

PLANNING FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT LEARN  
AND PEOPLE WHO GROW

by

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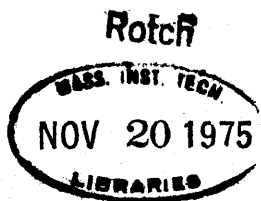
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for Lishan

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## Contents

Chapter 1--Learning to Plan	1
The changing role of the planner	1
Criteria for effective planning	3
Developing a theory for effective planning	6
Chapter 2--A Learning Theory for Individuals	8
The Argyris-Schon Theory	8
Generating valid information	9
Making a free and informed choice	14
Developing internal commitment	15
Making outcomes congruent with intentions	16
Torbert's Experiential Learning Theory	17
Synthesizing Argyris-Schon and Torbert	22
Chapter 3--A Theory for Organizational Effective- ness--Force-fitting Organizations into a Learning Theory	25
Testing a theory for effective organizing	29
Chapter 4--Planning for More Effective Government--	
A Case Study	30
An impressionistic account	33
Some hypotheses about effective organizing	35
Initially divergent purposes	36
Process effectiveness	40
Sharing of purposes	52



Short-term goals relate to ultimate purposes	54
Effectiveness around short-term goals	59
Organizational effectiveness	62
Feelings of personal effectiveness	64
The feedback loop	66
<b>Chapter 5--Applying Learning Theory to Planning for</b>	
<b>Systems and Organizations</b>	68
Implications for individual behavior	68
Implications for the planner	69
Implications for me--holding myself accountable	
to my own theory of action	70
Implications for organizational planning	72
Implications for the design of organizational	
communication	73
Implications for the design of organizational	
decision-making	75
Implications for the design of feedback	
systems in organizations	76
Implications for the design of interrelation-	
ships between organizations	77
Implications for design of feedback to	
individuals	77
Removing the constraints of habit in organiza-	
tional behavior	78
A simple model of organizations	83

Chapter 6--Designs for Further Research	87
Measurements of effectiveness	88
Measurements of individual behavior	90
Generating valid information	91
Making a free and informed choice	91
Developing internal commitment	92
Encouraging a mutuality of effective behavior with others	92
Combining the measures of individual behavior	93
The difficulty and limitations of conducting research	93
My own research	94
Appendix	95
Organizational purpose	95
Verbal behavior	106
Notes	115

## Chapter 1

### Learning to Plan

#### The changing role of the planner

As a student of the planning process, I have tried to develop an understanding of my proper role as a professional planner. I have considered, in this regard, both the trends in the profession and the trends in my own development. I have been most impressed by the concept of "transactive planning" presented by John Friedmann in his book, Retracking America.<sup>1</sup> Friedmann, currently Director of Urban Planning at UCLA, outlines the changes in planning which have occurred over the last hundred years. He points to the need for mutual exploration by "client groups" and planning professionals. His style of planning involves a continuous process of learning, which is appropriate to changing conditions and the increasing sophistication of modern clients.

Transactive planning, which I choose to call a positive, if not revolutionary, trend in the profession, is quite compatible with trends in my own development which I want to encourage. I especially look forward to a role which encourages continued mutual learning. As a potential "client" of professionals myself and as a potential professional, I appreciate the prospect of interactive relationships.

Transactive planning addresses my concerns about the interpersonal style involved in my profession. As for the actual content of planning, my concept of the "planning" which

I will do as a professional is akin to the common-sense usage of the term. I want to plan for the community in which I live in the same way that I would plan for a vacation trip. There will be, in any plan, certain desires and expectations about the future. By applying knowledge and theories developed from past experience, these desires will either be realized or modified. I will try as much as possible to remain grounded in my own experience and common sense. As on a vacation trip, there will be flexibility in the plans. Overall there will be a feeling of relaxation.

I hope to apply this naive and idyllic view of the planning process to a variety of concerns which I have. My goal has been to discover a theory of planning which is commonsensical and grounded in my own experience and at the same time applicable generally to any planning situation. I have looked for the basic similarities which apply to any planning problem, from making up a grocery list to developing a national energy policy. In the simplest case, a good plan has a desired end state and some strategy for achieving the end state. Knowledge and theories inform the strategy. In the case of a grocery list the desired end state is a well-stocked cupboard. The strategy involves knowledge of nutritional requirements, tastes in food, availability at a store, and cost. In a more complex planning problem, the same elements apply--there is a desired end state and a strategy for reaching that end. It may be difficult to know what the desired end state is, particularly

if many people are involved. The strategy may be extremely complex, involving many steps and a great deal of uncertainty. The knowledge needed to devise strategies may be difficult to acquire and theories may be undeveloped and inadequate. Nevertheless, at some level of abstraction the problem remains quite simple, involving an end state and a strategy toward that end.

#### Criteria for effective planning

From my rather simplistic notion of planning it is possible to develop some rigorous criteria for a planning theory. In defining these criteria I use the term "purposes" to indicate the desired end state of any particular plan. I use the term "goal" to indicate intermediate states which are part of the strategy for obtaining the purposes. The relationship of goals to purposes is a relative one, with goals always sought in pursuit of some more ultimate purposes. For example, one may end in one context may be only a goal in another context, a means to a more ultimate end purpose. For example, one may consider one's job as truly fulfilling, as serving some basic purpose one has, such as creativity. Another person might, in the same position, be interested only in the money earned, for its value in obtaining some other purpose, perhaps some pleasure. The job may have value as an end and at the same time as a means to other ends. It may be, in my usage, both a purpose and a goal.

Still speaking generally, I believe that in any planning

situation the following criteria will yield effective plans, plans where the end state or purpose is most likely to be realized:

- 1) achievement of goals under conditions perceived as stable
- 2) adaptation of goals to changing conditions
- 3) adaptation of goals to improved strategies
- 4) search for improved strategies to realize more ultimate purposes

I believe that any plan will be more effective if it incorporates these general criteria for adapting and improving the strategy of the plan.

I find the metaphor of a pathway useful in thinking about plans. One set of goals represents one pathway to the ultimate destination, the end purposes. Another set of goals, another strategy, is another pathway to the destination. The first criterion, above, says that one must be able to progress along a given path in order to reach the end. Without the ability to achieve goals, to move along the pathway, a strategy is useless, and a purpose is unattainable. The second criterion says that one must be prepared to take another path if conditions change along the way. A goal must be changed if some unexpected obstacle is discovered. The third criterion says that one must be prepared to take another path if some new information reveals a better way. An overview of the strategies which are pathways to a particular purpose may demand a

change of strategy because of new knowledge or theories about the strategies for the particular purpose. The fourth criterion says that one must remember always the importance of getting to the end, of achieving the purpose effectively. One must be constantly looking for a better way, at the same time that one is progressing on the current path. This is particularly true when there is uncertainty about the strategy. One must not forget the uncertainty and stop trying to improve on the current strategy.

The four criteria taken together form an effective system for realizing purposes. They seem to conflict but are in fact interdependent. If one is primarily concerned with goal achievement, then consciousness of purpose, in this context as a concern over the wisdom of pursuing a goal, may reduce the confidence and commitment to goal achievement. One may be reluctant to follow any given path if it will later be abandoned. Yet in terms of realization of the ultimate purpose, consciousness (constant awareness) of that purpose is crucial. It is useless to follow a path (to take action) which is not aimed toward the desired destination (the purpose). Distinctive destinations, the purposes, provide the meaning or motivation for taking action and for taking particular actions rather than others.

If a plan is designed to achieve goals without monitoring that achievement to determine if ultimate purposes are being served, to that extent, the plan is ineffective. The same is

true of the plan's adaptability. If goal achievement is designed to be maximally effective within a given set of goals and conditions, goal achievement will likely be reduced if goals or conditions change. In a world where conditions and perceptions of conditions are changing rapidly, general skills adaptable to a variety of goals are the most sensible to cultivate and plan for. This advice amounts to the old saying, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket". Effectiveness requires reformulating goals to better transform purposes to realization. Of course, goal achievement as a necessary component of a plan, should not be minimized. A person or system which has the capability of choosing goals which would realize its purpose, but is never able to achieve those goals, is certainly ineffective.

Planning effectiveness, then, involves the simultaneous satisfaction of all four criteria--for goal achievement, adaptability and consciousness of purpose. Maximization to any one criterion, as in goal orientation, will lessen the likelihood that other necessary criteria will be satisfied, or that ultimate purposes will be realized.

#### Developing a theory for effective planning

To make the criteria for effective planning useful, I had to expand the theory to include operationalizing these abstract criteria. I looked to develop a theory for achieving goals effectively, for adapting goals to changing conditions, for



adapting goals to improved strategies, and for remaining conscious of purpose and searching for improved strategies.

These theories which I searched for corresponded to what I believed an effective learning theory was. So I searched for a learning theory which I could apply to planning problems. My desire was to apply the elements of an effective learning theory directly to the general planning problem. But learning theories are formulated in terms of individuals and not in terms of the complex systems which are associated with many planning problems.

Nevertheless I felt that analogies could be drawn between the individual, effective in learning, and the effective system. I have gathered data which gives a preliminary indication that a general planning theory based on a learning theory is reasonable, useful, and even powerful.

First I will present a theory of effective individual learning. Then I will draw analogies from this theory to the situation of planning for effective organizations and systems. Finally I will present data and make some assertions about effective organizing, about planning for effective organizations.

## Chapter 2

### A Learning Theory for Individuals

The criteria for a planning theory which were developed in the last chapter must, if they are to be useful to the planner, apply to the organizations and large-scale systems that planners deal with and also to the individuals within the systems. These criteria mean essentially that a plan must continue to evolve, as the people within the system and the planner continue to learn, as the system itself "learns". Learning is a term usually associated with individuals and not with the more abstract systems which are the planner's concern. But some recent learning theories use systems language and concepts to describe individual learning. These interactional learning theories stress the value of feedback from other individuals as essential components of the learning process. Interactional learning theories provide a conceptual framework which can be applied to the redesign of the planner's large-scale systems and constituent organizations. Personal growth can then be enhanced along with organizational and system effectiveness.

#### THE ARGYRIS-SCHÖN THEORY

One such theory of individual learning was developed by Argyris and Schön.<sup>2</sup> Their theory meets the criteria for effective planning which I outlined in the last chapter. In order for the individual to plan and act effectively—in dealing with the physical environment or the interpersonal environment, in adapting to changed conditions or

changed goals, or in improving strategies and goals to better realize ultimate purposes—one must:

- 1) generate valid information about the choices of action;
- 2) make a free and informed choice of a course of action;
- 3) develop internal commitment to a chosen course of action;
- 4) bring the actual effects of action (the theory-in-use) into congruence with the intended effects (the espoused theory-of-action).

Let me try to explain the theory as I understand it. The theory is on the one hand very simple and straightforward and on the other hand very complex and idealistic.

#### Generating valid information

If one has in mind a particular goal or purpose, the first and obvious step to obtaining the goal is to gather information about the many courses of action available to achieve the goal. The better the information is about the consequences of particular actions, the better is the chance that one can know what actions will achieve the goal.

The Argyris-Schön theory is an interactional learning theory because it assumes that in almost any situation an individual's ability to gather information will be enhanced by communication with other individuals. In the case of action taken with respect to the physical environment, an individual's understanding of the consequences of his action can be greatly increased by his knowledge of the experience of others in that physical environment. For example, an individual might have

as a specific goal the growing of radishes in his backyard. The experience of people who are familiar with the local soil and climate and the growing characteristics of radishes would be invaluable information for the individual. Examples of this sort are so common as to defy enumeration. Much of our culture consists of observations of the physical environment which have been accumulated and shared over thousands of years and now form the basis of most of our knowledge about the likely consequences of our actions.

The value of information from another individual's experience is even more obvious when one's goal relates to action taken in conjunction with this other individual. For example, if one's immediate goal is to rendezvous with another person for lunch, it might be useful to know where the other person will be coming from and also what sort of eating place will be acceptable to him within the logical area for a meeting. Again, the number of examples of this sort--where the effectiveness of one's action depends on knowing about another's attitudes, behavior, intentions, or even simply his location at a particular time--are innumerable.

The information required to make an effective choice of action in situations involving numbers of other people can become quite complicated. For instance, if one chose as a goal the ending of war everywhere on the planet, the information required to choose the right actions might likely be beyond the capabilities of any one man or group of men to obtain.

This example raises two points about the relationship of information to goal achievement. First, information obtained about the choices for one's action may yield the conclusion that one's goal is quite impossible to achieve. In an effective learning system this outcome is not a problem. Since goals are always chosen to serve some more ultimate purposes, the bankruptcy of one goal leaves one the opportunity to choose another more effective goal. If an individual is able to determine that some goals are relatively ineffective and others relatively effective, then he is effective at the fourth criterion for planning, which requires consciousness of purpose and the search for improved strategies for realizing that purpose. The metaphor of a stone wall is appropriate here. If you can't seem to get through it, it may be better to go around the obstacle to your destination (your purpose) rather than getting caught up in the goal of going through the obstacle. Second, information may only enable one to improve one's chances of achieving a goal. For both these reasons, it makes sense to talk about effectiveness in relative as well as absolute terms: below some threshold level of information, there will be absolutely no effectiveness; above that threshold, the more valid and complete is the information generated, the more effective will be the choices made.

The Argyris-Schon theory specifies that the individual must generate valid information, information that is not distorted. Argyris, in earlier works, has developed extensive criteria for interpersonal behavior.<sup>3</sup> These criteria for

behavior are intended to reduce the distortion of information which typifies communication. Argyris suggests that the following characteristic behaviors will increase the probability of obtaining valid information:

owning up to one's ideas and feelings

being open to ideas and feelings of others

experimenting with new ideas and feelings

helping others to own up, be open, and experiment

These behaviors will reduce distortion at both ends of the line, as it were. Communication can be distorted both by the sender and the receiver. The receiver must make himself open to the different perceptions of others. He will then be able to effectively include this information as a basis for his own action. At the same time the receiver must try to avoid causing or encouraging the sender to be closed, deceptive, or distorting. Finally, in order to get the most effective flow of information with others, the receiver must help others to develop within themselves an openness to information which could be useful to both. Argyris suggests that giving and requesting directly-observable data, rather than attributions or opinions, will increase the validity of information. Also, he suggests that minimally evaluative feedback will lessen the likelihood of defensive distortions of information.

Argyris lists the following conditions in the individual as conducive to his generating valid information:

self-acceptance

confirmation from others

feeling of essentiality

psychological success

Though Argyris' characteristics are described in terms of the individual who wants to maximize his own effectiveness, reciprocal relationships with others are implicit in their formulation. He suggests that individuals, behaving in this effective manner, will exhibit norms of individuality, respecting and valuing the perceptions of others. They will at the same time exhibit norms of concern and trust.

The Argyris-Schön theory, then, implies a reciprocal interactive relationship between individuals to facilitate the learning and effectiveness of each. The individual, in order to become effective, must generate information which is useful, that is, which pertains to realizing his purposes. In order to obtain much of this useful information he must form open, trusting relationships with others to obtain information which is valid. Finally, he must monitor his own experience and watch the outcomes of his action. (This monitoring and feedback portion of the learning process I describe fully as the fourth stage of the Argyris-Schön theory.) The information gathered in monitoring one's own experience is valid, directly observable data, and most powerful in producing learning. The ability to predict outcomes is the ultimate test of the validity and usefulness of information.

### Making a free and informed choice

The second fundamental stage in effective action, according to the Argyris-Schön theory, is the making of a free and informed choice. An effective individual must make choices for himself. Only the individual himself can know at the moment for a decision what the objectives of his action will be. However, an ineffective individual may not be in touch with (conscious of) his objectives when making choices. Another individual can only guess at the many and perhaps conflicting purposes which will be operating at the moment of choice. His choice for another individual will always suffer to some extent from a lack of direct knowledge about another.

Freedom is a paradoxical concept and, in a sense, an illusion. Free choice is made within the constraints of possibility. In an interpersonal situation, what is possible depends on the action of others. One's ability to choose the most effective action is enhanced by knowing the actions and intentions of others. Others may give us "freedom" in the sense of creating opportunities. At the same time they give us "freedom" by informing us of the limits of our opportunities. The limits always exist. We must know our limits if we are to take action which has a possibility of success. "Freedom" of action without knowledge of the constraints operating, may yield failure or unintended negative consequences. In either case, the long-term result will be psychological failure. According to the theory relating to valid information, psychological failure



will yield defensiveness, distortion of information and more failure.

Free choice, in the Argyris-Schön formulation, results from valid information about the possibilities and the limits of choice and from an awareness of the purposes which determine the choice. We can increase the likelihood of an individual experiencing psychological success by encouraging him to make choices for himself, to own and feel responsibility for his actions. This individual will not only be more effective in realizing his own purposes but will also be more likely to give us the undistorted information which we need to be effective.

#### Developing internal commitment

The next stage, internal commitment, follows from a free and informed choice. Argyris: "Internal commitment means that the individual has reached the point where he is acting on the choice because it fulfills his own needs and sense of responsibility, as well as those of the system."<sup>4</sup> Without free and informed choice, and consequent internal commitment, the individual will depend on external control to hold him to the task. If that control is relaxed (and it can never be total), the individual will certainly question his own action, will not be totally effective, and may even subvert the task. An internal commitment enables one to proceed, with some doubt perhaps, but with no need for rebellion.

Many situations in organizations and other interpersonal situations involve external control rather than internal

commitment. This is the case when there is decision-making that is not consensual. Even if an external decision is made in the "best interest" of the individual, even if the individual would eventually make the choice which another has made for him, the individual will not effectively pursue the choice unless it is his own.

As a person becomes more informed and more effective, he becomes more aware of the variety of choices open to him. He is more and more likely to know what is advisable for himself. He is not likely to stubbornly insist on a course of action which no longer seems advisable. Although it is sometimes easier to get a person to improve his position by external control, this will be true only if he is relatively uninformed.

#### Making outcomes congruent with intentions

Finally, even with the best of intentions, seemingly valid information, a free choice and commitment to the choice, one may not carry out one's intentions. So the final stage of the Argyris-Schön theory involves obtaining information about whether one is actually doing what one thinks one is doing. This step is really a test of whether the previous steps have been carried out faithfully. If the intended action (the espoused theory-of-action) does not produce the intended results or produces unintended results, then the action-theory-in-use is not congruent with the espoused theory. The actual events are not those which were explained and predicted by the espoused theory.

The incongruence between espoused theory and theory-in-use will result from some sort of misinformation. For example, the individual may have all the pertinent information about conditions and behavior external to himself. But if he is unaware of all the ramifications of his own behavior, he will not be effective. Feedback from other persons or by some mechanical means such as videotape can help the individual to know what are the actual effects of his behavior. The individual may be misperceiving the behavior of others as well. Or he may be misperceiving information from the physical environment. Again, feedback from others can be the basis for correcting this information. Finally the individual may be acting on the basis of information from another person who is misperceiving his own behavior or misperceiving the environment. In this case the individual must check the person's perceptions with those of himself and others.

Torbert describes a theory of experiential learning which is not essentially different from the Argyris-Schön theory. But Torbert makes explicit different elements from those explicit in the Argyris-Schon formulation. The theories complement one another and make effective application of the essential shared principles somewhat easier.

#### TORBERT'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

My understanding of Torbert's theory begins with a quote from William James: "My experience is what I agree to attend

to.<sup>5</sup> Fundamental to Torbert's theory is the notion that people will perceive what they want to perceive. An individual's purposes will determine to a large extent how and what he perceives. The Alaskan Indian has 32 different words for snow. His highly discriminating perceptions are necessary to his survival. For the weekend skier it may be sufficient to know whether to wax his skis for dry snow or wet snow.

The structuring of perception has a critical effect on the information necessary to determine effective action. Information will be accepted only if it is in a form which one agrees (chooses) to attend to. One may be in the habit of stereotyping peoples' behavior according to some particular characteristics such as sex, race, age, aggressiveness, etc. After stereotyping, one may never notice the multitude of individual behaviors which are contrary to the stereotype.

One learns to structure, discriminate and give meaning to information so that it is both useful—that is, pertinent to possible action—and non-threatening. Torbert describes a level called consciousness which monitors the first level of experience—behavior and perception—and the second level of experience—structure. An individual's consciousness is aware of interactions between himself and his environment and monitors the other levels in order to maintain the overall, lifetime, autonomous purpose and integrity of the person. According to Torbert's model, structure is what determines what will be attended to (perceived) and what will not. Structure also

defines the limits of appropriate or acceptable behavior and appropriate or acceptable thought. Consciousness, in turn, determines structure, in order to best serve one's purposes.

I find it useful to think of structure and consciousness as heuristics--operating rules which determine behavior and perception at any given time. Structure consists of the rules which directly determine behavior and perception. Consciousness consists of the rules which determine structures.

Consciousness and structure are abstract concepts which serve to explain the ordering of behavior and perception. They cannot be observed directly but they can be inferred from observing behavior and perception. This inferring consists of imagining the rules which must be operating in order to produce the observed patterns of behavior or perception.

One need not be conscious of the rules which comprise structure and consciousness. In fact, Torbert believes that very few people experience consciously these levels of their operation. But he also believes that making these levels conscious is essential to individual effectiveness. To be effective, one's structuring of behavior and perceptions must contribute to realizing one's purposes, to having the effect one intended. If one is not effective through the unconscious operation of structure and consciousness, it may be possible to improve on that effectiveness by becoming aware of structure and consciousness.

Increasing effectiveness will result from awareness of

several elements. These elements include, in Torbert's formulation, individual purpose, behavior and perception, the structuring of behavior and perception, and the congruence of purpose with the actual effects of structured behavior and perception. An effective individual will experience an awareness of all these elements of his own operation. In an interpersonal situation, one's effectiveness will be increased by awareness of these elements in the experience of others as well. Knowledge of another's behavior and perceptions will help one to plan one's own behavior. It will also help in restructuring one's perceptions if that seems indicated. But knowing another's behavior and perceptions is not enough. In making decisions on the basis of another's behavior and perceptions, there is an implicit structuring of the other's experience. One is making inferences from the observed behavior or perceptions. These inferences are about the rules which the other has for structuring behavior and perceptions and for determining structure. It is necessary to know these rules in order to project accurately what the other's behavior will be in the future. If one can get direct information from the other about his experience of his own structure and consciousness, this will add greatly to the reliability of the inferences one might make about the other's future behavior.

Torbert's theory is based on a learning systems model. Effectiveness derives from feedback as well as from awareness. Feedback is information which allows one to determine to what

extent purposes are being realized. With this evaluative mechanism one can make decisions about the relative effectiveness of different behaviors and/or perceptions.

By Torbert's theory, effective feedback involves:

- 1) a mutual sharing of experience at the levels of behavior, structure, and consciousness;
- 2) formulation of that experience which encourages the other's efforts to specify and pursue behavioral goals that authentically transform conscious purposes;
- 3) a consequent pre-disposition to mutual self-control rather than external control.

The key points here are that particular types of information must be known and that this information must be shared. The information to be shared concerns an individual's experience of his own behavior and perceptions, his structuring of his own behavior and perceptions and his adjustment of structuring in response to consciousness of purpose. By sharing this information one gets help in four ways. The perceptions which one has of one's own behavior, structure and consciousness can be tested and refined through comparison with the perceptions which others have of that behavior, structure and consciousness. The perceptions of others whom one depends upon will be improved through one's sharing with them. The perceptions of others can also be tested for validity by sharing of these perceptions. The behavior of others can be checked for its reliability in predicting future action by sharing of

their structure and consciousness.

In the Torbert theory, the process of becoming effective is an interactive, reciprocal one. The individual becomes aware of his own structuring of behavior and perception as he shares experience with others. His effectiveness increases when the feedback he gets comes from increasingly effective others.

The theory assumes that certain general types of structurings will be effective in realizing all purposes which individuals might have. These structurings are:

- 1) an openness to the experiencing of the three different levels of operation of an individual;
- 2) behavior which shares this experience with others as feedback for them;
- 3) an openness to feedback from others.

The assertion that genuine purposes will be realized only by structures meeting these criteria implies that not all of the imaginable purposes are genuine and realizable. By the theory, even competitive or destructive purposes cannot be realized effectively without the cooperation of adversaries. These adversaries will, we would hope, not cooperate to be totally defeated or destroyed. The assumption which is implicit in Torbert's formulation is that competitive and destructive purposes cannot be shared or realized effectively.

Synthesizing Argyris-Schön and Torbert

The Argyris-Schön and Torbert theories give slightly



different versions of essentially the same argument. In both theories individual effectiveness is maximized through a learning system involving feedback from other individuals. Each theory requires that there be constant evaluation to determine if intentions are being carried out. Each stipulates that internal commitment rather than external control is necessary.

The Argyris-Schön theory is formulated in terms of an action orientation. The four steps of that theory—obtaining information, making a choice, committing to the choice and testing for realization of intentions—are easily understood. I find the Torbert formulation less comfortable to use but more fundamentally useful. Torbert's version reminds one that even the perception of information is an action which can be effective or ineffective. The gathering of valid information is subject to perceptual distortions. Directly observable data will not necessarily reduce the distortion. Torbert's version is also more direct in leading one to the introspection and self-consciousness which is necessary to be effective. This is not an omission by Argyris and Schön but rather it is a matter of emphasis. The Argyris-Schön theory gets at the need for self-consciousness in its step which compares intentions with outcomes. Torbert's theory stresses the need for self-consciousness and suggests the levels of one's operation which should be experienced in self-consciousness. I like, too, Torbert's emphasis on the mutuality of effective interactions.

My own synthesis of the two theories takes the Argyris-Schön theory as a framework. In generating valid information, I will specify that the information include behavior, perceptions and ultimate purposes, the structure of rules for behavior and perceptions, and the rules relating ultimate purposes to structure, behavior and perceptions. I will ground any focal experience I may be having in the continuing awareness of my ultimate purposes. This is, I think, the central and most difficult process in becoming effective: keeping a part of one's attention aware at all times of the question—"Why am I doing this?" Finally, I will encourage others to use the same theory and engage them in mutually constructive interactions.

## Chapter 3

### A Theory for Organizational Effectiveness-- Force-fitting Organizations into a Learning Theory

In the last chapter I described a learning theory which applies to individuals alone and in interpersonal interaction. The logic which applies to individual's effectiveness can be applied to organizations as a whole. I theorize that the criteria for effective learning will also yield organizational effectiveness, when applied to an organization as a whole.

The elements of the learning theory for individuals were:

- 1) generating valid information, including information about behavior, perceptions, structuring of behavior and perceptions, and consciousness of purpose;
- 2) making a free and informed choice;
- 3) developing internal commitment to the choice;
- 4) testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions
- 5) encouraging a mutuality of effective behavior with others.

"Others" refers, in this organizational context, to the other individuals and organizations with whom the organization interacts.

The formulation above calls for a mutual sharing of information about behavior, structure, and consciousness. In terms of an organization, the behavioral information refers to: action taken in pursuit of short-term goals; all the day-to-day and month-to-month activities of the organization, relating to its products and/or services; the inputs and outputs of the

organization.

The structural level refers to information about the formal structure and informal processes which determine: membership and roles in the group; how and what action is carried out at the behavioral level; and what information from the environment is accepted as valid feedback (what will influence the organization's behavior and what will be ignored).

The consciousness level refers to the abstract purpose of the organization. This purpose may be explicitly stated in the organization's policy or it may be implicit in the policy, structure, and actual behavior of the organization. In a truly conscious organization, ultimate purposes would be public and shared and determine effectively structure and behavior. In a typical organization, the abstract purposes which seem actually to operate, for example--profit-taking, survival, or growth--may not be the purposes which are emphasized in relating to the public.

Applying the theory of individual learning to an organization would yield the following assertion about effective organizing. At a macroscopic level of analysis, in an organization's relationships as a whole with individuals and groups outside itself, effective transforming of abstract purposes requires a willingness: to share abstract purposes, to test whether they truly represent more ultimate purposes; to share and test the structure for transforming these purposes; to share the actual behavior which creates products and/or

services; to make free choices and allow others to as well; and to test whether the output is what was originally intended.

It is possible to show that this manufactured theory is at least reasonable, without proving that it is true. The same reasoning which supports the theoretical steps for individual effectiveness applies to effectiveness in organizations.

Organizations can benefit in the same way as individuals do from a sharing of information. Feedback will help the organization know more about its own functioning--about its activity, its filtering of information, its structure for decision-making and the congruence of the outcomes of its activity and structure with its purposes. Sharing information will increase the effectiveness of those other individuals and organizations that the organization depends on. Information about the structure and purposes of other individuals and organizations will enable the organization to plan with greater confidence about the activity of these others.

An individual or organization which does not publicly test its assumptions and strategies will almost certainly have simplified those assumptions and strategies in a way which may appear effective at first glance or in the short run. A topical example is that of energy consumption. Short-run untested assumptions that energy sources were inexhaustible and relatively free (involving only the costs of obtaining the energy rather than the opportunity costs for future use or the costs of by-products such as air pollution) have been painfully

invalidated. If this knowledge had been shared, other industries and individuals might have chosen to curtail use earlier and encouraged development of alternative sources. For those who have been rudely awakened (and I am one), it was perhaps ineffective to take the route of blind faith in the good intentions and foresight of those who were given private control of energy resources. A healthy amount of mutual self-doubt and mutual self-control is desirable as is a willingness to confront other individuals and organizations on their own assumptions and operations.

Like an individual, an organization must make a free choice in order to be fully effective. This means knowing the limits which other organizations will reasonably place on the organization's activity and it means confronting the limits which are not reasonable. When organizational interests conflict, the effective and rational resolution will define the conflicting parties as part of a larger system which should locate its shared purposes and act on these. Any particular organization should assert its right to freely pursue activity which does not conflict with others.

The reasoning about internal commitment applies to organizations as well. Externally controlled organizations will have externally controlled members. External control means that another organization or individual is dictating the choices without regard for the purposes of the controlled group. It also means that the controlled group or individual is, for some

reason, not asserting its right to have its purposes considered in the decision-making process. From the theory about individual effectiveness, one would expect that the externally controlled members would be ineffectively motivated. The organization's effectiveness should suffer from these individual members with lowered motivation.

The comparing of outcomes with intentions is obviously vital to organizational effectiveness as well as individual effectiveness. This is a necessary step of any planning and action process, made by any individual or group.

Finally, the encouraging of a mutuality of effective behavior has already been suggested as necessary for effective feedback and free choice.

#### Testing a theory for effective organizing

The theory I have presented here for effective organizing is highly abstract. It does not describe the individual behaviors required to implement the steps needed for organizational effectiveness. Nor does the theory, as I have described it thus far, mention how to measure the required behavior or how to implement it. In an effort to make the theory less abstract and more directly applicable to planning for effective organizations, I have gathered some case material. On the basis of the data, I have formed and tested some hypotheses about the relationship of individual behaviors to organizational effectiveness.

## Chapter 4

### Planning for More Effective Government—A Case Study

Before making the most useful and most controversial assertions about effective organizing, I will describe some research I have done. I draw upon some of the data in the case study to support my assertions.

I chose to study, for my case material, the formation and early work of an organization. It seemed particularly appropriate to study the chosen organization because this organization has as its expressed purpose the improving of effectiveness of the municipal planning process. In the course of the group's work I might expect to learn from their effort to increase effectiveness.

The organization is a committee of 13 citizens from a town of about 55,000. These citizens were brought together through the efforts of a Professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. He had been invited by the Board of Selectmen of the Town to engage in a process for involving citizens in the design and implementation of town policy. He had previously engaged in a trial effort of such a process in a smaller town of about 6,000 persons. I had been involved in this project, also.

The model of the process developed in the smaller town involves the following steps: 1) organizing a credible body of citizens interested in contributing to and shaping development policy for the town; 2) conducting a town-wide survey of



citizen attitudes and priorities—to establish the major issues in the town and the attitudes of various groups toward these issues; and to provide visibility for the citizens' group; 3) formation of working groups around issues to make intensive studies and formulate policies and to allow large numbers of residents to participate in the planning process; 4) follow-up efforts to implement policy suggestions; 5) self-conscious efforts to transfer to lay citizens the capacity to manage this process (1-4) on their own; 6) some sort of continuing presence by the committee. These steps represent the intentions or espoused theory of the faculty member for the process.

The study I did covered the first phase of the process and approximately four months of work in the second phase. The process began in October 1974 with initial exploratory meetings. The Professor met separately with some Selectmen, an interested potential leader of the citizens group, and potential student staff. In a meeting with the full Board of Selectmen the project was endorsed and guaranteed funding of \$15,000. By early December, the first seven members of the Committee had been selected. These seven members were analyzed to determine what characteristics of the citizenry they represented. The gaps in representation were located and by early January, a "representative" body had been formed.

In early January work began on a "Survey of Citizen Attitudes and Priorities". This work became quite involved and was still proceeding four months later. An extensive document was

generated, which in pretests by volunteers took about two hours to complete. Plans have altered so that the survey will be sent out in six separate parts.

The other main work of the Committee during this period of time was the preparation of a proposal to HUD for funding of the survey and publishing of the results. The Selectmen had already committed \$15,000 to cover the costs of the survey. The HUD money would save the Town this money and enable analysis and publishing of the data gathered. The proposal was drafted by the Professor, subject to review and approval by the group. One intention was to satisfy the Selectmen's desire to save the Town money. But he also had in mind stretching the group's conception of its goals to include activity beyond simply forming the survey.

In mid-March, during the absence of the Professor, some underlying resentments on the part of Committee members were surfaced. It was decided that the Committee would meet by itself for a time so that members could regain a sense of control and direction. After four weeks, the Professor was invited back to renegotiate an involvement with the Committee. Three new members were chosen, a new staff formed, and work on the survey was renewed. In addition, the process of citizen education was begun with the development of a newsletter. Since this period of self-assessment, the Committee members have been more candid about the goals and the limits of their own involvement. Later I describe why I think the Committee has changed.

An impressionistic account

Any number of different stories can be related about a particular set of events, with each story assigning a different emphasis or meaning to the same events. Another story of the Committee which has meaning for me follows. The story describes the changes in the power relationships, the feelings of effectiveness, and the sharing of purposes which occurred during the first seven months of the process.

This story represents my impressions of the organization's history. I have not given any evidence for these impressions. I will present evidence for some of the impressions later if they pertain to my arguments about effective organizational planning. I give these impressions now to provide a time framework for my later arguments and to give a view of some of the changes in the group.

Phase I, I call "contact and contract". During this phase the initial contact between town officials and the Professor was made. The Professor described his expectations of what would be a viable process. The Selectmen openly expressed their purposes at this time as did the Professor. There was candid discussion and negotiation of a contract.

Phase II, I call "recruitment". During this phase the Professor took over a leadership role, defining for the group of interested citizens what they might be getting into. Again there was considerable candor and questioning of purposes and expectations. Thirteen citizens were chosen out of those

interested in working with the Professor. At this time, eight students were also chosen to work as staff to the Committee.

Phase III, I call "habit forming". During this phase, the Professor defined the work of the group and it began to function. A mechanism developed rather quickly whereby the citizens were given a reactive role. The Professor led the group, defining the major tasks and the timetable for these. Staff assumed minor leadership roles, defining the work of sections of the survey.

Phase IV, I call "revolt". During the absence of the Professor, resentments and feelings of ineffectiveness on the part of Committee members surfaced. It was decided that the Committee had lost control of its own work and that the Committee should meet on its own for a time to reorient itself.

Phase V, I call "reform". During the three weeks following the "revolt" the Committee engaged in reflection, self-criticism, and criticism of the MIT involvement. Out of this period of heavy criticism there began to emerge new mechanisms for doing the Committee's work. New habits were formed. For example, there was a feeling expressed by several members that they had not asserted their right to a voice in decisions. A new formal procedure was adopted to make sure everyone was heard. There was a concern that no long-range plan was available to inform the week-to-week decisions of the group. There was a general plan in the HUD proposal and the Committee developed a detailed timetable to accomplish the objectives of this

plan.

Phase VI, I call "renewal". The initiatives which the group had accomplished on its own sparked new initiatives by the Professor. He pushed forward with plans for a new stage in the process. By means of a newsletter, the Committee would increase its visibility and begin the process of citizen education. The survey work was resumed on six separate subject areas. There was a mechanism developed to achieve final form in three weeks on each successive survey. Three new members were recruited. The staff was returned to its role of providing products for the Committee to react to. Committee members seemed anxious to return to this task orientation, but they have also been quite concerned about their own effectiveness. Since the "revolt", members have been more open about their own involvement. They have remained very faithful to their newly-formed decision-making process. There have been lapses into ineffective old habits, which is, of course, expected when basic changes have been made.

Some hypotheses about effective organizational planning

On the basis of the information which I collected in Arlington, I would like to make some hypotheses about effective organizing. In the next chapter I will extrapolate from these hypotheses and from the theory about individual effectiveness to complete a theory of effective organizing.

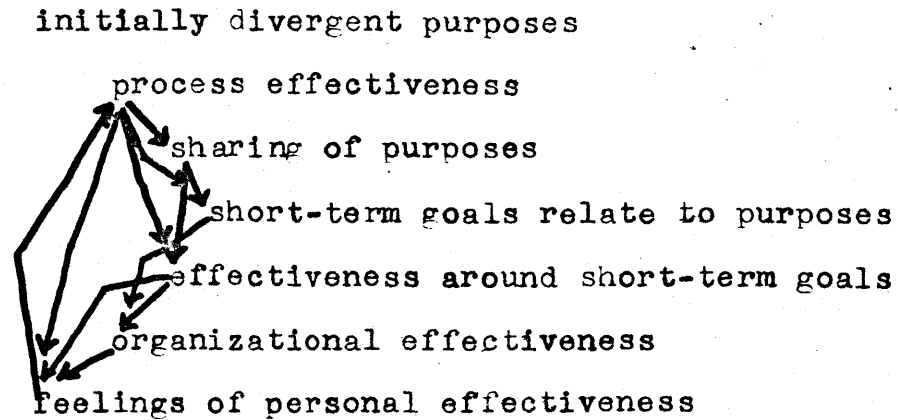


Figure 4-1. A Model of the Mechanism which Yields  
Organizational Effectiveness

#### Initially Divergent Purposes

The model above assumes that, in any organization, at the outset, members will have their individual impressions about the purposes of the activity which they share. Presumably, there will be expectations by those individuals that the shared activity will satisfy some of their own individual purposes. Until and unless the individuals share their own expectations, there is no reason why individual purposes will be known to others, and there is no reason why individual impressions about the purposes of the organization will be known to others either.

What is true of members at the outset of an organization should also be true of members as they join an already-existing organization. The views which new members have of the existing purposes or of their own desired purposes will not be known until these new members communicate them to others. A new member will likely know the publicly espoused purposes of the

organization. But some veteran members may not concur with the publicly espoused purposes. This may not be known to other members and will not be known to newcomers.

For the organization which I studied I gathered statements from all members in response to the question, "How would you define the goals or expectations of the (Committee)?" I took this measurement on March 4, about two months after the group had formed. I did find much sharing of purpose but I also found some basic differences in individual views of the purposes of the organization. I found differences in individual espousals along two dimensions.

One set of differences concerned the overall time-span of the organization's activity. The majority of espoused purposes involved a new and permanent process of improving the operation of the town government. (In the Appendix, p. 100, these statements of purpose are listed. Statements numbered 1,2,3,6,8,10,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,23 refer to a permanent process.)

"Develop a means by which a greater percentage of the Town's 'citizens' might, on a continuous basis, participate in directing the growth of the town" and "(the Committee) to continue to serve people as a means of communicating more directly to Selectmen or Town Manager" are examples of purposes which I classified as permanent.

Two people viewed the work of the group as involving only a single activity of relatively short duration--the making of a survey and presentation of the results to the town and town

officials. (Numbers 15,21) "To find out what the townspeople really want in the way of services from the Town" and "To represent to policy-makers in town all of the various sets of opinions in (the Town), and to use the information to write better proposals for town meeting consideration" were the statements which I classified as short-term.

Three people expressed purposes which extend beyond the short-term work of a survey but could not be construed as involving a permanent process. I called these long-term purposes. (Numbers 4,9,12) "Goals: surface priorities and attitudes, involve greater numbers of citizens in follow-up working groups" is an example of such a long-term purpose.

Several of the statements were too general to classify along a time dimension. (Numbers 5,7,11,22) Examples of the unclassified type are "To give guidance to town fathers" and "Hopefully in the final analysis the (Committee) will inculcate in the citizens of (the Town) a self-realization that they indeed are the power of government and this realization will put (the Town) on the road to better, more responsive government. This realization will hopefully cure the pathological apathy of 'citizens'."

In my case organization individual espousals of organizational purpose could also be classified according to the attitude towards citizen involvement. One group could be viewed as espousing the development of citizen capabilities and the tapping of the active citizens as a resource for dealing with the



Town's problems. (Numbers 2,3,6,8,9,10,12,13,14,16,22,23)

Examples are: "To develop a method for involving citizens in large numbers to facilitate solutions of social problems, etc." and "To create a wider base of citizens who are aware of town issues and willing to voice their opinions and work together to solve their problems, neighborhood problems and (the Town's)"

The other group imagines a much more passive role for citizens. In this view, citizens would be polled for their opinions on issues, but the work of policy formulation and implementation would be left to town officials. The citizens would have essentially a passive role. (Numbers 4,5,7,15,17,18,20,21)

Examples from this group are: "The goals seem to be to provide a vehicle for people to get their gripes and praises across to town officials elected and appointed who manage our town" and "(The Committee) to continue to serve people as a means of communicating more directly to Selectmen or Town Manager." (One of the statements, number 5, was ambiguous as given--"To give guidance to town officials". I classified this person as having a passive orientation on the basis of statements he made at the same meeting: "to produce an amount of information to give guidance to the people who need the guidance to determine what the townspeople's interests really are and what they want".)

I was unable to classify three of the espousals of organizational purpose along the active-passive dimension. (Numbers 1,11,19) An example is "Hopefully to include more people in the processes of government." I could not, on the basis of

this statement, know how people were intended to be included.

#### Process effectiveness

The basic notion in my theory is that individuals within an organization must be effective at learning and in action if the organization is to be effective. A corollary to this argument is that planning for effective organizations must include as its basic element planning for individual effectiveness.

Process ineffectiveness exists within an organization if some or all of its members are ineffective at the behaviors required for experiential learning. This is, of course, true of all organizations to some extent. The effective behaviors require: an awareness of the individual's different levels of experience, including consciousness of purpose and the structuring of behavior and perceptions; a sharing of experience, involving both supporting and confronting the experience of others; the making of free choices and consequent internal commitment; and testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions.

In order to measure whether the requisite behaviors are present in a given organization, one may analyze verbal interchanges to determine: 1) to what extent members are sharing and testing their perceptions, including perceptions about congruence of outcomes with intentions; and 2) to what extent members are making free choices.

There are two ways to get at the measurement of behaviors involving sharing and testing of information. One way involves

measuring directly to see if the needed information has been obtained about behaviors, perceptions, structuring of behavior and perceptions, consciousness of purpose, and congruence of outcomes with intentions. The other method is indirect. One can measure for the behaviors which will yield valid information. Torbert suggests three types of behavior which will invariably involve sharing of the requisite information about behavior, perceptions, etc. The modes of behavior which Torbert suggests are: supportiveness, self-disclosure, and confrontation.

"All three conscious structural modes...are characterized by an underlying acceptance of oneself and the other person as

being more than meets the eye and as experiencing dilemmas and incongruities among values, rhetoric, and behavior that can call forth work on oneself...

"Supportiveness does not involve agreeing with what the other person says, as much as dwelling in the other's experiencing as far as possible (the whys and hows as well as the whats), and thereby encouraging further exploration through the listener's willingness to experience it with the speaker.

"This mode of behavior has been extensively researched in the field of psychotherapy, and is especially associated with Carl Rogers... It has been suggested that (this mode of behavior) helps another person explore his inner structure because (1) he does not have to defend an inadequate structure from attack by another; (2) his sense of relatedness to and support from the other person reduces his fear of "losing control" if he questions his structure; (3) he experiences the other's attentiveness as a positive reinforcement of his exploratory behavior; (4) the other's attentiveness acts as a catalytic factor in reconciling the person's new-found sense of himself as one who can question structures with his previous sense of total identification with a single structure...

"By contrast, in the mode of self-disclosure, ...a person expresses and questions his own experiencing, thus modeling effective exploratory patterns of behavior. If a judgment or evaluation is made, it is expressed as part of one's experience, and as relating to the current situation rather than treated

as the basis of all experience...

In the mode of confrontation, "the speaker differentiates himself from the person to whom he is speaking, either explicitly by noting their different patterns of behavior, or implicitly by being able to note contradictions between the other's expressed values and actual behavior. (between what he says and how he says it). In either case, the speaker poses the opposition as a dilemma for the person to whom he is speaking as well as himself, one that must be explored if the interpersonal or intrapersonal contradiction is to be resolved...

"If the other person appears unwilling to work on resolving the difference, the speaker's confrontations may involve increasing anger or attempts to structure the situation so that the other's mystery-mastery avoidance of the issue is stymied, leading him to experiment with (a conscious) structural mode...

"Superficially, such confrontation may appear to contradict rather than complement the supportive mode of behavior, but this is not true theoretically (and practically, assuming the (speaker) is indeed conscious) because the (confronter's) aim is still to help the other person break through behavior patterns and self-images in the mystery-mastery mode and to attain congruent transformations among his aims (whys), behaviors (hows), and statements (whats)."<sup>6</sup>

Using the first approach of making a content analysis requires analyzing a great deal of data at several different levels. To make a judgment about the validity of information

requires determining if all the pertinent information for a particular choice has been generated. This includes information about the behavior, perceptions, structuring of behavior and perceptions, consciousness of purpose, and testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions for all the relevant individuals.

The second approach looks for modes of behavior which will yield the requisite information, for behavior in the conscious modes--supportive, self-disclosing, or confronting. One can analyze segments of behavior to determine if the critical modes of behavior are present. In a totally effective organization or individual any five-minute "slice" of verbal behavior should contain representation of the required conscious behavior. In a typical organization, conscious behavior will be observed sporadically.

Torbert describes the use of his categories in scoring behavior. Using his scoring procedure, one can get a quantitative measure of verbal behavior exhibited by a particular individual or group of individuals.

A rough measurement can be made of changes in behavior by taking equal "slices" of time at different points in time. The theory is not well enough developed to predict what will be the effect of other variables on the relationship between "effective" behavior and individual or organizational effectiveness.

In my case study I recorded several meetings of the Committee. In the Appendix, I have reproduced one of these transcripts in detail, from the March 4 meeting. (p.106) During this meeting there was not a great deal of the behavior in the conscious modes. Attempts were made to disclose individual perceptions of purpose and to confront the differences in individual perceptions, but resolution of the differences was not accomplished.

During the first half of the meeting the group discussed plans for the upcoming weeks. The discussion came to involve plans for activity progressively more in the future. The discussion eventually became centered on a planned public meeting to distribute the results of the survey. One member had been describing a scenario of such a meeting, when one of the other members felt obliged to confront him. "Paul" had just suggested inviting people to participate in smaller groups organized around issues.

#### Dialogue

**Eric:** Maybe I lost sight of something and possibly other people might be confused regarding it. But I came along with Paul up to a point where we have this massive meeting and we discuss the results of the survey. Now at this

#### Comments

Here Eric is acknowledging his understanding of the presentation made previously by Paul. This is supportive behavior.

## Dialogue

point, and I visualize it only this way, at this point we have now accomplished the basic mission which we started out to do, which was one--to produce an amount of information to give guidance to the people who need guidance to determine what the townspeople's interests really are and what they want...

Then we should draw back and sit back and say, 'Now the information is there. Let's see what these people want to do with it.'

Don't be the constant leader.

## Comments

Here Eric discloses his own perceptions of the purpose of the group, simultaneously confronting Paul's position.

Now Eric is no longer confronting or disclosing, rather he is dictating to the group what they should do. He does not follow through to resolve the confrontation. He does not own the strategy he suggests as his.

This statement lacks what is called "momentary validity". Eric is being a leader in saying, "Don't be a leader". This statement is equivalent to "Do as I say, not as I do"...



## Dialogue

## . Comments

Because if we guide them by the hand, we're back into the special interest category and that's what I want to stay away from. I don't see us being the leaders...

Fred: But the survey is still only a beginning. It seems like we ought to be there to help, with the availability of tasks, to help these working groups get set up, and to help the working groups work.

Eric: Fine. We've reached this point and we've given them everything. Right? We've given them the survey.

Wylie: ... You're talking

Here Eric is owning his perceptions. This statement is self-disclosing.

Eric had made an important confrontation about the basic purpose of the group, specifically aimed at Paul.

Fred, by stepping in, does not acknowledge Fred's different perception of purpose. It is neither supportive nor confrontive. Nor does Fred own his statements as disclosures about his purposes.

Eric's response to Fred's failure to "hear" him is a comment which does not evidence "hearing" of Fred. The statements are getting further from the basic disagreements.

Wylie gives a quick concise

## Dialogue

about item number 1 of our goals. Item number 2 is the next object, to provide a vehicle for interested citizens.

Now I want to correct the misimpression that Paul has just placed upon us. There is no such thing as a massive meeting in the Town....

Lucia: I think that what some people are saying is that rather than go in and...? ...these ideas and groups or topics, that if we presented the results and then asked people what areas are you interested in...But I get the impression that some people would like to have more of

## Comments

and accurate confrontation of Eric's different perception. However he does not test this with the group, or with Eric, and he does not own it as his own perception of the group's purpose.

Moreover, Wylie goes on, changing the subject abruptly. This has the effect of shutting Eric up, rather than resolving the conflict. A tension remains in the group as they go on discussing plans for the meeting.

This is effective supportive behavior, showing that she is listening to the other points of view. However, she does not get back to the basic difference in group purpose which Eric had confronted.

## Dialogue

this come from the people at large than...?...to hear the results.

People suggest that the groups organized before the meeting would still be selected on the basis of interest.

Greta, perhaps perceiving that the amount of work required of group members is what was preventing acceptance of the working groups, suggests we draw upon people who have shown an interest in the group.

Eric makes another plea for restraint and this time Fred goes on, ignoring him. Later, Eric makes a crack that lawyers talk too much--Fred is a lawyer.

## Comments

This responds to Lucia's interpretation of others' arguments but it gets no closer to the difference in basic purpose

Greta's comment seemed to address what I imagined that she imagined was the cause of Eric's expression of a less ambitious group purpose. However, she did not confront the possibility of less ambitious individual purposes nor the resultant less ambitious group purpose.

The group acknowledges only once more the idea Eric was expressing and goes on with plans representing the more ambitious perception of group purpose. Never again do they acknowledge his and others' different perceptions.

## Dialogue

## Comments

Still later a suggestion is made to publicize only that some problems have been uncovered and to not reveal details in the paper so people will have to come to find out more.

Eric: I like that, too, rather than give them all the information, give them just enough to create sufficient interest in that problem and then tell them the pro's and con's and let them...

Eric takes this opportunity to bring himself back into the group's discussion. He begins by agreeing with the last suggestion, then presents again his idea of a limited group involvement.

Whatever reasons Eric had for perceiving the group purpose as involving only the producing of information for town officials, these reasons are never surfaced. These reasons might have contributed to the group's effectiveness. I make the argument later that the failure to resolve these differences in individual views of the group's purposes will reduce the group's effectiveness.

I believe that the dialogue which I have presented here is a good representation of the level of effectiveness of the group at sharing information through conscious modes of behavior. Other examples of dialogue are presented in the Appendix.

Earlier, I stated that, in analyzing process effectiveness one should also measure to see if members are making free choices. There is evidence from meetings during the periods of "revolt" and "reform" that members did not feel they had been making free choices. Much of the lack of free choice resulted from a lack of time, as it will in most any situation. As staff performed more of the work of the Committee, they made more of the decisions, simply because decisions had to be made in between meetings of the Committee. "The control begins to shift from (the Committee) to MIT if we don't have time."

(Xavier) Also, during the early history of the group, the Professor, as teacher of the process, made many decisions. But it was also true that the mechanism of decision-making without consulting everyone was operating even when the Committee met without the staff. This was finally recognized April 15 and a new process for consensual decision-making was adopted. This new process was important enough to the group that they have numbered and recorded almost every decision since.

To summarize the data about process effectiveness, I have viewed the Committee as partially effective at the sharing of critical information and the making of free choices. I gathered data about the amount of behavior in Torbert's conscious modes as an indication of the amount of sharing of valid information. I found that some conscious behavior was exhibited but by no means consistently. I described a change in the decision-making process. In the first instance the infor-

mal procedure was viewed by members as not obtaining consensus. The change was to formalize a procedure to obtain consensus. I also viewed the large number of decisions made by staff and the Professor in their work as constituting, de facto, non-consensual decision-making. This has not changed, and may become worse as the staff works full-time during the summer. The Professor is trying to offset this by having staff work closely with individual Committee members. Nevertheless this remains a problem in the design of the process.

I mentioned earlier that the effectiveness of members at sharing information had improved. This improvement took place primarily during the period of "revolt" and "reform" during which the Professor and the staff were absent. I could not determine whether the increased openness was due to a natural maturing of the group or the absence of the MIT persons or a combination of the two factors. Since the improvement in the decision-making process took place during the MIT absence, it should at least be considered that the particular relationships of the MIT people with the Committee may have contributed to lowered process effectiveness.

#### Sharing of Purposes

My model suggests that process effectiveness is necessary in order to share and resolve perceptions of organizational purpose. The greater the degree of process effectiveness, the greater is the likelihood that initially unshared purposes will

be resolved.

As I displayed earlier, my case organization did indeed begin with divergent purposes. The dialogue I presented from the meeting of March 4 showed an effort to surface and resolve these divergent purposes. However this effort was not effective at resolving the differences. The exact same disagreement about group purpose surfaced six weeks later as Wylie confronted the statement of purpose in the minutes of the preceding week, April 8: "We decided we are in the business of producing information for the direction of the Selectmen and Town Meeting Members use in forming policies and warrant articles for the Town." Wylie said he didn't think that this statement covered the group's purpose. Eric stated that he didn't see anything wrong with it. Wylie repeated that the goals were much more profound than that; they should include the involvement of citizens. After much confusion, Paul said he agreed with Wylie, but Wylie then said that the minutes should stand as they were.

Individual members expressed a diversity of opinion about the group's purpose while the "public" purpose—the purpose represented in press releases and in statements to outside citizens and funding sources—remained consistent. These public statements, almost all of which were authored by the Professor, are reproduced in the Appendix. (p. 95 )

The level of sharing of purposes is significant because of its impact on the group's effectiveness around short-term goals. A good deal of sharing of purpose did occur and this certainly

facilitated achievement of short-term goals. At the same time, conflicts between members with unresolved divergent purposes reduced this effectiveness. I will explore this relationship more closely shortly.

Short term goals relate to ultimate purposes

According to my model of organizational effectiveness, shown in Figure 4-1, process effectiveness and the sharing of purposes each help to make short-term goals relate to those organizational purposes. Process effectiveness contributes to success in sharing information. This information is necessary to finding goals which will serve ultimate purposes. Without sharing of purposes, there will be confusion about short-term goals. Different purposes will almost certainly require different strategies for realizing those purposes. So persons with different perceptions of the organizational purpose will likely have different strategies for the work of the organization. The differences in strategies should be reflected by continual differences over the day-to-day and month-to-month activity of the organization. I would expect arguments over how to proceed with short-term activities which would never be resolved completely. As long as the basic differences in purpose are not surfaced and accepted, there will be no understanding of the basis for a compromise which is acceptable to all parties. The criteria for finding a creative solution to the conflict of interest will be unknown unless both sides share this information.



In my case study I measured differences in individual perceptions of organizational purpose along two separate dimensions. Just on the basis of differences in conceptions of the time span of the enterprise, I would expect that short-term goals would become confused. I would expect, for example, that persons who espoused long-term or permanent activity as the organization's purpose would want to devote time and energy within the group's on-going process to planning for and implementing goals beyond the survey. In addition this group might have a different orientation to the survey, conceiving of it as other than the total and end product of the organization. I would then predict, on the basis of the short-term vs. longer-term distinction, continual debates about the on-going work of the group.

A further confusion arises because purposes were dichotomized along more than one dimension without correlation. On the basis of the active-passive dichotomy, I would also expect conflict over the short-term plans of the organization. The active group should tend to plan for citizen education and involvement in policy-making. The passive group, with a different attitude toward the capabilities of the average citizen, would stress completing the survey.

The situation becomes complex when one considers simultaneously the effect of the time-span dichotomy and the active-passive dichotomy. One would expect that persons with both a short-term and passive orientation would be strongly committed

to proceeding with the survey to the exclusion of all else. Those persons with both a longer-term and active orientation should be strongly committed to proceeding with plans for work beyond the survey. In the case of persons with short-term but active views or longer-term but passive views, I could not predict whether the time dimension or the active-passive dimension would predominate. I might expect that the way these people were oriented in particular debates would depend on other factors in these debates.

In the discussions which I analyzed, those people with active and longer-term orientations were most vocal. These people had purposes which matched the "public" organizational purpose and they were in the majority. Those people with the passive orientations, with whatever time orientations, tended to align themselves against the other group. But the passive group also tended to be less vocal.

The dialogue on pages 45-50 is one such debate between the passive group (Eric) and members of the active group (Paul, Fred, and Wylie). Both Lucia and Greta tried to intervene in Eric's behalf. The differences which individuals had over purposes were reflected in lowered effectiveness around short-term goals, which I will discuss shortly. But it is impossible to say whether these differences had an effect on the relationship between goals and organizational purposes, as the theory predicts. The reason is that the Professor served as the arbiter of debates and made the suggestions about compromise goals

which were adopted by the group. He said that he was trying to accommodate the many political interests within the group and within the town. He was also concerned with developing the process of citizen involvement and providing educational opportunities for his students. He said that he was working toward providing the flexibility to allow people with many different but compatible purposes to share these purposes and work within the same organization.

Because the Professor set the goals for the group, I could not test to see if the goals were an effective or a confused compromise of the strategies of different members. The goals were chosen by the Professor in response to his own criteria about political viability and the process which he prefers for transferring learning to the Committee.

The major goal of the Committee thus far has been the development of the Survey of Citizen Attitudes and Priorities. It is not within the scope of this work to present the survey drafts which would be the basis for a judgment about the relatedness of the survey as designed to the organizational purpose. Judgments about the relationship of short-term goals to more ultimate purposes are necessarily subjective but are crucial in removing the mechanisms which typically reduce organizational effectiveness. I believe that impartial judges can make inferences about the purposes which goals actually serve. These inferences require imagining what the actual results of short-term goals will be. In an effective individual or organization,

this process of choosing goals with a consciousness of ultimate purposes will be on-going. In an organization which does not share purposes effectively, there is no consistent purpose which all individuals will use to monitor goals.

In considering the effectiveness of the survey as a goal to realize the more ultimate purposes of the organization, the Professor and I have differed in our criteria and our judgments. I have viewed the survey in terms of its ability to involve large numbers of citizens in a process of education about town issues. I have considered it important in this regard that citizens be given responsibility and guidance in developing their own agendas around their own interests. I have looked for signs in the survey work of significant citizen involvement. By my criteria that involvement has been very low.

The Professor, on the other hand, is not concerned about the level of citizen involvement at this point in the process. He believes that, at this point, it is more important to develop the political viability of the group by accomplishing a significant piece of work. He says that the citizens will become involved in working groups after the survey. When I am using good sense, I know that neither my view nor the Professor's is totally right or wrong. I should take into account his criteria for political viability. And he should consider the negative consequences of low citizen involvement. To me the burden of proof remains with him to show that the present process with a low level of citizen responsibility will become a process

with high citizen responsibility.

I think that the way the Professor and I could resolve our differences would be by developing process effectiveness, that is by learning how to communicate our differences and our agreements and how to give one another free choices. And I believe the same procedure will be necessary with the Committee members, to share and improve upon the various individual theories for the group's work, and to establish some shared measures of effectiveness.

#### Effectiveness around short-term goals

Process effectiveness should contribute to effectiveness around short-term goals. The ability to effectively share information needed to plan and coordinate action and the development of an effective decision-making process will, in theory, be associated with greater ease in achieving short-term goals.

The lack of fully shared purposes, which results from partial process effectiveness, will detract from effectiveness around short-term goals. The same reasoning, which explains why short-term goals will not fully relate to purposes if purposes are not shared, will predict lowered effectiveness around short-term goals. When people have different ultimate aims, they will have difficulty agreeing on short-term goals and becoming committed to the chosen goals of the group. If the different aims are acknowledged and accepted, there can be compromise around short-term goals. But when differences are not surfaced and the decision-making process is not consensual,

individuals will not make free choices and will not be committed to the goals which are chosen.

Effectiveness around short-term goals is related to but distinct from the relationship of goals to more ultimate purposes. I have just considered whether short-term goals will, if achieved, contribute to effectively realizing purposes. It then remains to consider whether these short-term goals are achieved effectively. One encounters the same difficulties as before when considering criteria for measurement, but one can make some judgments about whether the goals have been achieved within timetables, budgets, limits of acceptable behavior, etc.

For the Committee, I think that the increasing level of process effectiveness, including effective communication and a consensual decision-making process, will contribute to increased effectiveness around short-term goals. To accelerate this process, I would recommend giving direct attention to improving communication within the group. Also, unresolved dichotomized purposes have led, in my opinion, to lowered effectiveness around short-term goals. This is a subjective judgment on my part, but I believe that the work on the first short-term goal--the Survey of Citizen Attitudes and Priorities--has been only partially effective. I base my judgment on the fact that three months were spent producing survey drafts which were unrealistically long and complicated. This was not a problem in and of itself since the surveys could be easily simplified. But the expectations of many people, indeed the plans of the group were that the surveys would be completed by February. This was the

target expressed in an early press release, dated December 17.

Also, people reading the drafts

would easily be misled by their complexity into doubting the usefulness of the final product. The work during these first three months ignored the advice of a survey expert, who had suggested writing questions at the level of a twelve-year-old. Only at a late stage in the process have the questions been simplified to this level. An effort to share purposes and to share the reasoning behind particular strategies, such as not putting the questions in layman's language until after pretests and circulation of drafts, would, I think help to improve those strategies.

#### Organizational effectiveness

In theory, an organization or individual will achieve its ultimate purposes only if: its goals serve ultimate purposes, and, it is effective in achieving its short-term goals. Returning to the metaphor of a pathway presented in Chapter 1: you must be on the right path and you must be able to make progress on your path, if you are to reach your destination.

Measuring organizational effectiveness is not simple. If the purpose of the organization is expressed as achieving some end in the future, the measurement of organizational effectiveness will not be possible in the short run. If the purpose is to establish and maintain some condition, the measurement of organizational effectiveness will be possible as soon as the condition is established. It will then serve as feedback in the planning of organizational action.

For the Committee, the "public" organizational purpose



most often expressed includes "developing a process for an on-going citizen involvement in the formulation and implementation of town policy". Eventually this purpose will involve an on-going process, but this process will be months or years in development. There is no basis from the data I have gathered in seven months to make any conclusive statement about the long-term effectiveness of the Committee. However, I would predict on the basis of the logic of my model and the short-term data gathered that the organization will not be fully effective at its basic purpose, until it confronts the difficult problem of increasing the process effectiveness of members. This is a problem with any group. I would begin efforts to improve process effectiveness at the outset, but others would argue that this can wait until political viability has been achieved. Again, my argument is based on the view that the survey is not the most effective means for accomplishing the many immediate goals, such as political viability, nor the long-range purpose of citizen involvement. This is only my opinion and I certainly respect the counter-argument which I cited earlier.

Until the ultimate purposes of an organization are either achieved or proved impossible, arguments about the relationship of short-term goals to purposes and measures of achievement of those goals will constitute the only basis for judging organizational effectiveness.

### Feelings of personal effectiveness

The model predicts that process effectiveness, effectiveness around short-term goals, and organizational effectiveness will all contribute to feelings of personal effectiveness for the members of an organization, which is only logical.

Feelings of personal effectiveness can be measured in several ways. Direct statements about feelings of effectiveness are obviously the easiest and most reliable measures. But other behavior is indicative of such feelings. Effective communication and sustained involvement are signs of feelings of individual effectiveness.

The data about feelings of personal effectiveness among members of the Committee is quite extensive and helps to verify the model which I have presented. I hypothesized that unshared purposes would lead to confusion and reduced effectiveness around short-term goals. I would expect that those who expressed purposes which were contrary to the "public" purpose of the group and also in the minority would feel the most conflict and ineffectiveness. Five people were in the minority position of espousing a "passively" oriented purpose for the group. Of this sub-group, two dropped out of the group. Both of these people expressed strong feelings of ineffectiveness before dropping out: for example, one said, "I tried to get my ideas across, but I wasn't heard. They didn't change anything." Along with a third member of the subgroup who has remained with the Committee, this person also expressed feelings

of not contributing to the group. A fourth member of the "passive" subgroup has remained, but he has tried to confront the differences in purpose. I suppose that this behavior-- "effective" in mode, if not in outcome--and his willingness to express hostility may have given him a higher feeling of effectiveness than others in his subgroup. The fifth member in this subgroup, the secretary for the Committee, is the most involved group member because of her duties and is probably too busy to worry about whether or not she is effective in planning for the group.

I would expect that those people who expressed long-term/active rather than permanent/active purposes would feel some degree of conflict also, since the "public" purpose of the

organization is for a permanent process. Of the two people in this subgroup, one was the third group member to drop out. This person, too, expressed feelings of ineffectiveness, but indirectly, saying, "We've all had misgivings and have held back." However, her leaving the group was probably due more to her personal situation than anything else. The other person in her subgroup has remained with the organization. This is probably because she exhibited most of the behavior in the effective modes which I have observed. She did express feelings of ineffectiveness, however. She said that "too much responsibility has been given to the MIT students. But I blame myself as much as them."

For those in the permanent/active subgroup, there were few feelings of ineffectiveness. These people were most concerned that they did not have time to review all the written material.

All members expressed feelings of personal effectiveness to a greater or lesser extent.

#### The feedback loop

The subjective feelings of effectiveness of an organization's members should be the ultimate target of organizational planning, if my model is correct. My reasoning in this case derives from Argyris' theories about the effect of psychological failure, which were described in Chapter 2. Feelings of ineffectiveness will contribute to the perpetuation of defensive, ineffective communication and thought patterns. These

ineffective patterns are the basis for a self-sealing mechanism of reduced organizational effectiveness.

Unfortunately, I could not separate and control the data in my case study enough to verify the operation of this feedback loop. The observation of the feedback loop is difficult because the feelings of personal ineffectiveness which in theory feed back to create process ineffectiveness will not be easily measured. Process ineffectiveness, involving defensive, distorting communications, will probably prevent the sharing of feelings of ineffectiveness which perpetuate the cycle. It will not only be difficult for researchers to verify this self-sealing cycle, but other members will be shielded from knowing it is operating. They will then not be able to ameliorate the situation.

This mechanism can be observed in the interchange described earlier on pages 45-50. Eric attempted to confront the problem which he perceived--that the group was planning to meet the wrong purposes. The ineffective response of Fred, who ignored Eric's point, certainly caused Eric to feel frustrated and ineffective. His response was even more ineffective and the conversation cycled further away from the basic differences.

To break the cycle, individual behavior patterns and the feelings of ineffectiveness which reinforce them must be the target of change efforts. Positive changes at any point in the model will contribute to feelings of personal effectiveness and will feed back to make individuals more effective.

## Chapter 5

### Applying Learning Theory to Planning for Systems and Organizations

In the third chapter I described criteria for organizational effectiveness in abstract terms. I made no mention of the individual behavior required to implement the steps needed for organizational effectiveness. The theory of organizational effectiveness is unrealistic if it requires behavior which the individuals within the organization will never manifest. The theory is unsatisfactory in terms of the model in my case study if organizational effectiveness either requires ineffective behavior by the individuals within the organization or contributes to feelings of personal ineffectiveness.

#### Implications for individual behavior

I am quite aware that organizations demand compromise on the part of individual members. But I refuse to believe that the compromises which are necessary to organized activity must make individuals ineffective. The "organization" which demands compromise of members is nothing other than individual members. For the individuals who make up an organization, their own effectiveness, according to the Argyris-Schon-Torbert theories, depends on encouraging effectiveness in their fellow members. An individual should not permit the organization to restrict effective behavior on any member's part.

In reality, organizations, that is--other members, do encourage and insist upon ineffective behavior, for example--the

withholding of information and the denial of others' right to a voice in decisions which affect them. It is habitual behavior and has a certain persistent logic. For an individual, one alternative is not to get involved. Yet organizations or relationships with norms of partially ineffective behavior may be "the only game in town". To avoid such relationships may require avoiding all relationships, which would insure a low level of effectiveness. Another alternative for the individual is to act as a change agent. The individual who wants to be effective must stand up whenever possible and exhibit effective behavior. Daniel Ellsberg, some years ago, shocked the world by stepping outside the loyalties of his immediate organization to share information with the public. This was effective behavior in the sense that the public has the ultimate responsibility for controlling government organizations. The public cannot effectively monitor these servant organizations without pertinent information about their operations.

#### Implications for the planner

The planner, if he is to make effective and progressive plans, should plan for effective individual behavior. He should know and understand the habitual ineffective behavior which is characteristic of organizations and their members. He should plan for changes in that habitual behavior. The planner should admit that certain individual habits of behavior (structures) must be altered through a conscious sense of

purpose. The temptation will be to manipulate people to change structured behavior. But manipulative behavior on the part of planners and administrators is part of the system of habitual behavior which must be changed. Such behavior does not encourage the free choice and internal commitment which are necessary to effective learning and effective action. The planner must recognize, above all else, his own ineffective behavior patterns and learn to overcome them through consciousness and will. Only then will he be able to plan and implement his plans effectively, in transaction with "client" groups.

Implications for myself--holding myself accountable to my own theory of action

What I have said about the implications for all individuals and planners in particular should apply to my own activity if I am to be effective. This has implications for my behavior in attempting to convey my theory of organizational effectiveness as well as in other efforts I may make with regard to affecting organizations. In a situation where I am attempting to instill effective behavior patterns in individual members of an organization or I am attempting to change organizational structures, I must proceed in transaction with others in the organization. My particular view of what is desirable activity for the organization and its members may not coincide with other views. By my own theory I must share my perceptions with others and then come to some agreement about a shared course of action. Any unilateral attempts to instill



"effective" behavior will be ineffective.

In making my case study, I was at first involved in making some interventions in the group's activity. It was my own ineffectiveness at these efforts which led me to abandon my efforts to intervene and adopt a role of non-participant observer. Specifically, I attempted at one point to introduce an evaluation form of group effectiveness. This effort was taken at the request of one member, a co-chairperson. Though this might have given some legitimacy to my action, it was nevertheless taken without the desire or interest of other members. I rationalized that it was indeed a worthy cause, even though I knew that it was not likely to succeed. The source from which I drew the evaluation form indicated that such a mechanism was not likely to gain a cooperative or favorable response. I did not make much of an effort to pursue the effort. At one level I may have been justifying my theory by my own ineffectiveness. I certainly was aware of the ineffectiveness and it fed back, as per my model, to produce lowered effectiveness in the future. In another intervention, I attempted to facilitate the sharing of different perceptions of group purpose. Through the use of a questionnaire, I generated the requisite information. I did not, however, share with the group my reasoning for the sharing of this information. Consequently there could be no commitment to the process on their parts. Rather than have my ideas confronted or misunderstood, I chose not to assert them. This was the case also in another intervention which I

attempted. I suggested that the group keep a record of its process, including a pictorial account and that they prepare some sort of brochure to orient newcomers and other interested citizens. This idea was adopted some months later. At the time I merely presented my ideas in a memo and never tried to get feedback from the group about their reaction. All in all, my behavior was not effective, even in the sense of exhibiting the conscious modes of behavior. I was somewhat effective at these modes, but primarily at the mode of supportiveness, which would not be threatening to the group. I did not evidence self-disclosure or confrontation. These behaviors would have been necessary if I was to be effective in contributing to the work of the group.

#### Implications for organizational planning

The plan for an effective system or organization must include plans for encouraging effective individual behavior. As I outlined in Chapter 3, effective planning by an organization requires the five steps of the Argyris-Schon-Torbert theory. In order for an organization to make a plan--to devise strategies to achieve some desired end--requires: 1) generating valid information, including information about behavior, perceptions, structuring of behavior and perceptions, and consciousness of purpose; 2) making a free and informed choice; 3) developing internal commitment to the choice; 4) testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions; 5) encouraging a mutuality of effective behavior with others.

### Implications for the design of organizational communication

For an organization to generate valid information requires that individuals within the organization do the same. In order for the organization to share with others valid information about its activity, perceptions, structure and purpose, this information must be known to spokespersons for the organization. This information will be distorted and invalid if it is not shared with members to test whether it truly represents the organization. Information which has accumulated through a one-way flow of information to the spokespeople will probably not be valid. The same will be true if spokespeople arbitrarily speak for the organization. The information which spokespeople relate to outsiders should be shared and tested as widely as possible with members. The spokespeople should routinely relate to members their presentations to outsiders for comment and feedback about validity. Spokespeople should also share routinely any information gathered from others outside the organization, as this information is necessary to the decisions which members must make. There is a danger in allowing a particular person or group of persons to speak for an organization. These spokespeople will almost certainly distort information about other members, even if unintentionally. These other members will likely feel themselves misrepresented to some extent and may lose some motivation because of a sense of ineffectiveness.

In the case study, a structurally problematic situation existed because the Professor represented the Committee in

communications with outsiders. This became an issue around the proposal to HUD. Some people felt that the proposal, authored by the Professor, misrepresented both the activity and intentions of the group. Two of these people dropped out of the group shortly thereafter. These people had not come to accept majority purpose of citizen involvement which the Selectmen had agreed to in setting up the Committee. The most vocal in his objections, "Quincy", would not sign the proposal. He felt the proposal represented the Selectmen's interests and not his and that they should sign it. "Can't misrepresent for funds. It's not worth it. We must be honest." This perception of misrepresentation raised the issue of communication between the Committee and the Selectmen. Xavier said, "I'm surprised we have advanced to this stage without sitting down with the Selectmen. It is important that there be an understanding between the groups." These members had become concerned about the fact that a single member, the Professor, was representing them. The Committee met as a whole with the Selectmen shortly thereafter.

In an organization of persons with a shared capability around their goals and purposes, the representation of the group by a single person, such as occurred in the early work of the Committee, would be a problem. In the case of the Committee, however, the Professor (along with two of the staff) were the only people with experience in the process which is the target of the group. As the Committee has gained an understanding of

the process, the Professor has largely given up his role as spokesperson for the organization. In the reforming of the relationship between the Committee and MIT, a new structure was formed for publicity. A staff person from the Boston University School of Journalism was assigned the full-time job of publicity for the group. She is to work with Xavier on this area. This will represent a structural improvement, in my estimation, increasing the likelihood that communication with outsiders will reflect the experience of the entire group.

Even with disinterested professionals to do most of the official communication of the group, there will continue to be many unofficial communications by group members. The organization should try to relate consistently and effectively, through both informal and official channels. This will occur only if there is a sharing of all communications, confrontation of inconsistencies, and a commitment to giving and receiving valid information.

Implications for the design of organizational decision-making

For an organization to make a free and informed choice of a course of action requires that individuals within the organization do the same. A single individual or group of individuals cannot make an informed choice for the organization as a whole. That is, information about the choice rests within all the members of the organization and cannot be completely known by any subgroup. The best approximation for free choice within an organization allows each individual an equal voice

in determining the choice. This organizational choice would not likely be the first choice of all members. Therefore, some mechanism is necessary to insure that members will then freely choose to accept the majority decision.

For an organization to develop internal commitment to its choice requires that individuals within the organization do the same. Obviously the organization cannot be viewed as internally committed if some of its members are not committed to the organization's choice--if they view the organization's choice as exerted upon them externally. For the organization as a whole to develop internal commitment a consensus must be reached. Individuals must view themselves as freely choosing to accept the choice of the group. In the case study, I suggested a simple majority to make decisions, but with a special mechanism to try to attain consensus. Any individuals dissenting from a majority decision would be given time to argue their case and then ask for a revote. Minority individuals could, of course simply concede to the majority opinion. The Committee agreed to this mechanism in theory, but the behavior required was probably too foreign to their habits. They have not exercised the right to express dissenting opinions. Nevertheless, the formal process is adhered to in an informal way. Decisions are typically not called for until dissenting opinions have been debated and consensus has been reached.

Implications for the design of feedback systems in organizations

For the organization to test congruence of outcomes with

intentions does not require that each individual test congruence of outcomes with intentions. However, this testing does provide feedback of information about the organization's effectiveness. This information becomes data for any subsequent decisions. Since all decisions require that organization members have access to information pertinent to the decisions, the data from tests of organizational effectiveness should be shared.

#### Implications for the design of interrelationships between organizations

For the organization to encourage a mutuality of effective behavior with other organizations requires that individuals encourage a mutuality of effective behavior. In order to encourage effective behavior in others the organization must share information about its operation with others. Since this sharing of information is in effect an activity of the group, it must be one which is consented to by all the group's members. The encouraging of effective behavior in other organizations also requires that the organization allow others to make free and informed choices. This will result only if individual members as spokespersons and agents for the organization agree to and express this behavior.

#### Implications for design of feedback to individuals

One more point and I can draw my theoretical conclusion. I mentioned above that an organization's members should test

for congruence of outcomes with organizational purposes. But one must also expect that individuals will test outcomes with their own individual purposes. This is necessary if they are to have the proper information for making subsequent decisions and developing commitment to those decisions. From the case study model, I have seen that if the activities of the organization begin to serve purposes other than those of individual members, these members will become less effective and the organization will become less effective also.

To summarize the implications of my theory for organizational planning: designing mechanisms for enhancing organizational effectiveness can be largely achieved by designing for individual effectiveness in the Argyris-Schon-Torbert sense.

Removing the constraints of habit in organizational behavior

At this point one may be tempted to say, "So much for full organizational effectiveness. Let's leave well enough alone." Indeed, for fully effective realization of individual purposes through organized activity, as prescribed in either the Argyris-Schon or the Torbert formulation, would require a very different conception of organizing than that which is now common. For example, the requirements for mutual self-control (free and informed choice) would not immediately suggest the hierarchical control which is so prevalent. I have already described how one-way communication flows, non-consensual decision-making, and feelings of ineffectiveness reduce an organization's



effectiveness and form a self-sealing system. All these negative characteristics are typical in hierarchical systems. Hierarchical systems do not encourage inclusion of everyone's experience of the activity, structure and purposes of the system into the structure which determines what activities and structures will be experienced and what purposes realized. In a system of mutual self-control, such a hierarchy would be multi-laterally determined and subject to dissolution. Mutual self-control would involve a structure chosen openly and freely so as to best reflect the multiplicity of purpose informing the choice.

Organizations typically satisfy the purposes of those engaged in them only in an incomplete and unequal way. They are not fully effective at a microscopic level of analysis, that is in considering the effectiveness of individual members. It might be explained that this lowered effectiveness is necessary to achieve some measure of effectiveness at the macroscopic level, to raise the overall level of effectiveness. For example, it is this logic which places Gross National Product as the chief indicator of economic effectiveness, without consideration of the distribution of that product. The production of each individual is treated as equivalent to the product of other individuals and these products are then summed. The value of the product to the ultimate consumer is not considered. The measure of a product is made according to the market value. There is no way to determine if the product is significantly

adding to a person's well-being, as might be the case if the person is poor. This would mean effectiveness at the microscopic level. But if the product went to slightly raise the well-being of some rich person. This would not be effective at the microscopic level. It might be more valuable, in a social welfare sense, to add \$10 million in agricultural products for the nation's poor than to add \$50 million in products designed to raise the comfort level of the rich. These tradeoffs are not considered in the GNP measurement. Imbedded in my theory of organizing is the supposition that a concentration on such a composite economic indicator is not only inequitable and harmful to some, but that it also defeats its own avowed purpose, maximizing total product. My intuition is that the inequities of distribution result in a tremendous loss of output from those who are not equitably rewarded for their activity. Another problem with the GNP measurement is that it fails to reflect a large number of "national products" which are not easily translated into dollars-and-cents measurements. Indeed it is such intangibles which are at the heart of my understanding of effective organizing. Organizations, I believe, tend to operationalize the purposes of those within the organization which are most easily describable in concrete, material form. But individuals bring to an organization a multitude of life purposes, some of which are not even conscious. Most of these purposes will continue to operate while the individual is engaged in the activity associated with the particular

organization. One of the purposes which I believe everyone brings to an organization but does not share is the desire for process effectiveness--for effectiveness in communicating and making decisions. The ineffective organization does not provide for sharing the many purposes which individual members have. The operation of unshared private purposes is, I believe, what accounts for the failure of the typical organization to satisfy effectively the public purposes of its members. I have already described this mechanism, with regard to the case study.

Planning for the public purpose, or for some composite measure of organizational effectiveness will not satisfy all the criteria which individuals have for their own effectiveness. According to my model, feelings of individual effectiveness are dependent on process effectiveness and effectiveness around short-term goals as well as on long-term organizational effectiveness. It is useless to plan for organizational effectiveness and not also plan for process effectiveness. The model shows that process ineffectiveness will not only reduce organizational but will reduce feelings of individual effectiveness. This will further reduce effectiveness all around. It makes sense to plan at least as much for process effectiveness as for effectiveness at organizational purposes. Effectiveness at the microscopic level is as important as effectiveness at the macroscopic level.

I have mentioned thus far desirable new habits of choosing

structures openly and planning for process effectiveness. Another beneficial new habit concerns the structure which most individuals and organizations have for perceiving reality. There is a predominant notion about the structuring of reality which defines the typical activity of individuals and organizations of individuals. This notion about reality is, I believe, what accounts for the reluctance of people and organizations to behave in a fully effective manner, to share information to their mutual advantage.

Material resources are perceived as scarce. Acquisition and consumption of these resources are valued without limit. Individuals and groups of individuals strive to increase their acquisition of "scarce" resources. The resources then do become scarce, even if they were not. It is a self-sealing proposition. The same perception of scarcity becomes irrationally applied to other non-material realms. Status, respect, activity and love are viewed as "scarce" resources. Information, which is all important to effective functioning, is likewise viewed as scarce. It is hoarded for its value in exchange for other scarce resources.

Torbert's theory stresses the ability to choose structures for perception. An alternative perception to the one above can be achieved. One can view resources as finite but sufficient. The metaphor of scarcity implies that need cannot be met (for all). This perception tends to inflate the perception of need without limit. The metaphor of sufficiency tends to locate

need at a point where resources are sufficient. The metaphor of abundance can inflate need to the point that resources are totally utilized and are then sufficient, not abundant. The perception of resources as infinite, when they are not, can have the same effect as the perception of scarcity. Need can become inflated to an unrealistic point eventually resulting in scarcity.

The structuring of perception to view resources as either scarce or sufficient will determine the purposes and behavior of an individual or organization. Scarcity yields the purpose of acquiring as much as possible of the desired resources. This purpose restricts the amount of sharing of information which can be applied to the realizing of the purpose. Sharing may occur within a subgroup but the dominant modes of behavior will involve distrust, closedness, and deception. Alternatively, the perception of sufficiency does not militate against sharing. With this perception the beneficial effects of sharing information can be realized.

#### A simple model of organizations

Examining organizations macroscopically, all organizations, though superficially diverse, look basically the same. Here is my common-sense model of organizations. The actors in the organization are engaged in some sort of organized activity. They have joined in the organization because they can better serve some their own purposes by working together. The actors produce through their activity various products. These

products are then either directly consumed by members of the organization or exchanged for other products which are consumed. If one holds a very broad definition of product, to include any material objects, services, or intangibles which might result from organized activity, this general model does fit all organizations.

Industrial organizations obviously fit. Less obvious is that a volunteer social service organization fits the paradigm. In this case volunteer actors produce some service for others outside the organization. An implicit exchange occurs in which the volunteer possibly receives appreciation and esteem from the client. In addition he will attach a meaning to the interaction which heightens his sense of effectiveness and his self-esteem, or perhaps lowers his feeling of guilt. A different set of motivations might be proposed but I maintain that the motivation to act always implies some intended consequences of value, some incentive. A club or fraternal organization has a product for members which is not completely tangible but is real and of value nonetheless.

An interesting feature of the model I have of organizations is the boundary which separates the organization from its environment. This boundary is an illusion, in a physical sense, yet it powerfully determines the activity of persons on both sides of the boundary. It is an illusion also in that it really does not separate the purposes of those inside from the purposes of those outside. The people who work for

Volkswagen in Germany were, in a sense, laboring for me when they built, some fourteen years ago, what is now my car. And I have labored for them and all the intermediaries between by producing for a portion of the wages which are their product.

The boundary of organizational membership is an illusion also in that it does not define a group with common purposes. One might say that the organization is functioning for its members and not those external to it, but what is produced is consumed by persons both inside and outside the organization. What is consumed by those inside the organization, after exchanges with the outside, typically is differentially distributed and fits some individual purposes better than others.

Internal to the organization there are individuals with boundaries. The individual deals with others in his organization in the same way that his organization deals with other organizations—by offering a product or a share in a production process in exchange for another product. The individual, perceiving a physical boundary between self and others, imagines a boundary which separates purposes. Organizations form new, wider boundaries around groups of individuals, ideally to include the shared purposes of individuals.

The model of effective individual and organizational action presented in this paper denies some of the separation of purpose which, carried to an extreme, yields total alienation. The model proposes that it is a useful common purpose to overcome the physical boundary between persons by sharing

information which that boundary blocks, information about behavior, structuring of meaning, and purpose. The model suggests that the image of the individual mysteriously negotiating in a hostile environment could usefully be replaced by one in which individuals cooperate to each other's mutual benefit. Along these lines, a different perception of boundaries might still place one boundary around the physical body, maintaining each individual's will as the sole and ultimate determinant of his action. But in terms of information flows which influence the will to act, none but artificial boundaries can be constructed. The completely effective individual will have no such boundaries.

An organization of effective individuals is one in which each individual is effectively pursuing his own conscious purposes. In addition each is aware of and facilitates others' purposes. In this sense any organization of effective individuals will have as a shared purpose the achievement of each individual's purposes. Any other organizational purpose is ineffective without this central purpose. An organizational purpose which is not synonymous with effective individual functioning will be served by individuals who do not provide valid information and do not have internal commitment to the purposes. To restate the proposition and its corollary: effective individuals, when they act in concert, form effective organizations, and effective organizations are made up of effective individuals.



## Chapter 6

### Designs for Further Research

This planning theory, like the plans and action strategies which it purports to make effective, can be improved upon through practical application and research. Indeed, any theory, if it is to really contribute to long-term effectiveness, ought to provide for feedback about its own effectiveness in organizing thought and action.

My hypothesis relates certain individual behaviors to the effectiveness of those individuals and the effectiveness of the organizations and systems which they form. Each of these elements—the individuals' behavior, individual effectiveness, and organizational effectiveness—exist in relative degrees within an organization. One test of the hypothesis would involve a correlation between observed behavior of the characteristic desired type and measures of individual and organizational effectiveness. An extensive study could make a more fine-grained measurement. This could include the effect on the correlation between the three elements of: different levels of target behavior in different individuals; the behavior of "key" individuals; different levels of various of the target behaviors; different activities and purposes; conditions external to the organization; time factors; differences in structure and attitudes to structure.

Individual and organizational effectiveness, in an absolute sense, are hypothetically very rare. It is not

particularly interesting to know that a given individual or organization is not fully effective. But it is interesting and useful to know if effectiveness changes. Any study of my hypothesis must involve the difficult problem of measuring relative effectiveness. In this respect, the time scale of a study must be considered. Changes in relative effectiveness may occur only over a period of several months or years. Also it is paradoxical that an effort to increase effectiveness may yield a short-run decline in effectiveness. An initial study should attempt to discover how to measure relative effectiveness and should determine the time span needed to discern changes in effectiveness.

The other set of data needed for a study concerns the various individual behaviors which I hypothesize are necessary to individual and organizational effectiveness. The problem is to form measurements of the relative occurrence of these behaviors and structures. Correlations can then be made with the measurements of effectiveness.

#### Measurements of effectiveness

Measurements of effectiveness involve a comparison of intended effects with the actual effects of behavior and/or perceptions. Intended effects may be determined from the ultimate purpose of an individual or organization. So a first step in data gathering (or in planning an activity) is to determine the purposes of the individual(s) and/or organization.

There are two ways to determine purposes, both of which

are subject to distortion. One way is to get statements from individuals or an organization about purposes. These statements form the espoused purposes of the individual or organization. These espoused purposes may or may not be valid and complete. An individual or organization can act without being aware of their purpose. This would be termed a tacit purpose. Or the actual purposes which they are pursuing can be concealed. In both these cases the espoused purpose will be inaccurate or incomplete.

The second way to determine purposes is by making inferences from observed behavior and from the short-term goals which are chosen. This method can suffer from a lack of all the pertinent information. If one makes inferences about purpose, these inferences should be subject to testing. One should present the directly observable data on which the inferences are based and seek confirmation from the individual or organization involved.

To complete the measurement of effectiveness one must compare the purposes which are inferred as operating with the actual results of the behavior and perceptions of the individual or organization. Again, one can take statements from individuals about the actual behavior. These statements will constitute the espoused theory-of-action—what the individual says and perhaps believes his results are. One may also observe the individual or organization to make inferences about the actual results of behavior. These inferences should be

tested by making known the directly observable data on which one makes the inferences. And one should seek confirmation from the subject.

The measurement of effectiveness is not necessarily subject to quantification. Many of the purposes which individuals and organizations have are subjective and qualitative, e.g.—to promote social welfare. For some purposes, it may be possible to identify absolute effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Yet it may not be possible to distinguish positively between degrees of effectiveness. In some few instances, effectiveness will consist of achieving some quantifiable number of results, and a relative score will be possible based on the actual number as compared to the intended number.

#### Measurement of individual behavior

Whether one is interested in a specific individual's effectiveness or in the effectiveness of an organization, it is useful to consider specific individual behaviors to determine if they contribute to effectiveness. The behaviors in question are:

- 1) generating of valid information, including information about behaviors, perceptions, structuring of behaviors and perceptions, and consciousness of purpose;
- 2) making a free and informed choice;
- 3) developing internal commitment to the choice;
- 4) testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions;
- 5) encouraging a mutuality of effective behavior with

others.

I will consider ways to measure each of these separately and then ways to combine the measurements.

#### Generating valid information

I have already described how to measure these behaviors in relating the case study. (pages 40-44)

#### Making a free and informed choice

One can make a free choice only if one is informed, so this behavior depends upon generating valid information. But one need not make a free choice even if the information is available, so it is useful to know whether an individual or organization attempts to make a free choice with the information available. Sample instances of choice can be analyzed to determine if the choice is made or forfeited to an external agent. For example, taking someone's advice into consideration would not forfeit one's choice, but following someone's lead without question would be forfeiting choice. This determination is a subjective judgment and the data for the determination should be made public. In an organization, one can look at the mechanism for decision-making to determine if some members forfeit their right of choice to other members. It is possible for an organization to choose a decision-making structure which is not democratic. The organization will still be effective if this structure is chosen democratically and is then consented to by all members. This requirement is what Torbert calls an "openly chosen structure".

### Developing internal commitment

One can infer that internal commitment exists if decisions are made openly and freely. There is no behavior which can be directly observed or measured to indicate a level of commitment.

### Testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions

This behavior requires that the individual or organization know both intentions and outcomes. There must be an awareness of purpose on the one hand and a gathering of data about the real outcomes of behavior and perceptions on the other.

Torbert's conscious modes of behavior, described earlier, give the greatest likelihood of gathering the needed feedback. In particular, the behavior termed confrontation provides for feedback about observed inconsistencies in another's behavior. In an organization one can look for institutionalized mechanisms for feedback. Where these exist, effectiveness should be increased.

### Encouraging a mutuality of effective behavior with others

This "effective" behavior is best accomplished by Torbert's conscious modes of behavior. Supportiveness encourages exploration by another. There is, in supportive behavior, a willingness to experience the exploration of another. There is no need for the other to defend against an attack. There is no cause for fear of "losing control" if one questions one's present way of behaving. Self-disclosure also encourages exploratory behavior by modeling that exploration. The self-disclosing individual expresses and questions his own behavior.

Confronting behavior helps break through ineffective behavior patterns.

Combining the measures of individual behavior

The most quantitative measure of "effective" individual behavior involves the three conscious modes which Torbert formulates: supportiveness, self-disclosure, and confrontation. These modes of behavior contribute to all the steps required for effectiveness. In particular, generating valid information, testing for congruence of outcomes with intentions, and encouraging mutuality of effective behavior with others require the three conscious modes of behavior. Another useful indication of effective individual behavior is the level of sharing of purposes. For organizations, the congruence of organizational purposes with individual purposes, the decision-making process—whether or not it is a process which is openly chosen—and the provision of mechanisms for feedback are all useful in predicting effective behavior.

The difficulty and limitations of conducting research

Doing research on organizational and individual effectiveness is difficult because of the low level of effectiveness of organizations and individuals. "Effective" behavior is rare and consequently not easily studied. Ineffective individuals and organizations are reluctant to put themselves under scrutiny. The research itself requires effective behavior which will likely not be exhibited by the researchers. In addition there are problems with the subjective nature of much of the

data. All these problems with the research are also problems which prevent an organization from discovering its own problems.

Despite the fact that subjects may not be cooperative, the situations not easily quantifiable or comparable, the subjective judgments one makes can be quite useful. With a given subject, comparisons over time can perhaps reveal that the suggested behaviors do increase effectiveness. But because the variables are so general, the time spans relatively long, and the other variables numerous and uncontrollable, it is unreasonable to prove or disprove the correlation between the suggested behaviors and effectiveness with a single or even a few cases. Only the study of many cases will support an argument one way or the other.

#### My own research

Recognizing especially the limitations of my own understanding and my own effectiveness, I have begun with a modest research effort. I am particularly interested, at this early stage, in three areas: how to recognize and measure conscious modes of behavior; the relationship between individual purposes and organizational purposes and how these change over time; and how to introduce research on effectiveness to an organization. In each of these areas I must remain aware of my own ineffectiveness and the implications of it for the research. I must make a special effort to develop my own ability at behaving in the conscious modes.



## Appendix

I present here specific data gathered from the public documents of the Committee and from transcriptions of tapes of some weekly meetings. One set of data includes all references to individual or organizational purpose. Another set of data includes analyses of several meetings with respect to verbal behavior. I examine especially those instances where there is disagreement about purposes, and I look for behavior characteristic of Torbert's "effective" modes. In addition I analyze the decision-making process within the organization.

### Organizational purpose

Over the history of the group there have been many statements about the ultimate purpose of the Committee. These statements were made by various people and reflect different expectations of what the group should accomplish. It is interesting to note how various peoples' espousals of the group's purpose change over time and to note how the espousals of different people relate to one another. The following is a chronological account of statements of purpose.

10/30 from: Professor to: students

"The underlying concept is a simple one; planners need to find more effective ways of enabling community residents to participate in the formulation and implementation of strategies designed to guide future growth and development in their towns."

11/? from: Selectmen to: Professor

"Citizen planning groups allow for time to argue the issues,

practice arguments; Selectmen's recommendations have been refused at town meetings."

11/? from: Selectmen to: Town Meeting Members

"...a vital and significant process for setting priorities and shaping policies for the growth and development of the Town."

12/5 article from local paper

"The program he has developed involves large numbers of residents in the formulation of town policy, (The Professor) explained. From their expressions about concerns on the survey will come study of these problems and formulation of policy for the future growth and development of the Town. The intent is not to replace town government, but it will put more emphasis on citizen involvement and less on officials' involvement.

"The plan would start with a community survey of many areas that would determine residents' thinking on problems not taken care of, allocation of time and funds, what they would spend more on; etc., in order to determine priorities.

"The next step after the survey results are in and tabulated will be creation of working citizen groups in the top areas of concern... Initially they will go through a fact-finding phase, then publish their findings and present them to the town in open meetings. By this stage, (the Professor) said, the priority issues will be known and townspeople will be able to make intelligent recommendations. Hopefully in a

number of months (the Town) could have recommendations and an educated core group of people who understand the issues and can argue for policy, (the Professor) said. Residents would become the advocates for policy recommendations which go to town meeting or to other town committees for implementation.

"(The Professor) pointed out that the survey would be the start of an educational process."

12/11 from: the Committee (Professor) to: the public

"...a non-partisan group devoted to public education and citizen involvement in the formulation of policies to guide future growth and development in (the Town)."

12/17 from: the Committee (Professor) to: public (press release)

"Many people feel that they have no control over the decisions that affect their lives. In order to deal with this frustration, the (Committee) will 1) undertake a comprehensive survey of the concerns of all (the Town's) residents; 2) create new opportunities for interested citizens to learn more about the key problems facing the town and to participate in the development of solutions; and 3) offer new channels for the informal exchange of ideas between elected officials and large numbers of citizens."

The Selectmen are anxious to have more effective citizen input into the formulation of town policy. Town Meeting Members want an opportunity to learn more about the problems facing (the Town) and to help find ways of resolving them."

2/4 from: minutes recounting a public meeting

"(Fred)...restated the goals of the Committee: to discuss, define and document the issues and priorities in (the Town); to provide a vehicle for interested citizens, particularly town meeting members, to assist in improving town policies in these areas; to interest a wider range of citizens in town affairs and to get them directly involved in town government."

3/3 from: the Professor to: the Committee  
an outline of strategies relating to the survey

3/26 notes made at a meeting of the Committee

"What will the survey accomplish?"

4/1 notes made at a meeting of the Committee

"Xavier": "Beginning to lose sense of purpose--why am I here? Don't want to become lost in mechanics of survey.

Why are we here? What is the objective of all this?"

Diana: "To try and bring people together to try and implement things people want."

4/3 from: the Professor to: the Committee

Describing the Selectmen's espousal of The Committee's purpose: "They are counting on (the Committee) to set up a 'process for on-going citizen involvement in the formulation of town policy' (their words)."

4/15 from: Wylie to: the Committee

Describing his espousal of a group purpose: "Establish a procedure that will: interest a broad base of citizens in

town affairs, provide "continuing education" for interested citizens, aid citizens in becoming more directly involved in processes of town government for continuous evolution of town operations aimed at optimization of town government for the citizens,"

4/8 minutes of meeting of the Committee

"We decided we are in the business of producing information for the direction of the Selectmen and Town Meeting Members use in forming policies and warrant articles for the town."

4/15 my notes of the meeting of the Committee

Wylie challenges the minutes (above) of the 4/8 meeting. He says that the first paragraph does not cover it. Eric says he doesn't see anything wrong with it as written. Wylie repeats that he thinks the goals are much more profound than that. Paul says his mother says, "Don't give me a problem, give me a remedy." Wylie says he thinks that the goals should include the involvement of citizens. Olga says that this is covered in paragraph 4-- "(Wylie) gave us a handout of Goals which everyone should read." Fred says that there seems to be some disagreement about just what the purpose of the group is. Wylie says that he wanted everyone to bring in a list of goals, not just him. Paul says he agrees with Wylie's perception of the goals. Wylie says the report (minutes) should stand.

On March 4, I gathered statements from all Committee

members and staff in answer to three questions: "What was your reason for joining the...project as (Committee member) or staff? What do you personally hope to contribute to the group? How would you define the goals or expectations of the (Committee)?" First, I will list the responses to the question about goals for the (Committee). These responses measure the espousals which individuals have of organizational purpose.

- 1 Long-range goal--to provide input to local decisions or policy-making
- 2 To develop a method for involving citizens in large numbers to facilitate solutions of social problems, etc.
- 3 To create 1) a sense of effectiveness in forming town policy; 2) a desire to educate and be educated about town issues; 3) reforming of policy-making processes to reflect and make use of educated citizenry
- 4 That through the survey results, we can establish citizen priorities and be a part of their implementation
- 5 To give guidance to town fathers
- 6 Develop a means by which a greater percentage of (the Town's) "citizens" might, on a continuous basis, participate in directing the growth of the town.
- 7 The goals seem to be to provide a vehicle for people to get their gripes and praises across to town officials elected and appointed who manage our town.
- 8 To create a wider base of citizens who are aware of town issues and willing to voice their opinions and work

together to solve their problems, neighborhood problems, and (the Town's).

- 9 Goals: surface priorities and attitudes, involve greater numbers of citizens in follow-up working groups
- 10 To influence town policy in a meaningful way to develop a working basis for citizen involvement in (Town) government
- 11 To strive for greater effectiveness in "our" attempts to influence policy makers in (the Town)
- 12 To develop a survey which can be administered to the citizens and which will give some information about their attitudes, concerns, desires for the town. To act as facilitating group for the implementation of (putting in action) results of survey.
- 13 To educate the community about "what is". To permit citizen input into policy formulation with the ultimate goal of building the capacity and confidence for input into policy formulation.
- 14 To develop a credible organization with the capacity to help large numbers of citizens become involved in community decision-making on an on-going basis.
- 15 To find out what the townspeople really want in the way of services from the town.
- 16 A better way to educate the citizens and get their views out in the open to better effect public policy.
- 17 (The Committee) to continue to serve people as a means of communicating more directly to Selectmen or Town Manager.

- 18 To put the real needs of the community into a viable system (or channel) for influencing policy decisions that affect and shape their environment
- 19 Hopefully to include more people in the processes of government
- 20 I feel that improving the communication within the town government and between the citizens and town selectmen is the primary goal, learning how to do this is a secondary goal, achieving the capacity to maintain these skills is perhaps an expectation
- 21 To represent to policy-makers in town all of the various sets of opinions in (town), and to use the information to write better proposals for town meeting consideration
- 22 Hopefully, in the final analysis, the (Committee) will inculcate in the citizens of (the Town) a self-realization that they indeed are the power of government and this realization will put (the Town) on the road to better, more responsive government. This realization will hopefully cure the pathological apathy of "citizens".
- 23 As stated, last paragraph, p.5 of "Draft, 2/17, '75, pre-application to HUD".--"The (Committee's) goals are 1) to discover, define and document the fundamental issues and priorities in (the Town); 2) to provide a vehicle for interested citizens, particularly town meeting members, to assist in improving town policies in these areas, and 3) to interest a wider range of citizens in town affairs and



to aid them in becoming more directly involved in town government..."

The public or "official" statements of organizational purpose, which were presented earlier, all expressed the more ambitious purpose--that of educating and involving citizens in the formulation and implementation of policies for the town. These public statements were authored by the Professor, with the Selectmen and Fred, a co-chairperson, echoing his statements on a few occasions. The Professor also planned the activities of the group, based on a combination of purposes which he had. Unfortunately those activities were carried out by persons who only partially shared the espoused organizational purpose.

It is part of my thesis that individual espousals of group purposes should be shared and congruent with the publically espoused organizational purpose. Otherwise individuals will very obviously be "working at cross purposes". It is also part of my thesis that the overall purposes which individuals have should not be conflicted by the organizational purpose.

I have looked at the individual purposes which Committee members and staff said they had as reasons for joining the organization. I was interested first in whether all these purposes could be included in the overall purpose and activity of the organization. I was also interested in those particular individuals who did not espouse a purpose in common with the majority, who espoused the public purpose. I wanted to see if the individual purposes of this sub-group explained or

conflicted with their divergent espousals of organizational purpose.

Here are the statements of individual purpose--in response to the question, "What was your reason for joining the...project as (Committee member) or staff?"

- 1 I worked on the (earlier) project and I was interested in working with citizens in another setting. I've become very interested in citizen-based planning.
- 2 I am very interested in efficient and quick problem-solving methods dealing with large numbers of people
- 3 I wanted to learn how it's done. I also hoped to find out how to get a group of strangers to work well together.
- 4 My dissatisfaction with the general overall management of the Town.
- 5 Last ditch effort to help
- 6 My hope in raising the interest/participation level of (the Town's) "citizens" (residents, businessmen, et al) and commitment to effectuating same.
- 7 My interest in the feelings of our fellow townspeople and wishing to provide a vehicle for them to express their feelings
- 8 Combining my personal aspirations with practical experience. Also I like working on teams!
- 9 Strong interest in the direction (the Town) takes in near future, and long-standing interest in urban policy questions on broad scale

- 10 To gain experience in working with a group; insight into survey design; knowledge of research methods
- 11 1) to get to know (the Town) and "my neighbors" much better; 2) to contribute to the town I am currently enjoying living in; 3) to learn about a more meaningful planning process
- 12 I'm action oriented and was persuaded that (the Committee) might accomplish something for the town. Also believed that I could learn something from the group about the town
- 13 To learn more about group formation/coalescence; to monitor the match between group goals and actions and the community's perception of those goals and actions; to participate in and evaluate a model for citizen-based planning
- 14 To build and test a theory of public participation in community decision-making--it is my firm belief that greater numbers of people can and ought to be involved in planning for the future growth and development of their communities
- 15 To contribute something to the town in helping to determine some of its needs
- 16 To give the committee a "different" point of view which I felt might help us towards the common goals of the committee
- 17 To help join a gap between people of town and people who make and enforce policies in town
- 18 To contribute productively to a very worthwhile enterprise in some capacity allied to my varied training and

experience

- 19 I am concerned about (the Town) and want it to be a better place to live
- 20 To try and understand the needs of a community like (this one) and how to achieve these via the citizenry
- 21 An interest in citizen-based planning, and a remote input to my thesis (prototype designs for ( ) development)
- 22 Worked peripherally on (earlier) project; had an interest in becoming more involved in the process; (this) was the opportunity
- 23 Better town government through solid citizen participation

#### Verbal behavior

In the weeks following my measurement of individual and organizational purpose, I looked for efforts to resolve the differences in purpose. Eight persons did not share the purpose of the majority, which I imagined would lead to continued problems in progressing towards the group's purposes and/or the eventual withdrawal of these persons. In terms of the long-range effectiveness of the group, I was interested in how effectively, in terms of Torbert's conscious modes of behavior, this problem was handled.

Tape of March 4, 1975 Meeting of The Committee

#'s as per my recorder.

0-90 Committee is filling out forms for about half an hour,  
I'm fiddling with the tape

- 91-124 Discussion of pre-test next week
- 130- Discussion of 300-person sample survey
- 190- Post office box
- 265- Timetable
- 325- The report
- 365- Getting the information from the survey to the people,  
the report
- 385- What kind of results do we want to describe
- 430- Large group presentation vs. neighborhood groups  
Wylie suggests inviting established groups  
Paul had been describing a scenario of a large public  
meeting to distribute the results of the survey. He  
suggests inviting people to participate in smaller groups  
organized around issues
- 545- Eric: "Maybe I lost sight of something and possibly  
other people might be confused regarding it. But I come  
along with (Paul) up to a point where we have this mass-  
ive meeting and we discuss the results of the survey.  
Now at this point, and I visualize it only this way, at  
this point we have now accomplished the basic mission  
which we started out to do, which was one-- to produce  
an amount of information to give guidance to the people  
who need the guidance to determine what the townspeople's  
interests really are and what they want...we could take  
school, which happens to be a big issue. Do they really  
want a new high school or don't they want a high school?"

by means of a survey which has been conducted. Now once this has been completed, and the format is made, the survey is completed and the results are there and you do have this massive meeting in which you produce people with capability who are answering questions, who are explaining what the survey did. The newspaper comes out with the package that shows the results. Then we should draw back and sit back and say, 'Now the information is there. Let's see what these people want to do with it.' Don't be the constant leader. See what results can come from the results which we produced. Because if we guide them by the hand we're back into the special interest category and that's what I want to stay away from. I don't see us being the leaders. Let them tell us what they want, but let us not be the ones to tell them, that you should do this, you should do that. I think we should give them the broad picture at a special meeting and that's it. Let them come back to us. It's their survey. It isn't our survey. It's for them."

Fred: "But the survey is still only a beginning. It seems like we ought to be there to help, with the availability of tasks(?), to help these working groups get set up, and to help the working groups work..."

Eric: "Fine. We've reached this point and we've given them everything. Right? (Mild uproar) We've given them the survey."

Wylie: "You're talking about item number 1 of our goals. Item number 2 is the next object, to provide a vehicle for interested citizens. Now I want to correct the misimpression that Jeff has just place upon us. There is no such thing as a massive meeting in (this Town). There never has been..."

577- More discussion of the massive meeting as a possibility

590- Rhoda describes the process in (the smaller town) of breaking into small groups after the large meeting.

595- Lucia: "I think that what some people are saying is that rather than go in and...?...these ideas and groups and topics, that if we presented the results and then asked people what areas are you interested in...But I get the impression that some people would like to have more of this come from the people at large than (?) to hear the results!"  
(Discussion of independence from other groups; audio-visual presentation of results)

634- Eric: "If the (Committee) is a vehicle by which, uhh, nothing can challenge its authenticity or its fulfillment or desire. We're not one-sided in anything that we do. Anything that we do, we present the picture in a complete emphasis so that consequently nobody can point a finger at us at any time. So that's why I said when we finish and present it, then we should stand back and let them then come to us and say, 'We're interested in forming a group. We'd like to work in this particular field' or 'We'd like

your help in this." If it doesn't come about then that means that all the effort we put into it and all the results that we showed were of no value."

The Committee goes on to make plans for the massive meeting, ignoring Eric's comment. One person, Greta, acknowledges the idea Eric is after.

660- Eric makes a crack that lawyers talk too much--Fred is a lawyer.

Suggestions are made that there be the capacity to organize groups if they want to form around issues

Later a suggestion is made to publicize only that some problems have been uncovered and not reveal details in the paper, so that people will have to come to find out more.

735. Eric: "I like that, too, rather than give them all the information, give them just enough to create sufficient interest in that problem and then tell them the pro's and con's and let them..."

Notes of March 26, 1975 Meeting of the Committee by Fred

Xavier: "The survey must be 100% ours."

Olga: "We must read everything given to us."

Xavier: "Any misgivings we have must have input." "The kids are doing a lot."

Irene: "We have compressed our work for the sake of the Schedule. I have other involvements. I haven't had a chance to read everything

Xavier: "Their inexperience is beginning to show. In the



beginning we would nod our heads."

Diane: "I didn't see any revisions. I tried to get my ideas across, but I wasn't heard."

Xavier: "Every section should be our section. The control begins to shift from the Committee to MIT if we don't have time."

Wylie: "We must recognize certain ideas though we might not agree."

Xavier: "This group must take control."

Wylie: "Let's prescribe some procedures for the meeting with the Selectmen tomorrow. An incomplete presentation will hurt us. We have relied too heavily on the staff."

Greta: "We have confidence now as we see materials in front of us."

Xavier: "We haven't had time to rendezvous--to have meat around our meeting. We should meet every other week with (the Professor)."

Quincy: "It seemed to move fast. There are things in the survey I object to. And in the HUD proposal. I want to direct some questions to the Selectmen, to air my differences with them. They have lacked interest in what we're doing. Who is going to use this information? (The Professor) mentioned the Red Line--his access to knowledge may be detrimental. I don't want to be a goat to his knowledge. It's a hot issue in town. He has avoided meetings. I want to know who's going to use the information. Bending

from the truth doesn't satisfy me. We started with a good purpose and intentions, with a mandate from the people, not background for the town manager, selectmen, etc.

The people should have the input. There has been a lack of correspondence between the Selectmen. We must work within the structure of government. Must get the Selectmen to put it into practice. The HUD proposal was the Selectmen's doing. Put their names on it. I can't stay in the group after the survey but I might come in from time to time. This must come from the people. We can't misrepresent for funds. It's not worth it. We must be honest."

Wylie: "Regardless of (the Professor's) interests, I hope that a citizen's group could bring together the points which Quincy makes. If we can establish our credibility, communication which works both ways, we can get out our feelings and get alignment on the facts."

Quincy: "He (the Professor) should wear one hat or another. He shouldn't have access to information. They break you down, how you think, how to work with you. I question the use of the information. We are supposed to be a bridge between the Town Meeting Members and the administration. We're not to work with special interest groups as such."

Greta: "At the beginning it was stated--the Selectmen weren't to get involved."

Quincy: "We must watch out when things are taped."

Xavier: "I'm surprised we have advanced to this stage without sitting down with the Selectmen. It is important that there be an understanding between the groups.

The survey should go out when we're ready to put it out. I get the impression I'm being patronized by the MIT group. But, we are on the right track and moving. I have the impression that there others out there pulling the strings. We have no plan--no timetable."

Diane: "We should never have scheduled weekly meetings. There are too many pressures, the school vacation, no time available for legwork. Let it wait until next year, there is too much confusion in town now."

Xavier: "There is enough dynamite in the survey to blow the town to hell."

Greta: "We should take one evening for one section and review."

Quincy: "It kind of gripes you that it's their thing."

Diane: "The \$15,000--we had it from the Selectmen to do the survey."

Wylie: "The \$15,000 is from the town manager's budget if (the Professor) can't find it elsewhere. There is \$10,000 to MIT from grants for the MIT students."

Quincy: "This may run wild--MIT's foothold in (the Town)."

Xavier: "Controlled and monitored it could be useful. Why don't we just have a survey. Go to first base first."

Diane: "Do the survey first, then see what happens."

Quincy: "Let's slow the pace. It is impossible to monitor now!"

Greta: "I'm speaking now for Kate. She has two concerns:

- 1) that there are too many questions on the survey; and
- 2) what is it that we want the survey to do?--we want to know other peoples' concerns, not the day-to-day functions, but priorities and concerns."

Xavier: "I have an issue: someone interviewed the high school students. It was garbage. They were led."

Diane and Greta both express feelings of not contributing.

Irene: "We've all had misgivings and have held back."

Xavier: "This session is very good. It allows us to get closer together as individuals."

Quincy makes a comment about the MIT role and relationship with the committee.

Xavier: "We should suspend the working sessions for 2-3 weeks. Get it all together in that time. Define the problem. Irene and Fred should sit down with the Professor. They're off the potty chair."

Olga: "In (the smaller town), it grew the same way, this is the same."

Irene: "We're not the guinea pigs. We're the pioneers."

Wylie: "I don't disagree with Xavier on the working sessions, but what about the schedule--the questionnaire done, etc."

Xavier: "Tonight we set the stage, toss the schedule out the window. The climate in town is against the survey, because of the reorganization, the school issue, the town manager. It's bad timing."

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3. Intervention Theory and Method: A Behavioral Science View; by Chris Argyris; Addison-Wesley Publishing; Reading, Mass., 1970.
4. Ibid
5. Learning from Experience: towards Consciousness; by William R. Torbert; Columbia University Press; New York, N.Y.; 1972.
6. Ibid.