, 1980; Hills, 1975b).

Problems associated with the challenges of change in education are linked to curriculum orientations (Miller & Seller, 1990), or ideologies, and as such demand an examination in the context of the da Vinci Program and its foundation. My choice of Miller & Seller's (1990) treatment of orientations and meta-orientations was borne out of philosophical analysis of the Program. I found that the da Vinci Program tended to be a mixture of the Transactional and Transformational meta-orientations. I also posited that the foundation of the Program could be argued as a meta-orientation or over-arching guiding principle for curriculum in its own right.

The discussion about curricular change and orientations via da Vinci lends itself, too, to comparisons with the traditional practice of schooling in North America. However, since the da Vinci Program was never "fully" implemented (which is to be understood as I speak of implementation throughout this thesis) at Chugalong Secondary, a complete analysis of the benefits or drawbacks is impossible at this point. Nonetheless, I have made some comparative points which are drawn from my teaching experience and from various research findings. The key points that I found were that, 1) traditional schooling practices have changed little over the course of the past century despite literature that challenges the traditional paradigm (Cuban, 1984; Pallas, 1993) and, 2) the nature of this traditional paradigm tends to be a function of economics and institutional convenience and needs to concentrate more on full human development (Chamberlain & Chamberlain, 1993; Ozar, 1993; Becher, 1992; Goodson, 1992; Harber, 1992; Gough, 1991; Levin, 1991; Mallea, 1989; Mitchell, 1989; Bacharach, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Tizzell, 1987; English, 1986; Gray & Chanoff, 1986; Oakes, 1986a, 1986b; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Blackledge & Hunt, 1985; Cuban, 1984; Eisner, 1983; Sanders, 1981; Anyon, 1980; Apple, 1980; Kohl, 1980; Donmoyer, 1979; Madgie, 1979; Gibbons, 1976, 1990; Proctor, 1975; Freire, 1974; Illich, 1973; Lister, 1973; Collins, 1971; Coombs, 1967; Rogers, 1967; Wilhelms, 1967; Parsons, 1959; Russell, 1949).

The information which I amassed in seeking to explicate the da Vinci Program was useful also in reflecting on the Program's potential worth, not just for me or to me, but in the educational process as well. The Walkabout concept that Gibbons (1990) developed and that serves as the foundation of the da Vinci Program has been proven effective (Gibbons, 1990,

1992; Bogard, 1992; Langberg, 1992; Horwood, 1987). To speak of the worth of the da Vinci Program, then, requires looking at it through the Walkabout program, for example, in Jefferson County Mountain Open School. The development of the da Vinci Program resulted in a locally produced working document that can be utilized by educators to understand the Program and its potential effects, and to implement it.

The nature of the da Vinci Program lends itself to a narrative explication rather than a statistical analysis. Curriculum innovation and implementation obviously involve elements that are not so given to quantification. The thinking process, the undergirding of choices made, the questions raised, the power structure and struggles, the nature of educating, the role of students, teachers, community and administration, all in the context of implementing this Program, are experiential factors that elude quantification. Yet, such elements are significant parts in the process of education. The narrative voice is one dimension of the academic experience that affords a means of furthering our understanding of the educational process and complementing the knowledge we have about curriculum innovation and implementation. I will be employing primarily my voice throughout this document. However, there are places and moments when the necessity of using the first person plural in reference to the da Vinci team should be evident. In the chapter layout of this story I have employed the format used in the da Vinci Program itself: proposal, passage, and wrap-up. The Appendices contain documents that relate directly to the da Vinci Program from the initial presentation to the staff (Appendix 1, "The da Vinci Files") to the working documents (Appendix 4), Passage examples by some of the students (Appendix 5), to a final report that was completed for accreditation purposes (Appendix 6, "Graduation Development Site, 1991/92 Final Report"). In this way, I have sought to offer the reader not only reference materials for clarifying my experiences in the da Vinci Program, but also working documents whose function may serve to help in the implementation of a similar program.

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Acknowledgment

I am particularly indebted to Dr. Maurice Gibbons whose interview with me was both timely and provocative as I attempted to analyze my experiences in teaching and in the implementation of his ideas (modified) through the da Vinci Program.

Mr. Jeff Bogard deserves mention also for his time and sharing his experience and insights from being in and with the Walkabout program at Jefferson County Mountain Open School near Denver, Colorado since approximately 1974. Together, these two men provided much needed (and sought) direction and information that aided in the facilitation of the development of the da Vinci Program.

Without Drew, Kerry, Linda and Val (and later, Sally) the da Vinci Program would have struggled merely as a personal curricular interest and likely would have not developed into an actual program offering in the timetable.

Introduction

Background

The crucial issue of secondary education, and perhaps of all education, is how to promote the successful transition of youth from childhood and school to adulthood and the community (Gibbons, 1976: 1).

Such curriculum activities and additions as advising, outdoor education, gifted programs, global awareness projects, to name a few, and meta-curriculum (Miller & Seller, 1990) directions have been attempted in schools over the years with varying degrees of success or failure depending on the tenacity and energy of the implementers, budgets, politics, and long-term vision (Cuban, 1984). While educators have claimed for decades that schooling is for the whole child, much evidence, in fact, suggests that the opposite is true in practice (Becher, 1992; Cousins, 1991; Ministry of Education, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Gibbons, 1976, 1990, 1991; Cuban, 1984; Illich, 1973; Lister, 1973; Rogers, 1967; Wilhelms, 1967). My own experience in teaching bears this out both in practice and in observations.

In practice, the curriculum has determined the content, by and large, with variations occurring on occasion (i.e., activities of a more personal nature to the student). Evaluation schemes tend toward regurgitation of rote material, and staff members have shared their laments about trying to “get the class to learn” a particular point (Cuban, 1984; Gibbons, 1990; Eisner, 1983). At the secondary level, schooling as an atomistic practice is the norm (Miller and Seller, 1990; Eisner, 1983, 1985). The opportunity for the individual student to deal effectively or to learn to deal effectively with a personal issue or interest is generally a function of the counseling department or administration. There is little room left in the already crowded timetable and curricula for teaching students other skills that will be, in many respects, more practical in day to day living now as well as in adulthood. This was Gibbons’ (1976, 1990) thesis, and it served as an impetus for change for me and my approach to educating. The result of reading *The Walkabout Papers* (Gibbons, 1990) was the adaptation of Gibbons’ concepts in what I called the da Vinci Program (explained in detail below).

The overall experience of teaching has intrigued me in the light of the institutionalization of education, or what I call schooling. I was struck a number of times by the way we go about educating. It seemed more often than not the expending of energy, but with only the occasional

moment of satisfaction. I have taught for twelve years in the public school system: five years at a large secondary school (approximately 1600 students from grades ten to twelve) and two years in a junior secondary in Nova Scotia, and five years in a rural junior-secondary school in British Columbia. I taught French as a Second Language along with, for a brief two year existence, a Gifted program. But listening to other teachers and parents, and seeing the results of schooling over a period of time along with my experiences with a number of different administrators who were neither good managers nor curriculum experts left me in a tension between simply surviving in a tough job and wanting to improve the whole system of education.

My active interests included research in values education, philosophy for children, metacognition (in essence, reflecting on our own thinking process), and synthesizing these three. I believed that there was something missing in the curriculum, something that would enable students to be more active in the learning process which I thought was too impersonal and not really relevant to the student. When I read others who stated much the same thing (Gibbons, 1990; Eisner, 1983; Lipman, 1980; Freire, 1974; Illich, 1973), I was delighted but saddened at the lack or slow rate of change.

I was able to practice some of the above educational interests in the Gifted program that I taught for two years with the result that the students, for the most part, were able to pursue projects of a more personal nature. The students were challenged to perform their personal best, to think of alternative approaches, to reflect on their thinking, and to enjoy success. For me, this was probably the highlight of those twelve years of teaching in the regular curriculum. Those few students still make reference to a positive and valued experience. Gifted programs, though, tend to be centered on the few and, as I have discovered, dependent on the economic well-being of the district. At the end of the second year, the Gifted program was removed from the timetable due, it was claimed, to fiscal restraints. It seemed to me to be one more example of a beneficial and necessary program for the student that was removed for reasons other than pedagogical. My frustrations and dissatisfaction with this system of education continued to grow, however, and I was beginning to lose interest in the profession of teaching even as I altered my French Program each year in attempts to involve the students more in their learning process.

Chugalong Secondary School had a small population when I began there (roughly 400 students in grades 8 to 12) comprised of children from white, middle-class families and a minority native settlement. The community is a remote rural setting with a vicinity population of approximately 3000 people. The average age of the school staff is approximately early forties with relative stability of the group although the administration tends to be changed roughly every four to five years. The average teaching experience of the staff within the district is 10 to 15 years.

Away from the entrance to this school, tucked in between the penitentiary-like walls of the gymnasium that guard the parking lot and the office with its protected rampart-like windows, there is an arresting view, a refreshing view that replaces the uninviting one behind the viewer. I felt it every time I went into the school and would often marvel at that incredible sight. The dome of Mt. Elphinstone in the near distance with its range and the bay below are poetically beautiful. These are seen briefly as one exits the building, but nowhere in the school is that view exploited.

The da Vinci Program

The da Vinci Program, on the other hand, is the view without, the opening of the walls, the re-establishment of the link with the world ironically where educating began, begins, ends. Let the name da Vinci conjure up visions of cathedrals, flying machines, tanks, submarines, and other engineering feats long before their time, or of an enigmatic portrait now revered behind a vault in the magnificent Louvre, or of writings and musings of one of the greatest geniuses even beyond the Renaissance. Rebirth. It is the quintessential call to the process called education. In this rather remote community, in an unassuming structure that marks and fosters traditional schooling as well as any, the adherents of the da Vinci Program, which draws upon the notion of insatiable, willful, life-long learning as that master of Renaissance history so demonstrated, struggle to adapt, to establish, to succeed, even to encompass, and to lead.

Although we adapted much of Gibbons' material, the actual da Vinci working documents are closer approximations to the Walkabout Program at Jefferson County Mountain Open School near Denver, Colorado. The following description of the ideal da Vinci Program is comprised of

a mixture and development of these two influences which came about as we developed the Program (in Chapter Two, Year One, p. 39, I discuss the Program as it actually unfolded). The da Vinci Program itself is comprised of six passage categories (the full working documents are found in Appendix 4, p. 108). These differ from Gibbons' (1990) list of passages: adventure, creative expression, logical inquiry, practical application, and service (later, he added a sixth, academic [1991b]).

- Philosophical Inquiry—dealing with deeper issues that demand logical reasoning and reflection; i.e., personal loss, life after death, suffering.
- Physical Challenge—performing an activity that challenges physical endurance and stamina; i.e., a bike trip for a weekend or a week, rock climbing.
- Practical Skill—acquiring a skill that previously required someone else to complete; i.e., repairing small appliances, minor mechanics, gardening.
- Career Exploration—in-depth look at an occupation of interest; i.e., shadowing a professional for a period of time.
- Community/Global Awareness—researching and responding to an environmental issue; i.e., logging practices, waste management, hunger programs.
- Creative Endeavour—demonstration of a project in the visual or performing arts; i.e., a photography exhibit, a dance production.

The da Vinci Program, as in Gibbons' (1990, 1991) writings, emphasizes self-directed learning through guided instruction, through the teacher/advisor, and through practical experience. The learning activities undertaken by the student are interrelated in three domains: personal, social/interpersonal, and academic or technical. The teacher/advisor role involves facilitating and advising using diverse strategies which assist students in developing the attitudes, personality characteristics, and skills needed to pursue and achieve their goals.

Each student in the Program must negotiate an individualized action plan (initially, a proposal), or learning contract with his/her advisor. This document is designed to be not only an instrument for self-directed learning, but also a guide to maximizing the student's learning throughout the passage process. In meeting the demands of each of the six passages of the

Program, the parts of the contract should anticipate the difficulties and challenges the student will face as well as indicate solutions for the student to explore. Ideally, the contract will identify the vision or goals of the student, the learning strategies to be used, acceptable demonstrations of achievement, and the roles of each participant. The teacher/advisor needs to understand the nature of the project being undertaken, the anticipated learning outcomes, and agree upon the standards that will be used to evaluate the outcomes. As part of the proposal, the student must negotiate an evaluation technique that includes a minimum, an excellent, and a superior level of achievement (Gibbons, 1991), thereby incorporating evaluation in the learning process. As part of the passage process, students are required (and learn) to keep a working journal as they progress. The journal is a sketchbook or record of thinking, learning, planning, action and reflection, becoming a resource of ideas and reflections, much like the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci.

The learner is encouraged not only to synthesize the learning experiences, but also to become conscious of developing skills, applying processes, pursuing goals, and participating in a variety of experiences. Evaluation is both formal and informal, and includes self-assessment as much as assessment by those supporting the student (such as a group of advisors and peer support group). While the demonstration of outcomes is an important aspect of evaluation in general, much of the evaluation/assessment in the Program will be through journal entries during the passage process and the wrap-up, advisor reports, and creative work, all of which will be synthesized and documented in a formal portfolio. Students are responsible for formative self-assessments to monitor their ongoing progress as well as summative self-evaluations that involve careful self-reflection and analysis of their learning experiences. Peer assessment takes the form of support groups known as triads or quads. In these small groups, peers informally discuss and assess each other's passages providing ongoing support, suggestions and feedback. Parents play a key role in assessment by receiving and providing feedback at meetings and in their involvement in their children's passage.

Advisors are responsible for monitoring the student's self-assessment process through interviews, anecdotal records, proposal editing, progress charts, etc. From such interactions

advisors also provide external, objective feedback to students. Feedback is ongoing and ranges from informal interactions to formal structured assessments. Advising could also be a function of a mentoring team comprised of specific teachers, parents, and other supporters (although much of the work of advising takes place on a one to one basis). Ideally this team works with the student to foster an environment that is caring, safe and effective for learning. Together, or by taking on specific roles, members of the mentor team teach and guide the student in learning how to learn and in how to achieve goals, as well as in the learning and achieving itself. The mentor team becomes involved in assisting with assessment and evaluation, as well as in celebrating achievements with the student. The team is assembled based on the needs of the student and the characteristics of his/her goals.

The student is not left on his/her own but surrounded by a support system which includes both the human resources and facilities available within the school and the community. I anticipated that learning would include an exploration of the available support systems, how the resources in the school and community could be bridged and/or used in support of the student's learning experience.

I imagined the ideal role of the school administration as both an enabler and an objective source of assessment by providing informal and formal feedback to advisors and students as well as to board officials. Meanwhile, the school as a whole serves as a venue to present and display passage wrap-ups and provide public support and feedback to students and advisors.

I became convinced early in the inception stage of the da Vinci Program that Gibbons' ideas should be a regular part of the student's learning environment in secondary education particularly within the context of the alleged many problems in education (see Goodlad, 1985; Cuban, 1984; Apple, 1983; Illich, 1973; Rogers, 1967; Wilhelms, 1967), public demand for quality (i.e., product [the student] and accountability [undocumented comments from parents over twelve years of my teaching experience]) and lamented deficiency of education in providing the adolescent with the requisite skills for the transition to adulthood as a contributing member of society (Gibbons, 1990; Ministry of Education, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Wilhelms, 1967).

Early in his career, Dr. Maurice Gibbons, Professor Emeritus at Simon Fraser University,

considered the plight of the adolescent as s/he left school and faced society: an adult world in which the individual is expected to participate as a thinking, responding, efficient and capable person who productively maintains his/her society. In “Walkabout: Searching for the Right of Passage from Childhood and School,” an article published in the *Phi Delta Kappan* (May, 1974) which was to become the most requested reprint in the history of the journal (Gibbons, 1990: xvi), Gibbons laid the ground work for an alternative learning approach after questioning the appropriateness of the traditional North American education system in relation to the readiness of the adolescent in preparation for adulthood. In his book, *The Walkabout Papers* (1990), he remarked that the traditional methods seemed so wasteful since these methods failed (generally) to be relevant to the actual needs of the student such that “[n]o matter what we did, within the traditional framework...,” students’ interest waned and they seemed unprepared in the transition to adulthood (p. 2). He noted how he was struck by the “stark contrast between the aborigine’s walkabout experience and the test of an adolescent’s readiness for adulthood in our own society” (p. 2). The Walkabout concept evolved as a practical response to the lack of a truly representative “rite of passage,” one in which the educational experience would truly prepare the individual “for the transition from dependent adolescence to an independent, productive adulthood” (p. xv).

Gibbons argued for the importance of learning processes that “...could be used for a lifetime; responsibility, challenge and real-world projects not only [would lead] to the desired learning in compelling ways, but [also] to personal growth and the development of character” (p. iv). These processes include “goal-setting and planning, designing one’s own learning project, communicating, problem-solving, leading and participating in groups, reflecting in solitude, securing and organizing resources, and evaluating one’s progress” (p. xiv). Thus Gibbons, along with some associates, developed the Walkabout concept. In essence, it is a learner-focused program of challenging students to adopt a challenge of personal best in five areas (mentioned above): “adventure, creative expression, logical inquiry, practical application, and service” (p. xv. In *Slashing a Pathway to Education 2000: Self-Direction, Integration, Challenge Graduation*, Gibbons introduced a sixth area, “academic concentration” in which the student was

to become an “expert” in a particular field [1991b: 107]). In each of these categories, the student must negotiate a learning contract that includes the purpose of the project, the intended outcome, the means of achieving the goal, and a tri-level evaluation scheme of minimum, excellent, and superior level of achievement. In this curriculum, subjects/disciplines are still a part of the student’s learning plan but with more relevance since the students, and this is the crucial point, are more involved in the planning process of their goals and seeking those courses that are pertinent to their attaining them. All of this is facilitated through teacher/advisors, direct community involvement, and a more flexible school structure; one that is conducive to individual learning. Similarly, the da Vinci Program challenges the traditional view of teaching, learning, curriculum offerings, timetables, and community involvement but it can also serve as an integrative agent: course to course, course to life experience of the learner, learner to community, community to school.

Ideally, the da Vinci Program is a program that demands, teaches and fosters responsibility, self-direction, time-management, study strategies, writing skills, journal keeping, interviewing and critical thinking. I argue, with Gibbons, that including the experiential in education via a structured program such as da Vinci better prepares the adolescent for that inevitable transition to adulthood with the subsequent demands of society (but this is not to say that school is the only institution where this is possible).

However, the function of education appears, especially in practice, to revolve around professional and expert determination of what the adolescent qua student needs (Chamberlain & Chamberlain, 1993; Barone, 1992; Parker, 1992; Levin, 1991; Gibbons, 1990; Jackard, 1988; Brooks, 1986; Driver & Oldham, 1986; English, 1986; Knight, 1985; Lipman, 1984; Cuban, 1984; Eisner, 1983). Arguments are couched in terms like “society,” “economics,” “business demands,” “community needs,” “basics.” Education is confused with schooling and course work with learning. How do these aspects of North American culture aid the emerging adolescent in the face of peer pressures about drugs, sex, alcohol, smoking, or gangs? How does being another face in a classroom of 25 to 30 or more other students the same age, being expected and pushed to perform at a prescribed pace, time and level in any particular course aid the individual student

in dealing with the reality of a broken home, a parent with multiple partners, and increased responsibility to function maturely in the absence of models? These are the “realities” that I have encountered in my classrooms through open inquiry (1985 - 1993) and in some readings (Bibby, 1990; Anyon, 1981). How is staid traditional educating supposed to be significant to adolescents in the above context and in light of competing fast-action, sensually-gratifying films, video games, television, or music? Where in the burdened curriculum offerings of most schools is there space or time for teaching those essential skills for coping with loss, depression, conflicting values, personal interests and issues? Where is there adequate time for helping the adolescent who, through interrupting, belligerence, defiance, or apathy, demonstrates socially inappropriate behaviour? As Darling-Hammond (1993) pointed out,

Efforts to create more socially connected “learning communities” are buttressed by research evidence on the importance of alternative organizational arrangements— smaller schools fostering caring, common learning experiences of relevance to students, positive faculty and peer relations, cooperative work, shared values, and participation of parents, teachers and students (p. xviii).

In at least the majority of years that I taught before reading Gibbons’ (1990) book, *The Walkabout Papers*, I was struck more and more by the process of schooling and its intensity. In that time, I sought ways and means of not simply enlivening the practice of teaching, my practice of teaching, but of making the process more “learner friendly” without degrading the content of teaching or the purpose of learning. The above questions are ones that I have both raised, read and heard from others and which are important in relation to the da Vinci Program in that, ideally, the Program more readily enables the adolescent to begin to seek constructive responses in a structured, though not limiting, framework. Altering evaluation techniques, teaching cooperatively, field trips, and personal projects are all important and satisfying to some, but only to a limited extent. For myself, I was caught between having to deliver course content within a managed time frame and wanting to be able to help students address more practical issues.

In the past century of education, various groups and individuals have sought to balance the curriculum by including other than academic programs in order to offer students a broader approach to life, thus assisting them (Carter, 1984; Lipman, 1984; Simon, Howe &

Kirschenbaum, 1978; Frazier, 1976; Freire, 1974; Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1966; Dworkin, 1965). A conclusion that I have drawn is that if education were complete, then there would be no need of a Progressive movement or any other challenge to the curriculum. But I have read about and heard on numerous occasions staff members decrying the “over emphasis” on academics or making calls to raise the status of various “peripheral” subjects such as power mechanics, woodworking, family management, and languages (Gough, 1991; Goodlad, 1987; Apple, 1983; Conners, 1983; Eisner, 1983; Donmoyer, 1979; Madgie, 1979; Gibbons, 1976, 1990, 1991b; Proctor, 1975; Illich, 1973). Traditional education in practise lacks committed consideration of the whole child (Pallas, 1993; Eisner, 1983; Anyon, 1980; Gibbons, 1976, 1990; Wilhelms, 1967, Coombs, 1967; Rogers, 1967). In reality, only parts of his/her mind tend to be addressed. This is not to ignore that there are curricular components that attempt to help the student deal with other than academic issues. Nevertheless, the lack of processes for students, such as philosophy for children or values clarification programs, that are more specifically suited for such issues and that are grounded in research findings, is real. It is absurd to believe that large groups of adolescents, grouped according to age, expected to perform at near the same level and time are being benefited by this and by the major emphasis on academics to the virtual exclusion of the experiential (Oakes, 1986a, 1986b; Cuban, 1984; Lipman, 1984; Gibbons, 1976, 1990; Illich, 1973; Lister, 1973). As an example, whenever the da Vinci team (the teachers who became interested and active in the da Vinci Program) made a presentation to parents or educators on Professional Development Days, one of us would ask, “What is a key experience or significant event that you had and that you wouldn’t mind divulging to the group?” The responses never included an event in school which the da Vinci team would then emphasize.

As I indicated above, the da Vinci Program, as part of the secondary school curriculum, is a set of parameters that help the adolescent to focus on a specific topic of personal interest, developing various associated skills, and gaining from personal experiences. The teachers/advisors are supporters, guides, sounding posts, critics, supervisors, co-learners, and encouragers. Does the da Vinci Program begin to address the above mentioned schooling problems? Certainly the Walkabout concept has proven successful in these areas (Gibbons,

1992, 1990; Bogard, 1992; Langberg, 1992; Horwood, 1987). Ideally the da Vinci Program would address these problems, but a specific study of the da Vinci Program would need to be undertaken after a period of time to prove the particular long-term effects of the Program at Chugalong Secondary.

While the many merits of such an alternative approach are verifiable (Bogard, 1992; Langberg, 1992; Gibbons, 1991, 1992; Horwood, 1987), the da Vinci Program did not experience a full implementation (to the time of this writing, three years after its inception) at Chugalong Secondary. To elucidate the issues and arrive at a response that is both insightful to future program innovators and conclusive for me about the worth of this experience, serve partly as the impetus for this thesis. I also believe that it will better prepare the innovator who wishes to undertake the implementation of this Program in particular. Thus, the following issues will serve as the parameters for pursuing this study.

The Issues

The da Vinci Program itself demands a critical analysis as a radical program that saw its debut in a remote, public secondary school in British Columbia and that laboured long before the eyes of the majority of the school staff and district bureaucrats. As intimated above, school-wide reticence in adopting this Program as an alternative learning approach plagued the da Vinci team from the beginning and even after two years of development, presentations, informing, a pilot attempt, and a particular offering in the school's curriculum. My initial response was to wonder if this was a phenomenon endemic to this site or indicative of a greater problem outlined in the educational research (i.e., teacher malaise, institutional politics, social valuing). I have deliberately concentrated on the staff and administrators for the most part in this study mainly because these are the key individuals who have a greater impact upon the acceptance and full implementation of a program. Why should anybody, not just educators but also students and parents, want to know about this Program? What makes it significant particularly in the face of staff reticence? These are significant questions to which I will attempt to respond as I examine the challenges of change (personal, socio-political and pedagogical) due to the da Vinci Program along with its curriculum orientation.

There are two key issues, then, that I will endeavour to examine in this study. These are, 1) the challenges of change brought about, in this case, by the da Vinci Program, a curricular innovation and attempted implementation and, 2) the particular curriculum orientation of the Program. A third issue that corresponding to the first two, but which is not readily treatable in detail in this study, is the comparison of traditional schooling with the foundation of this Program.

Methodology

The story of the da Vinci Program is about ideals, about innovation and implementation, and it is about the effects of the same on people as well as on schooling. This is an inquiry, then, into a social event which I shall undertake by means of recollected and documented incidences of the process, having been a participant-observer. There is a particular difficulty here in that as I unfold the story, I change voices depending on the circumstance or reference. Thus, it is more appropriate at times that I speak as a participant in the group. At other times, I speak about the Program, or a related educational issue as an observer, somewhat detached as I reflect upon it. As the reader, think of the unfolding of this story like a fireside, but academic conversation with me. As I speak, the story weaves in and out of my experiences in the da Vinci Program, at times drawing in pertinent topics that I believe help to clarify particular points and/or my thinking. DiPardo (1990) emphasizes the point that narrative is both significant and essential in the development of knowledge particularly of the “human condition.” She states, “one’s own voice—indeed, one’s intellectual self—is a dynamic blend of the personal and public” (p. 83).

References to “Journal Notes” are taken from my notes maintained throughout the development of the Program and are followed by the day-month-year so as to give the reader a chronological reference in the development of this story. The transcription of personal notes, related materials over the course of the da Vinci Program’s development and implementation, samples of passages, and my readings will serve as the data.

Chapters one through three are arranged similarly to the pattern followed in undertaking a Passage in the Program as outlined above. For a Passage, the student must submit a formal proposal in which the desired learning experience is presented along with the intended evaluation

scheme. This is followed by the actual undertaking and documentation of the experience (the “passage”) and, finally, by the wrap-up where the student summarizes the experience, reflects upon it, and draws whatever conclusions are appropriate. This narrative, then, follows a logical sequence from the background information that led up to the inception of the da Vinci Program notion to the idea as a proposal to the staff of Chugalong Secondary School through to the final stage, or wrap-up wherein I examine the curriculum foundation of the Program and reflect upon the story of da Vinci. I invite the reader to reflect upon the story and the information I have included along the way and to ask, “What are my own presuppositions as I contemplate education and this story?” In the final chapter, under “Recommendations,” I include some thoughts on what I would have done differently and suggest to the reader that you ask yourself what you would have done differently. In this way, you will participate in this story at a deeper level. As a potential program implementor, the exercise should prove beneficial to you if for no other reason than to stimulate greater reflection upon the activity of educating and thereby, hopefully, cause some positive changes.

Directions in My Thinking

Teaching as an integrating process of self and others in the context of learning, be it knowledge or practice, has only become a deeper interest to me within the past eight years. In the four years previous to these I was preoccupied with maintaining the status quo of schooling, developing my identity, using the memories of my student days to guide my approach in dealing with students, and struggling to balance teacher-as-authority with teacher-as-human. I taught French as a Second Language from grades 7 through 12 for twelve years and also a Gifted program for grades 9 and 10 for two of those years. The interaction with students and involvement in extracurricular activities with them was, overall, an enjoyable time. I was able to transcend the barrier of teacher/authority and student/person. I initiated a philosophy club as an avenue for dealing with deeper issues not provided for in the main curriculum and a leisure club for those who just wanted an alternative place to relax during breaks. I have attempted reforming my approach in the delivery of content nearly every year. Some have been subtle alterations (such as evaluation schemes) and some have been major shifts, both in thinking and approach

(treating students as people, as humans). Nonetheless, even after making changes in the courses I taught, I discovered that the “right” approach was still not achieved.

The rigidity of a too-often-stale curriculum (Cuban, 1984), the demands of a distant (figurative and real) administration (Moore, 1992; Bacharach & Shedd, 1989; Mitchell, 1989; Tizzell, 1987; Brady, 1985), the pressures and redundancy of performing the requisite duties, and the desire to ameliorate at least the learning process for students led me to despair at times about the teaching profession and what seemed like the attending act of merely processing students. The image of factory and workers in an impersonal and stifling atmosphere (to which Eisner [1983] also refers) was quite often one I entertained in my thoughts and with friends, not because I was cynical but because the institutionalization of education and its practice reminded me of such a metaphor. It led to much pondering and discussions with those outside of school who indicated interest. I was genuinely concerned with finding the best way to teach given the constraints of time, resources, curriculum demands, and professional or administrative support. I was excited to read how the teacher could exemplify learning through praxis (Freire, 1974). And when I read about an alternative curriculum (Gibbons, 1990) that spoke to those very areas that I had been contemplating for some time, I became increasingly interested in the process of educating.

Leonardo da Vinci, who delved insatiably into the world around him seeking to know more, ever more and bequeathing much to the world (Richter, 1952), was the inspiration for me for a title that seemed the most suitable for a learning process that encompassed living in a real world as opposed, for example, to that factory world of texts, timetables and testing. As Aronowitz (1980) stated, “experienced-based pedagogy is grounded in a theory of learning which argues that the separation of form and content and specifically, the bifurcation of knowledge from its consequences is deleterious to learning” (p. 44). But how could I respond to this? How could any program contend with the traditional paradigm of schooling? The da Vinci Program gave the substance to begin to speak to the problem that Aronowitz (1980) raised.

The Walkabout Papers

Gibbons’ (1990) book, *The Walkabout Papers*, was ordered in 1991 for the staff

professional reading rack (which I was just developing). I took the book and read how he had developed (in the early seventies) an alternative curriculum that, in North America, attempted to address the inadequacy of transition in a structured sense from adolescence to adulthood by helping the student develop the necessary skills that will effectively enable lifelong learning. It was a curriculum based on the traditional practice of Australian aborigine tribes where the adolescent is expected to undertake a solo trek for an extended period of time into the outback as a vital part of the transition to adulthood. A program of five passage categories (see “The da Vinci Program,” p. 4) was developed by Gibbons (1990) that would, with the aid of mentors, help the student to set, negotiate, attain, and celebrate goals that were personal, relevant, and authentic. In turn, these goals would better prepare the individual for fuller participation in society.

As I read the book, I began to think of specific strategies that I could implement in my classes. I thought of practical projects that would be more personal and thus beneficial to the students as well as an evaluation scheme that would be more relevant to the students and be more consistent with learning a second language. The more I read, however, the more I was struck with the notion of learning, *my* thoughts about learning as well as the system of educating, or the institution of schooling.

Education *designed* as a continuous lifelong process requires an approach to teaching and learning suitable for such a long-range perspective. If we acknowledge education as designing resources for development—a strategic array of experiences, activities, relationships, and training to supplement normally available resources for growth—then we must view learning as the desire and ability to use those resources (Gibbons, 1990: 29, emphasis added).

In other words, this was not a process merely to be talked about or mentioned in policies, but to be practiced. But how does that apply to schooling? How did that apply to me? The spark for Gibbons was a film about an Australian aborigine on a walkabout, “a six months-long endurance test during which he must survive alone in the wilderness and return to his tribe an adult, or die in the attempt” (Gibbons, 1990: 2). In the film, the young native encountered a white girl and boy lost in the outback and, eventually, helped them to survive and return to their home. Gibbons states,

What I find most provocative is the stark contrast between the aborigine's Walkabout experience and the test of an adolescent's readiness for adulthood in our own society... By contrast, the young North American boy or girl is faced with written examinations that test skills very far removed from the actual experience he or she will have in real life. He or she writes; he or she does not act. He or she solves familiar theoretical problems; does not apply what he or she knows in strange but real situations. He or she is under direction in a protected environment to the end; does not go out into the world to demonstrate that he or she is prepared to survive in, and contribute to, our society (p. 2, 3).

I pondered this image for a great deal of time. The more I read, however, the more I wanted to see this Program in action. I was excited about and in accord with what I was reading and about the ideas that were provoked. I began reflecting upon my experiences in high school and university as well as in my teaching, comparing these with Gibbons' approach.

On a methodological level, I began to contemplate differences in my class for the following year. Over the course of the summer I gave the book to one of the newly arrived administrators of the school to read. Later that summer, he helped to organize the annual administrator's retreat, inviting Gibbons to speak at it. The questions he raised about the nature of educating and adolescent preparedness acted as catalysts to clarify my own contemplations over the past previous years. I became even more introspective about the nature of my approach in the classroom (French as a Second Language).

Up to this point, I had not arrived at any global responses to the issues mentioned above. I was keenly aware that the vast majority of students in grade twelve (at age 17 and 18) were no more prepared to undertake a systematic course of action to arrive at personally determined goals than students at lower grade levels. Most were planning to go to university. Whenever I confronted a student (this happened a few times) about why s/he was going to university, the typical response was, "Because! You have to go to university," as if this were a universal edict. But when I would pursue the question further, invariably the student would ask, "What else am I going to do?" Usually at that point I would suggest a year off from studies to travel or work so as to think about what s/he really wanted to do.

I researched values clarification and critical thinking strategies, thinking that somehow these could improve the education system. But each of these still tended to be extra-curricular

additions and still only addressed particulars. I continued to search for an improved approach. The longer I taught, though, the more institutionalized I became in my teaching. Yet, this caused a turmoil inside. I despised the practice of schooling and the frustrations began to dominate to the point where I seriously contemplated a career change. More and more, it seemed to me that we were merely processing entities called students.

In my former school near Halifax, Nova Scotia, I had developed a strong, positive reputation in the community (approximately 60,000 population). Innovations tended to be sparse and merely inserts in the curriculum such as recording two to five minute segments of television programs and having my students develop, in small groups, a French dialogue that would suit the film. While highly successful, such curricular activities were indicative of my attempts to enliven the traditional approach.

When I moved to British Columbia and began teaching in Chugalong Secondary, I had to contend with an antiquated French as a Second Language (FSL) curriculum (literally several years behind that in my previous school) and an emphasis on Provincial Examination results. I had to balance these with my desire to make the FSL Program more dynamic and practical. I employed a contract system of evaluation and tried various techniques to impress upon the students the idea that the language needed to be practiced by the student. I also believed that each student should have more responsibility in his/her learning.

While reading *The Walkabout Papers* rekindled the excitement of learning for me, gradually there grew within me a sense of confusion mixed with excitement and even greater concern about the nature of educating. The upheaval was felt throughout other aspects of my life, too, but particularly regarding education. The more I thought about the possibility of Gibbons' ideas, the more I felt dissatisfied with teaching in general and the more this alternative approach seemed the most suitable response.

Chapter One
Proposal
Genesis of an idea

During my reading of Gibbons' (1990) book, *The Walkabout Papers*, I was often amazed at the concurrence of my ideas with his as though my thoughts and laments on education were being given substance and specific direction. Reading that book, the subsequent dialogues, and rethinking that information helped me to re-examine the role of the student and that of the teacher. How could the system of schooling be altered or challenged to move away from its traditional stance? As I quoted from Gibbons (1990) above, it was also my contention that the traditional paradigm of schooling was lacking in its approach and substance. The approach tends to be dominated by emphasis on academics and the substance tends to be preparation for evaluation. Gibbons (1990) states that there are, among others, three "tendencies in schooling[:]. . . the tendency to cultivate failure, isolation and confusion. In the traditional paradigm all learning leads to the test and its proven success in it . . . While tests create pressure to learn, they primarily serve the needs of management and create serious downside risk for the learning of many students" (p. 147).

Gibbons (1976, 1990, 1991a, 1991b) presented variations of how teaching and learning could be accomplished differently than in the traditional paradigm, thoughts that had already been a part of my thinking for several years. Concerning the traditional practice of schooling, he states:

But it seems to me that our expectations are conditioned by student performance in courses. In fact, we have no idea what they may be capable of when the same energy and ingenuity that have gone into our system for teaching them subjects are transformed into a system for supporting their development of their own potential. How far they can and will go along any particular path they choose may be limited, over the years, only by their ability to conceive of it as possible and our ability to confirm it (p. 14).

But my perception of curricular and administrative restrictions was significant enough to cause some concern about even approaching the administration to propose a program of alternative learning despite the increasing frustrations of working in the traditional framework and subsequent concern about students and learning.

As September, 1991, and another school year approached, I was beginning to toy with the idea of attempting something of a similar nature as Gibbons' thesis. I began to write up a possible program approach that approximated Gibbons' model but with some reticence to attempt it. Nevertheless, I decided to ask the school administration if I could "do this program." Initially, I was given encouraging support by the administrator to whom I had passed Gibbons' book that summer ("What do you need?") and by the third week of September called a staff meeting to present my proposal entitled, "The da Vinci Files." I was eager to implement Gibbons' (1990) ideas but somewhat nervous about presenting my version to the staff. I was interested as much in receiving input and suggestions as I was in seeing others involved in the development and implementation of the Program. This was to be the beginning of an excitement for me that grew steadily over the course of that year and into the following year. Reading *The Walkabout Papers* (Gibbons, 1990) and the time over the summer months to wonder how it might work and what it might look like helped me to begin to think about a viable possibility in alternative learning.

Staff Meeting and Response

A copy of my proposal, "The da Vinci Files" (see Appendix 1, p. 95), was given to each staff member and to the administrators and a meeting was scheduled a week later. This was the beginning document that began the dialogues and the questions. About twenty-five of the staff (approximately 30 total) appeared at the meeting after school hours to hear clarifications and pose any questions regarding the proposal. The fact that so many had turned out was satisfying to see. I briefly commented on the content and timeline. Most were politely interested and wanted to know what the ramifications would be upon their classes. Others wondered if it was similar to a gifted program that I had facilitated for two years previously (which, interestingly, incorporated practical, critical thinking activities and some experiential learning projects). Only about eight people were vocal, but the concerns raised were certainly legitimate. Was this Program going to take place during school time? Was it just for gifted students? Could any student be in it? Who decides which students are in it? How many students would there be? Who was Maurice Gibbons, anyway? What was so special about the Program? How was it

going to affect other teachers and courses? What did the Program do for the student?

At the time, I was a bit perplexed at the questions. Hadn't I given them enough information? I explained that I didn't have answers in many cases, but I was seeking their feedback and willingness to dialogue and especially participate. In retrospect, I can see that I was acting rather naïvely. First, I did not have a well-laid out master plan, just an introduction. Second, I hadn't given ample thought to the nature of the Program and to what exactly I wanted to see transpire. I wanted to "do this Program," not knowing what else to do beyond making a presentation with some aspirations that the staff would want to join in. But this had its meritorious side. In such a bare-bones introduction, I was able to garner the support and willing participation of a few. Third, I hadn't really researched this enough—the Program, its workings, or the impact of attempted change on an organization. I had read a book (*The Walkabout Papers*), I was challenged by the ideas, and I wanted to see the ideas happen in this school. More importantly to me, I wanted the staff to become as interested as I was. After all, it was the students who had the most to gain.

The Core Group

About six staff members were interested enough to seek another meeting to clarify the Program's curriculum and even to become involved in it in some way while others were vocally content to let me work out the details and continue "my project." My perception was that the latter staff members were not interested in altering their teaching strategies and certainly not keen on having their classes interrupted through parting students on their way to "some special class."

A meeting was scheduled after school hours a few days later for the six interested staff members consisting of a teacher's aide (SETA) in the school's Alternate Program, four other teachers from diverse teaching backgrounds: Business Education, Intermediate Science, English, Drama, Western Civilization, and myself, French, and Gifted program. We proceeded to meet on several occasions with resolve to work out a plan of implementation.

Site Development Grant Proposal

We decided to apply to the Ministry of Education for a Site Development Grant with the hope of receiving enough money to enable us to have some release-time from our teaching duties

in order to develop further the idea of the Walkabout concept (see Appendix 2, “Initial Site Development Grant Proposal,” p. 97). We spent after school hours and even a couple of supper meetings discussing, challenging and writing down ideas and compiling information, referring often to *The Walkabout Papers*. As the deadline for the grant approached, the group decided to access personal Professional Development funds in order to take an entire day (October 10, 1991) to finalize the grant proposal. As that day progressed, I paused at one point and asked aloud, “What if we don’t get any grant money?” There was silence. “Are we going to continue? It’ll mean extra hours and lots of work!” As cliché as it sounds, “Yes!” was the unanimous response, “This is too right. It has to take place!” At that point, the ideas seemed too beneficial to students and even us to just relinquish. My journal notes from this time indicate some of the shared thoughts and directing points:

Walkabout—what is it about?

- challenging people without which we have a high drop-out; irrelevant curriculum
- provide more freedom in curriculum; involvement in community and beyond
- set up curriculum—very specific, very practical, need relevant resources
- give student different audiences (celebration)—peers, experts, parents
- self-directed study; student-oriented/directed
- survival skills
- holistic
- how celebrate without “sugar” [incentives]
- learning is/as a right of passage
- reason for living
- journey unto itself and benefit from journey
- discovery of new and other places to visit; quest
- learning without manipulation
- teacher also involved in process
- community connection
- help kids become life long learners
- time to “grow up” as a civilization in our approach to educating

Question: 1) Just a change of excitement about a job or actually how we (I) believe the individual learns?

- need clear thinkers for future and now is the time for change
- evidence already (albeit scattered thruout curriculum) that this works (work experience for example)

2) Prepared to deal with approach to educating because of the complexity of the future?

- discreet program: if begin with small group—non-threatening to other teachers—isolate key individuals who would benefit from this approach—doesn’t jeopardize the other staff members’ program (Journal

Notes, 11-10-91).

It was very exhilarating to work in this group. We were cohesive, supportive of ideas, encouraging, and energized by a marvelous idea. Slowly, the ideas for our own program took shape. The superintendent, whose wife was one of the original da Vinci group, offered concrete support in the form of his secretary's word processing skills in writing up our grant proposal. The materials that we were developing, often referring to Gibbons' writings, were presented to the staff for their responses and participation. Throughout its development, the da Vinci team ensured that the staff and administrations as well as the community were well informed. Despite the wealth of information and eagerness to dialogue on my part, some staff members articulated dislike of the Program. The reactions of some were startling ("Students need a teacher in front of the class." "I like being in control." "I am the expert and no one from the community can do my job." "You don't know what the hell you're talking about." "If it's [da Vinci] so good, why aren't there more such programs around?" "This is just for the elite, isn't it!" "What's wrong with the way I teach now?") and a number of surprising rumours filtered back to us from other schools in the district about what the Program supposedly was ("...another gifted program," "...an elitist program, not really good for the average learner," "...just self-directed learning, oh, we're doing that, too,"—Notes, 06-91).

On one particular occasion, we specifically requested a return response to our grant document which we provided to each of the staff members, but of the twenty-four other staff members only one individual returned the information with valuable questions and written concerns. Working with the same individuals over a period of time affords one the luxury of better understanding idiosyncrasies. In this case, I was not completely surprised that we were left on our own to pursue this program. Yet, I still hoped that our obvious enthusiasm and efforts would inspire others to consider seriously our endeavours and take an active interest in them. I expected to receive at least several responses back, even if they were negative. But the single response we did receive found us musing about the nature of the Program and the demonstrated indifference of the staff. Since the focus of the Program was on the student and improving his/her learning experience, not to mention the attractive benefits for the teacher (such as

broadening his/her role, increased interaction with the individual adolescent, modeling learning, building and capitalizing on student interests), I was somewhat puzzled at the apparent reticence to change.

The community, on the other hand, was as much a cause of concern as it was a valuable resource. At a public presentation at the school, many community members expressed tremendous interest and willingness to share their expertise, from graphic arts to sewing to mechanics and so on. I heard of one incident that a parent expressed concern that his/her child was “doing da Vinci” in regular classes and s/he was not about to have that. Nothing of the sort was taking place. I was slightly amused and, once again, amazed at the misinformation, concurring with the others that we continue to inform the public and the staff.

During the first year of development, the two administrators of the school continued to offer support and facilitate venues for acceptance and growth of the da Vinci Program, whether at staff meetings or with individual teachers. Occasionally, as I was inclined to be bullish in my enthusiasm, the administrators would call me into one of their offices to offer constructive criticisms, whether regarding my interaction with others or in presenting information. This carried on throughout the year and I believe I grew the most professionally in that time. I appreciated their candor but also their genuineness. I was sure they expressed a united desire to see the da Vinci Program fully implemented in the school and to pressure those staff members to change who were opposed to or otherwise unsupportive of the Program. While accolades were welcomed from the administrative levels, after a period of absentee and oblique verbal support in the following school year, I began to doubt the sincerity of the “shared” vision particularly in light of the evident lack of understanding about the nature of the Program noted through lack of participation or sustained active support.

The meetings continued after school hours even after the grant proposal had been completed and sent to the appropriate government department. However, we still wrestled with what the final outcome would actually be like. How would the Program actually function? Even though we had thought, discussed, written and read, a concrete idea of the day-to-day working of the Program eluded us. We felt assured that it would work and that it was somehow very right,

very necessary but confessed difficulty with envisioning its practical operation.

Jefferson County Mountain Open School

Near Denver, Colorado, Jefferson County Mountain Open School continues to function as a Walkabout school: that is, it follows a similar format as that outlined in Gibbons' (1990) book, *The Walkabout Papers*. Gibbons (1990) refers to the school in his book and Horwood (1987) offers an in-depth account of the school. I had contacted the school principal in late September, 1991, after the presentation of "The da Vinci Files" to inquire about the school (referred to as Jeff Co) and the finer points of its operations. This information was beneficial on occasion later on as the da Vinci team (as it came to be called) discussed various ideas concerning the Program. We wanted a local program but without the proverbial re-inventing the wheel. At some point early in our discussions, the notion of a trip to Denver to visit the school was introduced (part of the grant proposal included the request for funding for the group to travel there to observe).

After the grant proposal was sent, we continued to work out details of the Program mainly through dialogue and reading. The more we discussed its operation, the more we were determined to visit Jeff Co. In mid-December, we received a \$16,000.00 grant (from our proposed total of about \$26,000.00). The request for several thousand dollars for the team to travel to Denver had been denied by the Ministry. I felt that the grant was an initial confirmation that we were actually doing something legitimate. Given this, we began to talk seriously about the real possibility of traveling to Denver, somehow finding the resources. We were told that the superintendent would help us in our plans by offering to pay for part of our trip. We hastily made travel arrangements over the Christmas school break confident that we could secure the remaining funds necessary to complete the trip.

In the beginning of January, 1992, after some discussions with the superintendent and the District Professional Development Committee, we received enough funds to go. The administrator to whom I had passed Gibbons' book during the summer wished to join us and so six of us (the SETA from the Alternate Program declined) confirmed plans to go to Jeff Co. While the trip was scheduled for January 18 - 22, 1992, a few staff members voiced concerns that "those da Vinci people" should have such special privileges and asked why couldn't they get

some money as well to go on trips and have release-time? I was astonished at this response after the amount of time that we had spent in disseminating information to, and encouraging dialogue with the staff. It seemed to me to be another example of the unwillingness of some staff members to genuinely consider what it was that we were attempting to accomplish. Some of us tried to explain that we had already put in tens of hours of our own time and had continually invited staff to participate, but this seemed not to assuage the vocal malcontents. After having made all the necessary arrangements, we left on schedule. For three days (Wednesday to Friday) we, in groups of two or individually so as to collect as much information as possible, interviewed, observed, questioned, photocopied and, later on, discussed our findings.

Begun in 1973 as an alternative school, Jeff Co developed to its present approach. Gibbons' (1990, xvi) Walkabout article, according to Mr. Jeff Bogard (Bogard, 1992), came about a year afterward and the teachers decided to contact Gibbons since his ideas corresponded so well with the direction of the school. The da Vinci Program owes a great deal to Jeff Co both in terms of the directional support it received from the various teachers there and from the information retrieved and adapted. We even spoke amongst ourselves of establishing a means of transferability of credits between the schools for students in the Program should any students wish to pursue alternative studies in a different and enriching environment for a short duration. A group of students and chaperones from Jeff Co did pass through our community within the year and we coordinated a brief rendez-vous. Since that time (to the time of this writing), no further contact has been made.

There are three main reasons, I believe, for the lack of continued communication. Beginning a new curriculum, and a radical one at that, consumes a tremendous amount of time. In many respects, the feeling among the da Vinci team was that it was akin to having two jobs. Regular teaching duties can be time consuming enough by themselves. Developing a curricular approach that largely departs from the traditional paradigm of schooling on top of the regular duties, however, left little time remaining for correspondence. Also, due to the nature of being so involved in the Program, little thought was given to maintain correspondence. Thus no one took the initiative to do so whether through lack of interest, busyness, or lack of an organized

arrangement to do so.

For the three full school days that we spent at Jeff Co, we interviewed, video taped, collected materials, and observed. We were struck time and time again by both the aura of calm in the school and the articulateness of the students regardless of their particular social orientation (leather jackets to preppies to dreadlocks). This experience was as beneficial to us personally and professionally as it was pedagogically. On the personal and professional level, the intensity of the interaction and the open willingness, even desire, to share information and ideas were enlightening and liberating. Excitement about the potential in our own school moved us to think of ways to ensure the da Vinci Program would be implemented. It caused us to think of changes we could attempt in our classrooms (such as evaluative schemes and learning contracts) and of cooperative ventures between teachers. We were also intrigued by the seeming peacefulness exhibited by both the staff and the students. Did that help to account for the waiting list of teachers to get into this school? Or the waiting list of students to enroll?

On a pedagogical level, here was a Walkabout Program that was working, fully operating as an extension of Gibbons' (1990) thesis. Students were taught and accepted the responsibility of self-directed learning. Experiential learning was a significant part of the student's overall senior education. Subjects were also taught but even the process of timetabling, course selection, evaluation, and documentation were challenges to our traditional framework. Subjects were offered according to perceived needs by the teachers/advisors and according to the expressed preferences of the students. In some cases, courses were taught by an "expert" from the community or even by a student.

Certainly the students were not portrayed as unique (i.e., gifted or underachievers, etc.) but clearly demonstrated, in our observations and interviews, typical behaviours for adolescents grouped in a school setting. The only difference that was noted was as mentioned above regarding the positive, goal-focused, and self-determined activities and articulation of the students. To have students become interested and proactive in their own learning seemed to have a direct correlation with the structure of the curriculum and the functioning and nature of the whole school environment which would confirm similar findings by Crumpacker & Esposito,

1993; Darling-Hammond, 1993; Ozar, 1993; Provost, 1993; Becher, 1992; Harber, 1992; Cousins, 1991; Christopher, 1990; Genevro, 1990; Haller, Monk, Spotted-Bear, Griffith, & Moss, 1990; Rieselbach, 1990; Horwood, 1987; Tizzell, 1987; Gray & Chanoff, 1986; Graves, 1985, 1993a; Cuban, 1984; Conners, 1983; Eisner, 1983; Alexander, Ishikawa & Silverstein, 1977; Strauss, 1977; Gibbons, 1976, 1990; Dworkin, 1965.

On the return flight, and even in our hotel prior to leaving Denver, we each spoke of the transformations within as a result of this experience, likening it to a passage. This was an exciting challenge to us—to appropriate this milieu into the one to which we were returning. But here was a dichotomy of pedagogical urgings. On one hand, I wanted to see a similar program—the da Vinci Program—implemented fully in our school. On the other hand, I wanted to stay and slip into this educational setting so as to learn more and to grow. Nevertheless, we returned home speaking of one of the greatest professional development experiences any of us had had. Turning to our school and the challenges ahead of implementing an alternative curriculum, we felt prepared and anxious to begin that process.

Chapter Two

Passage

Pilot Program

The information from Jeff Co, our experiences over the months, and the Site Development Grant which we received culminated in our felt readiness to implement the Program as a pilot attempt with twenty students. This number was decided upon since we wanted to ensure success both with respect to advising (assigning four to each advisor seemed to be a reasonable number largely due to the demands of our regular course loads) and to the spirit of the Program. By this time, the da Vinci team was comprised of just five teachers. The SETA remained an interested advocate and the vice-principal who had accompanied us to Jeff Co continued with his responsibilities but promoted the ideas as well as encouraged me. While we solicited a potential pilot group from the staff and included our own suggestions, we soon discovered that it was becoming easier to think in terms of generating a list of those students who, for behavioural or academic reasons, would be unsuitable for a pilot attempt (it was a much shorter list). We indicated that students exhibiting gifted tendencies, under achievement, or anyone who would be considered a “suitable” candidate would be welcomed submissions though we, the da Vinci team, reserved the right to decide the actual group. Given that the remaining school time was short and being conscious of academics, gender balance, social significance, as well as the importance of best enabling the Program, we agreed upon a diverse grouping drawn from the list of recommendations.

The list of the initial twenty students was divided among us and we approached each student individually, explaining the Program to each one with an encouraging request to participate. Most of the students were interested with six from the first group of twenty declining. We presented a brief profile of our interests and backgrounds to this group and each one was asked to choose a team member as his/her advisor along with a second choice. The results were only slightly imbalanced and so adjusted to spread the numbers evenly amongst the team. The procedures (see Appendix 2, p. 102) and the decisions were explained to the students with an invitation for feedback. The students accepted the outcomes and a letter was sent home

to the participating students' parents with a request to attend a retreat that was specifically held to explain further the Program to the group.

Our first retreat was held at a local Boy Scout's camp. We "walked through" the Program with the students, instructing them in critical thinking and study strategies, time management, journal keeping, and the actual demands of the da Vinci Program. Activities were developed to help the students participate in small support groups and to have times of reflection. The response was very positive from the students, demonstrated through their openly discussing some concerns and expressed heightened interest in following through in the Program. Most of the parents attended a one-night presentation and supported our attempt with some interest.

In the end, fourteen students formed the pilot group of which four actually completed a passage by June of that school year (see Appendix 5, "Pilot Group" for samples, p.135). The students were drawn from classes on Thursday mornings usually for one half hour each. During this time, we pursued ideas, developed proposals, helped problem-solve, and clarified aspects of the Program. Two advisors worked with their da Vinci students for half of the morning followed by the other two advisors for the remaining half. One team member who had been a long-term substitute for a teacher on maternity leave had left and was now teaching in one of the other schools, leaving just four of us on the team. Two substitute teachers were hired on the mornings when we conducted our advising. These two covered the classes of the first two advisors and then move on to the other two advisor's classes while the first two advisors returned to their classes. We were very conscientious about trying not to use too much money from the grant or disrupting our regular teaching assignments. For the months of May and June, this approach appeared to work quite well. We were also concerned about the image we were portraying to the staff and community, wanting to ensure a bona fide program.

Although it came as no surprise after the first month to find that most of the da Vinci students were having a difficult time maintaining journal entries, we were, nonetheless, concerned. After all, part of a successful completion of the passage demanded the valuable resource of reflecting on the record of notes kept during the learning process. Gibbons (1990, 1992) himself had noted similar struggles (and others that I was to note as time went on).

Negotiating a learning project based on a personal interest was nearly as challenging as performing the passage for the students. With the exception of a few, these students tended to neglect not only journal writing, but also following through with their own ideas. Despite the fact that each one had initiated a personal learning project that was generated by his/her own interest, pursuing its completion seemed to be as onerous as completing assignments in regular course work. Advising for each of the team members included suggestions in time management, scheduling, writing properly, and encouraging, all of which continued with the next stage, the implementation of the da Vinci Program as an open offering to the school. It seemed strange to us that given the opportunity to do so, students tended to avoid completing tasks, even ones that were personally initiated and sanctioned by external authority (the teacher/advisor), whether because of fear of failure, fear of the freedom to pursue actual interests (needs), or because of the novelty of the Program and approach. Similar scenarios occurred during the first year of implementation (discussed further on).

There was uncertainty about the procedures although the da Vinci team intended to create a “survival kit” of necessary documents for permission from parents and the Board officials. At one presentation to the board officials, I mentioned to one of the members that I was taking one of the da Vinci students sky diving, which was her particular passage (Physical Challenge), to which the member responded, “I don’t want to hear that!” Nothing more was said until later on in an informal meeting with the administrators of Chugalong Secondary where it was suggested that the sky diving trip might not be a good idea. As it was, a formal school permission form was used to document parental, teacher, and administrative approval. I replied that, by that point, we had already gone ahead and successfully completed the passage (that was May 13, 1992). Other concerns were also a part of the team’s consideration as is evident from the following extract from my notes:

Concerns—Real and Potential

-time commitment

-write-ups (proposals and wrap-ups)

-legalities—Advisors meet regularly to cover passages—mutual support and understanding.

-set of principles of safety: Does it violate- self?

- others?
 - life?
 - general acceptable standards?
- (Journal Notes, 6-05-92)

My concern at the time was between taking a calculated risk with permission from the parents and encouraging the various administrations to support the program with active direction for a policy development. Ensuring the safety of the student was foremost in my mind and I am sure in the minds of the others. But there is a fine line between restricting activities for the sake of fear and relinquishing much of this control to the parents, student and the advisor. I as an advisor and the parents would have to be clear about the nature of the passage and attempt to examine the possible scenarios that could inhibit its successful completion. To use the sky diving passage as an example, despite the fact that we (the student, parents and I) verified the relative safety of the passage, that there was the drill-training prior to the jump conducted by the sky diving school, and that I accompanied her to the jump site and jumped, too, there is, nonetheless, a slight margin of risk that cannot be avoided. It is, and it was stated, a fact that it is possible for a parachute not to open, even after all the packing precautions have been taken. It is possible, too, that the landing could be just wrong enough to cause bodily injury or the airplane could crash. At some point, I thought, we have to accept the risk and proceed or discontinue. It is also a part of learning. The parents were in full agreement. Still, even as I kneeled in the plane beside her, I thought about the above scenarios. I also reflected on the program at Jeff Co and marveled that so many challenging activities were sanctioned in a country that is known, rightly or wrongly, for lawsuits. Some of these included major trips to Mexico or New York, bike riding or hiking ventures in the desert or working in a biological research laboratory. Not only did we not have a policy in place, but neither was there insistance upon such. The school permission form and an individual teacher approval form had been signed by the appropriate people, thus giving support. For the time being, this seemed to work well enough.

Administrative Involvement

Studies of innovation in school systems generated conclusions that were even more at odds with traditional management models. Schools that were particularly innovative were found to have 'norms of collegiality' and 'norms of continuous improvement' that minimize status differences between administrators and

teachers, engage all staff members in planning new programs, and cultivate an on-going critical dialogue on how school programs and every individual's performance might be improved (Bacharach and Shedd, 1989: 149).

Prior to the arrival of the new administration in the school, decisions were made consultatively and the staff accepted the dictums generally without quarrel. A staff committee had already been established and served to deal with key issues that affected the school from policy-making to budgets. At the same time that da Vinci was being "fleshed out," the new administrators (principal and vice-principal) assigned to the school consisted of a successful previous principal of an elementary school in the district and a principal from outside the district but known to the superintendent.

I learned of the power struggle between the two early on. The elementary principal was relegated to the role of vice-principal, despite his efforts to work toward a collaborative principalship, thus modeling a consensus approach for the staff. While the staff struggled with the concept of collaborative decision-making instead of voting on issues, the principal assumed his role of top-down authoritarian, indicating that he had already done his stint as vice-principal. Although the consensus model gained strength in staff meetings, from appearances, it seemed as though the principal tolerated rather than supported the process. The overall situation, nonetheless, was one of continued schooling with suspicion or at least questions of ulterior motives of the actions of the administration.

Mitchell (1989: 163) notes that for administrators, "the key question is whether to view schools as bureaucracies or as professional communities." Certainly contending with teacher unionism (Bacharach & Shedd, 1989), conflicting community demands coupled with a perhaps over-sensitivity to accountability, and changes in the power manipulation take their toll on the individual who strives to maintain control despite Bacharach & Shedd's (1989) conclusion that "[t]he top-down management techniques that were sources of efficiency in an earlier era have grown increasingly inefficient in today's more specialized, varied and variable product markets" (p. 151).

It was the perception of several staff members including myself that the situation appeared to be the administrators struggling along a path of domination. That the vice-principal

requested a transfer, to a classroom if need be, at the end of that school year because he “couldn’t work with him (the principal) anymore” and accepted a principalship of another elementary school says something about the nature of the conflict that power can cause. Bosetti, Landry & Miklos’ (1989) critique of what is called the dominant rationalist model of administration is appropriate here, particularly that this model “emphasizes regulation and power rather than choice in public administration.” Thus, I would conclude that in this particular situation Mitchell’s (1989) question was not a part of this administration’s role except for the vice-principal’s attempts to treat teachers as equals and his striving to work toward the same goal, that is, the education of people. The unionist mentality of we-they, their job and ours, was evident and likely added to the conflict and frustrations of the administration to a certain degree.

As a teacher and curriculum innovator/implementer, I expected those individuals involved in the administration of schooling to show greater interest (if not participation) in new programs, especially of the philosophical and practical caliber of the da Vinci Program. Personal expectations and actual practice are dichotomous themes it seems in education. While general interest was expressed, active participation was limited to occasional responses which became fewer as the first year of the Program progressed. Little more was demonstrated from any of the levels of administration which supports the findings of Harber (1992), Fullan (1990), Miller & Seller (1990), Brady (1985), Cuban (1984), Wilson (1981) and Hills, (1975a, 1975b). Miller & Seller (1990) noted in their discussion of roles and implementation that

Although the teacher is the actual implementor of a new program, the roles of the principal...and superintendent as support to teachers are equally important ...[I]mplementation success can depend a great deal on the overt signs of support for the new program given by principals and superintendents, for example, budgetary actions, comments made in public, and *personal interest shown in the progress of the implementation*. Principals who frequently discuss the implementation with their staff at meetings, who personally talk with individual teachers about the new program and assist them in solving problems show a greater success in implementation in their schools than principals who do not engage in these activities (p. 283—italics added).

At one point, an individual hired by the school board to film various new programs in the district arrived at Chugalong Secondary. She interviewed us (the team) and explained the

general purpose of the filming project. We never saw the finished product and it was never suggested to us that we should. Part of the rationale offered for the filming project was a kind of show-and-tell (or “dog and pony show” as we called it) for the district. In other words, “Look what’s happening in our district.” As with the staff of the school, it would appear that the various levels of administration viewed the da Vinci Program as merely a program—no more significant educationally than a self-directed methodology or photography course. It was simply an event that was owned by a particular group (the team).

Presentations and Responses

The staff was informed about what was being done as much out of professional courtesy as out of genuine desire to influence some to consider the Program and join in. After a few weeks, however, there appeared to be a growing chasm between the “da Vinci types” and the rest of the staff. The da Vinci team was perceived as giving cause for some alarm because of the (assumed) potential future threat against some of the existing courses, particularly those with few students. This persisted despite our efforts to keep everyone abreast of the development. Two weeks after our return from Denver, for example, a one-half day presentation was scheduled for the benefit of the staff in which great pains were taken to explain the development of the da Vinci idea, the trip to Jeff Co, and the direction of the implementation (see Appendix 3, p. 107 for the agenda). The staff showed polite interest. Despite our increased enthusiasm and desire to dialogue, the staff remained disinterested in changing or at least in considering the da Vinci Program as an active interest. Although we anticipated questions, distributed information packages that outlined the Program, and solicited feedback as well as participation (for the most part polite gestures of thanks were all that were offered), we heard hearsay accusations concerning the staff’s dislike of “being pushed” to accept this Program, or of being tired of hearing about da Vinci, or of the perceived threat to other courses if it were to be added to the already-burdened timetable. It was interesting to note the entrenchment of some of the staff in their thinking that this was some insidious threat to them personally, that they would have to *change*. It is around this time that I began to re-examine some of the earlier process of attempting to deal with change (the staff even had a professional day workshop organized by the

professional development committee of the school on the concept of change, but I am doubtful that much really changed).

Shortly after our return from Denver, a presentation of the same material was made to the community through the local Cable Television station. In April, the da Vinci team presented at a workshop for the district-wide professional development day followed by a special presentation at one of the other two secondary schools in the district.

This school was much more open about its disinterest in this curriculum alternative. Approximately twenty staff members (of about thirty-five and excluding the administration) attended our presentation. I was struck by the number of people who were busy marking assignments throughout the presentation. Since there had been some misinformation that had somehow filtered down to this school, such as the Program being the same as their own self-directed learning project or of its being just for gifted students, part of our question and answer period was taken up with dispelling such. We left information packages with the staff but heard nothing more from this school.

Change and Timetables

The notion of perceived threat to other teachers and their courses became even more pronounced as the staff considered altering the timetable for the following school year. The school's timetable (which one individual affectionately wanted to call the *learning table*), a topic that had been batted about since my arrival at the school five years previous, reached the point of achieving real change beginning that next school year. A number of hours were spent discussing options and different desires both collegially and in a particular committee. One person at a staff meeting voiced concern about "all those da Vinci people" being on the timetable committee (comprised of approximately six people). Actually there was me and one other person from the four-member da Vinci team on it and that after a request for volunteers. Part of a staff meeting was devoted to the presentation of several models, one of which was set forth by the da Vinci team that emphasized a more open concept similar to most university timetables. The main argument was that this model accommodated everyone's desires, was the most suitable for the da Vinci Program, and approached a more humane convenience for students. That staff members

would have to cooperate in deciding the slotting of their subjects was readily admitted and encouraged. One staff member suggested (seriously) that I present a working example. I attempted to accommodate his challenge but gave up after trying for a week to fit all the courses into a possible scenario and after realizing I had missed my own point: “staff *members* would have to *cooperate* in deciding the slotting of their subjects.”

At one point in a meeting of a timetable interest group, I voiced my frustration at the seeming lack of ability to comprehend an open timetable as if none of those present had ever been to university. I was aware that sitting down with one another and deciding upon the best time for such and such courses, even rethinking preparation of information units for those students who could manage the material on their own would require additional time, possibly even over the summer months. I had hoped that the system could be changed through reasoned discussion and reflection, a dialogical approach to educating as opposed to the atomistic continuation of schooling that seems to be moving along by the sheer force of its own momentum (Cuban, 1984; Eisner, 1983). The decision was to alter slightly the then present structure. Some staff even balked at spending any time on the timetable. After all, it was stated, that is what the administrators get paid for!

One encouraging aspect of the change in the timetable was the inclusion, at least, of specific times for the da Vinci Program to carry on its advising (a critical part of the Program). While this was a positive statement that we interpreted as a hopeful sign of acceptance, the day-to-day functioning of da Vinci, we discovered, was left to us to continue. No changes occurred where staff members became actively involved in the Program. In actual practice this was also the main slot where special events were presented and course changes were undertaken during the first two to three weeks of the school year which had adverse effects on the Program (discussed below in “Year One: Walk Through,” p. 39).

Preparation for Implementation: The Art of Quiet Revolution

In September, 1992, 114 students of the approximately 450 student population at the school had chosen da Vinci (as an elective “course”) which was beyond my anticipation though much to the team’s satisfaction. There was no doubt in my mind that this “statement” would

rankle a few staff members. This simply caused us to be all the more concerned about the legitimacy and the success of the Program. Plans were completed to teach the group rather than assume some requisite skills such as time management, critical thinking, journal keeping, interviewing, and cooperation. While we argued that the Program ought to be a part of every student's learning experience, we nonetheless sought to establish quickly a group of students who would become enthusiastic about learning. We believed that if the students did actually respond in this way, as well as experience the value of advising, negotiating and seeking ways to attain goals, they would begin to exert pressures on the other teachers to alter some of their teaching strategies, even move to embrace the da Vinci Program. We believed, too, that over a period of time (I kept suggesting it as the "Five Year Plan"), Chugalong would become the da Vinci School with, hopefully, an interchange of students (and teachers) among the secondary schools in the district. Surely, I thought, the successful students in the Program would tout the benefits and achievements possible from participating in it. Parents, community, and other students would eventually hear about it. Since all our other attempts to encourage greater staff participation failed to move anybody to become involved, this became a simpler way, energy and time-wise, to bring about change in the school. While we continued to assert the benefits of the da Vinci Program wherever possible, I was no longer so adamant or bullish about it. Instead, we concentrated on perfecting the Program's operation and planned for a strong beginning.

Despite the earlier presentation to staff and encouragement to them to read the materials, the da Vinci team continued on its own to manage the Program. After all, it was "our idea." Since the "revolution" was obviously not going to transpire immediately, perhaps a more "creative" solution needed to be explored. The problem that needed this solution was how to get a staff to embrace a radical approach (the da Vinci Program) that would both benefit the student and refresh the teacher, a program, it was argued, that would accommodate students of diverse learning levels while aiding each one to achieve those necessary skills for successful interaction in society. Gibbons (1990) must have anticipated much the same as is evident in his statement:

Many teachers new to S-D [self-directed] programs report feeling incompetent in the classroom initially. Some find their personal philosophy of education severely challenged. Others find difficulty finding personal gratification in their new

teaching role... Those who believe that all students should be treated in the same way find themselves in deep conflict as students and their programs become more divergent and require more divergent responses from teachers (p. 64).

I began to believe that the successful participants in the program would inevitably cause the staff and even the system to change: a silent revolution. Through increased interaction with and in the school, the parents and the community would likewise aid the “revolution.” I was hopeful that over a period of time, the community would reap many benefits from active participation with the education of its own young people and thus come to recognize the vitality of integrating education in the context of the whole community.

Year One: Walk Through

The pilot program had enabled us to experiment fairly cautiously with the details of the Program. The day-to-day operation of da Vinci was no longer a nebulous concept but a firmer reality. Thus, we were ready to propose formally that it be made a part of the learning program at the school. In the spring of each year, the counseling department helps students prepare for the following academic year by having them register for courses. In preparation for the student selection, a course selection booklet containing the course offerings at the school is developed each year. The da Vinci Program was a newcomer and was presented to the students as an elective in the booklet but only after some protest from me. I had been approached by the administration and the counseling department to draft a brief statement about da Vinci for the course selection booklet. I was adamant, once again, that da Vinci was not a course and confounded by the constricting restrictions of the administration and counseling department for a short description of such a dynamic program. I insisted that da Vinci was an alternative learning approach and that, in fact, it should be part of every student’s program in the school. I was told that this was merely a stepping stone to getting da Vinci into the school as a fully operational program. I discussed the matter with the team and we acquiesced, feeling somewhat cheated by this quick-fix approach. I believed, instead, that a concerted effort on the part of the administration and, subsequently, the school would establish a more secure program in the eyes of the students and the community (Mitchell, 1989; Bacharach, 1988; Brady, 1985; Wilson, 1981; Aronowitz, 1980; Hills, 1975b), that da Vinci would be viewed as more than another

curricular novelty.

Although the relegation of da Vinci to the status of elective course in the face of my opposition was a small set-back for me, the large number of students who enrolled in the Program served as a confirmation for the team that the Program that September was appealing to and desired by the students. Would the initial high numbers send a message to the staff, I wondered. My hope was that it would spur some of the staff members to seek more information about the nature of the Program and even become involved. Despite the large group, not to mention the effect of reducing sizes in some of the elective courses, ironically the only individual to become involved was a teacher new to the school that September who was filling a temporary position for another person on temporary leave.

By that time, the necessary documents were printed for the students, the group was divided up among us, and a plan of action was generated for the first three weeks. The Program debuted that school year with approximately 114 students, but the total dropped to approximately 60 within the first three months. Lack of a strong and sustained beginning at the commencement of the year along with the misconceptions by the students themselves about the real nature of the Program are the dominant contributing factors in explanation for this. The unfortunate situation of the allotted time for course changes and a new timetable conflicted with our meetings with the students during the first two weeks of the school year. Technically, there were three advising time slots in the timetable: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 8:30 to about 9:45. While this was also a time for students to take advantage of additional help in their course work, many sat or wandered in the hallways. As the students in the da Vinci Program were to pursue their interests also during this time (after advising and other preparations had already taken place), some staff members were quick to note those “da Vinci kids” who “were not working” which apparently also caused some concerns for the administration which were passed on to us through one of the members, never directly from the principal.

We had anticipated the time set aside in the timetable to be used for a methodical walk through of the Program with the students for the first three weeks. During this time, we made presentations to the whole group, and eventually smaller groups, about time management, study

strategies, thinking skills, proposal writing, and accessing resource people in the community. However, during the first three weeks, a large number of students missed the time due to individual timetable conflicts and due to expressed ignorance of the expectations of the Program. Some of these students failed to inquire about the time requirements, or failed to inform us or the counseling department of any changed status. One particular student presented himself to one of the advisors (team member) well into November claiming that he didn't know where he had to go so he just sat in the hallway (which many students did during the advising time as this was also a school-wide "self-direction" time. The "hallway" practice was beyond our influence at that time, though, I suppose, it may have been beyond our influence at any time since it was the decision of the administration and implemented without researching the ramifications, either on the staff or on the school climate). His particular advisor had assumed, after his sustained absence, that he was no longer registered in the Program. What with the back-log of student changes through the counseling department, it was easy to draw that conclusion.

The course changes through the counseling department along with other organizational interruptions in the course of the first few weeks of school were, I thought, an infringement upon our advising time. Although I was deeply concerned, it seemed the most that I could do was to simply articulate my frustrations within the group. Students were becoming restless and bored with the tedium of the advising time interruptions as well as with our lengthy presentations. The problems that we encountered were passed on to the principal who indicated that we would have to address those problems for next year. After the second week, it was suggested that we forego the walk through and begin immediately the passage process, capitalizing on specific moments over the course of the next months with our own groups to instruct in the fundamental skills, like time management and studying. The team was in agreement with the proviso that the whole group meet together from time to time for updates and preparations for retreats or other appropriate events. By the end of September, da Vinci had fewer than ninety students with the number decreasing each week. Undaunted, we continued, choosing to concentrate on the ones who had demonstrated their interest in the Program. Thus, the da Vinci Program began.

A Day In the Life...

A typical day witnessed the students of the da Vinci Program meeting together with their particular advisor who recorded attendance and inquired of high points or difficulties. Where appropriate, the concerns were addressed as a group for the benefit of all. Otherwise, concerns were raised and examined one on one. At this point, the students would either go to the library or to the computer lab to conduct research or writing. Since the initial stage of the da Vinci Program is the Proposal stage, each student had to present a formal proposition of his/her passage. I insisted that these be typed since they would be placed in a portfolio (maintained by the student) and because it would be easier for the student to have an electronic (computer) record of his/her passage progress. Other team members varied on this although I voiced a concern for consistency among us.

Mentoring was an aspect of the original nature of the da Vinci Program, but it did not become a reality. Mentoring differed from advising in that an individual (or possibly a small group of people) was to serve as a personal resource person whose expertise was directly related to the Passage topic chosen by the student. Ideally, a network of individuals from the community would be available from which to draw. Instead, individuals in the community were contacted on a need basis (which depended on the student, who we knew in the community, and the nature of the Passage) and the student discussed any necessary information with him/her. As advisors, we tended to take on the dual role of advising and mentoring, only occasionally contacting community members. In my own case, the demands of regular teaching and advising tended to preclude attempts at seeking individuals in the community who could have acted as a particular monitor even though we had, at one parent information meeting, created a list of people who expressed interest in acting as mentors or as resource people.

The actual advising time was comprised of the above and personal discussion. It was not convenient to have my group remain in my classroom (each of the team members met with his/her group in a classroom) as a group while I discussed with the person. Thus, after attendance, I sought out students from my group to discuss progress which I formally recorded for record keeping purposes (see Appendix 4, Assessment, p. 127). The novelty of the Program's

approach sometimes left students with idleness. This was either reflection time, clarification time with peers, or unproductive time.

A situation that I found perplexing was allowing for the student to develop a personal responsibility for his/her learning and passage completion, and operating in the traditional framework of external controls such as determining where students are to be at all times in the school or the sustained activity of the student. In some instances, I displayed my frustration with a few students who, expressing an understanding of the Program, nonetheless, chose to spend less than productive time on their passages. I found some, for example, in the computer lab, talking about unrelated events or even playing computer games. Some were actually challenged by this new approach and did spend some time reflecting upon their passage choice and the details. Some of the students had a spare block in their timetables designated as da Vinci time which meant that they were to conduct their research or work on their passage. I thought it ludicrous but tell-tale, insofar as da Vinci being viewed as a course in the traditional sense, to expect the students to “do da Vinci” in the library. After all our presentations and information packages, the Program was still viewed by most as a special projects course that would require the resources of the library which, we were informed by the librarian, were “severely lacking for the types of projects these kids want to do.” That some students would need time to pursue their passage was explained but always in the context of after school, on weekends, or, ideally, during extended hours in the timetable. A fifty-minute or one-hour block of time somewhere in the timetable was hardly conducive to setting up an interview or contacting someone in the community or researching practical details for an expedition. Thus, most of these students used the time for homework completion or for relaxing. Numerous occasions arose where the librarian put a note in my mailbox complaining about a particular student, or students, who were sitting in the library where they had been assigned for their da Vinci block doing nothing, requesting that I “please find them something to do” (Notes, 09-93).

Each of us on the team had encounters of an absurd kind, from insinuations that the students were not occupied all the time to students who were unsure of what da Vinci was about. For example, I had two young students who, tending to embark on similar ventures, spent three

months trying to draft a letter requesting permission to visit the Armed Forces Base in Comox, British Columbia. I encouraged them and became impatient with them as time passed at their lack of tenacity and preparation. On a humorous side, the initial draft of the letter was presented to me for approval relatively quickly. After I had pointed out to them some of the grammatical errors and made suggestions as to the overall format of the letter, the two informed me that they hadn't electronically saved the original. I recommended that they each get a computer diskette for future work as they would likely be using it regularly. For a few weeks, each took turns in forgetting the diskette at home, or not having made an additional copy of the file onto the other's diskette. An inordinate amount of time was being spent on rewriting the letter. After about two months, I reprimanded them for taking so long to write a simple letter. I spent one advising session with the pair explaining the Program, elaborating the details of their responsibility. They were surprised to learn that they could pursue any interest, following the procedures of course.

From that experience, I became more conscious of the need to ensure that the nature of the Program be expressed on a regular basis (I was not sure of a time frame for such) to the students as well as to the school and community in the form of public presentations. Miller & Seller (1990) suggest that the attainment of meaning for a program innovation takes time (p. 235). It has become obvious to me that the reference applies just as well to students' understanding. In the interest of the development of the Program and to communicate such experiences as the above, the team tried to meet on a regular basis during spare times to discuss or clarify issues. After the events with the students who had misunderstood the Program, I raised the issue of ensuring that the student perceptions were accurate. The others agreed, having reported similar situations.

Another issue that we had to discuss was concerning a large percentage of the students who stalled in the proposal process and who experienced difficulty both in expressing their interest and in the preparation of the formal document. Gibbons (1990) noted the same and went on to continue working with the students, encouraging them, pushing them, and clarifying for them over a period of time. The task of advising, I discovered, sometimes included routine measures of demanding greater productivity or improved presentation and format. Many times

the students became frustrated as they were encouraged but required to clarify ideas, or consider different approaches, or choose an aspect of a problem. I think that in most cases this frustration was due to lack of patience by the students from being distraught at having to rewrite a proposal. In many instances the proposal process carried on for several advising sessions and involved three or more drafts before the final copy was accepted. I explained that the process was important as it afforded a means of developing quality as well as assurance that the idea was clearer to anyone who wanted to read it. I also explained that the final draft would be included in the student's portfolio—a formal record of the student's accomplishments. This last point was an ideal rather than a reality.

Part of our intent through the da Vinci Program was to develop an alternative evaluation scheme. A formal aspect of this was the student portfolio containing proposals, wrap-ups, and additional information pertinent to his/her learning experiences while in school. This failed to transpire partially due to lack of time, but also for other reasons. The team's enthusiasm seemed to wane after a year and there was greater adamance by members to maintain present course loads which consequently inhibited maintenance of the Program and the cohesiveness of the team's efforts that was so prevalent initially. I recall in an interview with Dr. Gibbons (1992) how he expressed similar frustrations nearly twenty years previous with his own program and, in some ways, it seems best summed up in the following quote from Cuban (1984):

I do not have the energy nor, at this point, the willingness of [sic] fight the system. I know the scores of open education classes in our school will be compared with those of traditional classes. The comparison is itself fallacious. I know that... *But most parents don't. Many administrators don't and the system doesn't* (p. 168—emphasis added).

Attempts to access the grant money that had been obtained by us for release-time (which I tried to arrange as a group meeting on a regular basis) were often thwarted by team members' concerns for missed classes and even by the reticence of the principal to permit a regular time of meetings (none of which he ever attended over the course of two years). Over the course of the first year, the efforts became increasingly fatiguing:

Time—stealing, it seems, from other areas—from classes (release-time), from after school, after supper, from weekends, from other interests and

pursuits—always *from*. And yet, importantly, *for*—for a well developed program; for students, community, teachers; for the future; and sometimes, I think, for nothing. Given the right (wrong) mentality, insensitive school board, community, teachers, it (the Program) will wither and die (Journal Notes, 29-01-93).

Tiring. [The] retreat [has] come and gone. [The] meeting this past Monday revolved around evaluation. I finally mentioned that we have a grant for evaluation/assessment purposes and we have yet to access it. [There is a] reluctance to take release-time—catch 22 and pathetic irony. [We] need time to develop [the Program] properly and ensure a well established program. The problem is the “when.” After school hours defeats the purpose of the grant (for release-time) and obviously cuts into one’s personal time (This is not a “get rich” scheme!). Release-time, on the other hand, cuts into courses, classes, students’ time (to a degree). The integrity of the new is pitted against that of the old. Does that reflect one’s approach to the classroom (- learning)? - the necessity of the expert in the classroom? Or is it just the reality of a classroom full of adolescents who have adapted to a particular system, a particular delivery scheme and any variation from that (i.e., a substitute) thwarts or threatens to disrupt the course’s integrity? (Journal Notes, 13-02-93)

Along with the internal turmoil of Chugalong Secondary as a result of the Program, the community expressed mixed reactions, from positive and pledged active support to concerns about “this Year 2000 stuff,” to indifference. Students, as would have it, were caught in the middle of participating in the implementation of a radically different approach to learning and the lack of real support in the structure of schooling that could enable them to pursue their interests, learn the requisite skills, and demonstrate the outcomes in and to the watching community.

Influences Across the Curriculum

The development of the da Vinci Program was also instrumental in some of the changes in my classroom as well as, according to them, in the classrooms of the other team members. In September, 1991, I had altered the French as a Second Language Program evaluation scheme. A variation on the contract style, I encouraged students to develop their own projects after submitting a proposal to me. After our return from Jeff Co, though, I wanted to pursue more of a self-directed learning approach. Students were already paired off according to their choices so I discussed with them what I wanted to do. I told them the parameters of the course which included a written/oral “dialogue” every two to three weeks for evaluation and in which the students had to demonstrate what they had learned up to that point. I was then free to give direct assistance for as much time as was necessary without stalling the entire class. I carried this

approach into the next school year with a mixture of successes for students and frustrations from seeing some of them become complacent about their learning. In many respects this was a similar response in the da Vinci Program. I decided to continue with the initiative because I thought that over time, the students would begin to appreciate this freedom and responsibility. The majority did, but still with admissions that they were not working as hard as they might normally. Unfortunately, the administration at the time did not become involved in what I was doing in the classroom or in the da Vinci Program.

Certainly there was a bit of cockiness in some of my actions—a radical nature that was not present prior to the da Vinci Program. While I might have voiced an opinion previously, being enabled now to follow through with a concept to its implementation and the increased interaction with the administrators seemed to spark a greater boldness within me. The “new” was exciting and appealing. As the da Vinci Program developed over the months, I became more interested in the cause and less concerned about the reactions of staff members. I could not change them and they would not consider the materials enough to seek more information or to become involved although I was genuinely perplexed that more staff members would not. The da Vinci team, however, continued to work well together. Miller and Seller (1990) noted the apparent proclivity of some staff members to cooperate and of others who resist change:

Teachers sharing a common orientation often associate with one another and develop their own behaviour patterns. Within these subgroups, a teacher can sometimes find a more supportive climate for his or her preferred behaviour. It is possible, therefore, to find a general climate of support for an implementation project although there also exists a group of teachers who avoid the change... The values underlying the goals of the school will be reflected more accurately in the activities undertaken to achieve them than in spoken or printed words. This is particularly true of the value teachers place on change in a school culture. Attitudes toward innovation can be more accurately assessed through observations of what changes actually occur than through what staff members *say* they are doing (p. 241 - 242—emphasis in original).

Regular meetings were attempted but tended to be difficult to maintain and enthusiasm gave way to practicality (the above-mentioned trappings). This, coupled with the process of program implementation and schooling, led to less talk and action about the “five year plan” and to concentration on the routine. To that end, the following extract from my journal sheds some

light on the subject:

In the first year (Oct. - June/92) I tended to suggest, push, be the liaison with the administration and meetings took place regularly, a trip to Denver took place (4 school days!). From Sept./92 to Feb./93, the release-time has taken on a different light. Individuals are "encouraged" to take it, and half-days are viewed with more acceptance rather than whole days. Since Sept., we have used 2 full days for planning and discussion. In each case, there still wasn't enough time to complete all the business planned. I have accessed 2 half-days (since Christmas) to work on compiling all documents into 2 packages: One complete for interested schools/individuals and including materials [and] examples...The second is a scaled down version of just the key elements for parents and students (I think cynically that a 3rd should be done for administrators, etc., with just the synopsis of the Program in big print).

My plans are not synonymous or congruous with the present system/structure of education. Gibbons intimated much the same when I spoke with him (interview, November, 1992). When administration appeared [not] to be backing the Program in Sept. along with my attempts at innovation in French (S. L.), I became discouraged. Coupled with the lack of enthusiasm from the other team players (in terms of [Program] integrity and meetings), I have let much of the fussing and enthusiasm go. I no longer push hard for meeting times, feeling instead that if people think about it, own it, desire it (it, here, is the da Vinci Program), the enthusiasm and choice to push the integrity of the Program FIRST will push them. If they (the team players) choose not to drive hard, then should I? Do I push even harder? I honestly don't know at this point. Maybe another meeting with Maurice [Gibbons] is in order. Maybe I just need to leave the material and let time (in the hands of key users) take it (Notes, 13-02-93).

Chapter Three

Wrap-up

The da Vinci Program: Foundational Considerations

...visionary thinking is essential to effective social change
(Polak, cited in Miller & Seller, 1990: 226).

In the da Vinci Program, the wrap-up is both a time of reflection upon and the summary and conclusions of the completed passage experience of the student. It is also the place where the student has the opportunity to express any peripheral or incidental learning resulting from the Passage process. I will use this stage to address the issues first posed in the “Introduction,” present some recommendations and thoughts on what I would have done differently aimed primarily at the implementor, but with an equal view to bringing closure to my experience throughout my experience with the da Vinci Program.

I have chosen also to examine the foundation of the da Vinci Program here (this could easily be applied to Gibbons’ Walkabout concept and thus serves a dual purpose) since it was well into the implementation phase of the Program that I began to conduct research (in the form of compiling notes and reading the educational literature) with the aim of writing about da Vinci. I liken this to telling the story and then stopping for a brief consideration of an appropriate, if tangential, argument that, I believe, affords a fuller understanding of the presuppositional framework of Gibbons’ (and consequently, da Vinci’s) thesis. During that time I read Miller & Seller’s (1990) discussion of curriculum orientations. The outcome was that I developed a broader perspective of the da Vinci Program, Gibbons’ writings, the nature of curricular innovation and implementation, and my own thinking on education. I include this examination of the Walkabout concept as it relates directly to the issues presented in the “Introduction.” I also think that a consideration of the foundation of the da Vinci Program, as with perhaps all curricula, affords a clearer comprehension of its import, or worth, as well as the direction in which it is heading.

Historical and Philosophical Influences

show should contented fools of fact envision
the mystery of freedom?yet, among
their loud exactitudes of imprecision,
you'll(silently alighting)and I'll sing
(cumings, 1926: 113)

Historical and philosophical influences are not so pointedly traceable in Gibbons' (1990) writings. When queried about this in our interview, Gibbons (1992) referred to such persons as Carl Rogers, Alan Tough, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi along with others insisting that no one dominant theory or individual was significantly influential; rather it was a confluence (Gibbons, 1992). In reading Gibbons (1990), one senses the developmental and transpersonal.

We see that we are not just preparing students to develop a curriculum, but to develop as people. We are not just cultivating their clear intentions, but nurturing their personal search for meaning. We are not just developing their confidence in their ability to enact their plans, but fostering the certainty that they can legitimately pursue excellence in whatever they choose to do. We see that we are not just encouraging them to complete what they start, but showing them that they can shape their lives and make a difference in the world around them (p. 160).

Cognizant of this, then, his writings lead one to recall, metaphorically, ghosts or vestiges of Dewey (Dworkin, 1965—in seeking to address the actual needs of the student and challenge the traditional approach to education), Apple (1983—the open school notion of encouraging individual responsibility in learning), or Freire (1974), Illich (1973) and Lister (1973) (the student as participant in the process and development of a humane curriculum). Perhaps even more poignant is to consider the roots of this concept as leading out of frustration with the traditional system with questions of how to empower students, to “help them learn, relate, act, and live effectively now” that they could be genuinely prepared for an uncertain future, both personal and societal (Gibbons, 1990: xii; 1992).

For Gibbons (1990), the Australian aborigine walkabout tradition served as a striking metaphor for an educational concept that would have an impact upon curricula, methodology and the persons affected. In preparing the documents for a formal grant from the Ministry of Education, Program Initiatives Branch, for money to further develop the da Vinci Program, we, the da Vinci team, easily tabled similar principles as the British Columbia Ministry of

Education's *Year 2000* material, serving as a striking concurrence with the *Year 2000* concept (see Appendix 2, pp. 99 - 101). In my interview with the author, I asked whether, in fact, the *Year 2000* committee may have drawn from his material; a question which he, himself, wondered though with bemusement (Gibbons, 1992).

We received two grants from the Ministry of Education specifically in the context of the *Year 2000* to help in the implementation of the da Vinci Program. A brief overview of the program is intended here to inform and clarify. The *Year 2000* Initiative by the Ministry of Education was a major curriculum alteration that attempted to alter the traditional schooling framework through a more humane and holistic approach to educating. In it, courses were grouped in strands, or curriculum categories, and students were to complete a specified number of courses in each strand by the end of grade twelve as well as community service/work experience. The actual working out of the Initiative at the secondary level met with resistance by teachers and some parents such that it failed to be fully implemented. The Initiative has since been radically altered such that it resembles much more the traditional approach. In many ways, the da Vinci Program addressed the issues presented in the *Year 2000* documents, but, like it, did not become fully implemented at the secondary level likely, I suggest, for similar reasons.

Curriculum Orientations

Scholarly reflection about curriculum has led some key contributors in the field to categorize curriculum development in particular orientations, the number and content depending on researcher interpretation rather than on categorizations. Thus, while Miller & Seller (1990: 5) would indicate seven orientations ("behavioral, subject/disciplines, social, developmental, cognitive processes, humanistic, and transpersonal"), Eisner (1985: 62) posits five (social adaptation/reconstruction, academic rationale, technological, personal relevance, cognitive processes) and Doll (1989) would seem to indicate only two (the Traditionalist and Progressivist approach). After careful study of the "Walkabout Concept," I believe that Miller & Seller's (1990) three meta-orientations (Transmission, Transaction, and Transformation), or overall orientation categories, tend to offer more appropriate reference points. By meta-orientation is meant a general category of the particular philosophical tendency of the curriculum innovators

and/or implementers. According to Miller & Seller (1990: 5), “[t]he concept of meta-orientation helps one to perceive the linkage between curriculum practices and the philosophical, psychological and social contexts that shape them.”

In the Transmission meta-orientation, education functions to “transmit facts, skills, and values to students” (Miller & Seller, 1990). It is, as Freire (1974) challenges, a system of “banking” where the educator is the depositor and the student is the recipient, or depository. Key contributors in this area have included such figures as B. F. Skinner, Franklin Bobbitt, Edward Thorndike, Ralph Tyler, Hilda Taba, Neil Postman, and Emile Durkheim. It encompasses such thrusts as back to basics, competency-based education and mastery learning, and subject content.

The Transaction meta-orientation fosters dialogue; education as interaction; theory and practice in action, or praxis. Key figures in this area include Johann Pestalozzi, John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, and an element of Paulo Freire. It encompasses the notions of Dewey’s pragmatism, problem-solving and cognitive processes, and the scientific method. The student has more of an interactive role in the educational process as it particularly affects him/her.

The Transformation meta-orientation is focused on change, both personal and social. Key figures in this category include A. S. Neill, John Holt, Michael Apple, and Paulo Freire. It maintains a more transcendent approach that incorporates the spiritual, the ecological, and the socio-personal.

Where the school emphasizes academics, the da Vinci Program challenges this structure by insisting on more experiential learning and a more balanced system of education that enables students to develop their potential. Gibbons (1990) states, “[w]ithout concrete experience, studies are disembodied” (p. 40) and, “[t]he present-practise-test’ method of instruction still common in schools is inadequate for conducting a range of educational experiences in such varied sequences” (p. 46). The traditionally directed program of educating youth, which would tend to typify the approach of schooling and predominantly of the Transmission meta-orientation, implies or assumes *intended transfer*. By intended transfer I mean that through an authority-oriented curriculum approach, the student, upon or through mastery of concepts and information, supposedly would be able to apply the “learned” matter in diverse situations.

Generally speaking, mastery is determined by success on tests. That the student will be, first of all, cognizant of the interconnection or general applicability of the “learned” information and, secondly, capable of making the connections between learned information and some skills, and their applicability in either a broad sense or even specific situation (Hills, 1975) in my limited experience, is an aspect of education that is assumed or intended. Hence, intended transfer. The rationale runs somewhat along the lines of, “Well, here’s the information the students need to know. Here are the tests. They’ve been told what to expect and how this relates to jobs. It’s up to them to do the work (including making the connections).”

Actual transfer, on the other hand, is a matter of an inter-related, holistic approach to educating wherein through

productive activity, applying what they have learned in real and useful ways, students make experience and study their own, relate it to reality, and apply it to their own growth. When a person is responsible for applying and executing, these skills also become an act of self-discovery and a demonstration of oneself to others (Gibbons, 1990: 40).

Actual transfer is employed here to emphasize a more transactional and transformational thrust. The concerted efforts of teacher as advisor, student as learner, and community as participating mentors would ensure actual connections are practiced and learned. It is just such a significant point that the da Vinci Program curriculum encompasses, promotes, and models through its ideal structure.

In terms of just the three meta-orientations of Miller & Seller (1990), the da Vinci Program intersects with each depending on the nature of the activity although it is definitely rooted in the Transaction and Transformation meta-orientations. The elements in the Transmission list are meant to indicate the balanced approach mentioned above. In some circumstances, it would be necessary to transmit specific information such as the proper procedures to follow for the completion of a passage. The da Vinci Program differs from the Transmission meta-orientation in that its predominant emphases are found in the other two meta-orientations and in the development of processes. The following lists represent some concrete elements of the da Vinci Program as they relate to these orientations:

TRANSMISSION

- subjects/disciplines
- mastery of subject content
- competency-based (master specific skills and content)
- problem-solving techniques
- criteria for passages
- interviewing skills
- passage directives
- procedures for performance
- walk-through Program
- certain social behaviours and values
- journal writing
- study skills

TRANSACTION

- negotiated con-tracts
- goal-setting with advisor
- passage proposals
- group participation
- securing and organizing resources
- interviewing
- making choices
- locally developed courses
- evaluation
- self-direction
- planning
- time management
- celebration

TRANSFORMATION

- experiential learning
- holistic
- reflecting in solitude
- passage undertaking
- self-assessment
- journal reflection
- problem-solving
- behavioural characteristics
- personal accountability
- relevance
- cognitive processes
- process of choosing
- social interaction
- problem-reformulation

In light of the above and in consideration of Eisner's (1985) influence, and extrapolating from the essence of Gibbons' thoughts and writings, I would suggest that the Walkabout concept would be better suited in a category of meta-curriculum, a guiding meta-principle in which the student-as-person and the processes for lifelong learning are the primary foci. In Figure 1 below, I attempted to develop a graphic image of the nature of this curriculum insofar as it concerns the individual in a society. My purpose here was to illustrate that the individual is the key element in the human environment, not society and its institutions. I intended it solely for discussion purposes and as a graphic representation (at least for myself) of society.

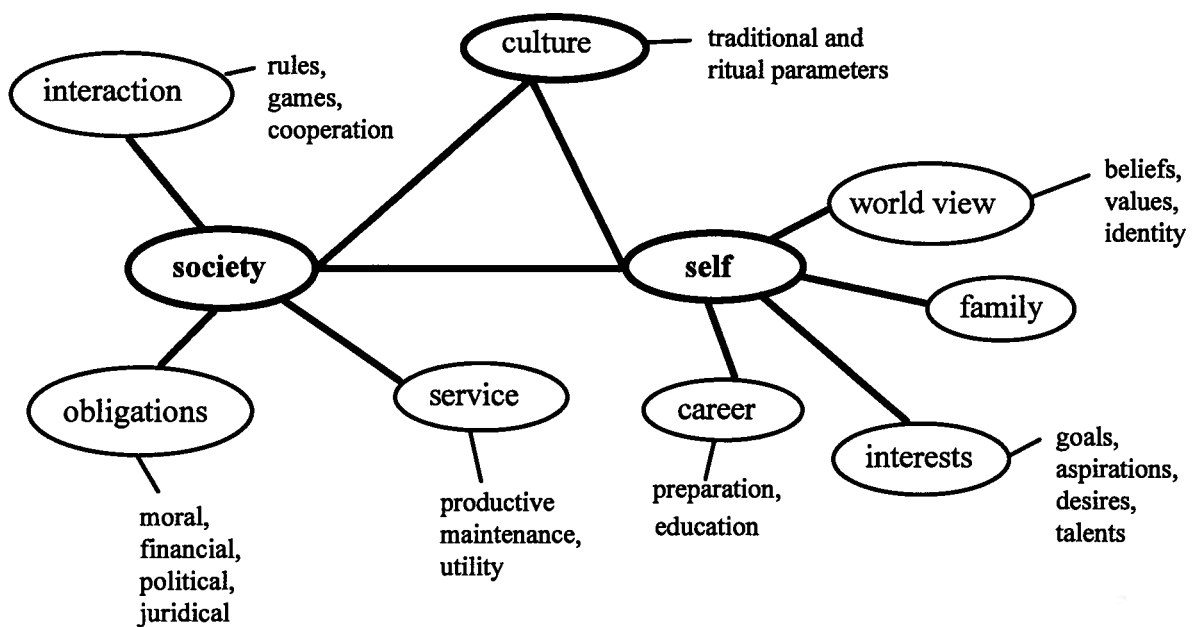


Figure 1. A Suggested Framework of Educational Identity: Walkabout Paradigm

Here, s/he develops and participates in society still as a *self* and as an integral part of the whole. The structure is fairly fluid or non-static, recognizing the nature of being human. In light of my own readings and observations about learning, the da Vinci Program is a more natural, productive and conducive approach to lifelong learning. Compared to Figure 2, where the *self* is significant but in the context of society and what society needs as a whole, the point is to demonstrate how the self is subjugated to the group and its institutions.

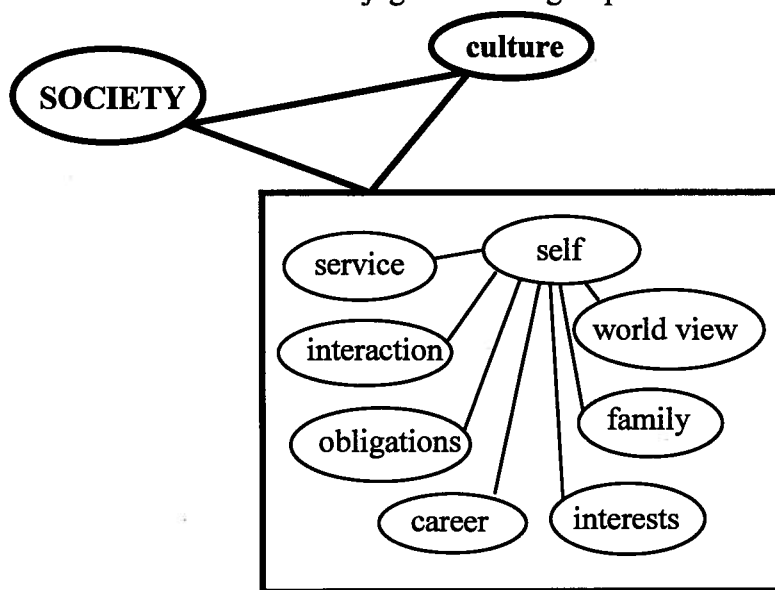


Figure 2. A Suggested Framework of Educational Identity: Instituted Paradigm

I have considered that one could pursue this discussion in the context of the tension raised as one struggles to function in both paradigms. Figure 2 mitigates against freedom (perceived or actual) and may tend toward oppressive dominance by the ruling élite. Figure 1 may tend towards anarchy, apathy, and heightened hedonism which, in turn, might initiate the former. Society imposes its needs upon the individual and even upon its institutions. Schooling is but one example. Driving licenses, drinking ages, anti-smoking legislation, noise and pollution controls, building codes are a few others. Numerous historical examples abound that demonstrate imposed needs. Curriculum implementors (governments, school boards, teachers, parents) also serve as examples of imposed needs. The needs here are those elements perceived as essential to the working or functioning of the social unit.

Authentic needs are the perceived and genuine needs of the individual. The student who has just lost a parent through death needs a venue so as to deal effectively with loss. Math, science, literature, French studies do not respond to such any more than other subject/disciplines. The same is true for other scenarios that might afflict the adolescent such as drug addiction, abstinence, moral dilemmas, anger, and so on. Counselors are available but still, students are expected to be in a classroom along with 20 to 30 others, to have all assignments completed, to be motivated to learn, to respond and participate, to pay attention, in short, to repress behaviours or emotions that do not conform to the expected, the task at hand, the imposed. Thus, as school (social institution) directs or imposes its traditional structure on the individual, those elements that form the individual as natural dimensions of learning become masked, replaced by the

Imposed Needs versus Authentic Needs. Bacharach (1988) states:

if schools are going to help disadvantaged students, teachers need “skills” in responding to students’ life experiences, purpose, and perspectives. To the degree that standardization inhibits these efforts, an argument can be made that standardization only provides an illusion of equality and an obstacle to equity ...[m]any fear that teachers will “teach to the test” (p. 494).

This admittedly represents an extreme view but can be heard through Eisner’s (1983) comments:

Attention to the sensibilities in schooling has always been a low priority. The senses are supposedly bodily functions, somehow unconnected to the mind. Feeling, or awareness of qualities, is supposed to rely upon soma, and educational

experience is supposed to deal with psyche. The break between mind and body is further legitimated by the reification of cognition and affect. We tend to regard the former as linguistically mediated thought—a kind of inner thought—and the latter as feelings that need no help from mind or intelligence (p. 53).

A structured program such as the Walkabout concept or the da Vinci Program incorporates the various dimensions of, and fosters learning from, personal interests. Hence, it helps the student address directly and more completely his/her authentic needs.

There is a tension also between the imposed needs, which function to maintain stability in a society, and authentic needs. Striking an equilibrium between these while helping the student become educated is a challenging task. The school-as-institution ambitiously speaks of preparing the person with an academic foundation but succeeds only in mass processing entities called students who have developed varying degrees of response abilities according to the demands of the teacher (who articulates interpretations of the demands of the system), or as Eisner (1983) states, “[t]he more we lean toward the factory model of schooling, with the teacher conceived of as a worker who processes students through known routines toward goals that students have had no hand in formulating, the more troublesome and problematic the view I am describing becomes” (p. 51). And, in contrast, it is the oldest “new” approach that focuses on the student-as-learner, as person.

To that end, Gibbons (1990: 195) developed a number of “principles of self-education, and their implications for teaching.” I have included the principles as succinct and ideal points for the da Vinci Program and which, in a broad sense, serve as a guide to understanding the Walkabout concept view of the individual in the context of lifelong learning. These summarized principles are extrapolations from a study on historically significant individuals without formal academic training and are included in a section entitled, “Toward a Theory of Self-Education” (Gibbons, 1990). The two lists are to be viewed synchronously, the one as a list of principles for the student’s contemplation and implementation and the other for the teacher to implement to assist the student. They are amenable to developing further into particular goals that could be determined by the da Vinci student and negotiated with the advisor. They could also be part of a learning centre’s goals.

Principles of Self-Education

Self-educator (Learner):

- control of learning is maintained by self versus maintained by “institution, their representatives, or their prescriptions;”
- effort concentrated in single area versus “general study of many;”
- usually experiential and for “immediate application to a task;”
- self-motivated; “committed to achievement;”
- envision accomplishment with “recognition or rewards valued higher;”
- tend toward a particular field based on combination of “interests, talents, past experiences, and opportunities;”
- develop individual habits of effective learning;
- development of high

Teaching for Self-education:

- help the student to attain internalized control;
- help the student “identify and become expert at the activity or activities that may become central in their lives;”
- integrated approach to theoretical with technical training and practical application- immediate use versus future application;
- help the student to set personal goals versus pursuing artificially prescribed ones;
- help the student develop effective means of realizing successful experience of goals or personal visions;
- help the student develop a broad range of experiences in diverse fields of activity;
- help the student “develop a personal learning style;”
- “promote, model, and reward the

“attributes ...associated with people of character [such as] perseverance, industriousness, altruism, sensitivity to others, and strong guiding principles;”

- initiative, “independence of thought, non-conformity, originality, and talent;”
- utilize “reading and other process skills to inform him/herself;”
- self-education tends to be a dominant theme throughout the person’s life;
- best developed in cooperative and accepting framework;
- positive, healthy, and outgoing self-image and person.

development” of positive personal attributes that sustain and encourage integrity and self-discipline in a society of persons;

- encourage and promote developing these attributes;
- help the student develop the necessary process skills;
- help the student to identify and develop emerging personal themes as well as new ones;
- foster genuine supportive atmosphere;
- holistic approach to learning.

Strengths and Problems

The development, assessment or implementation of curriculum necessitates an examination of its strengths and problems—potential and actual. Without such an evaluation, efforts at implementation may obviate possible future and long-term success. Lack of preparation and planning, of which evaluation and assessment are a part, anticipation of questions and responses, and other elements in the development stage (Miller & Seller, 1990; Pratt, 1980) of an innovation may thwart successful implementation of the innovation. The preceding information is relationally significant in the overall discussion of this particular curriculum, or meta-orientation. With an understanding of orientations and meta-orientations, an

examination of the strengths and problems of the Walkabout concept, particularly as they relate to the da Vinci Program and the individuals involved, is appropriate and desirable. Were one to do likewise with the traditional paradigm of schooling and compare it with the Walkabout concept, I believe it would shed some startling light on the way we practically view the worth of the individual, particularly the student.

I developed the lists in the first year of the da Vinci Program after considering Gibbons (1990, 1991, 1992) and reflecting on the process and my journal notes. The lists, then, are pertinent to the Program and lend support to findings about implementation (Miller & Seller, 1990; Gibbons, 1990, 1992; Bogard, 1992; Langberg, 1992). I have included a letter designation after each element which helped me to assess who or what was most affected for each strength and problem. The letter “S” designates the student, a “T” designates the teacher, and an “E” designates the education system. In some cases, more than one designation seemed appropriate and was included in the table at the end.

Strengths

- 1a** student-as-person-centered; subjects/disciplines are developed with learning/student development as focus (S);
- 1b** students are challenged to challenge themselves through 6 passages that incorporate experiential learning (S);
- 1c** change in teaching role (advisor/mentor) is more humane, realistic, rewarding, causing greater challenges for the teacher both in advising and in teaching practice (T);
- 1d** student develops a learning plan in collaboration/consultation with a personal advisor/mentor (S, T);
- 1e** all students are learners (S);
- 1f** personal responsibility (S);
- 1g** self-directed (S);
- 1h** self-confidence and esteem fostered (T, S);
- 1i** learning, nurturing, responsibility modeled and encouraged (E, T, S);
- 1j** writing and other process skills emphasized (E);

- 1k** student experiences and achievements recorded and maintained in personal portfolios (S, E);
- 1m** celebration as a public performance of experiences and achievements (S, E);
- 1n** student support groups consisting of three or four trust-worthy persons chosen by the student (S);
- 1p** subjects/disciplines and experiences integrated (E, T);
- 1q** stresses divergent thinking processes (E);
- 1r** interconnectedness with self, others, world, cosmos (S);
- 1s** stresses all aspects of human potential (social, physical, spiritual, cognitive, affective) (E, T, S);
- 1t** humane approach to learning (E, S);
- 1u** focus on patterns and relationships (E);
- 1v** cooperative learning (E, T);
- 1w** direct accountability with increased interaction with the community (E);
- 1x** eliminates or dramatically reduces need for mainstreaming or special programs (E, T);
- 1y** empowers students (E).

Problems

- 2a** non-traditional approach. Possible retraining of staff necessary (E, T);
- 2b** implementation may be (very) slow necessitating endurance, change, restructuring of learning time (T, E);
- 2c** consequent changes in teaching role (advisor/mentor) may be traumatic or burdensome for some (T);
- 2d** initial implementation demands extraordinary time commitments as well as participatory role of community necessitating re-ordering of priorities and assisting the community regarding its active role and consequent responsibilities (T, E);
- 2e** not for all students: some may defer personal responsibility to traditional approach (S);
- 2f** question of student-initiated activities (e.g., passages) that are unsupervised (E);
- 2g** question of student preparedness in key subject areas for possible future academic studies (E, S);
- 2h** lack of knowledge about the curriculum may cause inter-professional/personal conflict (T);

- 2i** lack of practical support and understanding of the curriculum by administration may lead to premature conclusions and waning teacher support and enthusiasm (E);
- 2j** demands possible paradigm shift regarding approach to teaching (T);
- 2k** slow process of change for teacher and system, difficulty in effecting change (T);
- 2m** transition from traditional methods of evaluation may be arduously fraught with resistance (T);
- 2n** greater articulation with secondary institutions vital particularly concerning transcripts/portfolios (E);
- 2p** higher level administrators with hidden (or blatant) agendas contrary to and/or unsympathetic to the philosophy of the Program may undermine its success and continuation (see Langberg, 1992) (E).
- 2q** challenges beliefs and practices including in the community which could cause difficulties in acceptance and thwart implementation (Miller & Seller, 1990: 239) (T, E).

The problems need not be regarded as detrimental to the implementation of the Program but, rather, problematic and needing creative reformulations. Gibbons intimated in his writings and in my interview with him many of the points above as did members of the teaching staff and students of Jeff Co (Bogard, 1992).

I further reflected upon the significance of the strengths and problems and decided to compile the information in the form of a table (see Table 1) with the three indicated groups that pertain primarily to education: the student, the teacher, and the system of educating. Comparison of just these points reveals some significant information that merits consideration in the discussion of da Vinci as an ideal as well as the nature of schooling. Many of the strengths were experienced in the first year. Such characteristics as in 1b, 1k and 1p were unattained due to lack of time. Various others were not fully enjoyed for diverse reasons. Most of the problems were encountered but, again, time was the greatest influential variable. In terms of the strengths of the Program, the student receives the greatest benefits.

	Strengths	Problems	Total
S- Student	14	3	17
T- Teacher	8	9	17
E- System	13	8	21
Total	35	20	55

Table 1. Comparison of Noted Strengths and Problems of The Walkabout Concept In Relation to The Student, The Teacher, and The System of Educating.

The nature of the problems, interestingly, tends to center around the system of education and the teacher, particularly regarding the effects of change, roles, support, and interaction. It seems reasonable to me that the more a person is aware of a need to change and the more s/he accepts those aspects of change as personal interests worth pursuing, the more the prospect of change becomes less of a potential threat and the more the developing new role becomes an attractive or viable reality (Miller & Seller, 1990; Doll, 1989; Eisner, 1985; Cuban, 1984; Baldrige, 1977; Coombs, 1967).

Interaction, the interchange of ideas, the dialogic, even praxis, are dimensions of education perhaps too often taken for granted and too seldom challenged for meaningful content. In any innovation, interaction plays a critical role. There are four interest groups whose interplay will have an impact on support for an innovation: students, staff, administration, and community. Miller & Seller (1990) and Eisner (1985) discuss the latter three and these have been examined above. The exclusion of the student as an influential factor in curriculum innovation supports the demands by some researchers for a more humane approach to education (Gibbons, 1976, 1990, 1991b; Illich, 1973; Lister, 1973; Rogers, 1967; Coombs, 1967; Wilhelms, 1967).

Interaction among staff about pedagogy tends to be rare (Miller & Seller, 1990; Eisner, 1985; Cuban, 1984) and then typically amongst the keener individuals who value learning from others. Whether malaise over perceived inability to enact changes (and possibly even lack of the stuff of change), complacency that seems to come with years of teaching and frustrations on different fronts (with students, with parents, with administration, with government), or from

being preoccupied with the process of schooling (Miller & Seller, 1990; Cuban, 1984), the reticence to change by others struck me when the da Vinci Program moved from the stage of curriculum curiosity to actual being with its subsequent competition for inclusion in the timetable. Previously, I had fought the impending changes that the government's *Year 2000* initiative implied and voiced my concerns along with other staff members about lack of time given to understand the changes or to try alternative approaches that would effect those changes. Change, from this perspective, was viewed with suspicion due more to the "imposition from above" of the *new* curriculum (Miller & Seller, 1990; Eisner, 1985; Cuban, 1984). After reading *The Walkabout Papers* (Gibbons, 1990) and the fact that I had been thinking that changes were necessary in education, I was more inclined to consider change as a positive activity than I had been previously. I did not have a grasp of the mechanics of change, of actually developing concrete responses. I had argued that time allotted to doing so would be necessary. As I read Gibbons (1990), his model, though unclear to me at the time as a complete working event, attracted my attention and time. I was building a home, teaching at school, reading Gibbons, and reflecting more and more on his concept. Time was not the problem as much as initiative to simply do. Another factor is that Gibbons' writings interested me. It was my initiative and not some top-down legislation. The impetus for change, then, came from within irrespective of time "allotted" for doing so.

On Ideology

In helping to understand better the full spectrum of the da Vinci Program, I found it particularly enlightening to consider the ideologies, both individual and institutional, as these form an important part of the "cultural capital" (Giroux, 1983) of any organization and relate directly to change (Miller & Seller, 1990: 239). As Giroux (1983) states, "[it is] both the medium and the outcome of lived experience, [that] functions not only to limit human action but also to enable it" (p. 17).

I noted staff meetings and "professional development" days where the discussion of school goals took place and documents prepared that announced the current "mission statement" of the school. Yet, the deeper reflection on personal ideologies and *actual* school ideology

(practiced as opposed to verbal assent to a list) were not truly addressed. I have experienced a number of sessions in which we dealt with school needs and goals, but analyzing the school's ideology, as well as personal ideologies, has not taken place. Ideology, I have concluded, is assumed. I am using ideology here to mean the presuppositional framework upon which is "hung" the aims and goals of the individual or organization. I think that Miller and Seller's (1990) discussion of meta-orientations is, essentially, about ideologies. Thus, at Chugalong Secondary, and as I have seen at other schools, after a series of activities, a list of general school goals (such as providing for a safe learning environment, foster excellence, prepare the learner for productive life in society) was made and distributed among staff members. Invariably, the list would be placed in an obscure spot. The practice of teaching is time consuming (Miller & Seller, 1990: 236) with little time for contemplating or pursuing concrete measures that would articulate the goals. To contemplate the ideology of the school, of the community, even of the personal would appear to be more than most are willing or able to do especially where contemplation and discussion might threaten to undermine articulated goals or counter them in practice.

Although I wanted to examine goals and the deeper issue of orientations or ideologies because of the da Vinci Program, this was not a shared interest. The schools that I have been in continue to function on assumed but unarticulated goals. Likely this is due in part to the nature of schooling where a group of individuals, in the role of teaching, assumes an inherent set of principles (or ideologies) that, in turn, can be articulated fairly universally without undue stress or demand to alter what is already taking place.

Bacharach (1988) commented that, "[a]n organization that is uncertain of its goals is incapable of strategic reform" (p. 495, emphasis in original). The deeper rooted goals that are out-workings of ideology (the practiced rather than articulated) are included here. To the extent that the individual's ideology (or world view) is congruous with that of the group's or the organization's, the level of conflict will largely be determined and reform (or change) will occur to the extent that that change is, in turn, congruous with the ideology of the organization. We (the da Vinci team) discussed deeper issues and goals and accepted the challenge to change,

essentially, goals and orientations. Bacharach and Shedd (1989) claim that

Time schedules, physical structures, one-teacher-per-class staffing patterns and high teacher/administrator ratios make day-to-day contact with other adults haphazard... Norms of 'non-interference' discourage the asking and offering of advice... *Curriculum policies, if they do not square with a teacher's judgment of what his or her students need or are capable of learning, often go unobserved and unenforced.* (p. 146, emphasis added)

It is not surprising, then, that we (da Vinci team) should be a small group within the school. In the same article, Bacharach & Shedd (1989), interestingly enough, go on to indicate some of the characteristics of schools where innovation is more successful, the content of which stands not so much as an indictment against less successful groups as a mirror of their ideologies and which could serve as a pedagogical prod to higher ideals. While the authors' findings contrast with the organizational saga (Baldrige, 1977) of Chugalong Secondary, these give a broad and useful guide in assessing its overall image. Thus, concerning the da Vinci Program, I would suggest that the fact that full implementation did not occur is attributable to, fundamentally, the issue of values, or ideologies which supports the findings of Miller & Seller (1990) and Bacharach & Shedd (1989).

I found Cuban's (1984) observations and conclusions useful in understanding the structure of schooling as a very widespread and long term practice. In the category under problems above, I noticed that the greatest difficulty with the implementation of the da Vinci Program was a function of authority, be it the teacher and administrators or the community and government. It has been my observation over the past twelve years that the student wants a change at least in the approach to learning, but teachers and administrators as well as government and community are resigned to maintain the structure and respond only to superficial ailments whether methodological or curricular. Without an in-depth consideration of the pertinent issues and curriculum foundation, and without attending to an appropriate view of the student and educating, I would argue that any attempts to reconstruct or alter curriculum components and curricula will lead to a product that is deficient in all of its constituent elements.

Summary and Conclusions

Humanity i love you because you
are perpetually putting the secret of
life in your pants and forgetting
it's there and sitting down

on it...

(cummings, 1926: 18)

There is nothing new under the sun.

Ecclesiastes.

While this study helped me to clarify a nature of schooling and problems in curriculum innovation and implementation involving one alternative curriculum approach, I remain perplexed at the intransigence of the very people who, ideally, should be exemplary in their willingness to learn, develop, and examine for the sake of the student, the adolescent. It is partially for this reason that I have included cummings' (1926) quote along with the Biblical reference. In a sense, they sum up some of the conclusions of my experience through the da Vinci Program. As regards the issues presented in the "Introduction," these have been answered indirectly throughout this thesis. In this section, however, I shall attempt to focus on a summary of my findings as these relate to each issue.

Miller & Seller (1990) and Fullan (1990) discuss the nature and dilemma of the challenge involved in the implementation process of an innovation. Since the teacher is preoccupied with diverse social and professional functions during the course of the day (Miller & Seller, 1990: 236), little time is afforded the implementation of a program, particularly if that program challenges the held beliefs and/or practices of the teacher. Miller & Seller (1990) state that, "There must be a recognized need for change. If teachers do not recognize this need, the intended change will be a non-event" (p. 233). They also indicate that there are

five major characteristics of a suggested change that will affect its adoption by others:

1. *Relative advantage*: The degree to which the change is perceived to be an improvement over present practice.
2. *Compatibility*: The congruity between the values implied by the change and those values present among the people who must implement the change.
3. *Complexity*: The ease with which the change can be understood and then applied.
4. *Divisibility*: Some programs can be implemented by breaking them into

smaller units.

5. *Communicability*: The ease with which the effects of the change can be shared with others (p. 234—italics in original).

The first three points helped me to understand the situation with the staff and its resistance to adopt da Vinci. I assumed too much that given the wealth of information along with the information sessions and presentations that we were conducting, the staff would be able to see the advantages of da Vinci in conjunction with the course work offered. Concerning the second characteristic, the notion of values and ideology struck me. We were a compatible enough of a group and had discussed school goals and mission statements in the past. Yet, it was obvious that the value I ascribed to da Vinci was radically incongruous with the staff's view of da Vinci. Perhaps, after all was said and done, there was still too much unknown for the staff. I do not believe, however, that the lack of attempted participation by staff members contributed to alleviating this problem. Fullan's (1990) discussion on implementation deals with much the same and emphasizes the critical importance of the principal's role in the implementation and continuance of a program such that there is a direct correlation between successful implementation and principal participation throughout the process.

Regarding the five characteristics above, Miller & Sellar (1990) do not discuss the issues of personality conflict, ulterior motives (i.e., retirement in a few years, pursuit of power or glory, lack of commitment to the job of teaching), resignation to the status quo, parental or interest group agendas, or the involvement of students at this point. My own thought is that the above issues in conjunction with the above characteristics may play a minor or a significant part in the overall success or failure of a curricular innovation.

A New Mythos

On the return trip from Denver, Colorado to Vancouver, the administrator who had accompanied us spoke of the da Vinci team developing its own "mythos." It was an appropriate concept. The old mythos, the traditional paradigm which I have referred to throughout this study, seems inviolate, even secure (Cuban, 1984). At least from what I am able to conclude from my research and teaching experience, that is the way it appears. The story of the da Vinci Program, the new mythos, reminds me of the Biblical reference to pouring new wine in old wine

skins (Matthew 9: 17), though admittedly out of context. Paradoxically, the new mythos, in many respects, is not new. And yet, it is refreshingly and excitingly novel enough to warrant such designations as “radical,” “new,” “experiential,” “alternative.” The old mythos, by virtue of its political structure, economics, and social history is self-perpetuating (Cuban, 1984; Eisner, 1983). To create a new mythos in light of that is not a facile endeavour.

The initial structure and approach of the da Vinci Program make it radical in comparison to traditional schooling. Part of its radical nature lies in its being a broader and more encompassing way of learning, of capitalizing on the interests of the learner. Such notions are out of keeping with the traditional paradigm of schooling with its hierarchical superstructure and fragile substructure (e.g., teachers who must work in virtual isolation from other adults, maintain abstract standards and curriculum impositions in the context of personal needs and ideology [Miller & Seller, 1990; Bacharach & Shedd, 1989; Bacharach, 1988; Eisner, 1985; Cuban, 1984]). Along with the rather typical top-down practice of imposing curricular demands on the system, teachers are suspicious of both the *new* and the motives behind it (Miller & Seller, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1987; Eisner, 1985; Cuban, 1984). The da Vinci Program is not to be understood in terms of too-far left or incomprehensible. While I claim that it prepares better the adolescent in that vital and inevitable transition between adolescence and adulthood both intellectually and socially, I cannot conclude that da Vinci was a viable program due to the problems associated with its implementation (it was never fully implemented at Chugalong Secondary). However, it is the intention that makes the da Vinci Program a pedagogical interest and potentially viable alternative worthy of serious examination.

This story of da Vinci involves my experiences in a local attempt at major curriculum change. The Program affords a structure, I contend, that ought to be standard fare in the senior student’s learning experience so that the adolescent who completes his/her formal schooling may be truly prepared to enter adulthood (Pallas, 1993; Gibbons, 1990, 1991b; Eisner, 1985). For those groups who would acknowledge the same and implement their own da Vinci Program, this story offers a perspective that should help to alleviate many of the problems that attend implementation and aid in the easier establishment of such a program. The telling of this story,

partly then, is to voice a potentially viable alternative in the marketplace of curriculum and sociological ideas, a marketplace that has, for various economic and ideological reasons, opted for a model that has remained basically unaltered for over a century (Cuban, 1984).

Cuban (1984) documented a number of alternative curricular innovations that saw brief existences with, in virtually every case, a return to the traditional approach, whether Dewey's attempts in the twenties, Newlon's changes in the thirties in Colorado, or some of the freedom movement influences of the sixties. Theories abound about the nature of approaches, curricula, resources and roles but, as Cuban (1984) noted, practices have changed little despite these and the positive (documented) benefits of some progressive programs and alternative approaches to schooling. He quotes one teacher who observed, "traditional teaching approaches drive students into boredom. If we were ever to teach sex the way we teach other things, ... it would go out of style" (p. 176). His research indicated that teachers tend to be the dominating agent of control and of the dissemination of information in the classroom which

will remain basically as they are right now. Why? Because subject matter—French, math, anatomy, history—dictates an essentially didactic class model since the subject is not known intuitively by students and must be transmitted from teacher to student. And the ultimate authority and control will and should remain with the teacher (p. 231).

His findings were invaluable to me as I reflected on the da Vinci Program. Gibbons' (1990) own experiences with implementing his Walkabout concept in the seventies met with resistance and, after his departure from the high school to teach at the university level, his program eventually ceased. In *The Walkabout Papers*, he states that

history is a record of just such revolutionary changes. The existing paradigm dominates for a while. Criticisms, contradictory evidence, and suggested alternatives arise, but they are easily deflected by the authority of established belief and the sheer immovable weight of *what is*... With conditions the way they are in education, it seems that we are in just that position ourselves: so deeply steeped in traditional schooling that we seem unable to respond to the tide of effects pressing us toward a new paradigm of teaching and learning (Gibbons, 1990: 144—emphasis in original).

This information aided me in my reflection back upon my experiences throughout the implementation of da Vinci. If a number of other curriculum innovators in the past have

attempted changes without long-term success, then I should not be surprised that da Vinci did not achieve greater status than it did or that it will likely disappear from Chugalong Secondary's offerings. Fullan (1990) cites Huberman and Miles (1984) who stated

that continuation or institutionalization of innovations depends on whether or not the change gets embedded or built into the structure..., has generated a critical mass of administrators and teachers who are skilled in and committed to the change, and has established procedures for continuing assistance... (p. 89).

Some of the factors that influence implementation, according to Fullan (1990), include "changes in behaviour and beliefs, and the overriding problem of ownership" (p. 91). I have commented elsewhere that the staff at Chugalong did not take ownership of da Vinci. The Program was continually referred back to us (the team). Behaviour and beliefs, or ideologies, demand deeper consideration and greater time to deal with. I speak more on this in the section, "What I Would Do Differently (p. 81).

I initiated the da Vinci Program largely as a response to an awareness that an alternative approach to learning, one that incorporated the experiential aspect of life, was lacking and necessary to enable and help the students prepare to participate fully in society as participating adults. Cuban (1984) established that the traditional paradigm has a tenacious hold on education despite the call by some to more humane and relevant learning in schools (Pallas, 1993; Gibbons, 1990; Eisner, 1985; Illich, 1973; Lister, 1973; Rogers, 1967; Wilhelms, 1967). In light of the positive findings regarding alternative approaches to learning (Gibbons, 1990; Gray, 1986; Cuban, 1984), and the demands of society for educational reform (Bacharach and Shedd, 1989; Bacharach, 1988; Apple, 1983), I think that da Vinci remains in a precarious position of either developing further or joining the ranks of historical attempts that inevitably were overcome by the traditional paradigm. My experiences thus far throughout da Vinci's development and implementation have been in harmony with the findings of Miller & Seller (1990), Bacharach & Shedd (1989), Mitchell (1989), Bacharach (1988), Cuban (1984) and Wilson (1981). Cuban (1984) states,

To ask why the dominant form of instruction continued to be teacher-centered since the late nineteenth century and why hybrids of teacher-centered progressivism and informal education developed in elementary but less in high

school classrooms, could produce a search to:

- Seek out motives, i.e., of reformers, teachers, administrators.
- Lay blame, i.e., intransigent teachers, penurious school boards.
- Justify the status quo, i.e., that's the way the system has been and it works.
- Understand why something developed.

This latter understanding of the word “why—” understanding the sources for continuity in teacher-centeredness and modest change—is, I believe, essential knowledge that policymakers, scholars, and school officials need... that could produce reliable knowledge upon which informed improvement efforts could be built (p. 239).

Cuban (1984) cites numerous references to this approach about teacher-centered curriculum delivery (Freire's [1974] “banking method”), inflexibility in the classroom, the recitation of information, and the largely unchanged traditional practice of schooling. For me, this information was significant not so much because it tended to support what I had come to realize in my practice, but because it tended to raise some serious questions for me, at least, about the nature of the educational process. Gibbons' (1990) book reiterated much the same, but with the added dimension of an offered viable alternative.

A related attribute that is debated among sociologists is the question of legitimization of inequality in the school. As Lister (1973) pointed out that

the élite/academics and the comprehensivists have much more in common than they themselves realize: they are both schoolmen and they share many assumptions: they tend to confuse schooling and education; to believe that learning is the result of teaching, and that learning is a commodity and that knowledge comes in packages processed and purveyed by them. They both believe in ‘equality of opportunity’ through schooling—which is the central myth of the system—and fail to see that schools cannot create equality of opportunity but only *legitimize* the inequality which exists in society (p. 22; emphasis in original).

In this case, the power is maintained by the process of schooling that, according to Freire (1974), is oppressive. In my reflection on my experiences throughout the development of da Vinci, Lister's comment stands as an additional call to re-examine the way we go about schooling. For Gibbons (1990) or Aronowitz (1980), it is the handicapping of youth by not incorporating experiential learning and more authentic approaches such as da Vinci. If schooling is to be viewed as propagating the “socially and economically democratic view of society” (Kohl, 1980: 62), then the question of values and ideology become crucial to the argument. And, in that case,

is school to be a model *of* society or *for* society? Or is this really a legitimate question?

My own experiences confirm that the schooling is as Cuban (1984), Eisner (1983), Freire (1974) and Lister (1973) have portrayed it. One of the outcomes of working on the da Vinci Program for me was a more critical look at schooling. From this I have come to determine that the hegemonic expression of adults dominating a passive group (Pallas, 1993; Mallea, 1989; Blackledge & Hunt, 1985; Mifflin & Mifflin, 1982, Parsons, 1959), essentially a class in society whose role status is determined by age and whose participatory status is determined by knowledge (Pallas, 1993; Gibbons, 1990; Eisner, 1983), or, as is actually more the case, by ability to pass prescribed tests through the regurgitation of prescribed knowledge, is a form of oppression. Schooling, then, as the prescriptive measures taken by an elite as agents (teachers) who inculcate the particular norms predetermined by the dominant group (society via bureaucratic representatives) to a select group (students) with limited ascribed power, constitutes an inequality, or a kind of social and political enslavement of individuals, inferior by reason of age and knowledge. I present this in the context of da Vinci because it and schooling are incompatible and because I would hope to pursue this matter further. I insist the point at least needs to be raised.

A number of researchers, such as Mallea (1989), Lareau (1987), Blackledge & Hunt (1985), Aronowitz & Giroux (1985), Giroux (1983), Mifflin & Mifflin (1982), Anyon (1980), Collins (1971), Parsons (1959), speak of inequality and/or hegemony in education. As I contemplated these writings, I determined that the da Vinci Program afforded a means of guarding against the legitimization of inequality that persists in society. To that end, the treatment above of the "Principles of Self-Education" is offered as another consideration in this discussion. Students who are better prepared for the role of adult, who learn the skills necessary for participating responsibly and critically in the social milieu, and who develop lifelong learning skills and self-direction, theoretically should be in a better position to thwart or challenge such inequalities. The traditional paradigm of schooling tends to combine groups of children and place them in an institutional setting according to age and particular classification (usually a grade level) and move them through blocks of time segments under the tutelage of subject-

specific specialists (at the secondary levels). Ideally, the da Vinci Program challenges this by insisting upon alternative methods and approaches that emphasize processes and experiential learning. As such, then, it is regarded as a radical learning approach. The da Vinci Program would be in accord, too, with Illich's (1973) suggestion that education can, in fact does function without the necessity of specific facilities which tend to perpetuate the traditional paradigm and maintain the status quo.

Considering that Gibbons began developing the Walkabout concept in the beginning years of 1970, and that I had difficulty trying to locate schools that are actively employing a similar program or approach (I could find none in British Columbia), it is not clear as to why, from the standpoint of a student-centered curriculum and the teaching profession's espoused concern for whole student development, there were not many "Walkabout" schools. This is not to say that student-centered programs do not exist or that they must bear the name, "Walkabout." Student-centered programs do exist. However, the Walkabout concept is more encompassing than mere student-centeredness as I have attempted to indicate throughout this story. Horwood (1987) describes Jeff Co in fair detail and an exploratory visit to the school by the da Vinci team in 1992 was able to confirm the feasibility and viability of the Walkabout concept. Jeff Co provided confirmation to us that Gibbons' model was workable. As the foundation for our own "Walkabout" program, I expected that it would capture the interests of the staff after we presented our findings and so facilitate full implementation. I have delineated above the outcomes of our attempts to implement da Vinci. The pedagogical and ideological challenges to change that da Vinci raised received reticence as a response.

Earlier I spoke of the da Vinci Program as part of a kind of revolution. Revolutions can die quickly and in the early stages. Gibbons' (1990) own ideas, for instance, saw a brief existence during his secondary school teaching experience and Cuban (1984) documented a number of curricular innovations that failed to continue on. I would suggest that the lack of Walkabout schools in British Columbia is not surprising and supports the findings of Chamberlain & Chamberlain (1993), Pallas (1993), Miller & Seller (1990), Mallea (1989), Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), Cuban (1984), Eisner (1983), Sanders & Schwab (1981), and

Proctor (1975).

Numerous researchers, such as Gibbons (1990, 1991), Gray & Chanoff (1986), Cuban (1984), Apple (1983), Eisner, 1983, Aronowitz (1980), Freire (1974), Illich (1973), Lister (1973), Rogers, 1967, Coombs (1967), Wilhelms (1967), speak to the currently lacking but necessary integration of experiential learning in the curriculum along with a reform of the traditional approach. I believe that for ideo-philosophical reasons (the predominant functionalist undergirding and tendencies of the policy-makers) and for socio-economic reasons (the extra cost of re-educating the educators and restructuring schools), the traditional approach to education, that is to say, schooling, is still unaltered. Gibbons' (1990) writings (and suggested alternative approach) are already twenty years old. Much of Cuban's (1984) research speaks of radical attempts. Bobbitt and Thorndike's scientific/militaristic approaches to education maintain their guiding influence on the schooling of society to which Aronowitz (1980) counters, "the military model cannot insure democratic participation. On the contrary it encourages subordination of a *conceptually* illiterate population whose skills extend to the technical plane" (p. 47: emphasis in original). Can da Vinci survive, be fully implemented in this setting? Given that Jeff Co has a similar foundation and has been active for twenty years in much the same environment, the da Vinci Program should perform as well, especially utilizing Miller & Seller's (1990: 278) model of implementation approach.

The da Vinci Program was likely viewed as too radical by reluctant staff members in that it varied too greatly from their personal, pedagogical ideology (Miller & Seller, 1990). We were not ostracized for our attempts but we did feel the psychological weight of avoidance or non-participation with us. My preoccupation with the details of the Program plus regular teaching duties as well as full-time graduate studies pre-empted any attempts to interview staff members about their perceptions about and reasons for not participating in da Vinci. Other than two individuals who expressed interest but were "too busy," no efforts were made by others to gather more information or participate.

The administration remained an authoritative agency that concentrated on the general management of the school. The da Vinci Program began with much support in the form of

granted requests for release-time and accolades, but participation and interest in it were not evident in practice or in outcomes. Cuban stated, "Two reasons, I believe, dulled the appetite of teachers for classroom change: the personal cost in time and energy and the lack of help to put complex ideas into practice" (p. 254).

Shifting Paradigms: Poetic Catharsis

The process of bringing to life, as it were, the da Vinci Program had a greater impact than I at first realized. It was not just a pedagogical challenge, or a cliquish new fad that happened to fall upon me and a few others. The reconsideration of education as opposed to schooling (Illich, 1973; Freire, 1974; Eisner, 1983) in my mind was heightened by *The Walkabout Papers*. On a couple of occasions I suggested to the group that the event of developing the da Vinci Program caused a sensation of power. But it was like the power of a huge wave upon which we were riding and at any moment, the wave could either send each of us crashing down in front of it or leave us behind.

For each of us on the team, the concepts of the Program—experiential learning, self-direction, advising, negotiating a learning project, integration of course studies—certainly challenged our thinking (or lack of it) about teaching, as I have intimated above, some moreso than others. We talked about the effects that the Program was having on us, from becoming more aware of our instructional approach in our regular classes to altering our activities and even our comportment in the classroom. Various outcomes included negotiated contracts and projects, more student-centered and self-directed learning, alternative evaluation schemes, more integration of learning and practical living.

The phrase, *paradigm shift*, was not used lightly but with a real attempt to understand the internal turmoil (to a limited degree) associated with the challenge against the dominant approach to teaching. Nevertheless, there still remains a certain incredulity on my part about the stalwart reticence to change by many within the system. For me, the statement by Baron and Sternberg (1987) summed up what I tended to think:

The fact that we think spontaneously does not prevent us from succumbing to the stratagems of hucksters and demagogues; nor does it ensure the consistent rationality of our behavior. Indeed, the list of documented ways in which our

reasoning commonly goes astray is a long one... *What is especially troublesome is our apparently pervasive proclivity to bias our interpretation of evidence in favor of our preferences and pre-established conclusions* (p. 28; emphasis added).

Gibbons' (1990) writings began a greater change within me. Whereas the greatest aspect to change concerned my thinking about teaching and students, I began to notice how other areas in the sphere of my living were affected positively. From the time of reading Gibbons' (1990) book and analyzing it to the team working together and making preparations for the trip to Denver, it was very much a personal revolution. There was a breath of excitement about the author's concept that rekindled a desire to both effect change in the education system and to learn, to pursue further learning.

I likened da Vinci to a revolution, of sorts, of freeing students from the fetters of the institution of schooling—a kind of educational emancipation—and challenging the perceived encumbrances of administration. If schooling were accepted as the institutionalization of education—the formalized and normative processing of adolescents grouped and advanced according to age and achievement on tests and occurring in depersonalizing settings for arbitrary segments and durations of time—then an alternative approach that attempted to incorporate experiential learning, flexible hours of formal instruction, and more humane and realistic considerations of the adolescent in terms of both his/her development and preparation for adulthood could be argued as near emancipatory acts. I am not suggesting that we relinquish standards, order, and collective instruction. That a guiding structure is necessary is borne out by social research (Bibby, 1990; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989, 1992; Anyon, 1981; Eggleston, 1977; Russell, 1949; as well as my teaching experiences over twelve years). It is equally evident and thus all the more significant that students are ill-prepared from the education system (Gibbons, 1976, 1990; Cuban, 1984; Apple, 1983). All the more reason, then, that a serious re-examination be undertaken of how we presently school adolescents and how we can teach them to learn.

Recommendations

There are, it seems to me from my readings and reflection, two main camps of educational thinking. The one accepts, fosters the status quo, or the traditional paradigm of

schooling, and resists changes. Its nature is predominantly of the Transmission meta-orientation and the institution of schooling is a social given and argued or assumed necessity (Mallea, 1989, Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Blackledge & Hunt, 1985; Kliebard, 1975; Bruner, 1971; Taba, 1962). The other emphasizes human nature and process and resists the institutionalization or potential dehumanization of persons (Toll, 1991; Gray & Chanoff, 1986; Gibbons, 1976, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992). Its nature is essentially of the Transaction and Transformation meta-orientations (Miller & Seller, 1990). One of the elements, then, of the da Vinci Program's potential worth is in its fostering the holistic growth of the person (I am not using "holistic" here in the pantheistic or New Age sense, but rather in a narrower context that encompasses the soul, or the whole person, not just the intellect). Its potential worth is also visible in the transformation of the individual from dependent adolescent to independent, articulate, emerging young adult who is able to function more appropriately in society as a contributing member (Bogard, 1992; Langberg, 1992; Gibbons, 1990, 1992; Horwood, 1987) in whatever manner that is.

Given Cuban's (1984) observations and conclusions about teaching practices in the preceding 100 years, the actual conceptualizing of what it is to teach needs some challenges if for no other reason than to ensure that we are performing the best job possible for the sake of the student. This is not to undermine or deny changes that have occurred. In light of my findings, however, curricular alterations, school site developments, and diverse teaching practices incorporating methodological variations amount to superficial considerations.

The question of the feasibility or viability of da Vinci, particularly in light of the Tylerian control of curriculum that administrations at the various levels maintain and that teachers (unwittingly) propagate, is an interesting query, but impossible to examine properly in this study. Miller & Seller (1990) indicated that any innovation requires time to implement and that the larger the scale of the innovation, the greater are the number of accompanying difficulties which, in turn, have an impact on the time. The da Vinci Program requires a longer period of implementation before a proper analysis of its viability or feasibility can be undertaken. This is not to conclude that the problems of the Program's implementation to this point were purely a

function of time. I have concluded, after reading Fullan (1990), Miller and Seller (1990), Eisner (1983, 1985), Gibbons (1976, 1990, 1992), Cuban (1984) and Freire (1974), that if there had been more time to implement da Vinci fully, there still would have been the attending problems that I have indicated in this document.

If the “five year plan” were given serious consideration and Chugalong Secondary were to become the da Vinci school, I believe there would be an equalizing effect within the district whereby students would merely transfer to the school of their choice in the district. Students, then, would attend one of the other two secondary schools if they wanted to pursue a traditional program of studies or to Chugalong Secondary if they wanted to pursue the da Vinci Program. I am well aware of the logistics and the dynamics that the impact of this would have on the other schools. These are aspects of change involved in the implementation of such a program as this one. The greater questions, “What is best for the student?” and, “How can we, society, best address this issue?” need to be addressed first.

The gap between the ideal and the actual, as I have intimated above, was not bridged in the first year of the Program. In a conversation with the present advisor in the Program, I noted that it is still not a reality. Whether or not it will be fully implemented remains to be seen as administrators change postings, staff personnel move, student demands place pressure on course offerings, and the vision is maintained by the remaining da Vinci advisor(s). The above ideal was constantly in my thinking about the da Vinci Program as the first year unfolded.

A number of additional questions arise from this study which remain unanswered. What is/was the actual versus articulated ideology of the school? Of the staff members? Of the da Vinci team? Does the Canadian identity have an impact upon the school setting, administrative profiles, and program applications (Taylor, 1992; Bibby, 1990; Mallea, 1989; Tomkins, 1981)? What are the actual responses of students in terms of improvements, perceptions, comparisons, and achievements? What are the insights and articulated responses of the staff and administration? What would a comparative study of Jeff Co, which offers an already established Walkabout program, and the da Vinci Program at Chugalong reveal?

Wilson (1981) noted that, “In the day-to-day administration..., answerability is composed

of four elements present in varying degrees under different circumstances: resources, knowledge, purpose and choice” (p. 288). Although this was primarily directed toward administration, I think that the four elements are readily adaptable to any level of decision-making. In terms of the changes discussed, then, I believe that the following questions within each element, actually voiced or thought, shed some light on the process from the teachers’ perspectives. Some of these questions could be adopted for student and parental consideration. There are likely more questions that could be raised but these serve as a beginning place:

- Resources: Who is making the change?
 What’s in it for me? What’ll it cost me?
 How much time do I have to accomplish it?
 Is time being made so that I can do this?
- Knowledge: Does it fit my ways (e.g. ideology)?
 What more do I have to know?
 Has it been done before? How is it different?
- Purpose: What are the reasons for the change?
 Why does it have to be done? Where will it lead us (me)?
 What are the expectations?
- Choice: Do I have to do it?
 Can I participate in its development?
 What’s the alternative?

Perhaps if I had known about and presented these at one of the earlier staff presentations, there might have been an improved response to da Vinci. For the implementer, utilizing these four categories (one could easily refer to Miller & Seller’s [1990] five characteristics of change, p. 234) should eliminate much resistance or at least reduce potential conflict. In terms of the da Vinci Program, some of these questions were anticipated prior to presentations and some were developed after I examined the Program from different views.

The challenge to change is multifaceted. Students, as a result of the nature of schooling, cannot effect change. The fact that even educators must struggle to implement minuscule

changes (such as the difficulties in integrating subjects or team teaching) demonstrates the hold that the traditional paradigm has on schooling as well as the problems that change is perceived to create. Cuban (1984) noted that one explanation for teaching practice as it is/has been is the

occupational ethos of teaching that breeds conservatism and resistance to change in institutional practice. This conservatism, i.e., preference for stability and caution toward change, is rooted in the people recruited into the profession, how they are informally socialized, and the school culture of which teaching itself is a primary ingredient (p. 243).

For the would-be implementer, a great deal of pre-planning and preparation is necessary (Miller & Seller, 1990; Gibbons, 1990; Eisner, 1985).

To accept the challenges in administration in ensuring success in such an implementation, such as participation or supportive dialogue, the levels of administration would have to embrace if not the whole Program's philosophy then at least the notions of professional and pedagogical support by recognizing that some key individuals have taken the time and expended the energy in an effort to improve the learning process for students. Implementers are seemingly ostracized within the profession as much by the nature of the demands that innovation places on them as by the perceived threat of change or difference that such attempts bring about in the implementers.

By September, 1993, the da Vinci Program had been relegated to the level of course elective and one teacher in a classroom, both acts which militate against the ideology I fought hard to develop and maintain. The act, I believe, undermines its credibility and viability as an ideal learning model. Apart from a renewed vision and vigor by all involved to gain a respectful place in education, I believe the da Vinci Program will disappear from the timetable as a noble attempt, but an unnecessary frill in a time of arguable necessary restraint in much the same way as the previous Gifted program and the like. I anticipated this result in the first year of implementation:

I fear at this point that the da V. will die within 2 years, especially with the present principal (and distance of the school board). Given financial constraints, my leaving in June, waning enrollment, the pressures to maintain this Program as a legitimate program (and not just some *nice* Innovation that brings in extra funding to the District and "good looks"), I think, will squash it. Likely it will be relegated to a single (or 2) teacher and a specific block of time in the timetable. After that, it will fade. I hope not (Notes, 13-02-93).

To understand the da Vinci Program not only as a radical approach to learning but as a creative response to the traditional system, the beginnings of a new social and educational awareness are possible. It is not enough to condemn the traditional paradigm of schooling or to be merely a social critic and delve into the realm of sociological theories. Applying the latter in a positive and tenacious manner with the view to a more improved universal existence in the cosmos is both a high ideal and, realistically, a lifelong ordeal. The essence or true nature of education, in my mind, is not about the impersonal mass production of entities called students, but rather the learning development of personal individuals. Treating students as individuals and with real needs demands a conceptual shift in the current educational system which means that teachers, administrators, politicians, and even parents must realign their thinking.

What I Would Do Differently...

In many respects, the telling of this story seems to be just a beginning. As I reflected back on the issues that I presented in the "Introduction," I was confronted with two main questions: What have I learned? and What would I do differently? What I have learned relates to what I would do differently if I had the opportunity, thus, the title of this section.

In general, I discovered that I approached curriculum implementation with a disregard for research, planning, or expertise. I initially thought, at least during the preparation and presentation of the "da Vinci Files," and assumed that other staff members would become involved automatically. Gibbons' (1990) book served as an impetus to change for me, but I discovered, well after the anxiety and frustrations of the beginnings of the Program, that teachers, administrators, and even students and parents respond differently to ideas, especially where those ideas challenge presently accepted views. Had I taken the time to thoroughly prepare for the full implementation of da Vinci, a greater degree of success might have been possible. I say this, however, with a certain caution, cognizant of the fact that innovations of an especially radical nature will always be fraught with resistance, and difficulties regardless of the amount of time that is allotted (Fullan, 1990). A more patient and researched approach, though, would have, I believe, ensured an easier transition. Some key areas where I would pursue a different tack are as follows.

In terms of staff information, I would help establish a framework for the presentation of ideas in a school (of course, I would like to change the present structure of schools, too) such that any innovation could be dealt with in a methodical manner, capitalizing on research, methods, and expertise. I believe that in this way, many problems could be foreseen and overcome. Miller & Seller (1990), Fullan (1990), Doll (1989), Eisner (1985) and Pratt (1980) are just some examples of curriculum specialists that could act as resources in this process. Involving the staff in the process as an active professional practice conflicts with the time constraints that already afflict teachers. In response, I would suggest that the roles of administrators and Board personnel be seriously and carefully examined with a view to improving the educational process.

I would suggest now that a staff be approached, through a professional development day or a conference, and presented a structured framework to enable careful consideration of both personal and school ideologies. I think that with such an approach, a staff could learn to understand its own compilation of ideologies and the factors involved in tolerating and even assisting others to develop, articulate, and implement curricular innovations. Key questions posed to educators to stimulate thinking about schooling, learning, goals and practices, though not new, could be mixed with research findings and presented with models of practice for consideration. A long-term plan of implementation should be drawn up (before public scrutiny) that anticipates questions, fears, ideologies and school climate. Initially, during the beginning stages of da Vinci's development, I wanted many times to force the Program into place. That is not unlike pushing a partially built boat into the water just to get people on board. I have learned that time and patience are key experiences and necessary characteristics for implementation.

Since (apparent) miscommunication seemed to thwart an interconnectedness between the staff and the da Vinci team, more time spent in the discussion of ideas, ideals and ideologies, particularly as these are challenged by findings in the education literature, and in small amounts (in other words, do not discuss all the school goals in one setting, for example), would help to alleviate some of the problems of communication. As I think back on when we were preparing to leave for Jeff Co and the one staff member who had raised a concern about our going, I think that a more charitable response would have included an invitation to join us along with more time

spent in going through the main points of the Program. The concern might not even have been raised had we more carefully prepared the staff. I was too inclined to disassociate myself from the staff, and to think that if staff members wanted to, they could just as easily read the same materials I had and approach me or the team for more information if necessary. In short, I rationalized my position with a challenge to others to read and think more, and justified my actions by appealing to the lack of time to “do everything for everybody.” If we had spent more time delineating the particulars of the da Vinci innovation, of our intentions (such as planning the trip to Jeff Co, beginning a pilot approach in the spring, thinking of a five-year plan for the full implementation of da Vinci at Chugalong Secondary), and of our expected or desired response from the staff and administration supported by research, then the da Vinci Program might have enjoyed more success. More students might have been more inclined to remain in the Program and more staff members might have become more involved.

In terms of the concerns about the high drop-out rate in the first three months of the Program, I would now suggest that a smaller, more manageable number be permitted in the innovation in the beginning, and this after a formal presentation and an interview with prospective participants. In this way, greater clarification of the Program’s, and our, demands could be ensured. A second activity that I would undertake for the first several weeks would be to “walk through” the Program with the participants, that is, practice some of the writing necessary for proposals and journal entries along with sample or small Passage projects completed as a group. This is a similar activity that I had done previously, and successfully, with the students I had taught in the Gifted program and is consistent with the practice at Jeff Co. I think that in this way, fewer students would be so apt to misunderstand the nature of the Program or to opt out of it.

Other factors, or variables that are associated with implementation (school ideology, governance, personalities and agendas), demand creative approaches over time for resolution or further study with regard to this Program. A final resort, one which I have heard discussed among educators and parents, would be to begin a new learning center, or resource place (which is what I would have a school become) for the enhancement of learning rather than the institution

where subjects are taught in the context of successful completion of tests. That, however, demands more thoughtful examination and discussions that are beyond the scope of this story.

The da Vinci Program afforded me a practical experience in curriculum development and, to a limited extent, implementation. The unfortunate part of this experience, for me, was not so much the struggles as the persistent nature of schooling despite the challenges to improve upon what we know in education. I have seen a Walkabout program in practice, interviewed students and a graduate from that program and yet, I cannot help questioning the practice of schooling, if not in British Columbia, then in the small District where da Vinci began. For the would-be implementor of da Vinci, or of a similar program, there is more to be gained from preparation and planning. The ground work will undoubtedly seem/be painfully slow, but it is a greater pain to make haste and reap resistance and rejection. The aim of da Vinci is to help the student develop fully in preparation for adulthood. It is the task and responsibility of a society to ensure the success of that aim. This is the challenge before us as educators, both as parents and as professionals.

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Appendix 1

The da Vinci Files (Journal Notes, 09, 1991)

A Program of Inter-dependence Learning

By the end of the 16th century [this should have been the fifteenth century], the renaissance was already history. The keynote people of the time, prime conference gurus in this day and age, were well into their latter years. Leonardo da Vinci, probably the greatest example of the renaissance individual, was, by this time, near death [in actual fact, da Vinci died in 1519]. Behind him lay hundreds of graphic ideas, sketches, paintings, and a legacy of learning that is often alluded to only in passing in the study of history. Yet, this master of knowledge was broken at the end of his life due to the lack of understanding of the one area that to this day eludes a firm or absolute response for most: the soul.

Less than a hundred years later, a new wave of transformation struck Europe through the mortal leaders of Martin Luther, John Calvin and others associated with the Reformation and the soul was included in every man's education.

The renaissance period comes quickly to mind when reading Maurice Gibbons' collection, *The Walkabout Papers*, where the student of the 21st century has become a specialist who seizes and responds to the importance of education as a means to a life of learning that leads to interacting in society *inter-dependently*. Now the learner enters society as a mature interactive being.

"The da Vinci Files" is an attempt to slightly restructure Gibbon's approach primarily in two areas: by insisting upon a broader base rather than the individual becoming a "specialist," and by incorporating a more formal structure of philosophical inquiry that would inherently include the spiritual, or the soul.

Since this is the first course of action from a *formal* perspective, it is posited by this instructor that a select group be released from their routine schedule during school time so as to be enabled to pursue that course of studies leading to a more diverse and productive lifestyle asserted in the Gibbons model. This trial group would meet with the facilitator daily to review progress and problems as well as once weekly for a seminar dealing with issues relating to their

program of studies or for personal presentations. Parents would be encouraged to assist in every facet of the Program and coached as to how they, too, could benefit from an interactive approach. In these ways the parent would be kept informed as to the progress and success of their child. Grading would be performed as per Gibbons' suggested pattern and all necessary curricular material would be covered by the learner.

Given its success, the following academic year would presumably experience more individuals opting for this learning approach. It is also assumed that this writer would be the facilitator.

Appendix 2

Initial Site Development Grant Proposal

In 1989, the British Columbia Ministry of Education proposed a major educational innovation entitled, *Year 2000: A Framework For Learning*. An attempt to “deliver effective educational programs to the young people of the province” (p. 2), the Ministry of Education developed a three tiered curriculum program—Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation—each oriented specifically to elementary, junior and secondary levels respectively. The Ministry of Education offered financial grants to educators who would develop and implement programs that were concrete examples of the *Year 2000*. The following document is the proposal submitted to the Ministry of Education for a grant to further develop the Program. As we contemplated the elements of the da Vinci Program and compared these with the *Year 2000* innovation during the proposal writing, it became a confirmation of sorts to discover that da Vinci served as a viable model of implementation for the key principles of the *Year 2000*. These were set out in a table in the Grant Proposal document which later also served as part of the da Vinci information document.

SYNOPSIS OF THE da VINCI PROGRAM

The da Vinci Program models itself upon Maurice Gibbons' walkabout concept and meets or exceeds the requirements of the Intermediate and Graduation Program of the Year 2000 Innovation in British Columbia by the facilitation of student negotiated projects, or passages. These passages are found in conjunction with regular course work and are relevant as well as individualized, address student interests and provide challenging personal experiences.

Based on six broad learning dimensions (practical skill, physical challenge, creative endeavour, community/global awareness, career exploration, philosophical inquiry), students negotiate with their advisors to create a personal program that involves flexible timetabling and the design of an authentic learning experience. Students will venture out beyond the classroom to explore their programs more deeply and broaden their experiences. The creative, innovative use of resources, particularly in the community, is central to the Program where students will interact with a multitude of organizations, institutions, professionals, business persons, etc., in order to investigate and research their programs.

A vital part of the Program involves strategies for guidance, training and assessment. Advisors, other teachers, parents and community members will be involved to prepare, guide and assess student achievement using a wide variety of methods, emphasizing lifelong learning and personal success.

The da Vinci Program culminates in a public presentation of each student's pursuits and a celebration of their personal achievements.

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INTERMEDIATE AND GRADUATION FOCUS / PRINCIPLES (GENERAL)

INTERMEDIATE AND GRAD PROGRAM

1. Students are individuals with unique learning styles and rates of learning.
2. Students are provided with the instruction and assistance needed for them to attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for success within the Graduation Program.
3. Students begin the Graduation Program where they left off from the Intermediate Program.
4. Students are provided with the means to prepare for the next phase of their lives by choosing from selected options.
5. Students experience a variety of learning strategies.
6. Students earn credentials that are necessary for post-school endeavours.
7. Students have flexible hours/days to take care of out-of-school responsibilities.
8. Students have support.
9. Students participate in a ceremony recognizing the completion of their formal public school education.
10. Students, with the support of family and school, take responsibility for their own learning.
11. Students have flexibility in the amount of time they spend attaining any given learning outcome.
12. Students participate in some form of Work Experience related to their interests.

* Taken From the Graduation Draft Document, 1991.

da VINCI PROGRAM

1. Programs are individually designed and scheduled to address learning styles and rates.

Advisors assist students in the redesign of individual programs based on six learning dimensions which directly relate to the four developmental goals of the Graduation Program.

3. Individually designed programs ensure sensible transitions from Intermediate to Graduation Program as well as adulthood.
4. With the assistance of advisors, students select topics relevant to themselves.
5. Students are challenged to use a variety of learning strategies to fulfill their programs.
6. Students attain graduation, career and authentic life experiences that earn necessary credentials for post-school endeavours.
7. Program schedules are built around the specific needs of the student.
8. Each student has an advisor and a selected set of human resources to call upon.
9. The graduation ceremony consists of a public presentation and celebration of each student's achievements.
10. Individualized programs with personalized schedules give students greater ownership of their education and a responsibility for completion.
11. Depending on each student's needs and situations, programs can be redesigned and rescheduled.
12. Students must engage in some vocational and community venture as part of their program.

INTERMEDIATE AND GRADUATION FOCUS/PRINCIPLES (ASSESSMENT)

(This table formed part of the rationale in the second Grant Proposal aimed at assessment)

INTERMEDIATE AND GRAD PROGRAM	da VINCI PROGRAM
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are supported in making informed choices about their particular pathway to graduation through a variety of assessment strategies. 2. Students use a variety of learning activities ranging from the simple to complex and the assessment practices used should relate to and support these activities. 3. Students are involved in the portfolios, assessment process by reflecting on their learning, setting future goals, collecting evidence of learning and using self-assessment to establish evaluation criteria. 4. Students learn to construct personal meaning, to use self-assessment and to develop independent, self-directed units. 5. Students have flexibility in the amount of time it takes to attain any given learning outcome. 6. Students develop a sense of independence, direction and responsibility for their own learning when they are involved in self-assessment. 7. Student assessment reflects learning with respect to physical types of performance, critical thinking and group processing activities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students take ownership for the quality of their passage and for completion through individually designed assessment strategies. 2. Students work with an advisor to design their own particular programs and assessment frameworks based on the six learning dimensions or Passages. 3. Students use journals, develop on-going assessment frameworks, progress reports for advisors and regularly scheduled conferences with advisors to evaluate Passage progress and determine assessment criteria for Passage completion. 4. Students choose their own topics of study (Passages) and are assisted by mentors and advisors to design appropriate performance and assessment strategies for each one. 5. Students are guided in the redesign and rescheduling of Passages, Passage assessment and evaluation timelines to meet their individual needs. 6. Students negotiate with their advisors and mentors suitable methods and timelines for self-assessment throughout their Passages. 7. Student assessment reflects learning through personal examination, critical thinking and feedback from a variety of sources: teachers, advisors, mentors, triad members and community resource people.

8. Students organize for their assessment and evaluation time frames to occur in conjunction with the learning situation and to be based on performance in relation to specific, clearly defined standards.

8. Passage performance and assessment opportunities are built around the specific demands and proposed completion date of the Passage in which the student is engaged.

* Taken from the Intermediate and Graduation Draft Documents, 1991.

Self-Directed Learning

The da Vinci Program emphasizes self-directed learning through guided instruction and practical experience, creating opportunities for the development of the whole student/learner. The learning activities are interrelated in three domains: Personal, Social/Interpersonal, and Academic or Technical. Within each domain, a student participates actively by experiential learning and by study. The teaching role will involve facilitating and advising using strategies which assist students in developing the attitudes, personality characteristics and skills needed to pursue and achieve their goals.

Negotiated Learning Contract

Each student in the Program will negotiate an individualized action plan, or learning contract with his/her advisor. This document is designed to be not only an instrument for self-directed learning, but also an outline of the process of learning. In meeting the demands of each of the six aspects, or passages, of the Program (Creative Endeavour, Practical Skill, Community/Global Awareness, Career Exploration, Philosophical Inquiry, Physical Challenge), the parts of the contract should anticipate the difficulties and challenges the student will face, and represent solutions for the student to explore. Ideally, the contract will identify the vision or long-term goals of the student, the learning strategies to be used, acceptable demonstrations of achievement, and the roles of each participant. The student and the advisors will understand the nature of the project being undertaken, the anticipated learning outcomes, and will agree upon the standards that will be used to evaluate and/or assess the work related to the outcomes.

The Working Journal

Students will be required (and learn) to keep a working journal as they progress. The journal is a sketchbook or record of thinking, learning, planning, action and reflection, becoming a resource of ideas much like the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci.

Evaluation

While subject matter is a part of the student's school experience, the learner will be encouraged not only to synthesize through precept and example, but also to become conscious of developing skills, applying processes, pursuing goals, and participating in a variety of experiences. Evaluation will be formal and informal, and include self-assessment as much as assessment by those supporting the student (such as a group of advisors). The student will negotiate an evaluation technique that includes a minimum, an excellent, and a superior level of achievement, thereby incorporating evaluation in the learning process. While the demonstration of outcomes is an important aspect of evaluation, much of the evaluation/assessment will be through Passage explorations and Wrap-ups, reports, and creative work which will be documented in formal portfolios.

CONFIGURATION

Students will become involved in the da Vinci Program through a number of options. The Program is designed to be made available to students within a wide spectrum of abilities, achievement levels, interests, and needs.

Advisor/Mentor Teams

Specific teachers, parents, and other supporters work as a team (although much of the work of advising will take place on a one to one basis) with the student to create a caring, safe, effective environment for the learner. Together, or by taking on specific roles, members of the mentor team teach and guide the student in learning how to learn and in how to achieve goals, as well as in the learning and achieving itself. The mentor team becomes involved in assisting with assessment and evaluation, as well as in celebrating achievements with the student. The team is assembled based on the needs of the student and the characteristics of his/her goals.

Support Systems

Support systems include both the human resources and facilities available within the school, the school district and the community. Often, learning will include an exploration of the support systems that are available, how the resources in the school and community may be bridged, and/or how one resource can be used in conjunction with another. (Please see model following)

Core Group - Students and advisors

Assessment within the core group involves a variety of approaches and configurations.

Students are responsible for formative self-assessments to monitor their ongoing progress as well as summative self-evaluations that involve careful self-reflection and analysis of their learning experiences.

Peer assessment takes the form of support groups known as triads or quads. In these small groups, peers informally discuss and assess each other's passages providing ongoing support, suggestions and feedback.

Advisors are responsible for monitoring the student's self-assessment process through interviews, anecdotal records, proposal editing, progress charts, etc. From such interactions advisors also provide external, objective feedback to students. All feedback is ongoing and ranges from informal interactions to formal structured assessments.

The Extended Group - School and Parents

The school administration acts as an objective source of assessment by providing both informal and formal feedback to advisors and students. The school as a whole serves as a venue to present and display passage projects and provide public support and feedback to students and advisors.

Parents play a key role in assessment by receiving and providing feedback at meetings

and in their involvement in their child's passage.

The Community

Any individual in the community involved in a student's passage shall be included in the assessment process. This inclusion can take the form of informal interviews and formal checklist assessments.

Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities play a role by recognizing the da Vinci assessment Program as a credible process of assessment. A student's da Vinci transcript will not be based solely upon a solitary letter grade, but will be an anecdotal summary gathered from the various methods from the variety of sources involved.

There is an aspect of sharing in this Program which involves advisors sharing the results of the implementation of the da Vinci Program within the district, within the province, and with the Ministry of Education and will involve students sharing their achievements with peers, community members, advisors, and mentors as the culmination of their work. In making presentations about the Program, the most powerful and effective demonstration will be the holistic growth of the students.

In order to share the results of the da Vinci Program, the implementation will be documented in a dossier. The dossier will include the following:

- Inception of the idea.
- Alternatives considered.
- Time line for implementation.
- Issues that arose both before and during implementation, for Program participants and for others in the school community.
- Samples of student work.
- Anecdotes on students.
- Quotes from student journals (by permission).
- Program review.
- Program materials to date.

Presentations to interested groups may include some or all of the following:

- Advisors outlining the Program and their roles.
- Students outlining their learning processes, how they changed, and what challenges they met.
- Displays of student achievements.
- Videotapes of advisor and student meetings.
- Relevant materials and documents.

METHODS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

The implementation of the da Vinci Program requires regular meetings of advisors not only to discuss student progress but also to assess the direction of the Program with reference to its aims, goals and objectives. To that end, the da Vinci team will change or alter the Program with respect to improvement. It is crucial that the da Vinci team take opportunity to interact with one another, the community and administration with a view to aid the student-learner develop to the utmost of his/her capability and to be a verification for the team members of progress and decisions in advisement.

Participants will review and assess the outcomes of the Program through:

- Forums.
 - Informal discussion.
 - Student journals and portfolios.
 - Advisor sessions and journals.
 - Regular conferences.
-
- Articulation with secondary level institutions and the appropriate Ministry Departments.

Appendix 3

Staff Presentation Agenda, Feb. 5

1. History

- Maurice Gibbon's Walkabout Ideas
- Materials were introduced to our Pro-D collection
- Early September, Blane called a meeting
- Interested people began to meet regularly
- da Vinci exemplified the type of learner Walkabout ideas espoused
- Administrators were supportive and encouraged further pursuit
- Interested staff saw the ideas as something they wanted to try rather than just read about

2. da VINCI

- Took da Vinci idea and shaped it into a proposal for a Ministry of Ed. Site Development Grant
- Creating proposal reconfirmed values and beliefs about the benefits to students
- Received Grant because selection committee recognized the da Vinci Program matched the Graduation Program in a number of ways.
- Obligations and conditions of grant

3. COLORADO

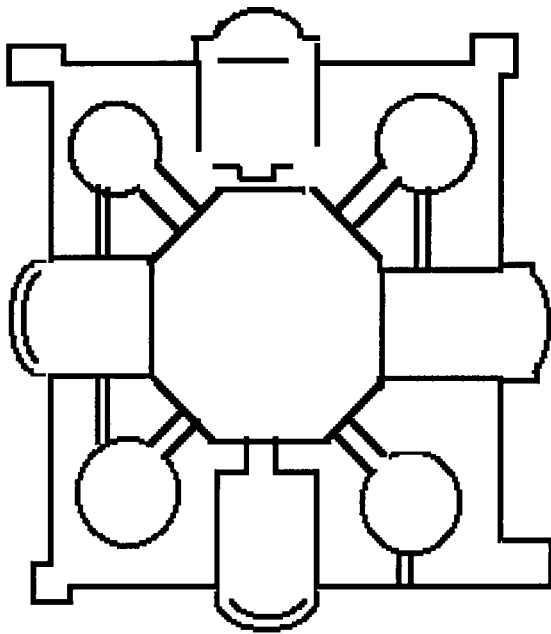
- Site development group felt the need to see a credible Walkabout Program in action
- Time restraints made planning and going on the trip a very rushed process
- Colorado confirmed potential of such a program

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- Initial project proposal included identification of 20 students
- Plans include a student, parents, and Chugalong staff orientation
- Individualized Educational Programs will be developed, based on elements agreed upon by advisors (teachers), parents and student
- Programs will emphasize understanding the Walkabout concept and embarking on "mini" passages (authentic learning experiences built on the six challenges described in the da Vinci proposal)
- Evaluation of student progress and the effectiveness of the Program will be ongoing
- In June, a program evaluation/report will be made to students, parents, Chugalong staff, district colleagues, the Board, and the Ministry with a view to identifying the value of Walkabout approach in connection to the Graduation Program

Appendix 4
da Vinci Program Working Documents

The guidelines used here were adapted from the materials from Jeff Co. It was the intention of the da Vinci team to create its own “principles of passage proposals, wrap-ups, performances, etc.” (Notes, 6-05-92.)



The da Vinci Program

da VINCI PROGRAM MATERIALS

Passage Guidelines: General
Passage Guidelines: Specific
Questions and Learner Profile
Assessment Forms

passage: (n.) passing, transit; transition from one state to another (Swanell, 1986).

As one recalls the aboriginal custom where the adolescent would be expected to embark on a solo journey lasting several months in the wilds of the Australian outback, his return indicating a successful venture, marked a vitally important element of human growth: that transition from adolescence to adulthood. This rite of passage would challenge the youth in all facets of his being: the spiritual, the personal/emotional and the intellectual. Practical skills would be learned for survival and for amusement. Philosophical inquiry, or questions of why, who, what, how would likely arise. The physical challenge of survival and the venture itself as well as developing awareness of his interaction with nature, with others, with the world would be a part of the passage.

For the student in any culture, each of these aspects is a passage in itself. Capitalizing on personal interests, the student of the da Vinci Program embarks on a Passage, an experiential venture that pits the student against him/herself in the developing process of learning; the beginning stages for lifelong learning.

STEP 1: IDEA ORGANIZATION

Passage Proposal Process

General Guidelines

1. Describe your Passage in your opening paragraph. You could use the newspaper format of who, what, why, when and where. Try to make your statements as clear as possible; write them as if someone who knew nothing about the school were reading them. Tell why your Passage is a challenge to you and what risks you expect in this experience: personal (physical, financial, emotional), social and intellectual.
2. Describe your preparation for this experience: your strengths, past experience, training you plan to pursue prior to beginning the Passage.
3. Describe the resources you have (personal strengths, motivations, people, books, materials, etc.) and the resources you will need and how you will obtain them.
4. Describe what you anticipate to be your greatest obstacle(s) and how you plan to overcome it (them).
5. Describe your first step in beginning this Passage; list your steps in order in your progress toward completion. A timeline with checkpoints may be appropriate here.
6. State how you will know when this passage is complete and proposed date of completion.

STEP 2: WRITING YOUR PROPOSAL

Passage Proposal Process

General Guidelines

1. Develop an idea, an interest or a dream. Consider your readiness in terms of past experiences, skills, knowledge, motivation, resources and personal strengths.
2. Meet with your advisor to discuss your idea. Take notes and follow through with responses and suggestions.
3. Write your Rough Draft, using both the general and specific guidelines for the passage.
4. Give a copy of your Rough Draft to your advisor, triad and, where applicable, to your mentor and ask for feedback. This will need to be at least two (2) weeks prior to a planned meeting for the proposal.
5. Revise your Draft Proposal and make a Final Draft. This process may occur more than once.
6. Select and invite people to be on your Passage Committee. It should include the following: advisor, mentor, triad members, parents (if appropriate) and community people involved in your Passage.
7. Give a copy of your Final Draft Proposal to each member of your Committee at least one (1) week prior to a planned meeting for the proposal.
8. Schedule a meeting with all Committee members.
9. At the Passage Meeting, seek approval and suggestions from your Committee and take notes to use in making further revisions (if necessary), or in performing the Passage and writing up your wrap-up summary.

STEP 3: PERFORMING THE PASSAGE

Passage Proposal Process

General Guidelines

1. Your advisor, mentor and other committee members are available to help you. If changes are necessary in the Passage, consult with them.
2. Document everything you do and the thought process you go through. Maintain a journal, notes, photos, receipts, letters and other relevant records. This is very important. You are responsible for keeping all your original work. Protect it and keep it organized, for example, in a dossier or portfolio. When you are ready to formally leave the school at the end of this stage of learning, your dossier will be proof of your learning experiences during your school years and should be very useful for future references whether for jobs or further studies. This can be the beginning of your portfolio: a personal glimpse of you.

STEP 4: PASSAGE WRAP-UP: ROUGH DRAFT

General Guidelines

1. Describe the Passage as you proposed it. The description should be written clearly with attention to main events and/or highlights so a person unfamiliar with you and/or the school could understand this experience. Balance a need to "summarize" the experience with the equal need to keep the "life" in your writing about this Passage experience.
2. What did you accomplish and how did you know you reached your goals?
3. Describe obstacles, challenges and risks (perceived and real) you expected to encounter on this Passage and how you dealt with them. How did you deal with unexpected events, setbacks, opportunities? Were your expectations realistic? Explain.
4. Describe the turning points or highlights within the experience. These can be documented with excerpts from your journal.
5. What peripheral or unanticipated learning occurred through this Passage?
6. List the resources used for this Passage. Be specific.
7. The closing statement could include how you feel about yourself and the completion of this Passage, why this Passage has made a difference in your life and where you will go from here in further experiences.
8. See specific Passage guidelines for additional information required for a particular wrap-up.

STEP 5: FINAL DRAFT OF PASSAGE WRAP-UP

General Guidelines

1. Organize your documentation.
2. Write your Rough Draft of the Passage wrap-up summary with the help of both general and specific Passage guidelines.
3. Meet with your advisor and triad for review and help.
4. Submit your Rough Draft of the wrap-up at least two (2) weeks prior to your intended wrap-up meeting. Be sure to include a summary of experiences and outcomes that you learned which were peripheral to the Passage or unexpected.
5. Revise and rewrite the Final Draft of the wrap-up with the help of the notes, suggestions and feedback from the members of your Committee. This may occur more than once.
6. Give a copy of the Final Draft of the wrap-up to all members of your Committee at least one (1) week prior to the next planned meeting.

STEP 6: THE CELEBRATION

General Guidelines

1. Schedule a meeting with all members of your Committee.
2. Present your accomplishments to your Committee and allow for helpful observations to be shared with each other. Document these in your journal.
3. Decide how you will celebrate. What would be the most appropriate setting? Will you need help in preparing? Discuss options and ideas with your advisor and triad. Who will you invite?
4. Make the preparations and be sure to inform your guests at least two weeks in advance so that they may make arrangements. Remind them again one week before the planned date. Inform them if there must be a change that may affect them.
5. Celebrate your success!

PRACTICAL SKILLS

PASSAGE GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

Essentially, in a Practical Skills Passage you will develop the necessary skill(s) to accomplish a task for yourself that ordinarily someone else would do for you, such as baking bread or repairing something. Often this involves a manual skill and you will demonstrate some product besides a journal or written description of your accomplishment. If you are a "hands-on" person, it is recommended that you complete this Passage first. Do not limit your thinking to manual skills exclusively as it is possible to consider broader encompassing skills.

CRITERIA:

1. Your Passage idea should be a challenge to you.
2. What risks will you be taking?
3. Your proposal should indicate your present skill level, how you have depended on others in the past and how you will demonstrate an increased level of proficiency.
4. What do you believe will be your biggest obstacle to completion and how do you plan to deal with it?
5. List any resources that you intend to use (books, magazines, people, etc.).
6. Indicate what documentation you will use (i.e., photos, videos).
7. Include a timeline, a proposed budget and a list of materials. A statement concerning how you might conserve materials is also useful.

COMMUNITY/GLOBAL AWARENESS

PASSAGE GUIDELINES

ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THE PASSAGE:

1. Identify and research an issue with community/global implications; one which can/does affect people locally or globally. The research will be presented in the most suitably appropriate form.
2. Do something that will help lessen the problem or improve the situation at your level. Your action will include some form of volunteer service.

CHOOSE AN ISSUE:

1. Narrow the topic to a manageable size for you.
2. Discuss your idea with your advisor. Bring any notes along.
3. Ask these questions to yourself:
 - Is this a problem for many people?
 - What effects does this problem have locally/globally?
 - Why did I choose this topic?
 - How am I personally involved in this topic?
 - How could I learn more about this issue?
 - Can I think of ways I could help lessen the problem? (You do not have to solve the problem!)
 - Where can I offer volunteer service to lessen the problem?
 - Have I looked sufficiently at as many sides as possible?
 - Have I collected enough information from a variety of sources?

SUGGESTED WAYS OF PARTICIPATION:

1. Work with an organization dealing with the issue.
2. Teach others about the problem.
3. Create works of art; write letters to officials, etc.

CREATIVE ENDEAVOUR

PASSAGE GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

While creativity can be thought of as a process of generating ideas, problem solving, planning and doing by a person who is creating a product, it is not limited to the arts. Creative aspects include the following:

1. Challenge assumptions.
2. See in new ways.
3. Recognize patterns.
4. Make corrections and construct networks.
5. Take risks.
6. Take advantage of the situation.

CRITERIA:

The student will do the following things:

1. Extend skills and interests in an area in which he she has experience.
2. Avoid copying and imitation and aim for originality and uniqueness.
3. Deal with an element of risk and strive to complete the Passage in spite of difficulties, such as scarcity of materials, lack of time, overestimating skills and abilities and losing interest.
4. Become actively involved in the creative process and present a completed project or product in finished form as an outcome along with the process documentation and summary for final wrap-up with the Committee.
5. Be responsible for finding and purchasing materials as well as making arrangements for use of school equipment or space if needed.
6. Allow for spontaneity and change while involved in the creative process. Remember that major changes in direction will require approval of the Passage Committee.
7. Keep a record of the creative process in the form of a journal, photos, slides, film, video tape, drawings, notes, audio tapes or other forms of documentation so as to monitor and be in touch with the mental process involved in creating, planning, brainstorming, deciding and changing directions.
8. Include a cost estimate; list of materials and equipment with sources; estimate of time needed; location where the work will take place; expected date of completion.

CAREER EXPLORATION

PASSAGE GUIDELINES

SUGGESTED PREREQUISITES:

- Interviewing skills
- Research skills
- Community interaction

BACKGROUND:

With the rapidly changing workplace and the reality that most people will experience more than one career in their lifetime, this passage should be both broad and deep. The specific interest should be explored in depth while accompanying lesser interests may be examined less intensively or several occupations could be explored and compared.

CRITERIA:

1. Indicate the career area that will be explored.
2. Include why you are choosing this career by indicating what attracts you to it. You may discuss the salary; benefits; highest possible earnings available; the organization; union information; future trends; best and worst locations; related careers; education needed and the associated costs, etc.; tools needed.
3. Describe how you plan to proceed with the exploration including the research necessary, the questions you will need to ask, who you will contact, and an estimated date of completion. Include the resources you will need such as newspapers, people, journals, consultants, books, etc.

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

PASSAGE GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

The focus of this Passage is the QUEST, a personal, meaningful challenge, a search or investigation with the outcome uncertain due to the risks involved in reaching the goal. The myth of the hero's journey can apply to this Passage. In the first stage, the hero receives a call to adventure in which the quest becomes clear and he/she prepares to meet the challenges (known and unknown) of reaching the quest. In the actual adventure, the hero leaves the familiar environment and is tested. Passing the test requires the demonstration of high levels of performance and skill in problem solving. Upon achieving success, the hero is transformed and returns to take on a new role in the world.

If the Passage includes a trip, the usual "reasonable and prudent" procedures for school trips apply. These include informing the parents and the school administration of the potential risks and how they will be dealt with. Your advisor will help you develop safety procedures as part of the proposal process.

CRITERIA:

1. Identify your quest. Be as specific as possible. State the proposal in terms of a personal goal that involves challenge and risk.
2. How will you reach this quest? What will you do? Where will you go (and how will you get there)? Why is this an appropriate way for you to do so?
3. Describe your readiness by writing about related experiences and how they have prepared you for the challenges and risks you will face in this Passage. Due to the school responsibility, each learner attempting this Passage must be thoroughly prepared for the adventure. If necessary skills and knowledge cannot be documented, you must include a plan for reaching acceptable levels as part of the preparation for the actual Passage. Include the following areas:

Courage: Attempting to reach a goal in spite of certain fears. Identify the fears you have about this Passage and describe ways that you can confront and overcome them.

Endurance: The ability to withstand difficulty, with finesse. In this Passage, you must go beyond merely "surviving" to demonstrate strength and perseverance.

Intelligent decision-making: Responsibility in action. How have you shown that you are able to consider important factors such as safety, support systems, itinerary, a check-in system and contingency plans to deal with the unexpected?

Self-reliance in an unfamiliar environment: You must be able to justify why a particular unfamiliar environment has been chosen and show previous experience and/or knowledge

that will help you in the new situation.

4. Describe the personal strengths and weaknesses in the following areas. How do these relate to this Passage?
 - **Self-concept:** How do you tolerate ambiguity? How well can you follow through and persevere? How do you describe your strengths and weaknesses?
 - **Motivation:** How great is your ability to commit yourself to a goal? How well can you follow through or persevere? How is your self-discipline?
 - **Relationships:** How do you take responsibility for yourself? Others? The environment? Can you express yourself? Can you adapt to different roles? Can you be a leader or a follower? Can you ask for and receive help? Can you give help?
 - **Learning:** Can you experiment? Can you take risks? Can you accept other views as valid?
5. Describe your plans and include the following listed below (if appropriate). Include needed preparation and resources (physical, emotional, mental).
 - **Itinerary:** Be specific. Where are you going? Where will you stay? How will you travel? Who will be with you? When and how will you communicate with your parents and the school? List names, addresses and phone numbers of key contact people en route.
 - **Equipment:** What equipment and special gear will you need? How will you provide it?
 - **People:** Do you have people available for expertise and/or companionship? In most cases it is recommended that this Passage be attempted with at least two persons to assure safety.
 - **Money:** Make a detailed budget, including phone calls, emergency preparation, transportation, lodging, food, documents (such as passport, birth certificate, or visa). How will you earn or otherwise secure the necessary funds?
 - **Other resources:** What books, maps, guidebooks, films, or training will you need before and during this Passage?
 - **Steps to completion:** What are the necessary steps for this Passage to take place? How will you know if you have reached your quest?
6. A journal is required in which will be a description of the Passage process with special attention to challenge and risks, problems and decisions that led to growth and self-awareness.

You may also choose to include other documentation such as copies of letters sent and received, diagrams, maps, drawings, photographs, or summaries of books and readings.

PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

PASSAGE GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

This Passage is a mental challenge where a specific process is followed in order to discover an answer to a question or problem. It demands the use of reasoning ability, problem solving skills, research, investigation, experimentation, data collection, analysis, and concluding a working knowledge of this process and scientific method to successfully complete this Passage. It should benefit you in some manner, be it a quest for expanding personal knowledge about a specific topic, or solving a problem for yourself, your family, the school, or the community. The more personal and meaningful your Passage becomes, the more influence it may have in assisting you to identify, practice, acquire, and establish adult behaviours.

CRITERIA:

1. Decide upon your idea and discuss with your advisor.
2. Choose a challenging question or problem; make a statement that proposes an answer that you suspect might be true (this is your hypothesis).
3. Construct a plan to test your hypothesis; consider as many alternatives as possible, such as research, experiments, investigation, interviews, etc.
4. Organize your data and/or information so you can interpret it; analyze your data objectively.
5. Conclude what you can from your data and apply it to your hypothesis; be sure that your conclusions are reliable and accurate.
6. Maintain a journal documenting the procedures, process, data collected, peripheral learning and analyses.

Profile of a da Vinci Learner

To embark on this Program, you should have a strong desire to work toward strengthening these characteristics. They are attributes of a lifelong learner and may best be approached by personally asking the question, “In my heart, do I want to strive to achieve these qualities?”

Self Direction

I choose and organize all or part of my learning activities

I decide what and how to learn

I organize my time to accomplish tasks

I seek ways

High Personal Standards

I aim to achieve my personal best

I do not need to measure my achievement against other people

I choose to improve

I don't choose to do anything that will harm myself or others

Self Determination

I don't see mistakes as failures

I creatively seek ways to overcome or learn from obstacles in order to achieve results

I want to learn

I form my own opinions

I value my peers but will not be pressured by them

I know my strengths and feel confident about my abilities

I keep open to new ways of thinking and doing

I acknowledge my weaknesses and seek ways to address them

I express myself clearly

I make defensible decisions

I evaluate my own learning

Personal Responsibilities

I am aware of the importance of timeliness

I fulfill my obligations

I anticipate consequences and accept responsibility for personal actions and decisions

I contribute to society by acting cooperatively and independently

I act with awareness of the needs of the global community

I am free of attitudes of discrimination

I respond to change in a socially responsible manner

I participate responsibly in a democratic society

da Vinci Learner Questions

If you had a choice, what kinds of learning activities would you enjoy?

Under what circumstances or conditions do you feel you learn best?

How do you organize your time to accomplish tasks?

Suggest some ways of learning that you would like to try.

How do you know when you have done something to your personal best?

When do you find yourself comparing your achievements to those of others?

Suggest some things about your life you would like to improve.

Think of a time when your actions disturbed or harmed someone else or yourself. How did you deal with the situation?

How do you feel when you make a mistake?

How do you react when something appears to be preventing you from doing something you want to do?

What does learning mean to you?

To what extent do your friends help you to form your opinions and to make your decisions?

Suggest some of your strengths and weaknesses.

Give some examples of times when you changed your thinking or behavior.

Think of a time when you had to defend a decision you made. How did you communicate your position?

Is being on time important to you? Why? Why not?

When you say you are going to do something, and you don't do it, what kinds of feelings does that create for you?

What do you believe you have or can do that could contribute to your community?

How does witnessing discrimination make you feel?

What are some examples of discrimination? What is your response?

da Vinci Assessment: Preamble

Assessment in self-directed learning, particularly in the da Vinci Program, poses challenging questions within each of the 3 stages of the Passage process.

Proposal Stage:

For students unaccustomed to drafting a proposal, seeking critical input, time-management, decision-making or persevering, the prospect of self-evaluation can be as foreign a venture. Questions of how best to aid the learner through each of these areas; how to work with the learner as an advisor, coach, mentor, advocate; how to appropriately assess progress are not answered simply and demand an individualized approach to each learner as well as a broader view of self which is demandingly challenging in itself. Much discussion and cooperative learning must transpire amongst the advisors and the learners. Hence, and for each of the stages, it is an on going aspect of both the Program and learning.

Passage Stage:

Since journal-keeping is a vital aspect of the Program (indeed, of learning), the questions of respecting learner privacy and how to aid the learner best maintain the journal and assess the process demand a careful balance of encouragement, trust, respect and appropriate response. As with the first stage, dialogue and willingness to learn must be maintained and fostered.

Wrap-up Stage:

Once the Passage has been completed or altered due to circumstances, the questions of what was actually achieved; how effective was the approach; what problems were encountered and how were they dealt with; what is the most appropriate way to articulate the end result can be better answered if during the first stages the learner has identified a baseline of understanding for the Passage as well as established a minimum, excellent and superior level of learning goals. In this way, the advisor in conjunction with the learner can better arrive at an equitable and realistic assessment typically, though not exclusively, expressed as a personal statement of the learning experience and culminating in a celebration.

da Vinci Evaluation Initial Term Form (First Reporting Period)

NAME:

TERM:

DATE:

Give a brief description of your passage: Briefly describe what you have done so far:

.....

.....

Self-Direction:

1. I have used my da Vinci block as productively as possible.
2. I have actively scheduled my time to accomplish the necessary tasks (proposal writing, research, Passage planning, studies, chores).

High Personal Standards:

3. My efforts to write and edit proposals in my journal has been to the best of my ability.
4. I have given my best effort in researching and performing my Passage.
5. I maintain a desire to improve in all that I do.

Self-Determination:

6. I demonstrate determination to accomplish my tasks on time.
7. I actively sought feedback on my proposals from my peers.
8. I have used my journal to reflect on my Passage and assess my learning and progress.

Personal Responsibility:

9. I have both set and met my deadlines.
10. I have taken responsibility in my Passage by discussing it with all persons affected by it (parents, peers, advisors).

TOTALS:

[illegible]

da Vinci Self-Assessment
In-depth Form (Second Reporting Period)

This document is intended to give you an opportunity to reflect on and communicate your assessment of your learning process, and for advisors, mentors and parents to respond to your self-assessment .

Indicate your satisfaction with your progress by placing a check mark in the appropriate column.

1 = very dissatisfied

2 = dissatisfied

3 = satisfied

4 = very satisfied

1 2 3 4

Self-Direction

1. I design plans that lead to the achievement of my learning goals. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

2. I efficiently organize my time to accomplish tasks. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

3. I set clear, realistic goals. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

4. I seek ways. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

5. I independently arrange for needed resources. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

da Vinci Self-Assessment

1 = very dissatisfied

2 = dissatisfied

3 = satisfied

4 = very satisfied

1

2

3

4

Self-Determination

1. I am not defeated by failures.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

2. I creatively solve problems that arise in my passage.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

3. I have demonstrated a desire to learn.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

4. I am more aware of my personal strengths

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

5. I have sought ways to address my weaknesses.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

.....

da Vinci Self-Assessment

1 = very dissatisfied

2 = dissatisfied

3 = satisfied

4 = very satisfied

1

2

3

4

High Personal Standards

1. I aim to achieve my personal best.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

2. I do not measure my achievement against other people.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

3. I have improved.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

4. I set personally challenging goals.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

5. I am developing ways of learning that reflect my needs.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Evidence:.....

da Vinci Self-Assessment

1 = very dissatisfied

2 = dissatisfied

3 = satisfied

4 = very satisfied

1

2

3

4

Personal Responsibilities

1. I meet my deadlines.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

2. I fulfill any obligations I have with my advisors, triad members, and any other people involved in my passage.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

3. I have demonstrated personal commitment to my passage.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

4. I accept consequences and take responsibility for my actions and decisions in my passage.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

5. I have positive interactions with my triad members, advisor, and others involved in my passage.

--	--	--	--

Evidence:.....

.....

.....

.....

Describe what you have done so far:

.....
.....
.....

What are some of the obstacles that you encountered and how did you overcome them?

.....
.....
.....

When is your next deadline?

.....

If there are changes, what are they and why?

.....
.....
.....

Explain what you have learned so far (use the back of this sheet if you need to):

.....
.....
.....

Advisor's Record

(For anecdotal reporting during advising time)

da VINCI

Advisor's Record

Name:

Passage

Date Completed

Comments (Indicate date, Draft #, suggestions, problems and resolutions, etc.)

Appendix 5
Passage Examples
Pilot Group

The following documents are transcribed copies of students' proposals. I have included my comments in brackets after underlined portions in an attempt to demonstrate part of the advising process that took place in the Program. The actual comments were written on the originals. Typographical errors are not included.

30-04-92

Draft 1

[-opening, background, obstacles?]

TRY

--I will write, illustrate, and publish my own children's' book. Because of my interest in writing and drawing. I need to develop & search for info [research skills] dealing with [including] people.

--The program at my old school (English and writing) taught me a whole lot. My grandmother was a well known author & I learned a lot from her. My father also writes and is an artist. [How does this tie in with the above proposal?]

I feel that I know enough about book formats to be able to write a book. Publishing I know nothing about and I will have to ask people about that. [Rewrite this sentence. Who will you ask?]

--My greatest obstacle will be [1] getting it published. I am not really social and am not that great at [2] talking to people that I don't know (over the phone, etc.) It will be a great challenge. [3. Completing the task.]

Draft 2

K.S.

April 11, 1992

checked May 21/92.

DA VINCI PROPOSAL [What Passage? Advisor?]

Because of my love of writing and drawing, and my interest in the publishing process, I will write, illustrate and publish my own children's book.

In order to accomplish my goal, I need to further develop my research skills as well as become more confident and fluent when speaking with unknown persons. [Indicate how.] I believe I know enough about book formats to successfully complete a story. I will undoubtedly learn more while writing. The school that I attended in California (Y F) had a very advanced English program as it was the main focus of the school. I obtained several awards in writing and the district published one of my stories. I have always maintained reasonably high English grades due to my interest in the subject. [Rework?]

I know very little about publishing, but when the time comes, I will seek information through the Writer's Festival, the publisher of Chugalong's yearbook and any other people/places that I come up with.

My greatest obstacles will be: getting my book published, talking to people unknown to me, and completing the tasks that I set out to do. It will be a big challenge for me, but I know that I can do it!

Passage Examples
Year One

M. H.
Career Exploration
Studying the Court of Law
Mr. Després
Oct. 19, 1992.
Draft #2

During the course of many months [specify time line. Rewrite] I plan to find out more about the court of law. I want to find out [as well as] what each type of lawyer does and what steps they had to go through to get there. I have been referred to four different types of lawyers. I will make the contacts needed then spend a day with each of them to learn about their individual occupation. Then I will decide which type of law interests me the most. Post-secondary schooling is definite. After getting the necessary knowledge of each type of lawyer, I will then go on to become a judge for Queen's Counsel.

I will spend a day with four different types of lawyers from Vancouver and Sechelt. [Rewrite] This day will include going to court with them or interviewing them. I will be observing both male and female lawyers. I will also be talking with at least one judge. [re-arrange this paragraph]

I have not had any experience with speaking with lawyers other than talking with my aunt and her husband. Another uncle used to be a judge but he retired and passed away. [How does this tie in with the?] After research is completed. I will write a portfolio comparing the different lawyers and present an example of a past case and how it was done and how I myself would do it.[rework this]

I cannot find any risks involved. [travel? meals? types of questions?] I am willing to challenge myself with this project by doing a lot more homework and study when I have spare time. I will have to compromise my personal life with my academic time.

Computer Program [Type of Passage?]

D. F.

October 19

Mr. Després [Blane]

[Draft #?]

In my passage for da Vinci, I plan on [to] designing a computer program using HyperCard that will be used to help out grade ____ students that are having difficulty in math. I chose math because it will be easier to do since I am a pretty good student in math. [Also, what about the needs of the student?] My passage will be broken down into two parts. Part one will be to learn and understand HyperCard. Part two will be to use my new knowledge of HyperCard to design a computer program. In designing this program, I hope to help out [teachers in] W.S. Elementary School who would like to see my program as it progresses. There will be few difficulties that I foresee other than lack of knowledge and time. But those can be easily overcome. [How? What are some of the strategies you can use?] To aid me in my project, M. L. has offered to assist me whenever I need it. So far, he has given me a book explaining how to program on HyperCard. I will work after school, during lunch and during my spare block to complete this my goal and hope to have it done by late February/93. I will know it is finished when I think and the teachers at W.S believe that I cannot do anything more on it. [Somewhat negative. How about considering the *utility* of it? Student like/dislike? What about celebration? What are some of the checks along the way you could do? Consider an actual schedule planner with weeks mapped out and specific products. Indicate also a timeline for me so as to keep abreast of your progress. This would also help you, too.]

Community/Global Awareness

D. F.

October 19

Blane Després

Draft #5

In my passage for da Vinci, I plan to design a computer program using HyperCard that will be used to help out grade four students that are having difficulty in math. I chose math

because it will be easier to do since I am a pretty good student in math. My passage will be broken down into two parts. Part one will be to learn and understand HyperCard. Part two will be to use my new knowledge of HyperCard to design a computer program. In designing this program, I hope to help out teachers in W.S. Elementary School who would like to see my program as it progresses. There will be few difficulties that I foresee other than lack of knowledge and time. But those can be easily overcome by working during my spare time and after work. To aid me in my project, M. L. has offered to assist me whenever I need it. So far, he has given me a book explaining how to program on HyperCard. I will work after school, during lunch and during my spare block to complete my goal and hope to have it done by late February 1993. I will know it is finished when I think and the teachers at W.S believe that the students will enjoy using my program. I am also going to get a group of students to try out my pilot and get their opinion on it so that I will have the option of both teachers and students.

Timeline

Phase one

Nov. 16 to 19 work on project after school to complete pilot.

Nov. 22 to 27 work during lunch to complete pilot.

Dec. 1 to 4 complete pilot and show it to W.S.E.

Phase two

Dec. 7 to 12 after getting info from W.S.E. on pilot work to improve project.

Dec. 15 to 18 work during lunch to improve pilot.

Community/Global Awareness
Da Vinci Proposal
M. L.
November 11th 1992
Advisor: Blane Després

Racial Discrimination

“A prejudice is a vagrant opinion without visible means of support”

Ambrose Bierce

My personal passage will encompass learning about racial prejudice and intolerance. This poses a great challenge to me for I am interested in all aspects of interracial communications.

It is my plan to attend an anti-racial discrimination course being offered by British Columbia Multicultural/Anti-Racist Leadership Programme. My strengths lay in my ability to understand and empathize with different cultures and people of those cultures. My friends have included people of other cultures. I wish to obtain the necessary skills and knowledge to help others understand and have tolerance for all peoples. I want to develop leadership skills; to clarify and use language on issues related to race and culture; to experience and hopefully to value another culture; to foster a greater interest in other cultures and races; to identify some causes of prejudices; to identify barriers between people and to increase understanding of our similarities and differences. I want to become a more effective leader in my school and community. I want to become more aware of prejudices in my school and become more effective in dealing with these conditions. At the end of this passage I want to raise a willingness and motivation in others and to address these issues involving prejudice and discrimination in our community. In correlation with the concerns and ideas of other people in our group I plan to help with placing a representative on student council. I want to help by increasing the number of people who are aware of such discriminatory actions by inviting them to sit in on one of our meetings. A small group of us will express our concerns to the staff at Chugalong Secondary. This presentation will tell of our feelings and how we believe that together we can bring about change. During the course I will keep a record of our progress in reaching our goals. This record will encompass the dates and times of our formal meetings and the events that we will hold. This

will be an ongoing record that I will present with my Da Vinci proposal at the end of the year 1993.

Appendix 6
GRADUATION DEVELOPMENT SITE
1991/92 FINAL REPORT

The following document represents a report to the Ministry of Education, Site Development Branch at the end of the first year of the da Vinci Program. It is included here as a formal summative report that was submitted by the da Vinci team.

Site

Name of Site: *da Vinci Program, Chugalong Secondary*

School District:

1. Describe how your work explored issues within the Intermediate/Grad Program.

The da Vinci Program emphasizes self-directed learning. The learning activities tend to be “*passages*” (learning experiences) within or in a combination of *Practical Skills*, *Community/Global Awareness*, *Artistic Endeavour*, *Career Exploration*, *Physical Challenge*, and/or *Philosophical Inquiry*. During the passage, a student learns by doing, by study, and by reflection.

The experience of taking such a learning process, designing a proposal for implementing, and then implementing the plan within a regular secondary school setting was challenging, exciting, and rewarding for the teachers and students. For every success, there was a roadblock. The teaching team needed to be the epitome of the kind of self-directed learners they were fostering. We sought ways; the seeking every bit as important as finding the ways. This, in itself, is the challenge of the Intermediate and Graduation Programs.

The Issues

•*The active participation of the learners in assuming responsibility for the direction of their learning.*

Self directed learning is very different from teacher-directed learning. In implementing the da Vinci Program, the team had to take a very different approach to teaching: we had to stop doing things for the students, yet we also had to assure that the students learned how to do those things for themselves. A personal relationship developed between each teacher (advisor). The

advisors taught the students the components and skills of successful independent learning, and then guided them through their struggle to follow the process. Setting clear goals, acting on them, and revising them as necessary became the key to the students' success.

As students went through the da Vinci process (designing a proposal, completing a passage, self-evaluation/presentation/celebration, and wrapping up), the value of a balance between independence and collaboration became apparent. The eloquence and finesse that the students demonstrated in negotiation, self-assessment, and presentation was astounding. Yet, they still needed the support, insight, and professional/experiential background of their advisors and mentors. The learning process became a true partnership, and, as a result, the students were deeply engaged in their learning.

- *The focus on the needs and interests of the learners.*

The concept of the da Vinci Program appealed to learners with a wide range of abilities and interests. The self-directed approach meant that each student could, with assistance, devise a passage that would focus on needs, learning styles, and interests. For example, students who were not highly skilled in learning processes such as reading and writing were freed to learn through manipulation and experience. In designing their passages, their self-evaluation, and in the sharing of their experiences, these students saw the value of developing stronger reading, writing, and speaking skills. In many cases, they actually showed an improvement in these skills as an offshoot of their passage process. On the other hand, gifted students were free to challenge themselves in learning domains that they might otherwise avoid. As well, they were able to explore an idea much further than classroom and curriculum structures would normally allow. The personal benefit of the self-directed approach could be seen most easily in the excitement and pride the students took in their learning as well as the relationships they developed with advisors, mentors, and fellow da Vinci students.

- *Advisement*

Advising was and still is the most challenging aspect of the Program for the da Vinci team. Changing the role from learning experience controller, central and sometimes sole evaluator, and disciplinarian to advisor meant changing the way students regarded us. It also

meant that colleagues needed to understand our goals in becoming regarded as advisors, and how the da Vinci activities, as well as the philosophy, would fit into the regular school program. The change from teacher to teacher-advisor was a slow one, requiring us to get to know individual students well and relating to them beyond their courses. Once again, modeling the profile of a self-directed learner was of key importance. When the students understood that we were on our own “walkabout” in terms of learning how to be an advisor, the shift in how they regarded us took place. Many colleagues became interested in the advisor concept, but some remain skeptical to this day.

The value of advisement is extraordinary. It plays a central role in helping to focus the students on their educational, career and personal goals. At the same time, it provides a forum for students to explore how best to meet those goals. Through dialogue and sharing of ideas, the students increased their self-awareness and became much more confident about planning and achieving goals. They were much more willing to be candid about failures and disappointments in an atmosphere of trust and encouragement, and came to regard the process as not one of failing, but of re-evaluating goals, and of learning from experiences.

Further to the benefit advisement provides for students, it creates a strong connection to parents and to the community. The da Vinci advisors worked with parents as students embarked on their passage processes, and many parents became more strongly linked to the school as a result. As well, in searching out mentors who would assist the students with their experiences, the advisors became much more aware of the resource people in the community. This, too, occasionally led to community members becoming more closely connected to the school.

The issue of time is foremost in the success of advising. Advisors and students must have time to meet on a regular basis. Without constant contact, the support system breaks down. Finding time in a regular school timetable was difficult.

•Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

The da Vinci passage “proposal,” or personal learning plan, is central to the Program. As a negotiated learning contract, it provides a framework for the students’ goals, their action plans, their instruments for measuring success, and their means of self-reflection. In many instances,

designing the passage proposal was every bit as challenging for the student as the learning activity itself. The proposal process was rigorous, with an emphasis on personal excellence, even in the presentation of the proposal document. The students rose to the challenge, and saw learning how to make a proposal as valuable as the passage experience itself.

As well as a passage proposal, da Vinci students use a self-reflection device used by Leonardo da Vinci himself: the notebook or journal. For many, exploring how to create and use a journal was again as valuable as the passage experience. Students were encouraged to use many different ways of recording information and observations in their journals. Some sketched and wrote poetry. Others used their journals as a formal tool for recording information and made the journal part of the presentation of their completed project. All of the students found the journals valuable in self-assessment, and in writing their “wrap-ups” (formal reports which become a transcript of their learning experience).

The sharing of their learning experiences (demonstration of learning outcomes) with others through celebrations and wrap-ups opened up a whole new realm of ways to assess, evaluate and report for the students. Presentations, performances, demonstrations, portfolios, slide and video documentation became as valid as essays and tests. In fact, the students and the advisors saw an added value, in that these methods described the learning process as well as the acquired knowledge or skills, and allowed for conclusions about personal growth.

The da Vinci team sees the whole issue of assessment, evaluation and reporting as the one area where there is much work yet to do. The site development project allowed an exploration, which revealed that the potential for alternative evaluation methods is vast. As well, the articulation with post-secondary institutions needs further exploration. The team will focus on this aspect of the da Vinci Program as it continues to grow and develop.

What the Issues Revealed

- The da Vinci Program experience illustrated and provided affirmation to the students and teachers involved that the vision of the Intermediate and Graduation programs can be brought into reality.
- The present structures of secondary schools need to be flexible in order to accommodate an

exploration and implementation of interpretations of the Intermediate and Graduation programs.

- That students and teachers involved in self-directed learning programs need to concentrate just as much on the process of learning as on the learning outcomes. In order to do this effectively, the role of the teacher changes, and the skills related to self-directed learning must be identified by the teacher and internalized by the student. Further study and exploration of advisement; self-directed learning skills and methods; learning styles; needs assessment; goal and action planning; and assessment, evaluation, and reporting will be necessary.

2. Describe how your work initiated change at the classroom and school level.

It is a question Marshall McLuhan would appreciate: did contemplating the da Vinci Program initiate change, or did contemplating change initiate the da Vinci Program? Perhaps it is better to think of the Program's implementation as adding to an atmosphere of change at Chugalong. The spirit of innovation is catching, and many teachers and students are exploring the concepts of the Immediate and Graduation programs in their own way. The possible influence of the da Vinci Program is still moving through the school; the distinction between classroom and school change being difficult to maintain. The change in the way some students approach their learning, the way some teachers are designing learning experiences, and the way some teachers are working together best highlight the Program's influence.

From da Vinci to the classroom and beyond

- The Program sparked an interest in enrichment activities and in self-directed learning*

While the da Vinci Program includes self-direction within the school curriculum, students who wished to explore concepts more fully saw the da Vinci Program as a vehicle to do so. They could work with their classroom teachers or people in the community as mentors, or even independently. Further, enrichment opportunities were there for all students, not just those who were achieving high grades or who would be considered gifted. Other students, not even involved in the da Vinci Program, became intrigued with either the idea of enrichment itself or with a particular activity that a da Vinci student was doing. Many students, not initially in the Program, "tagged along" or took part in an activity, out of pure interest or in order to support a friend. The existence of the Program made it "O.K." to become involved in extra or self-directed

learning.

The success and enthusiasm of the students who took part in the original da Vinci site development project in the Spring of 1992 could not be ignored. The administration and counselors at Chugalong, along with members of staff and school district officials supported the da Vinci teaching team in creating a locally developed course. While molding the Program into a course meant that some of the ideals had to be compromised, the response of the students confirmed that it was worth the risk. Twenty-five per cent of the school population, from grade nine to twelve selected the da Vinci course as an elective for the 1992/93 year. After an interview process and time to become familiar with the rigors of the Program, not all of those students felt ready for self-directed learning, and have withdrawn from the Program, but there remains ten per cent of the students at Chugalong who are enjoying the opportunities the Program presents. As a result, the history of the Program became that of Phase One: the pilot project, and Phase Two: the implementation of the Program as a course option for students.

•*The proposal process created a powerful learning and planning tool*

The process of envisioning, goal setting, and identifying measurements of success, which is part of a da Vinci “proposal,” has had a powerful impact on classroom activities and on the whole school. It is a pattern language, or a way of doing things, that makes sense and serves well to effectively communicate goals to others. As a result, the idea has caught on, with individuals and groups now using the proposal process. The proposal process has been used outside of the da Vinci Program:

- by students wishing to negotiate an alternative approach to a classroom assignment,
- by students wishing to negotiate extended leaves from school for family holidays or educational experiences,
- by students wishing to negotiate acceleration or slow-downs in coursework in order to better facilitate learning conditions,
- by student/teacher partnerships seeking support for a personalized learning program from the School Based Team,
- by groups wishing to organize within the school(such as the graduation class),

-by groups wishing to propose special activities (such as the student council).

•The concept of lifelong learning is becoming reflected in practice and internalized by the school culture

One of the principles of the da Vinci Program is that of passages: self- or co-designed learning experiences achieved over time. Allowing *time* to be a variable in learning, rather than a constant, brings into focus the value of mastery during a lifelong process. Shifting to that way of thinking has resulted in many classroom teachers at Chugalong using the concept of *Incomplete* in reporting to parents. Rather than failing a course, students are given the opportunity to identify, with their teacher, which required learning experiences are not finished, or not done to a satisfactory level of achievement. Students are then supported by teachers, counselors and administrators as they work to complete the required learning through a MAP (mutually agreed upon program).

The da Vinci advisors and mentors are seen by the da Vinci students as learners, too, sharing a passion for a subject, or learning itself, with younger people. This, like the mythology of a culture, becomes internalized by those involved in the Program. As the teachers who are part of the da Vinci team deal with their regular classes, the self-directed, lifelong learner approach influences lesson designs there, too. As da Vinci students and those who are not in the Program become comfortable with the approach, they are beginning to request other teachers to consider designing lessons in that manner. As a result, the da Vinci Program's emphasis on authentic experiences, in real environments when possible, has inspired many other Chugalong teachers to design learning experiences in the same manner.

•Incorporating the Program contributed to a need for a complete change to the school timetable

The Chugalong staff had been contemplating a change to the traditional five by eight, rotating timetable for quite some time. However, the need to preserve course offerings during a time of staffing cutbacks, combined with a need for flexibility in order to accommodate the da Vinci Program, brought about an amazing shift in the way we saw the structure of our school week. The result was a new timetable, designed specifically to meet the needs of our school. The new timetable, implemented in September, 1992, provides flexible time for students and

teachers to use in a variety of ways, while preserving the integrity of regular courses. The change in the timetable has provided the opportunity for students and teachers to explore the effective use of time in new ways.

•There has been a movement from the tendency to work in isolation to the tendency to work cooperatively

da Vinci students, while pursuing their self-directed projects, discovered the value of learning with someone in an advising and/or mentoring role. They had someone to share in the joys and frustrations of their learning process. The assessment and evaluation of their achievements were in their control, and so the students became much more open, both to identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, and to constructive critique. This openness about the learning process was taken even further when students began to develop relationships with each other. They formed supportive groups in their *triads*, often becoming as interested in a friend's accomplishments as they were in their own. Once again, this attitude carried forward into the regular classes, where students are now more enthusiastic about cooperative learning activities. They will even propose the approach if a teacher has not originally presented it as an option for tackling an assignment.

The da Vinci teaching team also discovered the value of planning and working cooperatively, building the Program on the strengths of a team, rather than on the skills of particular individuals. This, too, has carried on into the regular classes, with da Vinci team members joining with other staff members, and with associations of colleagues developing based on subject interests or teaching styles. In fact, another formal teaching team has formed at Chugalong in order to better deliver the grade eight core subjects, and there are a number of teaching partnerships evolving.

•The space and the facilities at Chugalong are used in a different manner

As with most secondary schools, Chugalong was not built or equipped to facilitate self-directed learning. The operation of the da Vinci Program, and the opportunities that the new timetable permits, means that there needs to be space for large groups of students to meet, and for many individuals to function in a supervised yet less structured manner. The school, especially

at certain times of the day, has had to move from being a series of one-room schoolhouses under one roof to a flexible space that could provide everything from privacy for individuals to a space where almost all of the students could interact. The computer labs, the library, the foyer, and the hallways have undergone the greatest change in use, but even classrooms are affected.

The computer labs are used extensively at all times of the day. Any available computers are used, even while there are classes going on. It is not unusual to see students using the labs long before school starts in the morning and well into the evening. The types of computer services needed has changed as well. Students and teachers are needing computers, modems, equipment and programs that will allow them to do everything from animated computer movies to distance communication with businesses and other learning institutions.

The library has had to absorb hundreds of students working independently on da Vinci projects, on homework assignments, or on independent studies and correspondence courses. At times there is almost no room for classes to use the facility. The kinds of learning resources that self-directed students need are scarce, and this has placed a new kind of challenge on the shoulders of the teacher librarian.

The foyer and hallways have become places where students congregate to talk and to do their work during flexible time and breaks. At present, they are literally sitting in front of their lockers by the hundreds. There is much work to be done yet to plan how to best use the existing school building and to plan for future furnishing, renovation and expansion.

What reflecting on changes revealed:

- That an atmosphere of change allows many initiatives to occur simultaneously, and that initiatives impact on each other and the entire school. Isolating a change that is distinct to the classroom, or distinct to the entire school is difficult. Change causes shifts in thinking and in values that flow back and forth from classroom to school, from student to student, from teacher to teacher, from students to teachers, from school to parents and finally from school to community.
- That the da Vinci Program has contributed to the atmosphere of change at Chugalong, sometimes serving as a catalyst and sometimes serving as a foundation. The changes in the

classroom and in the school that are connected with the Program have been accepted more or less, depending on individual students,' parents' and teacher's understanding of the principles of the Program and the desire for change. The da Vinci students and teaching team are grateful for the support they have received from the Superintendent, School Trustees, the school administration, colleagues, students, parents, and the community.