

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT
PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

WINNIPEG, Manitoba

FALL, 1977

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	
I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	3
II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	5
III. METHOD.....	7
IV. DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
V. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY	9
REFERENCES.....	10
II. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
I. CURRENT PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS	11
II. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER CHANGE METHODS.....	13
III. ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	15
IV. CRITERIA FOR THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION.....	18
-- Design Criteria	18
-- Guidelines for Implementing the Design	22
-- Consultant Behaviors	23
-- Criteria for Evaluation	25
CONCLUSION	26
REFERENCES	27
III. BROOKE SCHOOL - PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES	
I. INITIAL VIEW OF BROOKE SCHOOL	30
-- Some Early Events	30
-- The Development of the Interview Guide.....	35
II. THE VIEW FROM THE STAFF	37
III. DIAGNOSIS OF THE SCHOOL	48
-- The Development of Inter-Group Conflict	48
-- Inter-Group Conflict and Other Concerns	53
REFERENCES	55
IV. THE DESIGN PROCESS	
I. DESIGN OF THE ENTIRE INTERVENTION	56
II. DESIGNING THE FIRST TRAINING EVENT	57
III. DESIGNING THE SECOND TRAINING EVENT	90
IV. COMMENTARY AND REFLECTIONS ON THE DESIGN PROCESS	96
REFERENCES	99
V. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION	
I. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION	100
-- Entry from My View	100
-- The Participant's Perspective of the Contract Meeting	106
-- A Description of the Initial Interviews.....	107
-- Aspects of the Design of the Main Training Event.....	109
-- The Main Training Event	111
-- Assessment of Effects	134
-- The Second Training Event	141

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT'D)

CHAPTER	Page
V. CONT'D	
-- A View of the Workshop by a Participant	152
-- Final Interviews	154
-- Withdrawal	154
II. REFLECTIONS	155
REFERENCES	157
VI. EVALUATION	
I. FINAL INTERVIEW DATA.....	158
II. SUMMARY	168
VII. SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ABOUT FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS	
I. SUMMARY OF STUDY	169
II. RESULTS	170
III. DISCUSSION	180
IV. REFLECTIONS ABOUT FUTURE INTERVENTIONS	187
REFERENCES	192
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
APPENDIX	

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I.	Concerns About the School	38
II.	Underlying Causes	39
III.	Strengths	40
IV.	Teacher Effectiveness Training	41
V.	Confluent Education	42
VI.	Groups on Staff	44
VII.	Principal's Involvement in Confluent Education	45
VIII.	Parents and Teachers	46
IX.	The Roles of People in the School	47
X.	Expectations of the Participants	59
XI.	Hopes of the Participants	60
XII.	Advice from the Participants	61
XIII.	Theme #1 - How the Staff Works Together	70
XIV.	Theme #2 - The Strengths we Have	72
XV.	Theme #3 - Planned Curricular Sequencing	73
XVI.	Theme #4 - The Role of the Principal	74
XVII.	Theme #5 - Staff Meetings	75
XVIII.	Theme #6 - Relationship with Community and Parents	76
XIX.	Debriefing Summary of Thursday Morning	119
XX.	Debriefing Summary of Thursday Afternoon	124
XXI.	Debriefing Summary of Friday Morning	129
XXII.	Debriefing Summary of Friday Afternoon	133
XXIII.	Results of First Workshop	135
XXIV.	Assessments	137
XXV.	Individual Contributions	140
XXVI.	Debriefing Summary of the Second Workshop	151
XXVII.	October 29, 1975	159
XXVIII.	Effects	160
XXIX.	Negative Effects	162
XXX.	Most Effective Exercise	163
XXXI.	Least Effective Exercise	164
XXXII.	Sense of Power	165
XXXIII.	Confluent Education	166

LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
APPENDIX A	
A History of Organizational Development	195
A Participant's Observations	205
APPENDIX B	
Theory of Organization Development - I	214
Test on Inter-Group Conflict	215
Theory of Organization Development - II	216
Theory of Organization Development - III	217
Problem Solving Model	219
Suggestions	220
Your Problem Solving Behavior - A Test	221
APPENDIX C	
Staff Evaluation Form	222
Defining a Workable Problem	224
5 Basic Steps in Problem Solving	225
Example of an Agenda	226
Guide for Role of Chairperson	227
Observing	228
Debriefing Form	229

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge:

Dr. Tony Riffel for his cogent thinking and allowing nature.

Dr. Tony Stickel for his gentleness and wisdom.

The staff of the Manitoba Confluent Education program for their encouragement and support.

The staff of Brooke School for the time we worked together.

My wife for her patience and consideration.

My mother for her love and faith.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to design, implement and assess a strategy for resolving staff concerns of Brooke School using principles and procedures derived from the field of organizational development.

The strategy moved through the following sequence of steps:

1. Gaining entry. On October 29, 1975 a contract was formed for three in-service days of organizational development with the staff of Brooke School at the Oo - za - we - kwun Centre near Rivers, Manitoba.

2. Diagnosing individual interview data. On January 19, 20, 1976, diagnostic interviews were held at Brooke School with the participants in order to obtain preliminary data.

3. Designing the first training event.

4. Conducting the first training event. On January 22, 23, 1976 the first workshop was held.

5. Evaluating the first training event. In February, follow-up interviews by two staff volunteers were held to assess the effects of the workshop and to investigate the basis for the next workshop in March.

6. Designing the second training event.

7. Conducting the second training event. On March 12, 1976 a one-day workshop occurred.

8. Evaluating the intervention. On May 8, 9, 1976, I interviewed the staff individually in order to determine the effects of the intervention.

Three general questions guided the study. The first general question was: What does the literature indicate to be important guidelines necessary to maximize the chances of success in organizational development interventions? A number of more specific questions were derived from this:

1. What general directions are available as alternatives?
2. What directions seem worthwhile in terms of increasing initial participant involvement?
3. What guidelines are available for diagnosing the situation?
4. What principles are available for designing the over-all flow of the intervention?
5. What guidelines are available for designing a training event?
6. What guidelines exist for conducting training sessions?
7. What criteria are available for conducting an effective evaluation?
8. What ethical parameters should be followed by a consultant using principles and practices from the field of organizational development?

The second general question was: How might these guidelines be applied in the case of a specific Manitoba school? A number of

more specific questions were derived from this:

1. What is the situation at the school?
2. What are the concerns of the staff of Brooke School?
3. What design promises to meet the concerns of the staff?
4. Which techniques are likely to be effective and which are not?
5. What are the general and specific results of the intervention?

The third general question was: Is it possible to refine guidelines and develop further principles on the basis of Brooke School?

A number of more specific questions were derived from this:

1. Which general guidelines, drawn from the literature, appear to be refuted by the Brooke School experience? Which ones were reinforced?
2. What further criteria pertaining to staff involvement appear to evolve from Brooke School?
3. What further principles are available for diagnostic work?
4. What principles emerge for improving the workshops?
5. What guidelines emerge for extending the transfer of training?
6. What principles would further the probability of an on-going sequence of data collection, diagnosis, action, and assessment being integrated into the regular organizational life of a school?
7. What guidelines are available to assist schools in preventing specific problems?

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

W. Warner Burke states¹ "O.D.is surrounded by mystique.

O.D. is not helped by practitioners who are unclear themselves to resort to 'well, you just have to experience organizational development to understand it'." In this same general area, French and Bell conclude that² "the boundaries are not clear entirely... and the field is evolving". This study has, as its first justification the explication and development of the concepts of organizational development.

A further justification for this study is the need to determine what approach to organizational development is practical in schools considering the relatively short training periods that are generally available. There are relatively few days that are uncommitted at any time in most schools for work with the entire staff. The reason for this situation is that demands for in-service time are extensive and include administration days, parent-teacher conferences, divergent interests of different members of the staff, and divisional, regional, and provincial in-services. Therefore, in relation to long range organizational development programs of industry and the typical one day in-services of Manitoba schools, this intervention is in the middle range time period.

Support for this work also comes from there having been few studies of a practical nature dealing with in-service work. Harris and Bessent deal with this concern when they state³

there is not much available for the practitioner in his in-service education efforts. Research in this field is meagre. Reports of practices are sketchy and tend to be reported as local "success stories" rather than as objective descriptions. Good case studies are a rarity.

This study might answer this concern to some degree. Again, in a review of the state of organizational development, Burke⁴ calls for studies in the use of organizational development methodology that would ascertain its effectiveness. That is, practical data for future organizational development interventions is needed. Further to this point Sarason states⁵

the techniques have come to be viewed as ends in themselves; they place such an emphasis on communication and "interpersonal relations" as to convey the impression that they are the most important source of problems in the school culture, whereas they are, in my opinion, far more symptoms than cause.overselling these techniques does a disservice to that which is valid and helpful in their limited use.

This study has attempted to deal with this problem by examining the relevance of the techniques involved.

Since organizational development is an evolving field and since most of the work in the past has consisted of applications to industry, there is a need for more information on the application of organizational development principles and techniques in the field of education. This study has a practical significance in as much as it is an attempt to find a middle-range approach to systematic organizational change.

III. METHOD

As was stated previously, the basic purpose of this study was to design, implement, and assess an organizational development intervention in a particular school. The report of the research will be presented as a case study. The methods of research included case analysis and participant observation.

The characteristics of a case study include the following:

a) The process of gathering data and the procedures applied are interwoven and shuttlelike. While interviewing to gather information certain treatments could take place or during in-service exercises data collection is happening.

b) As many of the pertinent aspects of the situation as possible are taken into account. The data are related to some phase of the history of the situation. The case study is a careful analysis of the development of a group or institution.

c) Diagnosis, which identifies causal factors, is combined with a prognosis about possible effective treatments.

d) Confidential recording and relationships.

The fundamental rationale for the case study is that there is more likelihood of understanding an individual's behaviour if one examines the institutional, cultural, social matrix for that behaviour.

IV. DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organizational development is an attempt to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture - with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams - with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research. It is seen here as having an approximate duration of one year with two or three training events.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This report is divided into seven chapters and appendices. Chapter I has consisted of an introduction to the study. Chapter II is a review of the literature and provides a summary of the main approaches to making changes in schools with particular emphasis on organizational development. Chapter II also includes my criteria for design, implementation and evaluation of the intervention. Chapter III consists of a view of Brooke School as seen by myself after diagnostic data had been gathered and before designing the workshop itself. This deals with the setting of the intervention with its problems and opportunities. Chapter IV outlines the Design Process in a narrative form; the contributions of the volunteers from the teaching staff will be distinguished from those of myself. Chapter V contains a description of the intervention through my eyes along with reflections on the intervention. Chapter VI contains the post-intervention interview data. Chapter VII provides the results of the study and a discussion of those results. To what extent were the goals of the entire intervention realized? Over what period of time? It also includes my recommendations for future interventions using organizational development principles.

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3. Ben M. Harris and Willard Bessent, In-Service Education: A guide to Better Practice, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969, p. 1.
4. Burke, Op cit, p. 4.
5. Seymour B. Sarason, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change, Allyn and Bacon Inc, Boston, 1971, p. 216.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is concerned with the development of guidelines for organizational development interventions in schools. These guidelines are derived from the literature. For the reader who is interested in a history of organizational development see Appendix A.

The first section of this chapter is an attempt to outline problems and limitations facing organizational development at the present time as seen by various writers in the field. Following this section is a comparison of organizational development with laboratory method approaches that focus on different depths of intervention. The next section compares two approaches to organizational development as represented by Schmuck and Herman. This is entitled, "Alternative Directions Within Organizational Development". The final section of this chapter relates the criteria for the design, implementation and evaluation for this study to the literature of organizational development.

I. CURRENT PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS

Firstly, organizational development may be a "fad".¹ It is possible that little or no commitment to the long term use of organizational development exists. In view of the history of change efforts on schools this may be very likely. Burke is one who is concerned that organizational development be integrated into the mainstream of

an organization's life rather than being something used at a particular time for a particular purpose.² This same point is made by Sarason when he says that, "the more things change, the more they remain the same"³ in regard to schools.

Two other current problems were referred to in the "significance of the problem" in this study. There are a clear statement of what is included in organizational development and the lack of research related to measuring results.⁴

One of the criticisms of organizational development is that it has paid too much attention to the human and social dynamics of organizations and too little attention to tasks, technical, and structural aspects and how they are related to each other.⁵ In the future, one criterion for judging whether change has occurred may be whether structural changes have been instituted.

A further problem organizational development faces as an interdisciplinary application of the social sciences is lack of balance. On the one hand there is a need for theory to be part and parcel of any organizational development intervention,⁶ and on the other hand, there is a need to make certain that interventions are a creative response to a particular client group. According to Peter Vaill, "formal organizational development theories are rigid, inflexible, and based on an objective view of organizational life....the theories don't explain or predict the situation the organizational development practitioner finds himself."⁷

The polarity suggested by those who work solely on an intuitive basis is opposed by the extreme represented by those who "package"

organizational development with little or no tailoring for the particular target group. On another level, the enthusiasm of one extreme smacks of naivety and lack of theoretical underpinnings while the stoics ignore affective data in the way they present their "set-piece" efforts. Balance is exemplified by what some writers call "practice theories" in which success with a treatment corroborates the diagnosis.⁸

II. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER CHANGE METHODS

Bennis indicates six traditional change programs⁹ that are distinguishable from organizational development in that they have as their basis the belief that change can occur as the result of sharing an idea without becoming involved in the experiencing of that idea. Thus Bennis believes that organizational development is different in that it intervenes rather than giving recommendations or advice.¹⁰

According to French and Bell, the basic points made to distinguish organizational development from these change efforts of the past are:

- a) it emphasizes process rather than content;
- b) it emphasizes groups, this implies an emphasis on the work team as the key unit;
- c) it emphasizes the use of resources in a sharing manner within the work team culture;
- d) it emphasizes the relationship of a sub-group to the total organization
- e) it emphasizes the use of the action research model; and
- f) it emphasizes a developmental and long term view of change.¹¹

Further to distinguishing organizational development from traditional and current change strategies Harrison¹² has classified interventions on the basis of superficiality. His hierarchy of depth of intervention is:

a) Rational assignment of tasks:

This strategy is to redistribute (by proclamation) the tasks, resources, and power among the jobs in the organization. The consultant can do this without knowing in advance who will be occupying the positions. This is the technique used by most private firms offering consulting services to management (referred to above as traditional counselling). The classic theories underlying this technique are the theories of bureaucracy and time - and - motion, and the classic theorists are Weber and Taylor.

b) Direct influence on performance:

This strategy evaluates the performance of individuals and directly manipulates it. Particular techniques include appraising the skills an employee brings and placing him in an appropriate job, giving promotions, increasing or decreasing salary or wages, transferring employees, and using the techniques of management by objective. The classic theory underlying these techniques is "reinforcement" psychology and its prophet is B.F. Skinner.

c) Direct influence on the interpersonal interactions through which work is accomplished - for short, interpersonal instrumental rearrangements.

This strategy opens to negotiation those instrumental (task-oriented) acts that individuals direct toward others: delegating authority or reserving decisions to oneself; communicating or withholding information; collaborating or competing with others on work-related issues. The consultant is interested in the organizational member primarily as a doer of work. Much of Douglas McGregor's (1967) theorizing deals with this level.

d) Interpersonal emotional rearrangements:

At this level, the consultant deals with feelings, attitudes, and perceptions and the quality of human relations. "Interventions are directed toward helping trainees to be more comfortable in being authentically themselves with one another, and the degree of mutual

caring and concern is expected to increase", says Harrison. Sensitivity training in the T-group is a typical technique, though not the only one. This kind of intervention has been carried out in numerous industrial organizations; it has been used extensively in the school districts in which Carl Rogers has worked.

e) Therapy:

The deepest level focuses on the individual's relations with himself - and on increasing the range of experiences he can bring into awareness and cope with. This is traditionally the realm of psychological therapy and its patron saint is S. Freud. Religious leaders, historically, have also directed most of their efforts at this level of change.

Schmuck feels that the third level is the one organizational development is centered on but that organizational development can include aspects of the second and fourth levels.¹³

III. ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The main thrust of organizational development has evolved into working with intact work groups. Schmuck represents various researchers and practitioners of organizational development when he says, "We reject the strategy of making better organizations by improving the members as individuals."¹⁴ Further to this same point he says that the organizational development specialist "does not seek to change personalities nor is organizational development training aimed at facilitating personal growth."¹⁵ This view has, as its basis, research data that stranger laboratory groups have little impact on home organizations.¹⁶

At the present time many organizational development practitioners work with the intact work group. However, others disagree with Schmuck. They say that group norms are not the primary target but that the focus

of organizational development's efforts must be on the individual. Certainly ever since Lewin showed that behaviour derived from group norms was easier to change than behaviour rooted in the individual's character structure, attention has been paid to the normative climate. However, people can become aware and act on these new awarenesses and this personal growth is independent of the setting in which the individual finds himself. Herman works with work groups, but using a Gestalt approach to organization development, stresses individual behaviour as the key to organizational change and improvement.¹⁷

In Gestalt therapy awareness is regarded as being intrinsically therapeutic. The approach is based on a view of man as one who naturally completes finishable unfinished business. Herman's purpose as a facilitator is to encourage people to fully experience their behaviour and thus to grow stronger in their encounters with others. The move is from other-support to self-support. This approach is not the same as changing the environment so that it supports the individual although it is not antagonistic to it.¹⁸

Herman sees much of the organizational development derived from sensitivity training as producing managers who try to be "nice" to others in a way that violates their own authenticity and power.¹⁹ He sees "feedback" as a subtle way of preaching to other people.²⁰ This is somewhat in contrast to William G. Dyer's view of feedback as "not just a process of requesting a person to change but the beginning of the process of wider acceptance of each other".²¹ The basic thrust of Herman's approach is that only by assisting all people in the organization to realize how they truncate their strength individually will

the organization gain power. He makes the analogy that an organization has "top dogs" and "under dogs" and just as in Perl's individual psychology the underdog is always in control. New Year's resolutions in individuals and self-improvement programs in organizations only heighten the conflict in which, over time, underdog invariably wins. The balanced organization it appears, is one in which a synthesis occurs in which there is less tyranny with less sabotaging.

Herman is not alone in his disagreement with Schmuck. Tannenbaum supports his view in that he sees that organizational change must come from individual change.²² Oshry says much the same thing when he states that, "most personal growth comes from behavioural coping with action crises, very little from sharing of interpersonal feedback."²³

Orion White Jr. makes a clear distinction between the sensitivity groups from which most organizational development methodology is derived, with its emphasis on "feedback," and gestalt therapy. He states, "It is unfortunate that gestalt methodology, rather than the encounter group, did not become the main methodological device of the movement....it seems that such an approach would escape most of the dilemmas discussed here."²⁴ One of the dilemmas he discussed was the transfer problem due to a lack of a supportive atmosphere in the organization.²⁵

Both of these positions, Schmuck's and Herman's, are correct to a greater or lesser degree in any situation. People can move toward self-support and as Sarason indicates the dynamics of the situation

are prime determiners of the outcome as well.²⁶

From an analysis of the literature just reviewed and in combination with information from other pertinent sources, the following criteria were established to provide guidelines for the intervention.

V. CRITERIA FOR THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

Design Criteria

The first criterion is that the staff as a whole make a commitment to the intervention. French and Bell support this criterion when they speak of the importance of organization development being "owned" by subordinates as well as by the formal leader.²⁷ By ownership French and Bell mean it is the clients' intervention and not the consultants'. The expectation is that ownership will include involvement and investment in the process of organizational development.

The second criterion is that the staff provide volunteers to assist the researcher in designing the workshops. This criterion relates to the first in that it is a further attempt to increase "ownership" on the part of the client group. Harris and Bessent support this guideline when they state, "in-service programs should be planned with the active participation of those who are to be the benefactors."²⁸ The assistance in this criterion includes active participation in the planning of workshops as well as designing data collection methods and collecting such data. The volunteers may also

provide increased opportunities for the researcher to see the intervention from the view of the participants and thus increase the chances of a relevant intervention.

The next criterion is that the workshops be centered around the organizational concerns of the participants. Beckhard suggests that a necessary condition for a successful organization development intervention is that "Somebody or something in the organization is 'hurting.'"²⁹ Harris and Bessent distinguish between superficial surveys of teacher interests and the genuine interests of teachers which reflect real needs. They caution that too often the former is the basis for the design of in-service training sessions.³⁰

The next criterion for the design is that the action research model be explicitly used in the intervention. The importance of this model as the core of organization development efforts is indicated in "A History of Organizational Development" in Appendix A.³¹ This study will use as the basis for its over-all design, the action research model.

The fifth criterion is that the design weave theory and practice together in a balanced fashion. The search for balance in this area has been explored in this chapter.³² Hall emphasizes the balance required in this criterion when he states, "we have lost touch with the sine qua non of any technology: namely, a basic theory underlying the utility and application of technique."³³

The sixth criterion is that the intervention foster a long range view of organization development. Burke states that "one of the fundamental differences between organizational development and other approaches in organizational improvement is that organizational development is viewed

as a continuing process and not as an ad hoc time-bound program."³⁴
The fostering of such a view has been discussed in this chapter.³⁵

The seventh criterion is that the intervention recognize the development of group norms and the fostering of each individual's self-support as complementary objectives. This approach recognizes the need to work with normative patterns within the client group as well as the necessity of promoting individual self-reliance.³⁶ Sergiovanni and Carver underscore this approach by stating "self-concept development, confidence building....in a supportive climate are other contributors to changing attitudes and behaviours".³⁷

Organization development aims roughly at improving how people work together. In this chapter the point was made by Schmuck that organization development centered around interest in the organization member "primarily as a doer of work."³⁸ Thus the eighth criterion is that the focus of the training be related to the roles in the school rather than to life generally. In "Neurotic Organization: Symptoms, Causes and Treatment", Harvey and Albertson state that the "key to the diagnosis of organization neurosis is the fact that outside the organization context members do not either suffer the pain nor demonstrate the irrational behaviour they demonstrate in their day-to-day work."³⁹ Based on this conclusion, diagnosis and treatment would possibly err if the intervention dealt with how people behaved with each other generally.

The ninth criterion is that the design not aim specifically for classroom use of techniques or exercise introduced during the intervention. This relates to the previous criterion of centering the intervention around the organizational concerns of the participants.