

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 223

SO 003 075

AUTHOR Talmage, Harriet; Mendelson, Lloyd J.
TITLE Project Wingspread. Metropolitan Community Resources
as the Interface for Open Communications: Ideology
and Social Studies Action Programs.
INSTITUTION Chicago Board of Education, Ill.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 13p.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Community Resources; Community Schools; *Community
Study; Conference Reports; *Cultural
Interrelationships; Educational Objectives;
Elementary Education; Experimental Programs; *Field
Experience Programs; *Free Choice Transfer Programs;
Intercultural Programs; *School Community
Relationship; Secondary Education; Social Studies
Units; Urban Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Wingspread Project

ABSTRACT

This paper, presented in 1971 at the National Council for Social Studies Conference in Denver, advocates structuring elementary and secondary social studies programs around social intelligence in the Deweyan sense rather than building them around ideology. Too often programs espousing an ideology are touted as the best approach toward solving social problems in America when in fact they soon become obsolescent, predetermine student judgements, and predispose a conclusion. Project Wingspread, a social intelligence building program with ideological roots steeped in liberal tradition, goes beyond acknowledgement of social injustice. Rather it emphasizes cross community cooperation of suburban and urban students exposing them to racial and cultural diversity. Ten program objectives espoused no single ideology: each student formulated his personal views on issues after investigating community problems. Implications of these types of exchange program are: 1) social studies curriculum development; 2) cross community cooperation; 3) alternative types of exchange programs; and, 4) role of ideology in social action programs. Related documents are SO 003 074 and SO 003 091. (SJM)

ED 063223

cm

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES AS THE INTERFACE
FOR OPEN COMMUNICATIONS*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIG-
INATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPIN-
IONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY
REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EOU-
CATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Harriet Talmage, Associate Professor of Education
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

and

Lloyd J. Mendelson, Director, Special Programs **
Dept. of Government Funded Programs, Chicago Board of Education

Ideology and Social Studies Action Programs

The social sciences have been one sector of the educational community responding to current social issues. In the process of responding to these issues, there is evidence of a tendency to adopt whatever ideology has currency and build social studies action programs around that ideology. We have witnessed, in short order, responses to social issues under such rubrics as world government, integration, separatism, ethnocentrism, black power, third worldism, and pluralism. There is an ideological commonality as each can claim some affinity, no matter how vague, to Dewey's concept of liberalism.

Liberalism is committed to an end that is at once enduring and flexible: the liberation of individuals so that realization of their capacities may be the law of their life. It is committed to the use of freed intelligence as the method of directing change ... material security is a prerequisite of the ends which it cherishes, so that, the basis of life being secure, individuals may actively share in the wealth of cultural resources that now exist and may contribute, each in his own way, to their further enrichment. (Liberalism & Social Action, pp. 56-57)

Each movement, however, has significant ideological differences with differing implications for education in general and social studies education in particular. Too often the social studies action programs, espousing

*Paper presented at the National Council for the Social Studies Conference, Denver, 1971.

**Former Director, Project Wingspread, Chicago Board of Education.

SP 003 075



one or another ideology, are touted as the best approach for preparing students to comprehend and even solve social problems in American society. Frequently the differences between ideology and dogma are clouded. This is not to criticise experimentation in social studies action programs based on an ideology. Carefully planned social studies action programs testing ideological stances must be encouraged when they are prepared:

1. to examine and act on the social and educational implications of the particular ideology;
2. to recognize the distinction between ideology and dogma; and
3. to be more than bandwagon-type responses to the latest social or political slogan.

Dewey cautions us on all three counts:

If there is danger, on one side, of cowardice and evasion, there is danger on the other side of losing the sense of historic perspective and of yielding precipitately to short-time contemporary currents, abandoning in panic things of enduring and priceless value. (Liberalism & Social Action, p. 3)

Even when social studies programs which purport to attend to social issues are cognizant of the three cautions, several questions require consideration:

1. Do social studies programs espousing an ideology, in effect, build in their own obsolescence?
2. Can an action program that is conceptualized, let us say, in the heat of the integration movement have anything to offer social studies programs when the trend may be separatism or community control?

3. Do we deprive the student of the primary social studies objective, i.e., formulating judgments on the basis of varied experiences, when a program imposes upon the learner a fully developed ideological position with set values and methods of solution built into the structure?

Is it possible for social studies programs to be ideology-free?

Nineteenth Century historians made the attempt to work from a non-ideological base. Its success proved deceptive as social psychologists sharpened our understanding of societal influences on one's perceptions. Even if it were possible to operate from an ideology-free foundation, it may not be desirable.

This report, then, attempts to illustrate how one ESEA Title III social action program attempted to resolve the dilemma of fostering an ideological position without building into it its own obsolescence, without predetermining the judgments students should arrive at through participation in the program, and without interfering with an open examination of shifting ideological trends. Project Wingspread was not without an ideological base. It was initially conceived by a group of lay and professional people from a large metropolitan community who were concerned about the racial and cultural isolation of both the suburban and center city urban students, an isolation and insulation that would prevent the student from eventually participating in the larger metropolitan community which each shares and upon which each is dependent economically. The ideological roots were clearly steeped in the liberal tradition. However, the program developers went beyond the liberal's concern with the need to acknowledge social injustices and recognize a personal commitment to metropolitan issues. They primarily envisioned a program that would develop the student's social intelligence in the Deweyan sense.

To Dewey, social intelligence is contingent on inquiry.

Liberalism has to assume responsibility for making it clear that intelligence is a social asset and is clothed with a function as public as is its origin, in the concrete, in social cooperation ... The individual inquirer has not only the right but the duty to criticize the ideas, theories and "laws" that are current in science. But if we take the statement in the context of scientific method, it indicates that he carries on this criticism in virtue of a socially generated body of knowledge and by means of methods that are not of private origin and possession. He uses a method that retains public validity even when innovations are introduced in its use and application. (Liberalism & Social Action, p. 67)

Project Wingspread had at the core of its overall goals the building of social intelligence through direct experience augmented by a substantive body of knowledge and methods of action of demonstrated social value.

In the time span between conceptualizing Project Wingspread and making the Project operational, the current ideology had shifted from integration to separatism, from the melting pot concept to a pluralistic view of America. Although individual Wingspread Board members pushed to take a stand, having grown impatient with the process of developing social intelligence, the Board as a whole remained committed to the development of social intelligence. Dewey recognized this weakness in liberalism.

The crisis in liberalism is connected with failure to develop and lay hold of an adequate conception of intelligence integrated with social movements and a factor in giving them directions. (Liberalism and Social Action, p. 44)

Despite pressures from several activist Board members, the emphasis remained testing the viability of a social studies action program which utilized the metropolitan community resources as the interface for opening communications between youth of diverse socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds while sharpening the social intelligence of the students. The

objectives of Project Wingspread not only attended to opening channels for communication but anticipated three fundamental changes in behavior:

1. individuals with the capacity to interact with other cultures as equal partners;
2. individuals who can examine common metropolitan problems from differing perspectives; and,
3. individuals who see career and educational options that may not formerly have been considered.

In order to realize the type of optimum relationships that would bring about these changes, utilizing the facilities of the metropolitan community, Project Wingspread defined ten objectives for its program. These are spelled out in the blue handout.* It is clear after studying the objectives that Project Wingspread espoused no single ideology. Rather, it opened many avenues to the student. It was the student who formulated his own position after exploring in concert with others metropolitan community problems within the metropolitan milieu. Later evaluation indicated that each student synthesized his experiences in different ways, reformulating his own self-concept. For some, black power came to have real meaning. For others, there was a need to reflect on what had been a comfortable value system. For still others, the immediate world took on a different perspective. And for some, having to open for examination beliefs and myths that give security was too threatening. Despite changing trends and slogans, Project Wingspread remained a relevant social studies action program because it transcended a specific position and served as a vehicle for developing social intelligence by keeping communications among diverse students open and permitting each participant to come to terms with issues in his own unique way.

*Supplementary materials.

Models of Project Wingspread Programs

Three basic models were developed for implementing the various programs at the intermediate, upper-grade and high school levels. Variations within each model permitted accommodation to individual school systems and communities.

1. Direct School Pairing Model. Students and teachers exchanged schools for varying periods of time ranging from a few weeks (some intermediate programs) to a full semester (some high school programs). Three types of direct school pairing were implemented.
 - 1A. The half-day exchange brought students and teachers from urban and suburban schools together to pursue study of units in Metropolitan Studies developed by the participating teachers and Wingspread staff.
 - 1B. The full day program had exchange students attending self-contained Wingspread classrooms in the receiving host school in the morning and participating in metropolitan studies units the other half of the school day.
 - 1C. The full day program had exchange students attending ongoing classes in the host school in the morning and participating in metropolitan studies units the other half of the school day. On the secondary level, the Metropolitan Studies were equivalent to earning credits in Social Science and English.
2. The Magnet or Central Site Model. Pupils and teachers from urban and suburban schools were brought together at a central site. Either a school or a community center became the base of operation.

The metropolitan studies units were similar to those used in the other models. This arrangement was used only at the elementary level. It had an organizational advantage. The disadvantage lay in reducing the possible impact of the exchange program on the total student body of the participating schools.

3. Weekly Interest Group Model. High school interest group exchanges between paired schools focused on shared interests in theater arts and social problems. The advantage of interest group model was the greater numbers of exchanges possible. The disadvantage proved to be the relatively short time available to develop meaningful interaction and no absorption of visiting students into the regular school program.

The Process of Implementing a Project Wingspread Program

The scene has changed somewhat, but five years ago, the idea of suburban schools in metropolitan Chicago and the Chicago schools working out an exchange program was unheard of. The very idea of getting administrative approval to pursue conversations, let alone Board approval to move ahead with such a program seemed an impossible task. School Board approval from both ends was a formidable enough task, let alone selling the idea to community groups, parents and students. The one major strength going for Wingspread was its grass roots conceptualization. A number of civic and community organizations, with the driving force of a handful of dedicated individuals spearheaded the project to a point where institutional approval was obtained. Organizing a Wingspread project could be a director's nightmare. Let us take, for example, a high school exchange program.

1. Despite previous Chicago School Board approval of Project Wingspread as a Title III program under its aegis, school participation was on a voluntary basis. The project director's task was to enlist the cooperation of a school principal whose school was located in a racially changing neighborhood.
2. Contact also had to be established with a suburban school district, the administrators and the School Board.
3. Discussion with local community groups and parents groups in both the suburban and city schools were held; first as an information exchange, then the dialogue period, and finally the phase bringing both suburban and urban groups together.
4. School personnel, such as teachers, counselors and department heads were then approached. A Wingspread exchange program meant an exchange of teachers as well as students. Union contractual arrangements had to be respected, entailing carefully worked out arrangements with school personnel relative to work load, salary, additional planning time, and meetings beyond the regular school hours.
5. Volunteer students had to be recruited. This meant explaining the program, screening the volunteers, and the other phases of the selection procedure.
6. Students exchanging schools in the morning had to be programmed individually into equivalent courses in the exchange school. This put additional pressure on school counselors, who not only had to find the appropriate program, help the student make the necessary adjustment to a new school, new student body and probably a

different instructional style, but additionally, help explain the program to non-Wingspread teachers who may have been receiving an exchange student in his French class or math class.

7. Sell the afternoon Metropolitan Studies portion of the Wingspread program to the social studies and English faculty of both exchange schools. The metropolitan studies carrying one semester credit in both social studies and English were approved as equivalent to the regular third year high school offering in these areas.
8. Faculty from the exchange schools, the Wingspread staff, and community participants were involved in developing and testing the metropolitan studies units. Early formative evaluation indicated that students wanted a part in working up the units. Later programs made the necessary arrangements for more active student involvement in the planning phase, as well as the implementation phase.
9. Scheduling. Buses! Buses! Buses! Buses to the school in the morning, to places of business, courts, jails, social agencies under study, and buses back to home base again.
10. Repeating once again to community groups the objectives of Wingspread. The John Birch group in one area had strong reservations, intimating that more was there than met the eye. A black power group was fearful of diluting the new found black identity among its high schoolers.

Somehow, almost miraculously, each Wingspread program managed to get off the ground.

Before turning to a typical unit in "Education for Metropolitan Living," you may want to glance at the list of units, on page 17 and 18 in the blue handout.

Next, I would like to turn your attention to two other handouts:

- a) The white cover giving an overview of the high school units
- b) The yellow booklet, focusing on one topic in the unit entitled:
"Social Anatomy of the Metropolis: People of the Metropolitan Community - Black Ethnic Study"

A Typical "Education for Metropolitan Living" Unit

The senior high exchange program included a unit on "Social Problems in Law and Justice." Both Wingspread staff and Wingspread teachers were involved in the development of the unit. It entailed a number of steps:

1. collecting printed materials;
2. supplementing available material with materials written specifically by the teachers and Wingspread staff;
3. identifying the metropolitan community resources that affect or are affected by the law as it operates in an urban society;
4. contacting directors of agencies and institutions to work out the deployment of their staff for extending the classroom into the metropolitan community;
5. working out a balance between field and classroom work to provide the optimal on-site/classroom study combination;
6. bringing together the students and cooperating agency personnel.

"Social Problems in Law and Justice" brought the Wingspread students in contact with the courts, jails, judges in chamber, police stations, legal service agencies and local community legal aid groups. The object wasn't to take a series of field trips, but to gain on-site intimate personal experience with the law as it operates in an urban society and as it is perceived by different students.

After examining the many facets of the law and organizations of our legal system through the written materials and with the additional personal experiences of talking with prison wardens and prisoners, observing a court case in action and subsequently questioning the judge about the decisions, and talking to persons seeking legal aid, the students enlarged their

metropolitan community experiential base, thus permitting them to communicate more openly with each other.

The urban students had the opportunity to examine various levels of the legal operation and to see the law as not merely encased in a punitive structure. The suburban students reported a new awareness of inequities in our legal system. Together, the urban and suburban students encountered their own feelings and fears as well as to explore positive avenues available for bringing about change.

Culminating activities of a unit involved both evaluation of the more academic aspects of the unit, the field experiences, the discussions and personal encounters, and also a self-evaluation. A mechanism for channeling suggestions for change to the Wingspread staff was an important dimension in any of the "Education for Metropolitan Living" units.

Implications of Project Wingspread-Type Programs

Briefly, the implications of these types of exchange programs can be subsumed under four headings: (1) social studies curriculum development and instructional implementation; (2) cross community cooperation; (3) alternative types of exchange programs; and (4) role of ideology in social action programs.

1. Curriculum Development and Instructional Implementation.

We found what all recent programs have found. It takes a well structured curriculum, good teachers, student input early in the planning stages, open ended approach to social issues, and extension of the classroom beyond the confines of the classroom to make a curriculum viable to students.

The patterns of metropolitan education piloted through the Project Wingspread programs can serve as a model in the development of other exchange programs. A practical means to achieving metropolitan education has been realized.

2. Cross Community Cooperation. The attainment of the degree of cooperation among people and organizations for effectuating metropolitan studies exchange programs opens the way for other areas throughout the United States to develop similar exchanges.

These relationships include:

- Cooperatively developing plans among suburban school systems and the Chicago public schools for implementing the programs in Project Wingspread.
- Making possible the two-way exchange of urban and suburban students for extended periods of time.
- Building avenues of communication among teachers, administrators, parents, and the community.
- Involving personnel of public and private enterprises as metropolitan specialists.
- Creating the relationships between Wingspread staff and private and public institutions that allow these institutions to be the extended classroom.

The project has developed the models and mechanics for a program which can be effectively applied to many urban education systems.

3. Alternative Programs. Several alternative programs are being tested in the Chicago School System. One involves utilizing the magnet model to bring together students of different ethnic backgrounds who attend more homogeneous upper-grade centers (junior

high schools). These students come from schools that feed into the same high school. This surely is putting to the test Wingspread's goal of developing social intelligence. Certainly, the results will be measurable: Has the tension level been reduced at the feeder high school?

4. Role of Ideology in Social Action Program. To be ideology-free probably means being outside the pale of society. However, social action programs can ill afford to put ideology before the fostering and enhancing of social intelligence as a program goal. In these times of racial polarization, Project Wingspread has demonstrated an effective means of establishing communications among people. This has been accomplished without abridging the individual's self identity, but rather by utilizing the resources of the metropolitan area as a vehicle for furthering social intelligence. The results have been positive. Students from every ethnic group in this urban area along with suburban students have gained a heightened awareness of what it means to live in a modern urban society.

As my last remark, let me turn your attention to two evaluation summaries, reproduced in the blue handout:

1. Summary of the second year's programs
2. A follow-up study, one year after senior high school students participated in a high school exchange program.