A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO EDUCATION BASED UPON
THE WORK OF CLARE W. GRAVES

DISSERTATION

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By

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This study has a twofold purpose. The first is to develop a systems approach to education that is based on the seven levels of existence which were identified by Clare W. Graves. The second is to project and forecast the development of the eighth level of existence and to develop an approach to education for this eighth level.

In order to establish an understanding of Graves' theory of the levels of psychological existence, an extensive study was made of Graves' papers, both published and private. Based on Graves' theory and the research of others in the field, an approach to education was designed for each of eight levels of existence--reactive, tribalistic, egocentric, absolutistic, achievist, sociocentric, existential, and experientialistic—that complements and utilizes the unique characteristics of each level. The design of each educational approach includes learning system, motivational strategy, evaluation procedure, classroom management, and facility design. The issues of student grouping by level of existence, assessment of the individual levels of existence,
and matching of instructor and students by level of existence are also addressed.

This study suggests that the instigation of a systems approach to education which is based upon Graves' work would require extensive restructuring and reorganization of the American educational system. For public schools, this systems approach could provide numerous approaches to learning as opposed to the usual single approach; for higher education, the curriculum and methods of instruction could be organized around one or possibly two levels of existence.

Graves' theory also implies that as American society moves into the experientialistic eighth level of existence, traditional educational structures (such as grade levels, academic disciplines, and formalized degrees) could become loosely structured. This study suggests that another implication of a systems approach to education is an expanded role for education. In addition to the transfer of information, education could concern itself with aiding students to move from lower to higher levels of existence.
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CHAPTER  I

INTRODUCTION

One of the first discoveries made by the professional educator is that all students do not respond to the educational process in the same manner. Frymier says,

People are different. Some students learn better inductively, while other students learn better deductively. Some students learn better vicariously than from direct experiences, and vice versa. Some students learn better when they are told explicitly what to do and how to do it; others learn better when their work is thoughtfully criticized. Others learn better when they are praised. . . . Different learners have different educational needs, just as people have different physical needs (6, p. 682).

The educator who tries to find one style of teaching to which all students respond in an equal fashion quickly becomes frustrated.

This frustration is not limited to teachers; it affects administrators as well. The educational policy of the early 1970s, which emphasized the affective learning of the student, is now being challenged by a policy that is primarily concerned with a cognitive back-to-the-basics curriculum that concerns itself with reading, writing, arithmetic, and the teaching of patriotism. This line of thinking is finding great support among politicians, media personalities, and the general public. Brodinsky calls this movement "a regression to the traditionalism of an earlier generation" (2, p. 238).
The challenge for current educators is to find a theory that encompasses the values of the numerous theories of learning and methods of teaching, and at the same time explains the relationship among these diverse theories.

A similar type of frustration and challenge motivated Clare W. Graves to develop his Levels of Psychological Existence model of adult psychosocial behavior. Based on almost thirty years of research, Graves concludes that "man's nature is an open, constantly evolving system, a system which proceeds by quantum jumps from one steady state system to the next through a hierarchy of ordered systems" (9, pp. 131-133).

Graves contends that his theory of psychological existence can answer some of the questions of the educator as he seeks to deal with diverse kinds of students with different styles of learning (10). He has identified seven levels of existence—reactive, tribalistic, egocentric, absolutistic, achievist, sociocentric, and existential (8).

**Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this study were as follows:

1. To develop a systems approach to education that is based on Clare W. Graves' theory of Levels of Psychological Existence;

2. To project and forecast the development of the eighth level of existence; the eighth level of existence was included in the approach to education.
Significance of the Study

In the late 1960s, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) began to measure student achievement in art, citizenship, literature, mathematics, music, reading, science, social studies, and writing. Its first report, released in 1970, shows evidence of poor achievement in science and citizenship (2). Since that time it has released similar reports regarding the achievement of students in math, language arts skills, and science (2). In 1975, the College Entrance Examination Board reported that Scholastic Aptitude Tests results had dropped ten points on the verbal section and eight points on the math section from the previous year; the Board also predicted that the negative trend would continue through the 1970s and move into the 1980s (2).

Public response to this phenomenon was to demand a move back to the basics through the initiation of better instruction in reading, arithmetic, and writing. As this movement continued, greater demands were placed upon education for more drill, more recitation, more homework, for stricter discipline, for the teaching of patriotism, and for the end to social promotions. Soon after the back-to-the-basics movement came the minimum-competency movement, which took the position that minimum skills could be identified and that all students should be able to demonstrate a mastery of these skills before being promoted to the next grade.
In 1979, the Education Commission of the States released disturbing results indicating that the back-to-the-basics movement and the minimum-competency movement were not succeeding. What had been thought to be the answer to the education problems of the 1970s is emerging as a failure (2).

Clare W. Graves (8) states that the failure of these programs (and of other educational programs of the twentieth century) can be attributed to educators seeking one approach to education for all persons. He believes that we need several approaches to education, one for each level of psychological existence. Graves also believes that serious consideration of the implications of his theory to the field of education should be initiated (8, 10, 11). With the exception of his suggestions regarding education, little serious work has been done to design an approach to education that seeks to cater to the specific learning needs of students at each level of existence. The needs extend past the actual teaching process into other areas that affect the education process to include teacher hiring, student grouping, management procedures, building design, and student motivation (8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 20).

Graves predicts the emergence of an eighth level of existence in coming years (8). Therefore, this study will attempt to predict what this level will be like and how educators may best respond to meet the needs of students and educators as they emerge to the eighth level. This study is significant
because it suggests an approach to education that is based upon different styles of learning. It is also significant because it takes into account the future learning needs of man as he moves to new levels of psychological existence.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they relate to this study.

1. The terms levels of psychological existence and levels of existence refer to the seven states of existence that are presented in Graves' level of psychological existence model. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout this study. Beck defines levels of existence as essentially modes of adjustment used by individuals and even cultures to cope with their perception of the reality of their world—and help to explain where man is, where he has been, and where he is going. Each mode of adjustment contains a set of assumptions about the nature of man, methods of learning, modes of thinking, preferred motivational strategies, and total life styles (1).

2. The seven levels of existence are defined in the following terms as proposed by the National Values Center (1).

Level One--REACTIVE. Functions at the physiological level. Reacts to stimuli such as hunger, pain, cold, warmth, and sleep in order to obtain the immediate satisfaction of basic human needs. Pure Reactives are virtually valueless--concerned only with survival. Seen in new-born infants, profoundly retarded, severe stroke victims, and the senile elderly. Can be either a temporary state (like a person on drugs or in a state of emotional or physical shock) or a permanent state of existence.

Level Two--TRIBALISTIC. Seeks safety and security in a threatening world by fixating on power, chieftains, clans, rituals, or superstition. Strong reliance on
chieftain(s) [parents, teachers, coaches, supervisors, etc.] or the norms established by a clan [family, work-unit, team, or tribe]. Depends on the mystical forces inherent in life and tends to be both superstitious and ritualistic. Needs to find some way to explain the unexplainable. Expressed in highly-visible group affiliation and preference for "paternalistic" atmospheres.

**Level Three—EGOCENTRIC.** Unabashed, self-centered assertiveness. Aggressiveness takes many forms as he rebels against authority figures, norms, rules, and standards. Somewhat flamboyant in behavior in order to gain attention. Often brags, rough, brazen, abrasive, and even uncouth. May appear "paranoid"—feels that the world is a hostile and alien place. May internalize the impulses into an angry, embittered, and bristling personality. Manifests itself positively in creativity, willingness to break with tradition, and dogged determination.

**Level Four—ABSOLUTISTIC.** Finds structure, security, and predictability in systems of various types rooted in directive design. Strongly committed to what he considers to be the "right way." Promotes clearly-defined social roles. Prefers order, structure, patterns, and sequential time-frames. Somewhat rigid in responding to diversity and ambiguity. Likes a "cut and dried" kind of world and is prone to impose his system, concepts of right and wrong, rules and procedures on others. Places a premium on sacrifice, discipline, and adhering to the established norms of society.

**Level Five—ACHIEVIST.** Achievement-oriented, self-serving and aggressive, but within the constraints of society. Enjoys wheeling and dealing, engaging in various forms of competition, and demonstrating his ability to motivate, attain goals, and get ahead in life. Manipulation may be either concealed and private or it may be open, above-board, and displayed. Designed to produce evidence of success, accomplishment, and winning. This mode of adjustment will be found in abundance in politics, management, and in sales and marketing professions.

**Level Six—SOCIOCENTRIC.** Personalistic concern for self-discovery, acceptance, human dignity, and the uniqueness of each person as well as the inherent worth of people and humanity in general, a sociocentric individual will spend his time and/or energy working in behalf of social causes. Sociocentrics are opposed to the manipulative use of people, as well as the mindless
punitiveness of rigid conformity systems. Reflected in the "helping" professions and new theories and methods of personal introspection.

Level Seven—EXISTENTIAL. A personal activist who seeks to live within society's constraints while enjoying his maximum individual freedom. Tends to be inner-directed and self-motivating. Readily accepts ambiguity in people and situations. This value system is quite tolerant, but, at the same time, expects high levels of performance of itself and others. Responds to reasons not to rules, and is managed through competence, not status or position. May be expressed by dropping out of society in order to pursue individualistic interests and alternative life-style.

3. The terms approach to education or approach are defined as a way of thinking that has application to education at various levels. Approach would apply to an entire college or university, a particular course or a class of students that meets together for an entire school year (as is the case in elementary schools), a series of courses within a curriculum, adult education, human resource development, or a public school system.

Methods and Procedures

In developing a systems approach to education that is based upon Clare W. Graves' theory of the levels of psychological existence, it was necessary to establish an accurate understanding of the behaviors and attitudes of persons in each of the levels of existence. To ensure an understanding of each level, an extensive description of characteristics, both attitudinal and behavioral, was generated for each level. These descriptions were submitted to a panel of
three experts, each of whom has worked with Graves' theory for at least ten years, to determine if the descriptions accurately represented behavior and attitudes at each level. All three experts concurred that the descriptions accurately represent the levels. The panel consisted of Al Counts, a psychologist for the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Bill Lee, a psychology teacher at Yorktown High School in Arlington, Virginia, and Art Beck, Professor of Business at the University of Richmond.

After the panel confirmed the accuracy of the descriptions of the levels of existence, an approach to education for each of the levels was developed. At each level, attention was given to the learning system, student-teacher matching, grouping, motivational strategies, evaluation procedures, facility design, and classroom management. These eight approaches to education, one for each level of existence, comprise the systems approach to education. Each of the eight approaches is built upon the work of Graves and a synthesis of the works of scholars and researchers in the field.

In order to forecast and project the development of the eighth level of existence, Graves' most current work was examined (8). Upon completion of this examination, an extensive description of characteristics was generated to describe the eighth level. The panel of experts confirmed that this eighth-level description is consistent with Graves' guidelines regarding the development of new levels of existence.
Review of Related Literature

Graves is only one of the many behavioral scientists who have placed behavior into a system of levels. Some of the other well-known behavioral scientists are Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder (14), Maslow (23), and Piaget (26).

Piaget (26) developed his work around young children's perceptions of the game of marbles. He questioned children regarding what was good and what was bad, what was fair and why, and how the rules of marbles received sanction. From this inquiry, Piaget concluded that there are three levels of moral development. During the anomic level, the child is governed only by his own wishes; he has no conception of rules. The nature of play is primarily governed by the type of item in the child's possession at a given moment. At the second level, heteronomy, the child's morality is a result of his unilateral respect for, first, his parents and, second, for other authorities in his life; because of his respect for authority figures, rules become sacred and lasting. Changes of rules are quite difficult for a child to accept at this level of development. As a child matures, however, he becomes more cooperative with the children around him; when all members of his peer group are in agreement, rules can be changed and varied depending upon time and place. Piaget identifies this level of development as autonomy.

The research by Harvey and others (14) deals primarily with college students. They describe four systems on a
continuum from concreteness-to-abstraction and closedness-to-openness. System I is characterized by high concreteness of beliefs, high absolutism towards rules and roles, a strong tendency to view the world in an overly simplistic, either/or, black/white way, a strong belief in super-naturalism and inherent truth, a strongly positive attitude toward tradition, authority, and persons of power as guidelines to thought and action, an inability to change set roles, to put oneself in another's boots, and to think and act creatively under conditions of high involvement and stress (14, p. 2).

System I people respond favorably to persons of high authority or status.

The words dogmatic and negative are often used to describe the System II person; Harvey and others (14) say that this person is also torn between the need to submit to an authority figure and a basic lack of trust in most persons who hold positions of power. Personal control and exploitation are important to this person.

Friendship, interpersonal harmony, and mutual aid are values of System III people. At this level, subtle manipulation occurs through one's establishing dependency upon others and of others upon oneself. Normally, Harvey and others (14) suggest, many of the people involved in the helping professions operate in this system.

The System IV person is the most abstract and open-minded type of the four systems, according to Harvey and others (14). He tends to be pragmatic and information-seeking; he can handle change easily, can withstand stress, and can be creative. His use of rules is situationally based.
Upon examination of Graves' levels of existence (8), it will be noted that similarities exist between Graves' framework and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (23). Maslow believes that humans are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, and he uses a pyramid to illustrate the ranking of these needs. At the base of the pyramid is the most basic of needs—(a) the physiological needs. Ascending needs are (b) the need for safety, (c) the need for love, belonging, and identification, and (d) the need for self-esteem and respect. At the top of the pyramid is (e) the need for growth toward self actualization. If a lower need is left unsatisfied, this level remains dominant; however, if the lower needs are satisfied, the higher need dominates.

Graves (9) considers his work to be a revision and extension of Maslow's (23) views. Graves' theory is based upon the following three basic premises (9, pp. 132-133):

(1) That man's nature is not a set thing, that it is ever emergent, that it is an open system, not a closed system;

(2) That man's nature evolves by quantum-like jumps from one steady state system to another;

(3) That man's values change from system to system as his total psychology emerges in a new form with each quantum-like jump to a new steady state of being.

Graves agrees with Maslow that humans develop in a hierarchically ordered fashion from one system to the next, and in regard to development, the human being must be viewed in infinite rather than finite terms. In Graves' opinion, it is
inaccurate to conclude that a human being reaches a terminal point of actualization. As man faces new problems, additional portions of the brain will be activated (10).

Graves describes man's movement from one system to the next as

an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiraling process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower behavior systems to newer, higher-ordered systems as man's existential problems change. . . . Thus man tends normally to change his psychology as the conditions of his existence change. Each successive state, or level of existence, is a state through which people pass on the way to other states of equilibrium (8, p. 72).

A person centralized on one particular system views the world in a manner that is different from a person centralized in a different system. Graves says,

When a person is centralized in one state of existence, he has a total psychology which is particular to that state. His feelings, motivations, ethics, values, bio-chemistry, degree of neurological activation, learning systems, belief systems, conception of mental health, ideas as to what mental illness is and how it should be treated, preferences for a conception of management, education, economic and political theory and practice, etc., are all appropriate at that state (8, p. 73).

Graves' first article on his levels of psychological existence was published in 1966 (7), wherein he suggests that deterioration of work standards is not a loss of values but a case of conflicting levels of psychological existence. He also suggests that there is not only one style of management, but seven different, appropriate styles of management, one for each of the seven levels. This article stimulated so much interest that the periodical Harvard Business Review
received over 15,000 requests for reprints (32). Graves' second publication in 1970 (9) expands upon his seven levels of existence. He also introduces the idea that an individual's level of existence is a product of existential problems (external environment) and neurological systems (within the individual). Graves' most recent research was published in 1974 (8), and it is his most extensive published work on his theory of psychological existence; he expands upon his levels of existence, emphasizing how they relate to cultures and countries, management, and education.

Since Graves' research was published, other publications have appeared that either adapt or apply his work. Hughes (15), Hughes and Flowers (16), and Myers and Myers (24) report on the application of Graves' theory to the business world in management issues and personnel problems. The focus of their works is application, not theory-expansion or hypotheses-testing.

In 1969, LaBier (19) sought to provide documentation for the existence of Graves' absolutistic, achievist, socio-centric, and existential levels of existence. LaBier, a former student of Graves, found support for Graves' conception of the levels of existence theory.

Counts (4) examined psychiatric nurses' perceptions of patients using Graves' theory. He found that the nurses had a positive perception of patients who had levels of existence like themselves; patients perceived negatively by the nurses
were usually one level of existence below that of the nurses. For example, a sociocentric nurse would perceive sociocentric patients positively and achievist patients negatively.

A number of theses and dissertations that are based on Graves' theory have been completed at North Texas State University. Several theses (1975-1977) are descriptive studies of specific groups of people or professions; areas examined are religion (27), teaching (22, 30), military organizations (21), coaching (3), and law enforcement (28). Three other studies are concerned with the validity of the testing instruments used in the descriptive studies. Scoggin (31) tested the validity of the Values for Working test and found that it provides directionality but not predictability. He concludes that his collected data provides support for Graves' theory. In 1977, Rishe (29) designed and tested a Values for Helpers instrument to be used with persons in the helping professions (e.g., counselors, social workers, ministers). The results indicate that the Values for Helpers instrument is reliable but that validity is questionable. Evans (5) investigated the construct validity of the Values for Teaching, Values for Working, and Values for Helpers instruments; she concludes that the three instruments do not measure the six levels of existence that they were designed to measure. She states that there were insufficient data available to determine the validity of Graves' construct.
The most encouraging research regarding the design of a measurement instrument and the validity of Graves' theory was completed in 1979 by Hurlbut (17). She found that the Coping System Inventory does, in fact, accurately measure the six levels of existence that it was designed to measure. Both reliability and validity were statistically established.

Several other works are concerned with Graves' levels of existence and education. In 1975, Rhodes (3) designed a strategy for using Graves' theory to teach seventh-grade children. Not considering how different levels would learn, Rhodes confined her study to the design of one strategy to teach a particular concept (Graves' levels of existence) to a specific age group, and she concludes that the application of Graves' theory to seventh-grade students aids their learning and personal development. Long (22) made a descriptive study of the levels of psychological existence that were present in a Collin County, Texas, school district. She found that particular levels of psychological existence tend to cluster around particular academic disciplines (e.g., music teachers tend to have a level of existence significantly different from that of math teachers); she found that this was also true of the different levels of management within the school district. In 1979, Kollmeier (18) examined the relationship between teacher evaluations and levels of existence. She found that if students perceive the teacher to have a like or complimentary level of existence to themselves, they will rate the teacher in a more positive manner.
This section contained a synthesis of the literature that is related to Graves' levels of psychological existence theory. Because the works of behavioral scientists Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder (14), Maslow (23), and Piaget (26) are similar to Graves' work, their works were also examined along with Graves' publications and papers (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). A number of the studies that are based on Graves' theory were also examined.

Summary

Chapter I offers a brief analysis of current educational problems. It suggests that a systems approach to education, which is based upon Graves' levels of psychological existence, has significant value. Special attention was given to the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the methods and procedures utilized in the study, and a review of related literature.

Chapter II will examine Graves' theory in detail. The way in which he developed his theory will be included, along with a description of each level of existence. The projection of the eighth level of existence will be a part of the description.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


12. ______________, unpublished notes from an informal presentation, Dallas, Texas, December 26, 1979.


In order to have a complete understanding of Graves' eight levels of existence, it is helpful to know how he developed his psychological existence theory. He began work on his theory in 1952 while he was a professor of psychology at Union College, Schenectady, New York; before coming to Union College, he was a criminal psychologist for the Cuyahoga city court in Cleveland, Ohio, and a professor at Case Institute of Technology and Western Reserve University (6). His search for a global theory of personality came as a result of activities in his classes. Much class time was spent discussing which particular theory of personality was correct with regard to a particular issue, and these discussions created a great deal of conflict among his students. Graves believed that each theory was correct to some extent; the problem was to find a theory which recognized the correctness of existing theories of personality and, at the same time, explained the relationships among them (6).

Graves began his investigation by utilizing students from two day and one adult evening college classes. As to their knowledge of psychology, all of the students, whose ages...
ranged from twenty-one to sixty, were relatively unsophisticated. To examine their different perceptions of psychological health and maturity, he asked these subjects to describe the healthy, psychologically mature human being, and he found great differences in opinion. Graves concluded that by studying these differences he could gain significant insight into a theory that would explain the diversity of existing theories of personality.

Graves spent the first five weeks of class having students discuss their perceptions of the healthy personality. No reading assignments were made, and Graves, as the instructor, provided no input. At the end of this period, he had the students write their perceptions of the psychologically healthy human being, and he collected and retained this information (6).

Students were divided into small groups during the second five weeks of the classes, and they were told to discuss their perceptions; Graves observed this process through one-way mirrors. At the end of this second period, the students were instructed to write either a defense of their original position regarding the healthy human being or an explanation of their new or altered perception.

In the last five weeks of the course, Graves exposed the students to authorities in the field of psychology through reading assignments and lectures. For the final assignment, the students were instructed to write a defense of their original perception or an explanation of their new perception.
of the healthy, mature personality, and he conducted private interviews with some of the students. He collected all the data for the fifteen-week period.

Graves assembled a panel of judges who knew nothing about his method or his reason for collecting these data. He asked the panel to read the students' perceptions of the healthy personality and to classify them in any way that they deemed appropriate. The judges classified the subjects into the following two major groups, each of which has two subtypes:

A. The deny-self (sacrifice) group;
   1. Deny self for reward later;
   2. Deny self to get acceptance now.

B. The express-self group;
   1. Express self as self desires in a calculating fashion and at expense of others;
   2. Express self as self desires but not at the expense of others (6).

For seven years, Graves gathered data in the same fashion; at the end of this period, he had data from 1,065 subjects. Each year he submitted these data to another panel of judges, different from the previous panel, who had no knowledge of his methods or his goal. Each year the panel of judges identified the same two categories and subtypes.

Graves' next concern was to examine the changes in perception that were related to peer-group influence and authority-figure influence. He considered the five-week period of small-group discussion to be peer influence and the
fifteen-week exposure to authorities in psychology to be higher influence.

Although the deny-self group appeared to be vulnerable to authority, the deny-self-now-for-acceptance-now subtype was influenced by peer authority but not by higher authority. On the other hand, the deny-self-now-for-reward-later subtype responded in an inverse manner; these subjects were influenced significantly by higher authority and insignificantly by their peers: criticism from peer authority only caused them to defend their original position more strongly. Graves observed two similarities among subjects in the deny-self group; (1) they saw personality as adjustive to external sources and as denial of self, and (2) whenever they made a central change in their perception of the healthy personality, it was usually a change to an express-self category.

The express-self group responded to authority in a different fashion from the deny-self group. The express-self-in-calculating-fashion-and-at-the-expense-of-others individual responded to information from either the peer group or higher authority, or both. On the other hand, the express-self-as-self-desires-but-not-at-the-expense-of-others subtype responded only to self-thought or information they had generated themselves. Graves found two similarities among individuals in the two express-self subtypes; he observed that (1) they saw a healthy personality as expressive of self, and (2) whenever one made a change in perception, it was a change to the
deny-self group. When observing these two groups through one-way mirrors, he noticed that the express-self-in-a-calculating-fashion-and-at-the-expense-of-others subtypes did not hesitate to use their ability to manipulate other members of the group. The express-self-as-self-desires-but-not-at-the-expense-of-others subtypes did not seek to take advantage or exercise influence over other members of the group. Graves also noticed that members of this subtype had the ability to see more options of behavior and choice, and to exercise more freedom of thought, than the other three subtypes. It was at this point in his study that Graves began to think that possibly some type of hierarchy existed and that the higher up the hierarchy a subject moved, the greater the degrees of freedom (6).

During this same period Maslow's very popular theory of the self-actualizing person emerged, and Graves noted that the express-self-but-not-at-the-expense-of-others subtype approximated Maslow's description of the self-actualizing person (9). Because some of Graves' subjects took upper-level courses from him, he was able to continue research with them. In 1959, he began to notice an attitude shift in some of the subjects who had previously been the express-self-but-at-the-expense-of-others subtype; these subjects indicated a growing feeling that there was more to the mature personality than expression of self by taking advantage of the other person. This development created a problem for Graves because until this time his work was somewhat congruent with both
Maslow's findings regarding the self-actualizing person and Carl Roger's theory of the fully functioning person. Graves' new data implied that some persons were looking at a new perception of the healthy personality, and it was at this point that he began to suspect that psychological maturity is a process and not a particular behavior. He suggested the theory that human beings will continue the developmental process in the future (6). Graves hypothesized three main points regarding his theory.

1. Psychological health is a process;
2. It is a hierarchical process;
3. It is an open-ended hierarchical process of the fol-
character:

Deny self now for later reward,

to

Express self for self gain but calculatedly,

to

Deny self now to get acceptance now,

to

Express self but not at expense of others,

to

Deny self to existential realities (6).

In the early 1960s the United States experienced a period of economic prosperity that allowed a group of students, who had previously been unable to attend college, to seek a higher education. With their presence in the college classroom,
Graves discovered a perception of the healthy personality that he had not previously identified. This perception is concerned with survival of the strongest, and Graves concluded that he had found a new subtype, which was labeled express-self-impulsively-at-any-cost. Since he observed that when movement of this subtype occurred, it was to the deny-self-now-for-later-reward subtype, Graves placed this new subtype preceding the deny-self-now-for-later-reward subtype on his hierarchical ladder (6).

As a result of this discovery of a new subtype, Graves wondered if other subtypes existed. He concluded that there must be other levels because of the unique characteristics of college students. He surveyed anthropological literature, therefore, in an effort to identify other subtypes. Of the two new subtypes that Graves identified, the first is almost totally concerned with physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, sleep, and pain; the goal of the second subtype is deny-self-forever-to-the-ways-of-the-elders. Having identified eight different subtypes, Graves assigned the following labels to each (6).

Level 1—Autistic, automatic, reactive;

Level 2—Animistic, tribalistic;

Level 3—Egocentric;

Level 4—Conformist, saintly, absolutistic, awakening and fright;

Level 5—Aggressive and power-seeking, materialistic, achievist, manipulative;
Level 6—Personalistic, sociocentric;

Level 7—Individualistic (aggressive-pacifistic), cognitive, existential;

Level 8—Experientialistic.

At this point, Graves wondered if possibly he was dealing not with perceptions of personality but with eight individual personality systems or levels of psychological existence. He began a study of the subjects, not of their perceptions of the healthy, mature personality. As previously mentioned, several of Graves' students took both his beginning and upper-level courses; Graves, therefore, initiated more in-depth research with these students by personal interviews, observation during contrived group activities, and administration of batteries of psychological tests. One major finding is that Graves found no relationship between the different levels of existence of students and their intelligence (2).

In one experiment, Graves grouped his subjects by the different levels of existence, giving each group a problem to solve that had no exact answer but numerous solutions. He found that the seventh-level group not only generated more solutions to the problem than other groups, but the quality of their solutions was superior to the quality of the solutions by the other groups. [No group was formed with eighth-level students because a significant number was not available (3).] Because the seventh-level group's behavior was so different from that of the other groups, Graves believed that
some type of significant change occurred when an individual moved from the sixth to the seventh level. In 1970, Graves suggested that the change from the sixth to the seventh level is the bridge between getting and giving, taking and contribution, destroying and construction. It is the bridge between deficiency or deficit motivation and growth or abundancy motivation. It is the bridge between similarity to animals and dissimilarity to animals (4).

Graves searched psychological literature in an attempt to find a theory of personality that would account for all his findings. Unable to find such a theory, he decided to outline a theory of personality that is based on the idea that the levels of perceived psychological maturity are, in fact, different personality systems. In order to develop a complete systems conception of personality, he determined that he must

(1) Conceptualize adult behavior so as to allow for no variation in certain psychological dimensions, such as intelligence and temperament;

(2) Conceptualize adult behavior so as to allow for quantitative variation in some dimensions—authoritarianism, dogmatism;

(3) Conceptualize adult behavior in an alternating, wave-like fashion, allowing for repetition of theme and the different ways people in different systems organized the data;

(4) Conceptualize adult behavior so that every other system is similar to but at the same time different from its alternative;

(5) Conceptualize adult behavior so that each system has its system specificness, so that each system has a quality all its own;

(6) Conceptualize adult behavior so that certain systems are more externally oriented and that other systems are internally oriented;
Conceptualize adult behavior so as to show increased degrees of behavioral freedom in each successive system, particularly in the express-self-but-not-at-the-expense-of-others system (6).

In the early 1960s, Graves' research appeared to indicate that there is a relationship between one's socio-economic level and level of existence. The higher the socio-economic status of the individual, the higher he placed in Graves' levels of existence hierarchy; the lower the socio-economic status of the individual, the lower he placed in the hierarchy. Graves found that the more a person dealt with vital issues (such as survival and security), the more likely he was to be on the lower end of the hierarchy; if the person spent little time and energy on vital issues, the greater his chances of being on the upper end of the hierarchy (6).

As Graves identified the different kinds of problems that the human being must solve, he began to realize that there is a relationship between the problems and the human brain. He believed that a particular set of problems activated a particular group of cells in the brain. After searching current brain-related literature, he concluded that existing research provided adequate documentation for his conclusions regarding activation of different areas of the brain as existential problems changed (6).

As his theory developed, Graves examined the movement of individuals from one level of existence to another. He believes that in order for a person to move from one level to
the next, the first element that must be present is potential within the brain. The second factor is success in dealing with current existential problems. (For instance, before a person at the second level can move to the third level, he must be successful in dealing with the problems of security and shelter.) Third, dissonance must be present within the individual. If the individual is satisfied with his existence, movement does not occur; if dissonance is present, the individual regresses to past levels of existence seeking to eliminate the dissonance by applying old solutions to new problems; if new insight occurs during this regression, the individual advances up the hierarchy to the next level of existence (4). Graves believes that dissonance causes a chemical change within the brain. This new chemical is produced slowly at first and eventually in significant amounts. The presence of this chemical causes a quantum jump to the next level of existence (3).

When describing the process of level movement, Graves uses the phrase "subordination of the older levels" (4). With a move to the next higher level, one does not totally lose all the characteristics of the lower levels. One never solves all the problems that exist at a particular level; all individuals, therefore, are a mixture of many levels, but some levels are present in greater proportion than others. With his research subjects, Graves found that 50 per cent of an individual's level is localized at one specific level, while
the remaining percentage is distributed among the levels which he has passed and the level to which he is moving (6).

Having completed the description of the levels of existence and an explanation of how and why individuals move from one level to the next, Graves concluded that he had finally constructed a theory that integrated the confusing and contradictory information which existed in the field of behavioral science. He described his work as "An Emergent-Cyclical Model of Adult Psychosocial Behavior" (5). In 1978, he presented the following sixteen concepts that he considers of great importance in understanding his model of mature psychosocial behavior (5):

(1) That adult psychological development consists of hierarchically ordered, prepotent, upwardly spiraling psychosocial systems;

(2) That these systems alternate their focus in a cyclic, oscillating, dominant-subordinate fashion;

(3) An undifferentiated focus in the first system with differentiation to begin in the second and alternate thereafter between focus upon the inner subjective world and how to come to know and come to peace with it, in even numbered systems and focus upon the external world and how to control and expand power over it in each odd numbered system after the third;

(4) That cerebral dominance, in the even numbered systems, is by the right hemisphere of the brain and in odd numbered systems, beginning with the third, by the left hemisphere of the brain;

(5) That the alternating systems show little mean variation from system to system for some psychological dimensions such as intelligence and temperament;

(6) That certain psychological dimensions such as ideological dogmatism and objectivity emerge with
a particular system in the hierarchy of systems
then decrease of increase systemically in subsequent
systems;

(7) That certain psychological dimensions such as
guild, as a felt emotion, emerge with a particular
system in the hierarchy then, in subsequent systems,
very quantitatively in an increasing or decreasing
cyclic wave-like fashion;

(8) That every other psychosocial system, after the
first, is like but, at the same time, not like its
alternating partner. Systems 2, 4, and 6 are all
obeisance systems but each obeys in different ways.
Systems 3, 4, and 7 are all change systems but how
to and what to change in each system is different;

(9) That each system has a general theme for existence
which typifies it;

(10) That each central theme for existence is particu-
larizable into almost an infinite number of ways
for peripheral expression. For example, the fourth
level absolutistic "sacrifice now to get later"
theme is formed in the world particularized into
many absolutistic, monotheistic, religious theolo-
gies and many non-religious absolutistic adeologies;

(11) That increasing degrees of behavioral freedom,
increasing degrees of choice emerge with each suc-
cessive level but the degree of increase is greater
in odd numbered than in even numbered systems;

(12) That every seventh system shows a degree of change
in excess of the sum of all six previous changes;

(13) That adult psychological life is a developing,
emergent process which can be likened to a symphony
built on six basic themes which repeat, in higher
order form, every set of six. The first six tell
the story of adult psychological development in a
world of naturalistic abundance. The second order
systems tell the story of how psychological develop-
ment will take place in a world of naturalistic
scarcity;

(14) That each system develops from the interaction of
hierarchically ordered, parallel and prepotent sets
of existential problems and sets of neuropsycholog-
ical coping equipment;
That adult psychological development is a flowing process in which the solution of current existential problems creates the next set of existential problems to be solved and in their creation activates the next set of neuropsychological coping equipment consisting of the information processing means for detection and solution of the created set of existential problems.

That the process moves in a complex wave-like progressive nodal, regressive fashion. Each wave develops slowing to the point of inflection, then rapidly ascends to its nodal form, then begins a slow descent to the point of deflection where a precipitous fall ensures as the next wave starts to ascend (5).

Characteristics of the Levels of Existence

While certain aspects of Graves' theory have evolved and been modified by new information or insight, other aspects, such as his description of the characteristics of people centralized at each of the existence levels, have remained constant. With every published article, Graves expanded the information on each level, providing more and more specific applications of theory to the problems of contemporary society. In the following discussions of each of the eight levels, the behavioral characteristics, the thinking, and the values of each level are examined. [Descriptions that are marked with an asterisk (*) were developed by Pryor (10) in 1976.]

The Reactive Level

The individual at the reactive level simply reacts to external stimuli. To this person, the only important things are relief of tensions created by hunger, thirst, urination, and feelings such as those of pain, heat, and cold; since
this person has no values, anything that reduces pain or tension is good and the presence of pain or discomfort is bad.*

To think, believe, or judge is not a part of this person's functioning; he does not operate cognitively, he only reacts.* His sense of time is only in the present with no past and no future--only the now. He is incapable of assigning cause and effect to anything.

One seldom finds the reactive person actively functioning in society. The most common reactive person is the very young child, although most children move from this level very quickly after birth. There are times when adults do regress to the reactive level, especially older adults. Brain damage, caused by strokes, drug abuse, or physical injury, may cause a person to regress to this level. Similarly, brain damage or mental retardation may prevent a person from progressing to the next level of existence.

No human being is completely without reactive characteristics. Because the human being is a physiological organism, he reacts to some physiological stimuli.* Most persons in Western civilizations have moved beyond the reactive level (3, pp. 73-74).

The Tribalistic Level

For the tribalistic person, the most important need is security. He seeks to insure this need by attaching himself either to a chieftain figure or a tribe. The chieftain
figure may be a gang leader, a teacher, a religious leader, a spouse, a sibling, or a supervisor.* The tribalistic person looks to his chieftain figure to make decisions, give direction, and provide an overall sense of security; he will seldom make a decision or take action unless he receives permission from his chieftain.

The tribalistic person is often locked into a tribe or clan in order to obtain his needed security or direction. He will not violate the rigid traditions of his tribe.* Controlled by the traditions of his tribe, it is common to find that superstition, magic, and rituals are a very important part of the tribalistic person's life (2, pp. 121-122).

He assumes that all persons view life in a tribalistic manner. He seeks to continue a way of life that he does not understand. His level of awareness is very minimal, and his perception of time, past and future, is very limited.* The tribalistic person understands very little regarding the causality of events; he generally assumes that most things occur because of the movement of the spirits or of a higher authority. To continue to exist, one must continue the pre-established ways of the chieftain figure or the tribe.

When the tribalistic person reaches the point where he can insure his sense of stability with little expenditure of effort, his own excess energy allows him to move to the next level of existence. If dissonance or challenge does not occur, however, the individual will not move; he will become
more deeply involved in his tribalistic way of life. This dissonance often occurs in youth or when an outside force disturbs the tribalistic way of life.

At this point in his development, the tribalistic person no longer sees himself as an inseparable part of the whole, but as an individual separate and distinct from other humans. He begins to see the world as a place where people are trying to deny his new way of existence. His new way of being becomes one that will foster individual survival (4, 5).

The Egocentric Level

At the egocentric level, a person has sufficiently stabilized his physiological needs and tribalistic ways so that he can attend to egocentric needs. He now sees himself as an individual, and he assumes the attitude of express-self-with-no-regard-for-others (6). Concerned with survival, he intentionally manipulates the environment to meet his selfish needs. He subscribes to the doctrines of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."* Graves suggests that Machiavellian is a good term to use to describe the egocentric person because he is the "essence of humanity as described by the author of The Prince" (6).

Obsessed with the need to survive, the egocentric person interprets reward or punishment as feedback—a process of either fostering or not fostering his own survival. He sees the world as a place where many try but few succeed. As a
result, he believes the only way to survival is through brute force and heroic deeds; the epic hero is his idol, and heroism is the means of survival. He sees a world composed of those who have and those who have not; those who win have the right to loot the world to their own ends, and the losers have the right only to the scraps that the winners might toss them.*

The egocentric world is characterized by the expression of human lusts--openly and unabashedly by the have, more covertly and deviously by the have not.* A person at the egocentric level may be selfish, thoughtless, unscrupulous, and dishonest. Basically amoral, he is primarily concerned with whatever it takes to obtain power and meet his selfish desires. He has yet to learn how to function successfully within the limits of society.* To conclude, however, that the egocentric person is of little value to society is incorrect. Graves says,

Some men, in the pursuit of power, do tame the mighty river, do provide the leisure for beginning intellectual effort, do build cities, do assign occupational positions that directly improve the personal lot of some and indirectly spills off to the betterment of the miserable many (4, p. 146).

Egocentric values break down when the individual begins to question his current and future existence. The have ask, "Why was I born, and why can't I go on living?" The have not wonder why they cannot find some success in life. From these unanswered questions, the egocentric person concludes that if one finds the right form of existence, there
will be pleasure everlasting. Life appears to be in the form of an ordered plan, which is in fact a test of whether one is worthy of salvation. Often this plan is based on one of the world's great religions or philosophies. When an individual begins to question his egocentric lifestyle, he is ready to move to the fourth level of existence—the absolutistic level (3, p. 82; 4, 5).

**The Absolutistic Level**

At the absolutistic level of existence, the individual is involved with sacrificing immediate, earthly desires for an everlasting peace to come later. His focus is on the end—salvation—and the means to that end—sacrifice of desire in the here and now; salvation is the reward for living the right kind of life.* Typical behavior of the absolutistic individual includes denial, deference, piety, modesty, self-sacrifice, harsh self-discipline, and little self-indulgence (4, pp. 83-139).

The absolutistic person accepts his position and role in life; that inequalities exist is accepted as a fact of life. The important issue for the absolutistic person is to strive for perfection in his assigned role, regardless of how high or low his assigned station.* He believes that salvation comes by living the prescribed rules; what the individual wants is not really important because the issue is to discipline oneself to the prescribed plan of one's world. For the absolutistic person, life is a very serious business. Flowers says,
Each system-four person values his absolutistic moral laws and frequently uses words like should and ought. . . . Rules are black and white. His authority defines both virtue and sin and only his authority has the proper word (1, p. 21).

The absolutistic person has a low tolerance for ambiguity. He finds it difficult to accept anyone whose values differ from his, and he feels a need for others to accept his set of values. People at this level usually place themselves under a philosophy, cause, or religion, and they have a tendency to be attracted to vocations circumscribed by dogma or clearly defined rules.*

Of the eight levels of psychological existence, Graves believes that the absolutistic is the most confusing because absolutistic values often are so diametrically opposed that they seem to be different value systems. For instance, the Moslems and Hindus, often enemies, share the same thematic value system within this point of view. The holy wars of the crusades stemmed from the same value system as the non-violence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The systems are basically similar because they emphasize sacrifice now to achieve a better situation later. Doctrinaire Catholicism and atheistic Communism are, within this point of view, only polar opposite schema varying from the same central sacrificial theme (3, p. 83).

One should not view the absolutistic person as a necessarily docile, meek, and kind human being. A punitive, absolutistic person may try to force another person to adapt to his own way of thinking. He believes that the person who does not follow the appropriate, directed way of life should receive present and future punishment. The punitive, absolutistic person has been known to become quite assertive, even
to the point of sacrificing himself in violence if his values are threatened. He prefers authoritarianism to autonomy, but he will respond to participation if it meets the approval of an accepted authority figure*(3, 4, 5).

The Achievist Level

Because the achievist believes that he has limited control of his environment, he seeks ways to control his world by learning its secrets. Unlike the egocentric person (who tries to control his environment with raw, rugged brute force), the achievist person seeks to gain control through rational, objective behavior.* The theme for existence for the achievist is "express self now, but carefully, calculatedly, so as to not bring down the wrath of others upon me" (3, p. 83).

The end value for the achievist person is social and material success.* He values equality of opportunity and mechanistic, measuring, quantitative approaches to problems, including human problems. Additional values are gamesmanship, competition, the entrepreneurial attitude, efficiency, work simplification, and the calculated risk.* The achievist person creates wealth and the techniques needed to create it. His success-oriented values provide the knowledge and wealth that lead to the improvement of the human condition. He makes certain that persons of lesser means get more than the scraps, but never as much as he does*(4, p. 150).
As he gains success and wealth, the achievist finds himself skilled in the mastery of the "objective physical world but a prime neophyte in the subjectivisitc, humanistic world" (3, p. 75). Graves also says,

He has achieved the satisfaction of a good life through his relative mastery of the physical universe, but it has been achieved at a price—the price of not being liked by other men for his callous use of knowledge for himself. He has become envied and even respected, but he is not liked. He has achieved his personal stature and material existence at the expense of being rejected even by his children (3, p. 15).

Out of this sense of aloneness emerges a feeling of dependence. The need to belong and affiliate surpasses the previous desire to go-it-alone. His life begins to be restricted and restructured around the need to belong. The new theme for existence becomes sacrifice-some-now-so-others-can-have-too (3; 4, p. 150; 5).

The Sociocentric Level

The sociocentric person responds to authority in a way that is similar to those at the tribalistic and absolutistic levels of existence. Unlike these two levels (who respond to either the authority of a chieftain or a higher authority), the sociocentric person responds to the authority of his contemporaries. He spends much time and energy seeking his true inner-self; he is also concerned with the relationship of the individual self with the inner-selves of others.* The establishment of relationships is a prime value; other important values are harmony, belonging, being accepted, and the individual personhood of humans.* Graves says,
He prizes interpersonal penetration, communication, committeeism, majority rule, persuasion rather than force, softness rather than cold rationality, sensitivity rather than objectivity, taste rather than wealth, personality more than things (3, p. 72).

The sociocentric person is affectively warmer than any of those at the other levels (7, p. 7). Community involvement and interpersonal intimacy are values, and the expression of personal feelings and attitudes is encouraged. Graves points out that the sociocentric person should not be taken lightly; his level of depth is quite significant (3).

On the surface, sociocentric values appear shallower, less serious and even fickle in contrast to values at other levels because the surface aspect of them shifts as the "valued-other" changes his preferences. But the central core is a very solid process. It is being with, in with, and within the feelings of his valued-other (3, p. 83).

Because of his sensitivity to the welfare of others, the sociocentric person is often found in helping professions such as counseling, the ministry, nursing, teaching, and social work (8, p. 58). Getting-along is more important than getting ahead. Graves suggests that this individual has subordinated his self-interest only for the time being; self-interest will return again in a new and higher form--the existential form of existence (4, p. 85; 5).

**The Existential Level**

As a human being emerges to the existential level of existence, something happens which changes the behavior and attitude of the person significantly. Until this point, the individual has concerned himself with the resolution of
animalistic problems, those he has in common with other animals; he has exerted energy to meet physiological satisfaction, to provide for a continuance of a way-of-life, to assure personal survival and personal salvation, to provide ways to supply immediate pleasure, and to enable himself to be accepted and liked by others. At the existential level, man is free from fear for the first time. Previously, he was controlled by a fear of not surviving, fear of the spirits, fear of a stronger predatory individual, fear of not following a prescribed way-of-life, fear of failure, or fear of social rejection (4, p. 152).

Graves refers to the first six levels of existence as subsistence levels. Man at the subsistence levels is more action prone and intent upon meeting the needs of his animalistic environment. At the existential level, he moves into the first of the being levels of existence, which tend to be more intellectual. Having resolved his basic human fears, the existential person is ready to focus on the more conscious problems of existence, and he is able to face these problems from a more multi-dimensional perspective (4, p. 152).

For the existentialist, great importance is placed upon life—life in the present and life for mankind in the future. He adopts an attitude of express-self-so-that-all-beings-can-continue-to-exist. Because existence is of prime importance, much time is spent on the problems created by existence.
Broadness of view and universality are characteristic of the existential person's thinking. He is intolerant of persons with very narrow views, who are overly concerned with petty issues. The time perspective of the existential person is far into the future, often beyond his lifetime. Continuity of development is of more importance than the goal. Simplicity, spontaneity, and personal freedom are values. Personal relationships for the existential person are often few, although he places great importance upon these relationships, which are of greater importance than social approval and acceptance. He seeks to treat people not as he wants to be treated, but as they want to be treated (4, pp. 153-154).

Because the existential person values life, he views the world in the context of the many problems created by living. The world, its resources, and people are seen as interdependent, and, as a result, there is concern about the conflicting attitudes and wants of people; because he is comfortable with the conflicting attitudes and opinions of people, he values pluralism.* Basic ethics are determined by what will benefit the most people; he values what will bring good to him as well as to all of the universe (3, pp. 80-82).

The existential person is difficult to understand because he is a series of paradoxes. He knows that personal life is unimportant, but, at the same time, there is nothing more important because it is a part of life. He enjoys a good meal and good company, but he does not miss them when they
are unavailable. Graves states that if you ask an existential
person if he likes to be liked by people, he will respond
positively; if you then ask him if it bothers him when he is
not liked by people, he will respond negatively (6). He enjoys
sex tremendously, but he can do without it. He only wants
what he needs; he places little value upon acquiring in excess
of needs. The existential person has ambition, but he is not
ambitious. He understands power and how to get and use it,
but he also understands its limitations. He has the capacity
to handle paradox and polar opposites. The existential person
will vent anger almost immediately, but he will not retain
that anger or get worked up over it. He gets satisfaction
from doing well, yet he gets no satisfaction from praise for
doing well. Although he is not swayed by social norms, he
understands them very well. He fights for himself but not
defensively. He enjoys the pleasures of life, but he is not
dependent upon them (3, p. 81).

The existential level is considered by many people to be
decadent. Some see it as decadent because it values new ways
and needs the restructuring of life. "It values others as
well as self, the enjoyment of his life over and above sub-
mission to authority, others have 'just the same as me,' and
it values all and self, not just the selected few" (3, p. 154).
As magnificent as this level of existence may seem it is not,
as many have thought, the ultimate for the human race. Beyond
the individualistic level of existence lies a new level that few individuals have yet to experience (4, p. 154).

**The Experientialistic Level**

The experientialistic level of existence is the most difficult to describe because it is not yet fully developed. In fact, in his personal research, Graves encountered only six persons who appeared to be moving into the experientialistic level of existence; of these six, most are in their late fifties or early sixties (3, p. 77). Because Graves' development of the experientialistic level is in such a primitive developmental stage, description of this level will be divided into two stages. In the first stage, Graves' research on the experientialistic level will be explored. The second stage of the description will be a projection of the characteristics that may crystalize as the level becomes more fully developed. The projection will utilize the principles that Graves believes are involved in the development of a new level of existence. As mentioned in Chapter I, a description of the experientialistic level of existence was submitted to a panel of experts to insure that there was an accurate understanding of this eighth level.

*Research reports on the experientialistic level.—* At the experientialistic level of existence, man will be motivated by knowledge and human faith, not godly faith. The knowledge and competence acquired at the existential level will bring
man to a new level of understanding, and he will make great progress because of his broadened sense of humanness. At the first six levels of existence, man is controlled by animalistic needs; as man moves into the existential and experiential levels of existence, no longer is he controlled by personal needs. Man will be motivated by a desire to know and understand the world around him. At this level, stabilization and balance of life are important; he seeks a way of life that is in balance with nature and humanity (3, p. 75).

Values for the experientialistic person are not set by the wisdom of his elders (as with the tribalistic person), but by the accumulated knowledge of the knowers. He values cooperation and trust so highly that he will withdraw from relationships which are not based upon those qualities (11, p. 40).

Play, exhibitionism, receiving the plaudits of others, mean little if anything to man at this level. It is not that he cannot play, nor is it that he cannot or won't dominate. It is that he prefers serious endeavor and cares not to dominate (11, p. 40).

He values adjusting to the world as he senses it to be. The fact that he does not value the rules, or that he has no concern for the proper behavior of the world around him, is not cause to assume that he is an angry nonconformist; it is because he values deeper human things more; it is because he follows his impressions or intuition, not an established order (11, p. 40).
Graves describes the experientialistic level as a seeking level of existence that is motivated by information. He suggests that this level may be a refined version of the existential level. The experientialistic has conquered the existential desire for self-esteem, and he is now driven by the desire to acquire and disseminate information. If and when mankind moves into the experientialistic level of existence, the world will be a place where there will be

No bowing to suffering, no vassalage, no peonage. There will be no shame in behavior for man will know it is human to behave. There will be no pointing of the finger at other men, no segregation, depredation or degradation in behavior. Man will be driving forth on the subsequent crests of this humanness rather than vacillating and swirling in the turbulence of partially emerged man (4, pp. 141-142).

Graves suggests that the character of yet undeveloped experientialistic persons might be best described by D. H. Lawrence's poem *Terra Incognita* (4, p. 143)

There are vast realms of consciousness still undreamed of, vast ranges of experience, like the humming of unseen harps, we know nothing of, within us.

Oh when man has escaped from the barbed-wire entanglement of his own ideas and his own mechanical devises there is a marvelous rich world of contact and sheer fluid beauty and fearless face-to-face awareness of now-naked life . . . when at last we escape the barbed-wire enclosure of Know Thyself, knowing we can never know, we can touch, and wonder, and ponder, and make our effort and dangle in a last fastidious fine delight . . .

When Graves asked the experientialistic persons whom he had encountered in his research for a definition of the healthy personality, he received "an almost mystical conception
where a guy says he has sort of a feeling of what a healthy human is" (11, p. 40). Graves seems to imply that the experientialistic individual has difficulty explaining the healthy personality in concrete, behavioral terms; he tends to view the world from an intuitive perspective.

Projected characteristics of the experientialistic level.--To project the development of the experientialistic level, one must look at how new levels of existence will develop in the future. As an individual reaches the existential level, he is ready to move to a new second ladder of existence. The first ladder consists of subsistence levels. These levels are controlled by deficit or deficiency motivations (need for security, power, affiliations, etc.). At the existential level (the first rung on the second ladder of existence), one is motivated by what Graves refers to as growth or abundance motivations. When one reaches this second ladder of existence, one has met his subsistence needs and now functions at a higher, need-fulfilled, intellectual level. Levels on the second ladder of existence will repeat the levels on the first ladder of existence, but on a higher order form. Graves contends that the existential level is a higher order of the reactive level; the concern for the reactive person is simple, individual existence, while the existential person is concerned with esteeming that existence at a more sophisticated level (6). Similarly, the next level,
experientialistic, will be a reorganization of the tribalistic level on a higher plane.

At the experientialistic level, there will be a great concern for security and survival, but the perspective will be global; instead of concern for individual survival, the concern will be for the survival of all mankind. Behavior will be motivated by what is good not only for the individual but for all of humanity. Action will be taken only when the consequences are fully understood.

The return of the authority of chieftain figure may be projected at this level. The authority figure could have a place of prominence, not because he provides security, but because he has extensive knowledge in an area of interest to the experientialistic individual. Because the experientialistic individual is on a higher level of existence than the tribalistic individual, he will not be totally dependent upon his authority figure to shape his attitudes and beliefs. If an experientialistic person does, in fact, follow an authority figure, it will be because he chooses to do so, and because he has great interest in the area of knowledge of the authority figure.

The idea of tribalism is related to the idea of the authority figure or the chieftain figure. Experientialistic individuals may cluster into tribes because of similar areas of interest; in a sense, they will be sophisticated study groups. Unlike the tribalistic person (who is almost totally
dependent upon the tribe), the experientialistic person will have no dependence upon his tribe. His interest in the tribe will be totally related to the procurement of knowledge. The experientialistic tribe will be an open-ended group through which individual members freely come and go. When an individual's interests change, or when he has reached his goal, the individual will move on either to a period of independence or to another tribe that is dealing with an area of interest which is new to the experientialistic individual.

The tribalistic individual does not violate his tribe's rigid traditions, which are often superstitious and ritualistic. Although the experientialistic person may live a life that is governed by rules and guidelines, it is the result of rational decision-making and knowledge attainment because these rules will provide a balance that will continue life. While the experientialistic individual will place no credence in superstition and ritual, he will have an almost mystical regard for life.

The experientialistic individual's view of himself is almost contradictory. He values his uniqueness, yet he sees himself as an essential part of a greater whole—humanity. Although he spends a significant amount of time on his personal growth, it is important that this growth be related to the more universal needs of mankind.

As society in general moves into the experientialistic level of existence, the organization of many institutions
will change. Institutions—hospitals, schools, corporations, governments—will become smaller so that they can deal with specific needs of particular groups of people.

Technology in the experientialistic world will no doubt be highly sophisticated. It will be valued, however, only if it aids man in meeting his personal and global needs. No longer will technology be feared or worshipped; it will be viewed simply as a useful tool that can aid man in his pilgrimage.

Predicting the characteristics of a new level of existence can only be speculative because man's problems of existence cannot be predicted. In a 1976 newspaper interview (3), Graves suggested that this problem may be the energy crisis; however, he said that it must develop into such a severe problem as to affect all of society and dictate worldwide behavior. Regardless of the problems of existence, the key for man in the present is to recognize that change in man's levels of existence is inevitable. Instead of battling that change, man should adapt to the needs that arise as man emerges into new levels of existence.

Summary

Chapter II has examined the method of research that Graves used in developing his levels of existence theory. Also presented were descriptions of each of the first seven levels of existence (reactive, tribalistic, egocentric, absolutistic, achievist, sociocentric, and existential).
The experientialistic level of existence, a yet incompletely developed level, was examined. Graves' writings regarding the experientialistic level were summarized, and a projection of the attributes of the level, based upon Graves' guidelines, was presented.

When considering the eight levels of existence, it is important to remember that each is a theoretical description and that few persons fit exactly into a particular level. Most persons operate at a primary or dominant level, and they have one or more secondary or supporting levels. For example, under certain circumstances a person who is operating at the achievist level may regress to the egocentric level.

Chapter III will deal with the levels of existence theory as it applies to the educational world. For each of the eight levels, an approach to education will be designed that will comprise a systems model of education which is based upon Graves' work.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter I, Clare W. Graves believes that many of the problems of education can be solved using his theory of psychological levels; if learning occurs in different ways, then educators might consider developing separate learning systems for people who are at different levels of existence (22, p. 85). Graves' viewpoint is supported by the works of Cavanaugh (8), Dunn and Dunn (15), Gregorc and Ward (25), and Keefe (33). Graves contends that the present approach to education in the United States is limited primarily to the viewpoints of those who think in a righteously moralistic, absolutistic fashion, and to those who have a technologically objectistic, achievist viewpoint (22, p. 85; 24, pp. 5-6). According to Graves, this approach is one of the most important problems in education today.

From the absolutistic perspective, the main purpose of education is to instill in the student the right way to think, behave, and believe. There is a right and a wrong way for everything. To the absolutistic person, there is an absolute right as to what education should be and as to how it should
be carried out; Graves (22, p. 85) contends that any other approach to education is an erroneous frill.

According to Graves (22, p. 85), the achievist viewpoint contends that education should encourage the student to think in an objective, positive, rational, reasoning way. The achievist believes that the goal of education is to provide the student with hard facts at his fingertips so that he will be able to reach objective, reasoned conclusions.

The implication of using only these two approaches (absolutistic and achievist) to education, Graves (22, p. 85) believes, is that persons at the first three less-complex levels of existence (reactive, tribalistic, and egocentric) and at the last three more-complex levels of existence (sociocentric, existential, and experientialistic) will receive very little attention to their educational processes. Little has been formally accomplished as to the design of systems of education that considers the specific educational needs of persons who are at all eight levels of existence.

This chapter will be devoted to the development of a systems approach to education that utilizes each of the eight levels of existence as outlined by Graves (23). Each of the eight approaches is built upon the work of Graves and a synthesis of the opinions of other scholars and researchers in the field.

As outlined in Chapter II, individuals at each level of existence are motivated, learn, value, and view the world in
a fashion that is peculiar to that particular level. An individual at the reactive level functions in a fashion that is far less complex than the functioning of an individual at the existential or experientialistic level of existence. Because of the changing complexities of each level, individual approaches to education will move from the simple to the more complex. For each individual approach to education, the following elements will be discussed as they relate to Graves' theory:

1. The learning system;
2. Motivational strategy;
3. Evaluation strategy;
4. Classroom management;
5. Facility design.

After each element is discussed as it relates to each of the eight levels of existence, two other concerns will be considered. Because personal growth is central to Graves' theory of psychological existence, the assessment of a student's level of existence is critical. This chapter, therefore, will propose the design and structure of an assessment center that can monitor a student's move from one level to another. In addition to the design and structure of an assessment center, the grouping of students with instructors according to levels of existence will be discussed.
A Systems Approach to Education

The Reactive Level (Level One)

The first level of existence in the systems approach to education is the reactive level, the simplest level of functioning. Due to the low level of physiological and psychological functioning at the reactive level, education is often very simple. The first job of the instructor who works with the reactive student is to meet his basic needs. According to Graves (23, p. 147), if the reactive student is cold (or hungry, thirsty, etc.), most learning is difficult due to the reactive nature of his functioning. Table I illustrates the proposed approach for the education of reactive students based on Graves' theory.

TABLE I

A REACTIVE (LEVEL ONE) APPROACH TO EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System</th>
<th>Motivational Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluation Strategy</th>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Facility Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habituation</td>
<td>Physiological</td>
<td>Physical Stimulation</td>
<td>Physical Security</td>
<td>Soothing colors; multiple textures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning system**—Because the reactive student responds to his immediate physical surrounds, learning occurs through habituation and adjustment to his environment. According to Achenbach (1, p. 123), adjustments occur instinctively, with little or no conscious thought; there is no past
or future, only the immediate. Although seldom used in traditional learning environments, Erikson (16, p. 247) suggests that the instructor should concentrate on meeting the student’s physiological needs and altering his environment.

Assuming that the student is physiologically able, Schachtel (46, p. 154) believes that one of the primary goals of the instructor should be to aid the student in moving to the next level of existence. In order to move to the tri balistic level, there must be excess energy within the student's system, and this energy comes only when the student's physiological needs are met.

Much of the instructor's time, therefore, should be spent in activities that involve meeting physical needs (warmth, food, water, clean clothes, etc.) (16, p. 248). Also helpful are physical stimulation (such as massage), playing different types of music, exposing the student to different textures, and hugging (1, p. 39; 46, p. 98).

Motivational strategy.—Because the cognitive functioning of the reactive student is minimal and simplistic, it is difficult to design a motivational strategy. The reactive student's greatest need is to exist comfortably—free from pain and discomfort. According to Crain (11, p. 73), a student who is at a very low level of functioning is primarily capable of responding to his own physiological needs.
Evaluation strategy.—Traditional forms of evaluation (written tests) are not appropriate for reactive students because they appeal to needs and motivations (success, affiliation, internal satisfaction) that are found only at the higher and more-complex levels of existence. As suggested by Piaget (42, p. 33), physical stimulation (hugs, pats, etc.) is one of the few motivators that the less-complex student is capable of understanding. Crain (11, p. 74) contends that the presence of such stimulation is perceived by the student as encouragement and acceptance, and the lack of stimulation is perceived by the student as a form of rejection.

Classroom management.—Erikson (17, pp. 23-25) emphasizes the need for emotional warmth and physiological security in the management of individuals who are similar to the reactive student. Because he has very little awareness outside of himself, the reactive student perceives very little, if any, difference between his learning environment and his living environment. Messick and others (36) support the idea that most learning occurs on a one-to-one basis—instructor to student; the issue of classroom management, therefore, is more an issue of managing the individual reactive student as opposed to managing an entire class.

Facility design.—In designing the appropriate facility for the reactive student, careful attention should be given
to the development of an environment that provides a sense of safety, and the colors used should be soothing and soft (pastel shades). According to Somner (49, p. 129), there should be areas of stimulation also, such as bright graphics, textured floors (carpeting, patterned tiles), and windows through which students can watch outside activities and feel the heat of the sun. The classroom area for the reactive student could possibly be his living quarters also.

The Tribalistic Level (Level Two)

At the tribalistic level, the second level of existence in the systems approach to education, Graves (23, p. 137) contends that such a student's main concern is to continue a way of life that he does not understand yet strongly defends; he believes that his way of living is inherent in the nature of things. The approach for education of the tribalistic student is somewhat different from the reactive approach due to the tribalistic student's slightly more sophisticated level of cognitive functioning. The tribalistic student has a greater awareness of self which is seldom present in the less-complex reactive student. Table II illustrates the proposed tribalistic approach to education.

Learning system.—The individual who is at the tribalistic level of existence learns through the association of one thing or action to another. Because he seldom establishes
Learning System | Motivational Strategy | Evaluation Strategy | Classroom Management | Facility Design |
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
Repetitious | Assurance | Repetitive; immediate | Predictable | Open view; noninstitutional furnishings |

cause and effect relationships, repetition is an important part of the learning process for the tribalistic student. Learning takes place through the classical conditioning method (repetition) that is best known through the work of Ivan Pavlov, the Russian psychologist (41, p. 84).

In classical conditioning, the student is presented with an original stimulus and a neutral stimulus. Dembo (14, p. 206) explains that repetitive pairings of the two stimuli cause the student to respond to the neutral stimulus in the same fashion as to the original stimulus.

Because the tribalistic student has a need for a strong chieftain figure, the instructor becomes an essential part of the teaching strategy. Each new concept or piece of information should be introduced by showing the relationship of the new information to the existing knowledge base of the tribalistic student. Dembo (14, p. 206) states that change is very threatening to a student who is dependent upon an authority figure; new information that appears to be inconsistent with such a student's level of experience may
inhibit the learning process. The instructor should be physically available as often as possible to the tribalistic student in order to offer assurance and encouragement, and the behavior of the instructor (chieftain) should be as consistent as possible. Schultz (47, p. 186) contends that each time a student performs a task correctly, the instructor should acknowledge its correctness until that act of learning becomes automatic.

Motivational strategy.—Continual assurance by one's chieftain figure is one of the most important motivating factors in the life of the tribalistic student. Consequently, such a student is best motivated when he perceives no threats and when stimuli are not in conflict with the values and habits of his peer group (tribe) and chieftain figure. According to Ramirez (45), a student who is dependent upon an authority figure will respond positively if a new stimulus is presented by his chieftain figure (instructor).

With very young children, it is usually easy for the teacher to assume the role of the chieftain. Older tribalistic students may be more difficult to motivate if the instructor is in conflict with their chieftain figure. Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 53-54) support the idea of identifying the tribalistic student's chieftain figure and working with him; for instance, if such a student is highly dependent upon his parents, the instructor might work closely with the parents
and involve them in the learning process of the student. Good and Brophy (21, p. 15) support the instructor's role in motivating the student.

**Evaluation strategy.**—In an evaluation of the tribalistic student, the instructor should stress that the evaluation procedure is not a judgment of the worth of the student (14, pp. 81-82). According to Purkey (44, p. 63), simple written or verbal tests may be appropriate if any negative outcome is not associated with the test; tests would be readministered until the student has mastered the new material. The repetition of the test becomes an instructional technique that is related to the repetitious learning system for the tribalistic student.

Results of tests should be communicated to the tribalistic student almost immediately because of this student's difficulty in associating cause with effect. Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey (29, pp. 34-37) believe that the ideal kind of evaluation would be a one-to-one verbal evaluation in which the instructor is able to give immediate feedback and affirmation to the tribalistic student.

**Classroom management.**—Classroom management for tribalistic students should be predictable. According to Coopersmith (10), the instructor who exhibits strong classroom control also communicates a sense of assurance to these students. Kowitz (34, p. 103) believes that the instructor
should be available to provide students with permission to try new things and move about the classroom. Special times might be provided during which students can communicate freely with each other and the instructor; the instructor could initiate communication with each student, asking specific questions and providing opportunities for tribalistic students to seek information and assurance. According to Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 360-361), most classroom activities should take place as a group with the instructor as the leader. Whenever the class leaves its usual classroom space, the instructor's visibility and control will provide a feeling of safety to tribalistic students.

Facility design.—David and Wright (13, p. 24) suggest that the design of the physical learning space should communicate a sense of security and be physically similar to a home environment. This space should be open to allow the student a constant view of the instructor and other members of the class. According to Bruner (6, p. 62), an open area allows such students to observe all activities so that they will not be surprised or threatened by any sudden occurrence; the goal is to develop a sense of safety and security.

Propst (43, p. 2) believes that the teaching environment should be as noninstitutional as possible; furnishings and accessories should be similar to those found in a home, and students should be encouraged to bring items from home so
that they may personalize their learning environment. Bruner (6, p. 62) suggests that students should be allowed to group their desks into subgroups with friends. Unlike the reactive student (who has little awareness of his environment), the tribalistic student obtains a great deal of security from his environment.

The Egocentric Level (Level Three)

The egocentric-level student recognizes that he is separate and distinct from other human beings; he feels the need to foster his individual expression and to find a way of life through which he can be in control of his existence. Table III summarizes an egocentric approach to education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System</th>
<th>Motivational Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluation Strategy</th>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Facility Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>Frequent reward</td>
<td>Positive control</td>
<td>Open view; flexible stimulators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE III**

AN EGOCENTRIC LEVEL THREE APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Learning system.—The egocentric student is activated to learn by stimuli that he can use to meet his personal needs and desires; he learns by making movements that shortly thereafter bring about a relief of tension. Graves says,

Learning takes place best when much time is spent getting to the reward, the reward is presented soon after the act is performed, and the need state is
very strong. At this level, people learn best when they are rewarded for learning tasks (22, p. 84).

Schultz (47, pp. 249-250) believes that learning strategies should be based upon a rewards system; each time the egocentric student performs a task correctly, he should be rewarded with something that is of value to him. Graves (22, p. 8) contends that punishment has no meaning to the egocentric, and, in fact, may contribute negatively to the learning process; an example would be of the egocentric adolescent who is sent to the principal for a paddling, and who, as soon as he gets out of the principal's office, brags about the experience. Skinner (48, pp. 64-65) supports the ideas that one can expect changes in behavior and learning patterns only if there is an appropriate reward for doing so and if the material is related to something of interest.

**Motivational strategy.**--Because the egocentric student sees the world as a very hostile environment, he places value on the things that foster his survival. As a result, he is motivated to learn only that which enables him to be in control of his life.

The egocentric is described by Graves as "lusty" (22, p. 77). Gentile and others (20, p. 213) contend that unless the learning process brings pleasure, the level of motivation will be very low. Unlike the absolutistic student (who is motivated to learn out of a fear of punishment), the egocentric student is motivated to learn only when he finds it
pleasurable or when it is of obvious value to him to do so. According to Graves (22), academically related programs must be justified to the egocentric student by explaining "what's in it for him."

**Evaluation strategy.**—Often the egocentric student is suspicious of evaluation procedures; therefore, it is almost impossible to stimulate him to regard any type of evaluation seriously unless there is physical reward connected to the outcome. Evaluations should emphasize positive performance. Dembo (14, p. 213) contends that a test should be graded in terms of answers that are marked correct—not incorrect; that is, the reward should be for correct responses. As with the reactive and tribalistic students, one should not assume that a grade in itself is a motivating factor.

**Classroom management.**—In educating the egocentric student, the role of the instructor in classroom management is critical. Because the egocentric may question and distrust authority figures, Beck (5, pp. 8-9) contends that the instructor should project the image of a strong individual who is in control of both his personal life and the class; an instructor who is perceived as weak will be almost totally ineffective with these power-seeking students. Standards regarding acceptable behavior should be established and never varied. "Give him an inch and he'll take a mile" may accurately describe the egocentric student. Because these
students are primarily concerned with obtaining power, they have great respect for people who have power; in fact, their perceptions of people are divided into two categories—the weak and the strong. According to Beck (5, p. 9), the instructor should never allow himself to be perceived by egocentric students as out of control if he intends to manage his classroom effectively. Cavanaugh (8, p. 37) emphasizes that the instructor not only must be firm, he must also be emotionally warm; these students need affirmation and attention; if the instructor has established respect, few, if any, can offer the egocentric better stroking. Cavanaugh (8, p. 38) believes that this can be accomplished by publicly recognizing an egocentric student's positive behavior and providing rewards (e.g., extra minutes for lunch, posting good work so that it may be seen by fellow students, public praise).

Unlike tribalistic students (who seldom communicate even when given permission), communication among egocentric students will flow naturally with little regard for others; if they have a thought or a feeling, they will communicate it. Hurt and others (29, p. 57) suggest that it may be necessary to establish guidelines for communication in the classroom.

Facility design.—Classroom design for the egocentric student should allow an open view of all other students. This is similar to the design for tribalistic classrooms, but for
an entirely different reason; in the case of tribalistic students, the open viewing space permits the students to view everything so that they will not be surprised by anything that happens; the egocentric classroom should provide an unobstructed view so that the instructor can monitor the activity of each student.

David and Wright (13, p. 59) emphasize the need for appropriate amounts of stimulative colors and textures. Furniture should be attractive in appearance and designed not only for durability. [In prisons, research indicates that furniture designed for general public use lasted significantly longer than furniture designed for institutional use (49, p. 95).] The key to designing the classroom for egocentric students is determining the amount of stimulation that is needed; Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 25-26) suggest that stimulation can be adjusted with decorations, furniture, lighting, art work, and color.

The Absolutistic Level (Level Four)

The learning approach for the absolutistic person is in almost direct contrast to that for the egocentric person. According to Graves (24, p. 8), the egocentric person is intent upon expressing self regardless of the people around him, but the absolutistic person seeks to follow a somewhat more complex (sacrificial, rigid) way of life so that the future will bring a suppressed, desired reward. Table IV
suggests an approach to education that should meet the special needs of absolutistic students.

TABLE IV

AN ABSOLUTISTIC (LEVEL FOUR) APPROACH TO EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System</th>
<th>Motivational Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluation Strategy</th>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Facility Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>Negative consequences</td>
<td>Objective testing</td>
<td>Specific procedures</td>
<td>Lecture hall; physically comfortable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning system.—The absolutistic student learns best under a system of punishment rather than reward because he is extremely sensitive to punishment and will expend great effort to avoid it. Beck (5, p. 9) contends that learning is best accomplished by getting the absolutistic student to avoid that which will lead to punishment. Graves (22, p. 86) states that the absolutistic student perceives a lack of punishment as a lack of learning, yet he cautions that one must not overuse punishment with such students; the overuse of punishment may produce rigid patterns in the absolutistic student's behavior that are very difficult to change. Unfair use of punishment leads either to no learning or negative, hostile learning. Graves refers to the absolutistic system of learning as "avoidant learning" (22, p. 85). The entire learning strategy for the absolutistic student should be orderly and systematic; learning objectives should be
established and the plan for accomplishing these objectives should be written in a very specific manner. Keefe (33, pp. 112-113) suggests that individuals who are similar to the absolutistic student respond best to material that is concrete and specific.

The absolutistic student is primarily interested in cognitive information and may respond negatively to affective learning; he may, in fact, perceive activities that contribute to affective learning to be a waste of time. He is intent upon paying the price for future reward; therefore, the activities assigned by the instructor should be difficult, requiring concentration, and punishment should be administered when established rules are broken. According to Graves (22, p. 85), withholding punishment when it is due will inhibit the learning process of the absolutistic learner.

Motivational strategy.--The absolutistic student is motivated by possible future negative consequences if he does not perform as expected in the present. Unlike the egocentric student (who is motivated by reward), Mowrer (38, p. 28) contends that an absolutistic student is motivated by the fear of punishment, and he will do almost anything to avoid it. Mowrer further suggests that such students are motivated within an educational environment in which they know what is expected of them and the consequences of not
fulfilling those expectations. According to Park (40, pp. 208-209), one possible motivating strategy for students who are fearful of punishment is the grading system; if poor grades are perceived as punishment, such students will exert great effort to avoid them.

**Evaluation strategy.**—The absolutistic student responds to material that is concrete in nature and which is presented in a straightforward manner. Dembo (14, p. 400) suggests that tests should be objective so that questions have very precise answers; the essay test is not the best format to use with absolutistic students because it is difficult for them to formulate specific answers. Gronlund (26) believes that tests communicate to such students whether or not they are meeting set standards.

**Classroom management.**—Management of the absolutistic student is relatively easy; seldom is such a student a discipline problem. Keefe (33, pp. 112-113) implies that the most important things that an instructor should provide in classroom management are specific, clear guidelines for behavior and procedures; these guidelines might deal with such issues as homework, in-class behavior, tests, attendance, late work, and grading procedures. Kandel and Lesser (32, pp. 214-215) believe that the instructor should administer punishment for infractions of the guidelines. Keefe (33, p. 112) contends that students who are similar to absolutistic
persons prefer a formalized system of communication in the classroom. They are uncomfortable communicating with the instructor on a one-to-one basis; they are most comfortable with academically related communications.

Facility design.—The design of the classroom for the absolutistic student is unlike the tribalistic and egocentric classroom. The traditional classroom, with its rows of desks, usually serves the absolutistic student quite well. The room should be comfortable but not elaborate. An acceptable absolutistic classroom might contain a large number of desks that are attached to the floor in lecture-hall style. Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 112-113) contend that the traditionally oriented student expects only a comfortable place to sit and write in a room in which he can hear and see the teacher.

The Achievist Level (Level Five)

The achievist student learns in an active manner that is similar to that of the egocentric student. Graves (24, p. 9) points out that unlike the less-complex egocentric student, however, the achievist does not demand immediate reward. An approach to education for the achievist is presented in Table V.

Learning system.—According to Mager and McCann (35, p. 23), the achievist student learns best when the outcome of
TABLE V
AN ACHIEVIST (LEVEL FIVE) APPROACH TO EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System</th>
<th>Motivational Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluation Strategy</th>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Facility Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectancy</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Reward; risk</td>
<td>Shared control</td>
<td>Contemporary furniture; moveable seating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

his behavior meets his expectations; he will gladly behave in a particular manner if he is certain that he will get the reward he expects, yet his performance is greater when some risk is involved. Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 88-89) suggest that a student who is similar to the achievist student learns best through his own effort and when the process involves many different kinds of experiences (e.g., research, group work, role playing). Dunn and Dunn (15, p. 23) further suggest that if such students do not find the content challenging and useful, they will exert little effort to learn.

The instructor of the achievist student should spend appropriate time presenting the validity and usefulness of the material and relating it to long- and short-term goals. If the student believes that the material is of value, he will usually exert the necessary effort to learn it.

Dunn and Dunn (15, p. 32) contend that numerous techniques should be employed in teaching the achievist-oriented student because he tires quickly of a single approach. Acceptable techniques of instruction are research, problem-
solving, games, testing, group activities, paper writing, interviewing, and class presentations. Graves (22, pp. 78, 85) refers to this strategy as "multiplistic."

It should be noted that the lecture method of teaching is not emphasized. Of the first five levels of existence, the fifth level is the most complex and least dependent upon the instructor. For the achievist student, the instructor functions best in the role of a resource person. Unlike the absolutistic student (who is dependent upon the instructor to determine learning objectives), Johnson and Johnson (31, p. 7) contend that a competitive student feels the need to set his own learning goals. The instructor and student should jointly design a set of individualized learning strategies in order to accomplish the goals set by the student.

Motivational strategy.—According to Tolman (51, p. 230), the basic motivational factors for some students is success. These students are motivated to learn if they perceive the material to be useful to their personal achievement. Because success is such an important factor, achievement-oriented students respond positively to an instructor who appears to be successful (9, p. 13). Unlike the egocentric student (who is motivated by immediate pleasure), achievist students can deny immediate pleasure for a higher level—future reward.

Evaluation strategy.—Education is important to the competitive, achievist student because it is a measure of success
or failure. Dembo (14, p. 397) suggests the use of the bell-curve approach to grading because (a) it determines a level of success that is based upon the student's performance in relationship to the rest of the class, and (b) it creates the element of risk, which is an essential part of the achievist learning system. Without risk, it is difficult to maintain the energy level of such students; the bell curve insures that some will fail (risk), and it also insures that some will succeed (reward). The Harvard Business School is an example of an institution that uses the bell curve to introduce the element of risk into the evaluation process (5, p. 72).

Classroom management.—Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 64-65) suggest that many achievist students are most comfortable in an environment in which they sense some control in regard to their learning. This is accomplished by allowing easy access to other students and the instructor, as well as the freedom to make some personal decisions. If the student has a problem that can be solved by another student or the instructor, he should have the freedom to consult them; the same policy should hold true for use of equipment and information facilities. Even though the role of the instructor is less dominant with the achievist student, it is still important for the instructor to retain control of the class. Dembo (14, pp. 143-146, 160) believes that this is accomplished when the instructor is competent—interpersonally and academically.
Facility design.—According to David and Wright (13, pp. 89-90), the physical environment of the classroom for success-oriented students should be tasteful and communicate a sense of success. For students who learn in a multiplistic fashion, Dunn and Dunn (15, p. 26) contend that the physical environment should provide areas for numerous kinds of activities; there should be areas for lecture, small-group work, one-to-one interaction, working alone, and places where work in progress can be left undisturbed. Furniture should be easily moved, depending upon the activity. For instance, a small group of achievist students may need to be together for the entire period it takes to complete a project, but the arrangement of furniture and equipment may need to be totally different for the next learning activity.

The Sociocentric Level (Level Six)

According to Graves (22, p. 75), some achievist students reach the point at which they tire of continually seeking success and social recognition; personal success is no longer as important as certain values such as belonging, acceptance, and knowing one's self. When an individual reaches the sociocentric level of existence, the appropriate educational approach changes. Table VI presents a sociocentric approach to education.

Learning system.—At the sociocentric level, students acquire new knowledge through observation. Graves (22, p. 85)
suggests that learning occurs when the student watches others respond to an event; he also suggests that many kinds of knowledge can be acquired without any direct external reinforcement or engagement in the behavior observed by the student. Graves (22, p. 78) calls this system of learning—in which students learn by watching other people and observing how they react—"observational." Learning seems to occur more effectively when the sociocentric student can see the relationship of the content to things around him. Bandura (2, p. 12) suggests that some students respond best when they can see the overall concept, and they dislike the practice of dissecting a concept.

Bandura (2, pp. 22-24) also places value on providing the students with opportunities to view others respond to varying circumstances. This can be accomplished through role-play situations, small-group activities, educational games, and open discussions. Bandura (2, pp. 138-139) contends that the people-oriented student places significant value on
understanding himself and the people around him; consequently, time and opportunities should be provided for such students to do so.

**Motivational strategy.**--Graves (22, p. 79) suggests that personal growth, affiliation, relationship development, and harmony with the human element are motivational factors for sociocentric students; the sociocentric student is motivated to learn when he can relate what is being learned to one of these values. He will respond favorably so long as the learning activity does not ridicule or harm fellow students. Milhollan (37, pp. 118-119) argues that any activity that encourages affiliation and harmony is acceptable motivation, while activities that cause competition (winning or losing) are perceived by many students as negative.

**Evaluation strategy.**--Evaluation for the sociocentric student should be handled very carefully. If the evaluation process is perceived by such students as a negative experience, a great deal of damaging dissonance will be produced. Evaluation should be approached from a very positive perspective, with emphasis upon what was accomplished, not upon what was incorrect. While this is true for most students, it is especially important to sociocentric students. The instructor should continually tell his sociocentric students that evaluation is not a judgment upon the worth of a person; rather, it is an indicator of personal growth. When
possible, Dembo (14, pp. 81-82) believes that grades should be discussed on a one-to-one basis, instructor to student.

**Classroom management.**—Usually, the sociocentric class is easy to manage; since getting along is a premium value, the instructor has to exercise little classroom control. The most important job of the instructor is to create an emotionally warm atmosphere in which the value of each student is recognized. According to Milhollan (37, p. 119), opportunity should be provided for interaction and relationship development among students. Conflict is possibly the most severe problem that can occur in a sociocentric class; these students avoid conflict at all costs because it creates great internal stress. Gazda and others (19, p. 17) say that the people-oriented person may sometimes assume guilt for the conflict between other persons, and this can have damaging side affects. In fact, the suicide rate is higher for students who are at the sociocentric level than for those at any other level of existence (5). Milhollan (37, p. 120) contends that the instructor should help students deal with conflictive issues through guidance into constructive confrontation.

**Facility design.**—The sociocentric individual functions well in a warm, pleasant physical environment in which the colors are warm and stimulating. Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 117-118) suggest that the environment should be flexible to allow
for numerous kinds of activities. David and Wright (13, pp. 92-93) contend that there should be areas with architectural barriers so that students can have privacy for one-to-one communication and small-group work, but the classroom should also have an area that is large enough for lectures and activities that involve the entire class. Activities that involve the entire class allow these students to experience the sense of affiliation that is so important to the sociocentric individual.

The Existential Level (Level Seven)

The individual who is at the existential level of existence has a much clearer cognition of himself and the world around him than do individuals at lower levels. As indicated in Table VII, education at this level takes forms that have not appeared at the first six levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System</th>
<th>Motivational Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluation Strategy</th>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Facility Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situationally</td>
<td>Internal satisfaction</td>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
<td>Dependent upon situation; varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning system.—Because of his complexity, it is difficult to project how the existential student learns. Since he has evolved through the first six levels of
existence and reached the first being level, the existential student can and does learn in numerous ways. How such a student learns is related to the time and the nature and amount of interest in the problem. For the existential student, Graves (22, p. 85) believes that knowledge exists in specific settings; what was true yesterday may not be true today; "several interpretations of any phenomenon are always legitimate, depending upon the purpose, the point of view, and the objective." This concept is in direct contrast to that of the absolutistic student, who sees knowledge in concrete terms. How the existential student thinks is often confusing in that it changes as the problem changes.

The design of appropriate instructional strategies requires flexibility because of the numerous ways in which the existential student learns. According to Keefe (33, p. 117), one of the jobs of the instructor is to pose problems for the student and provide different ways of approach; the student makes the decision as to which approaches to use. Graves (24, pp. 16-17) contends that what the existential student really wants is autonomy and the freedom to solve problems in his own manner. To make him conform to one particular mode of instruction is to stifle his learning. According to Neill (39, p. 112), when a student is forced to adopt a particular approach to learning, acceptable work is usually done but the work will seldom be more than just acceptable. Such a student's standard response in such
instances may be to do what is only absolutely necessary and fade into the background.

**Motivational strategy.**—The existential student is motivated almost entirely by internal satisfaction. If he finds an activity pleasurable or of value, he will be highly energetic. He is not motivated by authority, social approval, grades, a way of life, or peer pressure. Unlike the sacrificial levels of existence (tribalistic, absolutistic, and sociocentric), external pressures play no part in the motivational framework of the existential individual. Neill (39, p. 39) believes that many students are highly motivated when they are allowed maximum personal freedom to do what needs to be done, in a manner that they perceive as best.

**Evaluation strategy.**—Grades have little or no meaning to the existential student because little value is placed upon externally created criteria. The important elements to the existential student are the criteria that he sets for himself, and the most important criterion in any learning activity is whether or not the activity is meaningful. Milhollan (37, p. 117) believes that if a student feels the need for external evaluation, he will place a great value on the judgment of the instructor or another competent person. This evaluation usually takes the form of a dialogue between student and instructor, during which they evaluate the student's progress together. Milhollan (37, pp. 110-111)
also believes that evaluation is worthwhile only if it is a tool for personal growth and improvement.

Classroom management.—Classroom management is seldom an issue in the teaching of existential students. Overmanagement of these students only prohibits their learning. The existential student believes that he is equal to (not better than) anyone in the class—including the instructor. As a result, if he feels that he is competent to make a decision, he also feels that he should be allowed to do so. Milhollan (37, pp. 117-120) believes that the role of his instructor is to advise—not control or direct—only when necessary. Holt (27, p. 212) believes that one of the best ways to manage a student is to let him manage himself; if he begins to move in the wrong direction, he can be redirected through rational reasoning.

According to Graves (22, p. 76), the existential student dislikes a formal communication system; he prefers the freedom to go directly to the person who has the information he needs, and he becomes very negative when he must waste time going through channels that require him "to explain what does not need to be explained to people who do not need to have it explained to them." If he needs information from the president of a college or the principal of a school, he wants the freedom to go directly to that person.
Facility design.--Bass (4, p. 23) contends that the design of the classroom is not as important for the higher-level student as it is for students at some of the lower levels of existence. Such students can learn in most environments, and if the environment is relatively comfortable, they are happy. Since the existential student often works alone in his own style, the classroom may serve no function. Bass (4, p. 22) suggests that more mature students may work in numerous places--at home, in the library, or under a tree.

The Experientialistic Level (Level Eight)

As the individual moves from the existential to the experientialistic level of existence, designing an approach to education becomes increasingly difficult. Toffler (50, p. 416) speaks of such a student as one who is motivated by the desire to acquire knowledge and understand the world around him; his whole lifestyle is an approach to learning. Table VIII illustrates the experientialistic approach to learning.

TABLE VIII
AN EXPERIENTIALISTIC (LEVEL EIGHT) APPROACH TO EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning System</th>
<th>Motivational Strategy</th>
<th>Evaluation Strategy</th>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Facility Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experientiality</td>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>World relevance</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
<td>Library; office space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning system.—Because the experientialistic student is so much in tune to experiencing the world and understanding its problems, he learns in an experiential manner. It is by dealing with a particular issue of life that the experientialistic person learns. Illich (30, pp. 103-104) contends that much learning occurs in a hands-on fashion. Such a student's learning will not result from a state of fear, but from a state of confidence in himself. Like the existential person, learning will occur in numerous ways. Illich (30, pp. 112-113) believes that the mode of learning should be determined by what is the best method to use to acquire the information that is necessary in order to deal with a particular issue. According to Barnes (3, p. 14), when no information is available regarding an issue, the future learner most likely will form a small study group to research the issue and provide the necessary information.

Motivational strategy.—Motivation for learning at the experientialistic level comes from the student's own experiences, according to Graves (22, p. 86). Because motivation comes from within, it is difficult to provide external motivation; however, as the experientialistic individual encounters issues that he does not understand or that he perceives as relevant, he is naturally motivated. According to Yankelovich (52, p. 24), relevance is of extreme importance; irrelevant information or learning is perceived as a total
waste of time. Like the existential student, forcing him to learn useless information is to invite a hostile response.

**Evaluation strategy.**—Traditional evaluation procedures and external criteria are of no value to the experientialistic student. Any evaluation that occurs, he does himself. Yankelovich (52, p. 73) supports the idea of an individual setting his own criterion for evaluation. Generally, the criterion will be related to how the study affects his life and the world in general; in other words, evaluation is deemed as positive if the study is of personal and worldly relevance (50, p. xxiii). The experientialistic person may seek feedback from knowledgeable authorities, but the final evaluation is done by himself.

**Classroom management.**—As with the existential student, classroom management is a very minor issue. According to Yankelovich (52, pp. 14-17), many such students demand free access to information and persons who can aid them. To force such individuals to go through a formalized system to get information causes them to withdraw and become hostile. Because the learning system of the experientialistic student is based upon experiencing an issue, Illich (30, pp. 63-64) believes that the creation of rules and formalized procedures only hinder the learning process. The formal class technique may not apply to the experientialistic student; in all likelihood, a small group (tribe) of people, who are
concerned with the same issue, will work together. Illich (30, pp. 133-134) believes that learning groups will be constantly changing as individuals solve and create new issues.

Communication should be allowed to occur spontaneously as needs arise. To formalize communication in the world of the experientialistic individual is to limit his effectiveness. Communication should occur as soon as the need arises; if the student needs to talk with someone regarding an issue of learning, he should be able to do so immediately. Milhollan (37, p. 121) believes that making such a student set up an appointment and wait several days will only discourage him; it may also cause hostility and cynicism.

**Facility design.**—The structure and design of classroom facilities are of little importance to the experientialistic student. He should be relatively comfortable and have easy access to other students and his instructors. Because he often works in small groups, space and moveable furniture should be available. The school building (classroom) may become an information bank (a place where information is stored). Propst (43, p. 332) envisions the school building of the future as a library-type building that houses books, periodicals, films, laboratory equipment, and computer terminals; its primary function will be to distribute information to the experientialistic learner. This building should also contain office space for authorities in particular
areas. With this facility design, Barnes (3, p. 16) contends that the learner would have easy access to both information and individuals who could give guidance as needed for the solution of individual learning issues.

Student Groupings by Levels of Existence

In a normal class, it is highly probable that one would find students who are at several different levels of existence. To provide a learning approach for students at each level of existence in the same classroom may be impossible. Cross (12, p. 33) suggests that one viable option would be to group students into classes by like levels of existence. With this arrangement, the instructor can design one overall approach that utilizes the students' optimum learning system and motivational needs. Grouping students by their particular levels of existence can provide the best possible learning environment for their needs; it will also aid students in moving further up the hierarchy. To place a student in a learning environment where he is most effective and content is to affirm who he is as a person. According to Keffe (33, p. 88), when a student is placed in an environment in which fellow students learn in the same manner, the student is allowed to experience the maximum behavioral and intellectual freedom of his level of existence. Graves (22, p. 81) contends that "today, we endeavor to teach children to be what they are not. That is, we prevent them from reaching higher into the existential hierarchy by preventing them from
acting out the levels of existence on which they are actually living."

One of Graves (23) major contentions is that the human personality is not static—a student's level of existence changes. When a student shows movement to the next level of existence, Dembo (14, pp. 53-56) believes that he should be placed in a new setting in which other students are facing the same set of conceptual problems. Exposure to students who are facing the same existential problems firms the moving student's new way of thinking and encourages movement to the next level of existence. A student who is entering a new level of existence should be grouped with other students who are entering the same level. A student who is consolidating his level of existence should be placed with like students. When a student begins to question his particular level of existence in preparation for a move to the next level, he should be grouped with students who are confronting the same problems. Division of subgroups (entering, consolidating, existing) may not be possible in all learning environments; however, it is essential that an educational system have at least seven approaches to education, one for each fully developed level of existence.

Assessment of Levels of Existence

If one is to group students by levels of existence, the assessment of these levels becomes quite important. When a
student enters a learning institution, significant time should be spent in determining his level of existence. Zenger and Hargis (53, pp. 11-12) believe that assessment should take several forms and should span a period of several days.

The most obvious method of assessment is a pencil-and-paper instrument; this method has a definite value, but it should be only one form of assessment. At present, there exists only one instrument with established reliability and validity that measures Graves' levels of psychological existence (28). The primary problem with this instrument is that it is written for individuals who have completed a high school education. No effort has been made to tailor the instrument for grade levels below the twelfth. Other existing psychological instruments that might be used measure such traits as concreteness-abstractness, cognitive complexity, achievement via independence, flexibility, tolerance, sociability, and dominance (33, pp. 85-86). Great caution should be exercised in the use of any test instrument to determine levels of existence: tests are only tools, and no assessment should be based strictly upon a test instrument.

Another useful tool in assessment is group exercise. By observing students in contrived group situations, one can possibly begin to understand how a student thinks and functions. Traits (competitiveness, independence, need to dominate, need for structure, etc.) can be observed by watching students perform in small groups. James Keefe
(33, pp. 112-122) suggests that numerous kinds of exercises should be utilized; one-to-one exercises, competitive group exercises, exercises strictly for enjoyment, and intergroup exercises (to name a few types) would provide valuable information.

Another excellent form of assessment is the personal interview. A great deal of information can be gathered by simply asking the student questions on both how he likes to learn and life in general. The best way to determine how a student should be educated may be by allowing him to tell the interviewer (18). Dunn and Dunn (15, pp. 4-5) contend that this is especially true with students at the higher, more complex levels of existence.

Another word of caution should be noted regarding the assessment of an individual's level of existence. An accurate assessment should require several days' time. To make an assessment on the basis of limited information may produce an inaccurate finding. Often, similar behavior occurs in individuals who are on different levels of existence; Keffe (33, p. 54) points out that the behavior may be the same, but there are different reasons for it. The tribalist student does his homework because his chieftain figure tells him to; the egocentric student does his homework only if there is a reward; the conformist completes his homework because school rules provide for punishment if he fails to do so; the achievist completes his homework because he
perceives doing so as a way to stay in the good graces of the teacher (which may be of future value); the sociocentric student does his homework to avoid conflict and keep everyone happy; the existentialist completes homework when he finds it meaningful. In each case, the behavior is the same, but the motivation is different. It is only over a period of time that an individual's predominant level of existence can be accurately determined.

The assessment procedure should be an ongoing process. When a student shows signs of movement to the next level of existence, the instructor should recommend that he go through the assessment process. According to Keefe (33, p. 96), if the student is moving to the next level of existence, he should be placed in a new class in which the students are on a like level of existence.

The assessment-center concept is not as difficult to develop as one might think (7). It should be manned by counselors, administrators, and instructors who are familiar with Graves' concepts. The assessors need not be full-time assessors; they could serve on a rotating basis. Bruner (6, pp. 61-62) contends that once a person is trained in basic assessment skills, very little further training or administrative support would be needed.

Instructor-Student Matching

Just as a student should be grouped with students of like level of existence, he should also have an instructor
who is at a complimentary level of existence; ideally, an instructor should teach an approach to education that is congruent with his own style of learning (33, p. 88). Not only does an instructor teach in the same manner in which he learns, but he also has a more personal understanding of the conceptual problems of his students. If it is not possible for an instructor to teach a class of students at the same level of existence as himself, the instructor should teach students who are at a level of existence that is lower than his own. According to Graves (23), it is easier for an instructor to understand the mind of students who exist at a lower level than his because he experienced, at one time, their level of existence. An instructor should not attempt to teach students whose level of existence is higher than his level. For example, a conformist instructor should not teach existential students; on the other hand, it would be acceptable for the conformist instructor to teach tribalistic students.

A student who is firmly established in a particular level of existence responds best to an instructor who is also firmly established in the same level. If a student appears to be questioning his current level, or if a student seems to be moving to the next level, he should be matched with an instructor who is at the next level of existence. An achievist student who appears to be questioning the achievist
level of existence should be placed with a sociocentric instructor.

Summary

This chapter has developed a systems approach to education that is based upon Clare Graves' eight levels of existence theory (23). The individual approach for each level of existence includes the appropriate learning system, motivational strategy, evaluation procedure, classroom management strategy, and facility design. The issues of grouping students and instructors according to levels of existence, and the movement of students from one level to the next also were discussed. The assessment of students' complimentary levels was considered. The systems approach to education seeks to include the learning needs of students at all eight levels of existence, not only the needs of absolutistic and achievist students.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


Summary

The primary purposes of this study were (1) to develop an approach to education that is based on Clare W. Graves' theory of the levels of psychological existence, and (2) to project the development of the experientialistic eighth level of existence. An understanding of Graves' levels of existence was established by submitting descriptions of each of the levels (similar to those found in Chapter II) to a panel of three experts who are familiar with Graves' works. A description of the projected eighth level of existence was also submitted to the panel of experts to insure that the projection of the new level is consistent with Graves' theory in regard to the development of future levels of existence.

Based on this understanding of Graves' theory, an approach to education was designed for each of the eight levels of existence—the reactive, tribalistic, egocentric, absolutistic, achievist, sociocentric, existential, and experientialistic levels. The eight educational approaches were designed to compliment and utilize the characteristics that are unique to each of the eight levels of existence.
The educational aspects of learning systems, the motivational strategies, the evaluation procedures, the classroom management system, and the facility design were considered in the design of the eight approaches to education. Also addressed were the issues of student grouping by levels of existence, assessment of individual levels of existence, and matching of instructor and students by level of existence. The eight individual approaches to education (one for each level of psychological existence) were combined to create a comprehensive systems approach to education.

Summary of the Systems Approach to Education

According to Graves' (2) levels of psychological existence theory, persons at different levels of existence learn in different ways. Based on this theory, therefore, a system of education suggests unique learning environments for persons at each of Graves' levels of existence. The following is a summary of the systems approach to education that was developed in Chapter II.

The Reactive Level

The reactive student learns as he adjusts to his environment through habitation. He is primarily motivated by basic physiological needs and will seek environments that are free of discomfort. Written testing procedures are not appropriate for the reactive student because of his low level
cognitive functioning. The presence of physical stimulation (such as pats and hugs) is perceived by the student as a form of positive evaluation; the absence of such stimulation is interpreted as negative evaluation. The reactive student is best managed in an environment in which there is a strong sense of emotional warmth and physiological security. The ideal reactive facility communicates a strong sense of security (utilizing soft, soothing colors) in a space—which may be the student's living quarters—that is well defined as the student's space.

The Tribalistic Level

The tribalistic student learns best when repetition is a large part of the learning process. He is best motivated to learn when he feels unthreatened; he requires continual assurance from his chieftain figure, who often is his teacher. The ideal evaluation process is one-to-one, in which the instructor is able to give immediate feedback and affirmation to the student. Classroom management for the tribalistic learner should be predictable, and the instructor should exhibit strong classroom control and communicate assurance. The physical learning space should be similar to a home environment in which there are open spaces that allow a constant view of the instructor and other members of the class.
The Egocentric Level

The egocentric student learns best when he is rewarded shortly after learning occurs. He is motivated to learn when he finds it pleasurable and when he knows what the payoff is for him. The egocentric student has no fear of punishment and will most likely distrust most evaluation procedures. Therefore, evaluation procedures should emphasize positive performance; some type of reward should be affiliated with positive performance. The egocentric student should perceive the instructor as strong, warm, and very much in control of the classroom. The design of the learning facility for the egocentric student should be open in order to provide the instructor with a continuous view of all classroom activities; furnishings should be pleasant and designed not only for durability.

The Absolutistic Level

Avoidant learning is the term that describes the primary learning system for the absolutistic students. Extremely sensitive to punishment, the absolutistic student learns best when he is helped to avoid that which will lead to punishment. He is motivated by the possible negative consequences in the future if he does not perform as expected in the present. The absolutistic student is comfortable with and responsive to an evaluation strategy wherein objective tests are the predominant evaluation form. He responds positively
to a style of classroom management in which specific guidelines for behavior and procedures are clearly communicated. The absolutistic student is most comfortable in a traditional classroom that is arranged in lecture-hall fashion.

The Achievist Level

The achievist student responds best to a learning system in which the outcome of his behavior meets his expectations. His best performance will occur when there is some degree of risk involved. His basic motivational factor is success. He is motivated to learn if the material is perceived as useful in regard to his personal achievement. Because competition and risk contribute to the learning system of the achievist student, he responds to an evaluation system wherein he competes with fellow students; the bell curve approach to grading is useful because it determines a level of success or failure that is based upon a student's personal performance in relationship to other students. The achievist student responds to a style of classroom management wherein he shares some control over his learning. Because of his desire to be and appear successful, he prefers facilities that are new, modern, and flexible.

The Sociocentric Level

An individual at this level of existence learns by observing other persons as they learn and react. He values such things as growth, affiliation, relationship development,
and harmony. He is motivated to learn when he can relate new learning to one of the above values. The evaluation procedure for the sociocentric student is most effective when it involves personal affirmation and relates to personal growth. Since the sociocentric student is seldom a management problem, he functions best in an environment in which there are numerous opportunities for interaction and relationship development with fellow students. He is most at home in a physical environment that provides enough flexibility for numerous types of activities.

The Existential Level

The existential student learns in numerous ways that are based upon the situation and nature of the problem. He is motivated to learn if he gets internal satisfaction from the process. He does not respond to such motivational factors as authority, social approval, grades, an accepted way of life, or peer pressure. To the existential student, the most valuable forms of evaluation are the criteria he sets for himself. As the material to be learned changes, the method of evaluation may need to be changed. The best way to manage the existential student (or class of existential students) is to allow him to manage himself. He works best in a physical environment that is comfortable and flexible.
The Experientialistic Level

The experientialistic student learns best when he is in the process of solving a relevant problem; as he experiences problems, he learns. His motivation to learn will be stimulated when he encounters problems that he does not understand but perceives to be relevant. Like the existential student, he will set his own standards and methods of evaluation; these standards will be related to how they impact personal and world issues. The experientialistic student manages himself; to attempt to make him conform to a formalized system of learning often invites such a student to withdraw and become hostile. The design and structure of classroom facilities for the experientialistic student are most functional when they take the form of an information bank from which he has easy access to the information and equipment required to solve the problems he is working on.

Grouping, Assessment, and Student-Instructor Matching

A systems approach to education that is based upon Graves' work requires that students be grouped in a more non-traditional fashion. Because students who are at each level of existence learn in ways that are unique to that level, students learn more efficiently when they are grouped with students of like level of existence.

Central to Graves' theory is the idea that people move from one level of existence to another. Therefore, it
becomes necessary to monitor and assess students' movement among the levels. This is done using an assessment center that utilizes pencil-and-paper tests, group assessments, interviews, simulations, and self-reports.

A systems approach also suggests the need to match students with instructors of like or similar level of existence. For example, an absolutistic teacher might be matched with students who learn in an absolutistic fashion.

**Discussion of a Systems Approach to Education**

The implications of Graves' theory of the levels of psychological existence to education are extensive and significant. Many of these implications suggest the need for an extensive rethinking and reorganization of current educational practices. Following is an examination of some of the educational changes that might occur if the American educational system were to be reorganized around Graves' theory of the levels of psychological existence.

Public education from kindergarten through the twelfth grade would be most affected by the instigation of a systems approach to education. Today, school districts are engulfed in the struggle to find the right approach to education. For example, one large metropolitan school district has been in the throes of such a struggle (6). Displeased with the use of the achievist approach to education, which values innovation, experimentation, constant change, and new programming,
the district is reverting to an absolutistic approach to education, which is characterized by basic instruction, no experimentation in the classroom, a distrust of innovation, strict evaluation procedures, strict attendance policies, and high accountability for students, instructors, and administrators. With this reversal to the absolutistic approach to education, it may be projected that improvement will occur among the absolutistic students in the district; achievist students, however, likely will become frustrated and restless when forced into an absolutistic learning environment. In fact, students at each level of existence other than the absolutistic may suffer when encouraged to learn in an absolutistic learning environment.

This decision by the school district is correct only for the absolutistic students. In order to meet the needs of all students, eight approaches to education should be considered for the curriculum in all school districts—one approach for each level of existence. What is needed is a policy of education that affirms and recognizes the uniqueness of each student, instructor, and administrator.

Graves' theory has implications for higher education as well. Colleges and universities should reevaluate their total approach to education. With the possible exception of very large universities, it would be difficult for institutions to offer an approach to education for each level of psychological existence that is found among students on most
college campuses. In this regard, it would be necessary for institutions of higher education to reevaluate themselves and their goals and become comfortable with the conclusions; if an institution is comprised of sociocentric teachers who are most effective teaching in a sociocentric fashion, the institution should function in a sociocentric manner. Each student should be helped to affiliate with an institution of learning that teaches in a manner congruent with his level of existence. Basically, there is a need for colleges and universities that function at each of the different levels of existence.

The admission procedures to a college or university should include an assessment to determine if the basic level of psychological existence of the student is congruent with the institution's teaching level. If the assessment determines that the student is not compatible with the institution's approach to education, it should be the function of the institution to direct the student to an institution that is compatible with his learning needs. Since his college years are often marked by a student's movement from one level of existence to another, when a student begins to move up (or regress) to the next level, he should be aided in transferring to an institution that can meet his new learning needs.

As previously mentioned, it would be almost impossible for most colleges and universities to offer classes that are
taught in a manner which is appropriate to each level of existence. In some of the moderate-size universities, it might be possible to provide classes for two levels of existence. For instance, classes could be offered for students who are at both the sociocentric and the existential levels. If a sociocentric student began to move to the existential level, he would be able to make a simple move from sociocentric-level classes to existential-level classes without changing institutions.

In the case of large organizations that control several colleges and universities (such as state and religious organizations), a network of schools could be formed. Each college or university within the network could function at a different level of existence. For instance, an absolutistic student would enroll in the college within the network that uses an absolutistic teaching approach; if the student began to move to the achievist level, he could transfer to the network college that utilizes the achievist approach to education.

If and when society emerges onto the experientialistic level of existence, the structure and organization of education may be quite different. Instead of having university departments that are organized by academic discipline, they may be organized by the needs of the society at a given time. For instance, a department might be organized to deal with an issue such as energy needs; one might find the department
consisting of geologists, engineers, agricultural scientists, sociologists, and psychologists, with each instructor approaching the problem from a different perspective. The organization of an academic discipline might be very loosely structured; an individual instructor might function in one department for a period of time and move to another department if and when his interests change or a need arises.

Academic degrees may be structured in a different manner. Students may plan and organize their degrees around specific problems, not necessarily around an academic discipline. As a result, they may take courses in numerous related disciplines instead of in one or two specific areas. Degree plans would be custom designed around the student instead of requiring the student to conform to a predetermined degree plan. It is not impossible to foresee that the value of a formalized academic degree could decrease because of the emphasis placed upon knowledge as opposed to accomplishments.

In the experientialistic world, the role of instructor and administrator may change. The experientialistic administrator could perceive his role as that of an expeditor of instructor needs. The role of the instructor could be to teach, and the role of the administrator could be to take care of paperwork and details so that the teacher can do his job unhindered by extraneous activities (2, pp. 76, 82). "The boss will be the expeditor of subordinates' desires rather than the director of their activities" (2, p. 82).
A system of education that is structured around Graves' levels of psychological existence could go beyond the transfer of information. From Graves' perspective, education also must

1. Take the open student from thinking levels of lower complexity through successive stages to thinking levels of higher complexity;

2. Provide the closed student with that increase in his knowledge and skills with which he can be comfortable and survive and live better as a human being (2, p. 85).

Recommendations for Future Research

Many of the implied and stated applications of Graves' theory regarding education are quite radical. To initiate a total program in a school district or college that is based upon Graves' theory would be both premature and unwise. It is the intention of this work to stimulate formal and informal thinking and research in regard to education and Graves' levels of psychological existence. The areas that warrant research and thought are many.

An institution of learning that is organized around Graves' theory would rely heavily upon an assessment center. In Chapter III, the basic organization of an assessment center was discussed. As the understanding of Graves' theory becomes more sophisticated, so should assessment centers. Research should be initiated that would enable assessment centers to determine if a student is emerging onto a new level of existence, firmly settled in one level, or beginning
to move out of a level. As of today, the best available testing instrument (5) can identify only the primary level of existence of an individual. Graves also contends that some persons exist at open levels of existence, while others exist at closed levels; "an adult lives in a potentially open system of needs, values, and aspirations, but he often settles into what appears to be a closed system" (2, p. 72). Strategies for dealing with closed systems may be different from those designed to deal with open systems.

In relation to assessment centers, another area of needed research is the assessment of students in different age groups. It is more difficult to assess the six year old child, who has limited reading and comprehension skills, than it is to assess eighteen year old students. Presently, there are no instruments that can assess the level of existence of students under the age of eighteen. Assessment strategies for all ages should be developed. Assessment centers would also help instructors to determine their personal level of existence and identify the teaching environment in which they excel.

Graves contends that the more education an individual receives, the more likely he is to move higher up the hierarchy (2). If this is true, the implications for graduate education are significant. At the higher levels of existence (existential and experientialistic), the student works more independently, with little need for close supervision; in
fact, at these levels, students react negatively to close supervision and excessive rules and regulations. As most graduate programs are structured today, students are required to depend upon a major professor and an advisory committee to direct their coursework and writing. Existential and experientialistic individuals have the need to make their own decisions and set their own criteria. If graduate programs cannot provide students who are at the higher levels of existence with the freedom to direct their academic futures, then it is possible that there may be a decrease in the number of students who enter graduate programs.

Another area of research should involve the relationship of instructional strategies and individual levels of existence. Experimental research should validate Graves' contentions that each level of existence learns in a different manner (2, 3). Research of this type would also help to define more clearly the necessary instructional and motivational strategies for each level of existence.

To reorganize any educational system utilizing Graves' theory would be a monumental task. Such research should examine how this reorganization might best be accomplished. All levels of education should be considered—elementary, secondary, college, and graduate. As difficult as the task may seem, school systems exist today that are organized around individual learning systems (1, pp. 682-684).
Graves first encountered persons at the experientialistic level of existence in 1958 (4, p. 10). As of today, however, the level is not yet well developed. Research should continue so that this level can be understood and more clearly defined. Study should begin on the development of the experientialistic level and its implications to society and education.

If one were to suggest that a whole system of education be reorganized around a systems approach to education that is based upon Clare Graves' theory of the levels of psychological existence, there would be immediate protests from administrators, teachers, politicians, and the general public. These protests would come because the idea is so radical and the organization would be so complex. No doubt, the person most qualified to justify a systems approach to education is Graves, himself. In a paper read at the 175th anniversary celebration of the founding of Union College, Graves says,

... if we want a viable, non-attacked educational system, we must organize so as to allow for the kind of growth that is possible rather than for the kind some people deem as desirable.

This means we must discard the idea of a majority educational system. We must develop, instead, a system based to serve, and serve completely, all the kinds of thinking minorities we have in the total system. We must not have a system based on any one or any hybrid way of thinking even if that one system or that hybrid system should happen to fit a majority of the students, a majority of the administration or a majority of the public, or a majority of all of these. To insist on a majority based system is but to invite the kind of
confrontation which we have today. What I am saying, as heretical as it may seem, is that if any educational system has within it a minority way of thinking, even a minority of one, which is distressed by the established way of educating in that system, then it is the responsibility of that system to change. It must change in whatever way is necessary to provide that minority or even that student with the educational means to the kind of growth now possible for that minority or that student (3, p. 7).

Undoubtedly, discussion and research regarding how people learn will continue for a number of years. As scholars consider the notion that persons learn in different fashions, it is to be hoped that Clare Graves' work will give direction and guidance to the search for a more comprehensive, more effective, and more human approach to education.
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