DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 047 068 UD 011 250

TITLE	Evaluating Compensatory Education Accountability.
INSTITUTION	Maryland State Dept. of Education, Baltimore. Div. of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	[71]
NOTE	21p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Compensatory Education Programs, *Educational Accountability, Educational Objectives, Educational Problems, Educational Testing, Evaluation Criteria, *Federal Programs, *Program Evaluation, Relevance (Education), Standardized Tests, Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	Elementary Secondary Education Title I Program, ESEA Title I Programs, *Maryland

ABSTRACT

This booklet comprises excerpts from the proceedings of a conference held in Maryland to explore the related themes of accountability and the evaluation of compensatory education. Participants at the conference were administrators, teachers, aides, and parents who met in small-group work sessions. The conference is judged to have succeeded in stimulating exchanges of ideas and self-examination. In addition, several key concepts are considered to have merged as continuous themes, which should be, it is held, taken into consideration in the design of any ESEA Title I program of compensatory education: (1) basic academic skills, with an emphasis on reading and language arts, must be the focus of Title I programs; (2) the trend in compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged is toward prevention of problems rather than remediation of long-entrenched problems; (3) a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the disadvantaged is essential in preparing Title I projects; (4) the key to meaningful evaluation is in the statement of the project's objectives; and (5) evaluation instruments to be used to measure the effects of the project should be expressly and specifically related to the stated objectives and activities of a project. [Because of the poor contrast between the type and the colored pages of the original document, several pages will not be clearly legible in microfilm and hard copy reproduction.] (Author/RJ)

Evaluating Compensatory Education

ACCOUNTABILITY

Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs

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Public education is receiving more money today than ever before. At the same time, the public is discontented because the schools do not seem to be producing results commensurate with the money being invested in them. Educators are being held accountable for the gap.

Too often we, as educators, measure success in terms of what makes up a program rather than what emerges as the end result. The merit of a program is determined by the number of aides employed, the reduced size of classes, or the use of more sophisticated equipment rather than by how much the students actually learn and achieve.

Too often we establish goals and objectives for a project only to lose sight of them once the program of instruction is implemented.

Too often we design educational programs to satisfy the professional or personal needs of educators. Yet, educators are and must be held accountable for establishing and implementing programs that meet the needs of each child and the needs and expectations of his family and community.

Too often "cultural enrichment" is stressed at the expense of academic achievement. Learning to get along with other people and to develop a sense of dignity and respect for one's self and for others *is* a legitimate part of education. However, parents and legislators know that many children are not learning how to read. And, they are blaming the schools. As a result, more and more machines and privately contracted educational engineers are being employed to "teach" children.

Educators can no longer evade these critical implications of accountability.

James A. Sensenbaugh

JAMES A. SENSENBAUGH
State Superintendent of Schools

1970 marked the fifth year for ESEA Title I programs in Maryland. In observance of this milestone, the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs, held a conference in February to explore the related themes of accountability and the evaluation of compensatory education.

Each local subdivision was invited to send a team of Title I administrators, teachers, aides, and parents to the two-and-a-half day conference at the University of Maryland. Following each presentation by a speaker, participants met in small group work sessions to discuss further the topics of accountability, project objectives, needs assessment, testing, the collection of baseline data, and project evaluation. This booklet contains highlights of some of the ideas, concepts, and areas of concern that emerged during the conference.

The conference was an important first step in making those involved in Title I programs aware of the need for and means of insuring accountability in compensatory education. Hopefully, from this awareness will come even more effective and meaningful programs for the State's educationally disadvantaged.

Percy V. Williams

PERCY V. WILLIAMS
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Compensatory, Urban,
and Supplementary Programs

A Word On Accountability

Dr. Quentin L. Earhart, Deputy State Superintendent of Schools, requested at the opening session of the conference that the participants' first act be to write down in large, clear letters one word: ACCOUNTABILITY. By the end of the conference, "accountability" was echoing in everyone's ears. The topic was timely because on March 3, 1970, in an address on educational reform, President Nixon also stressed the theme of accountability:

> School administrators and school teachers alike are responsible for their performance, and it is in their interest as well as in the interest of their pupils that they be held accountable. Success should be measured not by some fixed national norm but rather by the results achieved in relation to the actual situation of the particular school and the particular set of pupils. For years the fear of national standards has been one of the bugaboos of education. . . . The problem is that in opposing some mythical threat of national standards, what we have too often been doing is avoiding accountability for our own local performance. We have, as a Nation, too long avoided thinking of the productivity of schools. . . . Ironic though it is, the avoidance of accountability is the single most serious threat to a continued, and even more pluralistic educational system. Unless the local community can obtain dependable measures of just how well its school system is performing for its children, the demand for national standards will become even greater. . . .

In the same message the President pointed out that:

> The old answer [to the question of what makes a good school] was a school that maintained high standards of plant and equipment, that had a reasonable number of children per classroom, whose teachers had good college and often graduate training, that kept up to date with new curriculum developments and was alert to new techniques in instruction. This was a fair enough definition so long as it was assumed that there was a direct connection between these school characteristics and the actual amount of learning that takes place in a school. Years of educational research, culminating in the Equal Educational Opportunity Survey of 1966, have, however, demonstrated that this direct, uncomplicated relationship does not exist.

As Dr. James A. Sensenbaugh, State Superintendent of Schools, observed at the conference, parents, legislators, the press, and the general public are expecting visible evidence of student *achievement* in return for the great sums of money currently being invested in public education. And, these groups are holding educators responsible for what students achieve — or do not achieve — in school. This is the essence of accountability and the challenge confronting all who are involved in programs of compensatory education.

Accountability For Compensatory Education

The following are excerpts from the keynote address given by Dr. Wilson C. Riles, Deputy State Superintendent of the California State Department of Education.

A NEW DEFINITION OF EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

"With ESEA Title I and compensatory education came a new definition of equal educational opportunity. We came to realize that equal educational opportunity does not mean the same educational program for each child, but an educational program geared peculiarly to the needs of each individual child—a program designed to develop to the maximum the potential of each youngster."

THE NATURE OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

"To some people, any addition to the regular school program, no matter how small or insignificant, is called a compensatory education. The resources put into the effort may be as little as $50 per child, and it's called compensatory education. . . . The average for California's Title I programs last year was about $190 per child. The most successful programs generally involved more than that."

"Compensatory education does not consist merely of reducing class size. . . . If you do the same thing with 20 that you do with 40, it's not going to make any difference."

"Compensatory education does not consist merely of remedial reading using the same instructional techniques that have failed in the past. A good compensatory program must take into account all of the factors that are impeding the child's learning process. . . . It must consider the child's health problems, his attitudes, his self-image and his lack of verbal skills, all of which may be impeding his learning to read. It must take into account the negative effects of segregation, both racial and economic. . . ."

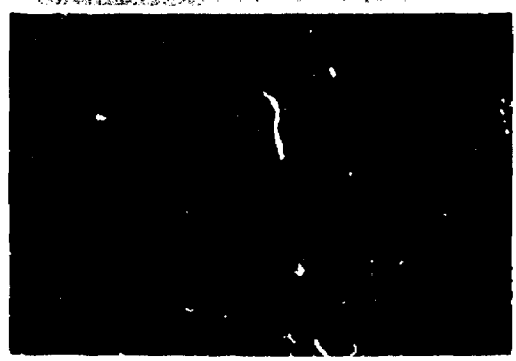
"Each child in a compensatory education program should continue to receive the services he needs until he is able to maintain progress without additional help."

TEACHERS AND COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

"Only if we have teachers who are understanding, who sense the professional challenge of working in poverty areas, and most of all, who care, will we succeed in our goal to provide the disadvantaged child with the same benefits available to all other children. . . ."

"There is plenty of evidence to show that a student's achievement level will tend to confirm the teacher's preconceived judgment of that student's capabilities. . . . Much of our problem in the past has been that educators really didn't expect children in poverty neighborhoods to succeed. . . .

"The task is not to teach down to the youngsters but to give them the experiences and the special help they need to achieve up to the high standards we set."



COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

"We cannot work in a vacuum apart from the community. We cannot be successful if the community does not have the faintest idea of what we are trying to do. . . . We cannot hope to reach the children without involving the parents in the process. . . . We need not feel that we have to do the total job. We must give parents the opportunity to work with us."

EVALUATION OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

"The evaluation report not only shows where we were but also the direction we should take. . . . Our job has become one of weeding out the ineffective practices and enlarging upon the effective ones. Trial and error was fine for the first year but not for this year and for next year. Changes in compensatory education have to be based upon the evaluation results."

ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE POLITICS OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

"I have appeared before many legislative committees in Washington and in California and I can tell you that they are interested in only one thing: *the effects of compensatory education on achievement*. . . . We know, as educators, that there are a lot of other in-puts and we should see that those that affect achievement are put in. But let us be political enough to know that legislators and the public are not going to look at all of those other things. . . . They are going to look at *achievement*, so let's be sure that we don't let that fall by the wayside.

"The public is demanding that educators be held accountable for providing measurable results in student performance. . . . Some people say that the standardized achievement test has not really reflected what children have learned, that the test is 'culturally biased.' . . . But I tell you this: standardized tests do reflect the skills and achievement level that are looked for by the colleges and the job market. . . . Unless we plan to create a separate college and a new job market for disadvantaged children, our responsibility is to provide them with the skills they need to compete in the existing ones."

". . . We wouldn't have a problem with the Congress or the President vetoing Title I money if the parents knew that Title I was being successful with their children. . . . When parents go and knock on the door, then Congressmen listen."

". . . It's tough for you in your local district to concentrate on just a few youngsters, . . . but we must say that that is all we could do, and if we show results (and the only way to show results is to have an evaluation), then we can go to the decision-makers and say, 'If you give us these kinds of resources, this is the kind of job we can do.' We must not lose sight of our goal, which is to raise the achievement level of disadvantaged youngsters."

Clear, Simple, Measurable Objectives For Accountability

As Dr. Riles pointed out, a project evaluation should show what has been accomplished (student achievement); what activities have been effective (or ineffective) in stimulating achievement; and what directions subsequent programs should take to insure continuing and expanding effectiveness. But how meaningful, how useful, and how reliable an evaluation will be depend on how carefully the program is designed and implemented. Put another way, an evaluation is the proverbial cart before which must come a sturdy horse — namely, the program itself. A horse is a complex animal of many parts, all of them essential for him to pull the cart. Similarly, a program of compensatory education consists of many interrelated components, all of which must be taken into consideration if the program is to be effective.

One of the most important components of a program, without which no meaningful evaluation can be made, is the program's objectives. A limited number of clear, simple, measurable objectives are to a program of compensatory education what muscle and blood are to a horse. At the conference Dr. Charles H. Hammer, Educational Program Specialist with the United States Office of Education, presented some ideas on stating project objectives

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

"There is a reasonably orderly progression in project planning. It begins with needs assessment. . . . If you don't begin with a needs assessment, you have no basis for formulating an objective or deciding what kinds of services to provide. . . .

"In order to insure the most relevant set of services, the needs assessment should be as comprehensive as possible, covering academic performances, physical and health characteristics, and psychological or emotional status."

OBJECTIVES

"The statement of objectives should parallel the statement of needs in structure and in detail. The more specificity that can be put into a needs assessment and statement of objectives, the more specificity can be put into a plan of services to meet those needs and reach those objectives. And this should greatly improve the chances of providing the most relevant and appropriate services."

Dr. Hammer described objectives as having three components and three characteristics, as seen in the accompanying diagram.

Measurability is the first characteristic of a well-conceived objective. An objective should be based on a stated assessed need that can be *described in measurable terms*. Dr. Hammer listed standardized achievement tests and also diagnostic tests in the areas of basic skills, psychological or emotional adjustment, and physical health as some of the tools that can be used to measure both student needs and expected outcomes.

The second characteristic of a carefully stated objective is ". . . the *relevance* of the objective to the assessed needs and the type of treatment or services provided. . . . If, according to your needs assessment, children need some kind of remediation in reading, you don't provide them with just a hot lunch and measure their progress in emotional stability."

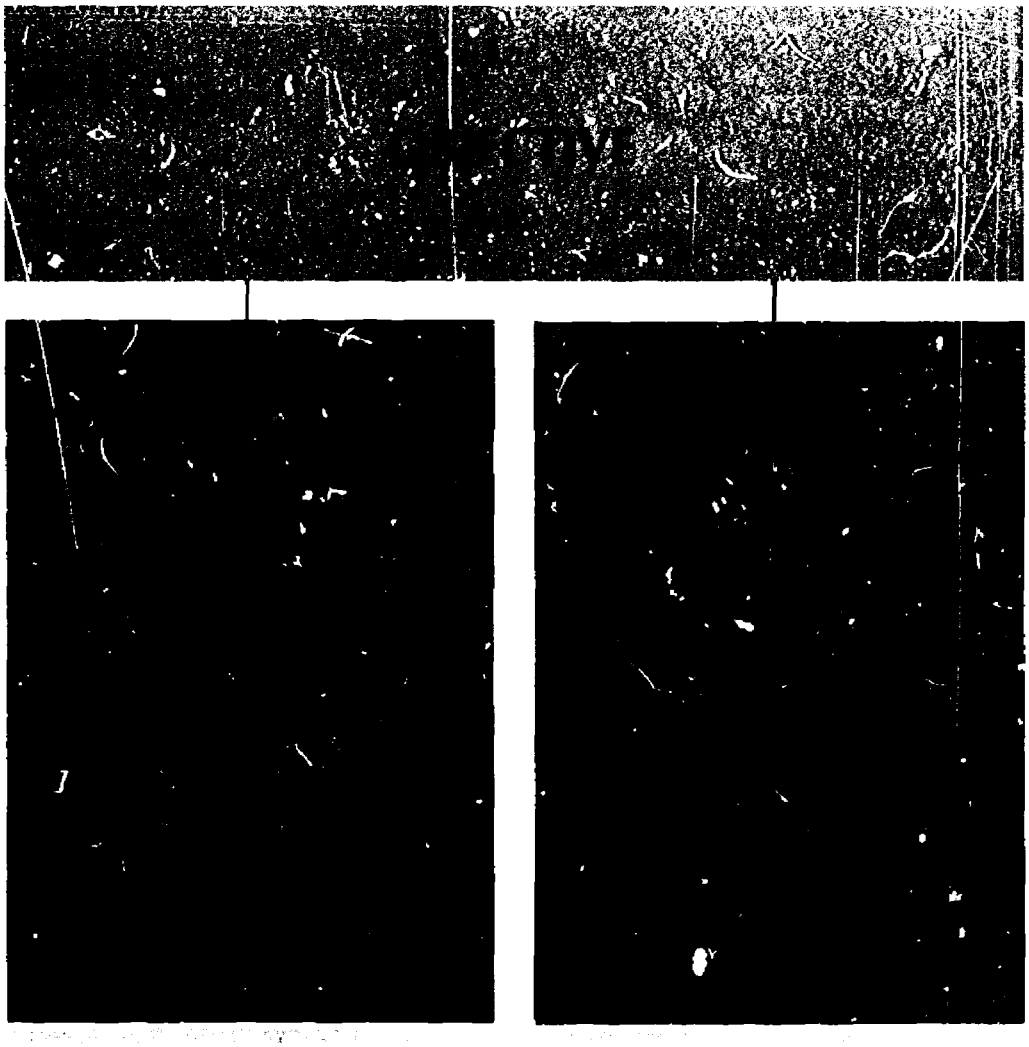
The third characteristic of an objective is *realism*: "The forecast of gains or the expected amount of progress made toward your terminal behavior status — your postmeasure — should be realistic. If the child has been falling farther and farther below the norm with the passage of time, it's not realistic to expect to be able to bring him back to grade norm within six or seven or eight or nine months."

SUBOBJECTIVES

In formulating objectives, "... we have to look at the whole array of needs and sub-needs.... These data tell us not only how deficient a child or group of children might be *in* an overall academic basic skill behavior like reading or reading comprehension, but they also tell us how deficient he is with respect to the prerequisite skills *for* reading or reading comprehension.... We are in a position to state not merely an overall objective, such as a gain score in reading, but a series of subobjectives as well, relating to prerequisite skills and to nonacademic skills...."

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION

"... if your objectives are properly stated and in measurable terms, you have in essence been spelling out the outline of your evaluation plan. Your evaluation essentially is then designed to tell you how close you have come to accomplishing each of your major and subobjectives."



1 Each project objective should state specifically the duration of project services (time lapse) and the desired outcome or point to be reached by students at the conclusion of the project (terminal behavior status).

2 Project objectives are derived from the assessed needs of the students who are to participate in the project (original behavior status).

3 Each objective and subobjective in a project should be scrutinized to determine if what it proposes is (a) measurable; (b) relevant; and (c) realistic.

Baseline Data And Instruments For Pre-And Posttesting

Gains in student achievement, or a lack of them, are what educators are being held accountable for. The public, parents, legislators, students, and educators themselves use test results as the most convenient index for determining how much students have achieved. By extension, these test results become the principal criteria for judging a program's success or failure.

Dr. Roger Williams, Chairman of the Department of Psychology at Morgan State College in Baltimore, discussed the relationships between tests and compensatory education projects. He also explored some types of baseline data that are useful in the assessment of students' needs and important in defining the areas of gain for which educators are being held accountable.

SOURCES OF BASELINE DATA

"Data provided by scores must be looked at from the standpoint of the baselines from which they extend . . We are concerned with age, with sex, with the level of education, and with the location and identity of the program of the schools where people are. We are concerned with subgroups in certain communities. We are concerned with neighborhoods. We are even concerned with measurements of the level of participation in neighborhood activities. All of these provide baselines from which it is possible for us to move forward. . . . Baseline is simply a device which says, 'We are here.' It is a device which has a particular and a peculiar relationship to objectives in saying that when we desire to accomplish a certain objective, we shall measure or evaluate the success in accomplishing it from this point.

"Baseline data may be obtained by comparing the performance at a given time of disadvantaged children against that of advantaged children, for we need to know the magnitude of the deprivations which have to be overcome. . . ."

". . . we need to understand how our teachers compare with advantaged teachers and how our schools compare with advantaged schools."

"We may obtain baseline data by comparing disadvantaged children with other disadvantaged children, for we need to know the relative deprivation they express in terms of others who may or may not be similarly disadvantaged."

". . . baseline data may be obtained by comparing the children with their previous performances in ways which make . . . them their own controls."

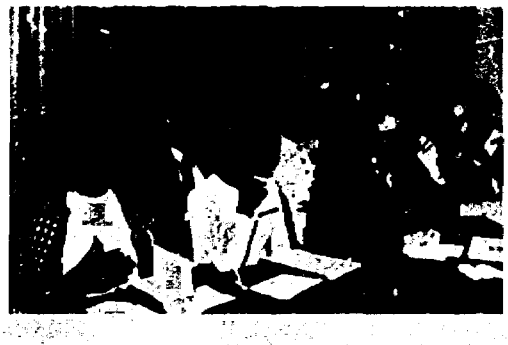
ON TEST INSTRUMENTS AND TESTING

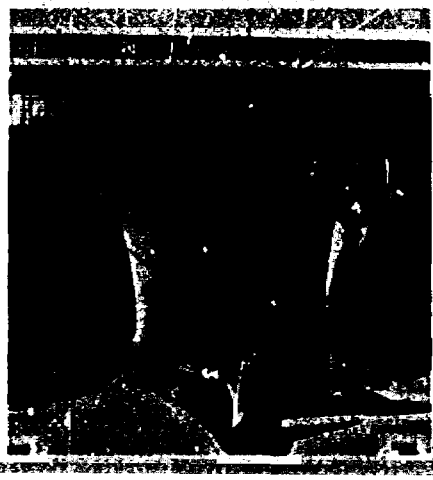
"The pre- and posttest concept . . . is useful as an instrument in just about any type of project, . . . but especially so in Title I. But the worth of this technique is based on the efficiency of test measurements taken.

". . . when we speak of test measurements, we are not necessarily confining ourselves to pencil and paper tests. . . . While these cannot be dismissed, they are not always appropriate. But a test is always appropriate. If we have no tests, we have no knowledge. . . . My use of the term 'test measurements' . . . includes any procedures by which it is possible for us to have any assurances that our pupils are changing their behavior as a consequence of the efforts we put forth.

". . . There is still room for developing creative approaches to the measurement of achievement and ability. Baseline data would become even more meaningful when determined by fresh and relevant devices and techniques rather than by the often stale and often-used standardized test samples.

"For example, more use must be made of the everyday behavior of the child as evidence of his abilities and competencies for coping with his school and out-of-school environment. . . . I am trying to make a plea for a level of observation in which it is possible to utilize observed behaviors in the preparation and construction of the instruments which will later be used to measure such behavior. . . . I fear that in many instances we have lost this rich source of information and insight. These measurements must be used repeatedly and in cyclical fashion, just as must be the case with more regular instruments."





USING STANDARDIZED TESTS

"Literature on tests, the books put out by test publishers, are sometimes extremely misleading.

. . . It is wise to pay as much attention to what is *not* said as to what is said."

". . . The basic problem in accountability is not simply testing but interpreting data . . . Interpretation is fundamental, for it is not the scores produced by the children that are significant *but what lies behind the scores.*"

"Relevant standardization will produce reliable differentiation within the range of scores earned by disadvantaged groups. But in many of the instances when tests are otherwise acceptable, standardization scores have been chosen in ways which do not make the norms applicable to the subgroups to which they are being applied. . . . You, because you have to make proper comparisons at the proper time may have to accept this responsibility of renorming tests. . . . *Every effort must be made to insist that the evaluative thrusts aimed at a project be both competent and relevant to the groups with which the project has been dealing.*"

Educational Significance And Terminal Evaluation

Dr. George T. Gabriel, Director of Educational Research for the Baltimore County Board of Education, suggested that the results of a project may be viewed in terms of their *statistical significance*, their *educational significance*, and their *relevant significance*. Once again underscoring the inseparability of the various phases of project design, he noted that project objectives must have statistical, educational, and relevant significance if project results are to be likewise significant.

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

"... We seem to have become satisfied with seeking statistical significance, wherein the results of posttests are significantly different from performance on pretests or where an experimental group performs with significant difference from a control group.... If something is said to be 'statistically significant,' we tend automatically to attach an importance to it.... The complement is also true: when a study reports results as not being statistically significant, we tend to shrug off the project.... It's important that statistical significance be attained, but beyond statistical significance, additional questions have to be asked, ... whether something is really educationally significant."

EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

"... Is not necessarily synonymous with statistical significance."

To illustrate the difference, Dr. Gabriel cited a case in which posttest scores on a test administered at the conclusion of a summer program to a group of preschool children indicated a statistically significant change from the pretest scores. Specifically, there was an overall increase of seven raw score points between the pre- and posttests and an overall change from a thirteenth percentile rank at the beginning of the summer to a seventeenth percentile rank at the end of the summer. Statistical analysis indicated that these gains were significant. However, Dr. Gabriel questioned whether or not the magnitude of gain, or the low scores even after gains were made, could be considered "educationally significant."

RELEVANT SIGNIFICANCE

"... Has participation really been relevant for the young people that have been exposed to the project?"

Dr. Gabriel cited the Westinghouse-Ohio University study of preschool programs ("The Impact of Head Start: An Evaluation of the Effects of Head Start on Children's Cognitive and Affective Development," June 1969) as one that posed the question of "relevant significance." The effects of the preschool programs, at the time the children left the program, were appraised in terms of their statistical and educational significance. In addition, studies were made to determine whether or not the programs had had, in effect, any real educational value for the preschool children by the time they reached the end of grades one, two, or three. The results of the latter studies were used to indicate the "relevant significance" of the programs, and in the case of the Westinghouse Learning Corporation study of Head Start, the programs were found to have little relevant significance. That is, children who had participated and shown statistically and even educationally significant gains in the preschool programs did not necessarily carry over these gains into the regular school program. As a result, the relevant significance of Head Start was cast into considerable doubt.

RELEVANT SIGNIFICANCE AND TERMINAL EVALUATION

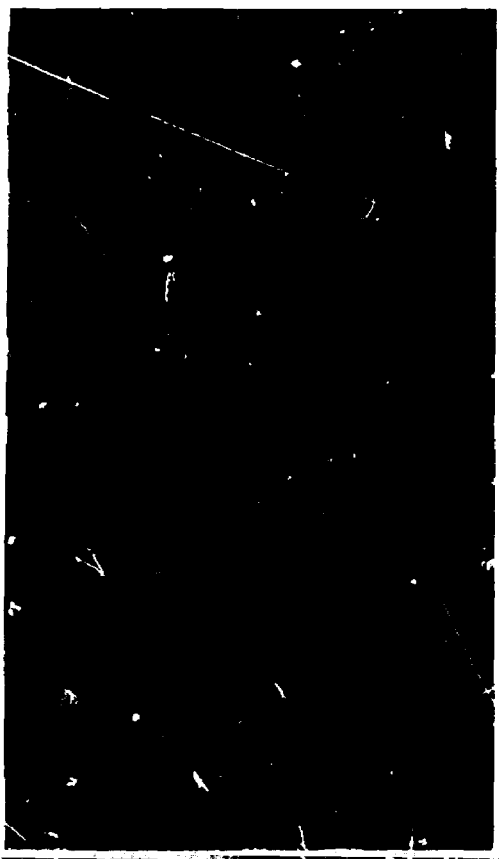
"Terminal evaluation has to do with the end of the project. . . . But, when do projects end? . . . The State educational agency and the local educational agency have found themselves in a bind of having to make a 'terminal evaluation' immediately after a project ends, on a year-by-year basis, due largely to legal requirements and guideline regulations. This fits the description of terminal evaluation if you define it in a narrow sense, and in terms of a project's statistical and educational significance. . . ."

however . . .

"Other agencies are superimposing different types of evaluative procedures on projects after they have 'terminated.' . . . The objectives that are being appraised by some of these other agencies are very different from the objectives that were originally established and stated when the program was initially implemented. . . . The ultimate questions being raised deal with the relevant significance of what happened to children in a project. . . . The President and the Congress are asking what really does happen to those who participate in compensatory education programs and they are making decisions on the basis of the answers to this question."

SOME WAYS OUT OF THE BIND

"If the ultimate questions being raised in the 'terminal evaluation' of programs are going to deal with the long-range, relevant significance of the programs, then questions such as 'how well do Title I youngsters *from* a preschool program do one, two, and three years after?' have to be taken into account in the design of objectives and services for the preschool program. In other words, in planning and designing a project, educators must take into consideration the immediate *and* long-range effects for which they may finally be held accountable."



Accountability And The Future For Compensatory Education

Dr. Elaine C. Davis, Director of the Model Cities and Pilot Schools project with Baltimore City Public Schools, summarized some of the recommendations made by participants during the conference work sessions. Among these recommendations were calls for:

- More parent and community involvement, using a team approach, in compensatory education programs.
- More publicity for Title I, to inform parents, teachers, administrators, budget bureaus, politicians and legislators of the Title I philosophy and of what Title I aims to accomplish.
- A handbook and/or training sessions, developed by the State Department of Education, to help districts write projects.

  Developing objectives.

  Defining "hard line data."

  Developing instruments other than standardized tests to evaluate areas besides academic achievement.

  Clarifying how "evaluation" differs from "measurement."

  Developing techniques for assessing community needs.

  Clarifying requirements for evaluation: Are informal test results, teacher judgment and/or anecdotal records acceptable?

- Conferences, arranged by the State Department of Education, to acquaint LEA personnel with techniques for teaching Title I children.
- A pooling of State resources to aid smaller counties.
- A conference, planned and conducted by parents of Title I children, to which educators are invited.
- A compilation of all local projects for distribution to all LEA's.
- A compilation of references on topics such as objectives and evaluative measures.
- A more reasonable schedule for reports required of LEA's by the State.
- More humanism in projects written by local districts.

  Concern was expressed over whether children's needs were being lost sight of in writing programs to satisfy regulations.

- Inservice opportunities for the team present from each LEA at the conference to work in their district with teachers, administrators, parents, and aides.
- Inservice education for teachers in local districts to improve attitudes toward Title I children and expectations of their achievement.
- More political orientation on the part of educators.

  Teachers should be permitted to help write legislation on education at both the State and federal levels.

TESTING PROGRAMS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

"Federal regulations require objective measurement of educational achievement on an annual basis. . . . The tests must be given annually — not specially designed tests — but those which will give the child a realistic view of how society will judge him. . . . Accept this both intellectually and practically and plan accordingly. . . . Read the test manuals carefully and conduct an item analysis of tests used to determine what the tests are all about and to know what is required of the children besides right and wrong answers. . . . Provide the children during the school year with activities of the types required in the test. . . . Develop informal tests that require the same types of test performance. . . ."

"In planning an informal testing program, use the following questions as a guide:

- How often do teachers measure achievement in reading?
- How is the next reading level determined? By the 'completion' of the current book in the basal reading series? By the principal or supervisor who says 'Group X has been on Book Y long enough . . . move to the next level'? Or by some more objective measure?
- How often is a child's reading difficulty diagnosed for the skills required to overcome the difficulty? Is each of the necessary skills taught and then the pupil's achievement measured as steps in overcoming the difficulty?
- If tests are 'culturally biased,' how are programs designed to overcome these cultural differences? Are cultural trips planned simply to increase knowledge about cultural centers and resources in the community, or simply to provide background for language experiences?"

TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TIME SPENT IN THE CLASSROOM

"We are in an age of technological wonders, but educationally we are still operating at a horse-and-buggy level. The basic tools in education even today are an overly loquacious teacher and a book. . . . What else can you use to point toward improved performance?

"Regardless of the similarity between two children's test scores, the chances are that each child learns differently. Could you, by treating them differently, make a difference? Could you increase your repertoire of teaching techniques and your tools to make a difference? Do you really try to individualize instruction?

"Do you know the children of today or do you think of them as you did before T.V.? Children today are more sophisticated, more intelligent, more experienced than ever before in history. They learn enormous amounts without our interference. . . . Children, now more than ever, have more freedom, are more independent in some respects, are more critical, have more ideas, have more bases on which to arrive at decisions, and they make some good ones. . . . Capitalize on the children's strengths and let them make some decisions that affect their learning."

"To improve reading, children must read, but why must they learn to read by reading what we select for them? . . . Reading materials are not confined to books or to classroom collections or to school libraries. If children know that what they really want to read is in the public library or on the paperback racks in the drugstore, or at the newsstand, they'll try to read *these* things and be anxious to learn to read better in order to read them.

". . . find new ways to use the school staff. . . . Can the staff be redeployed by means of team teaching? Or departmentalization? Or ungraded school organization? Or by other means?"

ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH PROJECT PLANNING AND EVALUATION

"How are proposals for annual funding developed? Annually, on a year-to-year basis? Or are they developed annually, but as a result of long-range planning? Do you look ahead three or five years and submit your annual proposal as a step toward the long-range goals? Do you re-evaluate the long-range goals as a result of yearly evaluations and restate them before the annual proposal is prepared?

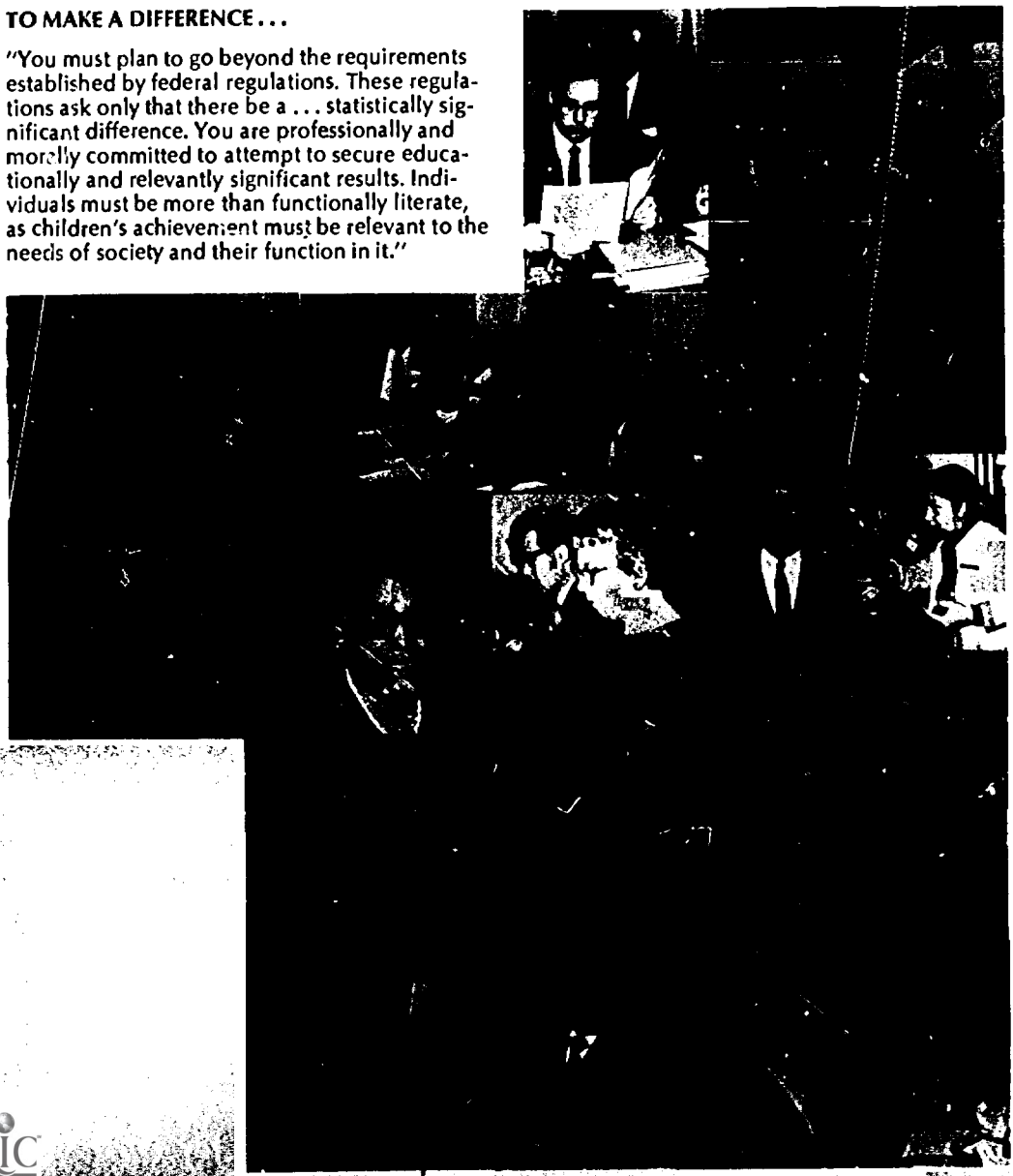
"Do you ask yourself what you would really like to know about the children in the program at the end of one, two, three, five years? Do you then collect sufficient data each year so that a longitudinal study is possible, if you decide, after the program is underway, that this is what you want to do?

"Are teachers involved in planning? Are their practical experiences taken into account? Are they aware of what research says *is* and *is not* effective? If so, what do you and they do to use this knowledge?

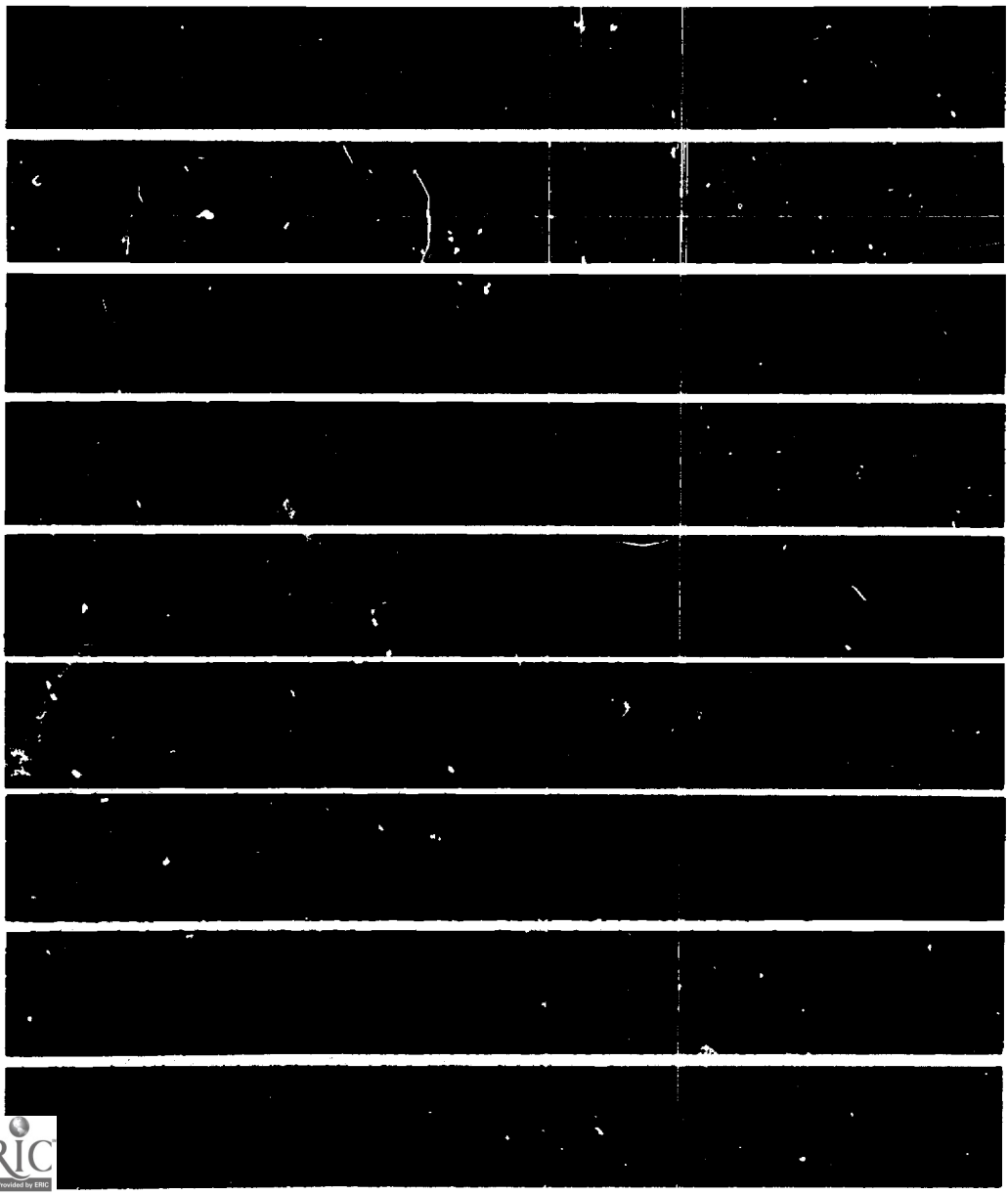
"You are continually evaluating children. How often do you evaluate yourself?"

TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE . . .

"You must plan to go beyond the requirements established by federal regulations. These regulations ask only that there be a . . . statistically significant difference. You are professionally and morally committed to attempt to secure educationally and relevantly significant results. Individuals must be more than functionally literate, as children's achievement must be relevant to the needs of society and their function in it."



Steps Toward Accountability



Afterword

The conference, *Accountability: Evaluating Compensatory Education*, was intended to stimulate exchanges of ideas and self-examination. Judging from the comments submitted by participants, the conference succeeded in doing this. In addition, several key concepts seemed to emerge as continuous themes throughout the conference — themes which should be taken into consideration in the design of any ESEA Title I program of compensatory education:

1. Basic academic skills, with an emphasis on reading/language arts must be the focus of Title I programs.

2. The trend in compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged is toward *prevention* of problems and the development of educational *readiness* in the earliest childhood years, rather than remediation of long-entrenched problems in later grades.

3. A comprehensive assessment of the needs of the educationally disadvantaged is essential in preparing a Title I project. This assessment should be based on formal and informal testing data; on parents' and the community's expressions of concerns; on diagnoses of the physical, social, emotional, and psychological state of the children; and on the observations of school personnel.

4. The key to meaningful evaluation and to fulfilling the responsibility for accountability is in the statement of the project's objectives.
   a. Objectives should be limited in number.
   b. Objectives, or the desired outcomes of the project, should be stated in clear, simple, *measurable* terms.
   c. Objectives should be determined by and directly related to the assessed needs of students.

5. If a project's objectives reflect each of the preceding basic characteristics, the types of services and instructional activities that should be provided will be clear.
6. The evaluation instruments to be used to measure the effects of the project should be expressly and specifically related to the stated objectives and activities of a project. Instruments used in posttesting should be parallel forms of the instruments used in pretesting, so that measurement of progress may be meaningful.

It is tempting to side-step the responsibility for accountability through statements of all-encompassing, vague goals; through broad or unfocused instructional programs; and through inadequate evaluation designs, unrelated to project objectives and services. But the day is past when educators can mask ineffectiveness by such evasive tactics. We have entered the age of accountability, and educators are being held accountable for whether or not students learn and achieve.