CHILDREN IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

Ethnography and education

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In the play Travesties by Tom Stoppard, a character makes the following comment about the meaning of the words art and artist: "Doing the things by which is meant Art is no longer considered the proper concern of the artist. In fact it is frowned upon. Nowadays, an artist is someone who makes art mean the things he does." This article suggests that the state of the art of ethnography may have come to the point where ethnographers can echo Stoppard's character to describe the change in the meaning of the word ethnography: "Doing the things by which is meant Ethnography is no longer considered the proper concern of the anthropologist. In fact it is frowned upon. Nowadays, an ethnographer is someone who makes ethnography mean the things he does."

Recently, researchers in the field of education have been particularly prone to use the terms ethnography or ethnographic to describe studies using participant observation, naturalistic inquiry, and open-ended research designs (e.g., Wilson 1977; Rist 1975). Thus ethnography in education has become a set of techniques in a discipline within the social sciences. A variety of researchers, many nonanthropologists, either "do ethnography" or critique ethnographic methods without reflecting the historical, methodological, and theoretical links of ethnography to cultural anthropology. Numerous methods and approaches, described as qualitative, naturalistic, ecological, and holistic, are identified as ethnographic, characteristic of or having the form of ethnography. Though it is not necessary to claim that only anthropologists can do ethnographic research, it is important to recognize that many of the methods, rationales for open-ended research techniques, and theoretical guides to interpretation of data gathered by these means derive in large part from anthropology.

Therefore, it seems necessary to define the fundamental characteristics of ethnography as they derive from anthropology, and also to clarify the difference between a full-scale ethnography and ethnographic studies that use some essential methods of ethnography. An understanding of ethnography depends on linking it to its traditional disciplinary base in anthropology and its role in the anthropologist's study of human behavior in cross-cultural perspective. To grasp the distinctions of methodology frequently said to characterize ethnographic research in education, one
must recognize the similarities and differences between these research techniques and those found in social psychology, sociology, and other disciplines that have focused on the study of human behavior in formal institutional settings of complex societies. In essence, if the term ethno- graphic is to have a consistent identity in educational studies, researchers must be able to identify what it is that makes a particular study ethnographic. For example, they should be able to distinguish an ethnographic study from ethiological work, from field studies, from systems analysis interpretations, and from case studies. Only in so doing can ethnographers meet the challenge of specificity of procedures, clarity of goals, and relevance of interpretations to theoretical considerations demanded in the numerous institutions now sponsoring ethnographic research in education.

This article considers: (a) methods of ethnography and an explanation of how some of these might be applied in ethnographic research in education; (b) some weaknesses and strengths of ethnography; and (c) suggestions on how some "essentials" of ethnographic research might be carried out in a community-to-school study with a topical focus on literacy.

**ETHNOGRAPHY: WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS?**

The goal of ethnography is to describe the ways of living of a social group, a group in which there is in-group recognition of the individuals living and working together as a social unit. By becoming a participant in the social group, an ethnographer attempts to record and describe the overt, manifest, and explicit behaviors and values and tangible items of culture. By long residence, the ethnographer learns the language of the society and structures and functions of cultural components, before attempting to recognize patterns of behavior that may be covert, ideal, and implicit to members of the culture. Ethnographers attempt to learn the conceptual framework of members of the society and to organize materials on the basis of boundaries understood by those being observed instead of using a predetermined system of categories established before the participant-observation.

The range of techniques the ethnographer uses includes mapping; charting kinship and other patterns of interaction; interviewing; collecting life histories; studying written documents relevant to the history of the group; and recording folklore of all types—narratives, songs, myths, riddles, rhymes, and proverbs. If used at all, survey data, questionnaires, and experimental methods play a much less significant role than participant-observation. The ethnographer's description will, ideally, deal with the totality of existence of a particular social group in its natural setting. Laboratory experiments, or any noncontextualized behaviors, tend, in the ethnographer's view, not to yield substantive conclusions generalizable to these same participants in their natural environment. Moreover, *a priori* hypotheses taken with the observer into a group are believed by ethnographers to reflect more the conceptual framework of the investigator than that of those being observed.

The concept of culture as holistic—more than the sum of the parts, both material and nonmaterial—forces ethnographers to place their descriptions in the context of larger purposes. Of major importance are knowledge of the universals in human experience and recognition of the unique aspects of human patterns of behavior that may develop within a group. Most frequently, the ethnographer's descriptive data will generate a cultural grammar, an abstract theory that provides the rules individuals within the society have to know to produce, predict, interpret, and evaluate behaviors in given settings or social interactions.
Simply put, the ethnographer's task is to describe the culture of the group being studied, and to identify specific cultural patterns and structural regularities within the processes of both continuity and change. For example, the ethnographer attempts to answer the question of what are the constraints on the system that contribute to predictable patterns of behavior? The ethnographer works with the following principles of operation:

1 Fieldworkers should attempt to uphold the ideal of leaving aside ethnocentrism and maintaining an open acceptance of the behaviors of all members of the group being studied.

2 When participation in and adequate description of the full round of activities of the group is not possible, fieldworkers should make a principled decision to learn and to describe as completely as possible what is happening in selected activities, settings, or groups of participants.

3 Data obtained from study of pieces of the culture should be related to existing knowledge about other components of the whole of the culture or similar pieces studied in other cultures.

Ethnography, perhaps more than any other social science, strives for a comparative perspective. Research conducted in one social group should be accessible for comparison with that conducted in other social groups.

As ethnographers in the past two decades have moved away from the study those social groups located far away from centers of modernization, and easily identifiable as bands, tribes, or villages, these methods and ideals of ethnography have been difficult to maintain. Many new techniques, theoretical perspectives, and comparative procedures have developed. Therefore, the array of diverse and often contradictory methods now subsumed under the term ethnography make it seem necessary to ask, "What is ethnography?" Alfred Kroeber, a figure prominent in the development of anthropology in the United States, asked this question in 1957 when anthropologists had begun their first major moves toward studying groups and institutions in complex societies. Kroeber noted that the shift of interest away from remote and less technologically advanced peoples to communities at home seemed to occasion neglect of "old-fashioned ethnography" (1957:196). For example, background ethnological research carried out in libraries and supplemented by oral interviews and documentary evidence in the field formed an essential part of many of the ethnographies of cultures of Africa, Asia, and islands of the South Pacific. Ethnographers working in complex societies, however, often seemed to see no need for ethnographical research. In addition, Kroeber charged that anthropologists working in the communities of complex cultures often failed to elicit data beyond the "expectable obviousnesses" (1957:196). Too often, these studies focused on how the "different," e.g. the poor, ethnic groups, and American Indians became more like the mainstream, the power group of the nation. Thus, Kroeber charged that ethnographers were leaving aside the longstanding maxim of anthropology to deny ethnocentric interests.

Kroeber warned that the study of an Indian tribe in earlier times and in its self-identified status as a group in relative isolation required methods no different from those used to study the assimilation of the current descendants of that tribe in an urban community.

Methods proposed by Kroeber as typical of "old-fashioned ethnography" warrant consideration for ethnography in education research. How might the methods and ideals used by anthropologists in the study of an
Indian tribe or an African village be applied in education research? Ethnographies, i.e., descriptive studies of a culture as a whole, are not usually written with a focus on formal education, but ethnographic methods characteristic of those used in preparing full ethnographies may be used in particular settings of formal education or other institutions. In several critical ways, ethnographic methods are distinct from other methods often termed ethnographic, though they may share philosophic bases with other research approaches (cf. Magoon 1977; Iannaccone 1975). For example, a case-study approach—the collection of intensive histories of individual units made from the perspective of development with relation to environmental factors (Smith 1978)—in and of itself does not constitute ethnographic research. Ethnographic studies involve more than simple participant-observation or naturalistic research in noncontrived settings (Furlong and Edwards 1977). What distinguishes ethnographic studies (whether carried out in formal education or other institutional settings, such as a hospital, bar) is consideration by the researcher of the applicability of methods and theories used by anthropologists (Wolcott 1975). Those discussed here are ethnohistorical research, attention to definition of the unit of study, microethnographic work, linguistic investigations, and analysis of artifacts. Many "old-fashioned" ethnographies (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1940; Malinowski 1932; Radcliffe-Brown 1933; Leighton and Kluckhohn 1946) exemplify some or all of these essentials, and they are discussed in numerous descriptions of the science of ethnography (e.g., Lowie 1960; Kroeber 1957). Thus, their use in education research may be said to help establish the ethnographic character of specific studies.

ETHNOHISTORICAL RESEARCH

For any particular social group studied, ethnographers have attempted to relate the origins and history of the group through time to consider the social past as well as the social present. Fieldworkers studying a tribe or village in Africa, for example, collected data on the group before the arrival of European influences. Records of early travelers who contacted the group and oral accounts from older tribe members helped build this history. In addition, the story of European contact and the development of European influence in cultural values and behavior was needed. Research for this portion was often done in libraries through records of European officials and missionaries, official correspondence, proceedings of specific councils, biographies of tribal chiefs, and newspaper accounts of European policies with respect to African cultures. Many ethnographers supplemented the published materials with unpublished accounts, such as the correspondence of missionaries, travelers, and merchants (cf. Schapera 1962).

Ethnographic research in formal education settings need not be different in type from that collected for the African tribe or village. An ethnographer writing about a particular school may, for example, learn much from documentary sources and unpublished accounts of the school. The nature, extent, and accessibility of these materials will vary according to factors such as the time, purpose, and agents of their preparation. Many other relevant materials are in the public domain: superintendents' reports, proceedings of local school board meetings, biographies of individuals influential in the development of the school or its system, and newspaper accounts. Evaluation studies of curricula, student performance, and labor relations are often less accessible, but failure to obtain these can often be partially compensated for through oral interviews and examinations of curricular materials at district libraries. Ethnohistorical research is particularly relevant for determining the background of particular themes, such as citizen education, back-to-
basics movements, morals education, in a particular school. Documents

describing the rationales for these movements often contain specific goals

and aspirations for students, as well as notions of how knowledge, skills,

and dispositions help create the "good" student.

Few "ethnographic" studies of education have included ethnohistorical

research, such as histories of the school, communities past and present

that make up the student population, and special interest groups (such as

labor unions, local businesses, and voluntary associations) that influenced

school policies and programs. The need for an ethnohistorical component

in the study of education is underscored by the work of historians of

education (e.g., Katz 1968; Tyack 1974) whose works emphasize the strong

effects institutions such as the school have had on what were formerly

private primary groups, such as the family. The Paul and Jean Hanna

Collection, begun in 1977 at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University,

contains materials from several nations that will help researchers answer

such questions as what role textbooks play in political socialization and

how ties between publishers and scholars, teachers and administrators,

affect school curricula.

ATTENTION TO DEFINITION

OF UNITS OF STUDY

Every anthropologist who undertakes a field study of a com-

munity or tribe, as well as those who engage in education research, must

make a decision as to the specific social group, setting, and focus he or

she will treat. Early sections of traditional ethnographies are often de-

voted to a definition of what is being studied—band, tribe, or village—

and the reasons for the choice of the group. If an ethnographer chooses

to carry out ethnographic research within a school or classroom, problems

of definition seem simple; problems of reason for the choice are more com-

plex. Often a particular classroom or school is studied because it was

accessible, a friend was on the staff, or the local district was fairly lax

about access of researchers to the school. Rarely are reasons for the

choice made clear. Types of schools or classrooms are also often left

unspecified, so that comparison of research across schools or classrooms

is difficult. The particular categories chosen to describe schools or class-

rooms raise problems; for example, if the ethnographer chooses to work

in classrooms of a particular subject or teacher style, will the ethnogra-

pher follow native usage (i.e., that of local teachers and administrators),

or will new terms be devised in accordance with the patterns that evolve

in the course of the study? There is no standardization across districts

and states for many components of formal schooling.

Another problem of definition arises for the ethnographer, because

within anthropology, education refers to the process of cultural trans-

mission (which extends throughout life); formal schooling is only one as-

pect of this process. Therefore, when formal schooling is the focus of

research, anthropologists attempt to study it in relation to the broader

cultural and community context in which it exists. For example, the be-

haviors of pupils are ideally viewed not only in relation to fit or contrast

with those of teacher, typical student, or successful pupil, but also with

respect to home and community enculturation patterns of pupils and teach-

ers. Thus, the ethnographer must be concerned with a definition of com-

munity if the study is to follow students into their home environments, or

even if communities served by the school are viewed as background for

development of the school. Communities served by schools may have one

designation used in official maps, another known and used by current

residents, and yet another known to former residents of that area who

have now moved to other locations in the same city. Communities may
also be defined only with respect to neighborhoods in which students live, or they may also be used to refer to institutions that may or may not be locality-based (e.g., the Kiwanis Club) and yet exert a strong influence on particular school activities. Many of the community institutions may not be structurally interrelated; yet all impinge on the school.

MICROETHNOGRAPHIC WORK

Since the beginning of anthropology, there has been an emphasis on the holistic nature of culture and the need of the ethnographer to deal "with the total range of human activity as socially determined" (Lowie 1960: 485). As anthropologists came to admit that they could not do justice to the whole range of these phenomena, they urged collaboration, first with biologists, chemists, and others in the "pure sciences" and gradually, with other social scientists. For some anthropologists, a better way to represent the whole was to devise new techniques appropriate for the study of the minutiae of parts of culture. Linguistics, the scientific study of language, developed increasingly rigorous and precise techniques for describing the structures of languages. Anthropologists and other social scientists have attempted to devise systems of description and analysis of equal rigor and precision for other aspects of culture, such as nonverbal communication, and social interaction. (For discussions of these methods, see Frake 1976; McDermott and Aron 1978; Erickson 1976.)

This need for finer and finer distinctions of what makes up the whole of culture for any social group has led anthropologists to observe new units of behavior and to deal separately with these in an effort to provide adequate descriptions. Ideally, these pieces, such as a lesson within a classroom or a conversation between teacher and principal, are so discriminated that resynthesis may at some point be possible to provide a composite view of the whole. For the researcher, however, these pieces are "wholes," in that they have a structure and rules of their own, and justification for revealing details of their composition, participants, settings, and rules lies in their shedding light on such broader issues as the rule-governed nature of social behavior and questions of covert patterns of exclusion.

Interactions within the school, such as the lessons, athletic games, composing activities, and reading circles are the interdependent pieces that go toward making up the cultural phenomena of the school. Each of these activities has an organization and sets of rules, overt and covert (e.g., McDermott 1977; Mehan 1978; articles by McDermott; by Mehan; and by Shultz, Florio, and Erickson, this volume). Often one group of actors has one set of rules and operates according to this set; other participants have different sets of rules and operate accordingly. Neither recognizes that two sets of rules are in operation. In all situations, a pattern of interaction and rules for roles played by the actors emerges from a detailed account of the situation preserved in fieldnotes (and sometimes supplemented by videotape), so that the ethnographer can return again and again to the data for analysis. In traditional field settings, anthropologists often gave descriptive accounts of tribal leaders' orations, interaction of villagers in the marketplace, or the reaction of community members to the performance of medicine men. Recording these events for detailed analysis is no different from recording analogous events in formal educational settings, except that current methods make descriptions more detailed than before.

A critical point of microethnographic work is that it be linked with other types of research on schools or classrooms. Ideally, microethnographic work can contribute to comparative analyses of classrooms of the same or different types, to studies of schools of varying kinds, so that
some reasonable sense of wholeness or comparison may emerge. The lesson, peer teaching interaction, composition class, or any of the numerous types of teaching situations (Stebbins 1975) suitable for analysis should not be separated in concept and in practice from ways this knowledge can relate to other components of ethnographic research. Is the lesson to be viewed as a field, that is, simply a setting for research, or is it a sample, an illustration of a type; and if so, are the latter definitions carefully established (cf. Arensberg 1961)?

To gain a dynamic view of education, we need to coordinate micro-ethnography in the classroom with the study of communities and other institutions related to the school. The continuum from community to school, from school boards to schools past and present, should be units of study that reveal processes of change. Without special attention to the need for a diachronic perspective, there is the danger that research that focuses on the minutiae of streams of behavior will seem to portray behavior in closed, fixed, repetitive frames. A given mode of activity will be viewed as reinforcing others in such a way as to perpetuate itself within the social organization of behavior. Exclusive focus on this type of research reinforces the "fallacy of the ethnographic present" (Smith 1962: 77), that is, the belief that observed conditions are static and not subject to influences from beyond the immediacy of the social organization of the institutionalised moments, e.g., the lesson, space or time routines, or other teaching situations.

LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATIONS

Ethnographers contemplating work among tribes or villages in faraway places usually did not speak the language of those they proposed to study. Therefore, they had to learn the language, and often they recorded it in written form for the first time. In the study of formal education in our own society, ethnographers would seem to speak the same language and to share basic concepts and categories with the participants. Yet, the specific terminology of schools and the ways of thought of teachers and administrators enculturated through the rites of passage of teacher/administrator training are often more different from those of daily usage than would be expected. Many of the words are the same as those used in normal discourse, yet their uses and meanings differ. For example, the term "E designates" is used in some schools to refer to students who by standardized test performance have no promise of successful academic achievement. In other schools, "E" is a grade of excellent. The ethnographer's task is to understand the practical dimensions of daily language use in the school setting.

Classroom language is characterized by a special "register" or style appropriate to teaching or caregiving. As a conventional way of speaking used in particular situations, a register differs in intonation, vocabulary, grammatical structure, and accompanying nonverbal features from other ways of speaking. The connected units that make up the "discourse" or flow of speech in interactions in school settings often have particular characteristics, especially as they occur in certain situations, such as lessons. Interpretation of the units of language is highly dependent on the setting, social relations between speakers, and expectations of each party. For example, many directives used in classrooms are either statements ("I can't talk until you're ready to quiet down") or questions ("Why don't you check the encyclopedia?"). All of these, however, function not as isolated sentences, but as connected units dependent on prior and subsequent units.

Folklore studies, traditionally a component of many ethnographies, and in many cases, an extension, have had the goal of recovering the
lore of the folk, both verbal expressions and ways of integrating uses of these expressions into other aspects of behavior. Traditional tales, games, myths, legends, songs, chants, verses, proverbs, riddles, and mnemonics have been collected by anthropologists. Many of these genres exist in schools and are used by people across the boundaries of social role and social situations. Schools often have a set of folklore typically identified with the school, and legends, myths, riddles, jokes, and songs are carried on generation after generation. Some of these are known to all members of the school, e.g., the school song or cheers; others are known only to certain groups within the school. For example, students usually pass on mnemonic devices and riddles unknown to teachers. The use of these genres in connection with specific subject areas is particularly important, since they often reflect values and dispositions unspecified in written materials.

The organization and uses of written materials are particularly important for analysis by the ethnographer, since they often contain hidden expectations held for students. For example, the relationship between text and illustrations in textbooks across subject areas varies greatly. Reading texts at the primary level usually contain illustrations that tell more about what is happening than the text does. Children attuned to studying pictures do better at inferencing than students not so attuned. Teachers are often unaware of the cues given in illustrations for inferencing. Social studies texts often have "floating" illustrations, pictures that have no specific relationship to the text other than providing a detail that can be subsumed under a generalization proposed in the text. In a chapter on industrialization, for example, a picture of a steamboat may appear; yet there is no discussion of steamboats per se. In another culture, ethnographers would be certain to note that in certain written materials, illustrations repeated the text's message; in others, they did not. Because ethnographers studying formal educational systems in our own society are familiar with textbooks, and they themselves adjust un-knowingly to the discrepancies in text-illustration links across subjects, they are unlikely to analyze texts with the eye of a stranger.

**ANALYSIS OF ARTIFACTS**

One of the first steps of ethnography is to inventory the tangible objects used in the range of activities of a social group. The forms of these are described, and observations allow the ethnographer to determine their functions, particular aesthetic patterns, spatial distribution, and relationships to status maintenance and role behaviors. Ethnographic studies in familiar settings of complex societies often given little attention to artifacts, since the material items of a modern technological society are so easily taken for granted by those socialized into that society.

Every school room is filled with material culture, some old, some new. Many of these artifacts may well be similar to those found in school rooms decades ago. Other artifacts are more recent and some are similar to items found in other institutions. Yet the artifacts and their arrangement are often unfamiliar to many children entering school in the first grade. These children must learn not only the names of these items, but also rules for their use in specifically designated time and space blocks. Students rarely question the function of these artifacts or their arrangement in time and space. For example, school desks have an appearance distinct from all other desks. They are also arranged in many classrooms in straight rows, and the desk of the teacher (not specifically a "school" desk) is placed at the front of all other desks. The functions of the desk in this particular space are not clear: teachers rarely sit at these desks and talk to the class as a whole. Instead, the teachers use the desk most
often when students are engaged in seat work or students are not present in the room. If the function of the desk at the front of the room is to see students (for example, to watch them during a test) this position for this practice is highly unusual. In other situations when one wants to watch others, observers place themselves so as not to be seen by those being observed, or, at the very least, to be as unobtrusive as possible. Placing the teacher's desk at the back of the room with students' desks facing forward seems logical if one expects that knowledge used in similar situations is relevant to teachers observing students in the classroom. This is just one example of an occasion when rules for the use and placement of material objects in the world outside the classroom do not apply in the classroom. If an ethnographer were describing a group whose culture was unknown to him or her, such incongruities in behavior from one setting to another would be noted.

WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OF ETHNOGRAPHY

The foregoing are only some of the techniques used in preparing full ethnographies that can be adapted for ethnographic research in formal education. Some methods of ethnography have been surrounded by debates throughout the history of anthropology, and most of these debates have pointed out particular weaknesses and strengths inherent in the anthropologist's approach to ethnography.

"So what?" is a question sometimes asked of the detailed descriptions provided by ethnographers. To what extent is the material and the sense of a particular phenomenon developed for one social group generalizable to other social groups? The same question can certainly be asked of studies of a single school or classroom or situation within a formal education setting. How can classrooms, schools, or situations for comparison be determined? In the selection of one school as opposed to other schools, the ethnographer must consider how what one finds in that setting is representative of what occurs in other schools, and how the results of one ethnographic study can lead the ethnographer to explain the relation of this school to others.

This problem is not unique to the study of formal education by ethnographers or social scientists. Those who carry out community studies have not yet determined a satisfactory typology of communities or explanations of how the study of one community can be generalized to others (cf. Arensberg and Kimball 1965). Recent arguments revolve around ways of locating community boundaries (Seller and Summers 1974) and distinguishing community studies from locality studies (Stacey 1969). For the community, there are often no recognizable boundaries; a community may be known by various names, and any one geographic territory within a specific community may be known as a community to other groups.

Schools, on the other hand, do have geographic boundaries, and it is predictable that numerous groups will be consistent in their identification of a school. The identification of parts or units of a single school and constellations of schools is much more uncertain, however. What is it that we have to see to know what a school is all about? What can ethnographers report that will help them identify other schools of a similar type as well as describe a particular school? How much new information does each ethnographic study of a school provide that can be related to the experiences of the past and provide any predictive value for the future? Most social scientists agree that evaluation in education research has had much more prominence than have process studies detailing innovations and other types of changes. Therefore, what can ethnography contribute to estimations of social change processes in formal education? These are
all questions related to the issue of the generalizability of ethnographic studies.

Another seemingly inherent weakness of ethnography is that it has traditionally claimed to do everything and to do it with objectivity. In actuality, all anthropologists know that no completely holistic study of a culture exists and that by definition, such a study is impossible. One cannot recreate the whole of a culture in an ethnography; therefore, the concept of holism is a guiding concept, one that holds out for anthropologists the constant reminder of the interdependent nature of culture, which is indeed greater than the sum of its parts. Similarly, anthropologists cannot be entirely objective in their studies. The constant goal of leaving aside value judgments is again a guiding principle, one that forces ethnographers to evaluate both the methods and the content of their studies in terms of this ideal. The ever-present call to value-free research has created, ironically, yet another weakness in ethnography—the absence of detailed attention to values, ethics, and morality in descriptions of cultures. Relatively few ethnographies provide descriptions of these topics that can be used in comparative analyses (Bidney 1953; Edel 1962).

The comparative perspective of anthropology, particularly of ethnology, is yet another guiding rationale of anthropology. It, too, has not produced as much as it has promised. Ethnology feeds on ethnography, because it has to do with the description and interpretive analysis of the cultural characteristics of diverse human groups. Ethnologists analyze the ethnographies of cultures (generally those of a particular region), and attempt to explain similarities and differences, to point out the distinct paths leading to comparable behavior traits in different social groups. Principles of borrowing, invention, diffusion, and other methods of social change are drawn from the comparative study of cultures. Ethnology, through its broad comparative surveys of human cultures, past and present, is often said to help explain processes of change and ways in which current complex diversities evolved.

There is, however, relatively little ethnology for present-day cultures of the United States. Ethnographies of communities are not abundant enough to permit the development of ethnologies. Ethnographic studies of schools and classrooms are neither numerous nor consistent enough to allow comparative analyses.

A relatively recent methodological and theoretical trend in ethnography may show the same divergence between ideal and real that the goals of holism, objectivity, and cross-cultural comparison have shown. This is the tendency among anthropologists to break apart portions of the field of ethnography, to develop new terms, and to apply these to the study of specific aspects of culture. Anthropologists have proposed such terms as ethnography of speaking (Hymes 1964), ethnography of writing (Basso 1974), and ethnography of literacy (Szew 1981). What has not been realized by subsequent researchers using these titles to describe their studies is that the original proposers coined these terms to emphasize the need to include speaking, writing, and literacy in ethnographies, not to urge an exclusive focus on these aspects of culture. Anthropologists proposing these terms urged an extension of research by ethnographers and linguists, not a restriction. The explanation used for proposing the ethnography of communication often seems forgotten in the pieces of language behavior described as "ethnographies of speaking":

The needed term must be one not only for coordinating language with other things, or for suggesting a portion of the range of problems, but one of general scope. For anthropologists and anthropologically minded investigators from
other disciplines, ethnography of communication seems best to indicate the necessary scope, and to convey and encourage the fundamental contribution they best can make: studies ethnographic in basis, and of communication in the scope and kind of patterned complexity with which they deal.

... such an approach ... must take as context a community investigating its communicative habits as a whole, so that any given use of channel and code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which the members of the community draw.

Facets of the cultural values and beliefs, social institutions and forms, roles and personalities, history and ecology of a community must be examined together in relation to communicative events and patterns as focus of study (just as every aspect of a community's life may be brought selectively to bear on the study of a focus such as kinship, sex, or conflict). (Hymes 1964:2-3)

Thus far, ethnographies of speaking have not achieved the goals of comprehensiveness or consideration of holistic context proposed here. They have tended to cover specific acts, events, and situations within specific interactions, and there are as yet only programmatic statements on the methodology of the ethnography of communication.

If ethnography has all these weaknesses, what are its strengths? Why are educators interested in having ethnographic methods applied in education research? Much traditional research in education has been quantitative, global, sociodemographic, and dependent on large-scale comparisons of many different schools, or it has been experimental, based on studies of selected groups operating in controlled settings. Terms such as input, output, accountability, and management have characterized many of these reports. Input factors (independent variables) have been said to influence, predict, or determine output factors (dependent variables). Pieces of data about social groups, such as number of siblings, income of parents, time of mother-child interactions in pre-school experiences, have been correlated with the output of students expressed in test scores, subsequent income, and continued schooling. The effects of formal instruction have been evaluated by correlating these input factors with educational output. Gradually, many educators have begun to realize that large-scale surveys, correlational studies, and exclusively quantitative studies do not provide actual data about events either in the classroom or the communities of students and teachers. Moreover, their findings are often used to predict the academic future of certain groups of students. Used in these ways, they reinforce stereotypes and easy generalizations about abilities of students, the inability of "others" to fit, and the disintegration of family and community life. They often allow already overworked teachers and principals to have "reasons" for closing off innovations and options in instructional methods and evaluation techniques.

Recognizing these limitations of traditional methods of educational research, some educators have begun to see the merits of ethnographic research in supplementing other types of research. The major emphasis from within education circles has been to use ethnographic methods in evaluating programs. Some groups involved in education research, such as education laboratories and research centers, are somewhat cautious about ethnographic research in education because they recognize that in
addition to the weaknesses noted above, ethnographic methods offer other problems in comparison to traditional methods of education research. Ethnographic methods to be used in a study cannot be specifically spelled out in research proposals; part of the strength of ethnography depends on its interactive-adaptive nature. The researcher, interacting with the group being studied, acquires data that enable the adaptation of methods of inquiry to the situation. Ethnographic research does not lend itself to being categorized, tabulated, or correlated, and it will not necessarily identify specific indicators that predict success of either programs or students. In short, ethnographic research does not meet the criteria of traditional research in education in either methodology, format, or results. It cannot be carried out in a brief time period. It does not generalize the findings from one setting to another without comparable work elsewhere. It does not fit neatly into current calls for efficient, business-like approaches to education, and it will not specify discrete noncontextualized factors that may lead to improving either schools or students.

From the point of view of anthropology and ethnography, these weaknesses are the strengths of ethnographic methods. The validity of abstract representations of human behavior must rest on reality founded on disciplined observation and analysis. Ethnography provides an empirical data base, obtained through immersion of the researcher in the ways of living of the group. This immersion allows perception of the interdependence of parts and also permits frequent returns to the data. The descriptive power, the ability to incorporate in data the form, function, and context of the behavior of a specific social group, and retention of the data for considered and repetitive analysis are the major strengths of ethnography. Ethnographic data can often help provide the context for expanded interpretations of studies done by other researchers.

Correlational studies (e.g., low scores on reading tests and low socioeconomic class) can be amplified by ethnographic work. For example, an ethnographic study of a specific low socioeconomic group may reveal that reading scores correlate not only with economic level, but also with the degree to which reading is relevant to group membership, status achievement, work opportunities, and retention of cultural values for the group as a whole. Ideally such contextual evidence for specific communities helps educators reexamine school values for literacy in terms of how they can be related to home and community values. Another explanation of the correlation might be found in an ethnographic study of reading circles done through videotape analysis (cf. McDermott and Gospodinoff 1979). If certain students have less eye contact, verbal interaction, and time of direct reading instruction than others, these factors may contribute more to reading failure than socioeconomic factors.

In essence, ethnography is the background tapestry—busily detailed, seemingly chaotic; however, upon closer look, it reveals patterns, and with repeated scrutiny, it may reveal yet other patterns. Upon this tapestry may be placed the studies of others, psychologists, political scientists, and sociologists, in an effort to explain as fully as possible factors that help determine educational success or failure. Perhaps more important than an emphasis on success or failure is the power of ethnographic studies to provide data from which we may determine the principles that explain the processes of stability and change. Only by knowing the context provided by the ethnohistorical past, and by having an adequate accounting of the individuals, activities, and relationships involved in the events of formal education can researchers know the internal and external conditions that relate to processes of change.

Ethnography, because it is descriptive, has a highly individualized and particularistic quality about it that provides vivid details and concreteness, and allows readers to identify with situations described.
Unlike correlational or experimental studies that provide hypotheses and predictions, ethnographic descriptions have the quality of reality and undeniable-ability. If one is a member of a group being described, and actions that have not before been recognized are described, one is forced to admit actions, to drop rationalizations, and to challenge the conflict between ideals and realities of behavior (Heath 1978). These characteristics are particularly important when education research is being considered by state superintendents, district supervisors, principals, and teachers in the formulation of programs or in new considerations of past practices. These in the day-to-day action of teaching and providing environments for learning need detailed descriptions of those practices and programs that worked or failed to work, and the conditions or contexts that created change for students and programs. Kroeber (1957) asserted:

What the ethnographer is alone in doing within the "social sciences," and almost alone in anthropology ... is two things. He tends to envisage his problems or objectives holistically; and he prefers to acquire his data by holistic contact, person to person, face to face, by word of mouth plus his own observations. (:193)

... the ethnographer makes his documents as he works. He knows their occasion and context, he can more or less judge their bias, he can extend or reduce the scope of his inquiry, he can return with fresh insight to recommence it. (:194)

These strengths are of immense importance to educators who, because they must make decisions for practice in the real world, need descriptive narratives and analyses derived from data that may help researchers answer as completely as possible the question "what is happening?" (McDermott and Aron 1978).

**LITERACY: COMMUNITY TO SCHOOL -- PROPOSAL FOR A STUDY**

In what ways might ethnographic studies provide an answer to this question for a particular topic in specific settings? The foregoing discussion has indicated that there are numerous settings for ethnographic studies, each making contributions to building a comprehensive view of education. Therefore, the study proposed here is for illustrative purposes only, and many other varieties of ethnographic studies are possible. The one chosen here takes the community as the focus, primarily to involve readers in considering how knowledge about uses of literacy in community settings may be useful for comparison with data about the uses and functions of reading and writing skills in schools. Within the United States, community studies have rarely been used in education research; the focus has been almost exclusively on the school and its subunits. Frequently, these units have been termed cultures in and of themselves; little attention has been given to the fact that these sociocultural units have few characteristics of the culture-bearing human groups traditionally studied by ethnographers. Schools and classrooms rarely have cross-generational self-identification, and their "culture," i.e., artifacts, values, and ways of behaving, is largely dependent on external forces (school boards, teacher-training institutions, text and test publishers). The relative degree and type of external force on schools as opposed to
classrooms has been the province of social historians, and a topic ignored by ethnographers. Little is known of the conditions that define and reinforce the character of certain classrooms.

Communities, however, are specific culture-bearing human groups with in-group recognition established through cultural transmission across generations. These are appropriate for studying education, both because they include and interact with the school and because they are the locus of enculturation forces (families, churches, voluntary associations) that exist apart from the school. Therefore, cultural transmission within the community involves the reciprocal influences of school and community as well as child socialization in primary groups, such as the family. Much of the relatively recent work in communities has been sociolinguistic (e.g., Labov 1966, 1972; Wolfram 1969), describing the language and ways of talking these students brought to school. The popular press and some teacher-training materials have occasionally overgeneralised conclusions from these studies to explain how the language forms and functions of groups included in these sociolinguistic studies contributed to the school failure of all members of specific ethnic or racial groups. The growing emphasis on "multicultural education" has made teachers anxious for materials on culture differences beyond those of food, music, and holidays. Thus, eye contact, the pimp walk, ritual insults, and characteristics of intimate space usage came to be handy additions to teachers' presentations of the cultural inventories of ethnic and racial groups. There is, therefore, a need for community studies that will help educators have more data on culture as both art and artifact, as ways of doing things (such as learning to read or categorize ideas) as well as material items made, acquired, and used.

Proposed here are the bare outlines of only one type of cross-cultural longitudinal project set in communities of the United States. The goal is to illustrate how ethnographic research can provide data about ways of becoming literate, specific areas of knowledge about reading and writing, and cultural items that are employed by community members in teaching and using literacy. A group of four ethnographer teams would meet to draw up an outline of ethnographic field methods and questions to be directed to literacy. Four communities that had in-group recognition of themselves as communities would be selected; ideally, four schools that members of these communities attend would also be chosen. Each team would go to one specific community. One member of the team in each site would initially work only in the community outside the school, the other member would work in the selected school. Prior to work in either community or school, ethnographers would study all available documents and ethnohistorical data. After an initial period in which there would be no contact between team members in each site, they would meet to formulate new questions by sharing data; following that, team members could switch positions, the ethnographer originally in the community now working in the school, and vice versa. This switch would allow team members to test perceptions and to verify adequacy of data collection. During the final period of the field study, teams from all sites would come together to develop a comparative framework before returning to the field for completion of the research. The final report would be prepared by members of each team, and summary findings on culture patterns in communities and schools would indicate patterns that promote or retard motivations for literacy—both its acquisition and retention. This kind of comparative approach would ideally help contribute to a typology of schools and an ethnology of communities.

What kinds of questions might the ethnographers bear in mind as they collected data? What knowledge about literacy would help focus these questions? Traditional anthropological approaches to literacy are
Illustrated by the work of Kroeber (1948), who talked of literacy and its spread with respect to distinguishing two types of societies, preliterate and literate. Goody (1968, 1977) posited a similar kind of dichotomy between literate and nonliterate individuals, maintaining that literate individuals have particular ways of knowing, perceiving, and categorizing reality. The functions of literacy implied in these societal approaches to literacy have become the guiding rationale of educational and economic institutions of complex societies. The assumption has been that learning to read and write does something not just to what people know but to how they will go about knowing things. Coordinate with the view that literacy makes individuals and groups think differently is the view that literacy brings economic advancement, benevolent attitudes, critical faculties, and logical thinking. The recent work of social historians (e.g., Lockridge 1974; Stone 1969), psychologists (Scribner and Cole 1981), and anthropologists (Basso 1974; Szew 1981; Heath 1981) challenges these traditional assumptions—economic, social, and cognitive—about literacy. The challenge of these scholars (and an overview of research on literacy in multilingual societies in Ferguson 1978) suggests that the study of literacy using ethnographical and ethnographic approaches is critically needed.

In the hypothetical study proposed here as one of the possible approaches to an ethnographic study of literacy, a first step would be collection of artifacts of literacy, descriptions of contexts of use, and their spatial and temporal distribution within the life of members of the community. The internal style of each artifact and the abilities of those who produce these should be considered part of this context. How are these artifacts presented to children? What activities and explanations surround their use? Do questions directed to children about these artifacts emphasize the acquisition of labels and description of discrete characteristics of items? Are there links made between these representations and uses of their real-world equivalents? An indication of the value of observing interactions with literacy artifacts is suggested by the difference in adult-child verbal exchanges which occurred in a community in which pictures drawn by children in kindergarten and first grade classes were collected in books for use by adults with young children (Heath, forthcoming). When adults attempted to relate to these "books," they were forced to ask real questions of the children about the objects, events, and attitudes depicted, because the adults could not understand the children's drawings. The young children responded with lengthy descriptions and narratives, not with single-word answers or labels. When adults chose books made by adults for children, and used these when reading with children, adults knew all the answers. However, when adults used books made by children, children knew all the answers, and children's language was much expanded over that produced when commercially prepared books were used.

Implications from this kind of detailed observation of the uses of literacy artifacts are reinforced in Ninio and Bruner (1978) reporting on labeling in parent-child dialogue cycles. In the introduction to the study, the authors make the general statement that "book reading is the major activity in which labelling occurs" (1:3), suggesting that this is a universal characteristic among social groups. However, some groups do not teach labeling as an isolated linguistic activity linked with book reading; their young are expected to learn the names of objects and activities from their use in contexts, and only when children ask the name of something do parents offer labels (Heath, forthcoming). Schooling does, however, make book reading the major activity in which labeling occurs. Therefore, for students who learn labeling through adult-child interactions with books, there is a critical fit promoting the acquisition of specific reading skills. For students from communities in which labeling is not learned in book reading, we need to know how labels are learned, what
discourse surrounds their introduction, and how inferencing skills are taught. Specifically, in what proportion and in which circumstances do labeling or specific directions for inferencing strategies occur? Are there ways of learning labeling that do not relate to books, which might be transferred to schools as methods of expanding approaches to instruction for all students?

Related questions are those asking how the community verifies norms for producing and using written materials. For example, if an item appears only in writing in a community and its topic has not been introduced orally, what will the reception of that item be? Will the form of the item make a difference? Will there be a search for verification, e.g., contact with individuals or institutions that might be associated with the item, or will community members rely on other literate sources to verify its usefulness (e.g., book reviews)? What are the ways written materials are used, ranging from product names to books? For example, how is the name of a new product unknown to community members learned? Is it through reading the label, television advertising, recommendations by other members of the community, or by analogy to a similar item? When do oral directions or analogous experience take precedence over written messages? Is there discontinuity between adults and children in the use of product directions? If there are discontinuities, are there rationales that attempt to explain these away? For example, if a child attempts to put a toy together or play a game without reading the directions, does the parent scold? Yet if the parent does not read the directions for putting together a new type of flashlight, and this is pointed out by the child, are there appropriate rejoinders by the parent such as "Do as I say, not as I do"? Is reading for information held up as an ideal by the parent, yet not practiced?

Other aspects of the purposes of literacy also involve the total spectrum of the ways of living of a group. Is it appropriate to respond to reading emotively or primarily in terms of information? Do community members talk most frequently about reading done for instrumental purposes (e.g., to learn about a job possibility) or to gain information in a broad sense with no specific predetermined purpose (newspaper) or for pleasure (comics)? What is the extent of self-conscious knowledge about literacy in the community? When most of the members of a community are not literate, what happens to those individuals who do become literate? Are their services incorporated into community needs, ignored, depreciated, or seen to relate only to that individual's life outside the community? Is the acquisition of literacy by an individual seen primarily as a social index or evidence of individual efforts?

The tools of the ethnoscientist (an anthropologist especially interested in the determination of categories by members of a social group) are especially useful in literacy-related issues both within the community and the classroom. For example, taxonomies of reading derived from community members, from a teacher, and from students are often very different. A taxonomy of reading elicited from a teacher may include only reading that has been assigned, is from a textbook, or is relegated to a specific space and time (e.g., circle reading, free reading). In community settings, children may provide more items in their taxonomy of reading, and their bases of division may include such headings as materials, purposes, and settings. Materials (i.e., what people read) may include minds, signs, pictures, the sky, letters, books, funnies, house numbers, prices, etc. Inside a classroom, children may give only a very restricted taxonomy of reading, such as books, workbooks, clock, and board, and purposes related only to teacher-directed activities. Taxonomies are useful primarily as they can be related to ways in which they are derived. Thus the contexts of learning and using terms for categories within the
taxonomies would be essential to ethnographers as they observed within both the school and the community.

ETHNOGRAPHERS AND EDUCATORS AS RESEARCH PARTNERS

It may be helpful to readers if I make explicit the experience out of which the view of ethnography presented here comes, and the audience of readers envisioned. The experience of being a public school teacher, anthropologist, and educator trying to bridge the gap between the world of university training and research and that of public education is reflected here. With the background of being a public school teacher in a multicultural setting in the United States, I did anthropological fieldwork in communities and schools of Mexico. Following these experiences, I attempted to bring both roles together as an educator participating in training teachers and helping public school personnel develop policies and practices for multicultural student populations in the United States. The audience addressed here is therefore both educators and anthropologists; ethnography in educational research today should make sense to both groups. Anthropologists must not feel they have to change or lower standards for educational research. Educators should not have to feel that anthropology and ethnography are too esoteric, detailed, and removed from reality to be of use in their decision making.

Many of the views expressed here are drawn in large part from the experience of tracing the footsteps of anthropologists and linguists in Mexico who had written ethnographies about communities there. In many cases, either these anthropologists or their students had used information from these studies to influence educational policy making at national and regional levels. These ethnographies (cf. Redfield 1930, 1941, 1955; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934) traced the history of the community and detailed in a descriptive account the language and culture of the group. Through a period of months, and sometimes years, ethnographers came to know the methods of self-identification held by the groups and the values, beliefs, and behaviors of group members of different generations and sexes. Therefore, when this information was used in determining educational policies and practices (cf. Caso, et al. 1954, 1964; Aguirre Beltrán 1957; de la Fuente 1964), community norms and needs were reflected. The uses of anthropological and linguistic studies in educational planning have differed in the various administrations of Mexican government in the past half century (Heath 1972), but increasingly since the 1940's, educators have provided for and paid serious attention to community studies in planning education; teachers and local community personnel have often played significant roles in recommending programs, practices, and personnel.

The multicultural nature of Mexican schooling has been recognized for decades. Within the United States, the multicultural nature of communities served by public education has only recently become an expressed concern and thus an impetus for change in educational processes. University teacher-training programs, research laboratories and centers, and policy makers at local and national levels have recently called for citizen advisory boards, citizen participation, and input from communities in a form that could be used in planning educational changes. The Mexican experience seemed a useful one for schools and communities of the United States. Therefore, during the past seven years, as an educator and anthropologist, I worked in schools and communities of the Piedmont region of North and South Carolina, attempting to incorporate the most successful aspects of anthropological and linguistic fieldwork in Mexico in educational planning in this setting. Teachers, administrators,
parents, and community leaders became involved in various aspects of the process. During these years, we worked together to use ethnographic findings from two closed communities (one black, the other transitional Southern Appalachian) of similar socioeconomic and occupational status to help make formal schooling work for these groups. My own focus and methodology in the communities was that of traditional ethnographer: observer/participant interacting with members of the communities in as many different daily activities as possible. The same type of participant/observation techniques was used in classrooms, schools, community service centers, and vocational settings during portions of the study. The topical focus was language learning and language use within the communities, schools, and service or work institutions. Given ethnographic and linguistic data about these communities and intensive training in ethnographic and sociolinguistic field methods, teachers and administrators collected instances of cultural fit and conflicts in learning styles, language uses, respect behaviors, time and space usage, and other aspects of culture. The teachers applied knowledge gained from the ethnographic data of the communities to devise new strategies of classroom interaction, to revise tests and instructional materials, and to reorganize space and time usage in schools and offices. They rewrote units for reading and social studies, handbooks for school volunteers, and mini-textbooks based on ethnography of speaking research they conducted in their own institutional settings (cf. Guinness and Heath 1974; Holland 1974). They extended the concepts, materials, and methods of ethnography through the workshops and in-service training programs they provided fellow workers in the region.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, standardized tests and sociodemographic correlational studies dubbed many of the children of the Piedmont Carolinas as low in academic achievement and potential. The overriding concern of the educational establishment became knowledge of how home and community experiences formed the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural behavior patterns of children. Initially, the focus centered on knowing how these patterns were formed in pre-school experiences, but gradually, the focus shifted to all of-school experiences, as teachers and administrators came increasingly to recognize the role community life played in supporting or denying school goals. For example, if students came from a community in which 80% of the residents worked in textile mills and never used writing skills of any type in their jobs, teachers could not argue that successful compositions helped guarantee vocational opportunities. Neither could they argue that successful writing habits would bring better wages, since many of the textile workers earned more than public school employees (see Heath 1981 for an account of how ethnographic data from communities were used to alter the teaching of composition). Researchers observed and participated in various aspects of community and school settings while bearing in mind some of these questions. How, and in what proportions, did members of the closed communities ask questions of the young? Was the greatest amount of question-asking done by parents or by other family members, by adults or by children, by males or by females? How did community members construct the reality of virtues and vices? What value-words were used to express taste and preferences, to criticize, grade, and evaluate, to warn, praise, reprove, and draw attention to rules and demands for respect? How widespread was the grading of people, the giving of advice, the expression of dissatisfaction with displays of respect, and the use of persuasion and encouragement? What kinds of references to written materials were expressed by community members? Did they use writing to seek information, advice, emotional outlets, or verification of their ideas and ideals? How did children learn
to read items, to recognize colors and other attributes, and to relate knowledge of these objects and their characteristics to other situations?

It should be emphasized that the goal of this ethnographic research in the communities (representative of approximately 70% of the local population) was not to catalogue folktale, list local folk heroes and occasions for celebration, and detail children’s games, so that teachers could use this cultural information as content to be taught in the schools (see Bauer’s this volume, for a discussion of the questionable educational merits of teaching folklore to the children from whose parents the folklore has been collected). The emphasis in the Piedmont Carolinas was to have educators learn the ways of teaching and learning that were functional for members of these communities. Especially critical was knowledge about the functions of spoken and written language in community settings. Throughout the curriculum, teachers could then adopt and adapt these varied learning processes in their teaching techniques and materials.

(For a full account of the project, see Heath, forthcoming.)

Ethnography in this setting was supplemented by experimental studies, repeated standardized testing, and numerous other traditional methods of evaluating educational progress. Data from urban planning, community centers, and transportation studies provided numerous leads on how and why communities were shifting in composition, recreational and work preferences, and associational networks. Many of the methodological guidelines were strengthened by these complementary data. For example, when reading scores for groups using a specific basal reading series in one school rose in a three-year period, and those in another school did not, teachers asked why. Teaching methods, in-service practices, sociodemographic characteristics of the populations, and access to audiovisual materials were ostensibly the same. A content analysis of the series was done, and the items and certain behaviors used in the stories were catalogued. Ethnographic data from the communities served by the two schools were checked to determine the presence or absence of these items and behaviors. In the communities attending the school with increased reading scores, at least 90% of the objects (such as elevator, escalator, apartment buildings) and cultural behaviors (such as riding a bus, interacting with a school-crossing guard dressed in a policeman’s uniform) used in the texts were familiar. In those communities where scores had not improved, only approximately 60% of the objects and behaviors were familiar. Had ethnographers in the communities not considered shopping trips, routes to school, and other seemingly useless details of daily activities worthy of recording, this check would not have been possible, and we could not have obtained an understanding of the context that contributed to the difference in scores between the two schools. Following this check, we were able to go back and analyze performance on various sections of the test. The vocabulary items and specific questions in which understanding of certain meanings of words was critical to comprehension constituted the greatest proportion of errors for students in the school that had the lower scores.

In addition to research in communities of students, communities of teachers and administrators were sites for ethnographic study. Knowledge about enculturation patterns of teachers and administrators helped explain their "set" toward particular school behaviors. Traditionally, the relative degree of fit between the norms of teachers and administrators and school goals has not been analyzed, except in such general terms as the "middle-class aura" they are said to bring to school (Payne and Bennett 1977). Such descriptions of these values and behaviors as do exist are not based on ethnographic analysis or studies of how the patterns of behavior of teachers and principals were actually acquired. Instead, these works speak of a generalized mainstream or middle-class "teacher lifestyle."
The answers to questions asking where the appropriate rules for behaving in school came from and why they are used and reinforced by teachers and administrators should provide information on how and why school officials acquire "readiness" for promoting school rules. Ethnographic study in the homes and communities of teachers and administrators reveals the enculturation patterns that provide frames into which institutional norms fit and from which they are reinforced. In Bernstein's terms (1974), classification and framing used by school personnel are only partially the creation of the school; they are also the creation of the socialization of the middle class. In short, research inside the classroom and school, when supplemented by studies of the content and process of cultural transmission in communities of all members of the school—teachers, administrators, and students—helps verify these frames.

Achievement of the essentials of ethnographic research suggested here depends on cooperation between ethnographers who focus on the community outside the school and those who focus on the classroom and also on the professional partnership of anthropologists and educators. We need to find out what it is that students need to know and do to become acceptable participants in classrooms in which their membership is imposed by others, and we also need to find out what it is they know and do to be acceptable home and community members. Through participating as research partners, teachers and administrators may gain specific insights into ways to alter what it is students need to know and do to be acceptable members of classrooms and still achieve educational goals. The purpose of the school as institution is to change some aspects of the behavior of every individual who passes through the process of formal education. The school has the task of socializing the young to a particular set of behavioral and informational norms characteristic of an idealized "good citizen." There are, therefore, limits as to how much the school's methods of operation can change without altering the basic purpose of the school. Nevertheless, certain changes in procedures and philosophic sets toward methods and materials can be made. For example, the hierarchical and sequential structure of classroom behavior can be changed to include structures that are not intrinsic to either institutional norms or enculturation patterns of the middle-class mainstream teacher or administrator. From our research in communities, we learned that sequencing, overlapping, and multiple coding within learning situations outside of classrooms were often much more complex than those of the classroom. Therefore, for students from these communities, the classroom slowing and simplification of interaction and presentation of discrete, specifically sequenced units in predetermined hierarchical form were indeed foreign. Teachers came to realize that the slowdown, breakup, and careful minimal layering of classroom interactions were not necessary, if they could adapt community teaching and learning interaction styles to classroom purposes. Teachers involved in ethnographic research therefore trained themselves out of some of their mainstream middle-class enculturation and institutionalized norms and learned to use some of the multiple and complex strategies employed in the communities studied.

CONCLUSIONS

In the past, emphasis has centered on ways to change individuals through formal schooling. Ethnographic studies should enable schools to broaden and expand the tasks individuals encounter in schooling. The essentials of ethnographic methods suggested here (ethnohistorical research, attention to definition of unit of study, microethnographic work, linguistic investigations, and analysis of artifacts) derive from the anthropological goals of ultimately obtaining holistic comparative
studies of communities and schools as part of those communities. In so
doing, education researchers may reverse the usual trend of being inter-
ested primarily in the influences of large social institutions on the cultures
that participate in them. Instead, educators may be able to realize the
potential of understanding the many patterns of culture represented in
communities for expanding ways of learning and reflecting knowledge,
skills, and dispositions in schools.

The future calls for the design of research projects from which we
can proceed to identify other essentials of ethnographic research in edu-
cation and perhaps construct a taxonomy of educational settings. With
such a taxonomy, we could develop a model in which tested types would
figure as expected results of variable forces at work and the processes of
change in education would be clarified. In short, to return to Stoppard’s
character who questioned the definition of art, we may have a paradigm
through which ethnographic studies in education can be considered the
proper concern of the ethnographer, and we can have an image of wholeness
to tell us what it is we are doing.

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