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A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A
QUALITY CIRCLE ON A PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

by

Ronald E. Williams

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

1989

Dissertation Committee

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Joseph Rost, Ph.D.
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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A QUALITY CIRCLE ON A PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

WILLIAMS, RONALD E., Ed.D. University of San Diego, 1989,
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Director: Philip O. Hwang, Ph.D.

The goal of this research was to establish a quality circle at a Southern California public high school and to determine what effect the quality circle process would have on problem resolution and communication at that specific institution. The circle was composed of eight faculty members who volunteered plus an administrator who served as the facilitator. The circle met weekly for one school year. The objectives of this study were twofold. The first was to utilize the quality circle as a process to identify, analyze, and solve specific school concerns selected by quality circle members. The second objective was to employ the quality circle as a means to increase communication among the members of the circle and between the members and the facilitator. The methodology used for this research followed the ethnographic model.

The results of this study validated the use of the quality circle process at a public secondary school. The quality circle analyzed long term problems that had diminished teacher morale. The circle formulated

solutions that were acceptable to both teachers and the administrators. Some selected concerns were tangible ones such as parking lot congestion and some were intangible such as staff morale. As members cooperated to search for solutions, communication was enhanced. A more thorough understanding developed through communication between the administrators and circle members as they combined skills, experiences, and knowledge to improve the quality of life at the school. Trust and camaraderie evolved and the circle was able to perform its functions effectively and with enthusiasm. All participants were willing to participate again if the opportunity presented itself in the future.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Carole, for her years of love, patience, and
understanding as I followed my dream.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing the doctoral program is a dream come true but the time requirements have taken a toll on those in my life. I would like to begin by recognizing my children. I have been involved with this project for most of my younger son's life and he is now in third grade. I wish to thank my three children, Jenny, Jeremy, and Micah for their support even though they did not fully understand the reason for my involvement with this study. Weekends were filled with computer work and research while many family excursions were postponed until the termination of this project. It is now time to return to those activities which were cancelled and spend time together.

The idea for this research emerged from a discussion with Dr. Hwang. I had encouraged the establishment of a doctoral program at the University of San Diego and when it became a reality, I was invited to apply. Dr. Hwang was aware of my interest and involvement with people and felt that the quality circle would enhance my style and provide a basis for new ideas. I immediately became fond of the idea and the adventure began. His support over the years has been enormous and his friendship a growing experience. I

appreciate all that he has done.

Dr. Rost was the faculty member who was my mentor during the final years of my program. It was he who wrote me that fateful letter informing me that the doctoral program was not to be looked at as a life time endeavor but a program with time limits. He encouraged me when I needed it and followed up with practical assistance which included many hours of tedious editing and revisions. His support eventually grew into a friendship. He is the best because he requires excellence which is why I aligned myself with him during the progress of this study. He has my heartfelt thanks and was in reality a co-director of this work.

My thanks to Dr. Kujawa who joined my dissertation team late but has been a valuable asset to me. He was there to discuss how the dissertation was forming and to give ideas to improve its structure. I thank him.

Many people assisted with the preparation of this study. Teachers who volunteered and those who eventually served on the quality circle will never be forgotten. Without their time, talents, skills, and intellect, this project would never have become a reality. To Betty, Jan, Linda, Kay, Linda, Brandon, Anna, Lee, and Brenda, I extend a hug and express appreciation from the bottom of my heart. The experience did not terminate at that last meeting in May

but will have another chance to reestablish itself someday. Diane, Sally, and Liz, my professional work partners, provided assistance throughout the process and I thank them.

Friends that were involved with the technical aspects of this paper deserve thanks. Marion assisted with the typing in the beginning when I was having difficulty writing about this experience. Ken, David, and Mark, with unending patience, helped me with the computer aspects.

I would like to mention, before I finish this section, the support my mother, Martha, my father, Frank, and my brother, Rick, gave to me. Their encouragement, extended over my life time, provided me with some of the energy I required to follow my dreams whether it was the Peace Corps or doctoral studies. That intangible support gave strength and power to me as I searched for new experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
CONTENTS OF APPENDIXES.....	ix
CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Importance.....	3
Purpose and Objectives.....	5
Definitions.....	5
Limitations.....	6
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	7
History of Quality Circles.....	7
The Quality Circle Concept.....	19
Participative Management.....	24
Quality Circle and Politics.....	25
Quality Circles: Controversy and Pitfalls.....	26
Quality Circles and Southern California.....	28
Education and the Quality Circle.....	28
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	33
Methodological Rationale.....	34
Design of the Study.....	36
Data Gathering.....	41

Data Analysis.....	42
Problem Solving.....	43
Communication.....	44
CHAPTER IV: DATA GATHERING AND RESULTS.....	45
CHAPTER V: INTERVIEWS AND SUMMARY.....	200
Introduction.....	200
Summary & Analysis of Interviews.....	232
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	257
Introduction.....	257
Quality Circle Guidelines.....	257
Objectives of the Study.....	264
Problem Solving.....	264
Communication.....	268
Generalizations of the Quality Circle.....	271
Recommendations for Improving the Quality	
Circle in an Educational Setting.....	280
Future Research.....	283
Concluding Remarks.....	286
REFERENCES.....	289
APPENDIXES.....	296

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Percentage of Quality Circles Where Supervisors are Leaders.....	47
2. Hours of Training for Quality Circles.....	60
3. Frequency of Quality Circle Meetings.....	63
4. Problems Handled by Qualilty Circles.....	80

CONTENTS OF APPENDIXES

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Page</u>
A. Letter to District Office Regarding Quality Circle.....	296
B. Letter to Faculty Requesting Volunteers.....	297
C. Note to Volunteers Concerning First Meeting.....	298
D. Note to All Potential Volunteers After Selection Was Completed.....	299
E. Sample of Quality Circle Agenda.....	300
F. Letter to Faculty Regarding Air Conditioning and Heating.....	301

CHAPTER I

QUALITY CIRCLES AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Introduction

The decade of 1975-85 was one of transition and, in some aspects, turmoil for the public school system in the state of California (Criscuolo, 1983; Webster, 1986). Legislation which included collective bargaining and bilingual education passed both houses and touched every area of life in public education. Educators were concerned because of scant information, training, and/or experience to deal with these mandates. Few administrators were comfortable with existing policies. They found themselves needing to reevaluate the situation at hand (Bachelor & Hawkes, 1985; Fillbrandt, 1988).

An additional concern was the adversarial relationships that surfaced on school campuses as both administrators and the various bargaining units attempted to determine their positions in the new bargaining game plan. There was not much expertise or knowledge that existed concerning how the bargaining issue would affect the school and ways of dealing with it. This adversarial relationship, at times, impeded the team atmosphere that was present on many

campuses prior to the passage of this law and in many cases drained energy from other situations. Positions seemed to polarize as power lines were drawn (Hodges, 1986).

Another law (AB 65) passed the California legislature, requiring students to complete a specified course of study and pass individual competency tests in mathematics, reading, writing, and grammar before being certified to graduate. This legislation caused anxiety in students, parents, and concern among faculty members. Questions arose as to: who writes those tests; what is a passing mark; who chooses the questions; and who is accountable for the students' lack of success on competency tests. School staffs, therefore, examined their programs to determine if the courses of study provided the skills and knowledge necessary to pass the examinations (Ingle & Ingle, 1983; Rooney, 1986).

An additional concern of declining enrollment in Southern California during this time partly stabilized teaching staffs. Fewer new teachers joined faculties. Without the influx of new staff and their ideas, enthusiasm waned; some became apathetic, frustrated, and comfortable with the existing system, or just decided to retire early. In addition, the reality of diminishing funds brought about by the passage of Proposition 13: a limitation on property tax levied on all local units of government in California (McGrew, 1978; Olivier, 1984; Tye, 1984).

Administrators, therefore, prepared to deal with complex issues that previously did not have to be addressed. Workshops were organized to train administrators in the skills required to handle these new mandates. School personnel, community members, and local officials planned expanded communication to discuss and comprehend all that had transpired the past few years. The time seemed appropriate for an intervention technique. Leaders needed a vehicle to develop the people and the real situation as it was experienced and not some mythical environment from the past that organizational members may have wished still existed (Bana, 1983; Cook, 1984; Ingle & Ingle, 1983; Long, 1986).

Importance

Change is a part of any vital school system. It is not uncommon in education or in business for that matter to read about employers, employees, and boards not agreeing on how managers should handle a changing system. Part of the reason for this disagreement, it seems, is that staffs are not invited to be a part of the information and decision making processes. They are not aware of the importance or the reasons for changes. The feeling of not being an integral part of the system does not lend itself to long term satisfaction among staff members. The faculty has a strong desire to be involved, not only with input but also

in the action phase of a changing educational system; however, in most cases that opportunity is not presented to them (Fillbrandt, 1988; Gose, 1984; Needham, 1987).

The quality circle is a technique available to leaders to encourage smoother organized change. It is a method of intervention that accomplishes the goals of improving the site through problem solving and better communication. This participative management technique alleviates the feelings of manipulation and frustration; because it lends itself to examining issues collectively and searching for solutions through cooperation and communication (Fox, 1987; Patchin, 1983).

The quality circle philosophy allows members of the group to be actively involved in the school's management process. A forum is established wherein ideas can be expressed and teachers can share their educational and life experiences. The circle is a tool whereby ideas with merit can be incorporated into the school's policy formation. With weekly communication occurring, potential areas of conflict surface and are examined by circle participants before they reach an explosive stage. Circle members search for solutions in a logical and organized manner, thus being participants in the solution and not part of the problem (Baird & Rittorf, 1983; Fox, 1987).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to organize and make operational a quality circle at a local Southern California public secondary school and gather data from that process. The chosen site, established in 1970, has a multiethnic staff and student body and is located in the San Diego metropolitan area.

The objectives of this research are:

1. Determine whether the quality circle provides the organizational structure and process necessary to search out, analyze, and solve schoolwide problems which circle members deem are important.
2. Investigate and analyze the impact of increased and improved communication among the circle members and the results of that action.

Definition

A quality circle is an autonomous unit composed of a small number of employees from the same work area who use the same work language. They have similar educational backgrounds. There are usually three-to-twelve members who meet on site with their immediate supervisor. They voluntarily join the circle and meet regularly for a specified period of time. They identify, study, analyze, and solve work related problems, present solutions to management, and then monitor those solutions. The circle

has the power to harness the energy, ingenuity, and enthusiasm of the employees to work on the unsolved problems of a particular organization.

The phrase quality circle actually has two meanings: structure and process. The circle is a group of employees participating together to solve problems. Yet, it is a process whereby problems are identified, studied, solutions found, implemented, and later evaluated.

Limitations

One limitation of the study is external validity. The case study is concerned with only one specific institution. Results gathered in this study will not necessarily be transferrable to another institution.

Because this study is qualitative and to some degree subjective, the reliability and validity of the conclusions are limited to the accuracy of the data obtained and to the ability of the researcher to make accurate assessments of the data collected (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Another limitation is the relationship between the facilitator and the members of the quality circle. The members and the facilitator had known each other for some time and rapport had been established prior to this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of Quality Circles

A check into the literature took this researcher back to 1890. In that year, at the Zeiss Optical Company in Germany, Ernst Abbe used a technique of requesting ideas from his workers about the product which they manufactured. He believed that the workers had valuable knowledge concerning the task which they performed in the production process. Abbe thought the workers might want to participate in the decisions affecting the production system. He actually allowed the workers to decide which job each would like to do.

Next, he wished to increase the production of optical glass but maintain the same level of quality. As this project progressed, he ordered that workers be included in the planning of the new machinery required to carry out the mandate of increased quantity without the loss of quality. He requested input from workers at the termination of the study to determine whether his idea had merit. It proved to have merit and played a major part in the Zeiss Company's

rise to become one of the foremost companies in Germany (Ingle, 1983).

In the 1940s, Walt Disney, believing employees could offer constructive ideas in production if given the opportunity, approached selected employees, and in some cases the employees' families, to request input on projects. Since the company's goods and services were produced for the family consumer, he surmised that obtaining their opinions would give increased credibility to his projects. In one instance, a custodian who was reviewing a project stated to his supervisor that something was amiss. Disney learned of this and questioned him. Disney learned that the custodian felt that the environment surrounding the project did not seem appropriate. Disney studied the environmental aspects of the project and eventually ordered that adjustments be made. In this case as in almost all other cases, Disney's efforts to include workers and their ideas brought about positive results (Ingle, 1983).

In 1945, a similar attempt at worker participation took place at the Harwood Manufacturing Plant in Marion, Virginia. It began with the managers switching worker assignments and sending them to be retrained without their prior knowledge. Workers resisted and to show their displeasure, took 34 weeks to be retrained. Grievances, absenteeism, and worker turnover developed and added to the problem. The managers attempted several solutions but met

with increased resistance. The owner finally attempted an experiment. One section of the plant was allowed to send representatives to confer with the managers concerning job changes. A second section of workers was left as it was. A third section was allowed to become totally involved with the decision making process. The idea was successful. Both the total and representative groups outperformed the control group and as a direct result of the success of the project, the number of days necessary to retrain workers decreased from 34 weeks to two days due to worker cooperation. By 1950, this participative approach was a permanent part of the company's procedures (Berger, 1986; Kregoshi and Scott, 1982).

In the Far East, the Japanese known as junk merchants were producing cheap products of poor quality. "Made in Japan" was not a mark of distinction. The Japanese were adept at duplicating the products of other countries producing imitations inexpensively. Wages were inadequate and Japanese workers were some of the poorest in the industrial world. At the culmination of the war, government and industry leaders decided to formulate a national goal to improve product quality and to change Japan's image (Kregoski & Scott, 1982).

After World War II, Japan's shattered industry began to rebuild. Its leaders chose to enter the fields of textile production and small manufacturing. The available labor

pool was predominately female because of a lack of males available as a result of the war. Many of these female workers had never been previously employed and were timid about their new roles. Small company work groups were established to confer on a regular basis, assist these new employees with personal or work related problems, encourage them to feel comfortable with work, and provide inservice training. Results were quite favorable (Patchin, 1983; Stahlberg, 1982).

In reality there was no other way to change the image of Japan except on a national scale. A nationwide program to improve quality was initiated. The government program included:

1. Quality audits
2. Promotion for good quality
3. Quality training
4. Use of improved statistical methods
5. Nationwide quality control activities (Ingle, 1982).

General Douglas MacArthur commander of the occupational forces in Japan assisted the country in its efforts to be industrially viable again by involving Americans in the rebuilding process. He attacked the problem on several fronts. One plan involved inviting at various times three Americans to Japan to assist with quality control. One was Joseph M. Juran, an American author, lecturer, and consultant on quality control. The other two were Edward W.

Deming and Walter Shewhard, experts in statistical quality control. From the efforts of these three men, a Japanese engineer named Kaoru Ishihawa, and the cooperative spirit of the Japanese worker came a new system which included the quality circle--a participative, holistic approach to quality control--which was to be one of the prime factors in Japan's move to improve quality in later years (Ingle, 1982; Patchin, 1983).

The new movement began when Deming introduced statistical quality control as a way of improving the quality of manufactured products (Deming, 1980). In the early 1950s, the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) accepted in concept Deming's work in statistical quality control. Deming and Kaoru Ishikawa, the son of Ichiro Ishikawa, the founder and chairman of JUSE, attended a conference in the United States and were able to meet privately several times. These contacts formed the basis for a friendship that would eventually bring about a personal interest on the part of Juran concerning quality control in Japan. Juran's ideas became partially acceptable because they involved employees in the planning and production of a quality product and was akin to some of the efforts that had been taking place in Japanese industry (Gibson, 1983; Halberstom, 1984; Ross & Ross, 1982).

Labor unrest in Japan became a topic of increasing popularity during the mid 1950s. Labor alienation, worker

indifference, strikes, absenteeism, grievances, and the taking of excessive sick leave were evident. Ishikawa felt that part of the problem was that Japan had adopted a system from the United States that was based on principles of management that did not fit Japan's needs or culture. Work was deskilled and barriers were formed between different departments and levels of employees. Problems were dealt with at the managerial level and did not provide for input from the workers. This system was alien to the Japanese work force and was part of the reason for misunderstanding. Changes had to be made.

As Ishikawa conducted research, he realized that some type of cooperative effort including the worker was needed. He began with the supervisor/foreman position in Japanese industry because it was a focal point for dissatisfaction. This position had little power and even fewer rewards--especially in regard to wages. It would be a logical place to begin as he planned for change. Each company had its own training program for supervisors/foremen, so it was relatively easy to use this position to initiate the change process. His idea was to show supervisors/foremen the importance of their position by making them feel more vital in the management of the organization. His plan would allow them the opportunity to be involved in solving problems in their particular area. When the supervisors had researched a problem and formed a solution, they would have the

opportunity to make presentations to the managers of the company. This would allow them the chance to gain recognition for their efforts. These lower level supervisors would be able to work with their particular work force addressing problems that required solutions and cooperate with their peers in implementing the solutions. The idea became an immediate hit and was accepted with excitement. Foremen were made a part of the managerial system, and the energy that emerged from that realization influenced the entire work force (Hutchins, 1985).

Back in the United States in the 1950s, other worker participation ideas were forming. Sidney Rubenstein utilized a similar concept of participative management to achieve higher production and better quality from employees. His program was called the Participative Management System. Rubenstein's philosophy was that the workers knew their job best and possessed the skills necessary to improve or at least raise efficiency. The problem was a lack of opportunity for the worker to be involved in the system. He, therefore, organized small groups to deal with total factory output and environment. The results were just short of spectacular because of the surge of worker morale and quality control (Ingle, 1983; Rubenstein, 1987).

The concept of quality control during the 1960s continued to gain acceptability in Japan. Industry's performance improved even though there were problems in

industrial relations. Part of the problem seemed to be that basic job satisfaction of employees was still lacking. Kaoru Ishikawa posed an idea which called for the formation of small groups of workers to affect production. These groups involved not just foremen but the entire work force (Patchin, 1983). Ishikawa's idea was to make quality the group's focus. Potential areas of involvement included defects in products such as scratches, cracks, or missing parts and problems with worker morale/attitude. Quality control, therefore, would not be the exclusive chore of the quality control supervisor but with the worker also. It was to be a holistic approach and would even involve the consumer because quality was a measure of customer satisfaction (Hutkins, 1985).

Several motivational ideas were initiated by the Japanese government. A quality month was established and a television series on quality appeared weekly. "Q" flags were flown by companies who had joined the quality movement, and prizes were awarded to individuals and companies who improved quality. An award called the Deming Prize was established to commemorate Deming's work in quality control. It is awarded annually for quality achievements and is akin to the Queen's Award to Industry in Great Britain.

In 1962, a Japanese magazine presented the idea of forming quality circles or quality control circles as they are called in Japan. This expanded on the idea presented by

Ishikawa. JUSE became actively involved in establishing, and training of these circles. By May of that year, the first quality circle was registered with JUSE by Nippon Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. In November the first conference was held and by May of 1973 a general conference convened for all interested and/or involved in quality circles. The government established a headquarters whose purpose was to organize, influence, and coordinate the establishing of quality circles. Regional quality circle conferences were organized the following year to discuss the local quality circle phenomenon (Dewar, 1984; Ingle, 1983; Pascale, 1981; Patchin, 1983).

In the late 1960s, a quality circle team from Japan was invited by Brazil to assist Oleg Greshner of Johnson & Johnson of Brazil to form quality circles. Brazil was the first location outside of Japan where quality circles were introduced. After its initial success, quality circles spread in Brazilian industry until, in 1979, more than 30,000 quality circles were in operation. The circle's ability to adjust to other cultures was accepted at least in part (Cangemi, 1985; Dewar, 1979; Hutchins, 1985).

In the fall of 1970, at Smith Kline Instruments of Palo Alto, another quality circle type activity was underway. An employee suggested an improvement for a cable connector. The manager asked him to sit down and discuss the suggestion with his peers instead of placing the idea in the suggestion

box. This was a distinct departure from the historical suggestion box procedure. The group came together, discussed the idea, and collected data. When a solution was formed, it was presented to the managers, and proved to be a success. The company was more than pleased with the efforts of this group and made the activity permanent (Patchin, 1983).

Wayne Reider, a quality assurance officer for Lockheed Aircraft, traveled to Japan in 1973 to gather data on the quality circle. While there, he visited twelve large corporations including Bridgestone, Honda, and Toyota. He spent hours questioning management about the quality circle process. At the same time, he visited with Japanese workers and learned first hand of their commitment to the concept and to the company which employed them. Managers proved themselves to be cooperative and had the attitude that participation by workers in management was beneficial to both parties. The quality circle process was quite attractive and useful, and he became convinced that the concept could take hold in the United States (Kregoshi & Scott, 1982).

Upon his return to the United States, Reider had translated the instruction books he had brought back with him. It was because of his efforts and enthusiasm that Lockheed became the first company in the United States to adopt the concept as practiced in Japan. Lockheed

established one of the first guide directories that included thorough training of the circle members and the facilitator (Gibson, 1983; Kregoshi & Scott, 1982).

Lockheed administrators felt that the circles could lead to a needed rebirth of worker and company morale. The process could improve employees' attitudes, communication, and affect the quality of workmanship (Gibson, 1983; Patchin, 1983). It is interesting to note that Dewar, a Lockheed employee, became so enchanted with the concept and such a believer in the circle techniques that he eventually resigned from Lockheed and established his own quality circle consulting firm.

In 1977, the International Association of Quality Circles (IAQC) was established. The association held its first international conference in 1978. This conference and its publications allowed people to keep abreast of the circle movement and inspire others to at least seek out information concerning the process of quality circles (Patchin, 1983).

As quality circles spread in the United States, many circles personalized their particular program. The names chosen by the circles demonstrated some of this individuality. A few are listed as follows:

TAS-The American Spirit

PPS-Participative Problem Solving Groups

MERC-Mercury Employee Recognition Circles

EIC-Employee Involvement Circles

TOPS-Turned Onto Productivity and Savings

Northrup Corporation of Los Angeles followed Lockheed's lead in February of 1978. Problems such as increasing costs, expanding work force, and the disenchantment among the blue collar workers needed attention. In July of that year, Northrup hosted a group of workers from Japan. The Japanese presented a demonstration on the quality circle process which impressed the managers. Northrup organized six pilot quality circles in August of 1978. By 1983, 60 circles were in place with 100 facilitators and 1,000 circle members. Comments such as "why bother" changed to "we can do it." Circle members learned to express themselves clearer both orally and in written form. Communications throughout the company improved, and members had an added feeling of self-improvement. There were measurable results in some very specific areas. Terminations went from 3% to 0%, transfer requests from 4% to 0%, employee complaints from 4% to 0%, and absenteeism from 7% to .75% (Patchin, 1983).

By the early 1980s, more than 500 Japanese companies had initiated the use of quality circles. A million quality circles with more than 8 million members existed in Japanese industry. Japan had announced years earlier that the Japanese industrial goal was to become the leader for quality in the world, and the people throughout the world

witnessed Japan assume that position (Dewar, 1979). Indeed, Joseph M. Juran had stated in the late 1960s that the quality circle movement was powerful and that Japan would become the world leader (Hutchins, 1985). His statement was prophetic.

The Quality Circle Concept

The quality circle provided a challenge for business and managers in the United States. As American industry studied the feasibility of this idea, questions developed from the onset including how the process was being understood, what it meant, and how it was to be put into practice. The Japanese relied heavily on training, development, and involvement of each individual worker. Their feeling was that it did not matter how much quality control there was if the worker had no motivation. An example of the insight into what the Japanese felt concerning the quality circle could be seen by the name used by one group of steel workers for their quality group. It was "jishu kanri" which loosely translated into "workshop enlightenment group." Strong cultural ties were embedded in the model such as life long job guarantees, closeness of the worker groups, early morning exercises, and industrial homilies to begin each day. The whole process seemed singularly Japanese. It was a national phenomenon in Japan. The reoccurring question as to whether it would survive over a period of time outside of that country especially when

there was disagreement over the basic definition and understanding of the phrase quality circle surfaced often (Dewar, 1979; Ellenberger, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Quible, 1981).

For the quality circle to remain successful outside of Japan, users of the concept had to understand the Japanese workers' lifestyle in relationship to the company. The priority of most companies was to improve performance. The workers had a commitment not only to the company but to their immediate work area. The next important goal was to improve the "self" including individual skills. The circle provided individuals with the opportunity to obtain recognition from the company and their peers in a way that was not possible otherwise. A chance, therefore, existed for employees to express their creativity and escape boredom. The last priority was financial gain. It was important but had a lower priority than the five goals previously mentioned (Berger, 1986).

When discussing the morale issue, Japanese workers felt positive about the quality circle. Many advantages were singled out. The first was that friends were made in the circle and this added to a more comfortable atmosphere in which to work. Workers learned to speak publicly with more ease and became more conscious of the importance of their job in relationship to other jobs. Skills were acquired that would affect other areas of their lives for years to come (Berger, 1986).

The objectives of most circles were many and varied. All stratas of a company were affected. Some of the goals that were part of the process are as follows:

1. Self-development
2. Group development
3. Improvement in quality
4. Improvement in attitude
5. Improvement in communication
6. Improvement in productivity
7. Improvement in safety
8. Improvement in cooperation and participation
9. Waste reduction
10. Job satisfaction
11. Cost reduction
12. Problem-solving opportunities
13. Team building
14. Reduction in absenteeism and grievances
15. Opportunities for people to get involved in their work
16. Connection of all levels of managers and workers to achieve success

Organizations interested in the quality circle had to accept some philosophical premises. Managers had to realize that establishing a circle was synonymous with exhibiting a new kind of trust in their employees. A belief in the following concept was necessary. If left alone and given

the chance, workers would do what was right for the company out of a sense of loyalty towards the company and pride in themselves Gailbraith & Christian (1986), Ingle (1983), and Rieker (1977) stated that a major aspect of the quality circle was the trust factor-a key to a successful circle process. Trust formed the base line for the group as it built camaraderie and dealt with problem solving. In addition, each circle developed its own personality as the circle matured and the members interacted with one another on a weekly basis.

Decision making would decentralize as a result of the quality circle process and work would assume a new identity in that employees and managers would be cooperating and communicating in a new manner. This process was an investment in the workers, their experiences, their knowledge, and their total resources (Berger, 1986).

Several tasks needed attention to prior to the first meeting. To begin with, the corporation would provide the training that would bring about the skills necessary for the circle process to be successful. Second, circles had to be accepted as permanent, actually becoming a part of the system. Third, because the circle process was a part of the management process, regular evaluations had to take place for the process to maintain its credibility. Fourth, the circle could be as large or as small in scope as required depending on the needs of the company. It worked just as

well with small companies as it did with large ones. Fifth, the managers must provide for a process that allows proposals from circles to be given the exposure needed in order to be adopted or rejected. Above all, managers and workers at all levels had to be committed to the process (Thompson, 1982).

The quality circle would bring about varied styles of manager-employee relationships in those organizations which took the risk to implement the process. Many companies were accustomed to using the style of management whereby decisions were made at the top and passed down the various levels of management to the employee. This style had been prevalent in the past because employees were largely uneducated and unskilled (Kregoski & Scott, 1982). The quality circle, though, allowed today's worker involvement in a participatory manner (Cangemi, 1985).

Yet, for those companies who adopted the quality circle, a difference between what had occurred in Japan; and what was occurring in the United States became apparent. Simply put, the Japanese used the quality circle to improve the knowledge and various skills of their workers as well as increase productivity. In the United States the quality circle seemed to be used increasingly as a method to increase production which was a deviation from the historical use of quality circles (Ackley, 1982; Dewar, 1979; Dunne & Mauer, 1982; Rouine, 1981).

Participative Management

There are several forms of participative management. Cangemi, Kowlaski, and Claypool (1985) discuss the various types in their book. The first form discussed is the direct approach which is not participative at all and allows for no input. "Information gathering" is next whereby employees give information to the manager either in oral or written form to the extent of their participation. "Information gathering and discussion" allows employees who gather the information to meet with the manager and verbally share background data. The "opinion gathering and discussion" approach includes interpretation as well as sharing of the information. Most committees in the school system are of this type. The principal sets the agenda, the members gather data and give their observations, and the principal makes the decision. The next style is that of "debate, dialogue, and refutation." This introduces exchanging and challenging the ideas of others. "Democratic" is the next style in progression. The quality circle would fit into this category if it had to be placed in one. There is a free exchange of ideas including challenges of opinions; however, at the end of the discussion, a binding vote is taken to determine what decision to accept. The last form is "delegation" whereby managers give power and authority to others to make decisions.

Quality Circles And Politics

Politics, mentioned only once in the literature reviewed (Thompson, 1982), is relevant, at least, for the circles which operate in the United States. Organizations have goals and a process by which goals are achieved. Employees are divided and subdivided into worker units. The line of management authority in most companies emits down from plant manager, to director, to manager, to general foreman, to supervisor, to each individual employee. Assumptions are made as to what most workers want, but the majority are rarely approached for input. Workers, depending on their place in the organization, have a job to perform; while some have the right to give their input to the decision makers, others do not. With that right to give input comes some degree of power through the use of influence. When a decision is made by decision makers, the result filters down through the ranks but at times decisions are not implemented properly because workers are not included (Thompson, 1982). With a quality circle, the supervisor/facilitator has a one on one relationship with each employee. The circle gives a time, place, and process whereby members come together for direct communication with their immediate supervisor.

Is the quality circle then a political reform? Yes it is. Thompson (1982) stated: "Most important, the employee's only resources--his native intelligence and his accumulated

knowledge and skill--remain latent because the organization allows him no opportunity to mobilize them" (p. 182). The circle allows a process whereby employees can use varying degrees of persuasion, have access to information, search for solutions, and work together in a group to give action to their thoughts. With quality circles, managers grant employees the opportunity to participate if they wish. The circle members obtain the right to consider what they wish and retain the ability to access whatever the members need within reason to solve the problem being processed. The circle is also granted access to the decision makers and whatever influence that right brings. These changes denote the altering of the distribution of power and gives employees privileges they did not have previously.

It is still a fact in the circle process that managers retain all the power they had previously. They are in control of the decision making process, have control of all resources, and establish all the rules. What about control of the quality circle? The control is indirect. Managers challenge circle members to act responsibly and show by their actions that they have faith in the company (Thompson, 1982).

Quality Circles: Controversy and Pitfalls

Controversy has surfaced as the quality circle has become more prevalent in the literature. Elllenberger (1982) and Aguila (1982) expressed the opinion that a

quality circle was a remade, retooled activity that had already been tried in the past and had proven less than successful. It was a fad and in time would disappear. Aguila called it the hoola hoop of the 80s. Besides, would a management practice from industry transfer anywhere? Since schools are polarized with teachers against administrators, it is, perhaps, a fantasy to attempt change. "Implementing a joint management/employee trusting support approach in such a climate is most difficult," he claimed (p. 95). A chance was available for a trusting relationship to be established if administrators showed interest, he said.

Dunne and Mauer (1982) stated that quality circle techniques sounded familiar because they were already being used. He explained that there was nothing "mysterious or new about the techniques. The difference was in the basic structure and clear methods of the quality circle" (p.87).

Dunne warned of pitfalls. First extensive preparation was necessary with training and meeting time allotted to the circle members for the concept to work. Expectations had to be realistic. Managers must look at recommendations fairly and use suggested solutions if they were logical, well thought out, and would improve the work environment or product. A positive outlook was needed because of possible skepticism at first. In the end the quality circle could, if used properly, satisfy many needs.

Quality Circles and Southern California

In San Diego County, the process is gaining converts. Several companies have active circles. Linquist (1986) reported that NASSCO, a local shipbuilding company, adopted the circle idea, and that installing this technique brought about positive feelings for the workers almost immediately. The company was pleased with what the quality circle had accomplished in such a short time.

In the Los Angeles Times (February 22, 1988) Yoshihara discussed the continued interest the public had as to what the Japanese had accomplished since the war. A new Japanese course for company leaders was established in Malibu, California to teach executives some of the methods used in Japan. Small yellow ribbons are used to bring attention to the tasks that had to be completed. This thirteen day camp called "jigoku no kuren" is a grueling two week long, hands-on time.

Education and the Quality Circle

Dunne & Mauer (1982) and Philips & McColly (1982) stated that the quality circle was not yet well known in education especially in elementary and secondary schools even though it was well known in the business world. Bittenger (1982) and MacAdam (1984) felt that in some respects schools could be fertile ground for the quality circle. There were some familiar similarities with the Japanese concept in that certificated employees had basically life long employment.

Ackley (1982) commented that committee work was a component of educational life and most teachers were experienced in its use. From their research, Ackley (1982), Chase (1980), Schafer (1982), and Skibbens (1986) showed that there was a desire by most educational employees to have an active and participative role in school management.

The focus of the quality circle is to search out problems and, through the use of data, formulate solutions. Dunne & Mauer (1982), Bellancen (1982), and Long (1985) believed that the typical school staff with its educational expertise and learned skills seemed better prepared than many other employee groups to participate in the quality circle process. The teacher in the classroom worked daily with the students and was keenly aware of which problems in the educational process needed attention. They could use their own resources as well as those of other staff members to solve problems. Galbaith & Christian (1986) and MacAdam (1984) felt that participation in the problem solving process would bring about a feeling of ownership by those involved, and that such ownership would impact the quality of education delivered by the institution.

Chase (1983) and Hutchins (1985) concluded that decision making which involved staff members would lead to a more effective way of dealing with improvements and thus would enhance the effectiveness of the school. Employees are the natural resource of the information needed for

improving quality. This is true whether in the commercial sector or in the public education sector.

The quality circle has implications in the area of motivation as shown in studies by Galbraith and Christian (1986) and Nemoto (1987). When staff members joined together to work on problem solving on a regular basis, direct results occurred; the circle was a team building technique, not a people using one. The circle allowed for individual self-actualizing and presented each person with the means to find an avenue for expression of that potential. Feelings of positiveness, trust, self-worth, and enthusiasm propelled the group to work effectively. The communication that evolved from this process assisted the circle members as they communicated with the entire staff (Berger & Shores, 1986; Eddy, 1985; Ingle & Ingle, 1983).

The studies of Ross and Ross (1982) showed that the process allowed individual members to use their own creativity. Each member could individually perform as various aspects of a potential solution were presented and shaped into a total solution (Ingle & Ingle, 1983).

Dewar (1979) wrote that stress reduction was another indirect result of the quality circle process. As the process evolved, self-worth was enhanced, apathy waned, and escape from potential burn out was noted.

Philips & McColly (1982) and Ingle & Ingle (1983) stressed that the quality circle process could be expanded

to involve students and parents. Ongoing parent meetings or extended advisory periods for students during the day could be useful opportunities to involve these two groups with problem solving areas directly affecting them.

Dunne and Mauer (1982) stated that the future of the quality circle depended on its usefulness. The circle was an ongoing process that, once in place, seemed to serve a need that had not been addressed previously. Skibbens (1986) warned that the quality circle did not provide a utopia. It was a component of a total management program, and its function was to set the stage for problems to be addressed, solutions found, and communication improved.

"It's a foreign idea and won't work here," some say. Yet, comments such as "if the Japanese can do it, we can too" have been compiled. There is insufficient data at this point to give a positive or negative confirmation to either of the above statements. The answer is to allow the process to proceed and draw assumptions after several studies have been completed (Ingle, 1982).

In conclusion, Bonner (1982), Kay and Love (1986), Maretz (1982), McCall (1981), and this reseacher pose a question. Can the quality circle function in a ninth to twelfth grade educational institution over a period of time and provide results in terms of observable improvement of problem resolution and communication?

From the data collected from the literature, it would seem that there is sufficient evidence to attempt a quality circle at a secondary educational institution.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The 1980s have been an active time for the collection of data as it pertains to the quality circle. Researchers and company employers interested in quality circles will have more data by the 1990s upon which further research on the quality circle process can be conducted. A number of articles have appeared recently concerning the subject of quality circles. Many of them are based on testimonials and/or opinions about the process rather than on research (Gibson, 1982). There is scant information on quality circles in the educational business. In the past five years, quality circles have begun to appear in educational institutions; however, these institutions are in the data collection stages at this time.

There is a need for work in this area if further study is to be based on research. This study provides a portion of that research in the form of a case study. It records the workings of a quality circle in its practical aspects and is now a part of the foundation for others to do further research.

Methodological Rationale

The ethnographic case study was selected as the model for this work because it met the needs of this research project (Dobbert, 1982; Ellen, 1984). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) listed five characteristics of the ethnographic case study. They are presented here as justification for the use of this approach.

1. "Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument" (p. 27). The quality circle process utilized site employees who volunteered to work on site problems and concerns. This volunteer aspect lent itself to a natural type of setting than a project that would have required participation. The supervisor was the "key instrument" in that he was the facilitator and the participant observer. His task was to manage the business of the circle and guide its activities. The meetings of the quality circle took place on site during part of the regular school day and included only people who worked at the school. All participants in the project had been employed at the site for more than five years and knew each other.

2. "Qualitative research is descriptive" (p. 28). Most proceedings were in the form of group meetings; a tape recorder was used to document verbal communication in all meetings of this project. The use of the tape recorder was discussed with the participants before the onset of the

project to lessen the effect of the tape recorder on the actions of the members of the circle. The participant observer and nonparticipant observer discussed nonverbal actions and used them to further understand what occurred. Included in the process were personal interviews, field notes, observations, gestures, conversations, and any action that affected the circle process.

3. "Qualitative research is concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products" (p. 28). This project was primarily concerned with the quality circle process. Employees with similar jobs met to discuss common problems ascertained by members to be important. Data evaluated and analyzed formed the foundation for building solutions. The energy, activity, and actions of the circle members determined the outcome. They set the pace and planned each meeting. A nonparticipant observer was necessary to the study so that a neutral person could assist in examining the process.

4. "Qualitative research tends to analyze the data inductively" (p. 29). A hypothesis was not preset in this study. There were no preconceived ideas or attempts to prove a point. The project was allowed to develop over a period of time. Data and observations were collected from participant observers and from the nonparticipant observer. Conclusions have been formed from this data.

5. "'Meaning' is of essential concern to the qualitative approach" (pp. 30-31). Participant perspectives were the focus for this study. Listening to participants, studying their reactions, emotions, and proceedings of the individual process became the major activity of the work. As the study advanced and as the members of the circle came to know each other, personal bonds were formed. Interviews were conducted at the termination of the study. Participants were questioned, allowing them to interpret what the project meant and their affect on the final outcome.

The qualitative model, therefore, has merit for this project. The case study approach further defines the subject to be studied. In this case it deals with one particular group of people in one specific setting. The researcher understands that the case study by its very nature is subjective. It is based on words, feelings, actions, and observations. However, because of the nature of this research, there is no other model available to obtain the data necessary to answer the stated objectives.

Design of the Study

The site chosen for this study was a suburban Southern California public high school which serves a population with a low to medium economic base. The school's multicultural population numbered approximately 1,800 students in grades 9 to 12 and taught by a faculty of 76 members.

The researcher was employed at the school and for fifteen years prior to undertaking this research. The quality circle's requirement that employees meet and work with their supervisor was accomplished. Meeting at the school, where the researcher and participants were employed, was appropriate. The actual meeting place for the quality circle was in the school's conference room in the administrative building.

The quality circle was composed entirely of certificated faculty members who volunteered to participate in the circle. A letter was placed in the school mailboxes of all faculty members requesting their cooperation by joining and participating in a quality circle. A majority of staff members responded with approximately half indicating that they were interested. The circle could accommodate from three-to-ten people. After scanning the literature, this researcher decided on eight positions to form the circle.

There were several meeting times offered to the circle members. The time which had the most volunteers was the period after school. Other times were: during the preparation period, before classes began, or during lunch.

Letters were sent to congratulate individual faculty members who were chosen to serve on the circle. They were also informed at that time when the first introductory meeting would be held. Notes were sent to all who applied,

thanking them for their interest and inviting them to attend a meeting to support the group with ideas and/or problems.

At the introductory meeting, the circle members discussed the possible length of meeting times. There was flexibility in that quality circles could be one half to one hour in length. A thirty minute meeting time was established. Halfway through the year the time frame was changed to forty-five minutes because thirty minutes was inadequate. The circle literature stated that the members needed to meet weekly but could select the day. Monday was chosen as the meeting day because members were the freshest at the beginning of the week. For the purposes of this study, the circle decided to meet for an entire academic year.

Arrangements were made with the teachers' union through the office of the district arbitrator so that teachers could serve on the circle and not fear they might cause labor problems or contract misunderstandings. An addendum was attached to the contract to cover this stipulation.

A nonparticipant observer was selected by the researcher to visit the meetings at random and provide information from time-to-time to the researcher. The observer was a faculty member with a counseling background which was needed because nonverbal communication, and interrelations between members would be primarily requiring

good observation skills and some understanding of group dynamics.

The first four meetings were reserved to train the circle members. Regular meetings were the most appropriate structure for the training sessions, thereby, establishing the meeting routine for the members. The researcher trained the participants in the techniques of the quality circle process throughout these sessions.

The facilitator/researcher prepared an agenda and directed group functions at each meeting. At the first working meeting, realistic goals were established hopefully satisfying the members' desires and the circle process.

A typical meeting began at 2:35 p.m. in the main office conference room. Refreshments were available. There were two rectangular tables with ten chairs. As members arrived, they shared refreshments and talked. Within five minutes, the meeting was called to order. The agenda had been distributed to each member the previous day. The past meeting was reviewed; the day's goal presented. A majority of the meeting was devoted to on problem selection, data gathering, or problem solution. All members usually spoke at least once although some shared more than others. The facilitator reviewed the accomplishments and at the conclusion of the meeting tasks were delegated. A few members engaged in further discussion, planned a date, or just relaxed before the trip home.

Generally speaking, the circle process moved along designated guidelines. Through brainstorming, potential problems were elicited from circle members of the circle. The group then arranged the list in order of priority usually preferring forced ranking. During this time, discussion was encouraged as the various problems were shared. Each participant, who brought a problem to the group, was asked to give a short discourse as to why the problem should be addressed by the group.

Data were gathered and problems were discussed in detail after problem selection was completed. Circle members were encouraged to share individual ideas and experiences concerning each problem. A classification checksheet was helpful at this time. An accurate problem statement was finalized in writing from the available information.

Problem analysis followed. Using various techniques such as cause/effect analysis, the problems were formed and analyzed. Possible solutions were presented to the circle. The solution primarily applicable for solving the problem was selected by circle members with a pilot project used to verify the solution.

The final form of the solution was then presented to the school principal. If there was concurrence, implementation followed. The circle had to be vigilant and

monitor the solution for a time period after implementation to determine its effectiveness.

Data Gathering

The facilitator, the group leader, guided the group during its first sessions. His responsibility was to suggest which techniques to use in the quality circle process, be knowledgeable of the process, and assist members in solving any procedural problems.

Agendas were then used to inform and set up parameters for the meetings. The researcher kept notes on each problem and solution presented by the circle and approved by the administration.

All problems, the circle addressed, came from within the circle. Administrators and staff did not participate at this level although they had the option of suggesting potential problems to a circle member. The facilitator, as a member of the group, could introduce ideas during the brainstorming sessions just as any other member. Problems were prioritized and chosen by group consensus. Data were discussed as members studied each problem and prioritized the list of problems and solutions.

The researcher recorded, transcribed, and retained all data concerning the circle meetings. Tape recordings of the data were more efficient because more detailed information could be gathered. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher more freedom to become involved with the circle.

Periodic meetings were held with the nonparticipant observer. Interviews were held to determine whether changes had occurred in the group process and/or occurred individually. The observer was someone acceptable to the group because her presence in the group did not interrupt the process.

Follow-up interviews were calendared to assist the researcher in evaluating if any types of changes had evolved. The circle members were asked whether the circle's process accomplished the goals they set or it was worth their time and effort to be a part of the circle for a year.

Apart from the above, the researcher inquired if the process of the circle accounted for any differences to the circle members personally. The quality circle in some aspects was more than a process; it became a way of life. The interviews helped to determine if that statement held true under investigation.

At the termination of the project, time was set aside to review the actions taken by the circle since its inception. The group discussed each problem and solution, and the effectiveness of each action throughout the year.

Data Analysis

Data from the transcriptions of the circle meetings are presented in the narrative form. Observations and assumptions were concluded from the quotes and participant observations as the meetings continued and became more

complex. Specific ideas and facts were catagorized according to the final interview questions which were formulated to find answers to determine if the objectives of the study were accomplished. Based on individual and group behaviors and other observable changes over the year of the study, the researcher analyzed the various changes that took place. These changes were evaluated to ascertain if they proved advantageous to the circle in reaching the circle's objectives.

Problem solving

The research plan was to collect and analyze the data from the transcripts to determine if the circle techniques could indeed solve the problems brought before the circle members. The researcher had to determine if communication was enhanced as projected. The number of problems actually solved and implemented was investigated. Conclusions were reached as to whether or not the solutions proved to be viable and effective. Beyond that, a more important question was: did the process provide a structure for problem solving in an educational system? The process would have been deemed a success if the circle provided a system whereby employees and managers could work together cooperatively and collectively to activate resources that would lead to the solution of problems.

Communication

From the collected data, the circle improved communication between administrators and faculty members. Quality circle members evaluated the communication both inside and outside the circle meetings. The data was interpreted to ascertain any improvement of communication by the circle process. In a study of this nature, the why is more important than the solutions formulated. Interpretation supported by data is presented in this research to show why objectives met.

In conclusion, the question as to whether the entire process had value to the participants, and/or to the institution itself is addressed in the final chapter. It is from this assessment that others, interested in the objectives of this study, can deduce whether it would be in their best interest to do further research in the area and/or to initiate a quality circle of their own.

CHAPTER IV

DATA GATHERING AND RESULTS

The process commenced with a preliminary visit to the principal to inform him that I was prepared to begin my dissertation study and to inquire as to whether he would be receptive to a quality circle functioning on the campus. After having worked with the principal for five years, I was acquainted with his management style and felt that the project would be acceptable to him. I spoke with him sharing the general idea of the dissertation and why I had chosen this topic. An appointment was made for the following day to discuss the specific plans that I was developing.

The next day when I sat down in his office, I was somewhat surprised, after our conversation of the previous day, that he was uncomfortable with group work which in general terms described the quality circle. He had reviewed a few articles on various types of group work and felt that the process may be outdated and, therefore, not worth our time. He also expressed concern that the circle process could be misused by some faculty members.

His doubts needed to be confronted. The quality circle techniques were, indeed, not new, but the process itself and

the manner in which the techniques were used was unique. I would be the facilitator (see Figure 1) and it was my function to guide the group and assist the group to formulate solutions that were viable, logical, and support in a positive manner the school's goals and objectives. All solutions had to be presented to him for his approval prior to implementation. The task of the quality circle was to search out problems, collect data, and devise solutions. The group would be reminded that the principal always would have the power to accept or reject any solution. I offered several problem areas where the circle might want to become active, for example, teacher concerns with the parking lot, the general morale of the staff, or temperature control in the classrooms. The principal realized that these were concerns that needed to be addressed and he shared several other issues. He then asked several questions.

1. How would I go about forming the group? I answered that this quality circle, as is true with all circles, would be formed from volunteers. A memo would be placed in all faculty mail boxes affording the entire faculty the opportunity to volunteer to be a part of the project. In that memorandum, the quality circle would be explained along with what type of commitment would be required, and the length of the project in terms of months.

2. Had the district office administrators been

Figure 1. Percentage of Quality Circles Where Supervisors are Leaders (Ingle, 1982).

consulted? I had not checked with the district office administrators. I first wanted to talk to the principal and then communicate with the district as a second step.

3. When and where would the circle meet? The when of the question would be dealt with by the group itself after the initial meeting. Possible meeting times would be preparation periods, before or after school, or lunch time. He offered his opinion that lunch time would be the less desirable choice. Where the meeting would be held was also a concern because space on the campus was at a premium. However, the office was being remodeled to include a small conference room and that seemed adequate for our needs.

4. What would be the impact on the campus? I was not sure what the impact would be. The purpose, at least partially, was to answer that question.

I reminded him that as the facilitator, I would work with the circle collectively on solutions and refer the circle proposals to him in a form that would be reasonable and positive. I reviewed again my two objectives with him and my general philosophy of why I selected this topic. Foremost in my mind was my desire to work on my relations with the faculty. I had spent years devising programs for students and for parents, but it was now appropriate to deal with programs for teachers. At the same time, I wanted to bring together the experiences and skills of the staff into a process that would benefit the entire school. The meeting

came to a close. The principal approved the project. I called the district office and made an appointment for the following week.

I met with the assistant superintendent to obtain his approval. I explained my proposal. He seemed open to the idea and said that it had merit and approved the study at the district level. I discussed the importance of having the union involved in the initial planning process and the positive aspects of obtaining cooperation at the onset. He referred me to the director of employee relations to inquire into any potential contractual conflicts (Fitzgerald and Murphy, 1982; Hutchins, 1985; Thompson, 1982). I composed a letter thanking him for approving the project (See Appendix A).

I met with the director of employee relations and discussed my proposal asking what suggestions he might have in relationship to the union. The director stated that it would be best if I met with the bargaining unit, spoke with them personally, and be available for questions. Fortunately the unit was meeting the following week and my proposal was placed on the agenda.

Six members of the bargaining team were present at the meeting. My objective was to obtain their cooperation and suggestions so that I could conduct my project on the campus where I was an administrator and use volunteer teachers as the participants. The bargaining team decided that if the

proposal was approved by the team, it would be wise to have an addendum to the teacher contract allowing teachers to participate in this project. All points would be in writing so that there would be no misunderstanding. The major concern expressed at this meeting was whether the quality circle would interfere or usurp any of the powers and provisions already provided for in the contract.

The district contract with the teacher's union mandated a Site Curriculum Committee at each school. The principal chaired the committee. Teachers were elected to seats on the Site Curriculum Committee and all departments were represented. Its primary responsibility was curriculum development. I explained that the quality circle would deal with concerns outside the area deemed appropriate for the Site Curriculum Committee. The bargaining team asked for examples, and I gave them the parking lot scenario. They were assured that all participants would be volunteers and that no section in the contract would be violated. With these answers, the team approved the proposal and an addendum was attached to the contract to permit the project. Several on the team appeared to be enthusiastic about the ramifications of the proposal, and two requested copies of the dissertation when completed.

One of the bargaining team participants was a member of the faculty where the study would be conducted. He was aware that I was working on an advanced degree. He

expressed words of encouragement and appreciation for presenting it to the bargaining team before implementation. I felt that for this particular project, which dealt with volunteerism and teachers, beginning with the bargaining team saved this researcher time and potential problems later.

Invitations to participate were typed during the following two days and placed in each faculty member's mail box (See Appendix B). I informed faculty members that I would be available for questions. Interest was expressed by individual faculty members. The major concerns were the amount of time involved, the duration of the project, and whether the time to be spent would make any permanent impact over the years. I attempted to answer their questions, but I also stated that much depended on the individual circle members. The experiences other organizations had with the quality circle indicated that positive, permanent changes could result from quality circle action. Two teachers came by the office, asked why I was interested in the project, and stated they would like to become a part of the project. I wanted to conduct research involving administrators and teachers. It was an area in which I had interest and was a concept that could use further work. Because of this interaction, I had a fairly good idea, even before the requests for volunteers were returned, that I would have the eight to ten members I would need to begin a circle.

After I received the responses from the teachers, I tabulated the results. Thirty-two teachers out of a total staff of 67 expressed an interest in participating in the project.

I issued a second memo to the teachers who volunteered for the quality circle requesting what time of the day would be best suited for them. After the results were tabulated, the largest number of interested teachers wanted to meet after school. A third memo asked each teacher to express a choice of which day would be desirable on which to hold the first meeting (See Appendix C).

Thank you notes were sent out to all who expressed an interest in becoming a part of the project thanking them for their support. All were informed that the after school time slot was the choice because of the number who volunteered for that time. Several indicated that with that slot extra time would be available if needed and that is why they chose it. All those who returned the original memo expressing a desire to participate, yet were not chosen to be included in the circle, were invited to visit the quality circle meetings when they had the time or when a particular action aroused their interest (See Appendix D).

The new circle members attended the first meeting to orient themselves to the quality circle process and to discuss organizational issues that would affect the circle. There were 12 volunteers who were available after school.

Of this number, 9 were women and 3 were men. After deliberation, I chose volunteers whom I felt would work well with their peers, had some group experience, would work positively for group cohesion and action, and would represent a cross section of the school. Eight appeared to be an optimum number, not including the facilitator, so that was the number chosen. The group was composed of 7 women and 1 man not counting the facilitator. Of the three men who volunteered for the after school time: one could not attend on Mondays, one man was not selected because he would not have been a cohesive member with the others chosen, the third was selected to participate.

Of the group, there were three English teachers, one physical education teacher, one special education teacher, one from social science, one from alternative education, and the school nurse. The researcher was the facilitator, a participant observer, and the representative site administrator. The number of years that the participants had worked at the site ranged from eight years to seventeen years. Several new teachers had joined the staff in September but none of them expressed an interest in volunteering. One potential volunteer stated it was just too difficult the first year to participate in a project of this nature. He would be interested in joining the following year.

A short paragraph on each participant would be in order at this time to present some of the characteristics of the quality circle members. Barbara was in her last two years before retirement during this study. She had been with the school since the beginning. She is outgoing and really a friend/confidant to many of the teachers. She is white, is a registered nurse, and lives in Coronado. She is married and has children all of whom live out of the house. She and her husband own a small plane and enjoy flying together to spend weekends at different spots in the country.

Jane is an English teacher who has also been with the school since its first year and stated she will remain there the rest of her career. She is in her 40s, single, white, and lives in the local area. She is somewhat shy, but friendly and has good rapport with students especially bilingual students.

Loretta is in her 30s and is divorced without children. She teaches English and has been at the school at least 10 years. She is an attractive woman, white, and enjoys dressing in a stylistic manner. She too enjoys working with bilingual students especially the educationally deficient students. She was department chairperson during this study and was also a resource teacher. She has followed several of her students through college and maintains written communications with a few as they enter the work world.

Kelly is a physical education teacher who also coaches volleyball and soccer. She supervises the cheerleaders, codirects peer counseling, is the advisor of the pep club, and advises the backpacking club. She is white, in her 30s, and lives in Pacific Beach. She is divorced with no children. She has taught at the school for the past 10 years. She is athletic and is part of an adult woman's soccer team. She enjoys hiking, skiing, and is quite involved with students not only during the work day but during her own personal time.

Bob is a special education teacher and has been at the school for some 8 years. He is white, married with no children, and is in his 50s. He is independent, reserved, somewhat shy, but quite friendly. He also advises the Key Club on campus. He lives in Escondido so has quite a daily drive each day.

Louise is the alternative education teacher. She previously taught reading and was the home study teacher. She is white, in her 40s, married to a lawyer, and has no children. She and her husband live in La Jolla. She has recently returned to college to earn her counseling credential. She is warm and friendly, does well with students who do not like school because she has a calming, nonthreatening effect on them.

Kay is a white female who is married and has children of whom one is still at home. She is in her 40s and enjoys

an active life. She teaches special education and social science. Her husband is in private business. She is class advisor for one of the grades. She is quite outgoing and has strong opinions about what is happening in the educational world. She is assertive but is also a good listener and she enjoys leading groups.

Alice is an English teacher who has been with the school since the beginning. She is divorced without children, in her 50s, white, and lives in San Diego. She is somewhat shy, reserved, and enjoys reading as a home activity. She teaches advanced placement and enjoys challenging students in the literature area of English.

Bethany, the nonparticipant observer, is a black female, attractive, widowed without children who is in her 30s. She has been a counselor since the school opened but has also taught English early in her career. She was born and raised in the south and has a private import business on the side. She is assertive, friendly, and involved with students with whom she works. She dresses in a stylish manner and her wardrobe reflects her differing tastes in clothes many showing her excitement with the colors of African dress.

In planning for the nonparticipant observer, I asked for volunteers and one of the female counselors, Bethany, expressed interest. She had been with the school seventeen years. Because of her counseling skills, I felt her ability

to observe the circle members and the process would be an asset to the circle. I specifically wanted to put her counseling skills to work and asked her to be aware of participant position at the table, tone of voice, nonverbal communication, and interrelationships between the members. By observing these behaviors at various meetings, she and I would be able to gain some insight as to how they developed throughout the project.

I met with Bethany before the first meeting and discussed her role. She was to visit the meetings from time to time. She agreed to come into the meetings, take notes, and later share her observations with the facilitator. She was quite familiar with the majority of the participants, and they in turn seemed comfortable with her. I felt that even though she would attend only intermittently, her presence would not cause hesitation or alarm on the part of any member of the group.

Five of us were all hired by the same administrator to join the new faculty in 1970 and had remained together some sixteen years by the time this project commenced. There is some correlation to the Japanese situation whereby people hire into a company and remain for life. In fact, four of the members of the circle mentioned that they would remain at the school for the remainder of their careers.

The first meeting was organized as an introductory meeting. I welcomed the participants as they entered the

conference room and thanked each one for volunteering for the project. I began by informing the group why I was working on the project and what I had done previous to this first meeting. I had met with the principal to gain his approval, then with the district administrators, and finally with the labor union representatives so that all concerned would be aware of the project. In this way the members could determine that I had dealt with potential conflicts from the district and the union. I had chosen this component of the Japanese management system because it dealt with coworkers and that was an area in which I wanted to do research and strengthen my own skills. In previous years, faculty members had entered my office and wanted to know why something was happening, why something wasn't done, or to share an event about some aspect of school life. We talked, exchanged ideas, but little action was accomplished. They wanted, as did I, a positive, meaningful change but there was an absence of a vehicle to satisfy that need. I chose the quality circle because it seemed to fit my style of working with peers and I had fostered a positive relationship with many staff members. The atmosphere now at school seemed receptive. The school was in its sixteenth year, and many of the staff were there since the school opened. Many of the faculty felt comfortable together.

The principal would be an unofficial member of the circle and was prepared to work with us. I had his trust,

and I knew how he stood on most issues. We would develop the proposals in such a way that the principal would be able to accept them because of the depth of data presented and the knowledge that they could be implemented and allow positive change to occur.

The time frame involved training for approximately two months or a total of four meetings (see Figure 2). After training, the circle would function for one year, meeting weekly. Meetings were to be taped. The objectives were read to the members. The facilitator called for questions; there were none.

A short history of the quality circle movement was then presented. I discussed how it began in Japan after World War II with the assistance of American scholars and how it thrived there. I shared the manner in which the circle solicited input from peers working together to solve problems, how it became a success allowing Japan to rise to the top of the industrial world. I discussed with them the manner in which a circle functions and that it was a technique presently used in business and production. My general goal was to observe its usefulness in an educational setting. I was becoming an advocate of business and education sharing techniques that worked and this was one of those first ideas.

I would train the members in the techniques of the quality circle and discuss the process with them. I

Figure 2. Hours of Training for Quality Circles (Ingle, 1982).

requested that they begin thinking about problems that existed on the campus; ones that we could solve in the circle. A question was asked whether problems could be solicited from the other faculty members and the response was positive. In fact, this type of activity was encouraged.

The quality circle would deal with situations on this campus only. District policies, curricular matters, or any other activity dealt with in the contract would be outside the circle's realm. Areas of authority that were vested in the district office only, for example wages or the number of minimum days per year, would not be considered. Basically this was to be a school problem-solving effort.

Each member was asked to express the reasons why she/he had volunteered to spend time on a project of this nature. Of the eight, three mentioned that they wanted to work with the facilitator. All eight stated that there were problems on campus that needed to be solved but a process had never been formulated to handle problems. They liked the idea of becoming a part of a solution-finding process. It was a way to be involved and at the same time return something to the school. Six had definite problems in mind and the group was the first opportunity offered to them to work towards solutions.

One of the members suggested along with the facilitator that refreshments be provided since the meeting was to be at

the end of the work day. All agreed although some said they would not partake of refreshments. The next meeting time was discussed. The consensus was that Monday was the opportune time to meet for the first day of the week was usually uncomplicated. It was not a day for faculty meetings or department meetings. People were not tired and would benefit more from the circle activities. Meetings would be held weekly unless there was a Monday holiday or a another meeting which the faculty wanted to attend (See Figure 3).

The next consideration was time. The circle was to be conducted partially on company time. The preparation period would have been a more traditional time to meet according to the quality circle guidelines. Coming together after school would be both company time and personal time. Contract language stated that teachers must remain on campus for fifteen minutes after school to be available to students, parents, or staff. The meeting after school, therefore, would only partially meet the standard of the quality circle to function totally on company time. All concurred it was for the best. Four of the members wanted their preparation periods free to work on school matters and felt more comfortable working on the circle after school. School was released at 2:35 p.m. All agreed they would attempt to arrive at the agreed upon starting time which was 2:40 p.m. Meetings would terminate at 3:15 p.m. All members agreed

Figure 3. Frequency of Quality Circle Meetings (Ingle, 1982).

that they would make a year's commitment. A weekly agenda would be provided in advance to each member (See Appendix E).

The data collected from this study were developed by the researcher into an ethnographic case study. The two objectives of the study were explained and questions were solicited. There were no questions. The facilitator had met individually with most of the members of the circle previously to answer questions.

An observation I made at this meeting was that the group was positive, action oriented, and they enjoyed each others company. A member commented that there were only two males present but it did not cause any concern among the members. The atmosphere was relaxed and yet there was excitement because the circle was embarking on a new adventure together; a movement that held promise. The second meeting was held the following week. Refreshments of juice and cookies were available. As they entered the conference room, the members shared refreshments and sat around the table socializing until all had arrived. It took approximately five minutes for the group to assemble.

This first training session was set aside to review the quality circle and its operational techniques. This material took two meetings to cover. The process was explained as a step by step progression that would bring about logical results. To comply with step one, I had

already asked members to come prepared with potential problems from their own knowledge and from talking to fellow staff members. Most members were in the process of gathering this information.

Step two was to select the problem. Anyone could present a problem, including administrators, but only the circle members would determine which problems to consider and which ones would be processed first. The circle member who presented the problem would submit a paragraph or two concerning the problem. When the group was ready to prioritize, the members would then have the data to make an informed selection.

Problem analysis was the next step. Most of the work is accomplished during this part of the process. There were several recommended techniques but the circle would use only those which fit the issue and the group's needs. This step includes determining the actual problem, gathering data as to why the issue was a problem, and analyzing its causes. As part of problem analysis, technical experts would be invited to the meetings to share their expertise. The techniques required for the functioning of the circle were not specifically designed by the Japanese for the quality circle. They were sorted out from many techniques because they were simple and were effective with the quality circle process. These techniques include brainstorming, data collection, data analysis, cause and effect analysis, and

histograms. When these were read to the group, the majority of the members were familiar with the terms and the processes they represented.

It had been previously decided that an agenda would be provided for each meeting. Time would be set aside to relax and share during refreshments until members arrived. The circle would spend the first minutes discussing the last meeting. Time would be provided at the end of the meeting to summarize the circle's work.

Members were reminded that it would be their task to solve problems, but these tasks would be equally divided among the members. Support personnel would be invited as needed to impart more detailed and technical information. Meetings would be regular, calendared, and would not be postponed or cancelled without just cause.

The customary goals of quality circles dictated that at least two solutions be presented yearly to the executive officer or in this case the principal. That would be the circle's goal too. If anything, the members felt that number could be improved upon.

One of the members inquired why the quality circle supposedly worked well. The answer was that a group working on a solution not only allowed persons to share possible solutions individually but permitted the group with its collective energy or synergy to arrive at a cooperative solution. This process provided the support required to

carry out a possible solution. Since all circle members were involved in the decision making and had input into the solution, there could be ownership and a sense of accomplishment for the solution when it was implemented. This realization that circle members could effect change and improve the workplace, in itself, was a powerful draw itself.

Several exercises were offered in the training manual. Trainers used these to obtain group cohesion, but the group as a whole felt such procedures unnecessary. The members had been together for a minimum of eight years both formally and informally. Time had been spent together and each knew the other professionally if not personally. The circle was aware of the goals that were before them. The group realized there was a job to be done and all were willing to be involved in that effort.

The facilitator felt that the group was exhibiting synergy. This is a phenomena of group work that emerges if the members are working together as a unit. Synergy means that all members will be heard before a decision is reached, and the group will work towards a win/win solution. It also signifies consensus as opposed to majority vote. In actuality the group felt attuned to this concept.

The facilitator's task was to guide, direct, and cooperatively lead remembering that the group belonged to all members equally and, therefore, should assist leading

itself. The work and decision making was to be shared by those involved. Above all, the group had to believe in the process.

Basic rules needed to be understood and accepted so that the process could proceed. Some have already been mentioned such as meetings should begin on time, be held regularly, and kept within the agreed time line. Beyond these each individual must take responsibility for the well being of each other in the context of the group. Each must come ready with ideas and not allow blocks to impede progress. Success and failure would be shared by all.

On a final note, the group process generally was discussed. Inherent problems or weaknesses with group work were apparent, and these points needed to be understood so that the group would be able to function more effectively together. Time was the first concern. Group work is time consuming and can require much patience. Another was the "band wagon" effect where one participant thinks of a solution and the remainder of the group concurs without really thinking. It was important to try to avoid this effect. Equal participation was the only way the group would work smoothly and effectively. Conflict between members would be acknowledged and dealt with in a positive manner.

The third meeting continued the training. The agenda item dealt with how to determine which problems to deal with

first. The members discussed the various techniques in problem selection. Whether the techniques were used or not, the members needed to be aware of the options. The three most used were benefit analysis, forced ranking, and Pareto diagram.

There did not seem to be any lack of potential problems from the members of the circle but there was some difficulty in prioritizing problems. Members decided that the first project should not be a complex problem, but one relatively easy to solve. For the process to attain some amount of credibility at the onset, members who had never worked within the parameters of a group would want to determine if the process could carry a problem from inception to implementation.

The first technique used throughout the process was brainstorming, and it was utilized for searching out problems and for seeking solutions. Simply put this technique allowed members to feel free to state as many thoughts as they wished during the discussions knowing their ideas will be accepted without ridicule and criticism. Circle members could pick up on an idea and expand on what was presented. All ideas had value and were discussed before the list was narrowed or before a final choice was made. Ideas could develop and/or change even after the members had thought about them.

The benefit analysis is technique whereby facts are placed on a chart with various ways of comparing different criteria. Information is divided into the categories of an urgent problem, an important problem, or a problem that would be convenient to solve but is not vital. Problems are listed on one side of a graph and numbers relating to the type of urgency are placed on the other side. In this way, problems are placed on a chart, making it is easier to visualize all potential aspects.

Forced ranking is a third technique. Problems are ranked according to a stated criteria. A list of problems is constructed. The problems are then divided into two columns: those which are most important and those which are least important. Lists are then divided and subdivided again until the problems are positioned from the most to least important.

The last technique is the Pareto diagram. This technique uses charts to visualize the situation. First, the circle determines what problem information will be classified such as by employee, by defect, or by work shift. The information is tallied over a specified period of time and percentages are calculated. Information is then placed on a chart using a bar graph. Then a cumulative line is drawn that sums up each column. An example in education could include the first problems discussed with the principal. A list would be given to the faculty asking

selected members to keep a tally on a daily basis for a stated amount of time how many instances they had problems in each of the three areas. Results would be tallied and put on a graph.

The analyzing and solving of a problem is the next step in the quality circle process. Members are to look at all potential causes and work on the most likely cause from the data collected. There may not be a single cause for a problem, and it can not be taken for granted that if one cause happens before another that the previous cause is the major one. From Kregoski and Scott (1982) there are two methods presented for problem solving. One is systematic problem solving as opposed to random problem solving. A problem is a problem usually as the result of many cause and effect actions. To be able to solve the problem and not become confused with all the symptoms, the problem is divided into parts so that all causes can be examined separately. There are two types of causes: those which are known and verified and those which are unknown and only assumed. Step 1, therefore, is to separate the two. Step 2 is to document all that is known and what is thought. Step 3 deals with the unknown. General headings have to be agreed upon in order to begin to separate the information. Once that is accomplished, Step 4 takes place which is brainstorming as many varied causes as is possible. In this way, all potential causes can be exposed. Step 5 deals with

prioritizing the various causes and selecting the top 3 to 5 causes to focus on. Step 6 deals with asking what, when, who, where, how, and why. At the end of these steps, the true cause or causes should be known.

A similar procedure for searching out causes is titled the process tree and is similar to the above process. Step 1 requires the problem to be put into writing. Step 2 is to itemize the symptoms. Step 3 is to list the sequence of events that led to the problem. Step 4 is to break down each step into more detailed sequences.

After the problem has been identified and analyzed, the remainder of the quality circle work lies in formulating a solution, and presenting it to the administration. Monitoring the solution to determine if adjustments need to be made or if the solution does not fit the problem, finalizes the procedure.

With the training portion completed, the group members felt that they were ready to proceed. Several had with them lists of potential problems which they presented to the circle. Three stated that the only difference in this group and other committees they had worked on was that this was a long term commitment and that the atmosphere was different in the circle. The camaraderie and the openness at least at the onset stood out and most still felt energetic about starting the process. It was agreed that the next meeting

would be a single agenda item to present brainstorming style the various problems.

When Monday came for our first working meeting, all who attended were on time and ready to work as a quality circle. The notes for this meeting will be more detailed in nature because as a model it will set the tone for future meetings and will assist in understanding how each meeting unfolded. One member had gone on a retreat over the weekend and was not expected until the following day otherwise all remaining members were present and on time. Refreshments were available and members seemed relaxed even though most of them entered the conference room with stacks of homework that they planned to take home. The atmosphere was comfortable and the meeting began.

As if taking a straw vote, the facilitator asked informally the number of potential problems each had on their lists. There was approximately twenty. A member commented it would most likely take more than one or two meetings to present and review all the potential items. Each person presented the items that he/she brought to the meeting, and all items were listed. A list would be prepared and put in all the members' mail boxes the following day so that they could think about the items and come prepared to discuss the potential of each in preparation for prioritizing. As each member presented his/her proposals, a short presentation as to why it was

important was given. As the process began, it became apparent that some suggestions could be combined.

Barbara requested that she be allowed to speak first. The issue concerning climate control in the classroom was first on her list. The school had a closed environmental system. All windows were sealed and each room had only one door. Heat, air conditioning and air movement in the room was controlled by the automated system. Since the school was built in 1970, the room temperature was a constant source of aggravation and discomfort to the staff and students alike. In the winter, the rooms were too cold, and in the summer they were too hot. On the day of the first quality circle meeting, it was a warm day and several of the rooms were unbearably hot.

Barbara's second suggestion was the drug problem on campus. She felt a drug program needed to be on campus to deal with students from a preventative standpoint and to deal with students who were already caught and/or suspended so they would not repeat the same mistake. She said the process for a first offender usually was suspension. If a further incident with drugs occurred then the student was suspended again and involuntarily moved to another campus. If nothing more, this would give the student a new environment in which to make a change if he/she wished. Drug abuse was a growing problem yet no active program was

in place to attack the cause. The members agreed that this suggestion was a positive one for the quality circle.

The next suggestion had to do with the time schedule at school. Jane stated that she had received this suggestion from a student as well as from a few teachers. Would it be possible to have a schedule more of the college type? There could be blocks of time and classes would meet on alternate days. Again the members of the group thought it would be worth adding to the list even though it had not been successful in the past. Loretta stated: "I just like the idea of kicking it around, thinking about it" and Janet said: "Some of us are too much the same. We need variety."

This exchange led to the next suggestion which was to prepare a cultural awareness experience for the students since there was such a diverse student body and problems had been developing. Both cultural and educational assemblies were mentioned as possibilities. Since the student body was large (1,700), it was further suggested that grade level assemblies be held because the group would be smaller and the experience more personal. Loretta commented: "That's a good idea." When talking about past cultural exchanges, Loretta exclaimed, "They were great."

This comment led to a suggestion by Karen which had to do with faculty meetings. She expanded her point to say that it was an opportunity to open communication among faculty members because keeping in touch on a high school

campus of this size was difficult to do. Faculty meetings, though, were a time when little was accomplished, and at the end of the meeting there were few positive feelings. The group felt that there must be a way to transform faculty meetings into a learning situation where work could be accomplished. "I really think strongly that having a positive feeling after a faculty meeting is important. Teachers should feel that they have learned something, they did something, or something positive happened at the faculty meeting, that should be a goal," Karen said. Karen had been under stress lately and was seriously considering a leave of absence next year. There was frustration as seen by her comment: "Well, it's considered a joke here" and "So many of those meetings when I leave, I just have to really work at being positive." The frustration again was strong. "It's like, instead of taking our time, we're getting so much paperwork now I can show you a stack that high of paper work and I already have enough paperwork." "Once a month for forty minutes, the faculty meeting should be constructed to make us more positive about our job in some way," she said. Karen continued, "It's discouraging. After sixteen years, I can almost tell you what will happen at the September meeting, at the October meeting, and it's almost like I've heard this sixteen times now. It's like eating soup everyday, I mean it's that type of feeling." There was then some mention of inviting a specific resource teacher from

the district office who could talk about professional development during faculty meetings. Alice had previously heard a teacher in a presentation and was impressed with her. "She was so good. I wanted to listen to her so much more." The talk again reverted to the faculty meetings and the few individuals who make life so dismal at the school. The facilitator stated: "That's something we can put down on our agenda" and attempted to move on, but the members had more to say. Discussion moved on to the subject of the faculty lounge and the negativity that was there, the people that inhabit the lounge, and the reasons why it can be such a negative place.

The facilitator stated that he had been speaking with several students and had a suggestion to present to the quality circle. The idea was to have a student/teacher camp. The peer counselors of the school had been training at a resident camp in the mountains. It was a renewing experience for the students involved. Possibly the atmosphere of the mountains and bringing the students and teachers together could have a similar result. Karen added it would be advantageous during the retreat to set aside time for teachers to be with teachers and students to meet with students. There was also a question about what type of students would be invited to be a part of this experience and there was some sharing about this point. The first comment by Loretta was "I think that would be great. It

would be a great idea. It's different, why not?" Jane said: "I bet nobody goes to camp from other high schools" and "Teacher-student groups could be a breakthrough." The circle then discussed specifics such as how much of the weekend would be required, who would be invited, and what month would be the best for the outing. October or November were mentioned as good choices. Although some anxiety was present, general consensus was that this was a workable idea which could assist with both teacher and general school morale.

The remainder of the problems were written by the members and given to the facilitator. The total number was twenty. The facilitator stated he would have the secretary type the suggestions and put them into the members' boxes midweek. Each member would have the time to review each suggestion and be prepared by the following meeting to prioritize. The reality was that the circle would have to combine problems and focus on a few of the problems because time would limit what could be accomplished. Karen mentioned that as the circle worked on the list of problems, "we have to deal with those that we could do something about."

The facilitator then reminded the members that the first problem should be one that was readily solvable. Since the group's skills were not practiced in the circle, a simpler problem would allow the group to experiment with

techniques and still permit the process to go forward. Loretta supported the facilitator, pointing out problems that could be dealt with and ones that could wait. Figure 4 shows the types of problems usually covered by quality circles in the production world.

The 18 problems finalized by the quality circle for consideration by the members were as follows:

1. Students who are out ill and need homework.
2. Temperature in classrooms.
3. Number of committees.
4. Morale and attitude of staff/preparation period get together.
5. Advisory period-number of and whether it was important to have it or not.
6. Teaching different subjects and fewer preparation periods to reduce the amount of subject oriented paper work.
7. Nonsubject-oriented paper work-letters, cards, attendance sheets.
8. Telephone availability for long distance.
9. Different time schedules for students/staff/length of classes: Is 50 minutes better than 55 minutes?
10. Interdistrict transfers: Are they an appropriate way to handle discipline?

Figure 4. Problems Handled by Quality Circles (Ingle, 1982).

11. Drug/alcohol problems: Organize program to assist students in handling problems and help regular attendance.
12. Cultural programs for students to raise awareness.
13. More involvement with Rohr Industries as a school business partner.
14. Room changes.
15. Faculty meetings: More positive, teaching time, learning time, enjoy each other, value time.
16. How to deal with negative people.
17. Trip to mountains to involve teachers with students and students with teachers to discuss common topic.
18. Student absenteeism.

As a concluding statement, the facilitator reaffirmed the fact that the circle members were now a part of a process that was going to tackle problems and accept ownership of the solutions. It was an active role that was being taken by a group of interested staff members who were willing to volunteer their time to improve their school. There was an apology for exceeding the assigned time. The meeting ended.

The next meeting was held the following Monday. Again refreshments were provided and as members entered, food and words were shared as the remainder of the members arrived. The group immediately went to work. The subject was prioritizing the list of problems. The facilitator asked

each member to mention their three top choices in order of importance. Since most quality circles did not handle more than three problems in any one year, listing three priority items seemed logical. Several members mentioned that listing the problems in order of importance had been difficult. This activity took the entire meeting time of this second circle meeting. It was more than just a listing of the potential problems upon which to work. It was a sharing of why some items were more important than others and member's personal feelings about those issues.

Jane was the first to speak at the suggestion of the facilitator for she seemed ready and prepared to speak. She used a process of elimination she said to narrow the choices. She was quite serious about the selections she made which were morale and attitude, teachers teaching many different subjects, and the phone.

Morale was of concern to Jane because she had been a part of the faculty since the founding of the school and several teachers were like family to her. Morale of the faculty directly affected her maybe more than most. She had also recently asked for and received several remedial level classes to teach and the pressure of teaching these types of classes all day had taken its toll. The phone issue gained importance this year because she was having a new house built and it was difficult for her to call contractors long distance because of the unavailability of a private phone.

Alice asked to be next. She stated that she voted for morale and attitude as number one, student drug and alcohol abuse next, and the student/teacher camp as third.

The morale of the faculty would affect her either way positive or negative. She has a deep concern for students and is involved with them personally which may be why she chose the drug and student/teacher camp as her second choice.

Loretta followed with her suggestions. Her number one priority was the phone. Student drug/alcohol problems was next and room changes was her last choice. Loretta lives out of the school's phone range and having a phone available was important to her. She has also taught remedial courses on a regular basis and has dealt with student drug/alcohol problems. Her last choice of room changes had to do with several teachers in her department having room changes affect their lives and she was concerned as to the way it was carried out.

Barbara shared her choices with the group. Her most important was the phone. She had a phone available and faculty members asked her to use it often. A phone for faculty use would curtail the use of her phone and cause fewer interruptions. The many committees that existed at the site was her second concern because there was an overlap of duties and much wasted time. Room changes was third and this was important because she had ties to several faculty

members whose rooms were changed and they had come to her with their anger.

Kelly was next. Her first choice was morale and attitude. She too was single and several members of the faculty were like family to her. Drug/alcohol abuse was next and this was her choice because as a physical education teacher she was involved with the physical wellbeing of students. She was also a coach making her more aware of the drug scene. Her third choice was student absenteeism. She did mention that if there were other choices that could bring about change she would drop her third choice since it was so broad of a concern. The facilitator stated that it could be listed anyway and dealt with whether something could be done or not.

Louise then related that she selected four priorities rather than three and if that was alright. There were no objections. Number one was morale and attitude. Louise was involved in the alternative program at school and overworked as the new program attempted to gain credibility. Her next choice was the phone and like other members the phone was important because she lived out of the city. At times she needed to make calls home and there was no private place available. Drugs/alcohol was her next choice. Again since she dealt with students who could not handle a regular program, she was keenly aware of the need for work to be done in this area. She realized that without assistance,

education for some could not take place. Her last choice was to learn techniques to work with negative peers. This was definitely an activity that needed support but raised anxiety too. A few of the negative people on campus were strong willed people and it would be difficult to deal with them. If anyone could make a difference with this type of person, Louise would have a chance. She also was the recipient of a newly earned counseling credential and wanted to gain experience.

Karen listed her first choice as the amount of paper work required of teachers. She was organized but the paper work was causing undue stress for her. Her second choice was climate in the classroom. She felt that she was representing the faculty as a whole because it really didn't bother her that much but she realized that it bothered many of the faculty and students. Her third choice was absenteeism. She had talked previously to the facilitator of the desire to teach and be the best she could be. This was difficult because of sporadic attendance practices of students.

Bob was last and chose climate condition in the rooms as number one. Next was the phone, third was faculty meetings and fourth was the amount of paper work that had to be accomplished daily. The climate condition was important to Bob. He was a special education teacher working in a remodeled small room where the climate control apparatus had

not functioned properly for years. His students could not handle the warm days without proper air conditioning or cold days without proper heat. Bob chose the phone issue because he lived an hours drive from the school and from time to time needed to phone long distance. The faculty meeting as a learning experience was an area of interest for him because of his wife's experiences. The paper work issue was of special significance to him because special education teachers already have extra paper work so any additional paper work weighed heavily on him.

Lastly the facilitator presented his selections. Number one was faculty morale and attitude. The idea was to combine the faculty/student camp with the morale issue because they seemed to be related. Next was climate control because it effected so many of the staff and students. Last was student drug/alcohol abuse.

As a finale, Karen added that she had begun to work on the problem of the phone on her own; something she had started before the quality circle began to meet. She was attempting to put a pay phone in the faculty room so that those who needed privacy and had a long distance call to make, could do so. She had already called the phone company and discussed the possibilities and was willing to donate an old phone booth where the new phone could be placed.

At this point, the members of the circle expressed excitement that Karen had gone ahead and started work on a phone. There was still the impression that a school long distance telephone should be made available to staff. The pay phone was a start, though, and would provide at least one outlet for those who had to call. There was anger on the part of Loretta that a school of this size did not provide a private phone for the staff to use whether work related or not. The tone was strong and the anger genuine. "I think its ridiculous . . . where you cannot call out long distance. And I think it's just lewd, it's beyond lewd, it's ludicrous" was her comment. Several suggestions such as where the phone could be located and who would absorb the cost were added to issues that needed to be resolved.

The facilitator brought the meeting back to task. The final tabulation emerged with morale/attitude having five votes along with drug/alcohol and the phone. Temperature conditions in the classrooms garnered three votes. These then would be the circle's first tasks.

Jane interjected that she was sorry that room changes did not make the the final selection because she would have changed her vote for that if the vote had been close. Loretta then stated that she had

already taken it to the Site Curriculum Committee meeting and had placed it on the agenda for the next meeting. The facilitator said that was a positive move and that was an appropriate group to handle the problem. The circle was not set up to handle all concerns and if there was a group set up to handle situations like the room change the circle could move on to other problems. Members nodded their agreement. A question as to why the room change issue was such an important one surfaced. Karen explained that several new portable rooms were being planned and that the social science department supposedly had agreed to move to them upon completion. Along the way one or two of the social science teachers had changed their minds and were questioning the move. Since many of the teachers had been with the school in the same room since the school's inception, a move to another room after being in a room for seventeen years could cause anger or anxiety. Loretta added that "Some of us are shuffled a lot so maybe it's time for other people to shuffle a little bit too."

Additional information was presented by the facilitator concerning the portables. The temperature in the permanent portable was controlled by the teacher and not the central system which would make that type of room desirable. Karen stated that this was the

reason why the social science department wanted to move in the first place because they would all be together and as an added incentive each could control their own classroom temperature. It was interesting to see the amount of information that Karen had at her disposal and her willingness to share it with the circle.

The facilitator called the circle back to the subject at hand but several members had not completed their dialogue so they continued. Loretta and Karen dominated the conversation sharing who wanted to move and why. It was an energetic exchange of information as if the members had waited years to share their feelings about room changes. Finally Loretta said "I'm going to keep harping on this. I'd like to see if we can come up with a system that wouldn't make everybody unhappy. By sharing books, materials, films, maybe we'll be able to help each other share lessons. I mean that would be wonderful, it would be great!" and with that the discussion ended.

The facilitator summarized what had occurred before the dialogue about room changes. Morale and attitude were mentioned as long term goals that the circle possibly would work on for the entire year. An easy one solution answer was not available.

Karen and Kelly captured the next few minutes as they aired several concerns that had to do with what

the circle was discussing. Kelly dwelled on the "availability or unavailability of the phone." Karen discussed at length how she attempted to enter the office after 3:30 p.m. and how inconvenient it was to have the office locked (the office staff's day ended at 3:30 p.m. although administrators sometimes remained).

After Karen had finished, Loretta made a statement that had implications outside what was happening in the group. She mentioned all teachers should have a key to the main office. "You know what it is? The feeling seems to be that they don't trust us. We're not trusted to have a key. That's the implication that adults here cannot be trusted."

The facilitator discussed a few of the concerns in relation to keys. This assisted in understanding all sides of the key issue. Loretta then returned to the phone issue and what could be done about it with verbal support from Karen. They talked back and forth attempting to find a solution even though all the data was not available. The only fact was five long distance school phones were on the campus. Telephones were placed with the principal, both assistant principals, the registrar, and the principal's secretary. No convenient way for the faculty to use one of these phones in private existed. The teacher would have to wait for one of the administrators to

leave their office or to give up privacy and use one of the phones while the person was in his/her office. Neither of these options was acceptable to the circle.

The facilitator saw that this problem was of immediate concern. Since emotions were rather strong from at least four members, the facilitator thought it wise to communicate with the staff as soon as possible that the circle was working on the phone issue. The number one problem for the circle to deal with then would be the phone issue. Karen said it well, "Like Loretta said even if we can do some things to alleviate the existing procedure" it will help.

Discussion continued on the phone issue. Bob capped the conversation by saying that "Control is the issue. Put the phone in a locked room." The facilitator refined it even more by asking, beyond control, what was the issue. Money was the answer from Barbara, Loretta, and Karen. This brought on further discussion of money and control.

The meeting was about to come to a close. The facilitator summarized again stating "Let's start out with the phone issue and set up a plan of action. It seems important. The week after that let's get something started on the morale issue and come back to that maybe once a month. When the phone issue is

completed, then we'll get into drug/alcohol abuse. We'll try to attack those three by June."

There were questions as to what the district's philosophy was in regards to phones at individual school sites and what the policy stated. The facilitator agreed to look into the issue and return with information at the next meeting. At the same time, information was given regarding the phone issue. Questions such as why the phones were located where they were, types of logs used, and procedures for the present use of the long distance line were reviewed for the circle. The facilitator stated that all would receive minutes in a few days and that at the next meeting the first item on the agenda would be the phone issue. The meeting adjourned.

The meeting of April 14th was called to order by the facilitator. Bob had informed the office that he would be out Monday so he was absent from the circle meeting. The facilitator immediately shared the information that the circle had requested. The principal said a district policy for the use of phones did not exist. Each school site was now in charge of their respective phones and were allocated five long distance lines. The site had the authority to change phone locations but would have to pay the bill if the phones were changed. The site was also responsible for

the collection of funds to pay for all long distance calls.

Karen had information that she wanted to add to the discussion. She had been at the district office in a meeting and had discussed the issue with a district official. She shared what the circle had accomplished so far and the feeling of the circle members in regards to phone use. The official had stated that several schools were experiencing problems and he thought that possibly each school needed another line that was not local nor long distance but at least had county range. The teachers would have county wide access which would solve most of their needs.

The facilitator interjected that the district communication concerning the new phone line had reached each site. The placement of the new line was at the discretion of the principal. The circle was also informed that the new long distance pay phone line in the faculty lounge would be connected in one or two days.

Betty spoke up and led discussion on the placement of the new district phone and facilitated information sharing from several members including Kelly and Loretta. Loretta brought up the question of trust again and felt that placing the phone on a secretary's desk would be inconvenient. Barbara had a phone line

put in her home which was similar to the county type of line that was to be placed in the school office. She shared that it was adequate for teachers who wanted to phone within the county.

Loretta had attended a department meeting this past Friday and had shared what was being done in the circle meeting in regards to the phone. There was relief and positive comments with expression of support from the teacher for the circle's efforts. The physical education department was adamant that a phone was necessary to set up athletic contests. Again Loretta was showing her support for the other faculty members in an area where she felt support was needed. It was a positive move on her part, though, and one that meant a lot to the general faculty. Barbara was also supporting the physical education phone issue because she had become a focal point for staff who had concerns and problems with the phone. She took it on herself to support issues which were important to the staff. This obviously was a prime reason for her volunteering to be a part of the circle. She was one of the older faculty members and was preparing to retire in a year or two. The fervor of her interests became more apparent as her retirement neared and the emotional support of those chosen issues became stronger.

The conversation then focused on the 911 number and whether the long distance line was needed to make this type of call. There was general confusion by most on the circle of why it was difficult to use the 911 number. Louise joined in for the first time this day stating she was confused about the process and that this was frightening. Karen, stated: "It would be faster to take 20 cents to the pay booth and dial 911 there." Loretta added: "It would be faster to run up to the fire station" and "this issue is so cruel that it gives me a headache."

It appeared time for the facilitator to disseminate information and to freeze the conversation on the long distance phone line. The emergency phone use procedure seemed to be an immediate need, therefore, the facilitator took the time to clear up the misunderstanding. The discussion became lively. Most of those in the circle had an opinion and wanted to be heard.

Louise was involved more than any other time since the circle began to meet. She was the alternative school lead teacher and was located in a building apart from the rest of the school. She also worked with students who were not from the regular program and she might need the emergency number more than most of the other staff. Usually the administration would do the

calling but, as Karen stated, all staff members should have the information for emergencies. There was real confusion on the part of Louise and also a desire to become acquainted with the system.

As explanation, the facilitator stated that the school district had just installed a centrex system with the base at the district office. A 911 call would send the emergency vehicle there unless the caller identified where the call was coming from and told the dispatch official that the phone was on the centrex system. Several positive results surfaced from this discussion. One was that there were a number of phones on campus which were not on the centrex system and could be used in an emergency without worrying about the centrex system. Telephones were in the associated student body office, the business education classroom, the drama classroom, and there was the pay phone outside the office.

Another result was that somehow no one had thought of instructing the staff how to use the new phone system when it was connected. Karen and Loretta both stated an inservice was needed to teach the staff how to use the system in an emergency and discuss the system so that there could be no understanding. Without the circle, the problem would not have become apparent and possibly an emergency would have been the

first instance that appeared to show that an inservice was necessary. Obviously this lack of information could have had dire effects.

Barbara and Karen suggested that an invitation to the phone company be sent asking for an inservice or contact someone with knowledge at the district office to do the task. The discussion narrowed to the new centrex system and the possibility that it was not right for the school. The facilitator reminded the group that this was a district decision and that "this group does not have the power to change it."

Discussion returned to what the problem was in the first place. Money and misuse of the previous phone system was the answer. Karen stated: "You know other people have used the phone, you have substitutes, you have instructional aides. There are a lot of people that have access to the phones."

Possible solutions began to surface. Barbara said, "Why don't we find out if we can increase the zone of centrex and inquire what the district office is paying now. Maybe for an increase in the fees we could extend our radius within the county for everybody." Jane who had been quiet for much of the discussion shared that maybe "the secretaries could be like operators, or something similar. The teacher calls

through any intercom system and says I would like to call and the secretary would dial it for you."

There were more questions about whose line was shared by whom and whether the lines would accept the 800 number. There was excitement as the circle continued to search out ideas, possible solutions, and shared their ideas about why the system did not function effectively. This was followed by an exchange of several stories about the disfunctional phone system and the sharing of more frustration.

Loretta began to summarize what had occurred regarding the phone. The new public phone in the lounge was to be available for personal calls with the faculty paying for their calls directly. The new phone in the office was for school related or personal business but there were still questions as to where it would be located.

The facilitator tried again to bring a close to the phone issue by stating, "We need to start working the last five minutes on morale and attitude. That's the long term project. What can we start thinking about?"

This question brought a request from Jane that was not on the agenda. The school administrators had recently deleted nutrition break because of firecrackers on campus. When morale was mentioned,

Jane immediately thought about the loss of the break. The facilitator explained what had occurred, what the dean of students was doing about the situation, and what the plans were for restoring the break.

The circle began to share information and ask further questions about what happened and why it happened. Several teachers had overheard comments made by students and offered those comments to the facilitator. In a few minutes, a large amount of information had been gathered; much more than the four administrators had at hand. All in all, it was a productive five minutes. The facilitator now had more relevant information to pass to the dean who was spearheading the investigation into who was exploding firecrackers. It provided the facilitator with a new idea. When there was an activity on the campus that was not in the school's best interest, it might behoove the administration to ask teachers who had information to come after school to a short meeting to provide a forum for all to share what they knew. The facilitator summarized the situation with the explosives. It was an excellent opportunity to inform a portion of the staff about a recent administrative action.

Further ideas of how to improve morale were requested by the facilitator. Karen returned to her original idea from a few weeks ago which was to have

more inspiring faculty meetings. Loretta agreed saying, "We needed meetings that were more relevant and more centered on teacher's needs." A dialogue was developing between the two. Loretta responded: "It's hard to be participatory when you know that Jack and Jerome are going to jump on what you say. You know. They intimidate the hell out of me." Again Karen followed with "I think it is too large of a group. I wonder what the feedback would be like during preparation period faculty meetings? I think for one thing you are going to have more sharing with a smaller group but whether the meeting goes well will depend on the group."

The facilitator entered the two person conversation and stated that faculty meetings were a problem and maybe it would be a good idea to invite the principal to the circle to discuss the circle's feelings with him.

Again the circle was not finished and had more ideas to share and wanted to develop thoughts on faculty meetings. Frustration was best summarized by Karen who stated that "If the meetings were worthwhile it would be alright but after seventeen years of faculty meetings, I could list on one hand how many I think were really beneficial to me as a teacher." More ideas followed. Loretta mentioned people being on

time. Kelly inquired about who was required to attend and who obtained excuses. Karen thought that faculty input should be sought. The facilitator interjected the thought that with increased morale there would most likely be increased productivity at those meetings. Kelly mentioned how difficult it would be to control the unruly faculty members, and Jane stated: "Teachers in a faculty meeting are a very rude group." The facilitator added that the morale issue had to be attacked little by little because attitudes take time to change. Karen brought up the idea of refreshments and said, "Food is one of the very simplest forms of sharing."

It was past time to adjourn the meeting. There was no time for a summarization. The facilitator thanked everyone for attending and sharing ideas. He finished with "you make Monday worthwhile." The meeting ended.

The meeting of April 21st opened in the conference room of the main office. Louise was not in attendance because she was being trained to direct the new alternative education program. This announcement immediately led to a few questions about the new program which the facilitator answered.

Bob brought the meeting back to the agenda by informing the circle that he had used his credit card

on the new faculty pay phone. There were some general questions concerning the new phone but elation was evident over having a long distance phone in the lounge for teachers exclusive use. Loretta brought up the fact that the circle had also discussed placing a long distance phone in the physical education room and in the nurses office. Just because this phone was now installed, work remained. Most were pleased at the fast action and acknowledged that the district was already in the initial phases of placing a phone at all schools, but that the circle's activities accelerated the process.

The next five minutes were spent with questions about how to obtain two more long distance phones, how they would be paid for, and how they were to be used. It was felt that the new alternative program would have their own phone and the funds to pay for that phone so that Louise's concern was handled. With this culmination of the situation, the circle continued with the subject of the alternative education program. It seemed that there were still questions to be answered. The program was a part of the campus but so removed that there was little information available. There definitely was a need for more dissemination of information.

information to the group. She had heard of a particular alternative program that did not use a main frame hookup to a central computer but instead used microcomputers and floppy disks. Also their programs dealt with remedial work only. She shared experiences her brother-in-law had had with that system.

The meeting returned to the agenda. Most members were satisfied that the phone issue, which had been a real problem to the staff, was now under control. Positive action had been taken and results were apparent.

The discussion returned to morale. A general introduction was given on the next issue to tackle. A thought was given by the facilitator to have each in the circle look at one way in which morale could be improved and lead the work on that one issue.

Jane was the first to question. "What type of concern would be an appropriate activity to involve the staff in some way?" The facilitator answered that anything in the life of the teacher was or could be a morale issue. An example was the misunderstanding between several teachers and the custodians. The facilitator narrowed the response to say that, "It can be anything that you think will raise your own morale. By raising our own morale hopefully we'll raise everybody's morale at the same time."

Karen questioned whether the facilitator was focusing on a particular project. The planned teacher/student retreat where teachers and students would work to motivate others through communication between the two groups was his project. Another example was given where one of the teachers on his own set up pot lucks in the lounge from time to time. It was always well attended and allowed for positive communication. Several in the circle led by Barbara and Louise were not aware of these lunch pot lucks and expressed surprise. Karen stated that some in the circle could make the event more regular and assist the teacher in locating a larger room so that more of the faculty could attend if they chose. The facilitator and Louise mentioned that food provides a medium for people to come together and share. There was agreement from the members.

The facilitator felt it was an opportune time to summarize this issue. The members agreed for each to bring in an idea so that all the members could brainstorm what ideas would bring the best result and what data would be needed to be able to bring about the desired result. Kelly suggested that the staff be provided with an exercise period on a daily basis.

Karen was into leading jazzercise and most felt that this could be an addition that would benefit all. Bob shared that, "I think stress reduction with exercises would be fantastic." This was one of the ideas on Bob's mind which had not come up previously.

The facilitator reminded the circle it was time to adjourn but first shared that physical exercise is a very strong component of the Japanese management system. It is ironic that the circle on their own came up with the same opinion. The meeting was excused yet several including Karen and Jane remained to further discuss ideas about morale.

The next session of the circle convened May 5th. There had been a week without a meeting because of the spring break. Members were ready to work upon entering the room. Kelly was a major participant at this meeting because one of the main themes was motivation and teachers involvement with motivation. The theme of enjoying each other and having fun on the job surfaced time and again during this meeting.

Three informational issues were covered. One dealt with the quality circle itself. The facilitator reminded the members that all had to be involved with the gathering of data; it was a team effort. Most remembered that information gathering was a key.

Several including Jane and Loretta had forgotten this point.

The second informational concern involved Loretta and another teacher. Mary, the other teacher, was going to lose her room because it was being converted into a computer center. Mary and Loretta belonged to the same department and Loretta received the complaint because she was department head. The facilitator had dealt with the issue and shared with Loretta all that had transpired with the room change. Loretta felt quite strongly about room changes and lack of communication. At the end of this mini discussion, Loretta seemed satisfied stating, "It's interesting to get the whole story because I didn't understand."

The last information given dealt with the master schedule. This is an important issue because with it determines what each teacher will instruct in the coming year. There is teacher input but the mechanics of how the schedule is built and why some of the decisions are made is not always communicated. Some general guidelines were shared with the circle and there was genuine understanding about some of the complexities of the schedule building.

The remainder of the meeting was spent on the morale issue and what project each member was going to champion.

Kelly opened by stating "Are we talking about personal morale or staff-wide morale?" The concensus was that both were valid for the discussion. Her feeling was that in the past few years, it was not fun teaching as much as it had been before for a variety of reasons. In the course of her conversation she said: " I think we really need to see each other as people. Like I never see Loretta. I never see Jane or any of these people because I am so isolated. I think it would really help everybody's morale if we could come together once in awhile. I have this outlook on life but I think that one of the main things that is missing around here is fun. Just enjoyment of what we're doing. And I think we could include things that are fun. Everything is so routine."

Kelly had another suggestion. At the beginning of the school year, a pot luck at a park or the beach could be planned so that teachers and their families could get together, share food, and enjoy the day. She felt this was a positive way to begin the new school year and would allow people to become reacquainted after the long summer and would facilitate accepting each other as people.

Alice joined in by saying, "We have talked about how test results would improve, more quality time on

task, and we could work harder if there were more fun interspaced with the daily routine."

Bob wasn't sure what to do in this area and the facilitator recommended doing something with the air conditioning. He commented: "Now that I could get into. That would be perfect. We talked about that last week." Someone earlier in the meeting had suggested getting together for lunch and sharing ideas so he said: "Maybe the facilitator and I could have lunch and just figure out what facts there are."

The facilitator shared his project which would take place in October of next year. The superintendent had been called and there was a meeting to arrange for some of the finances for this first student/teacher retreat. The facilitator did not want the participants to have to pay for this first retreat and was looking for ways to finance the trip including tapping school resources and district funds if available. The total retreat cost would be in the area of six hundred dollars. The facilitator stated it may be difficult to arrange for that amount of dollars. Loretta stated: "That's a small amount of money for the district. That's peanuts. That's nothing." Remembering the size of the district budget, it was a small amount.

Jane suggested that her project be in the area of communication and recognition. She mentioned that the

principal had a kudos newsletter published weekly to recognize individual faculty and staff but it was not enough. "It's nice to get a pat on the back for something, even the smallest things sometimes. Not that you have to fake it to make it nice, but I think a lot of us aren't recognized for our talent and the times we go beyond the call of duty," she shared. There was considerable emotion in her voice when this statement was shared. There was some confusion about what her plan was and this prompted the facilitator to invite her and Kelly to lunch one day to go into more detail of what she was attempting to promote.

From time to time in the meeting, a word or thought would divert whoever was speaking from the subject and the circle would go into a communication mode either to question or to express a concern. The portion of the meeting where concerns were shared was important to communication because those teachers who decided to interject thoughts did so because they wanted, or needed to be heard, and understood. The facilitator realized that these entities had become needed by the circle. The circle members felt that it was important so it was accepted as such.

The first incident of this nature had to do with maintenance people coming onto the campus to do their work and teachers not being aware of their presence

until their noise was heard. This was a concern that Kelly had wanted to share for some time. When the morale question was discussed at the beginning of the meeting, this was her example. Workers were refinishing the gym floor and she was not aware that they would be there that day until she could not get into the gym with her classes.

Loretta had an equally disturbing situation. Workers were on campus one day attaching bulletin boards to the hallway walls. The drilling and pounding were so loud, that even with the doors closed, she had difficulty teaching. Another example was when the repairmen were on the roof to fix the air conditioners. The footsteps and noise of their work disturbed the students. "If they could just tell us in advance, we could make other plans for the day," was her comment.

Jane had talked with the principal about sharing teaching techniques. He was excited about the prospects and urged her to write a plan. The principal offered to assist and send notes to the faculty but the notes were a little forceful. "It was a negative note and we were thinking that it didn't inspire me to want to share something and maybe I didn't have some little technique I could write down in two sentences, but it was something much more involved." This evoked a statement from Alice when she said: "I felt like

writing him a letter and saying you can't force people to be interested in techniques. If you would just open it up to those interested. Some of the techniques printed, I felt, were good ideas but he just handed it over and said try it." When some teachers did not comply or couldn't comply, they felt guilty. Her feeling was that it had to be planned cooperatively and there had to be some ownership by those involved if success were the goal.

Loretta stated at the end of the meeting she was not ready yet with what she wanted to do in reference to the morale project. She requested a week to think about it. The meeting ended at that point.

May 12th was the date of the next meeting. Refreshments were available as members entered the room. Three members were absent today. Karen was at a required workshop with computers and would miss the next two meetings. Loretta was out ill and Louise was at a meeting of alternative school teachers at the district.

The meeting was divided into two parts again not formally but informally. Communication was either in the area of information giving or in the area of project work. With three absent today, the primary contributor to the discussion was Barbara followed by Kelly and Bob. Bob was more involved in a verbal

manner today then ever before. This may have been the result of three members being absent or he may have been becoming more acquainted with the process. I would say it was both.

In the area of information, the facilitator reviewed with the circle each member's morale project. Today was a minimum day and after the circle meeting there was to be a lunch sponsored by the bilingual parents for the bilingual teachers. Several in the circle were not aware of this event and wondered why they had not received invitations to the lunch. After an explanation was given, they understood. Only bilingual teachers had received invitations. The dissemination of this information turned out to be positive because it kept rumors and hurt feelings from surfacing.

Later in the meeting when the circle was discussing financial requirements for the retreat, the item of a minigrant was mentioned. There were several questions as to what a minigrant was for, how did one go about applying for one, and what were the requirements to obtain one. The facilitator explained that the applications were available from the associated student body office and that grants were available for any project that had to do with the high school. The student legislative body voted on how much

to give and who to give it to. Several teachers appreciated the information and shared some plans they might make with the grant money.

The previous Friday, the facilitator handed out some fifteen class coverage assignments. Class coverage is when a teacher teaches someone else's class during their preparation period because that teacher has a medical appointment or that there is no regular substitute available. Although the work is compensated for, most teachers use their preparation periods to grade papers or prepare for the next day and they do not like to lose that time. The facilitator told the teachers, "Handing out class coverage assignments is one of the hardest thing I do." It was an appropriate time to explain the process to the circle. The members in the circle felt that they now understood the reasons behind the request for class coverage and they had empathy for the process; something they had not had previous to this meeting.

Barbara had definite feelings about another process that assistant principals preform which is transferring students who have behavioral problems to another school. With strong emotion, she stated: "I think that's the biggest cop-out we have in this whole district." The facilitator gave several examples of students sent to other schools, the reason why, and

whether they encountered success or not. One student who was a tenth grader was sent to a neighboring school because of behavioral problems, became an athletic star in soccer, and improved his grades. He graduated with his class and felt at home at the school even though it was not his neighborhood school. The change of environment was a positive move for this young man.

Another male student was sent to another school and he was there for only four months. His transfer did not work out although he did better at the new school than at his home school.

The facilitator did agree with Barbara saying, "You're right Barbara. We probably should keep more at home and see what we can do here." There was understanding not only on the part of Barbara who had a legitimate concern but on the part of the other circle members.

Bob shared a conversation that he had with his wife. They had been talking about the circle's activities and the projects affecting morale. She brought up an activity she was organizing at her school. It had to do with recognizing staff on their birthdays and it involved classified as well as certificated. If the staff member wanted to be a part of the activity, they would volunteer their name. On their birthday, the staff would recognize the person

who had a birthday with a small gift and that person in turn would do something for the students in their care. This changed the routine for that particular day and raised the morale of more than the birthday person.

The last information was shared by Kelly when she walked in late. All could see she had a patch of hair missing on her head and that stitches were visible. Barbara shared that Kelly had injured herself in a soccer game. Few members even knew that she was on a woman's soccer team let alone that she was a fine player. She had taken a fall, hit her head, and stitches were required to close the wound. The interest and caring received by Kelly caused a visible change in her composure.

The agenda today was a single item on drugs/ alcohol and what the school was doing to alleviate the problem. This had been one of the important issues on the initial list of projects with which the circle wanted to become involved this year. Barbara shared that the nurses, districtwide, were concerned with this problem and felt that it belonged in their arena. They had met with the director of student services to discuss what could be accomplished. This is why Barbara was interested in the idea and wanted to initiate some action at the high school. The circle felt its emphasis should be on prevention as opposed to

opposed to rehabilitation. The nurses were working on a project that would involve a health and drug information clinic on each school campus and Barbara volunteered her high school as the place for a pilot. The encouragement and support of the circle was a prime reason why she volunteered the school. The response in the circle was quite positive.

The facilitator stated that he was on the mailing list for Vista Hill Hospital and received regular research information dealing with drug use and rehabilitation. The hospital staff was promoting a Say No to Drugs group on all school campuses as a preventative measure. This high school had a peer counselor program with students who would be willing to become involved with long term followup. The peer counselors could provide a talking relationship to a drug user who needed someone to relate to. Barbara felt that a group would be a constructive measure. The facilitator suggested that the circle invite as a guest speaker a particular student who had given talks to classes on campus. He was still trying to remain off drugs and would be willing to answer questions and give more detailed information to circle members.

Barbara felt that the school required a more direct approach that would include the parents. The facilitator shared what action the administrators took

in the past when a student was found under the influence of drugs or in possession of drugs. The new plan as contemplated by the administrators was to urge the parents and student to enroll in a counseling program before returning to the school as an alternative to being transferred to another school. In this way, there would be a chance for a resolution to the problem. Monitoring would be supervised by the school administration.

Jane was not aware that the problem was as serious as it appeared or she would have selected the drugs issue as one of the three projects she wanted to work with this year. She stated: "I didn't perceive it as a problem here, but I hear at this meeting that there is a problem. I didn't know that."

Barbara moved on to another topic by announcing that she had written a proposal that would reestablish the social committee if a member of the circle would assist her. The committee had ceased to exist some time ago, and she felt that it had to be reinstated in order to play a part in the staff morale action.

The telephone issue was still not totally solved either added Barbara. The physical education department, both boys and girls, needed to have a countywide long distance line. Discussion ensued that evolved around the idea that one phone could be made

available to both boys and girls physical education teachers if it was in a central location. Kelly recommended having it in the gym or the football coaches office so that it could be used by both male and female coaches. Barbara volunteered to look into the cost, and how the principal felt about adding another phone.

The facilitator also reported on his meeting with the superintendent. The superintendent had offered to pay one-third of the cost of the student/teacher retreat. The facilitator had applied for a minigrant at the school for one-third of the costs and the last third would come from other money-raising projects. In this way the entire trip was financed and would be cost free to the participants. The retreat would be the first weekend in October, and would include approximately ten students and five teachers. Faculty members and the students would be asked to volunteer. The weekend workshop would take place on Friday evening and Saturday.

As the meeting was coming to a close, Jane asked why Bethany was visiting the meeting today. She was sitting off to one side. The facilitator reminded the group that we had discussed this situation at the beginning and that Bethany was to be a nonparticipant observer who would take notes on the process and report back at the end of the project. The meeting was over

with a statement that the minutes would follow in a day or two and be placed in each member's mailbox.

May 19 was the date of the following meeting. This meeting seemed fragmented and less work seemed to be accomplished. There was not a lack of dialogue, but the discussion was rambling and unfocused. The main topic "morale" was an ambiguous concept which was difficult to obtain closure.

There were a few informational issues including one that dealt with the principal's power to extend lunch. The week before, the parents club was selling tacos and enchiladas at lunch and doing a brisk business. They asked the principal for ten more minutes to allow them to handle everyone's orders. The proceeds were for the parent's scholarship fund. The principal allowed them to have the extra time. Some circle members wanted to know if he would do the same from time to time if the faculty had a function that needed more time than the half hour lunch break. The facilitator responded that it would depend on whether or not he felt that the request was justified.

Karen broke off from the discussion and asked if Frank, a fellow teacher, had returned from his absence. Jane added that he had been gone for quite some time. The circle took time to discuss why he had been absent. He had had a gall stone operation, was doing well, and

would be returning before the end of the semester. It was interesting that most on the circle had not realized that Frank was out ill. Barbara mentioned she would check to see if a card or flowers had been sent or not.

Another issue came to the front when Loretta stated that sometimes preparation periods are not used wisely. She was referring to a recent preparation period faculty meeting. A video tape on motivation was shown in the small conference room in the main office and took the entire fifty minute period to complete. Karen did not appreciate the use of the preparation period for this purpose because there wasn't time to introduce the tape and no time provided following the presentation to discuss it. Loretta commented: "I didn't like that video tape because it was too loud." Jane said, "I thought I was the only one in the world who didn't like it." Barbara surmised that it wasn't the tape they didn't like but the manner in which it was presented. All seemed to agree with the last statement.

Kelly wished to discuss the subject of a rotating schedule so that different periods would be scheduled at different times of the day. Block periods would be provided so that science classes and physical education classes could have more time but not meet daily. Jane

picked up on the subject saying that the variation would be good for all involved. Kelly said she liked assembly days because she knew there would be a variation of the daily schedule. "It makes me feel a little up because I know it's not going to be the same old thing." The subject was dropped after this exchange. Part of the reason the subject was dropped was that in 1977 the school had adopted a block schedule where periods alternated on different days. The students could not adjust though. They had problems remembering what day was which schedule and they took advantage of the system by being truant.

Jane reported on the pizza lunch she had with Kelly and the facilitator. Morale was the topic. She had wanted to be involved with this subject. "I was thinking it is like a home away from home." An idea she had was to have an auction with items brought from home. It would be a way for the faculty to raise funds to use for its lounge. Karen had been active the year before in assisting the principal to decorate and refurbish the faculty lounge. A new refrigerator was needed. Some 25 faculty members who brought their own lunches used this piece of equipment daily. A microwave would also be convenient to have in the faculty cafeteria so people could warm up lunch items they brought from home. Karen commented: "There's a

lot of different things to make life around here a lot nicer for everybody."

Loretta stated that preparation period teachers came together and she and other faculty members went out to eat just so that they would have time to spend together and share. Her conclusion was that, "I think mainly we decided to have fun things for the faculty to do."

Karen had returned from her inservice and she was welcomed back. She had much to share. Jane had an idea of a box social to bring teachers together. It could be held during an extended lunch out on the lawn. The teachers would sell their lunches hopefully to someone they did not know.

This led to a discussion of whether it was worth the time to improve the faculty lounge. The lounge was usually inhabited by five or six male faculty members whose jokes and antics did not please some female faculty members or for that matter some of the males. Loretta stated the faculty needed to take over the lounge again. Several agreed.

The discussion shifted to what occurred on teacher recognition day. Karen and Jane in a circle meeting several months ago had agreed to plan the day. Usually teacher recognition day was a lunch with entertainment by a group of students. After discussing the idea with

the circle, they planned for a barbecue with games and prizes. The principal gave his approval, and they set out to plan the first annual teachers' day picnic. Teachers and staff were asked to volunteer if they wished to participate in games and then were matched with each other for the three legged race, the egg toss, and other contests. Many students stayed after school to watch the festivities. Almost all those who volunteered to participate had a fun filled afternoon so that the faculty decided to make the teacher's day an annual event.

Five minutes or so of the meeting was spent with circle members remembering the good times they had and some of the positive outcomes they experienced. Karen, Barbara, and Loretta shared that they had used the occasion to sit with someone on the staff with whom they were unacquainted. The facilitator pointed out that several circle members had had a common goal that day which was to become acquainted with another staff member. Loretta stated: "I didn't plan who I wanted to meet. I saw an empty space on the bench and just sat down. It was real interesting. I enjoyed it a lot."

The facilitator brought the meeting back to the agenda for the last ten minutes. Barbara was asked to discuss her drug abuse project. The nurses throughout the district were becoming quite involved in a movement

to take action on drug abuse on the high school campuses. Barbara had taken a leadership role in this new endeavor. She summarized the meetings, sharing some of the new facts she had learned. She answered several questions asked by Karen and Loretta. Barbara felt she didn't have anyone else at the school with whom to share this information. She realized that there was talk on each campus about taking some action that would deal with students and drug abuse but she couldn't think of any other group except the circle who would be interested in the information she had. The teachers were quite supportive of her endeavors and asked to be kept informed. Karen closed the discussion on this issue by stating that it was difficult for teachers to obtain academic achievements from students who were having home problems or coming to school under the influence of drugs. She felt a program was vital to her efforts as a teacher.

Loretta said that she was attending a class at UCSD in this general area and that she and Barbara should get together to share information. At this point, it was time to adjourn.

June 2 was the final meeting of the year. It began fifteen minutes late because the facilitator was on the phone discussing one of the circle's projects. It had been difficult to get in contact with the air

conditioning specialist at the district office so the facilitator decided to take advantage of the phone call when it came.

The meeting opened with Kelly agreeing to bring refreshments to the next meeting. Circle members had taken it upon themselves to rotate the responsibility so that refreshments had become an integral part of the meeting. It provided a time where transition could take place from classroom teacher to circle member; it became a time to relax.

The facilitator apologized for the late start. The call had been from the district official in charge of the air conditioning system for the school district. Bob and the facilitator had been trying for several weeks to make contact with the district official to obtain the information Bob needed to work on his project.

The facilitator said that the circle meetings would begin again in October and would continue until the end of the semester. He wanted to leave a few weeks open to get the new school year started.

The facilitator then shared some kudos with the circle. The district supervisor in charge of heating and cooling wanted to congratulate you people and me for getting involved in a positive manner and trying to find a solution instead of just complaining and blaming

maintenance. It was the first time that any school got together and tried to look at the situation as a team, as opposed to a we/them situation. He agreed that when we returned to school in September someone from the district office would meet with the circle and discuss the problem of air conditioning at the school with the members.

Bob then took the floor and shared what information he had gathered in the past few weeks. He called the assistant principal at the local junior high school which had the same air conditioning/heating problems and found that he too was feeling that it was impossible to work under the present conditions. His solution was to sign a petition and send it to the district official in charge of buildings claiming impossible working conditions. The facilitator called an administrator at the junior high school and found somewhat the same information that Bob had obtained from a fellow teacher.

Bob then decided to keep a thermometer in his room to log the temperature over a period of time. There had been several disagreements over whether the room was the correct temperature or not. The only way to have the data to support the teacher's views was to log the temperature for a certain number of days.

The high school and the junior high school in question were built in the early 1970s. Even though the high school is on a mesa and obtains breezes from the ocean which is only a few miles away, the architect decided to build a school internally heated and cooled by a closed environmental system. All windows were sealed and only one door was built into each room. When there is a problem with the equipment, the only thing teachers could do is open the one door to adjust their classroom environment. If the system was on and working, the open door would cause the motor to overheat as the air conditioner or the heater attempted to control the climate of the room and the outdoors. The disagreement was between the only option the teacher had to control the classroom temperature and the efforts of the custodians to keep the system operating. These different views led to poor relations among many of the teachers and the custodial staff.

The facilitator continued to share information received on the phone. The district official stated that no one had ever in the history of the school talked with him about the system, its strengths and weaknesses. He said he would be glad to talk with the circle and use his expertise and knowledge to benefit the school. In the meantime, the circle members needed to understand that the system was bought in the late

1960s and was reaching its maximum years. A quick decision was difficult to make because to replace the system without some type of planning would be expensive. He was concerned with how the staff on the campus could live with the system until a decision was made to repair or replace it. The facilitator asked several questions. One was if the door was open would the system be necessarily damaged. He said that the system would be damaged after fifteen minutes. Another question concerned the thermostats. How did they function? His answer was that there were four rooms to each piece of equipment and the air conditioner or heater had to balance the temperature in the four rooms and then determine what temperature would be best for each room. It constantly balanced the temperature and air flow to each room because some rooms had greater needs and because the number of students or the activity in any particular room varied. In reality the system was not constructed to handle that kind of use. He stated that the system should not have been put in a school in the first place.

His last statement had to do with an analogy comparing the car air conditioning system with that of the school. When a driver enters his/her car, it takes awhile for the air conditioning to cool the car. Depending upon the original temperature and the number

of bodies in the room, the system will need at least 45 minutes to cool the room. The problem was: What were the teacher and students to do in that 45 minutes while the temperature was so uncomfortable. The system could not be turned on 45 minutes before class because the outside air was too cool and the automatic system would not allow it to engage.

There was further discussion in the circle about the information. The classroom climate had been a serious problem for the students and the staff for some time, and with the information obtained, it would still be difficult to solve. There was at least hope and empathy, though, for what was occurring in the classroom.

Kelly felt that bringing a question to the head custodian at a faculty meeting would not be a positive move. The facilitator suggested that the circle was an advantageous place to begin the discussion with the custodian. Kelly immediately concurred agreeing that the circle was a group of positive people and small enough to not be threatening.

The facilitator took advantage of the situation to share some insights concerning Jack, the head custodian, and his job. The school is overused and Jack's staff does not have the personnel to accomplish all the work that requires

attention. Concerning the air conditioning, Jack must begin the air conditioners before anyone arrives to cool the rooms. If he chooses this alternative, an oil pressure problem ensues. Without the presence of bodies, the rooms cool rapidly. The machinery then shifts into neutral. The generator is still prepared to begin again when the need is there, but while it is at a standstill, oil pressure increases and with the age of the apparatus, parts of the machine become inoperable. If he turns on the machinery after the students arrive, it takes a full 45 minutes to cool the room while the occupants inside sit uncomfortably. Another factor is that each room has a different capacity for students which means that numbers vary anywhere between 15 to 45 bodies. This puts undue pressure on the system.

Alice stated that it depends on where the room is in relation to the sun. This was a fact that had not been thought of and seemed important to the discussion with Jack. Some rooms were on the sun side and some were not. The sunny side would definitely have more serious needs than the shady side.

Karen had a possible solution. She believed that those rooms with the most serious problem should be first to obtain the use of fans or heaters. The facilitator again supported this input as fair and logical. Since there were not enough heaters or fans available for all the classrooms

they agreed that those with the most serious problem would be first on the list to be offered a fan or heater.

Kelly then asked a technical question about how many rooms were connected to each heating/air conditioning unit. Jane asked if we could request a layout so that all staff members would know which units related to which groups of rooms. Kelly commented that it was interesting that one person did not have all the questions or answers but that working together the situation was shaping up into a workable form.

The facilitator had some additional information concerning the environmental system and took the time now to share it with the circle. There were four rooms connected to each air conditioning/heating unit. The facilitator had an example which dealt with the hall lights. There was a dark indoor hallway and the facilitator had made a request to the custodian to turn on the lights during the day. He said that he couldn't without turning on the lights in the large open hallway too and that would be a waste of electricity. To have the lights on in the desired hallway without wasting electricity, two switches had to be installed. This was finally accomplished but it was costly.

Loretta asked what became of the idea of having all the windows opened. It was a possible solution that had been forgotten. Cost was the major factor, and the facilitator

stated he would call the district to see if an estimate was available.

Karen suggested a possible conclusion that was far reaching. She said: "Obtain an estimate on a new system. If you say the system has been used so many years, what is the normal life expectancy of this sytem in a school? When are we up for a new one?" This was a prophetic statement as we found out when Dr. Paul, the district official who would discuss the air conditioning/heating problem, visited with the circle.

Alice asked which other schools, if any, have the same problem as this school? Again Alice came up with a question that was quite relevant. The high school and the junior high school were built in the early 1970s when a climate controlled school was thought to be the most functional type of school. The school's inside environment was to be controlled at all times throughout the year. Was the other school having similar problems?

The next meeting would be the last meeting of this school year and would be used to summarize and plan for next year.

Alice wanted to review the priorities of the projects on which the circle had agreed to work. Alice, Barbara, and Loretta wanted to review what they were working on and maybe change or expand the projects they wished to be involved with next year.

The facilitator again mentioned that next year the circle would begin on the air conditioning issue and finalize it. Morale and the drug project would be discussed next to determine what the circle wanted to accomplish.

Louise introduced a new topic. She informed the circle members that the alternative learning center would be available soon to teachers and not just students. The main frame computer was connected to Cal State Sacramento, therefore, teachers could contract to take any course offered by that institution. She hoped that this new opportunity would please teachers and lift spirits.

Again, the facilitator requested that members take their original list home over the vacation, review it, and return in October with ideas.

Barbara and Jane mentioned two other areas that might be subjects for discussion: volunteer drug testing and contraceptives on campus. The members agreed these would be interesting subjects to discuss.

The facilitator mentioned the student/teacher camp because it was set for early October and there would not be time to meet more than once before the weekend of the camp. Several members of the circle indicated they would be interested in attending the camp. Barbara asked where the camp would be held. After that explanation there were further questions about the program, transportation, who

would attend, and why the camp. Again time was taken to disseminate information until all questions were answered.

It was at this meeting that much time was spent in answering questions and sharing information. Louise was fairly quiet during most of the prior meetings but she blossomed at this meeting with information which assisted the circle to better understand a program on campus. Alice asked some key questions which kept the circle process flowing and productive. Karen was showing herself as the solution finder and one who handled situations with logic. Kelly also showed some insight into what the real problems were. The group seemed satisfied with the meeting. There was general conversation about how much was learned, and how little was known previous to this meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

June 9 was the date of the last circle meeting of the 1986-87 year. There was a short dialogue about refreshments as members were arriving.

The agenda called for a review of the circle's activities during the spring semester. The telephone issue was first. There was a new telephone in a small office in the main office. It was exclusively for the teachers and its range was countywide. Although this item had been on the district's agenda, the circle's involvement assisted this particular school to obtain the telephone more rapidly

and allowed the teachers through the circle process to assist in solving the problem.

Air conditioning and heating was the next topic dealt with in depth. The facilitator spoke with the principal and discussed with him the activities of the circle in this area. The district air conditioning specialist was to be invited to the circle meeting in the fall to assist the circle in finding a solution. Bob was in charge of gathering data and in fact was logging daily temperature readings in his room. The head custodian was to be invited to speak with the group the next school year also. Small strips were placed on the vent systems in each room so that the teachers could cooperate with the custodian in knowing when to open or close their doors. The most important factor to the teachers and to the principal was that there was ongoing dialogue and that someone was working towards a solution of the problem. The principal was pleased with the circle's work and involvement.

Karen was asked what project she was contemplating for next year, and she stated without hesitation faculty meetings. She felt that having refreshments such as coffee, rolls, and fruit at the faculty meetings would add something to the meetings and assist the teachers to begin the meeting in the right frame of mind. Funds for the refreshments was a concern of the facilitator but that could be covered by the faculty lounge fund. Karen had also mentioned earlier

in the year that she and the dean of activities were going to put a few more machines in the lounge and use any profit from these machines for the faculty fund. Karen admitted that they had not met yet on that proposal.

Karen's next point had to do with the content of the faculty meetings. She was willing, as was Loretta and Barbara, to meet with the principal and offer their help to add substance to the meetings. She felt that the large faculty meetings should be for information giving, teaching, and/or workshops, but that preparation period meetings should be for feedback because of the smaller setting. Again content was the main concern as she said: "I really want something positive going on at the meetings that is focused. We should use the faculty meetings for something that is constructive and encourage people to want to be there. We will have a new principal and maybe this is a good time to get involved.

Karen had an idea for a solution for the faculty meetings. "I can see a couple of faculty members being in charge. I'm talking about each faculty meeting having some kind of positive program, even if it's a 10 or 15 minute program." The facilitator supported this idea by stating: "Reflecting what is going on in business and labor, I think more and more people want to be involved in their organizations. That's what this is all about. I think the principal would listen."

The subject shifted to the negative faculty members who use the faculty meetings as a stage to air complaints. Loretta, Karen, and Jane all admitted that they and other faculty members could be more proactive to assist in controlling negative faculty members. But then Karen said: "If you do not feel like you're allowed to speak, well that's why those faculty members speak out at faculty meetings. Where else can they make their points?" Karen answered that the Site Curriculum Committee was a place where this kind of discussion could take place.

The facilitator suggested that departmental meetings be a part of next year's plans. The facilitator reminded Karen that she was going to talk to the principal asking to make departmental meetings a part of the faculty meetings. Departments had not had the opportunity to meet regularly for the past few years and the teachers were missing the communication such meetings provided.

Karen thought that faculty department meetings should be held during the work day. In the past, the principal, when asked, distanced himself from this suggestion. He agreed that bringing the faculty together as a united body was advantageous but not during the school day. He said he would be willing to discuss the issue further, but new ideas would have to be generated that would not include the use of the student school day.

This comment led the circle into a 5 minute discussion of whether the Site Curriculum Committee was the place for teachers to share opinions or whether it was set up solely for the principal to direct curriculum activities.

The social committee was the next item mentioned. Loretta, Barbara, and Jane had met informally and divided the task into activities within the school day and after school activities. Jane would plan the activities within the school day and Barbara would organize those after school. Both felt that the social committee was concerned with more than social activities and was a prime factor in staff morale.

Loretta talked about the projects she would work on next year. She volunteered to assist with the social committee for she had some experience in that area. She also wanted to coordinate the notification of teachers when some type of maintenance was going to take place outside their rooms.

Kelly supported this last goal. The facilitator asked Kelly if she would like to take a project that was mentioned in earlier circle meetings: having a once a week exercise class for teachers in the gym during lunch. The facilitator and Kelly thought the time would be well spent not only for exercise but in spending time together. Alice suggested setting up one day a week as faculty health day. The

facilitator said many companies were becoming involved in the health of their employees.

The conversation returned to the faculty picnic day and the fun that was had by all with the games. Even some of the negative people joined in and seemed to enjoy themselves. There was enough evidence for the circle to become excited about doing more in this area. The facilitator and Jane commented that they had seen staff members who before the picnic did not know each other or rarely spoke with each other now stopping and talking in the halls from time to time. Alice noted that classified and certificated employees participated, and it was one of the few activities where the two groups joined together and socialized.

Alice was ready to discuss what she would do next year. She volunteered to assist Jane with the during school activities. With some advice from Karen, she also decided that she would work on times of faculty meetings and department meetings. The superintendent had stated that he did not want meetings during instruction time and did not want shortened days either. Karen said she would work with Alice to seek an innovative way to plan regular faculty meetings where the entire faculty would be present and a regular time for department meetings.

The facilitator mentioned that the advisory period was probably going to be deleted from the master schedule next

year. Everyone in the circle was pleased until Barbara asked where the extra time was going to be placed. The answer given was that it would be used to increase the time of the class periods. Jane asked if it couldn't be placed into longer passing periods or into nutrition break. The state guidelines were that the time had to be in classtime and not anywhere else. This caused the circle members to state that maybe advisory was preferable to making the periods longer. Loretta said her students could barely handle the time as it was, let alone a longer time. This was another case of obtaining input from teachers about a seemingly small item but one on which they definitely had an opinion. The consensus was that the advisory time was preferable. The facilitator agreed to take their opinions to the principal. With the time finished, the circle adjourned until October.

The first meeting after summer was held in late October, 1986. As an introduction and as a way to ease everyone back into the quality circle mode, the facilitator xeroxed a copy of the various projects that were suggested at the first meeting to determine whether they still held the same importance as they did the previous year.

Over the summer the principal of the school had been transferred to another high school in the district and a new principal assumed his duties. The new principal had been an assistant principal at the school some years before so he

was returning to a school about which he was quite familiar. The facilitator had worked with this new principal when the facilitator was a counselor and, therefore, had a working knowledge of his management style. The principal was informed of the ongoing research project and agreed to allow it to continue and to cooperate with the circle.

At the same time, in October, the new principal had to be hospitalized for back surgery and the facilitator became acting principal for five weeks. This emergency was the prime reason why the circle did not restart at the beginning of October. By late October, time and energy was available to start the circle again, and the first meeting was held. The same teachers were still members of the circle as was the nonparticipant observer. No participant changes were made.

There was time at this first meeting to share summer experiences and take time for refreshments at the beginning of the meeting. All members were asked to circle items on the original problem list if they still had value, add ideas that had become important, and drop items that were not necessary now that the new school year had begun.

Several informational items followed. One of the assistant superintendents had visited the school the week before to eat in the cafeteria. The facilitator had asked the assistant superintendent at that time to come visit the circle and hear from selected faculty their feelings about

the air conditioning and heating. He agreed to attend a circle meeting.

As a result of some severe rain storms over the summer, staff members noted that several drains did not function properly. Several of the overhead beams seemed cracked. These two items were added to the agenda that was being prepared for the meeting with the assistant superintendent.

Karen raised the subject concerning students being absent and whether Barbara, as school nurse, could inform the teachers how many days the student was to be absent. This led to a discussion about how to inform teachers when students are suspended especially when a student was from the special education program. From this came a conversation about special education students in general, how many days they can be suspended, and whether they are handled differently. Two of the participants on the circle were special education teachers so the circle became an inservice on special education for 5 minutes or so.

There are specific laws and regulations that need to be attended to when dealing with special education youngsters. The school, in fact, is responsible for them until they are 21 years old. The facilitator guided the circle members through the recent dealings with a special education student who had been in a number of fights. The parent conference, student's reaction, and results of the different interventions were shared with the group. For most members,

this explanation was the first such discussion they had had dealing with special education student to student conflict.

Karen was the first to speak on the topic of air conditioning. September and October are usually quite warm in south San Diego due to Santa Ana weather patterns (where the wind comes from the desert). This October was warmer than expected, and the absence of air conditioning on a consistent basis was aggravating. "From my understanding, the air conditioning has never worked here from day one," said Karen. I have been here seven years, and it hasn't worked properly that entire time. Teachers and students should not have to put up with such inefficiency." Her suggestion was to put available money into altering the windows so that they would open and close instead of investing more money into a basically inoperable air conditioning system. The fact that the main office air conditioning was always operable made the situation worse as far as the teachers were concerned. The facilitator again pointed out that the office staff was small and fairly consistent so the air conditioning did not have to work as hard and, therefore, operated more efficiently. There was a tremendous amount of anger and frustration on the part of the teachers. It was difficult for a teacher to meet with 185 students on a daily basis in a room without proper ventilation.

Alice raised the issue of students requesting homework assignments when they are ill or missing classes for a valid reason. Although not a significant problem, the issue was important enough for Alice and Barbara to raise it again after the summer break. After a short discussion, the problem seemed to be that students would ask for homework by phone and by the time the counselor's secretary collected the homework, the student would return to school. Gathering homework was quite a task. Each teacher had to write a short memo on what was expected of the student for that day and include any material needed to accomplish the homework. This was in addition to teaching the students in the classes and all the other activities for which the teacher was responsible. A quick solution was forged from the suggestions of several members. The solution that emerged was for the counselor's secretary to ask parents to wait a minimum of three days before requesting homework. This would decrease the requests for homework to only those who needed it as a result of long term absences. There was general agreement that this simple solution would ease the stress on the teachers yet still fulfill the needs of the students.

As an addendum to this proposal, Karen requested that the nurse and/or assistant principals share information with teachers on why students were absent. There was a short discussion between Karen and Barbara as to why it was

important for teachers to know what type of illness a student had or why the student had been suspended. The facilitator suggested a possible solution which was to copy the personal contact form stating the reason why a student was missing and deliver one to each teacher. It would be extra work but give the teacher the desired information. Barbara responded: "It's more work" to which the facilitator answered: "It's more work, but if it helps the teacher, then that's what we are here for." There was general agreement from the circle.

The next item dealt with the number of committees at the school, but the circle decided that this concern still did not have enough support to include it on the list of problems to be solved.

The circle then entered a discussion concerning advisory periods and whether to retain them or not. Advisory periods were daily 10 minute classes where the bulletin was read and announcements were made. Barbara, Alice, Bob, Karen, and Kelly all had comments on advisories, and those comments were generally negative. The circle began to brainstorm possible solutions for the advisory period. The subject brought about a lively discussion but the topic was not whether to have an advisory period or not, but what to do with the time if advisories were dropped. Should the time be added to all the remaining periods, or added to the beginning or ending of the day? Should there

be a longer lunch or longer nutrition break or should the time be put into a study or reading period? Bob very astutely asked: "Is the advisory period such a problem that you are willing to do all of these other things to get rid of it?" After this statement, the facilitator summed up the discussion by stating, "It may be that the advisory period is the least of the evils." After a few more comments, the circle moved on to the next topic.

The phone issue was reviewed because the problem took on a new dimension. The school had such a large population that an administrative assistant was hired, and he was assigned to the teachers' phone room to use as his office. The problem was now where to put the phone. The principal assigned the problem to the circle since it basically involved teachers. There were two other rooms available in the main office. One was a computer room where an Apple IIe was set aside for teachers along with a work table. The other room was the mail room where incoming and outgoing mail was handled.

This situation might seem like a minor point but when the new principal gave the problem to the circle to solve, he indicated his acceptance of the circle. He could have just asked a teacher or two and directed the telephone be moved. By assigning the problem to the circle, eight staff members were involved in the discussion and felt that some authority was being shared.

Another previously discussed topic that did not take hold at any of the meetings the previous year was brought forth by Alice. It had to do with the number of course preparations a teacher had for the number of classes assigned. The district and union contract dictated that teachers be assigned no more than three preparations (different courses for which teachers had to prepare lessons). The school administrator attempted to assign only two preparations to each teacher, one less than required by the contract language. Several members discussed how a course preparation was defined. For example, was first year Spanish for Spanish speakers and regular Spanish I different or the same prep? Jane felt that they were not the same. Alice complained that she had three and it was difficult to do a good job with that many preparations. She had the same schedule as last year, and the response from the facilitator was: "You kind of volunteered for that, we wouldn't have given you those courses if you hadn't volunteered." Alice answered back somewhat softly: "I just wanted to teach more or less the same thing twice in a row." The facilitator suggested that the problem could be remedied next year.

From this discussion, two new topics were introduced. One had to do with the reinstatement of drama classes and the other concerned the new portable classrooms that were to be installed in a month or two. For two years, the administrators had wanted to reinstate a drama department at

the school. The program had been dropped and the drama building converted into a resource center. In the summer, the new principal began a concerted effort to look for a drama teacher and build the program back into the schedule. Most faculty members were not aware of this movement. The facilitator related to the circle members that the drama building would be returned to the drama department at the beginning of the second semester.

This led to the next question which Karen asked: "Where was the resource center going to be?" Permanent portables was the answer, and some information was given as to when the portables would be ready and who would be occupying them.

The next item to be discussed was the practice of transferring students to another school when they were not progressing at the home school. There were comments on why transferring was a policy and what was the reason behind such practice. The facilitator was able to share a few examples of why the practice was used and a few instances of success and failure. Barbara voiced a comment concerning a neighboring school: "There's just something about that high school. In 16 years I've never figured out what it is. But the students must think it's a better school." The facilitator pointed out that the school was built in a single community neighborhood. This high school was a part of three distinctly different neighborhoods which set up a

situation for conflict from time to time. The circle had an opportunity to discuss the variations among high schools and why students respond differently to them.

Student drug and alcohol abuse was the next item presented. The facilitator said that the school's peer counseling group had been working on the drug situation and had formed a Say No To Drugs Club. The school administrators felt that there was a need for a student based antidrug group. One of the students had formulated a motto-- "I believe in me, I say no to drugs"--and a pizza restaurant in the area had agreed to put the slogan on tee shirts for the students who joined the group. Barbara stated that the nurses were still working on the issue and that the circle should continue to work on it also. At a conference she attended, Barbara found that "many high school faculties don't feel comfortable with who is taking care of the drug problem." The facilitator stated he was satisfied with the way this high school had started to work on the problem with students at the front. Barbara agreed. The item would be kept on the circle's agenda.

There was a comment made when the subject was brought up as to whether to keep cultural awareness on the agenda. Alice felt, "that there isn't a cultural problem." No one questioned her on this statement. The circle members responded that in the past cultural awareness had been addressed in the bulletin and in announcements over the

public address system. It was quickly decided these methods were not useful. Karen, Barbara, and then Alice joined in unison saying this still needed to be dealt with if time permitted.

The next subject was morale and the student/teacher camp that had been proposed at the end of the year. The camp had been held in early October two weeks before the circle had its first meeting. Most of the teachers who attended the camp were part of the circle. The camp brought about very positive results in communication. A meeting was planned for the following week to share what occurred at the camp with those who were interested.

Bob indicated that he had decided last year to work on the faculty meeting issue with Karen. Various subjects were suggested to them and each month's faculty meeting was given a theme based on teacher input that had been obtained at the end of the summer. Bob and his wife had been involved in presenting workshops concerning positiveness in the classroom. He had volunteered to take parts of two faculty meetings to present this workshop to the staff.

The meeting was about ready to adjourn and circle members were anxious. Alice brought up a concern about ninth grade students and their lack of school etiquette. Alice talked awhile about the situation in her classes stating that "a lot of kids don't know how to participate in a discussion. There are so many things they just don't know

how to do correctly. They don't have much sensitivity to other people." The facilitator suggested that "a counselor could come into the classroom and work with the kids." That suggestion seemed to satisfy Alice: "Well, of course, the counselors are overworked, but I think maybe something could be worked out." This seemed to be what Alice was searching for. She continued to share some events that occurred in her classroom for a few minutes, but then the facilitator moved to close the meeting.

The second meeting of the year was held on November 3, 1986. The members of the circle joined in the conference room and shared refreshments. Spirits were elevated and from the sound of the voices the members seemed pleased to be together again. There were three members absent that day but the meeting went on as usual.

The facilitator had been talking with Karen about sharing the skills and experiences that the faculty had. The facilitator felt that administrators did not take advantage of the teacher or student human resources at the school. A plan that could be functional without much preparation would have administrators and/or counselors covering classes for designated teachers so that the teacher could share a particular skill or experience she/he had with another teacher or class. Teachers would also be free to visit a peer's classroom during their preparation period. Loretta had asked the facilitator to discuss his Peace Corps

experiences with her English honors class and that's what precipitated this discussion. An extension of this concept would be to print a catalogue of the various subjects which teachers could develop and the catalogue would be given to the faculty so that teachers could call on each other for their particular specialties.

Jane asked what happened on Sunday when the participants in the student/teacher retreat met for the first time since their outing. They had agreed to meet once a month at a different student's house to keep the lines of communication open and to involve the parents. Most faculty participants attended the meeting, several of them with their spouses. A meal was shared and a group meeting was held after the meal with the parents of one of the students included in the activity. The student had called the facilitator the night before the meeting saying: "Help, help, my parents are going crazy. They painted the kitchen, bought two new lamps, washed the carpet, and cleaned the yard!" The feedback from the meeting was extremely positive with another student agreeing to host the December meeting and a third student taking the January responsibility.

The facilitator wanted the rest of the quality circle members who were not able to attend the retreat to feel welcome to come to the Sunday afternoon meetings and be a part of the activity. This invitation was extended because Alice stated that "I thought it was for the participants

only. I hadn't gone so I thought it was just another thing for them." The facilitator clarified the issue one step further by stating that the idea of expanding the initial group was approached at camp and the plan was to include more and more people gradually.

The facilitator commented that one student did not attend the retreat because she didn't want to get to know teachers as people. "I just didn't know if I wanted to know you people as real people. It makes it so much easier when you're not--you're just teachers, you're not real." The quote surprised several teachers. The facilitator thought that if it hadn't been for a circle there really would have been no appropriate place to share this feeling. Talk and sharing continued for a few minutes about other students who attended and what they had said. The facilitator brought the meeting back to the agenda. The past five minutes or so even though not on the agenda were important and there was a real sense of communicating. The facilitator stated: "We need to get our work done here. We're having too much fun talking about other things."

The order of the day was to prioritize the problems on which the circle wanted to work. Even though there was time to work only on a few, the circle decided to list them in order of importance.

Bob brought up the subject of air conditioning. There had been some disagreement between the custodian and him as

to whether the room was at a comfortable level or not. Several times the custodian entered the room, remained awhile and determined that the temperature was acceptable. On the other hand, Bob had never felt that the temperature was within acceptable ranges except at the beginning of the day. Bob had, therefore, brought a thermometer to school continuing into this year to systematically mark down the temperature three or four times a day. The first day's readings were 82, 81, 83 degrees. This problem definitely had to be number one on the list.

The facilitator had spoken with the assistant superintendent, and he was aware of the problem but not of its severity. There were plans at the district office to do major renovating but the plans were in the formulation stage. He had mentioned that he wanted to meet with some teachers who were willing to sit down and talk with him about the school buildings. The facilitator offered the circle as a group that had been gathering facts and were willing to meet and talk.

An additional problem became apparent with the mechanics of the air conditioning system. It seemed that it was on automatic and since each unit serviced four rooms the automatic device took a reading from each room, averaged them, and turned on the system when it reached a certain point. Unfortunately this process meant that one room could

be very cool and another could be quite hot before the automatic switch would activate the air conditioning.

There was a slight pause and Karen took the floor. She had remembered that the circle members had agreed to champion at least one problem each. She had wanted to work on faculty meetings, department meetings, and the lack of unity among faculty members. As department chair, she attempted to have a department meeting at lunch time and was quite frustrated at the outcome. "The Social Science Department had its first meeting today at lunch, and it was the worst curriculum meeting I have ever been at in ages. People were late because they were getting their lunch. Very little was accomplished that needed to be accomplished. We're having our first meeting in November, and to be quite frank, the meeting was on teachers time. And that's not right."

Karen had another subject that was related and that dealt with the split faculty meetings. Since the school held classes before the regular school day began and athletics after school, it was difficult to get the whole faculty together. As a result, two faculty meetings were held which tended to split the faculty and affect morale. Alice supported this view: "I think the principal doesn't realize how low the morale is."

The facilitator suggested that the faculty meetings issue be the number two priority for the circle this

semester. However Karen had not finished with what she wanted to say to the circle. Curriculum, staff meetings, and workshops, she said, were important, and lunch was not the proper time to hold these meetings. A specific time needed to be set aside for this type of business to be accomplished if indeed it was important, and the faculty as a whole needed to be involved. Karen stated: "I feel very strongly about this issue, personally, and about curriculum meetings. I think we are going to have to have some kind of scheduled time for that." Jane and Alice supported Karen's comments. The facilitator suggested that having meetings at lunch produced stress. Teachers needed a time to relax and eat. The facilitator related that "the teachers and other staff members need to be reminded that we need that half hour of just relaxation." So priority number two was the problem of having time to work on curriculum and departmental meetings.

Karen was ready to discuss number three. Her suggestion was to make morale and attitude the next priority stating "I think our continuing on with morale is important . . . I think we are heading in the right direction, but it should be a major goal." Jane and Alice concurred. Jane had asked several faculty members who were not involved in the circle to assist with this issue, and when they agreed to help, she had assigned them tasks. "One of my ideas, for example, is to get some of those guys in the faculty lounge

to organize something for the faculty. Let them do the planning and have them do it." There was general agreement that the morale and attitude of the teachers would be priority number three and that the circle was heading in the right direction with activities it had previously planned.

The fourth problem centered on the advisory period. It was still a nagging problem to teachers. Karen began the discussion. "I like advisory . . . my advisory that is. Of course, I might be lucky as I have a really good one. But the period is too short a time to do something really constructive with them. And yet if you're going to do nothing with them, it's too long a time." Jane and Karen shared ideas back and forth about giving grades to students for advisory, where to schedule it if it was to be included in the school day, what to do with the extra time if advisory period was eliminated, and what was the real purpose of the advisory period. The facilitator remembering the long discussion on the advisory period last year culminated the discussion. "We'll start here first and get some plans, and then take them to the principal who will take it to his committee, and then to the faculty. But the decision has to be made in January."

Priority number five became the availability of the telephone because again the needs of the faculty had changed. The principal had asked all teachers being evaluated to call twenty parents to share something positive

about their child as one of their goals. Because of this request, phone availability had become important.

There were some comments about what was next. Jane suggested that working with negative people might be combined with the morale issue. The facilitator stated that maybe this item might be handled better individually. But Loretta felt that working with negative people on the staff was a concern to all. "I've got probably more problems working with negative staff members than you do." Alice responded: "Well, we don't really know who's negative and . . ." Karen interrupted: "I do. You know what I do? I avoid them. And that's not the right approach, but I just have gotten so that if a certain person is in the lounge, I just want to turn around and walk out." She added: "I don't think I'm a good person because I don't think I'm really dealing with them very well." Jane joined the conversation saying: "The staff is a rude staff. Teachers are rude to teachers. Who can handle this group and talk about things that we could do to change people's attitudes? It's impossible to talk honestly about some people who aren't perceived very well by other faculty members and not let them get everybody else down!" The facilitator stated negative people would be priority number six.

Jane brought up the teacher/student retreat. The facilitator stated it was best to leave it to the end of the year because the retreat had been held in October and

another would not be held until the following October. The people involved in that activity had taken it over and it was progressing.

A comment was then made about the drug situation and there was an interesting dialogue concerning this problem. Discussion centered on where to place the drug problem on the priority scale. Jane stated that "this is really hard because I wasn't aware that there were a lot of students who had drinking problems. I haven't smelled booze on students in a long, long, long time." Yet a few minutes later she stated: "If you're going to tell me that some students had a margarrita on a weekend, that doesn't disturb me so much. It's the kids that drink in school, that drink at odd hours, such as early in the morning or during lunch." The facilitator stated that one student had recently been expelled because he had been found to have cocaine in his possession. Jane expressed shock and stated: "That's why he's been gone from my class." It seems that lack of communication again set this teacher apart from what was occurring on the campus. The circle decided that drugs and alcohol would be problem number seven.

Jane spoke up and stated that she would like to suggest problem number eight. The school had a partnership with a local company (Reed Industries), and although the project had started off with a celebration and fanfare nothing had

been done recently. The circle agreed to give the partnership problem a priority of eight.

Group work with students in the classroom and cultural concerns were the issues left so the circle made cultural concerns number nine and group work number ten.

Alice asked to raise another topic. Group counseling was arranged for students, and she had wondered about group counseling for teachers stating: "How about preparation period get togethers of just a group?"

Karen commented: "I think that the teachers could get something out of such groups. You know, we're talking about doing a social thing, even just to share. That was kind of nice because this is one thing we can get from this group. But if we weren't in this circle, we wouldn't have this kind of sharing. You understand what I'm saying?" The facilitator said that several teachers from one preparation period went off campus for lunch. Karen responded immediately: "That would be social. I'm not talking about social. I'm talking about a real sharing get together. Once a semester even but I'm just saying by preparation period because that's a small group. That might be an idea to help morale and some other things." Alice added: "I think another thing is that some people have problems and we never have anybody to talk to about them. We talked about this last year in the circle." There was obviously a need being expressed to not just talk about problem solving and

communication but sharing what life was like as a teacher at this particular school. It was also a reference to the fact that these people had been at the same school together for some time now, were used to each other, and yet were experiencing a change both personally and professionally as a result of being in the circle. Alice stated: "Do you notice the difference? I certainly do."

This point led to feelings from teachers that students needs were also not being met. Jane and Alice both agreed that students were experiencing pressure which was affecting their ability to perform in the classroom. Alice stated that "I've got students that don't look good and I talk to them about how they're doing." There were some further comments about student behavior and the meeting adjourned.

Only five members attended this circle meeting. Karen was the assertive one along with the facilitator. Barbara, the other assertive member, was absent today, which gave Jane and Alice more of an opportunity to become involved. Jane actually made a move by stating that she wanted to choose the seventh problem. Usually she was more supportive of other members and reserved. Jane participated in this circle session more than any other previous session. She was more comfortable with the process by this time and did not hesitate to state her opinion.

Karen wanted to comment on what the group had meant to her. When the facilitator stated that several groups were

beginning to meet socially, she immediately corrected the facilitator and stated this was not what she meant. She wanted others to have the experience of working in a circle type of group where opinions were heard and work was accomplished. The circle experience provided a forum where she could be heard and share her ideas with a sense of trust and acceptance.

Alice shared some personal thoughts, and even though there had not been much of this type of sharing the group had provided support and security to those on the circle who felt the need to speak about personal matters.

This circle meeting where some ten problems were prioritized was one of the better circle meetings. All members present had ample opportunity to participate, and they took advantage of the opportunity to voice their opinions and even expose their feelings about what was occurring in the school.

The November 17, 1986 meeting was quite short. Several members were not feeling well and Karen was hoarse. The purpose of the meeting was to assign people to champion each of the problems the circle was to work on from the second list. As always there were several informational items and clarifications.

The first information item was that the assistant superintendent would be meeting with the gas and electric company and the air conditioning company to discuss problems

and costs. The district was preparing a five year plan and the air conditioning at the school was on the district list for replacement. He wanted to speak with the circle about the air conditioning problems and inquire as to the facts the circle had gathered. He would be on the agenda at the next Monday meeting which was very timely because that would be directly after he had met with both the energy and the air conditioning companies.

Loretta asked about the new permanent portables that were being installed on the campus. Part of the renewed interest in these rooms was that each had its own climate control system. The principal assigned two of the eight rooms to the adult school. The number of adult students had increased and the school required additional space. This would release the room that the adult school had been using. Secondly, the principal moved the individualized learning alternative school into two of the new rooms. The alternative school used a number of computers for its individualized instruction and the climate control system in the room helped maintain the computers in working order. Thus, there were four rooms available for the regular day school.

Loretta complained about the new alternative program. Jane asked: "Is it causing problems? " Loretta answered: "Yes, because most of the kids are problem kids." There was some discussion about why it was opportune to move the

alternative program to the new building besides the need for the physical aspects of the room. It also was nearer the administration building and assistance from the main office could be requested and received more rapidly. Another problem was that the alternative schedule was different than the regular school and therefore students were going and coming at times different than the day school students.

The facilitator brought the meeting back to the task. A party was being planned for an administrator who had left the previous July. Since her transfer occurred in July the faculty had not had the chance to host a send off. The circle was assisting Barbara with that planning. Money had been collected for a gift and a dessert was being set up as a surprise. People in the circle felt good about the prospects of the farewell.

The faculty meetings/department meetings issue ran into difficulties because the district administrators were not open to minimum days for these meetings. The faculty meetings were set up at three different times: 7 a. m., 2:30 p. m. and the next day when it was convenient for those who needed to attend. An after school meeting was almost impossible because: (a) a second session of the day school was in operation, (b) the alternative school was in session, (c) period 7 classes were held, and (d) the athletics program began at that time. The principal set up separate meetings until the situation might change and the entire

faculty could meet together again. It was next to impossible to plan an inservice and then repeat it two times. The principal was working with the district office to find some way to meet everyone's needs.

Karen responded to a question as to how strong she felt about this issue. She stated: "I'm real strong. It's hard enough to see people that you want to see just because of the teaching day. We're so fragmented. He'll never get us together." She wanted to meet with the district office staff to ask if there was any way to change the schedule to allow for one meeting a month. The facilitator said that she should go to the principal and see if he would mind if the circle pursued this issue. She responded that she would do that.

The advisory period problem was the next topic of discussion. The principal knew that the circle was working on this particular problem and decided to bring it up to the curriculum committee. He said he was thinking about the types of problems the advisory period had on the school day, and he felt that the committee should deal with the issue. The circle would, therefore, not work on this issue. The principal appreciated the circle's efforts to raise the issue.

The new attendance policy then came up for discussion. A new attendance policy had just been given to the faculty but without any input. Loretta asked: "Was there faculty

input? The next thing we know the policy for attendance is published in the school paper." Bob added: "I've never seen it. I've never seen the policy until I read it in the paper." These two circle members were especially upset because they had no input to such a broad and sweeping policy. Loretta added that the reason the administrators did not present it to the faculty was because they would get 70 different opinions. Bob commented: "Democracy is inefficient." The facilitator stated he would look into the policy which was prepared by a new administrator.

The telephone and its new location was the next item on the agenda. The facilitator stated that he was working with the principal about the placement of the new telephone. The principal agreed that the mail room was the best place to install it. It was convenient, in the main office, and a door was available that could be closed for privacy. This project was well under way and almost complete.

Jane asked if morale and working with negative people were being joined together to form one project. Loretta felt that they should be separated, and the group concurred with nods. Loretta wanted to direct this project. She had already begun to work on one negative teacher who was one of the lounge regulars. Loretta had convinced him to eat in the cafeteria faculty room which was a more positive place. Karen came up with a comment. "I think that's probably because men act differently around women than when they're

with a bunch of guys. And it's just a bunch of boys at the lounge. That's really the way it is." Most of the women who frequented the lounge did what Karen did "if I don't like it then I just leave." The other circle members agreed with her. There were several suggestions that Loretta would work on and get back to the group at a later date. She did share that several of the women had begun to work on some of the men who frequented the lounge.

Barbara had previously agreed to work on the drug/alcohol project since she was working with the nurses, but she was absent so the project was not discussed.

The adopt-a-school proposal was next. Jane stated that it was too cumbersome of a project for her to take on solely. Alice stated: "We were adopted?" and wasn't even aware of the event. The facilitator suggested that what was needed was a person to act as a catalyst. The project could then be reintroduced to the faculty as a whole. During the conversation Loretta stated that maybe the circle should brainstorm about how best to use the adoption concept and involve the company in the regular life of the school.

The project on group counseling with students was narrowed to include ninth graders only. They seemed to be in the most need and with the smaller focus success would be more likely. Alice was still very much interested in this subject and had agreed to guide the idea. In fact she had met with one of the counselors and two of the younger

teachers to form a committee to work on the project. A freshman parent's meeting was organized by the counselors, and the ninth grade teachers were invited to attend. Loretta went and reported on the meeting. She was impressed even though only 21 parents were present for a ninth grade class of approximately 180 students. She was quite optimistic and felt that it would have been meaningful even if only two or three parents attended. There were questions and communication between the parents and the staff almost all of which was positive.

With the projects reviewed, it was time for some information giving. The facilitator informed the circle that the new principal of a feeder middle school had indicated that there would be changes at the school. The facilitator suggested that selected high school faculty members meet with selected middle school faculty members in order to develop some articulation between the two schools.

The facilitator informed the circle that a date had been set for the student/teacher retreat next October. Several more students and teachers had expressed an interest in attending the retreat.

Jane asked if there was any chance of a faculty/administrator outing. One of the administrators had expressed interest in the idea and was already working on the concept. He had sent for some material and was looking into a desert retreat for a weekend. There was general

acknowledgement that the retreat would be an idea which would benefit all. With that discussion, the meeting adjourned.

November 24, 1986 was the date of the first meeting where an invited guest was a part of the circle. Dr. John Paul was an assistant superintendent for finances and was invited to discuss the air conditioning and heating problem in the school. The dialogue became so involved that the regular agenda was put aside.

The meeting commenced with introductions and went immediately into the information mode. The facilitator wanted to share with John Paul the data that the circle had gathered so he was aware of the work that had been accomplished. This would save time and allow a more expedient use of the meeting time.

The air conditioning system was installed to cool or heat four rooms at a time. The four rooms set up as a unit were not necessarily side by side. The circle with the assistance of the custodian had found that some units of four rooms involved rooms around the corner from each other. The thermostat in each room would take a reading, and then the unit would attempt to cool or heat all rooms to an average preset degree. If one door of one room was open than the unit would work hardest on that room leaving the others with minimal service. If more than one door were open, the system would overheat and become inoperable.

The rooms were usually cool in the mornings until the rooms filled with anywhere from 25 to 40 teenagers. That would usually cause the system to kick in, but it took generally three to four hours to cool the rooms. Sometimes the air conditioners were left on automatic all night, and teachers and students would arrive at their classrooms finding them to be quite cold.

Teachers not totally understanding the system would begin the day with their door open and leave it open. The custodian would turn on the air conditioner, and the teachers would not be aware of this. They would leave their door open causing some of the air conditioners to burn out over a period of time. The circle in conjunction with the custodian had devised a solution which was to place a short piece of ribbon on each vent so that the teachers could determine when the system was operating. Unfortunately, when the system was on, the teacher would then have to close the door, creating a classroom environment that was not conducive to learning. This unacceptable temperature would last for usually an hour. Some teachers would keep the door open even after the unit was functioning. The custodian would close the door when he saw one open to save the system. Conflict followed.

The special education teachers represented by Karen and Bob had another problem. A regular room was split in half for the special education program. The controls for the air

conditioner were in one room, and the blower was in the other room. Thus, one room was cool and the other was the opposite. Bob had been collecting temperature readings, and the average temperature in the early fall and late spring was in the 80s.

John Paul asked: "Has this been a problem for 16 years?" The facilitator answered that it had been a problem ever since anyone could remember. The facilitator then suggested that circle members who had something to share do that so John Paul could hear directly from the teachers what they perceived the problem to be.

Interestingly, Alice spoke up first stating that her room was very cold or very hot. She stated : "It was so cold that I just couldn't stand it. It was too cold to sit at your desk and do your work."

Bob was next saying that on this date in late November the high in his room was 66 degrees although the day started at 64 degrees. John Paul said he was pleased that Bob had taken the time to record the temperature in his room because that data would help to determine exactly how serious the problem was.

John Paul then decided to share some information that he obtained. The district had hired a major air conditioning firm to consult with the administrators at the district and with several schools who were having air conditioning/heating problems. The main problem at this

site was that there was no middle ground between heating and air conditioning; there was no way to ventilate the room by circulating air from the outside. This was especially important since each room had only one door and windows in the rooms were sealed shut.

Other schools did not have such a serious problem because even though they had air conditioning and heating their windows opened. In one or two schools it was an energy problem but no where was the problem as unique as it was at this school.

The custodian had previously told the facilitator that the system did circulate air from the outside. In fact all it did was circulate the air within the room. John Paul stated that "the unit is a combination heating and air conditioning unit only."

Jane took advantage of a break in the conversation and said that she had nothing to say because her unit worked well most of the time. She did support the rest of the group by stating that "I know it's a big problem with a lot of people here." Bob added that "one room could be freezing and one could be really roasting. It depends on where the rooms are located."

The facilitator noted that the circle was involved in data gathering on that subject. Whether the room was located on the sunny side of the building or the shadey side of the building did have definite consequences as to the

room temperature inside. This led to a short discussion about which direction the buildings faced. The school was built on a natural mesa yet hallways were not in line with where the sea breeze was originating. Loretta said: "The school was constructed poorly. I mean, we have a nice sea breeze here almost all the time, but we can't open up our rooms to get at it."

Louise was next to speak. She had a special concern because the alternative program had some twenty computers in the room so a stable temperature was important. It was not only important to keep the people cool but the equipment as well.

John Paul expressed empathetically that there was a similar situation at the district office. His office was the nearest to the air conditioning unit and therefore he received the greatest flow of air. He had to shut down the vents to his office, and it still was barely warm enough. Moving back to the school problem he stated that "the biggest problem at this school is the lack of ventilation." He then stated that a new climate control system for the school would be in the range of \$500,000. This was the first time someone had mentioned replacement or what it would cost. He said that "the district would do away with the zone type of climate control and go to an individualized climate control." These two pieces of information surprised but pleased the circle members.

John Paul also stated that the life span of any air system was approximately 15 to 20 years and the school's system was 17 years old at the time of this study. With that in mind, the school would be near the top of the priority list to receive one of the first new systems.

John Paul reviewed how difficult it was for the teachers with the zone type of system. The teachers with large classes would be warm and the teachers with small classes would be quite cool. John Paul added a new note to the conversation when he said that the zone type of climate control was not even being sold to schools anymore. It never worked well and was not available even if a district wanted to purchase it.

The facilitator asked: "What are we looking at in terms of years? How many years will we be suffering through this?" The response from John Paul began with: "Okay, you may not like this." A proposal would go to the board to hire another energy consultant in December, 1986. The master plan would take a year, and with bidding for the purchase of the equipment, it would be three to five more years before the system was changed.

There was a visible acceptance and relief after the circle received this communication. Never had anyone acknowledged that there was a problem nor had anyone given the faculty any information concerning the plans which were

developed to improve the situation. It was an interesting feeling as the circle was drawn into this discussion.

The facilitator shared with the assistant superintendent that the air situation was indeed a factor as far as student achievement and teacher morale were concerned. In fact it was a major concern during any kind of poor weather, hot or cold. The facilitator said: "This is the first time we've ever heard that someone is willing to tackle it and say there's hope. It's always been, 'You're not closing the doors'. It's always been our fault. The system was just never set up to be successful."

John Paul discussed a new thermal system that the gas and electric company was encouraging the district to adopt. He had considered the option of restructuring the window frames so that the windows would open thus doing away with any need to look for a new system but the cost was prohibitive.

He asked whether the teachers liked the trailers or not. Each trailer had its own individual air system and so his question was valid in light of the discussion. The members said that while the trailers had their own system, there were negatives also. They were noisy, they had no carpets on the floor, and voices had a tendency to echo because of the tin walls. They were not conducive to effective teaching.

The facilitator asked if John Paul could provide thermometers to the school so that the temperature could be monitored by each teacher. Without an answer, the discussion moved to who would decide what the right temperature would be for each room. Would it be the teacher or a consensus of the people in the room? The facilitator returned the meeting to the task by asking: "Is there anything more you can help us with to get through the next year or two?" His answer was that any type of relief would be temporary in nature but it would help. He offered more fans for the hot days and more heaters for the cool ones. A survey would be necessary to inquire into the needs of each individual teacher.

Finally, after all the years of the staff and students feeling miserable, there was a resemblance of an answer and hope for the future. The entire system would be replaced with a system which would take into account the individuality of each room. Also there was recognition by a district administrator that there was a problem, and a temporary solution was offered that satisfied those in attendance.

Another subject was suggested that was not on the agenda. Barbara wanted to know the status of the district policy on separate smoking sections for smokers. There was some discussion about the new law and what was being done to provide for separate smoking areas. John Paul was told

about the particular problem at this school where the air conditioning system spread the smoke between the four rooms which shared a common air conditioning unit. Even though the smoking room was sealed from other rooms, the odor was still transmitted through the system.

After some discussion, a possible solution was suggested. The district's vocational high school built small buildings as part of its home construction and repair class. These small one room buildings would not be part of the self-contained school environment. Teachers could smoke in these buildings and the air quality of the school would not be changed. The facilitator and Barbara would look into this situation.

The facilitator raised the question of how to disseminate the information gathered this day. "There is no solution with the kind of system we have. The faculty just needs to know. No one has ever told them that. We just have to live with it until we can make it better. Can we tell them that? They've never been given a definite answer." The circle decided that Bob and the facilitator would write a memo to the faculty members to inform them of the discussion and to offer them the opportunity to obtain a fan or heater if they desired.

John Paul said that he had been at the district office five years but that he had not heard of the air conditioning/heating problem until just recently "so whoever

was yelling wasn't yelling very loud." Money was obviously the key issue, he stated, because of the expense in replacing the system. There has to be a long range plan to set money aside to pay for a new system, and it isn't just a problem at this school. This was of interest to the circle. He then gave a small mini lecture about bonds, interest rates, and how a district goes about setting up reserves to pay for large capital outlay items. His final remark was: "You're getting the attention, people." There were obvious smiles across the room. The facilitator responded "Well, you're here, which means a lot."

John Paul noticed that the agenda set for the meeting was not totally covered. The facilitator responded: "We'll just put our agenda off until the next meeting. This discussion was important though, and we needed to bring experts to us who had answers because we're fact finders, and we can't do that if we don't have the people with the facts. So you members of the circle know probably more than anybody now in the school about what's going on with the climate control system."

This meeting lasted over an hour. The facilitator who knew the most about the problem at the school spent the time extracting from John Paul as many facts as possible. It was a data gathering session and a learning session for the circle members and for John Paul.

John Paul was comfortable with the circle, and the communication was positive with questions coming from the circle and answers and/or concerns coming from John Paul. After the meeting, several circle members remained and thanked John Paul for taking time from his schedule to come and work with the circle. There was appreciation for the manner in which the facts were given and how open the sharing was. Most members of the circle expressed satisfaction at knowing more about the problem and what the district had planned to do to alleviate the problem.

The meeting of December 1st opened with the facilitator asking those who were absent from the meeting with John Paul if they would like a summary of what occurred. The response was positive. Jane began by sharing that John Paul was humorous yet factual. He informed the circle of what could be done and what could not be done in reference to the air conditioning and heating system. He gave a time line of approximately three to five years before something permanent would be done. He also said the cost would be in the area of \$500,000. When Jane had a question about how the cost would be financed, he gave a short talk about bond measures and interest rates that was quite informative.

Karen added that the new system would have individual room control of the climate instead of several rooms on one control. He also commented, and this irritated Karen somewhat, that he hoped teachers would not regulate the

controls based on their own body temperature but on the needs of the class as a whole. He suggested that the teacher ask the class in order to obtain a composite feeling of the best temperature. Karen said that she felt most teachers would do that automatically.

Alice stated that "he kind of irritated me and I don't mind saying it." John Paul had indicated as a result of a question from Alice that some teachers might be getting cold because of age. This did not go well with Alice. She had previously made a comment that she felt that the air conditioning system was the cause of her being ill so much the last few years. She thought his comment was insensitive.

Loretta added that she felt that John Paul's attitude was indicative of some administrators at the district. She and her students at times were so warm they could not keep their eyes open. At other times, they were shivering they were so cold. She also knew that some students were more sensitive to changes of temperature and the system would always be a problem to them. She felt that teachers would take all student's needs into account when the new system was put into effect.

The circle was reminded that the advisory period issue was going to the curriculum committee to be decided. Bob and the facilitator were going to prepare a memo for the faculty explaining what had been accomplished on the air

conditioning and heating issue, how inconveniences could be handled at the present time, and what was in store for the future. A request form would also go out to the faculty informing them about extra fans or heaters that could be requested for their rooms when needed.

Alice again felt that John Paul was "harsh, direct, and kept making jokes at the wrong time." Loretta maintained that the comment about age and cold was probably a joke. Jane added that it wasn't what was said that was offensive since earlier in the meeting the facilitator and Alice had made similar references and no offense was taken. She felt that the manner in which the statement was made brought offense.

Karen inquired whether the air conditioning system was working at the present time or not. The facilitator said that it was and if there was an individual problem with any unit, the faculty member should see him so whatever was wrong could be corrected. Referring to the number of times Jack the head custodian had closed her door to protect the air conditioning system, Loretta said: "I don't want him to say one more time that I don't know or that I don't want to talk about the system or to close my door without my permission." Feelings were obviously sensitive in this area. She then stated: "If we could only try to sit down with him."

The facilitator took the opportunity to offer to invite Jack to one of the circle meetings. It would be difficult for Jack to attend a meeting because he came to work early and left early. The facilitator stated that Jack could change his hours for one day so he could stay late and meet with the circle. The system was a continuing problem for Jack too and a constant headache.

Alice shared what we all knew. "Our students are not motivated to succeed in school and the air conditioning/heating issue is just one more thing to cause problems." The facilitator reminded the circle that the problem is what needs to be attacked and not Jack. Personalities are not really the issue. Louise stated Jack needs to be informed of that before he comes to the meeting. Alice overheard him say that he too was frustrated with the system, the complaints, and the lack of cooperation from the district. The teachers and the custodians had the same problem but viewed it from a different perspective.

Loretta mentioned that a teacher who used to be at the high school wrote an energy plan which pointed out the inappropriateness of the air conditioning system. The facilitator said that the teacher did this six years ago before John Paul was with the district. Loretta spoke again about how she and others who were dissatisfied should have picked up the phone and talked to someone in the district office. "None of us, and I too am to blame, picked up the

telephone and called to let someone know we were dying of heat and to do something. Amazing!"

The facilitator returned to the agenda. Alice had thought of another project which she would like to pursue: a speaker's bureau from within the faculty. She wanted to survey all adults on campus about their expertise in different subjects and publish a booklet with that information. An example was one of the teachers who went to China last summer. She had pictures and personal experiences which would benefit any class studying the far east. The facilitator added this would also help with faculty attitude, cooperation, and teachers getting involved at another level than that of teacher. Loretta felt that speakers would help break the monotony of the classes. There was a general positive response to this suggestion.

Alice suggested that counselors be included in this booklet not just to share places they have been or skills that they have, but to take over a class for a period when the class needs some counseling. This would get counselors into the classroom more often and allow them to take over a class and assist teachers in need.

The facilitator moved on to Karen and her task with faculty meetings. Karen volunteered to talk to the principal first to get a feeling for his thoughts and to see how much freedom she could have in dealing with the meetings. Karen also wanted to add department meetings to

the agenda with the principal to work them back into the regular schedule.

The facilitator mentioned again the counselors had a real role to play not only in being included in the booklet but also to use their skills to work with some of the freshmen who were having difficulty adjusting to high school. The facilitator was working with one of the counselors and a teacher with the purpose of visiting the large apartment complexes in San Ysidro. Many of the parents felt embarrassed to visit the school to work on their youngsters problems so it seemed logical for the school personnel to go to them. The school staff involved was excited about the prospects, and there was a waiting list of teachers who wanted to be part of the team.

This discussion led to a question from Loretta concerning the amount of paper work with which counselors were burdened. Student class change requests were one of the most time consuming tasks of the counselors. The facilitator stated again that the administrators were working with the counselors to use time management techniques to be able to counsel more students.

Loretta went on with the topic stating she had been working with several students to be certain that they were placed in the proper schedule. This related to her work as English resource teacher. Alice and the facilitator

suggested a few techniques to shorten the list of students Loretta had to work with so that the task was manageable.

There was a short break in the agenda to discuss the testing policy for next year. Loretta, Karen, and Alice had questions about when testing would be, what the different tests were, and what part the advisory period would play in the whole process. This information giving calmed a few circle members and assisted in the understanding of the entire testing program for next year.

The circle recommended that the same explanation be given at a faculty meeting so that all would receive the same information. Karen would ask the principal if five minutes could be set aside for this item.

Karen then spoke about her plans to meet with the principal concerning the faculty meetings. Karen was basically asking the circle for direction. The facilitator suggested that she discuss with the principal his plans for faculty meetings and professional growth activities for the next year. Karen also wanted to tell him that "we're really concerned about not having any department meetings scheduled" and ask him what his plans were in this area. She then mentioned that the department had drafted a letter to the superintendent and had not informed the principal about it. The facilitator stated that his preference was to go to the principal first with concerns and if that did not bring about satisfactory results, the department would send

the letter to the superintendent. Her response was that the department's intent was to attempt to have department meetings scheduled districtwide. The circle agreed that the department had a valid concern and maybe the visit to the principal and the letter would be positive if written properly.

The discussion moved into the curriculum area because department meetings were the arena where curriculum matters were discussed. The facilitator determined that this type of information needed to be submitted to the curriculum committee because by the bargaining agreement curriculum was the committee's responsibility. The facilitator had agreed at the beginning that the circle would not become involved in contract areas. The hour was late, and the meeting adjourned.

The following meeting was held on January 5th. The members joined together, and shared refreshments as all were entering the room. The facilitator asked again if anyone had any further comments to share on John Paul's visit. The head custodian had not been contacted yet. Next week would be an opportune time to have Jack visit.

Alice had been thinking about the option of obtaining a heater during the cold or a fan during the hot and was concerned that she or another teacher would leave their room with it on. It seemed that Alice had brought a heater to school and left it on. The custodian who cleaned her room

did not notice and it was left on all night so her concern was one from experience. The facilitator supported Alice's concern. That is an excellent comment. If we have 50 heaters on in rooms and people leave without turning them off, it could be a problem. "So I thought the district would not buy a lot of space heaters because of fire hazard and do they have the insurance for this?" said Alice. The facilitator said that maybe when Jack visited the meeting he could be asked to see how the custodians could get involved at least in checking these appliances that were in the rooms.

The facilitator then went on with the agenda. He felt that inviting other district officials to share with the circle would be positive and bring about better communication between schools and the district. Most on the group agreed that it would be worth the effort and would be a first in that district officials are usually not invited to the school sites.

Karen suggested that if Jack could not come after school, then maybe the circle could hold a luncheon meeting. This would not be the best option but might entice him to come. This would not upset his regular schedule. The facilitator stated that the best choice would be to have him after school if possible. "Remember this is the first time this has ever happened in the years he has been a custodian.

We need to open up communication. There is so much anger directed towards him."

Karen mentioned paper in the restrooms and not having it available all the time. The facilitator suggested that the circle remain with one topic at this first meeting with Jack and that would be the air conditioning and heating systems.

Kelly attempted to put the entire blame on Jack for the temperatures in the rooms. The facilitator responded that with all the facts that John Paul shared with us, it would be impossible to place the blame on any one individual.

Loretta spoke out saying she was not satisfied with the solution to the air conditioning problems even with all the facts shared. "If we can put a man on the moon, why can't we have proper school room temperatures." The facilitator repeated that with one-half million dollars the situation at the school could be remedied by the purchase of a new system. Loretta added: "I just feel really frustrated."

The facilitator counseled: "When there's nothing you can do about it, you need to move onto something else and not let it tie you down." The temporary solution of obtaining heaters and fans until the new units are bought and installed seems a fair resolution. Loretta demanded: "Then the heaters, and fans should be here." The facilitator reminded her that the school staff had not yet

asked for them and that would be the next step. All teachers may not want either one in their room, therefore, each should be asked and ordering would take place after that. "We can ask teachers to talk to their students to have them help make the decision."

Karen supported Loretta. "But when we go into our room, which is either cold or hot, we get discouraged. I think if the principal had to work under these conditions as we do and had to spend his eight hours in this heat, he would do more, or be more apt to get us solutions."

Loretta brought up the main office and its air conditioner and heater. The facilitator handled this concern by stating: "It's embarrassing sometimes when people come in and we're sitting there all cool and you're sitting out in your rooms all hot. He continued by reminding the circle that Jack would be at the next meeting, and he could then become a part of the solution.

The facilitator asked Bob if we could get the memo out to explain to the faculty as a whole all the facts that the circle had obtained, what temporary solutions we had at hand, and what was the hope for the future. The main point needed to be that the solution was at hand. Not 15 years away but only three to five years away. The facilitator felt that not only had the air conditioning and heating problem been taken care of but that the circle made a real impression on John Paul. Jane stated that "I thought the

visit of the assistant superintendent was fantastic as I mentioned before."

The facilitator summarized the air conditioning and heating issue so that the circle could move on to other business. "We all know that this is a problem, and it has been for years which have been full of frustration and hardship. John Paul was surprised that this problem was causing so much damage at the school and that he appreciated talking to teachers about it. Teachers were to be asked if they wished to have a fan or heater in their room as a temporary solution. John Paul had said that the old system would not be fixed but replaced in the near future. Jack would be invited to the next meeting to share how he and the teachers could work together these next few years until the new system was installed."

The circle was now ready to proceed. Karen then reviewed with everyone what she was planning to do when she met with the principal concerning faculty meetings and department meetings. She would report back after the meeting. She stressed again that she was working not only to change the situation at the school but was interested in involving the entire district in the solution.

Karen suggested that when she finished the letter to the principal regarding the problem of scheduling department meetings and supporting a learning type of faculty meetings, she wanted the circle members to sign it. The facilitator

asked the group members to respond. Barbara said, "I'd just have the whole group sign it." Loretta added: "That's fine with me" and the others nodded their heads in agreement.

The facilitator asked if the circle was talking about two letters one in reference to faculty meetings and one concerning department meetings. Karen responded: "They are probably two separate issues." The other members agreed.

Karen said that a few teachers told her that the district administrators thought "that teachers were trying to get out of class time." There was further discussion among Alice, Loretta, and Karen concerning time to do curriculum and staff development.

Loretta went to the next item on the agenda which was a social activity at the end of the semester. Something was needed at the end of the semester since there was no time off between semesters. An activity would help the faculty members to renew themselves and relax. Loretta mentioned a barbecue and had already gone ahead to ask a teacher if his home could be used for the event. The answer was yes so the planning had begun. Karen then thought of another teacher who held the Christmas party and whether a thank you note had been sent. It had not so the social committee would be asked to do that. With this comment, the meeting was adjourned.

This meeting ended the year of quality circle meetings and the commitment made by the members had been fulfilled.

The circle members wished to continue a few more months until at least the middle of May. The facilitator needed to commence having the tapes transcribed but was more than willing to continue the process until the circle was ready to terminate the meetings.

There were several significant actions taken by the circle during these last two months. The first meeting after the official end of the circle activity was the meeting where the head custodian, Jack, was invited to attend as a guest to discuss the issue of room temperature. He had cancelled several appointments because of his work load and he now finally was going to make an appearance. This was quite important for Bob because this was the one problem which he had been working on for several months. The main irritant for Bob was when the air conditioner was not functioning properly Jack closed his door without speaking with him first.

Jack had been head custodian for many years at the school and was ex-military. He had previous problems dealing with several faculty members because of his lack of communication skills and inflexibility. It was difficult for him this day because he was under stress meeting with a group of teachers. This was a first time for him and for the teachers. The facilitator made sure that he sat at his side. The meeting opened with the facilitator stating the problem as it had existed over the years. An overview was

given summarizing the meetings the circle had with the district official explaining that the original air system was inadequate from the beginning and did not function equally in all rooms as he originally thought. Bob then produced his chart with the temperatures, dates, and periods graphed. The temperatures were well above comfort ranges for the type of room he was in and for the number of students in the room. Jack responded that he could see why Bob opened the door but was still concerned that the open door would burn out the motor of the air conditioner. Then the facilitator offered the solution worked out by the district official and the circle. The district would agree to order more fans for the summer and more heaters for the winter until the time came for the system to be replaced. Jack hinted at a problem which Bob concurred with and that was shutting off the appliances at the end of the day. He explained that if not unplugged a fire could result. Jack then offered to have his custodians check those rooms with appliances each day to see that they were unplugged. The facilitator also offered to discuss with the teachers to be more careful in carrying out this function themselves. There was some further talk about where to place the appliances. The genuine sense of cooperation and sharing of knowledge affected all. It was one of the few instances where the facilitator could remember a discussion of this nature terminating in a positive way. The meeting ended

with hand shakes and words of thanks to Jack for attending the meeting.

The main issue for the following two meetings was a review of the phone issue. Over the summer the district had appointed an administrative assistant to serve at the high school and his office was to be the teacher's phone room. The new principal did not realize the importance of the phone and had just had it transferred to the administrative assistant. When teachers returned from summer break, they noticed immediately that the phone had been effectively taken from them. Karen and Loretta were angry and announced to the group that they would go directly to the principal to complain. The facilitator interceded with a suggestion to use the quality circle process and present a solution to the problem as requested previously by the principal. The group agreed with Karen and Loretta volunteering to spend the following week gathering information on whether the phone was missed and if so where would it now be placed. There was general discussion concerning the phone and how vital it was to teachers.

The next meeting a solution was presented to the circle. There were two rooms in the office where the phone could be placed. One was the teacher computer room and the other was the mail room. The computer room was not used regularly but when it was it was quite noisy. The mail room was used daily by the attendance secretary but was

usually quiet. The facilitator agreed to speak with the secretary to obtain her opinions as to sharing the room with the teachers. Again there was discussion as to any other place that would be more desirable for the phone and Loretta shared her frustration that the phone disappeared without the teachers knowing.

The facilitator was ready in one week to share with the circle that the attendance secretary would not mind sharing the mail room with the teachers because she realized the importance of the phone to teachers as they called home to speak with parents and carried out personal business. She suggested several places for the phone and some general rules so that those using the room could do so cooperatively.

The parking lot was placed on the agenda by Barbara at the following meeting. She had been denied her parking place several times during the week and felt it was time to seek a solution for this long term problem. There was immediate concurrence from the entire group. The nurse had her own place unlike the other faculty members but there always seemed to be someone in her place.

The problem was one built into the plans when the school was constructed. The faculty parking lot was laid out at the front of the school between the parkway and the front lawn. The street it faced was a major artery for the community and it led to two freeways located east and west

of the school. Parents used the lot/driveway as an area to leave off their children causing a traffic jam as teachers were arriving at work. There always seemed to be a student or two with their cars in faculty parking spaces also which meant that late arriving faculty members would have to park in the west or east student parking lots both at opposite ends of the school. Every member of the circle had a story to relate about problems coming to work and how it affected their day especially their first period class. Jane solved her problem by coming to work early so as to miss the snarled traffic. Karen mentioned that not all teachers had the ability to arrive early because of family obligations. It was immediately decided to adopt this problem as the next circle activity.

At the subsequent meeting the problem was divided into tasks. Bob volunteered to call other schools to see if they had a similar problem and how they solved it. Barbara would meet with interested staff on campus and discuss possible solutions. The facilitator remembered that a small group had begun to meet during the lunch hour to formulate a petition of complaint because of the continuing lack of effort to solve the problem. There was discussion relating various experiences and how important the issue was and yet there seemed to be no manner in which to solve the problem before the quality circle came into existence.

Brainstorming captured the entire time of the following meeting as ideas were suggested and placed in the minutes for future reference. A report from the city engineer was requested from the principal's secretary concerning the barriers placed in the middle of Palm Avenue and why the driveway had been placed where it was. Discussion of possible solutions included iron pipe gates at either end of the lot (the entrance and exit), additional barriers on Palm Avenue, paying a teacher to stand at the driveway and direct traffic, suggesting an alternate place for parents to leave off their children, car pooling so fewer cars would need to be accommodated, and contacting the city to inquire about their conclusions.

The next meeting was filled with reports on the items brainstormed the preceding week. Another school with a similar physical plant as this school had installed gates just two weeks earlier and were pleased with the results. They did offer suggestions of the type of gates to install and suggestions about times to open and close them. The city had shared that they did have plans for Palm Avenue which would affect the parking lot at the school and hopefully improve the traffic flow. Since the year was coming to an end the results were turned over to the Dean of Students so that the project could be continued and completed the following year. The combined solution would include the gates, the city restructuring the street, and

someone posted at the gate when teachers were arriving to allow only staff to enter the lot. A campaign would be initiated to arrange for an alternate route for leaving off children that would be as convenient as the front lot was. This route would be planned for the lower east parking lot and this would also alter some of the traffic flow so as to free up the front of the school. There was actual excitement from the staff when the solution was discussed at the faculty meeting and the standing comment was to name the gates the Barbara memorial gates since she had put in so much time and did not allow the gate issue to be dropped.

With two meetings left, Karen reintroduced the faculty meeting issue. The quality circle at the beginning of its existence had worked with the previous principal to assist in planning faculty meetings. Summer meetings were planned by several of the circle members and the other assistant principal to arrange for several faculty meeting programs focusing on issues that the teachers deemed important. She had wanted to return to the faculty meeting agenda item and plan for a meeting with the principal to question whether he was still interested or not. Loretta and Alice agreed to assist her in continuing on with this issue even after the disbanding of the circle.

The final meeting was basically a social/refreshment time where the group reminisced over specific events of the previous year and a half. Humorous incidents were

remembered and the nonparticipant observer finally joined the group as a participant. The facilitator stated that soon he would be arranging appointments with the circle members for interviews to obtain their opinions of what had happened over the period of time that the circle existed, whether the circle had met their needs, and if the goals and objectives originally set by the study were met. The facilitator thanked all for the commitment that went beyond what was agreed to and shared some of what he was feeling after having served as facilitator of the circle. There was encouragement to continue working towards some of the issues which were not completed nor worked on and that the spirit of the circle process would permeate the faculty for years to come. It was a bittersweet time with sadness because the experience was coming to an end yet pleased because summer was beginning. There was pride in what had been accomplished.

CHAPTER V

INTERVIEWS AND SUMMARY

Interviews

The interviews began with Barbara. Her interview took place in the morning off the school campus. My first question dealt with her thinking back and relating to me the reason she had chosen to become a participant of the quality circle study. After a long pause, she quickly answered completely without hesitation. She stated that she wanted to assist me with my research. Since we had worked together a number of years, she wanted to be a part of this project. Her succeeding statement related her relationship to business. She had read an article on the quality circle, knew the Japanese were adept at production, knew of their success, and wanted to learn something of the process. "The Japanese did it; why can't we?" was her comment. Her husband had been involved somewhat and was not enamored with the concept. She thought it would be fascinating. There was a sense of curiosity and excitement evident in her statement.

Bob's interview followed shortly after. It took place

on the school campus during his preparation period in a small private room. We began with the first question. He related several reasons why he became involved with the quality circle project. The primary reason was that he felt "isolated in special education." There were only four special education teachers; they knew each other well, however, a minimal relationship existed between them and the other teachers. He realized that belonging to the circle would allow him the opportunity to become better acquainted with other staff members. He stated that "once involved, my intent expanded to seeing the faculty and administration in a different manner than I had before." Curiously he answered verbally with a seeking tone. His final reason: he wanted to become involved in change, and, thusly, the circle was one of the first opportunities he had to be a change agent.

Jane's interview followed. The meeting took place on the school campus during her preparation period. The interview site was in a different room. When asked the reasons for volunteering for the circle project, she stated that she held the facilitator in high esteem. She knew the facilitator was good with small groups and worked well with feelings; therefore, she wanted to be a part of that. She further explained her interesting outlook of the circle concept and the notion of dealing with quality attracted her. "I wanted to have a voice at my school because it is

like my second home." To be a part of the decision making process "reduced my stress, made me feel important, and I was glad you allowed me to be involved."

Jane, a language arts teacher, was interested in feelings and humanistic endeavors. She stated that she volunteered for the project without expectations. She knew the facilitator was involved and felt the activity would be beneficial. She liked the idea of using a technique that the Japanese were using and with which they had had some obvious success. She was interested in the circle concept because "schools should be run like businesses in some aspects."

The fourth interview was with Kelly. It was held at a local pizza restaurant during lunch time. In answer to the first question, she volunteered to become a part of the project because of the facilitator and the other positive people whom she knew had volunteered. She was sure that the circle "would get positive things done." She too had a personal goal which was to become more involved with her peers and this seemed like the perfect tool to accomplish that task. Kelly had views that she had wanted to share for some time and had not found the proper forum through which to accomplish that task.

The next interview was with Louise who was the director of the alternative program called Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations (PLATO). The interview took

place at the same local pizza restaurant after the facilitator interviewed Kelly. Louise responded to the first question by saying that she wanted to become involved because of the other people who had volunteered for the group. "The others drew me to the group," she said. She liked to be with people, especially positive people. She really didn't know what a quality circle was all about, but she liked the name. "It sounded right to me." She furthermore stated that she knew the facilitator and wanted to be in a project with him. She knew it would be good for her morale, and was an opportunity to share with other faculty members.

Louise volunteered in order to investigate the quality circle concept. She realized that for some time "education and business have been isolated from each other." This gave her the opportunity to obtain first hand knowledge concerning a business procedure and to determine its affectiveness on education. She always liked to be with people accomplishing something new. In these areas, the circle met her goals. In addition, "I saw some progress in the circle. We were able to achieve something."

I met Karen, my next interviewee, in a small room in the counseling center. At the end of the school day, I queried her regarding her group participation. Karen decided to volunteer to be a part of the project because she liked to be an integral part of anything that addressed

change. Karen was a project-type person, and was interested in this group that worked to achieve a goal. On the personal side, Karen related that she was a special education teacher and basically was in a self-contained situation. Peer relationships were important and the circle seemed a way to be involved with her peers. Finally, she liked the business/production aspect of the quality circle. Education needed more of this type of cooperative sharing, and the quality circle was an intriguing prospect.

Loretta's interview took place in late June at the facilitator's home on the backporch. She had been working at the district office and stopped by on the way home. The interview lasted over an hour. She answered the first question as to why she joined without hesitation. She joined to work with the facilitator because she thought working together would be a positive experience. She saw a challenge in the area of decision-making; the only opportunity available at the time. Her third response had to do with several projects which she wanted to work, and the circle again provided her with the opportunity. She also mentioned in passing that the circle was a positive group. It provided a positive experience the year the circle began operation.

Loretta was also interested in how a business management technique could function in a school setting. She had always been interested in business, and the circle gave her

an opportunity to be involved in a process which had its beginnings in the business world. Indirectly, she picked up on some of the management techniques that the facilitator used, and by dealing with a district official, she also felt better acquainted with educational techniques.

Alice was the last participant interviewed. The interview took place in the morning at her home in the dining room at the start of the summer vacation. Alice and the facilitator were relaxed. During the one hour session all questions were discussed. Alice answered the first question stating that she wanted to make a difference, not just to talk and share information, but to make a real change without being directly involved with the entire administrative staff.

She realized that the experience would assist in boosting morale and that from the makeup of the low keyed group, she would be able to give her opinion and not be embarrassed. The group, she felt, would also assist in releasing tension and frustration that had built up over the week by sharing concerns and searching for solutions. The members of the group were positive people who would allow all members to speak. She also appreciated the procedure that stated that no one would dominate the group but all could be involved in leading at different times. Alice had many opinions and thoughts, but she rarely shared them

because it was difficult to get anyone to listen. The circle afforded her that opportunity.

To the second question asked: Did the quality circle meet your needs? Barbara answered that it was important to her to be able to become acquainted with more staff members on an individual basis. The quality circle, she continued, was a problem solving process. She wanted to be a part of solving some of the campus problems especially as they dealt with the environment and morale. She also became aware that some of her concerns were the concerns of several other members. This, she said, "gave her a sense of belonging." She had thought that only she was frustrated about the problems that had to be faced daily at work.

In answering the same question, Bob stated that the quality circle did several things for him. In fact, "it went beyond what I expected." He stated that he saw for the first time the more global extent of school. He became more involved with areas he had not thought of before, i. e., administration and plant operation. The circle became informative, and he became aware of many different aspects of the total school operation and its environment.

Kelly's involvements met her needs. The most important lesson she learned from the circle made her realize that when positive people get together and have open minds, much progress can be made. "I felt a part of the process of getting things done and I liked that." She also established

ties with other faculty members with whom she had no previous ties.

"Yes, the quality circle met my expectations. I would do it again but only if it was going to be goal oriented," said Karen. Depending on the facilitator, she would repeat the activity.

Loretta also felt that the quality circle met her needs. She enjoyed working with the facilitator; she liked the manner of the circle's organization. The people were positive and the work accomplished collaboratively, unlike other group experiences wherein one person directs the activities and the committee members sit there and offer suggestions when they are allowed to respond.

Something Loretta learned from the experience: the importance of working with such a diverse faculty. She did not know several of the members of the circle well when the meetings began, and it was satisfying to become acquainted on a professional as well as personal basis with a wider selection of the faculty.

When asked whether the circle met her needs, Alice responded that at the beginning it did not. When the facilitator asked for clarification, she said that the circle did what it was supposed to do, but it took longer than she anticipated. Going to the circle meetings on Mondays made the end of the day enjoyable. Furthermore, she left with a positive feeling. The contact with other

members of the staff in this context became an activity that she looked forward to attend; for this contact added another dimension to her life. There were teachers from all departments of the school, some of which she did not really know even though they had worked together for several years.

What problems did the quality circle solve? This was the next question. Barbara could remember two issues. One was the parking problem which had not been totally solved at the closing of the study. The other involved morale. She remembered a tea for the female faculty members and the lunches arranged by preparation periods. She saw that the lunch gatherings were positive influences on others, making her feel good about having had a part in planning them.

When I asked Bob exactly what problems were solved, his first response included the area of socialization and morale. He felt "the social revitalization was a direct outgrowth of the circle." The next topic he mentioned was the air conditioning. He stated that nothing happened immediately, but the local and district staffs shared much information between them which resulted in a better understanding of issues. Parking, the third problem, Bob thought the circle had helped to solve. He finally stated that "my answer reflects my personal feelings and ideas, but because of the morale issue the circle had a direct effect on my work with the kids."

"The parking lot was the first problem that the circle helped solve," said Jane. She explained that she usually arrived early and didn't know it was a problem until the circle discussed it. Becoming aware of this issue and others, she felt that she became more knowledgeable concerning her outlook of the school.

Jane then cited the morale and social issues next, separating them into two distinct parts. In the area of social concerns, she believed that the circle became more active; furthermore, she indicated that one member with the support of several others would continue the effort. "Friendships within the circle became more defined and clearer as a result of the experience."

Jane felt there was a definite boost in morale. Her personal goal at the onset was to get closer to several of the negative members of the staff, and with the assistance of the circle, she became successful.

Air conditioning was mentioned next, although it was not one of the major issues for her. Each person chose a special project and then supported that choice. She appreciated the open communication between the faculty and administrators.

Kelly mentioned air conditioning as one of the most important problems solved. Her answer was interesting because as a physical education teacher, she usually worked outside. However, she realized that it was important to the

majority of the faculty. The most indirect effect of this goal was the meeting with several experts who were invited to the circle for their opinions.

The parking problem was next. She felt positive about this issue because she saw immediate results.

The social/morale issue involved activities that lifted faculty morale, and the school became a better place to work.

When I asked what was accomplished, Louise said that the main issue was morale resulting in a less negative faculty. More and more teachers were positive in their approach. She related how everyone started together in 1970 and now were involved in the midlife crisis stage with some handling it better than others. There had been death, divorce, and family situations throwing a few people off balance. "Maybe this group was the first effort at dealing with that situation," she said.

The next issue the circle dealt with concerned the classroom environment. The circle work definitely made a difference.

The third issue was the parking lot. This concerned Kelly the most in as much as starting the day without a parking place close to her classroom not enabling her to unload supplies quickly and easily was a negative force.

I asked Karen what the circle had accomplished? The

major achievement, she stated, was the morale issue. A definite change in positive morale occurred which included the second year student/teacher camp. A networking was instituted and continued to function. The get-togethers during preparation periods and the progressively deeper caring for each other became increasingly apparent. "The circle became the hub from which other actions branched out," she said.

Loretta felt that decision making involvement was exciting. "It was interesting to be involved with management and to see something happen." For her the alienation of faculty from administrators was a problem, and the circle allowed her to reduce that feeling of alienation.

The office telephone for teachers' use was the next item Loretta remembered. After she mentioned this issue, she remembered that the telephone had disappeared again. In the past year, her commitments had changed and she had not used the telephone, and, therefore, didn't realize it was no longer in the mail room. She said, "next year that will be my personal project to go to the principal and find out what happened to the telephone."

Alice indicated the gate to the parking lot as being the most important problem solved. When she came to school in September and saw the gate in place, she had a sense of satisfaction. The gate may seem like a small issue, but it made coming to school and leaving less frustrating.

Next were the activities of the social committee dealing with the morale problem. She felt that the social activities rejuvenated the staff. It seemed that there was a social event each month. These events gave the staff an opportunity to get together and enjoy each other's company. People were friendlier than in past years, and this closeness made it easier. The picnic was the one event that she remembered the most. She appreciated Jane's and Karen's efforts in planning the event.

The room temperature issue was also a success. At least the teachers had the knowledge of what was happening, and Alice felt that the system was more efficient this past year. She guessed that the custodian had been spending more time keeping the machines functioning, and she appreciated the efforts made in that area.

The next question asked of the members dealt with communication. Bob felt a definite increase in communication among the circle's members. He was sorry that the increased communication was only on Mondays at the circle meetings. He did "go to more social activities to share with other faculty members." He realized that peer relationships were important to him and that he had to take the initiative and establish relationships. As to the faculty members outside the circle, the effect of the circle's activities was less obvious, but he did find

himself more open to short conversations and looked for opportunities to branch out and talk with faculty members.

Jane stated that communication was effected between members of the circle, but at times more communication with faculty members not in the circle would have prevented misunderstanding. She offered the example of the parking lot. While the circle was working on the parking lot issue, another faculty member called a meeting of interested teachers to deal with parking problems because angry faculty members had received tickets. She did not realize that the circle had already begun to work on that situation.

"Communication was amplified," she said. "I felt more comfortable raising my own ideas because they were accepted without anger. I function best that way." She finished this dialogue by stating that she learned more about the total operation of the school, how decisions were made, who was responsible for what area, and the part the district played in the process. Again she used the word global to express the totality of her feelings.

When I mentioned communication with those outside the circle, she responded that most of the positive communication involved those in the circle. She did share with friends on the faculty especially with the group of teachers she often saw. One of her tasks was to inform others what was happening in the circle. She said that most were interested and often requested information.

Kelly's communication expanded during the year. If there was a conflict, then the circle provided an arena and a process to deal with that complaint. She used the circle as a "testing ground" to get acquainted with others and to try out new ideas.

Outside of the circle, her communication with the faculty was enhanced as she realized that she had much in common with them. Her new goal at the end of the year was to continue to "become more a part of the faculty."

Louise felt that exchanging values over the year made communication possible. For quite some time, she wanted to know several circle members better but had not found the time or place. This was an opportunity to get close to them and have quality time with some people she valued.

Communication with those outside the circle was beneficial for Louise. She immediately took quality circle ideas back to the alternative program, and this provided the people who staffed the PLATO program with a link to the school. This gave them the feeling of being a part of the total school's mission.

Karen became better acquainted with two teachers she had worked with for years as a direct result of the circle's efforts in communication. When she came to this school, she had decided not to become as active as she had previously been. However, little by little she became involved assisting clubs during lunch and after school. She realized

that she needed peers and the socialization that would occur while building on those relationships. The circle, therefore, helped Karen fulfill that goal.

Outside the circle, there was some carryover for Karen. Staff members would ask what had transpired. Karen shared with them the general idea and in the process became more aware of her aims including those of others. She believed that others envied her participation in the group. Her suggestion was to publish the meetings minutes. She decided to disseminate the information to those peers she knew well, to exchange ideas, and share with members of the circle.

Loretta thought that sharing in the circle resulted in a new trust and positive feeling among the peers with whom she was working at school. It took time for this feeling to emerge, but it finally did. This increased knowledge of each other had a positive effect on Loretta both in and out of the circle's activities. Simple occurrences such as sitting next to a circle member during lunch, a meeting, or at the the copy machine took on a different meaning now that she was involved. There was a heightened concern among all the members as to whether the day was pleasant or unpleasant and each took the time to inquire why.

Brainstorming illustrated the skills and talents of various circle members. She learned that all the members had something to contribute. New relations with some of the members were based on newly found and shared skills and

talents. The circle led to new communications thereby allowing new relationships to emerge.

Loretta strongly believed that communication outside the structured group seemed to be incomplete. She realized that even though memos and minutes were published periodically, all the communication came directly from the members. She talked with 15 faculty members on a weekly basis with the majority stating that the circle had succeeded in doing some admirable work and were pleased someone else was doing it. Many were pessimistic about the outcome. She felt that most of the members had lost hope many years before and even though there were positive feelings about the circle's activities, they didn't feel that it would make any lasting difference.

Approximately 20 percent of those individuals she communicated with stated that the teachers were "duped into doing administration work for the administration." One teacher labeled the circle as "a group grope" even though Loretta made obvious the misconception. Little change in perception was apparent on the part of a few faculty members. They felt the members were "suckers" to allow friendship to get them involved in this activity. One teacher would have initiated a labor complaint she exclaimed, but since the members had volunteered for the circle, the teacher could not file the grievance. She concluded this topic with the belief that 75 percent of the

teachers with whom she talked were tremendously positive and supportive of the circle's efforts.

During the year that the circle functioned, Alice believed that communication improved; but after the circle came to a close, the ability to communicate was not the same. Circle members did become more friendly with each other, but the time or place was not available to capitalize on those contacts after the circle meetings concluded. However, when an occasion presented itself to share with a former circle member, the same feeling prevailed.

Outside the circle, Alice said, "There was no carryover. I didn't talk with others too much about what we were doing." She felt that others really did not know what the circle was doing although she didn't hear negative comments. She knew that some teachers felt that "it was an administrator using the teachers. Everyone was too busy and looked at the circle as one more committee to be on where nothing would be done." Her best faculty friend was on the circle so in reality she didn't have anyone else to talk with about the circle.

The fourth question had two parts. What was received directly from the experience and what was received indirectly. Barbara answered that the circle began to feel like a family; "Everyone seemed to fit." It was not a social committee because there was more to do than just planning events. There was a purpose and a motive. "More

people were brought together, and they seemed closer," she said. The indirect result was that she became acquainted with staff members and that genuinely pleased her. As the staff became closer, they pulled together for the benefit of all; something she had not seen in her years at the school. She was also amazed at the "tenacity of the teachers who returned week after week" which was something she had never experienced. Barbara continued by relating that she liked the size of the group, the refreshments, and found working in small groups very pleasing to her.

Bob was not aware of any indirect circle effects. He mentioned, however, that the most direct effect resulted in forming relationships with the facilitator, administrator, and faculty members. These relationships did not exist prior to the circle's formation. Bob said he had "a better feel for school." He explained about his past teaching position, that he had taught in a private school some years previously and, therefore, didn't comprehend all the facets of public education. However, he had assisted his wife as an elementary school administrator.

I asked what direct results Jane derived from the experience. The year that she served on the circle proved to be difficult because of her teaching assignment. She looked forward to the circle meeting because it was positive and resulted in a sense of personal satisfaction. Sharing relieved tension and frustration. She mentioned the

refreshments and wanted me to know that they were "very important" to her.

When asked about direct participation results, Kelly responded that she enjoyed "feeling a part of a group of peers." There was discussion and sharing of information on an equal level. All were working toward a common goal, and she enjoyed communication with the circle members and invited guests.

I asked her for some indirect results of her participation in the circle. She stated that she was now social chairperson, a positive move for her. Kelly felt isolated because she was a physical education teacher and physically separated from the major part of the faculty. She didn't realize how much this had affected her until she participated in the circle. After some ten years, she finally felt part of at least a certain element of the faculty and became more aware of other staff members.

Louise was ready with her answer when I queried her about the direct results of the circle. She took the information obtained at the circle and shared it with the PLATO staff allowing her an opportunity to use some of the same techniques to solve problems. Even if the problems were not solved, the staff found solice in the fact that someone was listening to their opinions, beliefs, and or complaints. "It made a difference," she said, "in how the center functioned after that." She made time for the

faculty social committee which wanted to assist with morale problems. "I didn't really have the time," she said, "but it became a priority so I found time."

"Communication was the most important topic," Karen said. The circle became a place to discuss school problems with a positive group who was looking for answers, not just wanting to gripe. There was hope, and she would underline that word, that things would improve if the circle got involved. She said she truly believed that.

When the facilitator asked for indirect results from her year's participation in the circle, Loretta spoke about the decision making process. She focused on being able to speak freely in front of peers and share opinions without fear of ridicule as valid reasons to her when thinking back on what had happened. The circle experience changed the way she would relate to her peers for the remainder of her career.

Indirectly, Loretta's experience was a confidence builder. She could be herself and sound like herself which was a new and good feeling. She was now confident and unafraid of being a leader. This experience became the most important effort in attempting to lead her peers and from time to time in the circle she was able to do this.

When asked about direct effects of the circle, Alice responded that the greatest impact centered more on morale than in any other area. The teachers became more involved with each other especially at the picnic. Faculty members

were talking to each other with minimal school discussion and getting better acquainted.

The parking lot gate had the most indirect effect on Alice. She really did not believe that any significant action would result from the group but when she saw the gate installed her view changed. Alice decided that she just needed to see a tangible result of the work the circle accomplished.

I asked Barbara if there were any negative feelings toward the project. Barbara said that she would have liked to see a few of the uncooperative, indifferent teachers become an integral part of the group. They would have added to the group's strength and the circle process may have given them the opportunity to become involved with the school on a more positive level.

Bob stated that he liked the concept of the circle philosophically. But, he said: "I am a cynic and really don't think there is a way to change the large school bureaucracy." The system is just too expansive, but he thought enough was accomplished in the circle for there to be a chance for some change.

As far as negatives, Jane remembered a "catch 22" situation with the bureaucracy. With all the work that the circle did, she was concerned that maybe not much would be ultimately accomplished. "It could all bog down like

always." There was a tone of frustration and tiredness that went with this statement.

To make a point, Jane then related a little Greek mythology to me about the mythological figure Sysiphus who would roll a rock up the mountain only to have it roll down, and, then, he would have to do it all over again, and again. She believed we were all like Sysiphus; however, in the circle we were making progress even though the end results were not immediate or as quickly as she wanted. There still would be results.

Kelly was pleased with the project but she realized that she had not communicated enough with faculty members who were not members of the circle. She felt that more emphasis on her part and the circle needed to reach out to the nonparticipating faculty members.

Louise had strong negative feelings when she could not attend the meetings. When others were absent, "it was a loss because not everyone was there to give input."

Karen felt the circle should be more action oriented. Solutions came slowly and were not immediately apparent. She realized many of the projects were long range with solutions being delayed as work was completed. "Cementing friendships in itself would have been worth the time and effort," she stated.

When the facilitator asked if there were any negative feelings, the only one Loretta could recall was that the

process seemed too slow. This was not the fault of the circle but with the school and district bureaucracy. She wanted to complete projects at a more rapid pace to accomplish more. She did add that occasionally members voices were too boisterous and perhaps something should have been done to correct that.

When the facilitator asked if there was anything Alice would change about the circle, she said that she would communicate more with faculty members outside the circle. She said: "A newsletter to the teachers would keep them informed. Maybe even the minutes of the meeting could have been distributed."

The last question was would you do it again? Barbara answered, "yes". She would like, though, to join a new circle next time with different people so that she could continue to experience growth and meet new people.

Bob stated that he surely would do it again with the same group or with any other group.

Kelly stated she would absolutely become a part of another circle because for her it was healthy. "All teachers are isolated spending the better part of their work day in the classroom with students and there are few opportunities to get together in a positive way." The quality circle was so relaxed, yet formal enough, so that work could be accomplished.

Yes, Louise would do it again because giving her time was worth it. "There is no real bell that goes off to signal participation so why not invest time in a quality project when it becomes available."

Karen said that she would participate again. She "wanted to make even greater advances" when asked why she would consider joining another circle.

Jane said that she would again be a part of a quality circle without reservation. She also did not mind meeting at the set time but would have preferred a day other than Monday. She said that she appreciated the facilitator keeping the meetings within the agreed time. She also mentioned the tape recorder because at the beginning she worried about using good grammar and proper speech. A few members were more talkative; therefore, her suggestion was to put it on the front table at the first meeting and at successive meetings on the side so that it would not be obvious. Possibly then members would forget about it and be more natural.

Alice responded that she would be a part of a quality circle if the opportunity presented itself. She enjoyed meeting with her peers and being involved.

To summarize, Barbara stated that the circle was fine but she wished more had been accomplished. She also said that more circles should have been initiated to allow more

faculty members to be involved in circles, and additional work undertaken.

In summary, Bob concluded: "I want it to continue because I see it as a positive program with positive effects." He also would like to see the circle expanded at the school and possibly district level. He missed the circle because of the loss of the opportunity for teachers and administrators to enter into conversation in a nonthreatening, informal situation.

As the formal part of the interview ended, we continued to talk. Bob said that the circle brought out some good organizational and administrative skills from the faculty members who participated. It was a way that "teachers could stay in the classroom and still help out and feel like they were involved with the administration." This point was delivered with confidence. He wanted to stay in the classroom, but he felt that the circle gave him opportunities to expand in an area that had not been previously open to him. There was a warm handshake at the end of the interview.

Jane said that the entire experience was "totally positive." It helped that it was informal and that work was accomplished. She learned to like other members of the circle with whom she had not previously communicated and she became more positive with one or two because she found other characteristics to admire. She enjoyed the humor and felt

it was a key ingredient to the amount of work accomplished. She remembered some members showing up with a frown and leaving with a smile. She suggested that it would have been better to limit some of the talkers to allow other members equal participation. She concluded by saying she missed the group and what it was trying to accomplish.

Kelly said that she was glad at least one physical education person was a participant. She pointed out that most of the areas of the faculty were represented, and that made for a well-rounded circle. "I miss it," she said. Sharing with "peer professionals" in a process where problems were being solved and opinions discussed resulted in time well spent. The new social committee resulted from the circle's activities and friendships. She felt she and the circle had accomplished a lot. She again raised the point that there was now no area or organization where faculty members could go to share ideas, solutions, and/or problems with one another. Faculty meetings were not appropriate because it was frightening to speak and many times those who did were embarrassed anyway. The circle provided a nurturing atmosphere where all opinions had value.

Louise, summarizing, said "now there is a big empty space where the quality circle was. It was a perfect size group for what had to be done." There were people to communicate with in a comfortable environment. Now there was nothing. It seemed that no one on the staff was

communicating. At the end of the year, she felt she could see more accomplished. There was a feeling of success. "It felt good," she said. It was a chance to profess her humanistic values, meet with others to form a group, and solve problems. "It really was no big thing but those in the circle realized that not just educational needs had to be attended to, but so did human needs. The circle took care of those needs, as least as far as I was concerned and from what I observed."

Karen had spent time searching for a way to use the quality circle to improve the present school organization. She had the idea that faculty members could participate in a quality circle in conjunction with the monthly faculty meetings. Faculty meetings are required and not very productive. Having the faculty meeting and quality circle meeting together would give more purpose to what were now marginally productive. In this way all faculty members, who had the desire, could be involved in change and involved more with school operation. It could be a very positive thing. She also mentioned that it might upgrade the commitment of the faculty to the school. They would have a voice in what happens and why. She emphasized that the "why" was very important for faculty members to buy into anything.

Karen believed that the faculty had talent and could make a considerable difference if they could use some of

their skills and knowledge for the betterment of the school. Loretta explained several points as she finished her interview. The first point related to secondary education in that the teachers are in their individual rooms on a daily basis. Communication with peers is necessary to concentrate on the task and feel good about teaching. When this communication breaks down or when there is no place for such communication to take place, "teachers feel powerless, helpless, and . . . hopeless."

Secondly she said that this process brought teachers into the campus mainstream. She became more a part of school activities and aware of various resources thereby initiating more action.

Thirdly, she had become more creative and innovative with her peers. Changes could be accomplished if those who are interested join together and pool their energies, and ideas. "These issues wouldn't ever have come up as ideas if it hadn't been for the quality circle," she said.

Finally, Loretta understood that the results from the quality circle were uncertain. Results would continue to develop because each of the members in their own way was continuing to find an outlet for these new found experiences and skills. The school and teachers would improve because of the skills and creativity possessed by the adults. She concluded "happier teachers make for happier kids who will achieve at a higher level. You wait and see."

Alice said that she enjoyed the experience and it was worth her time. Some days she would be tired and almost decide not to attend the circle but usually would go and was pleased with her decision. She relaxed and felt good about being part of a process which was attempting to make changes.

The facilitator next interviewed the nonparticipant observer, Bethany, a high school counselor who visited the quality circle occasionally to observe the meetings. She was a faculty member and well known to all participants: therefore, she was able to enter and exit with ease.

Her first concern involved the refreshments. It was very apparent early that the refreshments were an important part of the meeting. It was a relaxing time and a social time. She felt that it became more and more important as time passed. "Refreshments was a special way to end the day; a sharing time where winding down could be done."

Bethany offered her opinion that part of the circle meetings success resulted from members wanting to attend. Members volunteered, wanting to be part of the circle: therefore, they were willing to work hard together.

The high morale was apparent as the year progressed. In the beginning everyone was polite and wanted to be helpful. Later the circle members were more comfortable with each other; and by trusting the other members there was more participation. "If the circle has high morale, then the

members can and will discuss problems and find solutions. They feel better about themselves," she said.

Bethany stated that several members wanted to find a support group for whatever reason. They didn't seem interested in a clique but just a group to belong to where something positive was happening. After talking with several members over the months, she concluded that the group made the members feel special. She mentioned two members who had made changes in their lives as witnessed by other faculty members as well as herself. One was becoming more assertive and less sensitive about her life while another was taking on new leadership relationships. Bethany felt that part of the reason for the new found willingness to exert leadership was the supportive services from the quality circle.

When I asked how she felt the circle related to the rest of the faculty, she said that it was quite low keyed, and had its good and bad points. A few faculty members heard what the circle was working on and gave positive support whereas one or two felt the idea was a waste of time. Several members of the circle did not want to appear as a clique and feared they might alienate people, therefore, they talked almost exclusively with their friends making them feel a part of the process. But half the circle stated that some faculty members were quite curious because

of the positive state of mind that seemed to emulate from the members of the group.

In talking with those outside of circle activities, Bethany realized that three or four wanted her to be in the circle itself when she came to observe the meetings. They wanted her to be active, even though the facilitator had previously explained to them what her role would be. They, nevertheless, attempted to draw her into the conversation by asking her questions. Her assigned task, though, was to sit off to the side, take notes, and observe. Even at the end of the year, one member still did not fully understand why Bethany did not actively involve herself in the activities of the day.

Toward the end of the interview, Bethany mentioned that a faculty member said that the circle was "sissy stuff" because the research was qualitative as opposed to quantitative in its design. She offered no more information on this comment.

In summary, she enjoyed coming to the meetings and felt that most of the members matured as the year progressed. Members began to look forward to the meetings even at times asking her if she was going to be there that meeting day. There was talk among the members themselves that spilled over to the friends of those members so that the name of the quality circle became known. She noticed that two of the

members began to become involved on a daily basis socially and in some aspects show characteristics of leadership.

The last topic, we discussed, dealt with how well known the quality circle was on campus and if it was too low key. Her question to me centered on whether it was important for the circle to be advertized and for the faculty to know that the circle was a functioning problem solving organization. I answered, "not particularly." I was interested in establishing the circle and having it work towards definite objectives. Most important to me was that the work was completed. She responded that perhaps publishing the minutes for the whole faculty would have gained exposure for the circle and more input by the faculty. She even suggested a logo or motto be used. Such activities would assist in communicating the work of the circle to the faculty at large. The direct results of this action would have been more input and understanding.

Summary and Analysis of Interviews

At the conclusion of the interviews, opinions and beliefs tended to converge. In this section, the interview questions will be used as a guide to analyze and summarize reactions.

Question #1: Thinking Back, Why Did You Join The Quality Circle?

Three general motives expressed by circle members centered around volunteering their time, energy, and skills to this project for one year. The most prevalent motive was the desire to work on a new innovation with the supervisor serving as facilitator. Hutchins (1985) expresses this as a prime motivator. The staff hired at the school's inception were personally sought out by the new principal who had a year to prepare and bring together a staff to open this new school. There was a feeling among selected faculty members of being unique and somewhat special to have been chosen to open a new school. Throughout the years the faculty had weathered many a crisis together as life changed for each: celebrating children's birthdays, supportive when divorces split up lives, and sympathetic when parents passed away. A sixteen-year background molded friendships for a large number of us thus forming the basis for a natural work group. Robson (1982) determined that the natural work group made for a better functioning circle.

The facilitator began as a teacher, promoted to a counselor and then to an administrator at the same school site. When the facilitator made a request for volunteers to work on a project, half of the faculty members decided that it would be worth their time. This feeling of mutual caring and wanting to share in the research speaks of the bonds

which had been established. I was quite pleased that so many of my colleagues would join me for this research study.

The second motive was in the area of social concerns. To a person, each participant was seeking to broaden and strengthen their set of acquaintances and perceived the circle as a vehicle to satisfy that desire. This need would coincide with Maslow's hierarchy of needs and is a major contributor to why the concept of quality circles works so well as presented in Patchin (1983). Each participant felt that there was more to work than teaching. They realized that working together towards positive and consequential ends had value. Karen felt the circle "would get positive things done." Bob was "isolated in special education," and this was an opportunity to become a part of the faculty. Barbara was looking for a "sense of belonging" for she to was somewhat isolated in the nurse's office. Louise added: "Educators have been isolated from each other too long," and the circle allowed some to alter that conception. Robison (1982) states that isolation is one reason why there is interest by the worker in volunteering for a circle.

The teachers in the quality circle were in the same age bracket ranging from 40 to 55 years of age. Another fact was that out of the nine members, four were single or divorced, three were married without children at home and two, including the facilitator, were married with children at home. The adult peer group at the school was either

acting in the place of the primary family or was like a second family. Jane, Alice, Loretta, and Kelly specifically mentioned this fact. There also seemed to be a sense of routine in their lives and specific members were seeking something to renew themselves. Napier & Gershenfeld (1973) state that employees do look for opportunities to express and renew themselves by becoming a part of a small group type activity. Bob, Barbara, and Alice said that they were just waiting for an opportunity to be more socially involved and this group gave each member that chance. "It was interesting to be involved with management and to see something happen," Karen said. "I wanted to have a voice at my school because it was like a second home to me," and I wanted "to see the faculty and administration in a different manner than before," summarized Jane's and Alice's motives.

The last motive dealt with the quality circle itself. Curiosity played a role and was heightened by Barbara's energy who became an immediate advocate of trying this new concept. Barbara's husband had a fleeting knowledge of the quality circle from his company and discussed it with his wife. She was intrigued with the idea and began to read about quality circles. Barbara had liked the idea instantly. When I presented the idea at the high school, she was one of the first to overtly discuss the idea and agreed to assist. She felt it could be easily adapted to the high school situation. Mohr and Mohr (1983) stated that

"much of the training and the learning process in the quality circle is second nature for educational professionals (p. 189)."

The name and process intrigued faculty members, and this curiosity was another factor why they elected to volunteer for the project. Several potential members mentioned that after so many years of teaching, they wanted the job to mean more. Being a part of the system, having input into how problems were solved, and feeling at one with the institution where they were employed was an area where satisfaction was desired and had seemingly been denied in the past. Napier & Gershenfeld (1973) discuss the importance for workers to be involved as change agents and to feel ownership in relationship to the company where they are employed if their quality of life is to be effected.

Question #2: Did The Quality Circle Meet Your Needs? What Did You Reap From The Experience?

Generally speaking, circle members stated that the circle process met their needs and what they gleaned from the experience, which they bascially summarized as camaraderie. Socializing in a structured process where goals were being worked on is what they reaped from the experience. There was a desire to know peers on a more personal basis and an opportunity to join with other positive people. Thus Jane realized a renewed sense of

value and a feeling of importance--a lessening of a feeling of isolation.

It was not only the joining together of positive people, it was a group solving problems, taking action, and becoming a part of the school movement. Crocker (1984) discusses the power and positiveness that can be achieved by managers and employees working together on common goals. A sense of commonality affected each as they mentioned becoming involved in the school's decision making system. Issues that encompassed the whole school were discussed and action taken. The circle, according to Bob, "went beyond what I expected" in this regard.

Members felt a sense of accomplishment and oneness with the school and a good feeling of satisfaction ensued unlike any of them had felt in years. Bob stated that he wanted to "stay in the classroom, yet still help out, being involved with the administration." Karen, Loretta, and Barbara mentioned the business context of the quality circle process and were curious about how the process would work at a school. Individual comments showed further understanding of what learning was available. Bob went from the specific to the global in relationship to the school as he became familiar with the process. He noticed emerging skills that he had forgotten and was able to put them into use, not just for his classroom, but for the entire school. Loretta commented that she had learned administrative techniques

from the facilitator thereby allowing her to work more closely with administrators. The general feeling at the culmination of the project was stated by Loretta: "Yes, the quality circle met my expectations. I would do it again."

As the facilitator, I saw the quality circle process accomplish what I had hoped it would give an opportunity to faculty members to become involved with the decision making policies of the school. I was seeking a technique to work with faculty members in a participative management manner. I had overheard teachers discussing how they would like to become involved in the decision-making process but did not want to become administrators as Bob related previously. I believed that a oneness with the institution and a sense of ownership would revitalize the faculty resulting in a new sense of meaning which eventually happened but only in the circle itself plus a few of the member's friends. Thompson (1982) warned that one of the ways the circle can go wrong is when it is not promoted within the organization itself. As the facilitator, I made an error here, and to some extent the circle members contributed to that error in as much as we didn't promote the circle as a method whereby the entire faculty could get involved in decision-making at the school. We became too engrossed with the process itself. If one of the concerns was to institutionalize the process then communication was a key ingredient. Without this kind of

persuasion, the faculty would not accept the process nor advance its adoption for the school.

Question #3: What Problems Did The Quality Circle Solve?

The parking lot and morale were the two leading problems solved as gleaned from the interviews. It was interesting that Jane was the one member who made a distinction between the social and morale issue. She felt that morale was the key issue because solving it would have a longer, more lasting effect on the school than solving the social issue. As she pointed out, the social attractions had sparked morale and rekindled it. She had personally made a goal of her own to work with two of the negative faculty members using the skills obtained from the circle. These two faculty members related to her the real impact she made on their lives.

The parking lot problem was not solved until the following year; but the knowledge that someone in the administration had listened to a major concern of the faculty brought about considerable satisfaction. It is strange that the parking lot scenario did not surface in the circle meetings until the research was over. No one knows why the parking lot discussion was delayed since all members agreed that this issue was a major irritant to the majority of faculty. The parking lot is an excellent circle type problem because it had been a focus of attention for several years, but the administrators chose to ignore it.

The social issue was the next problem. Quality circles usually do not become involved with social concerns but as Schonberger (1982) stated it is a viable area for circle activity. The faculty as a whole, just like the representative group which served on the circle, was at a low ebb in the social arena. The quality circle realized that this was an area of concern that required action and rapidly set up several functions on several levels from the all female tea planned by the nurse, to the preparation period gatherings, to the all faculty fun day held one afternoon. There was an immediate reaction as the circle began to function in this arena. Bob stated that the "social revitalization was a direct outgrowth of the quality circle." Bob also shared that the increased socialization in his own life was noticed by his students as his classroom atmosphere positively changed. Karen commented that the circle had become the hub to coordinate activities because so many wished to become involved.

Minor issues were mentioned by the members when interviewed. Feeling more of a part of one's peers as well as personal contact with other adults with whom one works permeated several of the members' interviews. Such a response is understandable as conversation and sharing with work partners were deemed important to not only circle members but these benefits are characteristics of quality circles in general. Robson (1982) states that data shows

the adult to adult relationship found in quality circles is a prime factor for its success. Along the same line was Karen's comment dealing with the student/teacher weekend campout where communication was used to attempt to see how students and teachers could combine forces to move the school to new heights. It is interesting to note that this project is the one continuing at the school and in fact the practice has spread to three other schools in the district. The telephone installation was also mentioned by several circle members who commented on how helpful it had been not only as a personal convenience but as a work related necessity.

Kelly, Karen, Louise, and Loretta volunteered to be a part of the quality circle to become aware of how a circle functions, and they achieved their goal. They wanted to determine how it functioned in business, and if it was efficient in handling problem solving. They all agreed that the process was a valid one although Alice in her interview stated it was somewhat slow at times. Crocker (1984) in his research found that circle members were disturbed in the beginning by the slowness of the circle process.

As a final comment, Jane and Kelly placed projects that did not directly affect them high on their list of circle achievements. Jane put the parking issue high even though she arrived at the school early and had no parking problems. Kelly put the air conditioning issue high even though she

was not affected by the poor quality air conditioning because she worked out of doors. The outcomes seemed so vital to the other members that these two members wanted to be supportive. The oneness that builds in circles brought about these actions which seemed selfless and quite generous to both Jane and Kelly.

When I, the facilitator, began this study, I was not sure what projects the circle would place on the agenda. I had met with several faculty members who spoke with me about volunteering for the circle before it had formed. The morale issue mentioned more than once was not usually a problem accepted by circles. The type of problems accepted by the group was a key factor in whether or not the circle would be successful. When we began to brainstorm ideas of potential problems and the members produced a list of eighteen items, I realized that the group would have ample work for the year. I do believe, as Karen expressed, that we could have been more efficient in the use of our time. As facilitator, I allowed informational items to become a part of the agenda as a means of communication. Members expressed concerns at the meetings and desired information from and/or dialogue with the facilitator.

Although the problems did not seem at first to be typical of those discussed in the literature, the circle members convinced me that the problems were vital to them personally and to their jobs. The nonparticipating observer

stated "if the circle has high morale then they can and will discuss problems and find solutions." As Dewar (1984) states the circle does have the sole right to select problems they want to discuss. The process proceeded and the members were pleased with the validity of their choices.

The interviews were conducted three months after the termination of the research project. It should be noted that several problems the circle acted upon were not mentioned and were seemingly forgotten. The antidrug movement, which was a direct outgrowth of the circle and had a number of teachers and students involved, was one of these. This project was handled early in the study and that was the reason why it was not mentioned. The movement still has merit and is functioning on one other campus in the district.

Another problem the circle touched upon was faculty meetings. Teachers and administrators at the school are still discussing how to make faculty meetings more relevant and action oriented.

Question #4: How Did The Quality Circle Affect Communication Both Within The Circle And Outside The Circle?

Communication within the circle was enhanced. One of the prime reasons volunteers chose to participate was to build new relationships and deepen existing ones through communication. From each came the feeling that communication was one of the highlights of the experience.

It wasn't that communication was impossible but the time and place eluded most faculty members and the circle became a place where this action could occur without pressure or anger. Robson (1982) states that a circle is successful when there is an absence of pressure and alienation for whatever is said by a member. The circle became quality time. "I felt more comfortable raising my own ideas because all was accepted without anger," Jane said. The circle action also brought about a personal comment from Bob who at the beginning of the study felt isolated. "I will go to more social activities to share with other faculty members because I feel I can do that now and take the initiative." He has retained this commitment and it has made a difference with him personally and with his teaching.

Indeed, the circle did provide a place which was safe and nonthreatening for members to share concerns and ideas for solving problems. The members had known each other for a minimum of eight years, and for some, the relationships go back seventeen years, therefore, it was not difficult to set the proper atmosphere for circle activities to function. A member mentioned that one of the other participants was talking too much and was somewhat aggressive but the comment was not repeated any other time during the duration of the project. Communication flowed so readily at times that it was difficult to keep focused on the task at hand. The facilitator realized that there were few opportunities to

share. The discussion, though, at times had to be curtailed for there was insufficient time for all the conversation desired by the members.

Communication outside the circle was deemed inadequate by every member and the nonparticipant observer. A good example was that a teacher was forming her own committee to address the parking lot situation at the same time the quality circle was collecting data for problem resolution. She was not aware of the circle's activity in that area. What little communication there was involved talking, meetings, and sharing with pre-established friends on the faculty. Ideas were shared and solicited, but communication was informal and casual in nature. Most members did not feel that much was accomplished in this area, and Karen stated that more needed to be done, i. e. , print minutes of the meetings and distribute them to the entire faculty. Alice was blunt stating "there was no carryover. I didn't talk with others too much about what we were doing." Jane shared that some faculty members approached her and asked from time to time specific questions about what was being done in the circle. A suggestion that emerged from the circle was to distribute quality circle newsletters to the teachers so as to keep them informed. Ingle (1982) and Patchin (1983) believed that the trust and respect which develops in the circle allows for freer flowing communication and is one of the keys to a successful circle.

This communication, though, should include all employees and not just circle members.

Two positive examples of individual initiative involved Kelly and Louise. Kelly used the circle to experiment with personal techniques she planned to use on campus concerning building friendships. As the year progressed, she established relationships with other faculty members and in the process shared what was occurring in the quality circle. The other example was Louise who returned to her alternative education program and used quality circle techniques to expand communication with her staff. Both of these members felt that the lessons they learned produced excellent results.

In effect, this lack of communication with the faculty at large was a major failing of the quality circle project. Each member knew communication had to include the entire faculty and from time to time a comment was made to that effect but not one, including the facilitator, actively supported the idea.

By the end of the study, approximately one third of the faculty knew what was happening within the circle. Loretta's friend told her that the circle members were "dupes of the administration." I believe this comment was expressed because of the lack of information about the quality circle available to the faculty. Possibly the circle was enjoying the process so much that they simply

overlooked including others. The nonparticipant observer pointed out that the facilitator is basically a low keyed, cautious person, and he felt that there was no need to advertise the results of the circle. What was important is that the group deliver the presentation to the principal and see that the solution is implemented and monitored. There did not seem to be a need for broadcasting the results.

After the study was over and it became obvious that most of the faculty was still ignorant of the quality circle process and successes, the facilitator and members realized that they should have exerted greater efforts to make the circle a more permanent part of the school and to include more people in the information process through communication especially if future projects for this study included organizing circles throughout the school.

Question #5: What Were The Direct And Indirect Results Of You Participating In The Quality Circle?

The responses to the question concerning direct results were fairly similar, with all members mentioning the involvement with peers to strengthen relationships providing a foundation before other work could be accomplished. Comments emerged such as one made by Bob that "because of the morale issue there was a direct affect on my work" and "friendship within the circle became more defined and clearer because of the experience." There was a family

spirit, related Barbara, that set an aura of positiveness around the entire project. Jane was having a difficult year because of her teaching assignment, and the Monday meetings allowed her to make it through the year. She mentioned that it "assisted in relieving stress." Morale boosting was a direct effect felt by Alice which carried over to her friends and classroom. Loretta made the strongest statement saying that the circle "changed the way she would relate to peers for the rest of her career." A part of the reason why the circle was so dynamic for the members was the small size of the group which allowed for more rapid and personal dialogue among members. The professional and personal bonds that had been cemented for years and the circle that created an arena where dormant feelings were allowed to resurface and thereby take form. Barbara stated that the circle gave motive and purpose to a group that would affect the entire school; a school where the majority of the faculty members had spent a large number of years together. Ownership for the school was not prevalent in past years, but the circles process produced a method for members to take an active part.

Professionally speaking, participants all mentioned wanting to make a difference in the school where they were employed. Robson (1982) states similarly that a prime desire of quality circle members is to be a part of the problem solving process of the school. Bob's concern was to

have input into the total process, and not just being on the receiving end. To be actively aware of problems that existed and have the data that would enable them to formulate solutions was a desire expressed by Barbara, Jane, and Loretta. Added to this was communication which two members stated was as a direct result of the circle process. They spoke about communication with peers in the teaching field, with quality circle members and guests, and with students.

The direct results I, the facilitator, obtained can be organized in the same categories as the members. I was looking for another technique that would fit my style of leadership and I found one. I was searching for a way to become more involved with the faculty not only on a personal but also on a professional level wherein administrators and faculty could join with each other on a regular basis and discuss what was important to those present. My strengths were in the student and parent arena, and I realized that increased efforts had to be directed toward the peer relationship category.

The indirect results question brought forth fewer yet more varied responses. One member, Louise, had no response. If one response could be singled out as generally expressed, it was that the members did not realize how close the experience would bring them to each other. Barbara praised "the tenacity of the teachers who kept coming back week

after week for a year." Kelly and Bob mentioned isolation but did not realize how much peer relations meant to them until they joined the circle. Time and again they expressed the feeling of how positive it was to join with partners once a week to work together. Patchin (1983) stressed the importance of circle members joining together as partners working in a positive environment.

Loretta commented that the group helped her build confidence. Indeed Rieker (1977) states that the circle does build confidence in its members. She had a difficult assignment that year because she was involved in teaching, was the chairperson of her department, and assisted with a special assignment at the school. She was interested in leadership skills and observed the facilitator and other members when they modeled their skills. She would then adjust those skills to meet her needs. She would leave the group feeling confident that she could do what she was being asked of her professionally.

Jane came away from the experience with a new understanding of bureaucracy. This was an indirect result because it had not been one of the reasons she decided to volunteer. She was pleased that the circle was able to accomplish as much as it did, especially after understanding the complexity of the bureaucracy.

The nonparticipant member observed that "refreshments"

winding down could be done." The facilitator and the nonparticipant observer did not realize at the beginning how important the socializing and refreshments at the meeting would be. After Bethany informed the facilitator of this observation, the facilitator observed more closely. He noticed it was similar to a family meal where the circle members shared and exchanged their thoughts for the day. Again because of the teachers' lack of time to share on the adult level, the importance of the time together can not be underestimated.

The facilitator at the beginning saw the quality circle first and foremost as a problem solving activity. The teachers involved sought out some problems which had caused considerable frustration suggested solutions and gave exposure to other problems. Bob, Loretta, and Karen rediscovered dormant skills and talents. The circle members saw a totality of commitment as the three used these skills to help improve the school. Satisfaction with themselves and the process was a direct effect they might not have expected.

The major indirect effect was the strong bond after a year of participating together on circle activities. The communication that developed sealed that bond and allowed for quality work to be accomplished in an accepting and positive atmosphere. The knowledge that most of the members had worked together for a number of years but had not had

the opportunity to enjoy each other's company or to combine forces in a cooperative effort surprised most.

Question #6: What Were The Areas For Improvement Or Were There Any Negatives?

As Crocker (1984) warned, the members of a first quality circle might suggest that the process seemed too slow. Indeed, Karen, Jane, Loretta, and Alice said exactly that. The circle met only once a week and then in this case for just 30 to 45 minutes, therefore, progress seemed to be slow. Data retrieval and formulating solutions does take time. As facilitator, I could have hurried the process along but the information and communication sessions would have had to be curtailed, and I chose not to do that.

Bob and Loretta mentioned that the bureaucracy was a negative and slowed down the process. It did take time to invite the district official, and he did have to cancel the first time. I feel that in the members' exuberance to accomplish the circle's work of solving problems, other realities were forgotten. When working with other people at other locations, coordination does take time and is necessary. The lack of experience in working with others at this level may have added to the frustration of some members. Every meeting was filled with work and rarely were meetings cancelled. Essentially the process could not have moved faster, as more available time from the members was

lacking. Bureaucracy moves slowly, and problem solving from the bottom-up involves time.

Jane mentioned the tape recorder which was present at all the meetings. The recorder was placed in the middle of the table at all sessions to record voices clearer and to remind people that it was there. She personally felt uncomfortable with it and felt that some members may have reacted to it by talking more instead of less. Her suggestion was to tell members about it at the inception than move it off to the side out of notice.

The nonparticipant observer suggested that the facilitator should have kept tighter control on the meetings. Refreshments, information giving, and circle business could have been condensed and streamlined. With this type of control, efficiency would have been more evident. As Barbara stated, members sharing could have been curtailed at times when repetition set in. The facilitator tended to allow people to say what they had to say without placing too many parameters on their presentations. This skill could be improved when next the facilitator organizes a quality circle.

Question #7: Would You Involve Yourself In Another Quality Circle?

All members stated that they would volunteer for another circle if the opportunity presented itself again. Kay shared that "yes, I want to make an even greater advance

the next time." Kelly stated that it was one of the most healthy activities she had engaged in on the job. Louise commented that since the circle had terminated, she had felt "an empty space now that it was gone."

Each member would volunteer with the same group except for Karen who stated she would make a commitment only if the facilitator was the same, or it was someone just like him. Barbara wished to belong to a another group composed of different people or at least a group where the membership rotated.

Asked whether it was important to have the circle on company time or not, the uniform response was that it did not make any difference. The after school time was acceptable, and it was preferable to having it during a preparation period. The date and time turned out to be satisfactory although one member would have liked an alternate day.

Question #8: Summary

First of all, the entire circle elected to continue with the circle activities even though the year's commitment was completed. The circle continued for two extra months until the end of the school year.

Personal attachment to the process and to the circle members developed. Exclamations such as Jane's that it was a total success were shared by the circle members. Alice mentioned that she sometimes came to the circle meetings

tired and almost wished she had gone home; yet at the end of the meeting she was revitalized and left feeling good. The camaraderie was strong. Betty and Bob hoped that the circle process could be expanded to include more circles and involve more faculty. Bob said, "I want it to continue because I see it as a positive program with positive effects."

Remembering that the interviews occurred three months after the termination of the project, Bob, Louise, and Loretta said that they missed the interchange with each other and with the administrator. Being together to work toward a common goal that would improve the school was now something they wanted to do on a regular basis. Loretta mentioned that the circle assisted in dissolving the separateness experienced by teachers. Karen went a step further and began to plan how the circle activities could be included in faculty meetings. She felt the faculty would have a more committed feeling of ownership for the school if there were more circle type activities. The circle would provide a process whereby the staff's talents could be utilized.

Thompson (1982) expresses the fact that circle members gain a feeling of teamwork, usefulness, and loyalty because of circle activities. Louise specifically did have feelings of success, teamwork, and usefulness at the end of the year and expressed such. It was a feeling that did not

involve her position as a teacher but a relationship with her peers and the institution. There was a satisfaction that she had not felt for quite awhile.

Bethany's one comment was that she noticed personal growth in each and every member of the circle. Her observations not only covered the circle meetings but the members' actions outside of the circle. There was more of a willingness on the part of the circle members to be more assertive, to get involved, and show a caring attitude.

Loretta had some unique observations. She suggested that teachers were now an integral part of the school. Members were now knowledgeable concerning the school's resources and the workings of the bureaucracy. The process also promoted creativity and innovation to blossom at another level other than the classroom, as Thompson (1982) says they would. Whether the results of the quality circle will be permanent or not remains to be seen, but she felt that each and every member of the circle would be an ambassador for participative management no matter where they go. Her final comment was "happier teachers make for happier kids who will achieve at a higher level. You wait and see!"

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The quality circle is a participative management approach which uses the skills, intelligence, energy, and enthusiasm of the employees to solve company problems collectively. It is a technique initiated in Japan and has been used in industry for approximately twenty years. Two of the quality circle objectives concentrated on problem resolution and communication. In this particular research, I used this technique in a specific educational setting focusing on problem solving and communication.

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Determine whether the quality circle can provide the organizational structure and process needed to search out, analyze, and solve schoolwide problems that circle members deem important.
2. Investigate and analyze the impact of the increased communication that occurs among the members of the circle and the results of that action.

Quality Circle Guidelines

The quality circle guidelines for establishing a circle

and formalizing its activities as discussed by Thompson (1982), Ingle (1982), and Hutchins (1985) were followed for this research. The first guideline focuses on the size of a circle. The optimum size of eight as discussed by Thompson (1982) was chosen for this study. The researcher has had experience in dealing with groups from eight to ten. The number can actually vary from five to fifteen members, but for this study eight was chosen as the number most likely to bring about the desired results. The outcome of this study verifies that assumption. Fifteen would have created a large group wherein each member would have only limited time to communicate. A group of five would have been too small to obtain a broad spectrum of opinions; and with occasional absentees it would have been too small to function.

According to Ingle (1982) and Robson (1982) state the voluntary aspect of the circle is a critical element and permeates the entire quality circle process. Priority was given to those who volunteered first and to potential members who would add to the group's cohesiveness. Eleven faculty members volunteered for the after school time which made that time period the choice with the most potential members. Other volunteers selected alternative times: before school, during preparation periods, or at lunch. The after school time, though, proved to be more than adequate.

Another criterion for quality circles states that all members are to be from the same work area (Dewar, 1982).

Another criterion for quality circles states that all members are to be from the same work area (Dewar, 1982). The facilitator thought at first that he should select employees from different areas since the entire staff was involved in the educational process, but that potential group did not appear consistent with the guidelines. One volunteer opening was assigned to the school nurse even though she was not a teacher. Her position is one of a kind at each school site. She was a leader and active member of the teaching staff and her office was the hub where teachers could meet, relax, and talk. She was quite interested in the quality circle process and was the first to volunteer for the circle. Robson (1982) stated that a group as close to a natural work group as possible will be the most successful one. Care was also taken to assure that as many departments as possible were represented from the available volunteers.

The members chosen are to be those who work under the same supervisor and that person is also to facilitate the circle process. This is one of the key factors that makes the circle unique, suggested Hutchins (1985). In this instance, the participant observer and researcher became the circle facilitator. From the interviews, one of the major reasons why several of the faculty wished to join the circle was to work with the facilitator in a participative manner.

Circles are to meet once each week on company time with pay and in a special meeting room removed from the normal work area. The circle in this study did meet one day a week, Monday, the day selected by the circle because it was the beginning of the week when the teachers felt most energetic. The sessions were convened in the conference room in the main office away from the regular work area. It was also centrally located and comfortable.

Teachers by contract are required to remain at school 15 minutes after the school day to be available to students or staff. The circle met after school for one half hour for the first three months and then for 45 minutes during the second three months. Part of the meeting time was paid for by the district. This is a disparity from the guidelines that the meetings were not totally on company time. From the interviews, this point was not important to the participants of this circle. Circle members retain the right to determine when they wish to meet. The members of the circle concluded at the halfway mark in the study that the 30 minute meeting time was not sufficient to carry out the work on the agenda. The reason centered on refreshments. The circle members not only searched out problems and designated which ones to work on but they also determined the other activities in which they wanted to participate.

The members decided to lengthen the meeting to 45 minutes so they could begin the meetings with refreshments and still have ample time for problem solving. There is precedence for refreshments said Patchin (1983), but it was not recommended in the guidelines because of cost and responsibility. The facilitator, nevertheless, provided refreshments at the first meeting as a matter of habit. Refreshment time, thereafter, became an integral part of the meetings as circle members agreed to provide them for following meetings. It was the nonparticipant observer who first noticed the impact the refreshments were having on setting the tone for each meeting, and how much a part of the meeting they had become. As learned from the interviews, the refreshments had value for the members. They did not regret their decision to increase the meeting time by 15 minutes to continue having refreshments.

As noted previously, circle members have the right to choose which problems to study and resolve. Bob related in his interview that he wanted to expose several problems that had bothered him for years, but there had not been a vehicle by which to satisfy that need. Robson (1982) found this theme prevalent in other circles where employees used the circle to handle long term problems. Occasionally, the school's principal did visit the meetings and suggested problems with which he wanted assistance. The atmosphere was congenial and receptive when he visited. The circle

presented him with a process which handled problem resolution.

The data required to solve problems were collected by members, Bob, the best example, took temperature readings in his classroom for several weeks because there was disparity between the custodian's perception of the problem and the classroom teacher's cognizance. Technical and management specialists were also invited to the meetings when their expertise was required. Members felt guests might be uncomfortable sitting in front of such a group. The facilitator prepared each guest before their visit in order to avoid problems. The data needed to solve problems were not difficult to search out since there was cooperation from the faculty not only at the site but also from the district office. This was partly due to the nature of the project and the curiosity people had with the circle process itself.

Presentations were prepared for the principal as the process dictated. The facilitator was in regular contact with the principal and communication occurred concurrently, therefore, when the problem was ready for approval, the principal had the knowledge and data required to make his decision. Since presentations were somewhat informal, this distracted from the process that deserved more exposure. Had the presentations been formalized with the entire circle present, a more positive outcome would have been apparent.

Without the entire circle present, a feeling of detachment was evident and some of the members felt there was unfinished business.

The last criterion has to do with the length of time circles exist. Circle members become inactive at their convenience. The circle, as a whole, can also deactivate itself if the members feel that all problems have been solved, or that the circle has outlived its usefulness. In this case, the members were asked to be a part of the process for one year: spanning the middle of one school year to the middle of the following school year (with the summer recess occurring at the halfway point). No circle member resigned from the circle although there were absentees for various reasons. Inquiries from interested faculty members regarding entrance of additional members to the circle in the future were reviewed and discussed. By the end of the study, an announcement explained that the project had ended. Although circle members were released from their commitment, they wished to continue until the end of the school year. The facilitator knew of his transfer to another school site the following year. The group continued until the end of May and disbanded at the end of the school year. Much was accomplished during the last four months. The researcher may have been in error not to have reported on those last meetings as the circle engaged in several successful projects.

Objectives of the Study

Problem Solving

The prime focus for the study was to ascertain whether the circle process is a technique for solving problems at a school.

The circle prioritized eighteen areas of concern gathered by the members from their own thoughts and experiences and the concerns of other faculty members. Four problems on the original list plus one that was added at the end of the first year were either in the action phase or solved at the termination of the study. Thompson (1982) stated that two or three project presentations a year would be the average for a circle and would deem the circle's work acceptable. However, Karen said in her final interview the circle could have been more successful had it resolved more problems.

The most important concern expressed by the members in the circle had to do with morale so it became the first problem to be listed. Morale is not a problem that the majority of quality circles should attempt to solve because of its lack of parameters. However, according to several authors (Crocker, 1984; Mohr, 1983; Berger, 1986) it was a legitimate concern if it was the wish of the circle. Morale is an ongoing type of problem because of its very nature, and the members felt its urgency. The abiding feeling in the circle was that the whole issue was being

ignored at all levels in the school. Yet it was of vital concern for the well being of the school and the staff. Since circle activities in this area lasted the entire year, the social scene at the school was revitalized with an abundance of activities on various levels. Low morale had been reversed.

Student drug abuse was another of the first four concerns. This too has been an issue that has taken a concerted action over a long period of time, and a complete solution is very unlikely. A student based movement commenced as a result of the circle activities. At the end of the year, the movement had a membership of over forty students and five teachers. A positive presence of student noninvolvement in drugs was witnessed on the campus; and furthermore, the movement became a model for other schools in the district.

The classroom temperature issue reached somewhat of a conclusion with a new understanding and awareness on the part of the teachers and the custodial staff regarding the complexity of the solution. The temporary solution of district fans and heaters was offered because the ultimate solution required action by the district officials whereby the entire environmental systems of several schools would be restructured or replaced. Circle members had input, though, with the district official who had been a circle guest. He would be a part of the team which would recommend the final

action. The frustration dissipated on the part of most of the teachers as dialogue increased. Their concerns had been heard, and they obtained some response although the ultimate solution was down the road.

A telephone with long distance access was now available for the teachers to use. The faculty expressed its appreciation for this seemingly unimportant convenience but necessary part of modern life. The telephone had been connected in a private room of the main office that had been set aside expressively for the teaching staff. Loretta commented that she felt treated as a professional because of the resolution of the telephone issue.

The parking lot was a problem for all staff members, not just teachers, and its resolution allowed staff to begin their day less frustrated. Gates were erected at appropriate places and the staff could now arrive at their classrooms without the undue pressure of parking a distance from their rooms. This seemingly minor issue was of the utmost importance to almost every staff member.

As witnessed by the solutions discussed, the concerns of the staff were addressed. The circle members had the unique yet challenging task of selecting issues that would allow them to do their work more efficiently and with more enthusiasm. The issues chosen may have been surprising to the reader, but they were not surprising to the facilitator. As these barriers to inefficiency were removed, a oneness

with the school in its task to educate the students became apparent. The circle provided a morale boost that allowed members to function at a greater energy level than previously. This oneness can not be overstressed as a factor in unlocking the talents and energy of the staff.

A sense of ownership for the school was seen that had not been apparent prior to this study. The circle was a process whereby teachers could use their skills, intelligence, and experiences in more areas than teaching. Mohr and Mohr (1983) stated that the circle process does allow workers to use their life skills and experiences and, therefore, make the circle an attractive process. Members could become involved in situations and issues that when solved would improve their work life and free them to teach more effectively. I really don't feel that every teacher wants to become a school administrator, but many do have a desire to have an impact on the quality of their own work.

The quality circle process received a resounding vote of confidence because the process worked. The circle technique tapped into the wishes of the circle members to work with administrators, and the will of the administrators to work with teachers. Staff members realized that situations existing for many years were still waiting to be addressed. Yet, a vehicle was not available to concentrate on those areas. The teachers knew the concerns and were prepared to assist in handling them. The benefits reaped

included more satisfied staff members who were happier more willing to serve the students, and have a respect for coworkers, administrators, and the school. The mention of respect between circle members is expounded extensively in the literature. Respect is another key factor that evolves from the circle process, according to Patchin (1983).

The quality circle process is more acceptable than other methods used in participative management because of three prime factors. First, the circle is composed of volunteers meeting at a time and day of the members' choosing. Secondly the issues discussed evolved from the faculty at large and the members of the circle. They determined what areas to discuss and the amount of time spent on each issue. Thirdly, the facilitator was an administrator cooperating with the faculty to form solutions. Ingle (1982) states that this collaboration tends to dissolve adversarial barriers.

Communication

The second objective has to do with communication. When this study was still in the developmental stage, the objectives were placed in the order of importance; the first being problem solving, and the second, communication. Now that the study has been completed, I would change their order of priority thereby placing communication first. Communication among co-workers, administrators, and teachers became the core of the study. The topic of discussion for

at least half and occasionally for most of the meeting was communication, both in the form of giving information and in clarifying issues that had surfaced the previous week. In my opinion, this constant communication process did more to raise morale and indirectly expectations than the problem solving.

During the interviews, interviewees spoke highly about communication and feelings. Karen focused especially on this issue. Teachers meet daily with their students without the benefit of adult contact. The majority of school teachers are sociable and desire contact both professionally and socially with their peers. Each member expressed at least once that there was a personal, social reason for them to participate in the circle, and the reason dealt with peer relationships.

The camaraderie which existed before the quality circle project was apparent and existed at one or more levels among most participants. The circle experience brought the individual members closer together though its emphasis on communication. Participants experienced working and being together for the benefit of the school and themselves at a more personal level. I realized members were more aware of their peers' needs during the meetings and found them adjusting their behavior to retain the balance so that all could participate. Another observation is that members tended to sit in the same place weekly, forming networks

with those seated nearby. Synergy developed in specific seating areas, then enveloped the entire circle later in the year.

Finally, Thompson (1982) wrote that the quality circle has to be seen as a political process and I concur. Most administrators use the suggestion box or the one on one conference to obtain ideas/suggestions from employees. The circle enfranchises employees with rights that they previously did not possess and allows them to be a part of the decision making function of the organization. Partly because of the principals who were at the school during both years of the study, there was little apprehension on the part of the school's administration. The first principal agreed to allow the study to function at the school. The succeeding principal arrived in the middle of the project and agreed to allow the study to continue. If the circle would improve the school and work to solve problems, then he would give his support. Since the assistant principal was the facilitator, some of his concerns were dissipated. Neither principal was apprehensive about allowing this type of activity because he realized that the final authority in approving any proposed solution would be his alone. Although this circle functioned without any major confrontations with the principal, the potential for such an occurrence is definitely possible. In some organizations,

this type of activity could be viewed as a major reform depending on the chief executive officer.

Generalizations From This Study Concerning the Quality
Circle

The quality circle case study in this research dealt with one circle at a specific secondary school. The circle was facilitated by an administrator who had a long term working relationship with the staff who volunteered for the project. It is my intention now to discuss the quality circle as a small group activity and as one element of a system of management. In this context, the procedure could be replicated at a similar institution allowing further study to be conducted.

The quality circle, similar to any small group activity, has a set of goals and objectives for guiding the circle to success. Members participate in a collective fashion to accomplish a goal with greater ease than is possible individually. The quality circle offers employees the opportunity collectively to solve problems which they feel are important.

Napier & Gershenfeld (1973) illustrated that groups which spend time at the onset becoming acquainted will decrease misunderstandings among members. Later on a frame of reference will develop setting a standard whereby all will have the opportunity to participate. In some small groups more time will be required to accomplish this

objective than in others.

The membership criterion is an additional key to a successful small group. Napier & Gershenfeld (1973) stated that three reasons surface to explain why people join a group:

1. The person likes the group activities;
2. The person likes the other group members;
3. The potential participant feels the group will meet personal needs.

The group becomes more attractive as it proves it can meet members' needs. If the group is attractive to the members, a cooperative spirit develops adding to members' security and their willingness to be involved. It also increases the retaining power of the group. The quality circle deals only with volunteers and solely with the problems which those volunteers present at the meetings. This uniqueness lays the foundation for a cooperative and effective group. The voluntary group which is cooperative in nature has a better chance of meeting set goals than is a confrontational one according to Napier and Gershenfeld (1973). I found that the members of this group became a part of the circle for all three reasons listed. Most were seeking success in all three areas and that was why the study proved so positive.

The size of the group has a direct correlation to the amount of time each participant has to communicate in the

group. The group must be small enough for each member to become involved yet large enough to allow for diversity of opinion. As the number increases, less time is available for each member to participate. Most small groups tend to limit size from five to seven participants. The quality circle guidelines recommend from six to twelve members. The point in both cases is to limit membership to afford each person in the group the opportunity to communicate often (Kanter, 1983). I found in this study that eight was the exact number. Diversity was present and ample opportunity was available to each to speak if they so desired. Even when one or two were absent the group was not hindered from reaching its daily goal. In fact the shy members took the opportunity to become more involved.

Group standards or norms are criteria which determine whether a small group will be successful or not. They are in place to assist a group in attaining its goals by keeping the group task oriented. Standards delineate what members should or should not do. A group may set its own standards, or as is the case with the quality circle, standards are already in place and members accept those in order to participate. The standards for small group problem solving are quite similar to the quality circle whose norms are specifically designed to solve problems taught to members before the process begins. "Training maximizes the efforts of the group", professed Napier & Gershenfeld (1973, p. 210)

Quality circle rules and regulations are flexible. Groups are able to choose various methods for solving problems and arranging the agenda to meet the needs of their particular circle. I found the standards set by the quality circle to be valid for this type of group work. As the group worked through the process, individuals did not feel a lack of structure.

Leadership is the fourth criterion of a small successful group. The leader's task is to see that work is completed and assist the group in achieving established goals. He/She must also supervise the small group in setting parameters in order to function within the confines of a larger group in an acceptable manner. Three different types of leaders are: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. The small group utilizes the democratic leader type because of the group's mission. In the democratic setting, members are permitted to take the initiative and share the role of a leader if they have the skills or knowledge for the task. The quality circle procedure allows the leadership role to be shared when a member has a specific strength or skill relevant to the task. I found this to be true in that usually the circle referred leadership chores to the facilitator but when there was a specific topic where a member felt skilled, he/she would assume leadership of the group.

Communication is the last criterion of a successful small group. Napier & Gershenfeld (1973) stated: "It seems that when people enter into a task with a predefined need to be cooperative and interdependent, there is more listening, more acceptance of ideas, less possession of ideas, and ultimately more communication" (p. 24). A group will have higher morale where there is more participation through communication. Of course, efficiency may suffer when there is thorough communication. All ideas offered by members of a group must be acknowledged and this is not necessarily an efficient use of time. Communication is a prime motivator for small groups to form. People wish to have more meaningful, personal communication. The quality circle is established for exactly that reason. With eight as the average size of a circle, participants are able to communicate in a manner that is not possible during the regular work day (Levinson, 1981). Communication was at a high level in the circle I facilitated. It became the driving force as the circle worked towards achieving its goals. With an expanded meeting time, members would have ample opportunity to share their ideas in a relaxed and open manner.

Several different types of small groups exist: advisory, task force, therapy, problem solving and T-group. The type utilized most in industry is the problem solving group which is closely akin to the quality circle. One of

the reasons small groups are forming is that "we are living in a time when people are demanding to be heard and involved," according to Napier & Gershenfeld (1973, p. 210). The natural work group is the most logical group to begin with as a center core of a group. Employees already have some type of rapport developed if they have worked together for any length of time. I found this to be quite true in that several of the teachers had worked together previous to the circle experience so synergy occurred quite rapidly.

The problem solving group has universal guidelines to deal with problem resolution. The steps are as follows: (1) identification of the problem, (2) diagnosis, (3) seek out alternatives, (4) form solutions, (5) implementation, and (6) evaluation and adjustment. The quality circle also has a set of standards quite similar and also lead the group to resolution.

For small groups, which include the quality circle, goals must be understood and agreed upon by members of the group at the onset. Ideas need to be explored in a nonthreatening environment with all participants sharing. Communication must be open and two way. The size of the group and its meeting locations must fit the task assigned to the group. Time needs to be long enough to complete the task but short enough to keep members from losing interest.

Taking it one step further, the quality circle as a representative of the small group process was used in this

study as a participative management tool. Participative management "is a method of decentralizing decision making so that the persons closest to the problem can resolve it," according to Pascale & Athos (1981, p. 159). Participating with administrators should not be seen as a gift to the worker but as an organizational tool so that employer and employee can cooperate to improve conditions. But it must be remembered that it is hard work according to Kanter (1983). She found that employees did not mind the hard work and did want to be included in the process if they could see tangible results. Employees actually were more interested in local problems that affected them in their work area than in what might be termed "big decisions." This should assist in putting aside fears of some managers that participative management is a way to undermine power. In addition, Gordon (1977) wrote that decisions and solutions were carried out with more fervor and commitment when affected employees were allowed to participate in forming solutions. In fact, more participation was associated with better communication, better cooperation on the job, and overall improved performance. I want to stress that the quality circle is not just a tool for communication. The circle I facilitated would not have been successful if work had not been accomplished in the area of problem solving. Communication and problem solving were both needed ingredients for success.

As executives analyze participative management, the concept should be seen as part of a balanced style; a part of a total answer (Levinson, 1981). This approach can assist the manager in motivating employees, especially those who have been at one task for years to renew their energies and produce more at a higher level. Involving people in the management side of the company is a morale booster. Encouraging employees to communicate and work together for a common goal raises spirits. This has special significance for school administrators who are searching for a method to revitalize teachers who have been at the same school teaching the same course for years.

The participative approach is, therefore, ideal as a tool for effective leadership which in turn, is imperative in making participative management successful. Careful management along with detailed planning, preparation, and supervision is required. The participative approach works efficiently when participants are secure and firm leadership is available to guide it. Kanter (1983) made an interesting point when she concluded that the masters of change are also the masters of participation.

O'Toole (1985) uses the example of the Motorola Company. Motorola wanted to find an effective way of engaging the entire work force of approximately 60,000 employees in a participative management scheme. After completing a study, the executives of the company

established a program called the Participative Management Program (PMP). Employees were divided into groups of 50 to 250. Each group would work as a loose knit team and each employee was responsible for his/her own actions and work quality. When one member had a suggestion for improvement, then a report was made to the team captain and a small representative group was called together to discuss the merits of the suggestion. The process encouraged more frequent communication and had the effect of encouraging employees to work together more cooperatively for the common good.

The participative approach was not just a part of the system. It was a part of the work culture. It became institutionalized over the years and is still in practice. Some companies might say workers are paid to come to work and not to think beyond their own jobs. Motorola executives say employees are intelligent, curious, responsible, and valuable members of the corporate family.

The quality circle is a small group activity based on small group theory and is used as a participative management approach. It is part of a total approach which a leader may want to utilize to stimulate employees. The quality circle uses the skills, intelligence, knowledge, enthusiasm and energy of employees to assist in improving their quality of work life. Managers must realize the force and power of the process and decide if they are prepared to supervise this

type of activity. Training is required and there must be a commitment of resources, manpower, and ongoing support. Managers will hopefully not want to shy away from becoming involved with their employees in this more meaningful way. It is a risk. But proper planning, a receptive attitude and consistent supervision lower the risk substantially. It seems illogical, though, to this researcher that a leader would not want to use all resources at his/her disposal to assist in guiding a company or school to its highest level of effectiveness. The quality circle can be one of those resources.

Recommendations For Improving the Quality Circle in an
Educational Setting

My first recommendation is to lengthen the quality circle time to one hour. Refreshments and socializing were vital yet time consuming. Meeting times needed to reflect the addition of these activities, but even 45 minutes were insufficient to encompass all that the circle members wanted to accomplish on a weekly basis. We found that discussion was hampered because members did not have sufficient time necessary to share their total concerns. Several meetings extended beyond the time limit because the interest was there and the majority of the members wanted to finish the topic they were working on.

Circle membership is at the center of the next recommendation. Members were basically chosen on the basis of who volunteered first. The remainder of the group was filled with those who would work in harmony together. Thompson (1982) discussed the importance of compatibility in forming the circle membership. In addition, several members had volunteered for the specific time they were interested in. If another circle was formed, a more diverse cross section of teachers would be solicited.

Betty expressed the desire to alter the membership next time to obtain a wider variety of input. Every other member would have returned to the same circle if given the opportunity, but she would have chosen another group if available to obtain a broader view and different perspectives. This was a pilot project in many respects, and a successful experience was one of the goals.

Responding to several comments from the circle members, I would encourage stricter guidelines in the area of action items. The facilitator's main task is to guide the group to problem resolution. I would tighten parameters on the circle discussions. Assigning action items to individual members with a date attached to report back to the circle might have kept the circle on task and moving more rapidly. Karen reflected that she was pleased with the outcome but would have preferred to move at a more rapid pace. With

more than 30 or 45 minutes, time would have been available to cover more items and arrange for more solutions.

A more formal presentation of solutions to the principal would have enhanced the product of the quality circle. These presentations would give the circle more exposure and would add finality to the process. Most of the time the facilitator and one circle member would talk to the principal. Since the principal was already aware of the possible solution, the presentation was anticlimatic. This solution was quite satisfying but was not repeated. The nonparticipant observer noticed the reaction of the members and the positiveness of the event as opposed to the other way in which a presentation was made. I remain convinced that keeping the principal informed throughout the process is helpful and supportive to the circle's goals, but the final action of approving a particular solution has to be improved.

Some type of communication has to be devised to inform the entire staff of circle activities and results. Minutes were published one time and a memo was distributed to the faculty when the room climate issue was alleviated (See Appendix F). The circle was low keyed. Problems were solved, and the faculty could see the changes but were not aware of the circle's involvement in those changes. This tended to set the circle apart as a type of elitist group due to the lack of faculty integration as a whole. Mohr &

Mohr (1983) warned that circles that do not integrate with other employees might be seen in this fashion. When solutions were presented to the faculty either directly from the principal or at faculty meetings, few people except circle members knew how the solutions evolved. More visibility would have assured the circle's place in the school's decision making scheme. During the year after the study, a staff member inquired as to whether the circle was still functioning; but basically it has not been missed except for the circle members themselves.

Future Research

The quality circle process has been introduced to the educational community as a tool which may serve to solve various school problems. This research is, though, a single case study at a specific high school. Further studies that replicate this one are now necessary to ascertain the validity of this research.

The process has merit, for I know it fills a void by obtaining the enthusiasm of the staff to assist in the management of schools in solving problems. The circle's experience assists some employees in satisfying their desires to participate as much as possible in the life of their school. Hopefully, other researchers interested in a concept of this nature will conduct other case studies with a quality circle.

Other facets of the process warrant further study. One facet is the length of the study. A question can be raised as to how long a quality circle can exist and still function effectively. From the literature, a circle functions until the members feel that their task is finished and no other problems are available to solve. This circle could have definitely functioned longer. In fact, in the waning months of the project, the circle's expertise showed through even more.

Another question to raise is whether the quality circle could operate at different educational levels: elementary, junior high, the middle, and/or adult school. Problems exist at all levels and teachers may appreciate becoming involved with a quality circle activity in order to allow for more input into the system.

This case study dealt with faculty and administration. I suggest that there are opportunities to form circles involving parents, students, and/or classified staff. All those involved with the educational process could profit from meeting together to attempt to improve the school through communication and using quality circle guidelines. The exchange of information by parents and students has some influential ramifications. Administrators would have the opportunity to listen to new ideas and opportunities that may have been overlooked by the school's staff.

Setting up a quality circle with members first and selecting the facilitator afterwards might be an interesting variation. However, if the facilitator is chosen from volunteers for this study, would the same results occur if members did not volunteer partially because of the facilitator? If the steps of the quality circle are followed, then there should be no apparent change in the outcome.

More indepth research into the political aspects of the quality circle warrants further study. This report touched lightly on this issue, but the circle is no less than revolutionary if one looks at the concept closely. Whether all types of managers could handle the circle process and its activities remains to be seen.

It should be remembered that the Japanese model evolved in a different culture. The Japanese government provides for lifetime employment rights and a solid loyalty binds employees to their firms. This may be happening in the United States with some firms but it is still not the norm. Will the quality circle work without the background of lifetime employment with a firm? Without a strong commitment to a company, will the employees desire to work with the supervisor in order to improve that company? These points all remain unanswered until further study is conducted.

Concluding Remarks

This case study presented the quality circle as a procedure for problem solving and for the enhancement of communication. The quality circle has been utilized successfully by industry for approximately 20 years. To this researcher, a void was present in the high school in the area of participative management. This tended to keep talented people from having input into the management of their school and from having a feeling of a lack of ownership for their school. Was it because of depleted energy and enthusiasm on the part of teachers and administrators or was it because of the absence of a process? It seems that the latter statement is more accurate. This small group technique was proaction oriented, a supervisor/employee type of activity, and had a history of producing results. This researcher felt that the quality circle had merit for a service industry such as education. A sense of intrigue was present in regards to the process and a desire to determine the circle's possible usefulness to a school.

The conclusion from this study is that the quality circle is a viable process. It allows not only the administrator to be a "change agent" but invests that power in the circle as a whole. The quality circle over the year did solve problems that were deemed important by the members of the circle. Some of these problems affected the

entire school such as the air conditioning; while others, such as the teachers' telephone, affected just the staff. The members selected and introduced the issues through brainstorming and collected the data necessary for resolution. Upon completing this task, the circle assisted in the implementation and monitoring of the solution.

Communication was improved as witnessed by the facilitator during the interviews at the termination of the study. The weekly communication was deemed satisfying by the circle members because it primarily resulted in a feeling of oneness with the school, two way communication among the members, and both members and administrators reaching an understanding not previously experienced by the teachers. This allowed for comprehension, not just of their specific area of interest, but for the entire school. Bob was the member who stated that because of the circle activities, he was able to see the school from a new perspective; one that was holistic in nature.

The quality circle worked because of the process and people involved. The key factors: volunteerism, members' right to select the problems, obtaining data for resolution, the cooperating spirit between teachers and administrators, and an atmosphere where all ideas were accepted at face value were all vital to permitting the process to succeed. Because the teachers desired to be a part of the process and

already had positive relationships, synergy was achieved at a rapid pace and work could commence earlier than expected.

This process is revolutionary because power is shared and the circle is allowed to seek out information needed to solve problems. The circle becomes involved at a level normally not offered to teachers. The circle members are recipients of facts which others do not have access to and there is a strong sense of satisfaction by circle members as they use these facts to form solutions. This cooperative effort in a positive atmosphere is the foundation from which effective change can occur.

As an administrator and researcher, would I lead another quality circle at a school? The answer is most definitely "yes." The experience surpassed my expectations, and I became familiar with another technique which has enhanced my skills as a leadership. I find it to be an excellent process for problem solving and communication with the staff. A sense of trust, respect, and cooperation with much improved communication evolved from this experience. As Long (1986) wrote: "At a time when our nation's schools are being pressured from various directions to improve the equality of education while resources remain static or are reduced, there remains one untapped resource, the ability of teachers to identify and solve school problems" (p. 57).

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO DISTRICT OFFICE REGARDING QUALITY CIRCLE

DISTRICT OFFICE

Dear Mr.

I would like to share with you my plans for a research project that I hope to carry out during the next school year. The project would take place at High School and deal with volunteer selected staff. A short statement concerning the project is attached.

I appreciate the opportunity I had last week to discuss with you my thoughts and ideas for the project. I would like to assure you that this research proposal will not deal with any issues dealt with in the contract that exists between the district and the teacher's union.

If you desire more detailed information or would like to ask further questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Williams

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO FACULTY REQUESTING VOLUNTEERS

October 30, 1985

Dear

This year, I plan to carry out a research project at High School under the auspices of the University of San Diego. It will deal with a concept called quality circles. This technique for quality control is prevalent in many major companies of the world, but is not found in the educational field below the college/university level.

The quality circle is a volunteer group who meet with management for one-half hour weekly to discuss plant environment and quality control. Sequential steps are followed, taking an expressed problem from inception to possible solution. These results are then forwarded to the site decision maker.

Taking into account the training and expertise of the staff, the process attempts to allow more involvement with change and improvement at the site.

I hope you will be interested in participating in this research project which will take place from mid-October to May. If you wish to join in this study, please sign below and place in my box by Friday. Hopefully the experience will be rewarding as well as a learning experience.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Ronald E. Williams

Signature

APPENDIX C

NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS CONCERNING FIRST MEETING

TIME: _____

DATE: 12-11-85MEMO FROM THE DESK OF RONALD E. WILLIAMS

Those interested in Quality Circle Project After School:

It seems that the project will take place after school for most of the volunteers chose that time. Thank you for your interest. I would like to have one meeting before the holidays. Which day would be most convenient for you?

Day: _____

Please return tomorrow.

APPENDIX D

NOTE TO ALL POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS AFTER SELECTION WAS
COMPLETED

12-11-85

To: _____

Re: Quality Circle

Thank you very much for your continued interest. The majority of those who volunteered chose after school. From that number eight were selected. I have informed those who will be involved. I will be glad to keep you informed of the progress of the project if you wish. I want to thank you wholeheartedly for your interest and support.

Williams

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF QUALITY CIRCLE AGENDA

MEETING NOTICE

DATE: 4-9-86

TIME: Next meeting Monday 4-14-86

LOCATION: Office Conference Room

AGENDA

Minutes from meeting of 4-7-86: All members present

All eighteen (18) quality circle subjects were discussed and were put in priority (the first three).

1. Phone availability for long distance calls both personal and business.
2. Morale and attitude of staff-long term goal
3. Drug/alcohol problems: organize program for offenders

Other items will be considered after completion of the above.

Agenda for next meeting:

1. Organize problem solving for phone situation.
Delegation of tasks

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO FACULTY REGARDING AIR CONDITIONING AND HEATING

To: Faculty and Staff

From: Williams, and the Quality Circle

Re: Air Conditioning/Heating in Classrooms

The quality circle is composed of some ten staff members who are volunteering their time to work on selected problems that need solutions here at . The first problem chosen to work on was the air conditioning and heating of the classrooms. It has been a problem since the inception of the school. Facts were collected and professionals were invited to meetings in order for us to obtain as much information as possible so a solution could be found. The facts are:

1. The district acknowledges that the present system does not work. The present system is designed to have one unit to handle the air conditioning/heating for four classrooms. An average is taken of all four classrooms and the unit responds by attempting to add or hold back air to each room. The designers did not realize that different classrooms have drastically different needs. One classroom can have 40 students, the other can have 20. The system can not handle such diversity. Also there is more traffic in and out of rooms than originally thought. This design is not recognized now as the system to use for schools and in fact has been outdated from soon after its implementation at Montgomery.
2. The system, therefore, needs to be replaced and there is a long range plan to do just that. It will be quite expensive to replace but there is a five year plan to save the money to begin replacing several systems in the schools. An engineering firm along with SDG&E is working with the district now to come up with the best system available for schools. Obviously one requirement is for each room to have its own unit so that the teacher in conjunction with the custodial staff can monitor the environment in that room.

3. In the meantime, if the environment becomes unbearable please see Mr. Williams. We will work together for a temporary solution. When the heat is upon us again, the only workable situation is to have the doors cracked until the air conditioning catches up with the requirements of the individual room. After that point, closing the door will help the unit to not overheat. Again if it becomes detrimental to the learning of the students in your room, please see me. Mr. and I will work together to assist you. Have patience and know that in the next few years a permanent solution will be available.

Note: We are presently working on the parking situation and have been involved with staff social gatherings this year to increase staff morale.