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## **"Personal Opened Model"**

### **I. Introduction**

"... There is a way a teacher can experiment with non-authoritarian teaching and be free of other teachers and supervisors. That way is to work with problem students – those students the school system has give up on. Disturbed and retarded and disruptive and delinquent students are in a special category. They are often considered "troubled" simply because they refuse to conform to the authoritarian structure of the school and refuse to acknowledge the totalitarian power of the teacher. They don't have to go through the curriculum and don't have to take tests. Nothing is expected of them and all that is expected of their teachers is to get them off the backs of the rest of the staff in school. Many extraordinary teachers have accepted this situation and created free and open classrooms for their "special" students..."

Herbert R. Kohl,  
"The Open Class-room"  
Chapter VII "Problems", pp.94-95

As to me, let's say to "my" needs, the "open classroom" is not "opened" enough... This paragraph is titled "Problems", which means it is dealing with the problematic roles of the "open classroom" method...

Perhaps all that I'm going to introduce here is the extension of this little paragraph. I have not yet experienced my idea fully, but it is bumbling already for quite a while in

my head, having found a few chances to be partially realized. I have been already working for several years with such students, and I must admit that these people are able to learn, their whole level is absolutely high (see below)\*.

I believe it is worthwhile expanding it into a whole system or educational model, being worked out practically in the frame of special sections in certain institutes or even in the frame of separate institutes.

This model will specifically fit the studies of Arts, because of the tremendous and essential importance of self-expression and creativity bound to these ones.

(A) **What is my Goal?**

This model deals, as mentioned above, mostly with the study of Art. It is designed for people who are highly gifted (generally grownups); they are in any case full of inspiration, imagination and own certain large amount of the ability of creative thought. Due to their being so different from all others (especially because of the originality signifying their unique personality) they cannot "find themselves" in any of the existing frameworks and institutions. They already possess some deep concepts about music, they sometimes even have some artistic experience\*\*, but they still don't know the basic principles of symbols of this special "language" they already make use of (writing or reading notes, for example).

These people have not had the opportunity for ordinary studies, for various reasons, and they have reached a point they need this basic knowledge. Their special quality of talent dictates the necessity of teaching them – they want to learn and they absolutely deserve it.

I'm speaking mostly in terms of Israel and Music studies; there is a huge lack of choice in studies, and many talented musicians are not able to learn what they really desire to learn according to their own needs.

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\*Sometimes they can be very talented!

\*\*Make music, make performances, for example.

I am sure such a problem exists in many other countries and in a variety of arts\* – so I would like to transfer my model to other arts and to different societies and countries.

Society may only gain from this investigation.

**(B) Basic Idea of the Model**

This model might be the one dealing with students in the most individual way, much more than anywhere else. The programs will be planned for each student personally! After learning basic elements, the student will be free to choose his way, while getting all possible assistance and advice from teachers and the principal. Finally, after advanced studies in the possible areas (of that Art) he will start specializing.

The student will not be bound to the requests of a special degree when he starts learning. He will be realizing, through his studies, what exactly he is aiming at. This school will be called, for example, "Music High School", or even a title of "Music Teaching High School", or "Music Performance High School", etc. The name of Art will appear in its title and nothing more – and that will bring it to be quite flexible, but still being able to qualify people to all certain degrees.

**(C) Outlined Plan for Curriculum**

- (1) First concrete aim: the student will study by having all sorts of programs through the model, all the basic elements, followed by the necessary areas of this art.
- (2) Each element or area will be covered in this model by a few teachers, each representing another approach (to that same subject, of course); this variety of choices enables some excellent fitting between teachers and students.
- (3) The first courses taken by the student will be given entirely in the private system.

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\*The problem of Music Higher Education is that every student should limit himself to a single model or only a few models, through his entire studies.

From a certain stage there will be workshops, combined classes (between teachers, among students – all kinds of integration), in which the students will get to know each other better.\*

- (4) Still there is a standardized, quite detailed curriculum, with certain classification of achievements (through instructor process, of course) required in the basic areas. However, all the shared activities, built on a certain level of comprehension and attendance, will be according to the personal development of the students, without "harming" their individuality and originality.
- (5) After the student is accepted, and all the professors get to know him (through admittance examinations), they all hold special sessions and fix for him his program for the first 3 months, and choose from among themselves his coordinators. Then they meet again and this process becomes cyclic.

**(D) Problems**

I have an idea and I want to accomplish it. It is very difficult to believe, unless you start realizing that things are actually carried out. Though I will be very glad to emphasize some of the problems – and these go beyond that "problem" in Kohl's terminology. The following must be considered during in the process of modeling:

(1) Problems of Subject-matter

- (a) The complicated contrast between the student's needs and the curriculum needs and requirements (although they are still very flexible).
- (b) There is a great need for the best teachers, highly trained professionals and educators, who could be flexible enough to handle their "crazy" students.

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\*We should bear in mind that as the students start learning, they differ so much from one another that they must be "isolated".

\*\* Which I present as an indicator and opening point for building this model.

(2) Technical Problems

There are many problems concerning the administrative role; I will put some of these very roughly.

- (a) The problem of examining and accepting students. I would accept people who don't even know to write notes, but who will still be able to prove their talent. You may watch such a person in a performance, for example, or any live show by performing his part; in this way the criteria of self-expression will not be lost, and that person will be considered as having passed the admittance examination.\*
- (b) The entire role of administration is very different, especially in terms of advanced planning; due to the need for many teachers, all of them are going to be only partly-employed in this model (usually as additional work after their regular workday) and it is very difficult to make promises to teachers (in this model) in advance about their job; the same problem applies to the supply of equipment, although in this specific area there are always repairs, improvements, changes, additions, etc.

The arrangement of semesters will not exist for students here. I would like every student to advance in his own "path", and the shared "journeys" will be planned only for very short periods of time. Integration is very important, but not at the expense of self-expression and development of each person!

- (c) Teacher sessions: actually make this model viable! They are held very often and give the right for integration and shared courses. These potential shared courses are included in the budget-planning and implemented all year long. In each such session every teacher tells his colleagues about his experience with students, which is the key for new combined programs.

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\*This could be an entire study (sub-study to our one) building models of examinations for these people, based on the "happening" case: generally they will not know they are being examined; they will be observed during some of their activities, etc.

(d) Library: according to the individual approach, it is a very good place for finding materials, especially for individuals completing joint programs. In other words, for this type of model, working in a library is essential.

(e) Bibliography

- The Pre-school in Action, Pr. Ronald K. Park, Bost. 1973
- The Open Class-room, Herbert R. Kohl