

# DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 034 007

UD 009 317

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 TITLE Teacher Training and Reading Institutes in  
 Poverty Area School Districts. Evaluation  
 of ESEA Title I Projects in New York City,  
 1967-68.  
 INSTITUTION Center for Urban Education, New York, N.Y.  
 Educational Research Committee.  
 Spons Agency New York City Board of Education,  
 Brooklyn, N.Y.  
 Report No CUE-A-086  
 Pub Date Oct 68  
 Note 34p.  
 EDRS Price MF-\$0.25 HC-\$1.80  
 Descriptors Decentralization, Depressed Areas  
 (Geographic), \*Disadvantaged Youth,  
 Federal Aid, \*Institutes (Training  
 Programs), Program Coordination, \*Program  
 Evaluation, Program Planning, \*Reading  
 Instruction, \*Teacher Education, Teacher  
 Workshops, Trainees  
 Identifiers Elementary Secondary Education Act Title  
 I, ESEA Title I Programs, New York City

## Abstract

The 1967-68 Teacher Training and Reading Institutes constituted the third cycle of a program funded under Title I of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and performed under contract with the New York City Board of Education. The main objective of the training institutes was to provide teachers with training and insights particularly relevant to the teaching of disadvantaged children, primarily designed for the new and experienced teacher, but also serving as refresher programs for the experienced. The evaluation of the institute, described in this report, is based on extensive observations of the teacher-training workshop into districts in order to achieve an objective view of the program. The findings covered (1) the institute planning and structure, encompassing supervision and support, coordination at district level, program planning, and the schedule of the institutes, (2) the staff, (3) the trainees, and (4) program implementation. That the institutes were not uniformly successful in achieving the program objectives is principally adduced to the incomplete decentralization process the program underwent during its operational period. (RJ)

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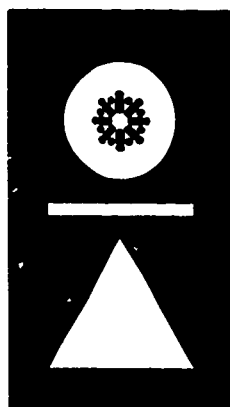
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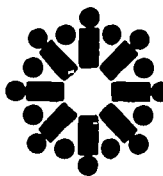
Project No. 06F68

TEACHER TRAINING  
AND READING INSTITUTES

by Marvin H. Gewirtz

October 1968

The Center for Urban Education



UD 009 317

ED034007

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TEACHER TRAINING AND READING INSTITUTES  
IN POVERTY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Marvin H. Gewirtz

PROGRAM REFERENCE SERVICE  
CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

Evaluation of a New York City school district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10), performed under contract with the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1967-68 school year.

Educational Research Committee

October 1968

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## CHAPTER I

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The 1967-68 Teacher Training and Reading Institutes constituted the third cycle of this program funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The principal objective of these programs was to provide teachers with training and insights particularly relevant to the teaching of disadvantaged children. Although the institutes were intended primarily for new and inexperienced teachers, they served to sharpen the professional skills of experienced teachers as well.

The first set of training institutes was held in the summer of 1966 in ten training centers located throughout the city. The content and structure of that initial effort were centrally planned and executed by a director appointed by the Board of Education. The following summer a new cycle of teacher training and reading institutes was mandated, but this time the program was decentralized and was placed under district jurisdiction. Under this arrangement, the board provided general guidelines, but each district was free to shape the program to its own particular needs. Eighteen of the 26 poverty-area districts decided to hold institutes during the summer of 1967 while eight preferred to start them at the beginning of the 1967-68 school year.

The third cycle of training institutes (those being evaluated herein) was begun in February 1968 under the same decentralized procedure as the second. Most districts either continued or recycled the same type of reading and general teacher training institutes they had run the previous summer or fall. Others, however, used the third cycle to add more specialized kind of program content such as music, group guidance seminars, community relations, etc.

At least one kind of training institute was conducted in 23 of the 26 poverty-area districts (although funds had been mandated for all 26). Several districts ran two or more kinds of institutes, and altogether there were 34<sup>1</sup> distinct programs operating during the spring or summer of the 1967-68 school year. The breakdown of institute by type is shown in Table 1 below.

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<sup>1</sup>This figure is three less than that reported in the March Interim Report. The decrease is due to two programs that were originally reported erroneously as being under Title I and one other program that never got off the ground.



TABLE 1

## TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES, 1967-68 SCHOOL YEAR

| Type of Institute                          | No. |
|--|-----|
| General teacher training                   | 14  |
| Reading                                    | 8   |
| Community relations                        | 4   |
| Mathematics                                | 2   |
| Audiovisual training                       | 2   |
| Conversational Spanish for<br>JHS teachers | 1   |
| Science, elementary grades                 | 1   |
| Guidance seminar                           | 1   |
| Music                                      | 1   |
| Total                                      | 34  |

The institutes were held either in one central location within the district, or in individual schools, as the district supervisor decided. Time allotments ranged widely from a minimum of three, two-hour sessions for a mathematics laboratory to a maximum of forty, two-hour sessions for general teacher training for junior high school teachers. The median was approximately twenty, two-hour sessions. The total number of participating teachers was slightly under 2000.<sup>2</sup>

The format of each institute showed considerable variation. The most usual format was that of workshop consisting of anywhere from five to forty teachers. However, the institute could also consist of individualized instruction in a specialized technique such as diagnostic reading testing, larger lecture groups, or visits by trainees to local community facilities.

Where there was a sufficient number of teachers available at a given location, they were separated into grade-level groupings. In some districts, one central location was chosen to which came all teacher trainees in the district. In other instances, workshops were set up in two or more locations within the district. One workshop in audiovisual training was held at Board of Education headquarters.

<sup>2</sup>This number is one-fifth less than the estimate in our March Interim Report (2500). The reduction is due to the reclassification of programs in two districts into non-Title I and to the attrition found in many institutes.

Generally speaking, one instructor was assigned to conduct the workshop sessions, but guest instructors and speakers were commonly found. In two instances the trainees heard a new speaker every week. Eighty-four workshop instructors, or trainers, were employed in this program. The trainers were chosen for their special competence, usually from among specialists at the district or school level. Many were assistant principals.

The activities of the institute were sometimes coordinated by a supervisor at the district office and sometimes by a supervisor located at the institute school. The degree of supervision varied markedly.

The trainees were, for the most part, new and inexperienced teachers although in several institutes, such as those in conversational Spanish and community relations, higher proportions of experienced teachers were found. Participation in the institute was on a voluntary basis, but in some districts trainees were "strongly urged" by their principals to participate. The trainees were normally paid a stipend of \$6 for each two-hour session. In some districts, they were offered the option of receiving inservice credit instead.

The first cycle of the institutes, which had been a centrally planned and executed operation, had revealed a high degree of similarity of program content and structure among the ten participating institutes. The second set of institutes, though decentralized, was carried out according to a set of guidelines provided by the Board of Education. The board's central coordinator also provided administrative support, facilitated the flow of needed materials from the board, etc.

Just prior to the start of the third cycle, however, the coordinator who had been assigned to the program took a leave of absence and was not replaced.<sup>3</sup> One immediate consequence was that no new set of overall guidelines was produced for the third cycle, even though the types of institutes set up for this cycle included more than training in reading and other academic subjects. In the absence of an official statement, the overall objective of the third cycle may be assumed to be to provide teachers with training which better prepares them for working with pupils in poverty-area schools.

Each district, therefore, developed its own particular sets of objectives according to the nature of its institute(s).

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<sup>3</sup>As this report will indicate, the coordinator's loss was severely felt. The lessons to be derived here concerning the transition to general decentralization will also be discussed herein.

## CHAPTER II

## EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODS

The most valid criterion for evaluating any teacher training institute is the extent to which the material and techniques learned are brought into the classroom. To investigate this criterion one would need to make observations of the trainee's classroom activities and obtain some measure of the impact of these activities on his students. Such assessment assumes a control group against which the trainees may be compared, and ideally, a pre- and post-measurement on both experimental and control groups. Budgetary and time considerations effectively precluded this preferred approach to the evaluation.<sup>4</sup>

Two other approaches to the evaluation are possible. The first is a survey of the trainees and staff of the institutes to determine their own opinions of the program. Essentially a "self-evaluation," this approach, which has all the advantages as well as disadvantages of a subjective appraisal, had been employed by the writer in his evaluation of the 1966 summer institutes and by the evaluator of the 1967 summer institutes. Since the results of these surveys showed a marked similarity from year to year, it was considered unrewarding and repetitious to use this method a third time.

The other approach -- and the one taken in the current evaluation -- is extensive observations of the teacher-training workshops by experts and in an effort to achieve an objective view of the program. Three qualified observers were employed to carry out this task.

The observation staff consisted of a former high school principal, a former elementary school assistant principal, and a college diagnostic reading instructor, who had prior experience in the school system. To the extent feasible, each was assigned to observe institutes most closely paralleling his own educational experience.

The funds allocated for this project allowed for a total of 22 observation visits. In selecting programs for visitation, the observers

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<sup>4</sup>As is too frequently the case in Title I programs, delays in funding seriously impairs action on both administrative and research matters. In the present instance, the evaluation assignment was made just two weeks prior to the start of the institute cycle.



concentrated on those which offered the basic kinds of reading and teacher training and were considered, accordingly, more typical of the project as a whole. The specific districts for observation were chosen at random.

In order to acquire a more reliable picture of a given district's program, the observers made at least two visits. Generally, one of these visits took place early in the cycle and one toward the middle or end. Ten districts were visited in all.

In a typical visit, the observer arrived at the institute early enough to query the individual in charge on basic factual data such as attendance, makeup of the trainee group, schedule of program, feedback to trainee's school, etc. At the same time, the observer obtained from the institute director copies of materials distributed to the trainees. (If a set of materials was not immediately available, he would arrange to have it sent on later.) During, and often following, this preworkshop period, the observers informally discussed reactions to the institute with staff and trainees. The observer's writeup of his visit followed the topical outline of his guide (see Appendix A) and contained supporting details for his evaluative comments.

Unlike the 1966 institutes, whose standardized content made it feasible to use a single instrument<sup>5</sup> across all ten centers, the diversity of the current institutes made it impossible to use one measure which would apply equally to the content and format of all programs. Instead, the guide employed by the observers was concerned primarily with the pedagogical technique and the learning atmosphere. Critiques of more specific content and format leaned heavily upon the knowledgeability and experience of the individual observer.

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<sup>5</sup>The Teacher Attitude and Information Inventory, constructed by the writer in his evaluation of the 1966 Summer Institutes for Teachers of the Disadvantaged.

## CHAPTER III

## FINDINGS

Because the approach used in the collection of the evaluation data was more qualitative than quantitative, and because the total sample is so limited, no attempt will be made to affix percentages to various aspects of the findings. To do so, in our opinion, would give an impression of numerical accuracy that is inappropriate for these kinds of data. Instead, the observers' insights will be discussed in qualitative terms that we hope will provide a meaningful and accurate picture of the program in all its aspects.

Whether or not a teacher-training program realizes its stated goals depends on many interrelated and interacting variables, such as the caliber of the training personnel, the extent of institute planning and preparation, the basis for trainee participation, etc. This report will attempt to deal with each issue separately while taking note of the interconnections among them.

## INSTITUTE PLANNING AND STRUCTURE

Supervision and Support

Under the current decentralized arrangement, the Board of Education provided only the broadest kind of guidelines for the goals and content of the institutes and left it up to the district to determine the details of the implementation.

At the same time, however, responsibility for certain administrative functions, such as payroll, ordering of materials, granting of inservice credit for institute attendance, etc., remained with the board. Unfortunately, it must be said that for the cycle of institutes under review, this responsibility was not sufficiently recognized. In the course of our observation visits, a number of complaints were heard regarding the delays in obtaining materials and the general breakdown of communication between the district and central offices. Evidence of this problem was uncovered in our initial contacts with the district offices last February and was reported in the Interim Report prepared at that time. The source of the problem was that the individual who had been assigned to coordinate the program at the central office took a leave of absence just as the third cycle got underway and was never replaced. Thus an observer reported:

"Resentment and disappointment was expressed at the lack of communication and interest on the part of headquarters personnel."

Another observer noted:

"As late as it is in the school year (May 6), there is still no communication between the institute and any one at the Board of Education. From February to the end of the school year there was no single director at headquarters to whom problems could be referred."

And in a third district it was found that:

"There seems to be little or no communication between the coordinator and a Board of Education representative."

A serious consequence of this leaderless state of affairs was the confusion that existed around the issue of inservice credit. Apparently some of the districts combined in one institute those trainees who were paid for their attendance according to Title I regulations and those who received inservice credit instead. Other districts did not offer differential credit to their trainees, and as a result, lost many of them to colleges and other courses.

In any event, it was clear that the current training institutes suffered from the board's inaction on a replacement for the coordinator.

In at least four instances, programs had to be revised or postponed because necessary materials were not forthcoming on time. In several other instances workshops were forced to rely on materials borrowed from other sources.

A final indication of the lack of supervision from the Board of Education is the fact that three districts did not have a Title I teacher-training program at all, even though it was mandated for all districts.

To some extent, one might regard the problems of support and supervision as almost inevitable in the transition period toward complete decentralization, and perhaps, in that goal lies their solution. At the same time, the need for a central office for support and resources can be ignored during a transition period only at the risk of creating more problems and frustrations for an already overburdened staff.

As one of the observers remarked:

"At a time when there is general support for the idea of decentralization as a panacea for educational shortcomings, it should be noted that some failure in communication with a central authority at the Board of Education played its part in preventing the Teacher Training and Reading Institute project from achieving its maximum potential."

#### Coordination at the District Level

As previously noted, the major responsibility for the planning and administration of this cycle of the Title I teacher-training institutes lay with the district office. From the observations made in 10 of the 23 districts conducting institutes, one receives a mixed picture of how well the districts carried out this responsibility. In several districts the program was obviously well planned and tightly organized, either by one person at the district office assigned to coordinate several workshops or by the individual who had ultimate responsibility for running the one workshop designed to serve the entire district. Usually these individuals had previously been in charge of ongoing teacher-training programs in the district or had directed one or both of the preceding Title I institutes.

In a few districts, however, it was apparent that once the individual undertook the assignment of organizing a training institute in his district, he could count on little additional assistance from the district office. For example, one observer noted:

"There is no evidence at the local level of any direction (instruction, request for progress report, evaluation, etc.). There is only slight or indirect feedback to the District Superintendent."

In another instance, where there was a change of institute director in the middle of the year, the observer reported:

"The present coordinator received no instructions or money for materials for this group. He has not made any requests in that regard, nor is he following through to find out if there is money available."



A third example illustrates how a relatively inexperienced teacher of diagnostic reading tests was essentially left on her own to set up and administer a district-wide program:

"The [instructor] seems to encounter difficulty in scheduling conferences with teachers, and my impression is that most of these meetings are arranged informally and held rather on the spot. I feel this is too haphazard and does not lend itself to effective training."

Since a primary function of these institutes was to introduce teachers to the latest advances in education, it was desirable to have institute learnings disseminated as widely as possible. Again, the observers reported that usually such dissemination, if it occurred at all, was fortuitous rather than planned. This is not to say that the institutes' impact was limited to those individuals who attended. The enthusiasm evidenced by many participants must have inevitably spilled over to others in their home schools.

Finally, there was the issue of coordination of the institutes' programs with ongoing supervision at the trainees' own schools. The observers noted there was need for more effective correlation of the training of inexperienced teachers. No trainee voluntarily mentioned any help or advice given by his own school's supervisor, which either supported or contradicted what was being taught at the institutes. Thus there was no evidence that the day-to-day supervision in the schools built upon or referred to the work at the institutes. Although we may assume that individual trainees were likely to have spontaneously discussed institute learnings with their supervisors, it is clear that there was little formal attempt to coordinate these two training situations.

#### Program Planning

Not unexpectedly, the extent of planning within a given institute was highly correlated with the degree of supervision. The majority of institutes reflected a good deal of preparation and planning by the coordinator and staff. Some typical observers' comments on this aspect are:

"The institute showed definite structure, preplanning, and direction for the 15 sessions of instruction."

"The content of the institute is cooperatively planned and the plan allows adequately for evaluation and modifications. The periodic meetings of the instructors with the coordinator are used in part for this purpose. Written suggestions requested from the trainees are carefully screened and incorporated if they focus on the primary purpose of the institute."



"The plan of instruction is comprehensive. It makes provision for evaluation and practical problem solving."

"The coordinator personally met with the administration and parent groups of each of the schools involved, orienting them to the purposes and goals of the project and enlisting their cooperation."

Among the remaining institutes, the program planning was more loosely carried out, and in three cases, it seemed to be almost haphazard. The following observations illustrate the lack of planning found in these few instances:

"This session gave ample evidence of the weakness of organizing an omnibus type of training program with ten topics listed and ten different speakers. This type of organization might work by providing some orientation to succeeding instructors as how to avoid the errors made in this session."

"The fluidity of the session plans makes it difficult to follow in sequence or to be assured of continuity."

#### The Schedule of the Institutes

All but a few of the institutes were scheduled to meet for two hours per week starting somewhere between 3:00 and 3:30 P.M. When the institute was located in the teacher's own school or within a few blocks of it, this time schedule presented no problem. In several districts, however, some teachers had to travel a considerable distance to a centrally located building. Inevitably, this meant delaying the proceedings or having latecomers arrive as much as one-half hour after the appointed time. The dilemma faced by some of these centrally located programs was that too few teachers were involved in the institutes to allow for a more decentralized arrangement. Institute sessions rarely ran beyond 5:00 P.M. in deference to teachers' family obligations and travel time. Thus the observers noted that trainees frequently did not have the benefit of a full two-hour session. In view of the fact that teachers are usually tired at the end of a day, perhaps it would be just as well to plan for less than a two-hour session, in any case.

#### THE STAFF

In the overall opinion of the observers, the staffing of the third cycle of teacher-training institutes was of generally high

caliber. The competence, diligence, and enthusiasm of the trainers were cited frequently in the observers' reports. This is not to say that, compared to previous evaluation reports, every trainer at every institute was a master teacher, but there seemed to be less criticism of the level of instruction taking place in the third cycle than in the previous two cycles. Because we do not have sufficient data on specific personnel, it is difficult to know whether this improvement was due to the fact that many trainers had more experience after two previous go-rounds or whether there has been a selection process taking place which, in time, is yielding more qualified personnel.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note here that the issue of staff competence is being considered apart from program content. That is, one may have competent trainers, but the focus of their efforts may not be as relevant to the primary objectives of the institutes as one might wish. More will be said on this subject later on.

The following quotations from observers' reports illustrate their positive evaluation of the great majority of the institute training staff:

"The instructor, Miss . . . , was a sympathetic, warm, and understanding person. She infected the trainees with her love for children and with empathy for disadvantaged children. She provided the group with practical help arising from 35 years of experience...."

"The instructor in each of the three groups visited [Ed. note: within one institute building] was prepared, fluent, competent and very serious in regard to teacher's responsibility toward the pupil."

"The instructors were adept in the mechanics of the equipment. They demonstrated the advantages of each machine and highlighted its suitability for specific areas and types of instruction. Demonstrations were carefully planned...Trainees were given the opportunity to operate and make use of equipment under expert supervision."

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<sup>6</sup>That institute staffing was generally good is all the more impressive because of the late starting date. Eight districts had decided to use the funds allocated in the spring of '67 to hold their second cycle in the fall of 1967, instead of the summer. All others had to await the funding of the third cycle before they could begin staffing in the fall, and as noted above, final approval of the program did not take place until January or February of 1968. By this time, of course, many potential trainers had made other commitments to college courses or other Title I projects.

"I was particularly impressed by the understanding and knowledge of the corrective reading teacher, Mrs...."

"Mrs.... is a very personable individual obviously in love with her job and her children and possessing the quality of infecting others with the possibility of science as a center of interest for children in early childhood classes."

"The instructors observed seemed to be competent, confident and knowledgeable. They were accepting and open-minded in the question and discussion periods."

Typical of the smaller number of negative evaluations of the trainers are the following comments:

"From our conversation as well as from observing Mrs.... during her discussion with a classroom teacher, I felt she could not adequately explain these [diagnostic reading] materials. In this discussion, she seemed to me to rely too heavily on the importance of the material, per se, rather than placing the emphasis on sensitivity to the child's needs and how to help him overcome his difficulties in a classroom setting."

"The only response to Miss Y was quiet listening. She virtually limited her effort to the reading of the items and made brief and ineffective comments. She gave few or no concrete suggestions to explain the items nor did she elicit a single question or comment. She might just as well have handed out the hectographed material and dismissed the group."

"...the trainer was so involved in the recital of her experiences that she missed many opportunities to be of help to these inexperienced teachers."

There were two categories of outside speakers: educational specialists, usually members of a college faculty, and representatives of the community who were either professionals or lay persons. In their institute visits, the observers saw one of the first and three of the second. Obviously, this is too small a sample on which to base any broad generalizations. Nonetheless, it might be useful to report the observations of these sessions as illustrations of the possible advantages and disadvantages found in the use of outside speakers.



The presentation of the educational specialist, a college professor of elementary education, was generally well received by the trainees and well regarded by the observer. It appeared to be a useful complement to the week-to-week instruction provided by the institute staff, particularly in terms of merging theoretical understanding with practice in the teaching of reading.

In the words of the observer:

"This session was a bridge between college education courses and realistic, on the job teacher training and practice. Trainees asked questions that frequently required reconciliation or modification of theory and practice."

Armed with expertise on the very latest research findings and the sensitivity to an area that comes only through complete immersion in it, the specialist is expected to bring fresh insights and innovative suggestions to a workshop program. Although it might be somewhat confusing to an inexperienced teacher to hear a specialist express some viewpoints at variance with board guidelines, in the long run it may still be worth more to have the new teacher maintain an open mind on the subject than blindly to follow dogma. And we need not belabor the point that there is value in exposing the more experienced teacher to a specialist in his field.

Of the three other specialists observed, two were professionals associated with community agencies and one was a lay member of a community group. One professional's presentation was essentially an informative account of how a neighborhood service center operates and what opportunities exist for liaison with the schools. In the observer's opinion, it was "an interesting and productive session with a competent speaker who acquainted the teachers with some of the many problems of the people in the community."

The remaining two invited speakers dealt with the topic of the relationship between the community and the school. Granted the sensitivity of the topic at this juncture in time, it was apparent from the reports of the observers that in both instances, an opportunity for a constructive dialogue was lost, and the net result of these sessions may have been more negative than positive. In each case the speaker addressed the full institute body after the trainees had already spent one of the two scheduled hours at smaller workshop sessions; in each instance there was little or no time left at the end of the presentation to allow for a meaningful exploration of the many stimulating, provocative, and challenging statements made by the speakers. The observer reported:

"The session was concluded hurriedly on an undesirable note of ambiguity, error, indecision, shaken confidence and even some hostility. To a degree, this negates the advantage to a newly appointed teacher, of exposure to a different point of view."

Such reactions to talks by community people may occur even with ample time set aside for discussion. But precisely because feelings are so strong, it is important that lines of communication be open between teachers and community and that the conditions for the dialogue be as fruitful as possible. In the observers' judgment, and the writer's, the setting of a teacher-training institute provides a good opportunity for such dialogue. It seems reasonable to devote at least several sessions of each institute to this type of content and to follow through, perhaps, with teacher visitations to community centers.

#### THE TRAINEES

The lack of a clear directive from central headquarters on the issue of inservice and salary differential credit resulted in an unfortunate competition for attendance at teacher-training courses. Legally a teacher cannot be paid a stipend under Title I and receive differential credit at the same time. But what was not clarified was whether both types of trainees could participate in the same course, one receiving the stipend and the other the credit. Apparently several districts thought this could be done, but most did not. A large number of teachers, who might have registered for a training institute under Title I, chose instead equivalent courses leading to inservice and differential credit. Some of these courses were at local colleges; others met in the same building as the institute.

From discussions with institute staff and trainees, the observers drew the following conclusions:

1. The most successful workshops seemed to be organized around fairly restricted grade-level groupings. Where alternative training courses were available at a given time, it became difficult to find enough teachers from a given grade level to constitute a workshop group.

2. As a corollary to the above, if only one training group were held in a school it could be staffed by the very best master teachers available, who would confine their efforts to those grades in which they have most experience.



3. With a sufficient number of teachers to form grade-level workshops in each school (or even in two or three closely clustered schools), there would be no problem of travel time and delayed workshop starts.

4. With workshops organized on a school basis, the issue of feedback and continuity of training would essentially be resolved. (In all likelihood the institute's trainer would be a supervisor at the same school.)

The great majority of the trainees seemed to be motivated by the desire to receive credit for the course rather than for the stipend it provided, and many dropped out at the end of the second cycle held in the fall in order to sign up for a credit course. Thus, at one of the best institutes held, the observer reported:

"Newly assigned teachers prefer to take college courses leading to the M. A. degree, which they can use for a salary differential. There are several other reading courses being given in the district that can be used for increment credit."

Nothing said thus far should be misconstrued to mean that most trainees attended the institutes merely to receive inservice credit or a stipend. Although receiving credit was an important consideration, the majority of trainees, particularly the very inexperienced ones, looked to the institute to provide much needed professional assistance as inferred from the following comments of the observers:

"[In this second visit to the institute], the attitudes and participation of institute trainees continue to be at a high level -- serious and professional."

"I was impressed with their sustained interest in the institute and with their professional attitudes and efforts towards self-improvement. The trainees feel the institute has definite value for them. It affords them an opportunity to have professional contact with colleagues in a situation conducive to a give and take exchange of ideas. They can get help and answers to their immediate problems related to instruction or classroom management."

"On the basis of my observation, my impression is that the teachers were helped in this session and that they looked forward hopefully to succeeding lessons."

"The teachers were interested in this task [a vocabulary analysis of the Primary I and II levels of the Metropolitan Achievement Test] and worked beyond the stipulated hour to finish the analysis."

"Their voluntary attendance [even considering a \$6 stipend] after a day's work, in many cases under exceedingly difficult circumstances, attests to their interest in self-improvement. Many inquired where they could purchase with their own money, some of the supplementary materials for audiovisual instruction."

An objective account would also have to note that a number of the trainees displayed their marked lack of interest in the workshop proceedings by reading newspapers, filling out tax forms, etc. In all fairness, however, this reaction was observed mainly in the less well-run institutes. We believe that the great proportion of trainees came to the institutes highly motivated toward self-improvement, and in most instances, these trainees felt they derived benefit from the experience.

#### PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Given the foregoing positive and negative assessments of the institutes, it is not surprising that the workshops displayed a wide range of trainer-participant interaction. At most institutes -- and particularly at those in which the size of the group was reasonably small -- a real "workshop" atmosphere was achieved. The interaction between the instructor and the trainee in these groups was at a high professional level, and it was clear that the participants were deriving palpable benefits from the experience.

The following observers' reports were typical:

"The trainees participated actively and enthusiastically. They really contributed to the progress of the session...Questions, discussion and interpretations were freely exchanged among the trainees and between the trainees and instructors."

"Mr.... then went around the group of teachers seated in a circle giving each a chance to make comments; for the rest of the hour there was free and frank discussion of the methods used."

"The teachers actively participated in the discussion. There appeared to be much cohesiveness within the group and a genuine desire to learn more about properly diagnosing the needs of and helping individual children within their classes."

"The ambience in both institute groups was professional -- in a relaxed informal workshop manner. The instructors kept the pace brisk. The trainees asked questions, contributed to free discussion, offered individual points of view, expressed dissenting and supportive opinions, and exchanged classroom experiences."

Regrettably, the excellent teaching atmosphere found in the institutes described above was not achieved in all instances. Partly, this was due to the style of the trainer. Several trainers tended to dominate the session while others had a soporific effect on the already fatigued teachers.

In at least several instances, however, the difficulty was one of timing -- attempting to jam too much into the allotted period and leaving no opportunity for the exploration of concepts and the interchange of experiences, which has in the past been reported as a most valuable aspect of these institutes.

Finally, it appears that the nonhomogenous grouping of trainees (covering many grade levels or a wide diversity of subject areas), also had its impact on the workshop atmosphere. If the subject under discussion was not completely relevant to a trainee's classroom experience, or if the trainee did not have the background to absorb the material (e.g., teachers of vocational subjects studying complicated primary reading concepts), there was bound to be difficulty in communication.

Some of the observers' comments follow:

"The teacher's sincerity got across, [but] no feedback was in evidence. The teacher ignored the statement by the supervisor that the members of the group were prepared to tell about their problems."

"While Mrs...may be effective in diagnosing children's reading problems and helping them, she did not involve the trainees in direct participation in the work of this session. There are many ways in which reading skill is helpful in mathematics...but she missed many opportunities to be of help to these inexperienced teachers."

[Regarding an invited speaker] "The full session was consumed by the speaker with no real time left for discussion and exchange of viewpoints. Direct questions from the trainees were not handled well. In some cases he was abrupt and aggressive in response to the questions."

The observers regarded the offerings of the majority of the institutes as being of practical value to the trainees. This judgment was based on their own evaluation both of the program content and of the response of the trainees. At the same time, it was clear that the observers felt many institutes should have given even more emphasis to the special needs of the disadvantaged.

The full potential of the type of practical assistance that the training institute is capable of offering is indicated by the following observers' comments:

"The specific and direct questions asked by the trainees in relation to their own classroom problems and to the non-English speaking pupil would indicate that the institute is helping them find answers and that there is a carry-over to the classroom. It is also clear that trainees have been sharing institute materials and learnings with their [home school] colleagues."

"In each group visited within the institute the emphasis on the needs of the disadvantaged and the non-English speaking pupil was consistent. The focus was on the learning process of such pupils in distinction to cut and dried teaching techniques."



"Tips, methods, and techniques for teaching disadvantaged children took much of the time of this session. Trainees were not only given instruction in methodology but constantly were given good understandings of human relations and behavior."

On the other hand, the institute that was generally doing a good job of teacher training, but whose focus on teaching the disadvantaged was somewhat blurred, was described in this comment:

"The trainees are being given instruction in basic reading techniques that are the real foundation for instruction of all children and it is therefore worthwhile. However, it frequently appears that the special purpose of the institute becomes incidental, tagged on, or taken for granted."

Those workshops that were best planned and conducted were most likely to be the ones in which the most useful materials were distributed. A characteristic of the better workshops (where materials had not arrived at the time the observations were made) was the readiness of staff and trainees to develop their own hectographed materials, often at great investment of time and energy. Thus one observer commented:

"I was given a folder of worksheets developed by the teachers which were intended to reinforce the reading skills of first and second graders. These were an outgrowth of the discussions at the workshop and were prepared during the teachers' free time. They seemed to be, for the most part, well thought out in terms of skill to be taught."

And another reported:

"Instructors prepared materials for the trainees. A \$400 allotment of materials ordered in advance for the summer session has not been received to date. There is no allotment for supplies, e.g., stencils, mimeograph paper, etc. The coordinator depletes her own school supplies for institute purposes."

There were marked differences among workshops in terms of the availability and usefulness of the materials distributed. In several instances, no material at all had been distributed at the time of the observer's visit.



A variety of methods was used to reach the objectives of the institutes. Already mentioned was the use of outside speakers who addressed the entire institute or one class. Demonstration lessons were given with trainees usually acting as pupils. Visual aids were demonstrated in one session observed and were scheduled as a topic for discussion in others. Trainers described techniques for employing special materials distributed to the groups and clarified the use of other materials in teaching a particular subject or a broad spectrum of subjects.

Methodologically, a most serious weakness of the institutes was the relatively few demonstration sessions employing a class of children.

It would appear from observers' comments that when a session was well-conducted, some of the most fruitful training took place when children were present. Recognizing the difficulty involved in asking children to remain after the normal school day, one might even consider paying children for being available to a workshop.

## CHAPTER IV

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall conclusion to be drawn from the data is that the 1967-68 Title I Teacher Training Institutes were not uniformly successful in achieving the program objectives. An evaluation of each institute's performance made by the writer on the basis of the observers' reports indicated that about one-third of all the institutes visited successfully carried out meaningful teacher training with special emphasis on the teaching of the disadvantaged. Somewhat over a third provided good "bread and butter" training (in the words of one observer), but did not sufficiently attend to methodology and understandings of special relevance to the disadvantaged. The remaining institutes visited fell short in both respects.

Most of the reasons for this outcome have already been discussed among the findings presented above. It would be useful, however, to restate and integrate them in this final section and to offer a set of recommendations based on them.

The difficulties resulting from the "semidecentralized" state of the program have been spelled out in some detail. As the process of decentralization goes on, administrative matters such as payrolls, ordering of materials, decisions concerning differential credit, etc. will probably be more efficiently handled. At the same time, one can detect in the disparity of approaches to district organization and planning, a need for continuous information and guidance for those districts requiring assistance. This assistance could take the minimal form of providing a central repository of all new approaches successfully employed in teaching the disadvantaged, including complete sets of materials, types of equipment, etc. In anticipation of a large number of innovations in methodology arising at the district level, lines of communication to this information repository should be kept open both ways so that these advances may be shared and tested by others as soon as possible. In this connection, it might be observed that one of the most fruitful outcomes of the first cycle of Title I (1966) Teacher Training Institutes was the sharing of ideas and materials in which the director reproduced and distributed to all personnel the best of the individual institutes' output. As decentralization takes place, the benefits of this sharing procedure should not be lost.

Whether this central agency would function simply as a clearing house for information or would take on other functions as well would depend, in large measure, on district needs. One must assume that every district has sufficient numbers of trained and experienced personnel to carry out a generalized teacher-training program. On the other hand, personnel capable of conducting very specialized types of training, e.g., in the optimal use of audiovisual equipment, may not be available in

every district, in which event they might then be supplied through a central headquarters training cadre.<sup>7</sup>

The principle implied in the recommendation for a centralized training cadre in special subject areas is simply that of maintaining maximum flexibility of structure in order to provide the very best teacher trainers to the largest possible numbers of trainees. The same principle should be applied at the district level as well. This might mean, for example, that for such specialized training as diagnostic reading testing, a qualified teacher would circulate among several institutes within a district rather than different, albeit less talented, trainers serving each of these institutes. The sole criterion for the choice of a trainer should be how skilled this person is in working with disadvantaged children and how effectively he can communicate his skills to other teachers. Judging from the observers' reports, this standard was not achieved in a number of cases. One might conclude that this occurred for one of three reasons: 1. In the choice of staff, greater weight was given to titles than to the more relevant considerations of teaching ability; 2. The late start of the program made for a shortage of the most qualified personnel; or 3. There simply are not that many good trainers in existence. One would like to believe it is for one of the first two reasons, not for the last, that staffing of the program fell short of highest expectations.

Related to the issue of trainer selection is the matter of the overlapping of various inservice teacher-training programs. Despite the administrative difficulties likely to be encountered in the merging of Title I and non-Title I teacher-training programs, such a merger seems to be the only reasonable procedure. In this way, the training staff would consist of only the most qualified personnel, and competition for staffing among the various training programs would subside. Furthermore, a unified arrangement would provide a larger pool of trainees from which workshops could be constructed in the more desirable homogeneous groupings. This means that the groups could be made more according to grade level. In the merged training arrangement, the trainee should have the option of taking the course for credit or a stipend -- a policy already being followed in some districts.

Although the question of time schedules was discussed in some detail in the body of this report, it is important enough to deserve reiteration here. Simply put, a teacher who has to rush to the institute at the end of a hard day's work, arriving breathless and often late, is not likely to be ready to engage in high level mental activity. Moreover, as we have noted, under the current mode of operation, the trainee

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<sup>7</sup>This is not a novel suggestion. One of the institutes held a series of Saturday morning workshops at the board's Bureau of Audio-visual Instruction, conducted by BAVI personnel.

often ends up having considerably less than the planned two-hour session. Ideally, therefore, institutes should be set up within easy access of the trainee's home school.

A corollary recommendation is that institute programs establish more realistic schedules for the following reasons: 1. It does not seem reasonable to hold more than one session per week, as happened in two districts; 2. The total number of sessions held during the school year should not exceed twenty; beyond that number, the sessions may become onerous; 3. A schedule that includes a full week's training in administrative details and classroom management, to be held before the opening of classes in September, would seem to be an ideal arrangement for new teachers. Such a schedule would provide much needed orientation to the task ahead and also allow for feedback from the actual work experience.

No set of suggestions for improving the teacher-training institutes would be complete without some reference to the program's research needs. Although certain insights may be gained from the type of evaluation that has been conducted on the three cycles of the Title I teacher-training program, the true value of the program lies in its ultimate impact in the classroom, and this impact has not yet been adequately measured. To do so would require considerably more time for planning and a much fuller budget than have been available heretofore. Since Title I teacher-training institutes have been regularly refunded up to now, it would seem that research plans may safely be made in advance. Several budget levels could be worked out depending on the scope and depth of the research, but nothing less should be accepted than an amount sufficient for the job of answering the basic evaluation question: Does the training program make a difference to the education of the disadvantaged child? Until steps are taken to secure appropriate monies and time for planning, our research efforts will continue to have a limited utility.



## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Viewed as a whole, this third cycle of the Title I teacher-training institutes was considered relatively successful in providing teachers with basic skills in a variety of subject areas. It was less successful in establishing its total relevance to the needs of the disadvantaged. Among the reasons noted for this partial fulfillment of objectives are the problems arising out of the transition to a decentralized operation and the lateness of funding.

Given the magnitude of the task before us to find new ways to meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children, and given the final responsibility of the individual teachers in this endeavor, the time has long since passed when half-hearted or routine efforts at the training of new teachers are acceptable. Many anticipate that decentralization of the school system will be accompanied by greater administrative flexibility and educational achievement. That this may not automatically follow was, we feel, indicated by the wide range in effectiveness of this decentralized Title I teacher-training program.

Perhaps the most important observation to be made is that, in spite of all difficulties, a number of districts were able to mount programs that were exciting, relevant, and highly productive. The obvious implication is that if some districts can do it, why not all? For any given district, the answer to this question undoubtedly can be found among the issues explored in this report such as degree of planning and supervision by the district office, selection of training personnel, etc. It is incumbent -- and in a real sense, urgent -- for districts with less than adequate institute programs to find out what was lacking and to seek the necessary solution. In reading the observers' reports and in talks with district representatives, one could not escape the impression that in some cases a sense of urgency concerning teacher training, at least under Title I, did not exist. (If more care and effort was being invested in other inservice courses in the same districts, this is yet another argument for the merging of all training programs.)

Anything less than a full-fledged, concerted campaign to provide our teachers with the best available trainers in the most meaningful learning situation not only does an injustice to school personnel and children alike, but exacerbates the already difficult problem of school-community relations. While some central group may continue to provide partial support for a teacher-training program, from here on, the primary responsibility will be on the districts themselves to provide the spark.



## APPENDIX A

Center for Urban Education

A1

Title I Evaluations

### Observation Guide For Teacher Training Institutes

#### A. The general structure of this institute

1. Number of sessions planned.
2. Length of each session.
3. Number of teachers being trained.
4. Source of these teachers: volunteers, assigned, paid attendants, entire district, one school, other.
5. General nature of sessions: lectures, demonstrations, films, guest speakers, visits to schools, other.
6. Any indicated plans for followup of teachers who attended the training sessions.
7. Identity of person leading the institute and of other teaching personnel.

#### B. The instruction being offered

1. Manner of presentation - characteristics of instructor.
2. Instructor's efforts at involving trainees in subject.
3. Evidence of efforts to stimulate trainees and to elicit responsiveness.
4. Utilization of variety of instructional materials: books, audiovisual aids, realia, blackboard, duplicated materials, other.
5. Utilization of variety of teaching techniques: lecture, reading, dramatization, simulating classroom situations, role-playing, question and answer.
6. Any efforts at utilizing children: either directly in arranged demonstrations followed by discussions, in visits to schools, or in presentation of filmed classroom situations.

7. Any provision for testing or receiving feedback from trainees, with views to restructuring sessions according to needs indicated.

C. Reactions of the trainees of the Institute

1. Attitudes evident toward a) instructor, b) classmates, c) subject.
2. Degree of evident involvement in subjects being taught.
3. Attendance at sessions.
4. Evidence of carryover into own classroom procedures.
5. Trainee reactions to possible changes or additions for future institutes.

B1

APPENDIX B

Staff List

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CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION  
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE  
ESEA TITLE I EVALUATIONS

S U M M A R Y   R E P O R T

Date:    October 1968

Project:    Teacher Training and Reading Institutes in Poverty Area  
(06F68)      School Districts

Evaluation Director:    Marvin H. Gewirtz  
                                    Consultant  
                                    Center for Urban Education

PROGRAM REFERENCE SERVICE  
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PROGRAM REFERENCE SERVICE  
CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

TEACHER TRAINING AND READING INSTITUTES  
IN POVERTY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

This set of teacher training and reading institutes is the third cycle of this program under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The main objective of the program is to train teachers in pedagogical techniques particularly applicable to teaching the disadvantaged. The institutes are intended primarily for new and inexperienced teachers, but may also include more experienced teachers who are seeking to update their skills and understandings.

The first cycle of institutes held in the summer of 1966 was centrally planned and executed by a director appointed by the New York City Board of Education. Each of the ten centers in which the institutes were conducted carried out a similar program of training. For the second cycle, in the following summer, the program was decentralized to the district level, and the institutes were conducted according to specific guidelines provided by the board. In this third cycle of the program, district superintendents were allocated mandated funds and were directed to set up whatever types of institutes they felt were needed in their area. No written guidelines were provided for this cycle. While the great majority of districts continued to hold institutes for general teacher training or specialized reading training, several initiated experimental programs in such diverse fields as music, group guidance, spoken Spanish, etc. All told, 34 different institutes were held in 23 poverty area districts. Three poverty area districts did not hold institutes during this current cycle.

The institutes, generally of workshop format, ran from a minimum of six hours to a maximum of eighty hours with a median of forty hours. Slightly less than 2,000 teachers participated in the third cycle of the institutes. The evaluation was conducted by means of visits of trained observers to a total of 22 workshops randomly selected from among those providing the basic program of general teacher training and reading training. To provide a more reliable picture of a district's program, at least two visits were made to each district. The observers' visits were distributed among ten districts, so as to yield a representative sampling of the whole program.

Each of the three observers was provided with a topical guide which covered both administrative issues and evaluation of workshop process. The objective assessment made by the observer was supplemented by informal discussions with staff and trainees.

Adding to the data collected during the observers' visits, the evaluation director interviewed, personally or by phone, each district supervisor of the program.

On the basis of these observations and interviews the following findings are reported:

1. In the period of transition between the first centrally directed program and the highly decentralized program of this third cycle, the board did not meet its continuing administrative responsibilities. Thus the districts reported difficulties with payroll, delays in delivery of urgently needed materials, confusion concerning the granting of increment credit, etc. The communication problem was caused by a leave of absence of the board's program coordinator, who was not replaced.
2. Even though the majority of districts adequately assumed the responsibility of planning and supervising this decentralized program, in a number of instances the district office provided little support for the institute personnel. In three districts no Title I teacher training program was run at all, despite the fact that it was mandated for these areas. On the whole, there seemed to be little effort made to coordinate the institute program with other ongoing training programs or with supervisory efforts at a teacher's home school.
3. The teacher trainer staff was considered generally quite competent by the observers although a number of exceptions were noted too. Some districts reported difficulty in recruiting staff because of the late start of the program and because of competition for personnel from other training programs.
4. Trainee interest and motivation, which was generally high, varied with the quality of the institute. For many trainees, the institutes provided a much needed bridge between the theoretical and the practical as classroom problems were brought into the workshops for discussion.
5. Many potential trainees were lost to the program because they preferred to take college or other teacher training courses providing increment credit. Several districts interpreted the program so as to allow either a stipend or credit to be given to the trainees, but the great majority of districts did not do so.
6. In many instances, trainees had to travel fairly long distances to attend their institute. This difficulty resulted in long delays in starting time or losses of up to half an hour of training for some trainees. When a full program was scheduled for a given session, this time was badly missed.
7. In areas where a single workshop served an entire district, trainees of several grade levels participated in that workshop. Consequently, some workshop sessions were not entirely relevant to the needs of a number of participants, and this situation resulted in decreased interest on their part.

8. It was found that, on the whole, the workshops were well planned; they reflected much thought and energy expenditure by the staff. In a number of instances, the trainees were actively involved in the planning of topics to be covered.

9. The observers found a good workshop atmosphere in most, although by no means all, institutes visited. There was a free give-and-take between staff and trainees and among trainees. Several workshops, however, fell short of this ideal.

10. On the basis of the observers' reports and evaluations, it is estimated that about one-third of the workshops visited fully accomplished their goal of providing special training for teachers of the disadvantaged. In these institutes appropriate methodology and materials were introduced. Somewhat more than a third of the workshops provided good "bread and butter" teacher training, but the presumed focus on teaching the disadvantaged was often blurred. In the remaining cases, neither level was achieved.

The overall conclusion to be drawn is that this third cycle of decentralized teacher training institutes was moderately successful in attaining its objectives, but that in many districts much remains to be done. Among the recommendations made were:

1. The consolidation of all types of teacher training programs currently operating within a district. This unification would allow for less dispersal of teacher trainers and therefore, for selection of the best available personnel to conduct the training courses.

2. As a corollary of the above, more teachers would be available to form workshops within smaller grade level ranges and in more closely clustered groups. Thus two of the problems noted in the current institute cycle would be avoided.

3. All teachers should be given a choice of receiving increment credit or a stipend for workshop attendance.

4. For more specialized types of training, such as in using audio-visual aids, trained personnel should be made available from a central pool located either at the board or at the district office. During the period immediately ahead it might also be found useful to maintain an information coordinating center at the board to keep the lines open among the districts on new techniques and materials.

5. A workshop schedule that allowed for a week of meetings prior to the opening of school and then continuing into the fall would appear to be an ideal arrangement to serve new teachers.