

"21 Feb 73

Dear Mike,

- 1) Well I've finally gotten my new classes settled down enough so that I can write you and reply to my backlog of letters.
- 2) Pertaining to our adventure here is the results of my research.

Canoe trip idea

To buy a canoe from Sears (whose prices I assume to be approximately competitive with other commercial sources)

Aluminum hull rigid

    painted 17 ft. 230 \$

    unpainted 17 ft. 215 \$

        "    15 ft. 210 \$

plastic hull rigid 17 ft. 255 \$

Inflatable vinyl 92 \$

- 3) I haven't been able to contact the guy who is supposed to rent the inflatable kayaks. I lost the card mom gave me. In a few days the local group of the Sierra Club will meet and I'll try to make some contacts for information then.

- 4) I don't really like the idea of your carrying the full financial weight of this venture so I have been looking at alternates.

Snowshoeing

    from the REC snowshoes cost about 35 \$ all told.

    from Blackforest the cost is 25\$ per kit

        40\$ completed

Rocks and Mountains

I've been talking to mom. She wants to go to telescope peak in death valley and to the White mountains (range east of Sierras at about the latitude of Tuolumne meadows. It might also be fun to try to go to Joshua tree to climb those rocks again.

What ever we do I have vacation from April 14 to 22.

- 5) Returning to the philosophical/practical discussion and specifically to page two of 4 Feb 73

I am coming to believe that learning the "independent joy of learning" i.e. (how ever you wish to translate it) the acceptance and practice of "learning is fun" that this can only be a matter of individual affirmation and learning ( subject as it is to translation and mistranslation).

- 6) As to whether this is practical I think remains to be seen. The experiment is not yet over. I believe that certainly there is the strong possibility that this sort of learning is incompatible with any system. And therefore that any systematizing of this learning will destroy the intended message.

- 7) I am not sure what you meant by the activity (3) and the fraction or break (4) of the assertion but this might be it. If what I believe is true in 5) above is indeed true I think it means

several things.

1. of immediate practicality the flexibility and opportunities for individuality built into the program would seem to be the heart of its success. The selection of teachers who seem likely to be the best at getting across this kind of message (meaning probably those who have truly learned it themselves) and the selection of students who are most likely to be able to benefit the most from it thus receding slightly in importance. It should be said though that these selections are by no means unimportant and that without them the program would not do as well as it does.

2. of concern this may mean that the independent study program is incompatible with the general school system and its philosophy (which is to teach as opposed to the facilitation of learning in I.S.). Thus one might expect the program to do better were it located someplace away from the regular school plant. ("Do better" in the sense of facilitating the learning of the joy of learning.) However there are many problems with this that are immediately apparent particularly as regard to facilities. In effect it would probably be easier to change the school to a philosophy of facilitating learning rather than ~~teaching~~-teaching. Now this might be accomplished in more difficult and involved. The best answers would probably come out of a synthesis of the views of

Of the views of the myriad published critics of the existing school systems and programs.

3. It may mean that any gifted program is doomed to eventual failure if the programs ever become less than experimental or if it comes to be believed that the answers to the practical problems of gifted education in the program are final answers rather than just answers to the learning needs of a specific individual and "where he is at". Perhaps in this regard the advisors at each school can only hope to become more proficient at finding new answers rather than to build an index of previous answers.

8) I don't really know if the above speculations are valid. I hope to test at least some in this coming semester.

9) In reply to 6 Feb 73 A pri. I am currently writing up my research proposal. Basically it will follow the format as outlined in my letter 16 Jan 73 page 4 with the modification that questions 5 through 8 will be omitted until a later time. I will send a copy of the final proposal as soon as it is written (probably within then next two or three days).

10) re paragraph 2 of above. It could be that the "subjective" terms of ~~value~~ evaluation could be the most important. Question- could it be that the greatest benefit/success of the program is not necessarily the learning of more information over the given period of time enrolled but rather the increased motivation to learn, creativity, willingness to risk, to be carried into the greater number of years beyond high school?

11) ~~It would~~ predict that the success of alumni out of the program would be more likely to be due to these factors than to any accelerated cognitive learning that occurred while in the program. Herein might lie a criterion for judging. Does the program provide in addition this form of affective growth?

12) I think you're right in pp2 that the criterion are unstable. Like you ask so many questions! I'm afraid I don't really know the answers to them all. I have consequently been led to a train of thought. Suppose a renaissance man. What is his mind? What happens when he solves a problem? Perhaps this thinking is the ability to take the world like a picture puzzle

and take it apart and put it back together. Where creativity arises not just from the familiarity with all of the pieces but the ability to change the assemblage by interposing pieces to create new sequences (thoughts, ideas) and different pictures. A resemblance can't or would be one who would be familiar with enough of the pieces not to be lost and then. Oh well.... that an idea.

13) I think I missed the point in pp3 and 5. It seems to my 1g crant mind that if one wanted to know everything the place to start would be where that person happened to be at the moment of the decision. Where else? How else? If in pp9 you mean: "what kind of ability generates the forms of its productivity?" perhaps the answer is only the ability to learn... And if one begins to know everything from where one stands in the world what other forum is there than the world? The origin of question then might become "what kind of ability generates productivity?"

14) pp6. I can give you what I know of the reasons for I.S. but I think Mr. Lorch or Dr. Normanson could put it more concretely than I. About all I can tell you is that I.S. came about because it was perceived to be needed. There is also a historical perspective dating back to the first Sputnik and a subsequent political/educational/philosophical change in the schools resulting in greater direction of students towards college, science and engineering, and (pertaining to the the question) a tendency to look at the gifted children in the U.S. as a 'natural resource' that had hitherto been wasting away in regular programs.

15) reply to 6 Feb 73 B p.6

"What do we mean by lateral extension?": What I envision as the lateral extension is the extension of the circle of people communicating providing for I.S. a greater information base to tap and for the people involved in letter writing a sort of market place of ideas. In a sense the lateral extension is not stratified with graduates and students separate but globular like a star.

16) I wrote a short paper last semester on socialization vs. individualization (specifically how mother and baby interact.) I don't think that there is a teacher-learner cycle except as an infinitely small short one. In essence I think we perform both simultaneously (through feedback) so the term 'maturing' while somewhat awkward perhaps may be the best for use in this circumstance. I think that definitely there is a maturing that the program can gain from its students. Perhaps this is the symmetry you meant. Its an important idea to keep in mind.

17) re 6 Feb 73 B mid pp13

I think the numbered paragraphs, dating letters, and distribution listing is probably adequate for the moment in keeping track of relevant discussion and provides at least a reasonable means of designing distributions in lateral extension.

19) I don't think that the possible extensions that we can effect can be anything but small real extensions and activities. The philosophical groundwork should probably serve as a guide to the practical discussions and activities. After all the changes ( or innovations or addends) we hope to make in the program are in reality going to have to be activities. And as such will likely require some sort of active introduction to the students currently in I.S. other than just sending letters to P.L.L. and Mr. Lorch.

20) There are 45 high school centers. I think that in any implementation our developing philosophy and ideas should take this into account. I do not mean at this point that the activity of organizing the alumni (i.e. telling them of this opportunity) should immediately attempt to laterally expand to this dimension. Probably that would be fatal to the project. Instead I think that the goal should be to reach the alumni of all 5 centers (as well as their friends and associates who might be interested and brought in by them) by building upon a solid core of regular correspondence (as between you and I.).

21) With the existence of the entity implied above

(20): I think that within and the developing architecture of "going back and contributing" we will be providing an example (or elucidation) of the concept (or formulation) that "the only thing that matters is the independent (hunger for knowledge) joy of learning, and here is a place where this will be true," with the added implication that "here" does not denote any specific location in space but a quality of motivation.

21) As to the question of what I got out of I.S. at Claremont I think the message was essentially the same as in your experience. In short "there is an opportunity and a place to learn and to endeavor to secure all that you can." Probably this is an aspect of the whole program that anyone center. It is only interpreted, expressed, and exhibited in varying degrees from the philosophical intent by the teachers.

22) As to how the program was to work I think the keyword was "flexible". It worked in the direction and extent that one of us would (tried, could, were motivated to, and needed) take it.

23) The question has arisen regarding the problems that I.S. programs in general and specifically are having. A general description of what is meant by "having problems" would likely make it easier to discuss this issue.

24) Financial problems 1) the president's budget cuts include (to my knowledge) title I and III funds. So far as I can understand it the title III funds are specifically designated for certain programs or types of programs. This is proposed to be replaced by revenue sharing. A system that will not have this kind of specific designation. The I.S. program in San Diego was started with title III funds. I do not know how much of the present budget is still funded in this way. I would hazard a guess that it is a significant amount, i.e. enough that the lack of it would seriously disrupt or curtail the program. Again this is a guess in an area where we should have accurate information. I suggest asking Mr. Hermanson for a better answer on these financial problems.

25) 2) Just to mention the continuing trend in public voting of disapproving school bonds. This affects the whole school system especially the experimental and special programs.

26) Functional problems (or possibilities of problems)

27) If the ideological base of I.S. is as we have established it for PLES and OHS is correct the implementation must remain very flexible and experimental. This involves 1) Continuing to find new resources of information. Expand contacts with the outside world of people. Obtain access to specialty libraries.

2) Continuing to encourage special projects by students. This is perhaps the most important part of the program. It is certainly important from the standpoint that perhaps only with this aspect of the program does it become truly independent study or seminar, and not merely accelerated school.

3) Changing the reading lists and expanding the libraries. In regularly existing seminars the program should not fall into the trap of providing the same readings year after year. I seriously doubt the existence of a subject that needs to be taught every year (i.e. courses required for graduation) that has such a limited range of applicable materials. Seminar structures should continue to have the goal of not needing a teacher except as a resource of occasional information, guidance, and bibliography suggestions. 'occasional' (misspelled) is stressed. With the use of the teacher as a constant resource for any single seminar what is it but a small class with the usual lecture format. An idea for expanding the libraries might be to encourage I.S. alumni to donate course texts and readings rather than selling them to the next year's class or a bookstore.

28) Of course these are ideals biased by my own opinions of what I.S. should be but I think that at least some are generally along the right lines. It is in the sense of these ideals that the program may be slipping from flexible (experimental, active) to accelerated.

29)

29) I do not seem to imply in 28) that 'accelerated' is necessarily bad. Some students need 'accelerated' or even regular classes in some subject areas. I do seem to express the idea that if 'accelerated' is all that I.S. is the program is probably doomed.

30) This letter has taken a week to write. Involving reply to 5 letters received during the semester break, extending discussion, and typed copying of the letters received to complete the distribution pattern. In the mean time I have gotten almost 4 more they are:

17 Feb 73 a, b, c, d, e, f

18 Feb 73 b, c

20 Feb 73 (postmark)

These will be replied to at a later time (today being Thurs Probably Sat.) I have begun typing copies of the folder of correspondence and hope to have a copy to David K. within 1 or 2 weeks.

31) Please find enclosed copies of letters I have replied to and a copy of my research proposal. Replicas of this package will be retained by me

Sent to Mike F.

Sent to Mr. Lorch

love,  
Dick F.

P.S. As my typewriter has broken I will be slow in completing the distribution pattern in the next letters. Please bear with the difficulty.