SOMEONE TO TALK TO: CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN FRIENDS IN A JUNIOR HIGH LUNCH ROOM

THESIS

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Quantitative studies dominate early adolescence research, a field which also lacks an understanding of communication behaviors between early adolescents. This study uses the qualitative methods of participant observation and informal interviews to observe conversations between girls in a junior high lunch room. Friendship characteristics and group socialization are discussed as they emerged from the field data. First, friendship hierarchies (best friend, close friend, and friend) may be adult-imposed structures. Hierarchies are not prominent in the minds of friends as they relate to each other in daily conversation. Second, friendship groups serve to socialize early adolescent girls.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Elizabeth still remembered how horrible it had been, having to say goodbye to Amy. Once Amy had moved, it really wasn't the same. (William, 1986, p. 5)

"Enid Rollins, you are the best friend in the whole world," Elizabeth exclaimed. "I mean it Enid," she said again. "I can't tell you how lucky I feel having you for a friend." (William, 1986, p. 12)

She couldn't imagine what it must be like to have a sister, let alone a twin, someone so like yourself in every way. Elizabeth was the closest thing Enid had to a sister. She realized now that she felt very possessive of her. (William, 1986, p. 19)

"Enid, you're fantastic," Elizabeth said, a wave of relief flooding over her. She felt a million times better the second that Enid laughed. It was the first sign that everything was going to be all right between them again. (William, 1986, p. 37)

Elizabeth felt a pang of uneasiness. What if her two best friends didn't get along? she asked herself. What in the world was she going to do then? (William, 1986, p. 50)
And Sandra was a member. The most natural thing in the world would be for Sandra to nominate Jean at the next meeting. Someone else would second her, and Sandra was sure Jeannie would make it through the pledge period and be admitted to Pi Beta Alpha. . . What's wrong with me? Sandra asked herself, hurrying over to Robin's side. Jean's my best friend. So why don't I want her to get into Pi Beta Alpha? (William, 1986, p. 68)

Suddenly Elizabeth felt as though everything might be salvaged. "Great minds think alike," she said, hugging Enid back. "Hey," she added under her breath, "I'm sorry about the car ride. Forgive me?"

"Of course," Enid said, looking at Elizabeth as if she were daft. "Don't you realize I'm your friend?" (William, 1986, p. 110).

These excerpts from Bitter Rivals, one book from a popular series (Sweet Valley High), reflect a common notion of high school friendship and how friends behave toward each other. This series is also popular among junior high school girls and may provide them with models for conduct in unfamiliar situations. Concepts of friendship are not regularly taught in any formal situation; friendship is an experientially learned relationship, like many others. This thesis project will explore how junior high school girls experience and define friendship, as told to and seen by a
participant observer. The following literature review and methodology proposal outline the importance of such a study, and how this study was executed.

Literature Review

Researchers adopt a number of perspectives to explain and illuminate friendships and friendship characteristics. One of the more common methods is a cognitive approach that assumes thinking abilities are directly related to relational capacities. "Reasoning changes in a fixed sequence of stages in which one level of functioning is incorporated and transformed into a qualitatively new way of thinking at the next stage" (Newman & Newman, 1986, p. 65). As cognitive abilities change, perspectives on relationships also change. "With increasing chronological age, children develop a progressively more differentiated and hierarchically organized conceptual system with which to think about and talk about their interpersonal relationships" (Mannarino, 1980, p. 59). Bigelow and La Gaipa (1975) suggest that friendship expectations appear to progress, with chronological age, from "egocentric to sociocentric to empathetic" (p. 858). Bigelow (1977) went on to determine that these three stages are associated with chronological age, but 13- to 14-year-old students still identified characteristics consistent with younger children,
although they, in theory, have progressed from the concrete operational to the formal operational stage (Piaget, 1970). Others have suggested a developmental approach to researching friendships (Peever & Secord, 1973; Duck, Miell & Gaebler, 1980).

In terms of cognitive development, 11- to 14-year-old girls should have begun the transition from concrete operational to formal operational thought (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). This change not only includes more advanced logical abilities, but also "In the realm of language, formal operations raise the young person's appreciation of the subtleties of language" (Elkind, 1980, p. 434). They are able to think more abstractly and begin to think more relativistically and empathetically. According to Bigelow (1977), this age group begins to expect empathy, understanding and self-disclosure from friends, whereas similar moral values, character admiration, common activities and propinquity were previously more important. Early adolescent girls will also prefer friends who are more developmentally advanced than they (Bigelow & La Gaipa, 1980, p. 40).

This focus on cognitive developmental stages enhances our understanding of children's friendships and provides a meaningful framework. The cognitive perspective offers interesting insight into the ability of people to communicate about and within friendships. "The deeper level
of communication essential for intimate friendship is impossible without an adequate conceptual framework of what friendship is all about" (Bigelow & La Gaipa, 1980, p. 39). Therefore, communication and cognitive development are inextricably bound and are reflected in people's friendships.

Psychoanalytic perspectives on friendship development are also heavily cited in friendship literature. Douvan and Adelson's (1966) seminal work posits that early adolescent (11-, 12- and 13-year-old) behavior reflects the "exercise of the ego" (p. 187). This age group is consumed with activity: "thinking, orientation to reality, memory, social perceptions, will, [and] creative activity" (Douvan & Adelson, 1966 p. 11). Friendships at this age focus on doing things together rather than on the relationship itself. It is not until middle adolescence (at 14, 15 and 16 years old) that girls stress loyalty and emotional support in friendships.

Sullivan (1953), another psychoanalyst, suggests that interpersonal fields and communication influence development through stages. People encounter life in three modes: prototaxic, "experience occurring before symbols are used"; parataxic, "experience characterized by symbols used in a private or autistic way"; and syntaxic, communication between people, when symbols are agreed upon by the
interactants (introduction to Sullivan by Cohen, p. XIV). Another important concept developed by Sullivan is dynamism, a person's characteristic way of interacting "with the environment . . . and also in relation to the important needs" like hunger, lust, intimacy, and minimizing anxiety (p. XV).

In early adolescent youth (9 to 12 years), Sullivan states that "the child begins to develop a real sensitivity to what matters to another person" (p. 245). Sullivan also identifies a "need for intimate exchange with a fellow being, whom we may identify as a chum, a friend or a loved one" (p. 261). This perspective relies heavily upon interaction with others to develop the self: "from birth on children's personalities are shaped by relationships with parents, school authorities, siblings and peers" (Buhrmester & Furman, 1986, p. 42). Subsequent studies have supported some of Sullivan's propositions (Bukowski, Newcomb & Hoza, 1987; Buhrmester & Furman, 1986; Tedesco & Gaier, 1988). Bukowski, Newcomb & Hoza (1987) concur with Sullivan that "upon entering early adolescence children increasingly turn to their friends for support and satisfaction of emotional needs" (p. 149).

The psychoanalytic perspective views early adolescents as on the brink of adolescent conflict. This stage is a time for activity, and friendships are formed around common
activities. During the adolescent stage, friendships fulfill need for support and loyalty.

Other researchers focus on friendships and groups of friends as socialization agents. In terms of the group, 11-to 13-year-old people "are very concerned with the norms of the same-sex peer group, figuring out which actions will lead to acceptance and inclusion and which to exclusion and rejection" (Gottman & Mettetal, 1986, p. 197). Among other techniques, gossip serves to transmit group norms (Fine, 1977). "Gossip, for children, is one way to learn about the facts of life and the ways of the world" (Fine, 1977, p. 182).

Members of social clusters influence each other to the extent that they "return consent forms together and drop out of school together" (Cairns, Perrin & Cairns, 1986, p. 352). A question similar to "which came first, the chicken or the egg?" arises in terms of these friendships: are friends similar before they become friends, or does similarity result "from a process of socialization in which association leads to similarity"? (Kandel, 1978b, p. 427). Kandel (1978) concludes that friends choose similar friends. Castlebury and Arnold (1988) support this finding: "groups seem to form along racial and social class lines" (p. 103). Cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) may also explain this phenomenon: people desire consistency in their lives, and
when two perceptions are incongruous, people "rearrange their psychological world to restore consistency" (Smith, 1982). Newcomb (1961) proposes a balance theory, where people who are attracted to each other are probably similarly oriented toward some object, belief or value. Over time, people become more similar as well, as they try to create a sense of symmetry. While friends are similar, they also change over time, and adolescents choose new friends who "confirm and validate the direction of [their] progress by seeking others as friends who reaffirm [their] new and developing outlook" (Duck, 1975, p. 363).

Sex differences in terms of exclusivity have been posited, arguing that girls have more exclusive dyadic relationships, while boys have a greater number of less intimate friends (Douvan & Adelson, 1966). Eder & Hallinan (1978) dispute this claim by presenting data from an open classroom. Their data show that in an open classroom girls' and boys' friendship patterns were similar and suggest "sex differences in friendship patterns are due mainly to socialization differences as opposed to biological differences" (1978, p. 247).

Certainly children's influence upon each other is great, considering the amount of time they spend interacting in school, in extracurricular activities, on the telephone and socially. Social theory sheds light on preadolescents' interaction with peers.
A whole separate arena of research on friendship includes various facets that are not tied to a developmental or social theory. Developmental theories focus on changes in the individual over a period of time. Another line of research concentrates on friendship development, or the stages through which people progress to become friends. In a vein similar to Kandel (1978) and Castlebury and Arnold (1988), Duck proposes a set of filters with which we screen people who are potential friends. "The filters are arranged in sequence starting with such sociological or incidental cues as proximity of dwelling, frequency of meeting, or expectancy of future interactions" (Duck, 1976, p. 138). Potential friends glean information about the other person to "filter the acceptable from the unpromising" (p. 138).

The stability of friendships is another atheoretical tract of research. Berndt & Hoyle (1985) critique the notion that "the stability of friendships is relatively low during childhood and increases regularly with age" (p. 1007). They found that eighth grade students lost more friends than they gained, although hypothetically this age group would be expected to have more stability compared to fourth grade students due to having greater maturity. After conducting a study including first and fourth graders and another with fourth and eighth graders, Berndt and Hoyle
call for research that considers both stability and change as well as individual differences in friendship stability.

Literature reviews on adolescent friendships call for the following: cross-cultural studies (Kon, 1981); research aimed at "specific social processes involved in having a close friend" (Ginsberg, Gottman & Parker, 1986, p. 5); amassing more research on friendships and peer groups, and multimethod studies (Serafica & Blyth, 1985); and investigation into the "processes that operate during friends' interactions to structure and change their relationship" (Berndt, 1982, p. 1458).

Relatively few studies exist which take a communication perspective on early adolescent's friendships. These rarities include Fine (1977) who looks at four components of children's gossip, Elkind's (1980) work on "strategic interactions", and Rawlins (1989) and Rawlins and Holl (1987) who examine tensions in adolescent's communication with parents and peers. Other research focuses on the development of communication skills such as comforting messages (Burleson, 1982), persuasive communication (Bearison & Gass, 1979; Clark & Delia, 1976; Delia, Kline & Burleson, 1979), and listener adapted communication (Delia & Clark, 1977; Ritter, 1979). In all, the focus on communication in friendships in general, and early adolescent friendships in particular, is scarce. This piece of research is an attempt to begin to remedy the situation
by contributing longitudinal, qualitative information to the existing knowledge base.

Methodology

Criticisms of the research on early adolescent friendships pertain to substantive and methodological issues. Positivistic investigations occasionally elicit conflicting conclusions due to the lack of attention to important variables (Berndt & Hoyle, 1985). The naturalistic researcher takes a holistic approach when conducting research; therefore, all aspects of the situation are taken into account. Instead of hypothesizing about one aspect of friendship that the researchers judge important or interesting, they can immerse themselves in the setting and discover what is salient to the participants.

Some friendship researchers advocate qualitative approaches to investigation of friendship: "Direct observational methods are a necessity" (Ginsberg, Gottman & Parker, 1986, p. 4); "Studies of AF [adolescent friendship] [sic] in its natural setting, taking into account socioeconomical conditions, the cultural milieu and the adolescent subculture itself, are needed." (Kon, 1981, p. 203); "Attention to a wider network of variables, as well as the use of other research methodologies (especially longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys) can help [broaden]
others have studied segmented aspects of early adolescent friendships: length of relationship, stability, choice of best friends, similarity between friends. This holistic study, based on qualitative methods, attempts to understand early adolescent girls from "their own frame of reference" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 6). This perspective is under-represented in the literature and deserves more attention. Who knows more about girls' early adolescent friendships than those who are engaged in them?

The remainder of this section will address the various components of "the flow of naturalistic inquiry" as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 217). Comments about the study are based on a pilot study (Adams, 1989).

Observations in the field

Research for this study took place in a junior high school cafetorium (a combination of "cafeteria" and "auditorium"), during the lunch break. In this suburban school, the lunch period is thirty minutes (including passing time to and from the cafetorium), and students are only minimally supervised. Students are able to socialize with whomever they wish, but they may not "table-hop" (move from one table to another) during lunch. Therefore, lunch time interactions should represent natural social conversations between friends. In fact, lunch is one of the
few times that students are allowed to socialize freely at school for any length of time; during class they are engaged in formal learning activities, and passing time between classes (five minutes) is spent getting to another class, passing notes, and exchanging a few words with friends. The only other lengthy blocks of time are before school (after the buses have dropped students off) and after school (before the buses arrive).

In participant observation studies, the researcher can be referred to as the instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sanday, 1983). The researcher "becomes a part of the situation being studied in order to feel what it is like for the people in that situation" (Sanday, 1983, p. 20). The experiences are then recorded in the form of field notes that are used for data analysis. The advantages of using a human as an instrument include the ability to adapt to a situation, where forms or questionnaires cannot. Another advantage is the "human instrument's" ability to use tacit knowledge. A person can test gut feelings, whereas a paper and pencil questionnaire can only solicit the participant's interpretation of the question. The qualitative method provides descriptive data that may be supplemented with other data such as in-depth interviews, official records, focus groups, etc. For this study the data-gathering methods comprise participant observations (which become
field notes), written documents from the participants, short interviews with personnel from the school, sociograms, and unobtrusive measures (i.e., notes passed between students, posters in the hallway).

**Sampling**

"All sampling is done with a purpose in mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 199). In this study, students were selected with regards to grade level (in order to refrain from having three groups of seventh- or three groups of eighth-graders), gender (girls), and willingness to talk to the researcher. This method of convenience sampling was modified throughout the study as students changed lunch periods (due to schedule changes), people moved to sit with other groups, and (during a three-week period) when seats were assigned during lunch. Throughout these changes, I remained with the core groups of students and met new participants who sat with or around the core groups. Sitting with the same people allowed some longitudinal continuity, but as they introduced me to their friends, I also expanded my sample. This method of sampling along with the research design was approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research.

**Data analysis**

While positivistic investigations rely on a priori theory to guide statistical data analysis, naturalistic
inquiry utilizes inductive data analysis. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), this generally involves two steps: coding the data into meaningful bits; then categorizing the resulting bits. Glaser and Strauss (1967) add three more steps to this process: integrating the categories; delimiting the theory; and writing the theory. This method results in "grounded theory," or an explanation of behavior that is based on observed phenomena.

Analysis of data collected in this study was based on this method. The preliminary study (Adams, 1989), which followed the naturalistic paradigm, is an example of such analysis. Three months of field notes from observations of junior high girls were coded, and categories emerging from the pilot study data include "roughhousing," "boyfriends," "interpersonal conflicts," and "deviants." The "friends" category from this study included information about qualities a friend should possess, types of friends, and other characteristics:

Friends are "someone you get along with and someone to talk to" (H19). Sometimes friends spend the night with each other, and you can borrow things from them. When friends move away, you write to them (sometimes they write back).

Best friends can't tell anyone else if you tell them a secret. "Jan said, 'She can't boss people
around', and continued, 'You have to have something in common with them. Like my best friend. . . we like the same food, the same sports, lots of stuff'" (F25).

Friends compliment each other, joke with each other, accuse each other of taking things or saying something, play tricks on one another, and talk behind others' backs. (Adams, 1989)

The "friends" category is the focus of this research.

A tentative theory of early adolescent friendship is posited after careful consideration of all data. Theory explaining the behaviors in this context can only be applied to this particular situation. Transfer of the theory may be appropriate if "similar information is available in both sending and receiving contexts" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 217).

Findings from this thesis could be transferred to other situations if the "thick description" of the context provides a close approximation to those other situations (Ryle, 1971). To allow for transfer to other situations, a portion of this thesis will detail the setting and participants.

Research design

The naturalist lets the focus of the study arise from the context, after first understanding the environment to determine what is important. For example, the researcher may believe boyfriends are significant to the participants
and wants to focus on this topic, but the investigator may find school work or sports to be more primary in the participants' lives. The research design emerges as researchers engage in "continuous data analysis, so that every new act of investigation takes into account everything that has been learned so far" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 209). In the pilot study, I first began looking for indications of interpersonal conflict. As my time in the school accumulated, it became obvious that these people were much more concerned about other areas of their lives such as friendships, boys, and gossip. In other settings, or as these students mature, conflict may be a more predominate facet of life. However, this thesis will focus on an aspect of life that is paramount in this setting: friendship.

**Report style**

The traditional social scientist addresses such concerns as "the statement of the problem," "delimitations," and "definitions of terms," but the qualitative researcher has the task of relating knowledge from a series of experiences in a coherent format.

The case report provides an appropriate style for presenting findings of naturalistic research: 1) the writer can provide a detailed account of the site and participants ("thick description") in order to facilitate transferability (Ryle, 1971); 2) the reporting of multiple realities and
interaction between the researcher and respondents can be more effectively addressed; and 3) the narrative quality of the case report enables the writer to give the reader a sense of "being there" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data and research findings reported in this project reflect the case report format, and direct quotes from field notes and tape recorded conversations support assertions presented.

Rough and final drafts of the resulting case study should be reviewed by the respondents. Because the researcher is attempting to capture the respondents' point of view, she "has an obligation to attend to those inputs and honor them so far as possible" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 211). Unfortunately this piece was not be read by the respondents because they were unavailable (due to school schedules) when the study was written and completed.

Boundaries of the study

Due to continuous data analysis, potential areas of study continually arise. At some point the researcher must narrow the substantive boundaries of the study. In this case, friendships and information that pertains to a friend relationship will limit the study.

Another way of limiting the focus is choosing between the problem (research inquiry), the evaluand (something to be evaluated), and the policy option (questioning the utility of a proposed or existing policy option) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Keeping with the aim of higher education
research (broadening the body of knowledge), and after evaluating the results from a preliminary study, this thesis focuses on a specific problem: what is the role of friendship in preadolescents' lives?

Trustworthiness: validity and reliability

Trustworthiness parallels the conventional criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity. The latter constructs are not applicable to naturalistic inquiry, but Guba (1981a) equates them with more appropriate concepts: credibility instead of internal validity; transferability in place of external validity; dependability in lieu of reliability; and confirmability substituting for objectivity. A number of techniques have been proposed to establish trustworthiness (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985, ch. 11). In this study, credibility is established through "prolonged engagement and persistent observation," triangulation, peer debriefing, thick description, and an audit trail.

Prolonged engagement in the setting is essential to build trust with the participants. Eliciting and understanding participants' views is central to qualitative research. This study has been conducted over a period of seven months (including the pilot study), which is sufficient time to "learn the culture," test misinformation, and build trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301).
Triangulation, the primary method used here, can be achieved through using different sources. Three groups of "informants" are available, and they should give similar information (if posed with the same question, for example). Peer debriefing occurred with fellow graduate students, the major professor directing the study, and noted researchers in the field. Finally, an audit trail has consisted of my signing in and out of the school, as well as my field notes and tape recorded conversations.

After a review of the literature, it became clear that qualitative studies are rare in the field of early adolescent friendship. Most researchers examine fragmented aspects of friendship without understanding either the participants' views or the gestalt of the relationship. Researchers also commonly adopt a perspective (psychoanalytic, developmental, and social theory) that guides the inquiry. While theory-guided research leads to a covering-law approach to understanding friendships, a skewed version of early adolescent friendship is presented because an important aspect is omitted. This thesis recognizes the early adolescents' experience of and perspective on friendship as central to understanding this relationship. The study contributes to our understanding of the communication that takes place in early adolescent friendships by providing the preadolescents' point of view. Subsequent chapters provide a thick description of the
setting and the participants, describe the emergent categories, and define the grounded theory.
CHAPTER II

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

The Setting

The junior high school selected for this study is located in a large southern metropolitan area. The school district is predominantly Anglo and middle class. Approximately 665 students attend this school; classroom size is limited to 24 students with an average of 22 students per class.

The actual building is relatively modern and well maintained; the walls appear to be freshly painted and some of the hallway is carpeted. Posters in the hallways change regularly. When I first started visiting the school I noticed an anti-drug campaign that included posters. During another visit,

I saw a new poster in the hallway that read "The mission of this school is to provide students the opportunity to become responsible citizens and independent lifelong learners by focusing instruction on critical thinking, reading and writing across the curriculum." (H2)
A bulletin board displayed pictures of new students with the title "New Kids on the Block" (a spoof on the name of a popular music group). Decorations in the halls changed regularly. Lockers lined the hallway, with an occasional trash can located unobtrusively in corners.

The entrance of the school was especially appealing. Trees were located in front of the window, and wooden benches deinstitutionalized the blandly painted walls. A trophy cabinet faced those who entered, almost 30 feet away. The front office/reception area was open to the entrance way; no glass or door shielded the secretary. Offices behind the front desk space housed the principal and other administrators.

The building created a courtyard with metal gates guarding spaces between the main building and the gym. Figure 1 illustrates the overall layout. The courtyard was an option for those who finished lunch early, for they could not enter the halls or go to the library.

Students ate lunch in the "cafetorium," which was also used for assemblies and extracurricular events such as choral concerts. Figure 2 contains the floor plan. Hot lunches were available, and a snack line offered salads, hamburgers and french fries on a daily basis. Students could also buy a variety of ice cream treats as well as chocolate chip cookies every day.
Figure 1

Map of the School
Figure 2

Map of the Cafetorium
The school provided long folding tables for the students to sit at during lunch. Unfolded, the tables became two separate areas with four seats on each side. The girls I sat with would regularly save these seats for friends, although technically this was not allowed.

Three faculty members were assigned to lunch duty. During my observations, these were always the same people. Occasionally the principal would sit with other faculty members during the third lunch. If she, or any of the other off-duty faculty, saw undesirable behavior, they would confront the student. Of the three on-duty faculty, one would normally supervise the lunch lines while the others surveyed the cafetorium. A janitor also worked at the trash compactor, where students discarded the remains of their lunches.

The Participants

As previously discussed, the same groups of girls were visited throughout the study, with a few exceptions. In this section, the principle participants will be described.

First Lunch

Mary, a seventh grade student, was a brown-haired, slightly heavy girl. She did not talk much about classes during lunch and reported average grades when others asked about them. Mary's mother and father were divorced, and she and her younger sister lived with their mother. Mary spoke
of visiting her father during breaks. Her father and step-mother were separated and had filed for divorce by the end of the school year. This upset Mary in that her step-mother was the one who bought her good presents.

Mary was a primary member of this lunch group. She seemed to get along well with most of the other members except for one, Lucy. She reported that Charlotte was her best friend on the first day I met her, but later included Kristy and Jenny as best friends. Mary referred to Rochelle, another friend who sat with this group for part of the year, as her "bodyguard." They often borrowed things (like watches, jackets, and money) from each other.

Charlotte, another important member of this group, was also a seventh grade student. She was a little shorter than others in the group and petite, although she once complained of being fat. She was growing her bangs out to the length of her long brown hair.

Charlotte rarely discussed class-related topics. Horses were her love, and she had planned on getting one for Christmas (which did not happen). She said she could keep it on her older sister's property.

Charlotte easily revealed her moods, which were often either joyous or sullen. She was often displeased with one of the other members of the group, which she expressed by talking to them in a sarcastic tone, or ignoring them.
completely. Nonetheless, she was popular with her peers, and people often saved a seat so she could sit by them.

Charlotte once told me she had twenty best friends; on another occasion, DeeDee commented that she had a new best friend every day. Charlotte and Lucy seemed to talk often of going places (like a travelling fair) and doing things (spending the night, swimming, and shopping) together.

Lucy was one of the three eighth grade girls who sat at this table. She had brownish, thick, curly hair and wore thick glasses that slid down to the middle of her nose. Lucy was pudgy, but seemed unconcerned. She once spoke of being on a diet and how she was learning to eat sensibly.

Apparently Lucy was the oldest child in the family. She spoke of her younger sister and her baby sister (who was less than a year old). Her father either owned a limousine service or drove for one.

Lucy talked about buying things and having "luxuries" like a swimming pool. While the other girls may have perceived this to be bragging, I think Lucy was trying to share stories and include herself in the group conversation.

Lucy spoke of going to the resource room (for learning disabled students), and from what I saw, her spelling was not average for an eighth grade student.

Charlotte was consistently reported as Lucy's best friend; however, Mary had accused Lucy of "buying"
Charlotte. Perhaps this was the source of animosity between Mary and Lucy.

Josey joined this group after the semester change. She always brought her lunch to school, because she "would rather starve than eat that garbage." A seventh grader, Josey had long dark brown hair surrounding her round face. She spoke with a lisp, but it was not distracting.

Grades and school were a priority for Josey. She was in "honors" math and constantly asked other students what grades they got. She was dismayed one day when comparing her math book with others at the table, because she found that every one else had learned what she was learning.

Charlotte often admonished Josey for telling the same story over and over. Josey's attempts at conversation and questions to the group were sometimes ignored, or answered curtly. She got along best with DeeDee, but did not know who her best friend was. Even though she was pushed to the fringes of the group, she sat down to lunch with a positive attitude almost every day.

DeeDee, a seventh grade student, had the first lunch for the whole year, and occasionally sat with the group during the first semester, but became a regular member during the second half of the year. Of the rest of the group, she seemed the most self-confident. She always sat up straight and contributed her comments with assurance.
DeeDee identified Josey as a close friend and another girl who did not sit with the group as her best friend.

Karla and Jenny sat with the group the majority of the time. Their ties to the group strengthened over the school year. Karla was originally a rival of Mary's, but by the end of the school year, they were promising to call each other over the summer. Both Karla and Jenny were eighth grade students, and their bodies were more mature than the seventh graders'. Jenny adopted a mellow rock-n-roll image, and dressed in black, a contrast to her blonde hair. Karla often wore outfits similar to cheerleaders'--a short skirt with tennis shoes and bobby socks.

Although these two identified with the group, they usually sat at the table next to Charlotte, Mary and the rest. Karla and Jenny consistently yelled derogatory comments at the boys who sat at the table across from theirs. This seemed to amuse the teacher on duty who would come over and ask the girls why they sat there if the boys bothered them so much.

Rene invariably sat with Mary during the first semester. She was a sixteen-year-old eighth grade student who had transferred from another school. Rene acted more maturely than others in this group; she spoke of boyfriends, dates, and her high-school-aged friends. Perhaps this is why she began sitting with another group during the second semester.
While the girls in this group reported they were friends, talk at the table indicated animosity between some people. I wondered if the occasionally shunned group members sat there only because they couldn't think of another place to sit. Josey, DeeDee and Lucy were definitely on the fringes of the group. Charlotte, Mary, Jenny and Karla had the strongest personalities. Figure 3 presents a sociometric representation of their relationships.

Second Lunch

In comparison to the first lunch group, this one was much more cohesive and inclusive of members. These girls were all eighth grade students who constantly looked forward to getting to high school where cute boys abound. They were more willing to answer questions about their friendships and other topics and tended to ask me abstract, intellectual questions ("Which is the more important part of the library, the librarian or the books?"). Although they complained of the uselessness of the knowledge they were acquiring, good grades mattered to them. People in this group regularly saw each other outside of school. They planned celebratory activities, like a day of movies, shopping, and eating out when school was over.
Figure 3

Sociogram, First Lunch

DeeDee

Lucy

Charolette

Mary

Kristy

Jenny

strong positive

strong positive most of the time

some anomosity

uncharted relationships are not confirmed by the researcher
Paula was the first person from this group to speak with me. Most of the other students asked "Are you a teacher?" then "Are you an evaluator?"; Paula asked, quite casually, "So what do you teach here?". She was the most talkative member of this group.

Paula's parents immigrated to the U.S. from India. Paula was adamant that she not be forced into an arranged marriage, although she thought her parents' marriage had worked out well. She was a vegetarian, with long black hair, fine facial features, and braces. Her parents didn't give her an allowance, but supplied her with money when she went shopping or out with her friends.

Her best friend was Melinda, and they had known each other for at least three years. Their friendship started in elementary school. Paula was outgoing, and seemed to be the link between this group and another which sat at the adjoining table. When the other group and Melinda transferred to third lunch at the beginning of the second semester, Melinda sat with another friend, not the other group.

Melinda was short and petite with long blonde hair. One of her teeth was silver, and it was visible when she smiled. She spoke often, but could also remain quiet; she seemed to talk only when she had something to say. Although she was not the "ringleader" of this group, she was an organizer. People's lockers were decorated as a result of
her efforts and she rallied for getting the group together outside of school. Aside from Paula, she was close friends with Joy, with whom she sat when they had third lunch together.

Jess, a tall blonde with naturally curly hair and braces, was probably the most athletic of the group. She was enrolled in a private dance studio and also participated in school sports. School work was not as important to Jess as it was to the other girls, but she telephoned her friends for help with homework. She called Melinda for math, Paula for English, Joan for social studies, for example. I'm not sure if she was slow, or just enjoyed saying "I don't get it," and then a few seconds later "Oh, I get it" during lunch conversation.

Jess' best friend was not a part of this group, as she lived in another state. She identified most of the others who sat with her as close friends.

Joan also sat with this group, but was quiet much of the time. She spoke only when she had something to say. However, if something were important to her, she would be adamant about voicing her opinion. A Taiwan native, she ate food others thought was weird, but she dressed very fashionably. Joan spoke of going shopping almost every weekend. She loved high fashion stores like The Limited.

Joan was planning a trip to Taiwan for the summer with her family. Sometimes she spoke of how differently people
in Taiwan dressed, or of other distinguishing features of her native culture (such as the different hours for attending school).

Her family consisted of her mother, father, and an older brother. Joan complained that her parents threatened to put a lock on the refrigerator because they thought she was getting too fat, an accusation that appeared unfounded. Her brother drove her places, but only if she begged. She had no major criticisms of him.

Joan's close friends were those who sat at this lunch table, but her "good friend, almost to best" was a Taiwanese girl who attended another school. This friend was returning to Taiwan with Joan during the summer.

Marleen, a girl with long dark hair and a quick smile, was another member of this group. She seemed self-assured, but also wanted approval from her peers. Her comments and contributions often ended with a "you know?" that truly wanted a reply. Marleen was neither vocal nor quiet, but participated in group discussions. She seemed to be a little depressed near the end of the year, which I think was related to Jess' criticism of her. Jess condemned Marleen's practice of asking others if they would go and stand in the lunch line with her while she purchased cookies or french fries. Jess thought this was immature.
Marleen's father was a student at a local university; her mother worked and also sewed Marleen clothes, among other things. Her family had recently moved from Louisiana and had lived in Arkansas before that. Her best friend, with whom she corresponded by mail, lived in Arkansas. She considered all of the girls who sat with her at lunch to be close friends.

Delores began sitting with this group during the second semester. She hardly spoke unless directly asked a question, but when she spoke, her voice was strong and confident. She was also Indian, and had fine facial features. Delores wore glasses, but at the end of the year she said she would be getting contact lenses. Her mother would get her contacts on the condition that Delores would start wearing make-up. Although Delores' best friend was Joy, she was also very close with Paula and Melinda.

Other names appear in field notes because two weeks before the winter holiday, students sat in assigned seats during lunch. I was given permission to sit with the girls, but they were not all sitting near each other. Girls from the group introduced me to other students who were sitting around them. (I rotated, sitting with different people during this time.) Figure 4 diagrams the girls' relationships from second and third lunch.
Third Lunch

At the onset of this study, I began sitting with a group of seventh grade girls during third lunch. They spoke with me for a few visits, but then shunned me: "Sorry, that seat's saved." I quit going to this period until Melinda was transferred from second to third lunch. I then visited with her and her friend Joy.

FIGURE 4

SOCIOMGRAM, SECOND AND THIRD LUNCH

Melinda ↔ Joy

Paula ↔ Delores

Jess ——— Marleen

Joan

strong positive ———
strong positive most of the time ———
some anomosity ———
uncharted relationships are not confirmed by the researcher
Joy was also an eighth-grade-student, and somewhat precocious, both physically and emotionally. Her long brown hair surrounded her freckled face. She was excited about getting her braces off about six months after school ended. Joy and Melinda would spend their entire lunch periods gossiping, if enough information were available. Joy adored talking about other people.

Joy's family purchased a house in a nearby city in May, but they did not actually move in until after school had ended. Her family comprised her mother and father, plus her 15-year-old brother. Joy did not often complain about her brother, except that he listened in on her phone conversations.

Mindy sat with Joy and Melinda for a few weeks at the beginning of the second semester. She rarely contributed to the conversation, for her topics were inappropriate. No one would respond to her stories about her uncle's girlfriend who had a baby last night. Before long she was sitting with another group. When asked about this, Joy explained that Mindy never had any good stories, and that she was just too weird to sit with them. Melinda thought that Mindy still liked them, but that she just preferred to sit with other people.
CHAPTER III

DATA ANALYSIS

Because categories are not preordained, analysis of qualitative data is generally inductive. Data analysis is a process of physically sorting "units" of related data into piles while constantly comparing each unit with the others in that pile as well as with all of the other categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process is executed throughout the research project, not just once after all the data have been collected.

Absolute guidelines for data analysis are nonexistent. In fact, Sieber (1976a, cited in Miles, 1983) charges that texts describing qualitative research devote only 5 to 10 percent of total pages to discussing this crucial stage of research. The method used in this project will follow procedures advocated by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Taylor & Bogdan (1984).

Individual units of data were coded with a number and letter (for field notes), or a number and a letter preceded by a "T" (for tape recordings). A unit is "the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). The units were then physically cut apart and grouped according to themes and
typologies (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Units that were not heuristic were then discarded. An example of such information would be

By the time I had reached the hallway with the language arts classrooms, the teachers were gone to lunch. I poked my head in a classroom, but it was empty. An adult who was walking down the hall asked what I wanted. (E5)

Figure 5 illustrates how each unit of the field notes was categorized.

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Figure 5

**Categorization of Field Notes**

Mary had turned so that she was angled away from Sue, and facing toward Charlotte. Sue was mainly talking with me.

Lucy was eating a corn dog on a stick, a "big fat one", as Mary pointed out. She then looked at Charlotte and said, "I didn't mean it like that, get your mind out of the gutter." Mary continued, "My mind isn't in the gutter, it's in the bedroom."
Charlotte had been eating her sandwich, more or less ignoring the conversation. Her reply to Mary was, "I didn't say anything. What are you talking about?" in a quizzical sort of "are you kidding?" tone.

Rochelle was eating a barbecued rib sandwich and had complained that her chicken sandwich on Friday had been raw. Sue commented that Brandy's mom loved McRibs, and the last time they were at McDonald's, she ordered five of them.

Lucy and Charlotte were talking about the facial that Charlotte had given Lucy over the past weekend.

Whenever possible, the categories of units were linked together to develop concepts or propositions. A proposition is a rule or statement grounded in the data. "It is through concepts and propositions that the researcher moves from description to interpretation and theory" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 133). Concepts are developed in three ways: by labeling categories with words from participants' language that capture the meaning of their thought or action; by making sense of two categories with a concept; or by identifying themes which tie categories together.
Categories, Concepts and Propositions

When sorting these units, a problem of categorizing in terms of relationships arose. For example, people who were best friends at one point were not always best friends later. Therefore, some relationships were coded according to my best interpretation of the relationship at the time. The following excerpt was coded under "Activities, Best Friend" because I believe at least one of the girls thought the other was a best friend at the time of the incident:

Charlotte: Last night when I was taking my shower I was like really dark. Like ten times darker.
Brenda: How did you get dark?
Lucy: We laid out all day at my swimming pool.
Charolette: In the forty degree pool! (TB4)

Another challenge was in distinguishing between best friends, close friends, and friends. I will argue later that these are arbitrary labels for fluid relationships, and that the girls do not think of each other in terms of a hierarchy unless pressed to do so. However, for the purposes of data analysis, these distinctions are the best way available at the time of data collection to indicate the emotional investment in a relationship.
Friendship

Definition and characteristics of friends

Qualities that girls look for in friendships are cumulative as the relationship becomes more intimate. To be a friend, the other person must like you, feel you are fun to talk to, write you notes back and forth, etc. To be a close friend, you must do all of the things that a friend would do and talk with your friend about problems, buy presents for each other at Christmas, and share things. A best friend will do all of the above as well as sharing intimate secrets without telling others; she would be "special" in some way to the friend, etc. Table 6 depicts this hierarchy.

Table 1

Qualities of Friends Hierarchy

Friend

someone you get along with
someone to talk to
sometimes two-faced
like the same things
stick up for each other
probably in the same economic group
honest
funny
Close friend

all of the above and
having a history together
someone to talk to about a problem (or anything)
someone to ask for favors
someone who could stick up for herself
someone who you can trust

Best friend

all of the above and
having a long history together (some say two years)
talking on the phone often, up to every day
"she can't boss people around"
someone who is not a bragger
someone to talk with about personal things
someone you like the most
someone you spend time with
someone who doesn't make fun of you
someone who is a special friend

These general attributes and how friends meet, complete the category of the qualities of friends. Clearly there are some differences between what is expected of friends, especially between "friends" and "best friends." Of course the desired characteristics a friend should possess also vary from person to person. Joan and Jess disagree on one quality a best friend should have:
Joan then said that you have to have a fight with someone before you can be best friends. You have to know how they act when they're mad. "You have to have a fight to know them." (F35)

Jess argued Joan's point. She said you don't get into fights with your best friend. You get along so well that you never fight. (F36)

Some best friend relationships were long distance, with the best friend residing in another state. Of the eighth-grade girls who sat together in second lunch, only one had a best friend who attended the same school. Other girls were unsure of who their best friends were. These scenarios lead me to question the established belief that best friendship is one of the largest factors in these girls' lives.

The girls I met with were largely unable to articulate "how to meet a friend." Charlotte, a girl from first lunch, came back to school after Thanksgiving and announced she had a new best friend, Samantha. I asked where she had met Samantha, and she said she couldn't remember (J14). When posed with the question "If you see someone and decide you might want to be their friend, what do you do?", the answer was "you talk to them." I concluded that these girls do not dwell on relational development. In fact, they may not be cognitively aware of what they do to promote friendship.
Activities

As indicated in the preceding section, friends spend time together, mostly talking. Friends engage in "in" and "out" of school activities. Due to a lack of transportational options, students spend most of their time together before, during, and after school. However, these activities are not as "fun" as what happens outside of school, so the in-school activities are talked about less than the out-of-school activities.

Talking is the most important in-school friendship activity. Friends wait for each other in the hall so they can exchange a few words before hurrying off to class, and they are extremely disappointed when they do not have classes together or the same lunch period. Sitting together during lunch often entails saving seats so that friends can sit right beside each other. Groups of people consistently sit together, and they tend to talk for the whole lunch period.

Out-of-school activities can be one-on-one events or group-type occasions. The dyadic activities reported by these participants include shopping, spending the night at another's house, going swimming at a friend's house, and talking on the phone. Group activities were planned by the eighth-grade girls to celebrate the end of a semester or a school break (to alleviate boredom). The group would meet
and spend time in a strip mall with a theater, a popular pizza parlor, and a department store.

Parties and school-sponsored dances also fall into the group out-of-school activities category. Dances were a rare happenstance, with one near Halloween and another near Valentine's Day. These were attended by groups of eighth-grade girls (the seventh-grade participants did not attend) who had pictures taken together and danced with each other when no one asked them to dance. The parties I knew about were, coincidentally enough, given on the same day by two students who sat in the first lunch period. This situation presented one of the girls who was invited to both parties with a dilemma. The parties provided lunch table conversation for a few days before they occurred and several days after (just like adult social functions).

Conflict

The data I collected regarding conflict were mainly theoretical. When friends were actually mad at each other, I was not privy to how the conflict was resolved, and they were not eager to disclose the information. Therefore, my notes contain instances of girls in conflict, and a description of conflictual behavior, but a void exists in terms of causes, negotiations, and outcomes.

These girls identify conflict as "when someone is mean to you, or they do something you don't like." A counselor
in the school indicated that jealousy foments conflict between best friends. In this example of one girl irritating another, the offender consistently asked others at the table if they would stand in line with her while she bought cookies or french fries:

Brenda: Are you and Marleen disagreeing or something?
Jess: No. It's just that she acts like a little kid.
Joan: Is anyone going up there? (mimicking Marleen)
Jess: I know! Well, I mean, she does that. . It just bugs me. Like she has to have someone to protect her or something. (TF4)

Jess enacted the behavior that students told me girls do when they are angry: they don't speak to their friend. Ignoring is a primary retaliation when one is mad at another. This makes sense, because the mad person is taking away what most girls would consider a very important part of friendship: talk.

Melinda arrived, sat down beside Joy, and turned away from her. "Hi Melinda," I said. She barely gave me a smile.

"Melinda, what's wrong?" Joy queried.
"Nothing," she almost growled.
Joy and I looked at each other in surprise, and continued our conversation. (T9)

As students begin participating in more mature friendships and find themselves in conflict with others, they have the
opportunity to learn how to manage disputes effectively. However, the tactic of avoidance seems to be most prevalent in the girls I observed. Avoidance becomes an appropriate response to conflict when "the potential problems the group may encounter in addressing the issue outweigh the problems of leaving the conflict unresolved" (Folger & Poole, 1984, p. 57). I remain unconvinced that these junior high girls have many options other than avoidance: they are expected to ignore a friend when angry, and their experience in resolving conflict in friend relationships is relatively limited.

Borrowing and Sharing

Friends who sit next to each other at the lunch table commonly share food. Food items are both asked for and offered to those who look hungry, are finished eating, or if the benefactor has an excess of food. Non-friends also participate in this activity, but when they ask for food, they are more likely to be denied. Two examples illustrate this daily activity. The first is between friends.

Rochelle was eating one of her cookies and offered the second one to Mary, who gladly took it, and shared some with Charlotte. Earlier Mary had asked for the mint from Lucy's Lunchables lunch, and Lucy had given it to her. (L25)
The second exemplifies a non-friend (Kristy) asking someone for food.

DeeDee, who was sitting next to Kristy, pulled a fruit snack out of her lunch bag. "Hey, what's that?" Kristy asked.

"Just something my mom gave me to eat," DeeDee answered.

"Can I have some?" Kristy asked.

"No," DeeDee denied her.

Kristy, annoyed by the rejection, looked toward DeeDee and stuck out her tongue and spit (a "raspberry"). DeeDee immediately got up, walked around the table, and sat next to me. "I can't believe it! How gross. You just don't spit all over people. I'm grossed out.

Yuck." (T12)

DeeDee's denial of Kristy may have been caused by previous interactions: Kristy was generally not friendly or neutral toward DeeDee. They did not converse frequently, nor did they sit beside each other often. This relationship, combined with a request for a scarce commodity (unlike chips, where many come in one container), probably influenced DeeDee's decision.

While food may be the most frequent commodity shared in the lunch room, other items are also borrowed and shared. Money, clothing, and accessories (watches, etc.) are less frequently exchanged.
Affirmation and negation of friendship

Friends declare and deny their friendship with others using a variety of strategies. I saw or heard of affirmations more consistently than negations, probably because the latter are more subtle. Friendship can be affirmed by wearing special jewelry (friendship rings or necklaces), talking about friendship with another person, or a signing a card LYLAS, which is an abbreviation of "love you like a sister". A public display of friendship such as the following would be considered an affirmation:

I put my pen down and Charlotte took it and started writing on her note book. She drew a picture of something someone had given her, and then she drew a picture of the t-shirt Kristy is making. On the front it said "Kristy + Charlotte", and the back said "Best friends forever." After she drew it, she tapped Kristy on the shoulder and smiled (almost smugly) at her.

Other affirmations are more ambivalent:

"I don't care for her, but I mean we're sort of friends." (TA2)

My observations provided only two cases of negation of friendship. One case was a group that rejected a girl who normally sat with them during lunch. She approached the table, but was turned away with "Sorry, that seat's saved."
In the other instance, Marleen related a story to Joy about a girl who was trying to hide her friendship with someone from another friend. An edited version follows:

Paula asks this girl, "Are you waiting for Audrey?"
And she goes "Shhh. We're not supposed to be friends, because if Jennifer finds out then she'll get mad at me and I'll get cussed out and everything."
And then Audrey gave her a balloon, and a birthday present and she goes "Audrey! Now this is going to look like we're friends." (TA8)

When asked, Marleen was not sure why they were not supposed to be friends.

Enemies and past friends

This category comprises conversations about others (usually those who are not present) who the girls may have called "back-stabbing sluts" (past friends) or people who had always been adversaries. My categorization of these episodes were based on girls' descriptions of who was an enemy or past friend. Qualities of enemies and past friends remain elusive, however, current and past behaviors were described more vividly.

Girls tend to talk vehemently about those who were their friends or those who have crossed them in some way. Kristy, a girl in the first lunch period, was often angering people by spitting in their faces, breaking into their gym locker and to damage their things, and spreading rumors
about others. However, she managed to repair her relationships and remained a part of the group. Grudges can be held for lengthy periods, as in this situation:

Brenda: Why do you hate Angie?
Josey: All she cares about is popularity. Well, everyone does, but I mean she goes over it, you know. And she like brags a lot. Her parents, they really don't have money, but they buy her all these fashion clothes and everything she wants. But my mom does their taxes and she knows how much money they have and they don't have that much but they still buy her everything she wants.
DeeDee: She's a spoiled rotten little brat.
Josey: She said she wants to beat you up.
Charlotte: Who?
Josey: Angie.
Charlotte: Like I'm sure she could beat me up.
Josey: But we're going to toilet paper her house.
DeeDee: Are we going to prank call, too?
Josey: Yeah, but not her house. She'll get mad if we do both.
Charlotte: Hey, listen to what she did one time. When we were real young. We were at the grocery store you know cause she invited herself to spend the night...
Josey: Oh she did that to me too, see we used to be
friends. . .

Charlotte: Let me finish. Anyway we were at the grocery store and my mom was getting ice cream and Angie goes "I want some. I didn't like that kind. I like this kind." And she got some out and put it in our cart. (TA4)

Another "enemy" type of relationship occurred between Mary and Lucy. Lucy considered Charlotte her best friend, and so did Mary. Mary was openly critical of Lucy, perhaps in an attempt to scare her off or to make her undesirable in Charlotte's eyes. The first instance occurred when Charlotte was at the table.

Brenda: Where's Lucy?

Mary: Hopefully she's not here. Hopefully she doesn't go to this school anymore. (TD1)

On another day when both Charlotte and Lucy were gone from the table:

Mary: I hate her. She rules Charlotte. She tries to buy Charlotte. (TC2)

Enemies can also be past friends. In this case, Joy is finishing a story about Emily and Mica laughing at her when she asked a question during class:

Joy: . . . I'm looking at them and I'm going "how could you do that?" I mean I didn't, I don't know what makes them think these things about me. I don't appreciate it.
Brenda: What things?
Melinda: You might want to explain to her about Emily and Mica.
Joy: Emily and Mica are very snobby people. I don't know why they hate me for some odd reason.
Melinda: Emily used to eat lunch with us.
Joy: Emily used to like me until Mica came and took her away, so now Emily thinks I'm stupid. I mean, I'm sure Mica brainwashed her into thinking things about me and. . . (TD6)

These vignettes not only describe relationships, but also indicate what the girls consider inappropriate behavior. Storytelling and inappropriate behavior will be discussed in another section. Perhaps the enemy's behavior was interpreted in a negative way; if a friend did or said the same thing, it would be interpreted differently. For example, perhaps Emily and Mica were laughing at a comic book hidden in their text, but Joy ascribes the laughter to her behavior. A relatively few number of enemy/past friend conversations were observed in this study, so the ability to project propositions is limited.

Exchanging presents

Conversations about exchanging presents, observations of students interchanging presents, and my inquiries about the activity are included in this rubric. An abundance of presents were exchanged at Christmas. Other circumstances,
like birthdays, also warranted buying presents, but this was not a frequent topic of conversation. Perhaps presents for events other than Christmas are considered optional, and therefore are treated more discreetly. During the week before the winter holiday break, presents were exchanged by students, most of whom would be considered close friends and best friends. Students describe face-saving strategies they use when they are caught off guard, such as when someone has given them a gift, but they have no gift in return:

"What happens if someone you didn't buy a present for gives you one?" I continued.

Marleen jumped in, "You say, 'I left your present at home. I'm sorry.'"

"And then go and buy them one that evening?" I asked.

"If your mom will let you," Paula said. The others agreed. (S28)

Mary did not have a present to give to her good friend in this example:

Then Charlotte held up the candy cane that Mary had given her and said, "Wow, a candy cane, this really costed a lot," sarcastically.

"Well," Mary responded, "My mother is taking me shopping late. What can I say. I have no money. I'll have a gift for you in January." (P10)
Eighth-grade students reported that the price of the gift was not a large issue, but "sometimes you would feel down" if you spent a lot of money and the other person didn't.

Gift giving also reflects the relationship between the dyad. Close friends and best friends exchange presents. Awkward situations arise when this rule is violated:

Jess sat down and said, "Quick, let me borrow your pen (to sign a Christmas card). Some girl gave me a present, and I don't even know her." Marleen asked, "What's her name?" Jess replied, "I don't know, Tisha I think." (P23)

About then a girl approached the table and handed a decorative bag to Jess. She said "thank you" and handed the girl a card and a candy cane. Jess opened the bag and a small garbage can, filled with candy, was inside. (P24)

Conversational Topics

Storytelling and talking about experiences provide fruitful information for understanding the middle-school girls' culture. As these sub-topic headings indicate, conversation is not something to while away a lunch period, nor is it just talking about other people. Implicit messages in the conversation reveal the norms, attitudes, and beliefs of the friendship groups and individuals.
Comparison with others

This single episode illustrates the power of others in shaping self esteem and in how a girl makes sense of her world. Josey, a bright student, is enrolled in honors math, which she thinks should be more accelerated than regular math. Her comparison with other students while doing her math homework at the lunch table leads them to scorn her math class:

Josey: Have y'all done this yet?
Mary: I don't care.
Charlotte: I did that a long time ago, too, Josey.
Mary: Y'all are behind, aren't you?
Josey: No.
Charlotte: Look at this. We did that at the beginning of the year.
Mary: We did too. That was like my eleventh note, and we have about seventy notes.
Josey: Oh yeah, this was... Let me see, what is this. I don't even know what this is. The rates factor model for multiplication.
Mary: We've done that.
Josey: This is pre-algebra, so...
Mary: We've had pre-algebra.
Josey: Well...
Mary: You have to get through pre-algebra to get into
eighth grade. We've done all that.
Josey: You have to what?
Mary: Go through pre-algebra so you can get into
eighth grade and we've done all that.
Josey: See I, . . See, are you both, . . . What math
class are you going to be in next year?
Mary: I don't know.
Josey: I think they said like people in regular like
math in seventh grade that they have to take a test so
if they. . .
Mary: I'm not going to be in honors next year.
Josey: I'll be in algebra next year. This is pretty
easy, multiplication. Have you done that yet?
Mary: Yes, we've done that.
Josey: Have you done that yet?
Mary: Rates of proportion. We did that in the same
unit.
Josey: O.K. let's see. . .
Mary: Yep. . . area. . yep, yep, yep
Josey: Let's see what else is there. Oh, that's just
answers.
Mary: Nothing. We've done that whole book. Not
actually in that. . .
Josey: That's easy. My gosh the answers are in the
back of the book and it's so easy......oh that's easy
too. You know I think they are making honors math more
easier cause the answers are in the back of the book and everything. (TD2)

Her face-saving comments at the end of the exchange demonstrate how she will reconcile how she perceives herself (I'm smart; I'm in honors math) with the information she has received from other students (we're not in honors math, but we've done all the work you have). Josey portrays the work as easy in order to save face.

**Embarrassment**

Occasionally students set others up to be embarrassed, or talk about embarrassing events. Typically embarrassing events would be considered "inappropriate" behavior, but a few events were considered funny.

Jess fishes around in her purse and mumbles something about looking for her pants (a coin purse cut in the shape of surfer pants). This reminds Paula of a previous event, "There was an incident while you were gone. Melinda was looking in Jess' purse for the pants, but she pulled something else out instead." The girls break into giggles. (Q50)

Embarrassing or humorous events divulge aspects of the culture that normally would not be discussed. In another situation, the girls set me up to be embarrassed. Perhaps my attempts to be a naive observer were not always appropriate:
A faculty member I had never seen before was walking around the cafetorium, talking with students a few tables away. The girls said he was "fine." I asked what "fine" meant. The said, "Hey coach, she wants to know what 'fine' means." He came over. I looked at him and said "hello." He told me, in a rather cocky tone, that "fine" means perfect, and turned and walked away. (K30)

The somewhat aggressive nature of this episode may be explained by a theory of play in which offensive actions are diluted for play (Bateson, 1972). The subtle cues present in the situation (i.e., the girls were not really laughing at me, but the situation) indicate the intention of play, not harm.

What is good

Most of the conversation that revolved around behaviors were about what is inappropriate, but a few snippets of talk disclosed what should happen or what is good. For example, girls reported that it is best to shop at places like The Limited, Foxmore, Foley's, and Lerner, which are considered high fashion stores. The implication is that if you shop elsewhere, keep it to yourself.

Once I was taking notes while waiting for my group to arrive in the cafeteria. A girl saw me taking notes and demanded "Are you taking notes on us? Are we good? Are we
normal? Uh, oh, she's writing about us." (E26) Those who are not normal are considered nerds.

Another conversation was fueled by a teacher who commented to her class that students cannot make good grades if they have a lot of friends. Melinda and Joy discussed this point:

Melinda: And I was going, that's what you think. I go, "I have friends, and I make good grades." I didn't tell her, but I was saying it to myself.

Joy: If you don't have friends you just think about people making fun of you and then you fail and...

Melinda: I talk to friends at school. Then I go home and study. I call my friends and I still get good grades.

Joy: Now as for Delores, maybe if she didn't have any friends she'd be passing! (TD7)

This is the only passage that explicitly states "having friends is good." The teacher unwittingly contradicted an implicitly agreed upon notion, violating a "prohibitive rule" (Shimanoff, 1980). The prohibitive rule is recognized by "the consistent absence of the prescribed behavior, and its presence should be taken as a deviation" (Shimanoff, 1980, p. 103). The teacher's deviation, then, provided an opportunity for the girls to discuss, and confirm, their beliefs.
What is inappropriate

This category comprises the largest of the conversational topics section. Messages in lunch conversations implicitly express all sorts of undesirable behavior: from unmentionable conversational topics to thinking you are "too cool." Girls' comments about other girls' inappropriate behavior subtly socialize students and shape their behavior. If they continue to act inappropriately, they will be shunned. This happened to Mindy, a girl who sat with Melinda and Joy during the first part of the second semester:

Brenda: Mindy doesn't come over here at all any more, does she?
Joy: I'm glad.
Brenda: Do you think she took your pictures out of her notebook?
Joy: Know what I did, you know my picture, I... 
Brenda: You remember how she had pictures of you at a dance?
Joy: She had that one single picture of me and I told her to take it out. I said I didn't want to be seen.
Melinda: No she didn't take them out. She still likes us and everything. She just likes to sit over there. I know when her and Joy sat together [first semester] they didn't talk at all. From what they told me...
Joy: She's not exciting. She doesn't... all she does is sit in her room and listen to her stereo. To music all day long. That's all she does. She doesn't go anywhere, she doesn't leave the house. The only exciting stories she has is going to the mall or something. She doesn't have any awesome friends like we do. She doesn't have anything to talk about. So every time when you had first lunch, when us two, we, Mindy and I had lunch together, oh, gawd. Everything we talked about was up to me. I brought up the subjects, I had to talk. If I didn't have anything we would never talk at all. She talked about her Dad beating her Mom and all this stuff, ok. Now she always told me the same stories about how she had to go to a motel because her Dad kicked them out and all this stuff. To me that's a type of bummed up life, you know. Anyways, you know that single picture of me she had? I said, "Mindy, take that out" and she said, "Why?" I said, "Because I don't want to be seen." She goes, "o.k." and she took it out. I don't know if she got the picture that I didn't want to be seen with my picture on her stuff. I didn't say it that obnoxious, but I didn't want to be seen. . . (TA12)

Unfortunately, Mindy didn't hear this conversation and had no opportunity to learn from this mistake. Melinda,
however, could heed this warning and come to lunch prepared with a suitable list of topics to discuss each lunch period.

Other comments regarding girls' behaviors were declared in their presence:

Joan then said that she spent most of her time listening to music, and that she didn't like watching t.v.
Jess said, "She's a weird person," and asked, "Do your parents think you're weird?"
Joan said that her parents watch t.v., but they didn't think it was weird that she didn't. (H25)

Nerd Day during spirit week provided a plethora of examples of how to dress inappropriately.

Many shirts were half untucked, and plaid shirts were worn with striped pants. Some students rolled up their pants to expose white socks with dress shoes or no shoes or mismatched shoes. Taped glasses were standard, along with pencils and pens in shirt pockets. The girls also applied large, dark freckles with eyeliner. (E8)

Since "nerd" is an extremely undesirable label, students could notice unsuitable fashions and avoid them.

Other disagreeable qualities of friends and acquaintances were voiced when girls talked about other girls. A careful observer could identify several traits that should never be displayed by a suitable friend:
"Oh, I don't like her," Joy declared, "she thinks she's too cool."

"Yeah, she hangs around guys and yells in the halls," added Melinda.

"She's really stuck up," Joy continued. (Q61)

Other inexcusable behaviors observed by this researcher include wearing too much make-up (TD3), falsely accusing someone (TE4), "making out" (which means having sex in this culture) (TE7), saying you'll do something and then reneging (TC1), playing with dolls (Q25), and repeating a story too often (F13). Some of these offenses are avoidable, but other violations are more subtle:

Lucy came over and said, "I'm sitting over there today, o.k.?" to Charlotte.

Charlotte snapped back, "Why should I care?" (Ill)

Learning to act appropriately is a primary task for this age group. Perhaps on another day Lucy's question would have been appropriate, for example, if she and Charlotte were planning on sitting together. These friendship groups allow for errors, but an unspoken limit is present.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Fluid Nature of Friendship

As I alluded to in the chapter on data analysis, I found the girls' friendships to be in flux. While a girl may be able to identify a best friend, she would not consistently refer to her as "my best friend, Sue." Instead, girls described all levels of friends (best friend, close friend, and friend) as "friends," without distinguishing between them in most conversations. For example, Melinda was complaining to Joy that they were not able to meet over spring break:

Melinda: It would have been fun if we had stuck to our plan. All of us friends, we were going to get together. We were going to go to all these places. We were going to go shopping, and Mervyn's, and Tia's, and Fun Time Pizza, and the movies. But I didn't get a call from you or Delores. (TA10)

In this context, "all of us friends" refers to people Melinda regard as close friends, or a best friend: Joy, Delores, and Paula. However, in every-day conversation she
does not use specific language. Students display similar word choices in other contexts. When asked, "What is the best thing about being in middle school?" the reply was:

The best part of school is the five minutes between classes, lunch, and talking with friends. (D23)

Not "close friends" or "my best friend," but "friends."

In another situation, I asked the eighth-grade group to define "friend" and "friendship."

They groaned and said they had answered that last week. I said that we talked about best friends last week. They said that a friend is someone you get along with (sometimes, you can get mad at them) and someone to talk to. (H18-19)

The lack of distinction between types of friends demonstrates how girls consider all of those in their friendship network as generally the same.

Another episode illustrates the lack of terminology for levels of friendship:

I said that I had wondered about what they call people. "I know you have best friends, but what do you call your other friends?"

"Friends," Jess shrugged her shoulders.

"Good friends," Paula contributed.

"Pals?" Joan giggled.

"Companions," Marleen offered.

"OK, then what do you call other friends?" I asked.
"Friends," Jess said again.
"Classmates," Joan said.
"So what do you call other people?" I asked.
"That girl," Marleen said, "and then point."
"Snob," Jess said.
"Stupid," Joan said.
Paula said, "Yeah like 'hey, stupid' or 'see that stupid over there?' Joan says that a lot." She attempted to mimic Joan, but knew she failed, "I just love imitating you, but I don't do a good job." (R32) During this interchange, the girls seemed to be brainstorming, encouraging each other to invent labels instead of telling me "the way it is." The degrees of friendship reflected in adult language such as acquaintance, companion, chum, confidant or intimate remain elusive to these eighth-grade students. However, when a distinction between friends is important, girls do indicate a difference:

Joan asked for the question of the day. I said, "I saw you exchanging gifts before Christmas, and I wonder who you exchange them with."
"Friends," Jess said.
"No, close friends," Paula said. (S29) Predominantly, though, friends are friends, and they are only categorized when the need arises. Given a choice to
interact with a best friend or a close friend, one would probably choose the best friend. However, if person who were not a very good friend invited someone to a tempting activity (a day at a local amusement park, for example), she would probably accept. Douvan & Adelson's (1966) research concludes that early adolescent girls are focused more on doing things than on relationships. The information gleaned in this study appears to coincide with their findings.

In this sense, relationships are contextual; a person's importance depends upon several factors, which sometimes include whether she is a friend. Weik (1974) captures the fluid nature of girls' early adolescent friendships:

The possibility that multiple states exist simultaneously for a single psychological variable is plausible because actors remember, perceive, and anticipate. These three processes can generate different states for a single variable at a single moment in time. That being the case, the stipulation that a system can operate on only one value of a variable at a time may distort and oversimplify our ideas about interdependent human functioning (p. 357-367).

The ideal best friend situation, a long term relationship where girls share everything that happens to them, is an unattainable model for many of the girls who
participated in this study. As noted, many girls had best friends who lived out of the state, and only a few had best friends who even attended the same school. Some girls reported they did not know who their best friends were. These circumstances may lead to girls' relying on close friends or a group of friends for the same emotional support the aforementioned ideal best friend would provide. The artificial hierarchy of friendship collapses in the interaction between middle school girls in daily life.

Friendship groups as socialization agents

Data collected in this study indicate that friendship groups may serve to mold girls into socially acceptable beings. Findings in this research were congruent with Gottman & Mettetal (1986) and Fine (1977) who assert that friendship groups are socializing agents, and that gossip is one channel for communicating group norms.

Storytelling and gossip promote the development of shared meanings between early adolescents. Due to these shared meanings "members achieve a sense of commonality of experience" (Smircich, 1983, p. 55). Conversations at lunch may "convey the ideals" of "the local culture" (Louis, 1983). Personal stories and stories told about others "may be fulfilling different needs at any one time" (Alexander, 1990). For one student, a story could be merely
entertaining, while another might be understanding a new facet of the culture.

In an era when both parents work and more early adolescents are alone by themselves after school, the friendship group "facilitates social skills and accustoms one to considering the needs and deferring to the legitimate activities of others" (Nye & Berardo, 1973, p. 377). Communication between friends during lunch facilitates learning the middle school culture, as well as some basic values, attitudes, and beliefs of the larger society.

Respondents complained about negative behaviors in people who attended school that are also undesirable in the larger community. For example, spitting in someone's face (T12) or wearing too much make-up (4C) is not acceptable in most situations "in the real world." The norms established in friendship groups reflect some of the values of American society.

Similarly, positive values such as sharing are also demonstrated. Students learn how to be unselfish outside of the familial context by sharing items with their friends. Whereas "ties with siblings set the stage for other relationships," friendships prepare students for interactions with the larger community (Papalia & Olds, 1989, p. 253).

The friendship group should not be mistaken as a finely ground mirror of society. Students are presented with
lessons to learn in friendship groups as often as they are confronted with new material in the classroom. The early adolescent discerns how to act "in several distinct social worlds, and [she or] he discovers that appropriate behavior is dependent upon [her or] his interpretation of the nature of these worlds" (Fine, 1981, p. 36).

Confirmations of Previous Research

This research largely confirms and supports previous research in the area of early adolescent friendships. Early adolescents in this study tended to respond that they wanted friends who were similar to them, upholding Kandel's (1978) claims. One student indicated that "rich kids hang out with rich kids, and poor with poor" (118). At least two students changed friendship groups during the course of the study, perhaps to adopt new friends who "reaffirm [their] new and developing outlook" (Duck, 1975, p. 363).

Bigelow & La Gaipa's (1980) findings that early adolescent girls prefer friends who are more developmentally advanced were also consistent with this research. Friendships between Mary (a seventh grade student) and Rochelle (sixteen years old); Charlotte and Lucy (seventh and eighth grade students respectively) and Melinda and Joy (a precocious girl) illustrate this assertion. This research provides a context for previous research. Episodes
presented here serve to illustrate how seventh and eighth grade girls experience friendship. The assertions of researchers in the field are confirmed by these vignettes, which also validate past research in a contemporary setting.

From a more comprehensive perspective, this research also supports communication theories regarding symbolic interaction and constructionism. The former is based on "how language is used to enact or create social structures and on how language and other symbol systems are reproduced, maintained, and changed through use" (Littlejohn, 1989, p. 12). In this research context, communication certainly fashioned notions of appropriateness and inappropriateness. Similarly, by participating in the creation of shared meaning, "it is the social process in group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life" (Blumer, 1969, p. 19).

Girls assigned meaning to and made sense of their world to create their reality based on their experience. Consistent with Shotter (1984), participants' communication influenced their perception of reality, which in turn affected how they communicated. For instance, when a person violated a norm, and acted inappropriately, others may have judged that person as incompetent, and ignored or chastised her. Rejection would then have effected her perception of self, which would influence her next communication act.
Shimanoff's (1980) rule theory is also illustrated in this project. Inappropriate behavior of girls could be described as "breaking a rule." Marleen's consistent request for a person to accompany her to get a snack was perceived as inappropriate. Given the elements Shimanoff (1980) presents, (rules must be followable, rules are prescriptive, rules are contextual, and rules specify appropriate behavior), a rule could be discerned from this situation.

The present research speaks directly to early adolescent friendship and socialization, but it also supports predominant theories in communication.

Conclusion

In all, this qualitative research study adds to the existing knowledge base. Findings from previous research were upheld, and a new understanding of the fluid nature of early adolescent friendships emerged from the data. The notion of a hierarchy of friendship was disputed, using data from the field as support. Several categories emerged from the data, which increase our knowledge of what is important to early adolescent girls. A thorough description of the setting and participants would allow for the transfer of knowledge from this situation to another, although a comparison was not attempted in this thesis. The researcher
is responsible for providing "the data base that makes transferability possible on the part of potential appliers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316).

Additional work in the field may confirm the tentative theory of fluid friendships. Other areas deserving further research include exploring the notion of the fluid nature of friendships in other contexts (other age groups and settings). Secondly, are these girl's concepts of friendships consistent across different friendship groups? Castlebury and Arnold (1988) identify twelve informal groups in a middle school (Christians, Punk Rockers, Jocks, Preps, etc.). Do these groups view friendship in a similar manner? Another interesting avenue for exploration may include investigating boy's concepts of friendships and comparing them with their female counterparts. This qualitative study provides a unique perspective for examining girls' early adolescent friendships, which has the potential for spawning further research.

Mary asked me, "How long are you going to be coming here?"

"How long are you going to talk to me?" I asked facetiously. "Probably until June."

"Wow, that must be a long paper," she commented. I replied, "Yeah, you could say that."
APPENDIX A

OBSERVATION DATES
Field notes were generally recorded within 24 hours of being in the field. Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

The following is an inventory of the dates of observation. Students were observed in the cafetorium, standing in line for lunch, in the outdoor courtyard, and walking to and from class. Dates with a letter beside them were recorded as field notes; those with a "T" followed by a letter were tape recorded.

October 5, 1989 (A) general observation
October 9, 1989 (B) general observation
October 26, 1989 (C)
  first lunch with Mary et al.
  second lunch with unidentified girls
  third lunch with Tiffany et al.
October 30, 1989 (D)
  first lunch with Mary, et al.
  second lunch with Paula et al.
  third lunch with Tiffany, et al.
November 2, 1989 (E)
  first lunch with Mary, et al.
  second lunch with Paula et al.
  third lunch with Tiffany, et al.
November 6, 1989 (F)
  first lunch with Mary, et al.
  second lunch with Paula et al.
  rejected by third lunch group
November 9, 1989 (G)
  first lunch with Mary, et al.
  second lunch with Paula et al.
  sat with third lunch group
November 13, 1989 (H)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.
    rejected by third lunch group/stopped sitting with them

November 16, 1989 (I)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

November 27, 1989 (J)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

November 30, 1989 (K)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

December 4, 1989 (L)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

December 7, 1989 (M)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

December 11, 1989 (N)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

December 18, 1989 (O)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

December 19, 1989 (P)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.

January 25, 1990 (Q)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.
    third sat with Melinda, et al.

January 29, 1990 (R)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.
    third sat with Melinda, et al.

February 5, 1990 (S)
    first lunch with Mary, et al.
    second lunch with Paula et al.
    third sat with Melinda, et al.
February 26, 1990 (no notes)

March 5, 1990 (no notes)

March 12, 1990 (T)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

March 26, 1990 (TA, tape recorded this date and hereafter)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

April 2, 1990 (TB)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

April 9, 1990 (TC)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

April 17, 1990 (TD)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

April 23, 1990 (TE)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

May 6, 1990 (TF)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

May 14, 1990 (TG)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.
May 21, 1990 (TH)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.

May 29, 1990 (TI)
first lunch with Mary, et al.
second lunch with Paula et al.
third sat with Melinda, et al.
NOTE: Items taken from field notes are signified by a letter and then a number; items from taped conversations are signified by "T" preceding the number and letter.

FRIENDS

Qualities of, definition of
keeps secrets, doesn't boss or brag, common interests
C.F. J22, M31, R42, S50, TE3
F. D5, H18-19, I13-18, M32, N44

Activities
talk to them, lie by pool, sit with, other's house, shopping with, talk on phone, help with school work, spend the night, parties
B.F. F4, F17, F29, G10, H13, H14, J7, J22, TA3, TB4
C.F. R42, TA10, TB1

Borrowing and sharing
food
asking for Q33, Q13, S50, T12, TA5, TE6
offering L25, Q42, R8, R16, T16, TB2, TB9, TC3, TC4, TD4, TE1
clothing, accessories, etc.
H7, H12, L23, TA1, TE2

Conflict
B.F. C24, F35-36, I23, P31
C.F. T9-10, T35, T38, T43-44, TF4
F. D26, H41, S17, S29, S42-43

Affirmation/Negation
B.F. I5, I19, J14, K10, M35, N37, O22, P31, R30, TB5, TD5
C.F. T37
F. E28, F43-45, TA2, TA8

Exchanging presents
B.F. O11, P4, P10, P18
C.F. P20, P23-24, P29, P30, P34, P43, R45, S28
explanation of R45, S28

Enemies/previous friends
TA4, TA12, TC2, TD1, TD6
CONVERSATIONAL TOPICS

Inappropriate
E10, D17, E8-10, E17-18, F13-14, G25, H25, I11, J9, K17, P10, Q25, Q27, Q61, S50, T12-13, T18, TA9, TC1, TD3, TE4, TE7

Embarrassing
K30, Q43, Q50, R49

What is good
E26, G24, TD7

Comparison with others
TD2
NOTE: Items taken from field notes are signified by a letter and then a number; items from taped conversations are signified by a "T" before the letter and number.

FRIENDS

**Borrowing and sharing**

food:
- asking for S50, Q13, TE6, TA5, 033 (taking), T12
- offering T16, Q42, R8, R16, TB2, TB9, TC3, TC4, TD4, TE1, L25

clothing, accessories/other:
- TA1, L23, H7 / H12, TE2

**activities**

talk to them, lie by pool, sit with, other's house, shopping with, talk on phone, help with school work, spend the night, parties
- B.F. TB4, F4, F17, J7, J22, H13, H14, G10, F29, TA3
- C.F. activities TA10
- C.F. talk to if upset R42
- F. parties, H13, TA3, TB1

**conflict/resolution**

- B.F. I23, P31, F35, F36, C24
- C.F. arguing TF4
- C.F. anger/mad T43, T44, T38, T9, T35, T10
- F. meanness, anger, arguing S29, S17, S43, S42, D26, H41
- F. negotiations between TA3

**numbers of**

- B.F. I20, R46, TB8, E32

**difference between friends and**

- B.F. I19, F 32-35, R37

**affirmation/others identify**

- B.F. 022, TB5, I5, J14, K10, TD5, M35
- comments about TA2
- B.F. N37, P31, R30
- C.F. hugging T37
unsure of
B.F. TB5, I20

goes to other school
B.F. E29, E30, F26, F27

length of friendship
B.F. E31, S50, TE4, C24
F. C30

qualities of, definition of
keeps secrets, doesn't boss, common interests, doesn't brag
C.F. qualities M31
help with school work, J22
qualities M32, H18, H19, I13-I18, D5, N44
C.F. favors for each other TE3
C.F. teasing TE3
importance of TD5
similarity/difference of family TA11, TA6

how met
B.F. F31, J14
beginning a friendship T36

exchanging presents
B.F. O11, P14, P10, P18
exchanging presents S28, R45, P20, P30, P43, P29, P34

negation of
hiding friendship TA8
rejecting F43-45, E28

Enemies/previous friends
TD4, TD1, TC2, TA12, TA4

Conversational topics

storytelling/talking about others-negative:
TD4, TF4, TC1, TA8, Q25, TE7, TE4, TD3, TA12, TA9, TA4, Q61, T12, T13

sarcasm P10

support R42

setting limits Q27, T18, I11, E28

information seeking TB3, TA7, Q19

embarassing Q50, Q43, K30

telling another they are inappropriate/weird H25, I11, D17, E17, E18, K17, J9, B10

what is good G24, E26

what is not good G25, E8-10

projecting F13, F14

others as focus of conversation, CI1, I12, I28, P32, TE5, TD4, TD4, TC1

comparison with others, self-esteem TD2

reminiscing S50

demands on students (teacher's view) C25
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE FIELD NOTES
School Observation #16

December 19, 1989 11:20-12:05

Recorded Dec. 20, 8:00 am

Brenda Adams

*note: This was the last day before the winter holiday break. The classes were shortened so that school could be let out early. I arrived late because I didn't know the schedule.
I quickly walked into the building, and decided not to sign in (both to save time, and I didn't know if I was too late.)

I walked into the cafetorium and went to a teacher who was standing near the stage. I asked him which lunch period this was, and he said it was first. I smiled and said "thank you."

I turned and started scanning the crowd to find the girls I usually sit with. Mary saw me and waved her hand. I walked over to their table, but there were no seats. I knelt at the end of the table.

Mary showed me a pen that Charlotte had given her that day. It was the kind that folds up. Mary had an empty box of candy canes on top of her books, and in the box was a wooden carved box. I asked her what that was, and she said it was the gifts she was giving out.

Charlotte had started eating her cookies and I asked her about "sketch the cookie." She said she would do it with the second one.

Kristy was sitting next to Charlotte. She was showing a small box with a bear and perfume in it to the girl sitting across from her. Kristy was making mocking sorts of faces (like "Look isn't this nice" sarcastically). I asked where she got it, and it was from her boyfriend.
I asked what people were going to do tomorrow. Mary said she was going to watch her soap operas, Charlotte said she was going to clean, another girl said "I didn't know, go somewhere, I guess, like shopping."

A boy sitting further down the table was asking Mary for a candy cane, as she had two left. "Can I have a candy cane? Please? I don't have any." (He was holding a peppermint stick.) She did give him one in the end. Then she offered her last one to the girl sitting next to her.

Charlotte had a small jingle bell sitting on her lunch tray. Mary asked if she could have it back. Charlotte wanted to keep it for a while.

Then Charlotte held up the candy cane that Mary had given her and said, "Wow, a candy cane, this really costed a lot," sarcastically. "Well," Mary responded, "My mother is taking me shopping late. What can I say. I have no money. I'll have a gift for you in January."

Mary got up to throw her lunch tray away, and I sat in her seat while she was gone. She returned and knelt at the end of the table. I offered her her chair back, but she refused.
Mary asked the girl sitting next to me, "Did you stay at Charolette's house last night?"

"No," the girl said.

"Then they gave you a ride home?" Mary asked.

"No," Charlotte sighed, "We made her stay outside with the dog. Of course we took her home." (I think this was after the choral concert.)

The girl sitting next to Mary said, "We screwed up everyone of our songs last night, but we got the best applause." Mary, who had sung in the concert, questioned, "You go the best applause?"

"Yeah," she said, "The teacher had to put the eighth graders with the seventh graders and we were all in different classes, so it was the first time we had all played together."

I asked if their classes were rowdy today. Mary said, "All of my classes are having parties today."

The girl next to her said, "I've got tests in mine, except for math. Do any of you have Mr. Opal?"

"Yeah," Mary answered.

"How did you do on the catalog assignment?" the girl questioned.

Charlotte asked, "What are you talking about?"

"Well," the girl explained, "You have this catalog, and you're supposed to spend as close to seventy-five dollars as you can without going over. How did you do, Mary?" "We came within 73 cents," she replied.
"Mary Hacker loves Joey Johnson," a boy down the table chanted. Mary ignored him.

The principal came on the microphone saying, "We only expect three things of you during lunch. They are keeping the tables and floors clean, no table hopping, and visiting quietly with other's at your table, not screaming across tables. You seem to be lacking in these skills. Let's be good for the rest of the day so that we can start the new year with a clean slate." The students listened to little of what she said, and then clapped when she was done.

The teacher who was monitoring said for our table to put their trays up. Many girls left, and when Charlotte came back, she traded places with the girl who was by Mary, so she was sitting closer to us.

Mary opened the wooden box that contained the presents she was giving out. I looked in and saw necklaces, earrings, and a candle with a candle holder. She pulled out a yellow necklace and a pair of earrings, and gave them to Charlotte. Charlotte seemed happy and thanked Mary. Then she returned to what she was doing, shooting people with her candy cane.

The bell rang, and I said that I would be back after January 16th. Mary asked when my paper was due, and I said in June. She said, "Wow, it must be long." I said yes, it would be.
Charlotte picked up a shopping bag with a Christmas motif on it and said, "I feel stupid carrying this bag around." I said, "What's in it?" She said there were presents that everyone had given her. Then she said, "Oh, I forgot your present. Oh well, I'll bring it to you in January" to me.

They turned around to walk away, and Mary said, "I don't see why you get so many presents and I only got one." I didn't hear Charlotte answer.

I walked to the area right outside the office to write my notes and wait for the next group. Paula was the first to arrive, and she declared that there were no assigned seats today. Just then a teacher came over the microphone saying there were assigned seats.

I told Paula that I was going to sit with Marleen and Jess because I had promised them I would yesterday. We all went to that table and sat down.

Jess sat down and said, "Quick, let me borrow your pen (to sign a Christmas card). Some girl gave me a present, and I don't even know her."

Paula asked, "What's her name?"

Jess replied, "I don't know, Tisha I think."

About then a girl approached the table and handed a decorative bag to Jess. She said "thank you" and handed the girl a card and a candy cane. Jess opened the bag and a small garbage can, filled with candy, was inside.
Jess didn't have lunch today because Paula found it and gave it to another person, who she thought was the owner. Jess hadn't seen it since.

Rose came over and sat down. "Is this our assigned seat today?" she asked. I said yes, and advised everyone to play dumb if the teacher questioned us. (We were not found out.)

Dana was sitting across from me, and she asked for the question of the day. I said I didn't have one, and asked her to make one up. She said it would be, "What are you doing over Christmas?" So, I asked her to answer.

She said she was spending from now until Christmas day with her friends and family, then she would go to Houston, and then return for a New Year's party.

Joan said, "Brenda, Jess got me some perfume for Christmas. It's called-----, but it's just like Obsession."

Paula said she had gotten three cassette tapes from different students; two of them were singles, and one full length. Joan said that she had gotten Paula one of the singles. Jess said she had given Paula the full length tape. Paula had also received some silver earrings.
I noticed that the girl who had given the present to Jess was wearing a dangling ring, and I asked, "Is that a friendship ring?" She started to take it off, and explained, "Tisha gave it to me, and she has the other half, but I'm not sure we're still best friends. We got into a big fight. She's sitting over there." She was pointing to another table. The dangling part of the ring was half a circle with parts of the words "best friends."

Paula said, "Look over at that table, do you see that guy, that loud one? Karen, you know, that really pretty girl that usually sits with us? Well, she's going with that geek. Can you believe it? She's much better than him. Yuck." Someone else added that Karen did not get anyone presents.

"She has bad taste," Joan commented.

Marleen said that everyone had gotten her candy. "Y'all want to make me fat?" she asked.

Joan showed me the pin she was wearing, and said, "This is what Melody got me."

Jess was giving away some of the candy from her present, especially the banana flavored Now & Laters. She said she didn't like banana flavor.

The boy Karen is going with asked me, "When is your project over?" I said in June. He asked,
"Have you been here since September?" I said no, since late October.

Paula asked me to go and buy her an ice cream cone. She had waited too long, and the line was gone (students can go back to buy things until all of the students are served). I said, "Well, o.k., give me your money." She gave it to me. I went into the kitchen and purchased the ice cream. The women watched me return to the table. They were still watching me as I sat down. So, I said, "Play along with me, I'm not going to eat it," as I unwrapped the ice cream. "They are still looking at me," I said. When they stopped looking at me, I gave it to Paula.

While I was gone, Paula said that the boy Karen is going with said, "She can't boss me around, that purple haired lady." (O.C. perhaps he used different language, but that's what Paula reported to me.) I said, "When have I ever bossed him around?" questioningly.

"I know," Paula said, "he's such a geek."

Joan said he was being an ass hole, but they couldn't say that in school so they said "nice hole". Jess said, "I don't get it....... o.k. I get it."

Jess noticed a neat pen that Tisha had by her tray. She asked where Tisha had gotten it. She said that a teacher had given it to her. Jess asked, "Oh, are you her aide?" Tisha said yes.
Jess had one present left to give. Joan asked, "Who is that for?"

Jess said, "Melinda."

Joan said, "I bet I know what it is," whispering, "is it --- --- (some name of an imitation perfume)?"

"You don't have to whisper, she's sitting way over there. Yes, it is."

(O.C. I have been wondering what ties all of these little vignettes together, because often when I write my field notes, the discussion doesn't flow. I think what happens is I'm jotting down notes, so I lose some non-verbal communication, and that students look around, and topics arise from what/who they see. They are not continually talking.)

Jess said, "I really liked what you gave me," to Joan. Joan said, "I gave you something else. Did you lose it?" Jess said no. I asked what it was. Joan said it was a book, Rumors, from the Sweet Valley High series.

Joan wondered why things that they wanted to buy cost so much. She said that teenagers didn't have much money to spend. She then asked if we had heard the joke, "I get paid weekly, very weakly."

Jess said, "I didn't get it. . . . . I do."
Joan was looking at a teacher who was standing close to our table, and she commented, "I bet she bought all of that at K-Mart. . . . Why do we hate K-Mart so much?"

Over at the table where the boys were sitting, a student had spilled some milk. A teacher was saying, "Go put your trash up and come back to mop this mess up." The boy left, nearly in tears. Another kid at the table made a half-hearted attempt to clean up some of the milk. The boy who went to throw away his trash was going to sit somewhere else, but the teacher caught him and brought him back. The kid was now visibly crying. Paula said, "Everyone hates him, he's such a geek."

Joan said, "It's not his fault everyone hates him."

"He's just such a geek," Paula reiterated.

The bell rang. I reminded the girls that I would be back after January 15, and said good-bye.
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