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ABSTRACT

The Louisville Public School District is probably the only large public school district which has systematically begun change on a "systems" basis. Top school officials first made a wide-ranging assessment of the most pressing problems in the district, developed and stated their premises, and then planned two programs. The primary organizational concepts found in Project Focus are team teaching, flexibility in scheduling, role redefinition for teachers and administrators, and community involvement. There are six Focus elementary schools. Project Impact uses the same fundamental organizational concepts as Project Focus. Impact projects are to be found in one senior high, four junior high schools, and three elementary schools. The specific goals of the two programs were as follows: (1) to improve the self-concept of students; (2) to improve pupil achievement in the basic skills of reading, mathematics, and other essentials; (3) to stimulate intellectual curiosity and the self-motivation to learn; (4) to help students become more self-directed and self-disciplined; and, (5) to help students develop satisfying human relationships. (Author/JM)

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SYSTEMS RENEWAL IN THE LOUISVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

Lessons on the Frontier of Urban Educational Reform in a Big City School District

by

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Russell C. Doll

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INTRODUCTION

Attempts to improve urban school systems have been many and varied. The government has allocated monies for workshops, institutes, special programs, and new materials and equipment. Some universities have attempted to change programs of teacher training. School districts have attempted to reduce class size and inaugurate new reading, math, and speech programs. Minority group history was introduced. Some schools began to resemble the Houston Space Center because of their new technological approaches. Districts bussed, decentralized, and created departments to handle special "Title I Schools." Teachers were exhorted to make learning more humane and meaningful and, in a few cases, were even given some help in how this might be accomplished.

Still there has been little appreciable improvement in the quality and/or the results of urban education. Achievement scores continue to lag while children and teachers flee the central city schools. School districts continue to search for "the right" program, curriculum, technological advance, or teacher in-service program, yet all involved sink deeper into the morass of frustration and despair.

One primary reason why the "innovations" have failed so abysmally is that most of them have been introduced into an already on-going social system with little or no attempt to assess the effects of the "innovations" on the social system. The innovations were introduced in a piecemeal and scattergun fashion. They have been, as Janowitz calls them, "segmental" changes.[1] Programs were piled on top of other on-going school programs. Changes in curriculum and program were planned in central offices by specialists and supervisors with no attempt made to develop different institutional frameworks within which the changes could best function.

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[1] Morris Janowitz, Institution Building in Urban Education (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969).

No attempt was made to build in mechanisms whereby staff had time to plan for implementation of programs and to re-plan if problems developed. Consequently, the programs caused more havoc than they provided help.

In Louisville, Kentucky, the Louisville Public School District has rejected the "segmental" approach and attempted educational change on a "systems" basis, closely parallelling Janowitz's "aggregation" model. Systems change necessitates a consideration of the total social system and how it is affected by the changing of one part of the system. It requires that alternative plans be made for other parts of the system so that changes can be accommodated with minimum amounts of confusion and maximum amounts of success. It also requires planning for supportive structures which will facilitate, enhance, and sustain the beneficial outcomes of this change.

Louisville, to date, is probably the only large public school district which has systematically begun change on a "systems" basis. Consequently, the Louisville experiment should be closely watched so that other districts can benefit from the promises and avoid the pitfalls.

The authors of this pamphlet went to Louisville and spent three days talking to central office personnel, teachers, and administrators. We could not carry out an in-depth examination because of time limitations although enough information was gathered so as to allow for the identification of trends, patterns, problems, and strengths. Even had there been time enough for an in-depth examination, it is still too early to make any judgment as to the overall effectiveness of the changes made or the usefulness of the "aggregate" model.

Any judgment regarding the success or failure of systems change in Louisville must wait for at least another year. But until that time it is important that what has happened, and is happening, in Louisville be given as wide an audience as possible.

The district is literally attempting to "put it all together" in their systematic approach to change. Louisville could very well serve as the model of a trail-blazing district in the implementation of systems change. That attempt alone is worth the looking into, whether or not the attempt is successful. It is hoped that the readers of this pamphlet will see in the Louisville School District's attempts encouraging signs for which they might have been searching and also gain some insights which will help them to "put-it-all-together."

THE SETTING FOR CHANGE

Like other big city school districts in the 60's, the Louisville District found itself in trouble. Middle class families had left for the suburbs and for schools on the Indiana side of the Ohio river. These schools were newer, had stable faculties and a greater tax revenue base. This exodus to the more affluent areas and newer schools left Louisville with a greater proportion of children needing extra help but with fewer resources to allow for this help.

The Louisville district, at present, has an enrollment of 53,064, a racial balance of 27,445 white and 25,619 black. Over 33% of the students are from families with annual incomes of $3,000 or less and/or are receiving welfare. The majority of the low-income students are concentrated in the central and West side of Louisville, and a disproportionate number are black.

In 1969 the Louisville School District was in trouble. A quote from a school district publication states

> 1,865 students had dropped out of Louisville Public Schools. Children have been leaving city schools in such droves for years, earning Louisville the dubious distinction as the major U. S. city compiling the second highest dropout rate in the nation.
>
> 71% of Louisville's school children scored below national norms on achievement tests.
>
> Achievement levels in reading and math had been sliding lower each year. The average city school eighth grader finished the 1969-70 school year reading at a grade level of 6.3, two grades below the national average of 8.6[1]

Superintendent Newman Walker was hired in the spring of 1969 with the understanding that he was to have a free hand in instituting change. He began immediately to surround himself with a strong staff, the key person being Dr. Frank

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[1] Putting the Educational Package Together in the Louisville Public Schools, (Louisville School District, mimeographed, April 5, 1971).

Yeager, a large and out-going, cigar-chomping, ex-secret service man who now serves as Walker's alter-ego.

With Dr. Walker's equipping his car with a telephone so as to be able to spend time in the schools, and with Yeager handling administrative details, Walker and Yeager began to plan for educational change.

> The chief architects of the Louisville educational bundle, Dr. Walker and Dr. Frank Yeager, now Chairman of School Operations, marshalled all available forces in one particular target area composed of 13 Title I schools (chosen due to the low achievement levels of their students. Another non-Title I school, Bloom Elementary, which was generally viewed as meeting the needs of its students, was chosen to aid in the dissemination of the (planned) project. While projects and programs that would aid in the entire System were sought, a decidedly concentrated effort in this target area was planned.
>
> Drs. Walker and Yeager began searching through existing federal programs to find the design necessary to implement these ideas. . . .
>
> Walker and Yeager were determined to incorporate continuity into their approach, minimizing the use of federal funds for any activity that would be unrealistic to duplicate after federal monies were exhausted. Therefore, a disproportionate segment of funding was directed into training.[2]

Walker still tries to spend the majority of his time in the schools while Yeager handles the day-to-day administration of the district. In the following sections we will look at the major changes which were implemented and how they are faring.

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[2] Ibid.

PROJECTS FOCUS AND IMPACT: AN ATTEMPT AT SYSTEMS CHANGE

The success of innovative instructional programs is dependent upon a number of well-executed procedures. The first of these procedures is to develop an adequate and accurate assessment of the problems to which the program is to be addressed. This assessment must go beyond just the mere enumerating of things which are wrong. It must be in depth and of such completeness so as to identify the reasons why the problems exist.

In identifying problems, it is important that every aspect be considered. It would do little good to change an irrelevant and outmoded curriculum, for example, unless teachers acquire the skills to handle the new curriculum. The assessment of problems should consider in depth all aspects of the social system both separately and together.

Another procedure involves the stating of premises which will guide the program planners. The premises are important in that they deal with the basic ideas undergirding the approaches which are used. It is crucial that the premises reflect reality. For example, a new program will not succeed if it is built on the premise that children reach their fullest potential when given complete freedom. This simply is not a true statement given the present knowledge of child development, parental expectations and the societal structure.

Further, the premises should not be limited to statements about the learner. Premises regarding teachers, parents, principals must also be considered and incorporated into planning. If there are givens related to only the learner and no common understandings related to teachers and others who influence the functioning of the social system, then the program developed will be "segmental." For example, if it is agreed that children develop best when they can exercise control over their environment, this will lead to a program goal related to the student. But other givens such as the fact that teachers function best when they feel a sense of worth and accomplishment also must be recognized and taken into account in planning the program. If the program goal of letting the child "control his environment" is not balanced by program planning which also allows the teacher to feel successful, then the program may fail because the teacher has withdrawn or feels no sense of worth as a professional.

The Louisville School District has attempted to develop its two major programs - Project Focus and Project Impact - following the principles outlined above. Top school officials first made a wide-ranging assessment of the most pressing problems in the district, developed and stated their premises, and then planned the programs.

The Focus and Impact programs will be described in the next section of this chapter. But first, we shall examine the problems which were identified and the premises which were stated to get a better idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the programs.

1. Problem Assessment

Problem identification concentrated upon schools in economically and educationally deprived areas and concentrated on four main issues:

(1) Deficiencies in pupils' skills/cognitive development

(2) Deficiencies in the pupils' socialization/acculturation

(3) Deficiencies in teachers' understandings/skills

(4) Lack of communication between community, teachers, and central office.

With regard to number one it was recognized that by all measures the children in the Focus and Impact schools were far behind the city and national means in their basic skills. Also, the vast majority of the students were unable to move, with confidence and success, into subjects (such as calculus and physics) which required higher cognitive processes.

With regard to number two, it was recognized that children were not being adequately prepared to participate in the society beyond their neighborhood. Further, dropout rates were the second highest in the nation and juvenile delinquency rates also were very high.

With regard to number three, district officials stressed that teachers often did not understand the problems of their children. However, little effort was made to identify the specific skills teachers would need to acquire to teach more effectively. This was an omission for which the Louisville School District paid dearly during the first year of the program's operation.

With regard to number four, the major problem was seen to be an estrangement between the school and the community. The estrangement was not in the outcomes desired but in the fact that the community was not aware of any outcomes at all or any interest by the District.

In the above four categories we see the beginning of a systems approach to attacking educational problems. An attempt was made by district officials to take into account the many counteracting and interacting forces which were in operation both within and without the school.

It is mainly in the case of identifying teachers' problems where one finds the biggest weakness. Little thought had been given to why the teacher might be performing and feeling as he was.

2. Basic Premises

The basic premises suffer the same strengths and weaknesses as do the problem assessments. They are as follows:

> The teachers in the Louisville city schools have, as a whole, applied themselves diligently in the face of adversity. Often confronted with alienated seas of empty faces, they have performed as well as humanly possible. Yet, they, too, were

> sometimes victims of a mindless bureaucratic organization that stifled their creativity and crushed their spirit. Thus, the administration of the Louisville City Schools also needed to take a long, agonizing, shocking look at itself before recommending change.[1]

It is to the credit of the Louisville Public Schools that most of the premises don't read like the truisms found in curriculum guides nor like the wishful thinking more appropriate to hermit prophets on cloudy mountain tops. By and large the district has maintained contact with reality in the stating of the premises.

Yet a weakness is their almost total concentration on the "givens" related to students alone. There should have also been some premises related to teachers and what they need and expect. If plans for the programs are to stem from the premises then the plans are going to be incomplete in regard to teachers' needs. The incompleteness of the stated premises failed to take into account the fact that a total systems approach to educational improvement must give serious thought to the daily problems teachers face in interpersonal communications, inter- and intra-organizational communication, expenditures of physical and emotional energies, self-concept, role expectations, and the potency of dynamics in membership groups and reference groups.

By taking these dynamics into account the district could have developed a number of necessary teacher-oriented goal outcomes such as providing continuing supportive structures for teachers, planning for mechanisms whereby they could have continued guidance in planning, where they could have consultive personnel assigned to them with whom they could consult when severe self-doubts would arise.

3. Statement of Goals

The partial weakness in the statement of the premises and the problem identification is reflected in the specific goals drawn up for the two programs. The specific goals are as follows:

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[1] Projects Focus and Impact, (Louisville Public Schools, mimeographed, 1971) p. 2.

> (1) To improve the self-concept of students, (2) to improve pupil achievement in the basic skills of reading, mathematics, and other essentials, (3) to stimulate intellectual curiosity and the self-motivation to learn, (4) to help students become more self-directed and self-disciplined, and (5) to help students develop satisfying human relationships.[2]

Like the statement of the permises and assessment of the problems, the goals are limited to the learner. It seems strange that as well thought out a program as this one would have excluded goals related to teacher support. The goals related to teachers are primarily concerned with a quasi-evaluation of teacher effectiveness in regard to academic matters. Goals related to teacher support are ignored at great peril when a systems approach is contemplated.

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[2] Ibid., p. 2.

THE PROGRAMS

Of the two programs, it is Focus which seems to be the "core" upon which Impact and other spin-off programs are based. This section will explain the basic concepts underlying the two projects and then examine them from a systems standpoint.

Project Focus

The primary organizational concepts found in Project Focus are:

1. Team Teaching
2. Flexibility in Scheduling
3. Role Redefinition for Teachers and Administrators
4. Community involvement.

1. Team Teaching

Teachers are placed into teams of eight members as follows:

(a) One coordinating teacher

(b) One teacher

(c) Four Teacher Corps Interns

(d) Two Para-professionals

The teams work with "family" groupings of from 100-200 students which at the minimum provide, roughly, a 13 to 1 student/adult ratio and at the maximum a 25 to 1 student/adult ratio and at the minimum a 50 to 1 student/teacher ratio and at the maximum a 100 to 2 student/teacher ratio

There is an attempt to provide planning time so that team members will be able to develop curriculum approaches, diagnose the individual needs of various students and plan work for the diagnosed needs. The student/adult ratio supposedly allows time to diagnose and plan and increases the opportunities for observation of the children.

Because of the lessened student/adult ratio, members of the team presumably have an opportunity to plan a curriculum geared to the students' interests. Most of the meeting times are after school but there is also built into the program a flexibility allowing for some meetings during the day.

2. Flexibility in Scheduling and Curriculum

Flexible scheduling in Project Focus Schools is designed to provide greater opportunities for students to follow their own "instinctive learning needs" (sic). It also gives the staff more opportunity to guide the "instructional searches" (sic) of the child. Students are expected to move at their own pace within and between families.

The team arrangement, in conjunction with the "flexible scheduling," is supposed to allow for an exchange of ideas and for the development of a unified team approach.

3. Role Redefinition for Teachers and Administrators

The role of the teacher was envisioned as changing from that of a "Teacher" to that of a "facilitator." Quoting from a document published by the Louisville School District, we find what is considered to be the "heart" of the change.

> The teacher's role . . . changes from that of a "teacher" to that of a "facilitator," more than a mere disseminator of information. The teacher's role becomes one of stimulating pupil interests and providing varied learning resources. The teacher may ask occasional divergent questions encouraging children to develop their own powers of critical thinking.
>
> Traditionally, teachers have taken the role of "the authority," whose values and opinions have taken on the force of law. Many teachers have performed beyond any rational expectations in such situations; however, too often the native creativity of our students has been crushed. Instead, docility and passivity has been encouraged by unfortunate dominance-submission relationships between teacher and pupil.
>
> The alternative to this teacher-as-Sole-Authority situation is far more difficult to implement than the traditional mode. It requires flexibility that builds on student input. It

> places a heavy burden on the teacher to eschew the insular security of the authoritarian role, to continually solicit and non-defensively accept honest feedback from pupils, parents and other teachers. It calls on us to recognize our children and ourselves as living, growing, searching humans.[3]

4. Community Involvement

It is anticipated that each Focus school will eventually be governed by a "mini-board" composed of parents, teachers, and pupils. There is to be close parental involvement related to program planning and curriculum changes "as needs arise." The plan further stipulates that, "in the final analysis, if pupils and parents in project schols do not conclude that the programs are an improvement, the projects will be discontinued or modified to suit the satisfaction of the communities served."

There are six Focus elementary schools, five are at a K-6 grade level and one at a K-4 level.

Project Impact

Project Impact uses the same fundamental organizational concepts as Project Focus. The major differences involve the organization and staffing of the "families."

Impact projects are to be found in one senior high; four junior high schools and three elementary schools. The teaming differs in that the teams are composed of three teachers and three para-professionals. There are "volunteers" used but no Teacher Corps Interns. The families are composed of about 125 students, giving a student/adult ratio of approximately 1 to 21.

However, in the case of a high school or junior high school, it is questionable as to whether one can use a student/adult ratio as an indication of increased student assistance - at least in academic matters. Because of the greater complexity and specialization of subject matter and increased student sophistication, a

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

"volunteer" or para-professional may not be able to offer adequate instructional benefits to the children. They might, however, serve as potent models. In the case of a secondary school, then, a student-to-teacher ratio may give a better indication of potential for individual instructional assistance than does the student-to-adult ratio. In the high schools and junior high schools, the student/teacher ratio is 42 to 1.

Impact elementary schools have the same scheduling and instructional program as the Focus schools. The Impact junior high schools, however, base their major emphasis upon a "center of interest" curriculum which includes concentration on "relevant social issues, interpersonal development skills and career opportunities."

The Impact junior high school children do not remain all day in their "families." For two hours each day they participate in subject matter classes such as physical education, industrial arts, home economics, typing and special laboratory activities. Other aspects of the curriculum design can be seen by quotes from a Louisville publication:

> The instructional program in Impact Junior Highs incorporates programmed materials where appropriate, time for pursuit of individual interests and talents, group interaction in which students develop problem solving techniques, pupil-to-pupil tutoring, a contract approach between teacher and pupil in appropriate scholastic areas, career exploration and pre-vocational training and actual involvement in the solution of community problems.[4]

The senior high school does not incorporate a "family" concept or the same "team arrangements although teachers are grouped into subject matter blockings. If two or more wish to collaborate it is called a "team" approach. Approximately 40% of the senior high school classes utilize a "team" approach. Blocks of English/social studies are "team" taught at the sophomore levels as are biology, math and geometry. The "team" is composed of two adults and two para-professionals.

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[4] _Ibid_., p. 5.

Sophomore physical science and chemistry are taught by "teams" of two teachers.[5]

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[5] Additional information on the organization of the high school program in Project Impact is provided in a later section of this paper which deals with Shawnee High School.

THE PROGRAMS AS A SYSTEMS APPROACH

Officials in the Louisville School District disclaim any intention of having formulated a "master plan" for educational change. If this is so, then they had a rather good intuitive sense of what kinds of changes would increase the potential for program success. They wisely began to plan for a change in the total social system of the target schools. This change included all aspects of the school, from faculty, to materials to instructional techniques. It also included the change in organizational structures described above, the idea being that these structures would themselves generate opportunities for systems change from within. The approach was a wholistic one.

A wholistic approach is an integral and necessary part of any systems change and involves all the components of the system. A patchwork approach in which a principal might be changed or a few reading supervisors added to a school, or a limited special program implemented, or adding of more equipment, etc., limits potential for long lasting and significant improvement in the instructional program and limits possibilities for a program to sustain itself over time. It is limited in its potential because it changes only one segment of the system and places an instrument for change within a framework which remains basically the same.

Janowitz argues for an "aggregate" approach to change.[6] This kind of change sees the parts of a system as being interdependent. It argues strongly for a systems change.

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[6] _Op_. _cit_., Janowitz.

The Louisville School District began a systems change. They planned to involve teachers in the change, provide them with training for change, allow them to reinforce one another, and provide them with an administrator who himself understood and would support attempts at change.

To attempt this systems change they moved in a bold way. In a rather unprecedented move, teachers, clerks, and principals in the fourteen target schools were given an opportunity to transfer (without prejudice) to other comparable school positions if they did not want to take part in Focus or Impact. Less than half the teachers in the target schools re-applied for appointments.

At the same time, applications for the program were made available to all other teachers in the Louisville District. Three applications were made for every position that was available. Consequently, it was thought that all fourteen project schools would be staffed by faculties who wanted to be there and would be led by principals who also wanted to be there. These staff members, teachers, and principals were to be people who had exhibited previously some leadership potential or were already providing effective formal and informal leadership to others.

In adopting this policy of providing new faculties for the target schools the Louisville District dealt with an important component of systems change. It was realized that the success of programs is dependent upon willing implementation and that it is the staff, to a great degree, who give meaning to the programs. Instead of relying upon hardware and horatorical philosophical statements, the District moved to insure that in the target schools there would be a staff willing to take the hardware and philosophy and merge them into a workable approach. Without this kind of staff change, the program would have been doomed to failure from the beginning.

The District's move was not one directed against the teachers previously at the project schools but instead was predicated upon some rather salient socio-psychological ideas. District officials realized that if you drastically changed the framework, philosophy and responsibilities of an on-going social system without allowing for "escape" by those not comfortable about the change, you are building in possibilities for covert - if not overt - subversion. By providing a new staff who had internalized the goals of the program, a major portion of the system would be secure and systems subversion cut to a minimum.

TRAINING

During the summer a series of workshops was held so that teachers would be prepared for the programs that next fall. Included in the workshops were 414 certified personnel, 270 para-professionals, and 50 to 114 Teacher Corps Interns who were to be working in the Focus schools. The topics covered in the workshops "concentrated primarily on the verbal aspects of human behavior" (sic).

The workshops were considered as being an integral part of the systems change. They were supposed to insure that the implementators of the change thoroughly understood the ideas of the programs. The purposes of the workshop were to provide the teachers with a set of basic skills to support and sustain the changes made in other areas of the school's social system. If, for example, the ways of treating children were to change, then the attitudes of teachers had to support the idea of change. If curriculum was to be altered, then teachers needed to know what the effects of this alteration would mean for them with regard to time allotments and construction of learning experiences. The workshops, then, were seen as a needed prelude to wider change which was to take place later.

The concept of this supportive and developmental workshop cannot be faulted. Its major weakness lay in what was not included in the workshop. Not included were the basic skills the teachers would need to plan and develop frameworks for implementation, to plan for the mechanical aspects of implementation, and to provide for the logistics of program continuance. Teachers knew little of how to group for teams, what to do with time allotments, how to develop team plans, how the new ideas and curriculum could be implemented on a team basis and what to do if things did not develop according to the plans.

This deficiency in the workshops can be traced to the weakness in the premises and assessments of problems, as was mentioned earlier. The workshops were developed keeping the spirit of the premises and in accordance with the assessment of the problems. The premises were stated in student-centered terms and the problems were seen as being primarily interpersonal problems relating to the need for teachers to develop better "understanding." So, much of the summer was spent learning to "understand" one another. This program emphasis can be seen from this quote found in a District publication.

> All 414 certificated personnel in Project schools have undergone two months of intensive summer training in behavioral science seminars. . . .
>
> The summer training concentrated primarily on the verbal aspects of human behavior. The training helped Project personnel develop problem-solving and teamwork skills. Project teachers, paraprofessionals and Teacher Corps Interns participated in sensitivity labs to become more perceptive of the effects of their behavior on others, to learn such group techniques as role playing, observation and feedback, and to become more sensitive to the feelings of others. Project personnel also participated in human potential training, an approach emphasizing there is something right with individuals and concentrates on strengths rather than weaknesses.
>
> The intensive training hopefully strengthened these adults in the interpersonal aspect of classroom behavior. This relates back to one of the central targets of Projects Focus and Impact: the effort to meet the human needs of our students. Part of the training this summer was based on the principles of sensitivity training, a method stemming from the discipline of psychotherapy. However, the sensitivity training utilized here was not of the "far out" genre so widely publicized through mass media; further, this summer training was not designed for use in the classroom.
>
> Rather, the training concentrated primarily on the verbal aspects of human behavior. We tried to openly discuss how the behavior of all of us affects other human beings. We tried to learn how to become less judgmental in our behavior.[7]

Lost in this approach is the direct help teachers need when they enter the crucible of the schools. Teachers are going to be affected by every aspect of the system and every aspect must be planned for. The idea of holding workshops was in keeping with a system approach. The breakdown was in the narrow and limited assessments of the problems teachers would encounter in implementing the new programs. The end result of concentrating on "affective" parts of the social system, to the neglect of other skills, can be seen from this quote attributed to a teacher who said, 'The workshops were great. We all loved one another. And then the kids came."

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[7] Op. cit., p. 7.

The teachers were misled in the workshops into believing that the "affective" teaching model was synonymous with the idea of a "good" teacher. They interpreted the "humanizing" of education as meaning the elimination of structure and control. Classroom management was to be achieved entirely through "understanding."[8]

There are persuasive reasons why a "skills" approach for teachers is as important as an "affective" one. For one thing, a teacher needs skills to construct and "control" a learning environment. If a teacher is to experience satisfaction in his job he must establish a degree of control over his environment. His personal needs in gaining satisfaction are remarkably like his students'.

Control is not synonymous with dictatorship - it refers to the potential for changing a learning environment if it is not working. It also means having the skills to change the learning environment. In this way a teacher can achieve his professional ends - a central factor in role fulfillment satisfaction.

Control skills are also needed on a team level so that teachers can construct a predictable environment. Predictability does not mean stagnation. It does not mean exclusion of novelty or variety. An environment can be predictable and still allow for variety, novelty, and spontaneity. The important thing is to be able to predicate how these factors will be developed. If spontaneity takes place within a stable framework then teachers can feel free to plan for change. But the teachers not only were not given skills needed to establish control in the classroom - they were led to believe that "understanding" in itself would result in

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[8] The predictable outcome was large amounts of chaos associated with discipline problems during the first part of the school year.

"control."

The teachers were overwhelmed when they failed to control a learning situation and interpreted this as their failure as professionals. When they found themselves disciplining the students, they then seemed to be failures as "human beings" - a view they had internalized as a result of their discussions on "humanizing" education.

Another major oversight of the workshops was the fact that the future faculties of the schools did not have much opportunity to plan together. When a social system changes, the participants enter into a period of uncertainty until new normative patterns are formed and new relationships are worked out. If faculties had been able to work together during the workshops, teachers might have avoided many of the problems which developed in September. Also, the teams could have been working on developing structures and frameworks to facilitate team functioning.

Programs in Operation

When the programs began, the major problems seemed to be those encountered in: (1) attempting to implement a teaming concept; (2) finding planning time for adequate curriculum implementation; (3) managing students' misbehaviors brought about by a misunderstanding concerning the degree of structure needed.

(1) The full potential of the program could not be realized because teachers did not have an adequate concept of team organization. They were given team assignments but the implementation of team functioning was left in their hands. As a result, with so many new and varied things to do at the beginning of school, the teachers were left to group by themselves. When the students came, the teams did not have knowledge of what to do with them within a team framework.

(2) The time allotted for planning was not enough for the teachers to work out their plans for curriculum implementation, straighten out their growing insecurities, adjust to one another as team members, and develop a structure for operation.

(3) Because the workshops and the premises stressed a "humanistic" approach to education without, at the same time, stressing the need for adequate classroom management, some faculties began to lose control of the instructional programs. Humanism and understanding were not an adequate substitute for a controlled learning situation within which humanism and understanding could be applied.

It is obvious that in most classrooms across the nation terrible things are being done to children. There is regimentation and structure for the sake of structure alone. There is a crushing of the inquisitive spirit. Some teachers and administrators are putting all things into structured frameworks without any recognition that structure exists only to provide meaning to experiences and to facilitate internalization of controls that they should allow for more freedom.

But because this situation exists it does not justify adopting a position which confuses freedom with behavioral anarchy. Freedom requires an orderly structure within which to develop. This is particularly true in the case of working-class children because so many of them: (1) need and desire some security and direction which is not found in their environment outside of school and/or (2) perceive a non-controlling teacher as (a) a weak individual to be taken advantage of; (b) a person who does not care what happens to the students; (c) an incompetent or (d) an adult who forces children to be humiliated through a trial-error process of learning.

Para-professionals and Teacher Corps Interns

Even though some of the workshops centered on interpersonal relations, friction developed within some of the teams. The problems seemed to revolve around a prior understanding (or misunderstanding) of the role and role assignments of the para-professionals and the Teacher Corps Interns. During the workshops it was emphasized that "everyone was equal"; evidently this was felt to be in keeping with the humanistic goals toward which the Focus and Impact projects were aimed. Yet it was obvious when the program began that everyone could not be equal. There was an obvious salary difference. There were informal status expectations which in our culture must be recognized at the risk of dysfunction. There were jobs which must be performed, which jobs carry a lower or higher status.

After a time some of the para-professionals began to feel that the teachers were treating them "like dirt" and some of the teachers began to feel that the para-professionals were becoming "obstinate." Some para-professionals refused to grade papers, collect lunch money, etc. The problem has not yet been completely resolved and probably won't be until job assignments are clarified and all personnel involved understand that in a work-a-day school situation, everyone cannot be completely "equal."

PROJECT VIII

Project VIII is an anti-dropout program which was initiated at Manley Junior High School in the fall of 1969. The project has a staff of nine adults (3 teachers, 3 assistant teachers, 1 home-school coordinator, 1 clerk, and a director) for sixty alienated, potential dropouts drawn from the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Project VIII is Louisville's share of a larger program for which federal funds were obtained in Paducah while Newman Walker was still superintendent of schools in the latter district. In 1970-1971, additional branches of Project VIII were established at Tingley Elementary School and Nale High School. Project VIII is described here because in several respects it exemplifies in microcosm the concepts and problems of systems change efforts in the Louisville Public Schools.

The basic design for Project VIII incorporates a number of elements which are being shown both in Louisville and elsewhere (e.g., Harlem Prep; CAM Academy in Chicago) to be important if not indispensable components in secondary programs for urban youth - particularly those who are either disadvantaged or alienated. The small size of a unit (60 students) and the low adult-student ratio allow for close personal relationships among all participants, and the professional staff perceive little or no pressure, either overt or covert, to stick to rigid, predetermined curricular or district-wide rules and regulations. A Community Advisory Council has been formed to provide advice and support for teachers and students. Opportunities for tying curriculum to the urban environment are available through field trips and other means. Teachers understand the importance of helping students take responsibility for their own learning. High-interest learning materials at appropriate reading levels as well as learning games, audiovisual materials, and other equipment suited to students' learning styles, are produced or obtained and used extensively. Learning assignments cutting across subject-matter disciplines are planned and adapted in accordance with an explicit diagnosis of students' interests and motivation. All three teachers in the Project VIII program at Manley Junior High teach social studies, in which emphasis is placed on self-understanding and other affective goals; they specialize in mathematics, language arts, and science. Staff members not only have plenty of time to plan together and coordinate their efforts but also have engaged in apparently-successful training activities (based particularly on Robert Carkhuff's training approach described in his book, Helping and Human Relations) designed to help them become an effective team.

After two years, Project VIII appears to have had considerable success in reaching its client population of hard-to-reach youth. Staff members we talked to in June of 1971 appeared more positive than teachers we have encountered in anti-dropout projects in other cities. But more important, the program apparently had overcome the usual stigma of being a custodial alternative for the "dummies" and "hoods"; instead, it seemed to be emerging as something of a magnet attracting students voluntarily from throughout the school. Data available for 1969-1970 indicated that absences among students enrolled in Project VIII that year had dropped to 1,792 days from a figure of 3,107 for this group the previous year. Eighth graders gained an average of one year in reading and mathematics achievement - far above predicted gains based on their previous performance.

In providing a definite multi-faceted vehicle for better education and in testing a model which was not just a "pilot" project but was immediately extended mostly intact (with suitable adjustments) to two additional schools the second year, Project VIII illustrates how Louisville school officials have tried to carefully implement instructional programs distinctly different from, and more promising than, traditional practices in urban schools.

But during its first year Project VIII also ran aground of problems similar to those which have surfaced at Impact and Focus schools in 1970-1971. As described by Director Bill Perkins, Project VIII's first year was a "hellish" one which sometimes saw the program tottering on the very brink of dissolution. What appears to have happened is that the professional staff had accepted the ideology which claims students should learn "freely" and then all but ignores the necessity for structure and for gradual phasing-in of self-directed activities. (Chalk up another one for our old friends and tempters, the ideological non-structuralists!) The result, of course, was chaos. At the beginning of the second year, definite rules and regulations for classroom organization and behavior were drawn up and implemented with as little autocracy as possible. That Project VIII then survived and apparently prospered is a tribute to its staff and a hopeful augury for the Impact and Focus programs as they enter their second year of operation.

PROCESS PLANNING AND EVALUATION

A great deal of stress in the Louisville Public Schools is being placed on (1) relating planning and evaluation to program implementation and (2) transforming services provided under these headings from a peripheral aspect of central office functioning to a key component in every facet of the district's operation. And properly so. Although it is only during the past few years that many educators have truly begun to sense the importance and value of feedback and assessment data in planning and improving public school programs, recent advances in the state of the art may result in real gains for districts which apply emerging planning and evaluation concepts intelligently and systematically at every level from the classroom to the central office.

With leadership supplied particularly by former Indiana University Professor Larry Barber, many of the newer concepts (which can be encompassed within the larger rubric of "process planning and evaluation")are being systematically introduced with a vengeance in the Louisville Public Schools. A visitor to Louisville need not look very far to find serious efforts to apply these concepts in practice; indeed, all the newer catchwords - behavioral objectives, formative and summative evaluation, criterion-referenced objectives, etc. - permeate newer programs in the district. Fashionable terminology aside, is there reason to believe that these monitoring and evaluation activities really can help reverse what many define as terminal illness in big city schools?

Clearly, it is too early to attempt anything like a conclusive answer, but in several respects early developments in Louisville may be viewed as somewhat encouraging. Among the positive trends we observed in connection with contemporary process planning and evaluation tools were the following:

- Useful data collection instruments such as the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) and the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO) were being administered periodically to teachers and administrators in all special project schools and similar data were being collected from central office personnel.

- Appropriate worksheets and forms had been drawn up and introduced to facilitate planning and evaluation. For example, project directors now make out reports which not only describe the objectives and programs they are to implement during the year but also include information on proposed schedules, plans for student and parent involvement, problems encountered periodically in implementing the project, and related monitoring data. Because the worksheets provide basic data both for monitoring and evaluation, they can facilitate problem identification and problem-solving during the course of the year as well as facilitating program analysis and re-design at the end of specified phases. Louisville school officials consider the process to be a version of "internal performance contracting," and the form giving an overall view of planning and evaluation activities in a given project is labeled "Performance Contract."

- Following the same general approach, teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators in Focus and Impact Schools all received training in the writing of behavioral objectives and subsequently submitted lists of interim and final objectives which they intended to accomplish during the 1970-1971 school year. Considerable sophistication was evident in several sections of the sample set of behavioral objectives we examined for Roosevelt Elementary School. (Many of the observations in this section are based primarily on our examination of this document, which was titled "Roosevelt Objectives").

- Policies and practices for process planning and evaluation being developed in the Louisville Schools are viewed officially as supporting services to personnel in the schools rather than as evaluation instruments with which the success of programs and personnel will be judged successful or unsuccessful. The intent is that process evaluation approaches such as those described above not only will clarify goals but also will provide needed monitoring data which can be used in spotting and solving problems in implementation. At least on paper,[1] the emphasis is to be on program improvement and care is taken to avoid the newer variants of bureaucratic game-playing and goal distortion which emerging concepts of process evaluation can easily generate.

- Although some of the behavioral and criteria-referenced objectives we examined obviously were copied whole-cloth from sample lists provided by the central office and others did little but parrot points of view stressed by administrators or trainers, many others showed an encouraging awareness of concepts and attitudes of vital importance in the effort to improve inner city schools. For example, objectives submitted by individual teachers frequently bore on such important matters as teacher familiarity with students' family and community (e.g., "I will visit each student's home by April 9, 1971, at least once"); positive teacher attitudes (e.g., "I will show more patience, as measured by a reduction in the number of times I lose my temper"; "I will become totally consistent in my actions and reactions to children."), the dynamics of team teaching (e.g., "I will try to better utilize the expertise of the team members"; "I will critique each of the 5 interns at least 3 times a week, according to the interaction analysis guidelines."); individualization of instruction (e.g., "I will divide my math class into groups according to achievement and let them work at their own pace."); students' self-concepts (e.g., "By June 8, 1971, 50% of the children will post their work under their name on a display wall . . . This will be measured through direct observation recorded in a class journal."); and student-teacher relationships (e.g., "By June I will have brought all the boys in my homeroom home with me for dinner.").

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[1] We did not have time to discuss the status and utility of process evaluation activities at any depth with teachers and others whom we interviewed in the schools.

As often as not objectives were stated in measurable terms, particularly with respect to learning of academic subject-matter (e.g., "At least 75% of the Dolch words by April"; "by June, at least 75% of the lowest 5th grade group will be able to demonstrate, with 75% accuracy, their understanding of the following concepts . . ."). Humanistic objectives frequently were included and many did all anyone could ask to call attention to affective goals for an inner city school (e.g., "My personal objective this year is to foster an atmosphere in which every child is able in his own way to satisfy his curiosity, develop abilities and talents and pursue his interests in order that he may begin to develop an appreciation for life and living and an understanding of self worth.") The majority of staff members appeared to have taken the whole business seriously and to have devoted some time and effort to defining their goals.

At the same time, however, relatively few objectives dealt with or even recognized the other side of the coin, namely needs for order and structure and self-discipline that must be given initial priority or at least equal attention if students and teachers in an inner city school are to move successfully toward achieving humanistic and academic objective goals such as those illustrated above. In other words, deficiencies which might be identified in the behavioral objectives written by staff both mirrored and resulted from the basic problem in the overall reform effort in the Louisville schools: a relative neglect of structure and adult guidance as compared with the emphasis placed on group process and student-centered learning.

For example, a number of staff submitted objectives such as "Students will experience success in self-directed learning . . .," "I will allow my students more voice in their own education. . . .", and "my children will enjoy coming to school and learning," but not one offered an objective which explicitly recognized that some students require much more structure than others (such an objective might read, "I will differentiate instruction so as to provide structure and security for students who most need it and will make an explicit effort at least twice a semester to diagnose how much progress each student has made in learning to work independently"). Similarly, objectives such as "I will take a more active interest in the inner-city child" and "Students will work more co-operatively as measured by increased participation time for individuals in groups . . ." were submitted much more frequently than objectives such as "To try to get the team to work harder on discipline in the halls and lunchrooms." In general, the experienced teachers seemed less likely than the interns to neglect the latter type of objective, and it was the paraprofessionals whose objectives most frequently cited order and good manners as important goals in the education of inner city students (e.g., "Have orderly classes when we are trying to teach").

On the other hand, it also must be acknowledged that many of the behavior objectives we examined implicitly recognized that student self-discipline and self-direction are goals which can only be reached through developmental progression on the part of individual students as well as a class as a whole. One intern, for example, specified in his list of objectives that, "By June 8, 1971, 75% of the children in our section will be able to attend to an assigned task for a minimum of 15 minutes," and another set forth the goal of improving "the ability to work independently, as measured by the ability of 85% of the students to begin an assignment without the need of the teacher to procure the needed materials." Also, we must note that the objectives of some teams showed a much more consistent recognition of structure needs than did the objectives of other teams, even at the same grade level in the same school. It would be interesting to pursue this phenomena in greater depth by interviewing members of several teams and assessing differences in experiences and output across teams.

Finally, we must re-emphasize our convictions that humanistic-oriented goals are necessary if inner city schools are to be improved and that the behavioral objective approach and other forms of process evaluation may prove of considerable value in reforming urban schools. Any new approach, however, has pitfalls which must be explicitly recognized if it is to produce more good than harm. In setting goals for a school, for example, it makes sense to aim at reducing the number of dropouts and suspensions, but it is conceivable that an administrator who commits himself to this goal and thinks he may be evaluated on it may lean over too far to retain disruptive or even psychopathic students who for their own benefit, as well as others', should not remain in the school. Stated differently, there is a danger that goals will be treated as independent entities rather than parts of a larger system: it is one thing to reduce the number of suspensions because the quality of education for alienated pupils has improved; it is quite another to achieve the goal by administrative fiat. As illustrated above, it is tempting to write behavioral objectives which reinforce an emphasis on one type of objective at the cost of another equally important but quite different objective. We suspect that the behavioral objectives written in Focus and Impact schools next fall will demonstrate a lot more awareness of such pitfalls than did those prepared in the fall of 1970.

CONSISTENCY OF THE LOUISVILLE EXPERIENCE WITH CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH AND CONCEPTS IN URBAN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

We already have noted that reform efforts in the Louisville Public Schools have both exemplified and drawn heavily on contemporary management concepts focusing on the planning and evaluation of educational programs. However, there are many other important concepts in urban education research and analysis which provide useful perspectives for assessing the adequacy and meaning of system renewal efforts in Louisville. Conversely, the experience of educators implementing the reform program in Louisville also sheds light on the usefulness of formulations offered by researchers and observers in other cities.

Rather than presenting a thorough review of the literature and research on urban school reform, we will endeavor in this section only to describe one set of findings from research and one set of recent recommendations concerning school district feedback and facilitating mechanisms. Our basic purpose in this section is to obtain a sense of whether or not events in the Louisville schools during the past two years seem to have been compatible with these findings and recommendations. Clearly, definitive conclusions cannot be arrived at on the basis of a few highly selective comparisons of this type, but at least we can illustrate the utility of viewing developments in one school district in terms of research and concepts formulated elsewhere.

Research on Innovation

One of the most important studies on innovation in public schools is the case study Neal Gross and his colleagues conducted in an inner city urban elementary school in which an attempt was made to re-define the traditional role of the teacher.[1] Broadly speaking, the purposes of this innovation were to build a classroom environment in which children could "follow their own curiosity," become more "engaged in the process of learning," and take more responsibility for their own and others' learning.[2]

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[1] Neal Gross, _et al._, "An Attempt to Implement a Major Educational Innovation: A Sociological Inquiry." Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Research and Development in Educational Differences, 1968. ERIC ED 032 649.

Following a comprehensive review of the previous literature and an intensive case history which included nonparticipant observation, formal interviewing, systematic observation in classrooms, analysis of questionnaire responses, and extensive discussion with participants in the innovative project, Gross and his colleagues challenged the "major explanation currently being offered" to account for the success or failure of innovations, namely the view that "initial resistance to change on the part" of members of organizations is almost the sole reason why innovations are apt to fail.[3] "This explanation is too simplistic," they concluded, "because it ignores

> . . . three conditions that may exist or arise in organizations. First, it disregards obstacles to which members who are not resistant to change may be exposed when they make attempts to implement innovations; second, it gives no consideration to the possible importance that management . . . may play in creating or overcoming these obstacles; third it overlooks the possibility that members who are initially predisposed to accept an organizational change may later, because of frustrations they have experienced in trying to implement it, develop a negative orientation to it, and thereby be unwilling to implement an innovation.[4]

Elaborating on this conclusion, Gross and his colleagues described how their case study revealed that

> . . . prior to the announcement of the innovation of a basic norm shared by all teachers in the school was that they should accept and promote educational change . . . Our case study, in short, supported our general contention that the 'overcoming resistance to change' explanation was too simplistic . . . Our findings showed that the failure

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[2] Ibid., pp. 306-307.

[3] Ibid., p. 47.

[4] Ibid.

> to implement the innovation . . . was attributable essentially to a number of obstacles that teachers encountered when they attempted to carry it out that were never removed . . . One barrier . . . was their lack of clarity about the new role model . . . A second . . . was the teacher's lack of the skills and knowledge required to carry it out . . . A third . . . was the unavailability of required materials and equipment . . . A fourth obstacle . . . was a set of organizational arrangements that were incompatible with the inovation.[5]

Summarizing their findings and conclusions, Gross _et al_. stated that

> . . . the innovation introduced into Cambire School was not implemented despite the fact that it represented a promising new educational idea, was supported by ample fiscal resources, and was proposed to a staff with a positive orientation to educational change. This finding strongly implies that although these conditions may constitute necessary prerequisites for the successful _initiation_ of educational change, they do not represent a successful set of requirements for the successful implementation of innovations.[6]

It is readily apparent, we believe, that Louisville efforts at urban education reform have not fully taken into account this particular set of findings on variables that make for the success or failure of educational innovations. To an extent, the summer 1970 training program appears to have been conducted primarily in accordance with an "overcoming resistance to change" model; at any rate relatively less attention apparently was given to developing instructional skills and working out detailed new role definitions that teachers would need to possess in order to successfully implement Projects Impact and Focus. Since much attention _was_ given to the role of management in removing obstacles to new instructional approaches, it is not possible to fault the reform projects on this score; nevertheless, it is possible that more might have been done in this regard. Finally, lack of suitable materials and problems in organizational arrangements did appear to impede the process of change in at least some of the schools, particularly the secondary schools. In sum, problems which have arisen in bringing about educational reform in Louisville exemplify and reinforce findings of previous research in other schools and cities. In a later section of this paper we identify a set of fundamental lessons which are suggested by this research as well as by Louisville's path-breaking efforts to renew and revitalize inner city schools.

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[5] Ibid., 243-246.

[6] Ibid., p. 259.

Recommendations for School District Feedback and Facilitating Mechanisms

If it is true that specific barriers to change must be quickly identified and overcome in order to successfully implement an innovative program of instruction, accurate and comprehensive feedback both at the building level and the school district level becomes an indispensable prerequisite to effective reform. Elsewhere in this paper we have described the exemplary efforts which have been made to develop and implement modern process planning and evaluation systems in the Louisville Public Schools. Despite these commendable and progressive steps toward improving feedback in a big city school district, however, we found reason to believe that important information on critical dysfunctions was not always filtering back to top decision makers rapidly and clearly enough to result in action commensurate with the immediacy and severity of problems in the schools.

Similarly, teachers attempting to implement innovation in an urban school require many kinds of special support to help them overcome difficult problems associated with organizational change and renewal. Again, Louisville has taken some major steps forward by creating an Office of Organizational Development and providing intermittent training for teachers in the target schools, but still more must be done to make this support effective at the classroom level.

All of this only goes to prove, we suppose, how horrendously difficult is the challenge of reform in a big city school district - even in a district such as Louisville which clearly is at the cutting edge of reform.

In a spirit of constructive criticism, therefore, we would like to cite several possible feedback and facilitating mechanisms which have not as yet been widely used in big city school districts and which would be valuable complements to the process planning and evaluation systems, the in-service training programs, and the "hierarchy-flattening" arrangements which have been instituted to improve feedback and facilitate change in the Louisville Public Schools. One of the authors of this paper elsewhere has described a number of such possibilities which include the following:

> Feedback Mechanisms
> a) Problem assessment documents for each unit and for the system as a whole. Serving a function analogous to the President's "State of the Union" message, problem assessment documents . . . should be presented to decision-making congresses such as a Teacher-Parent-Student Cabinet which has real power to take action to clear up the problems identified. . . .
> b) Ombudsmen. At the present time there appear to be only two public school districts which have established the position of ombudsman. . . .
> c) Inspectors. The basic distinction between an ombudsman and an inspector . . . is that . . . the inspector takes initiative to identify malfunctions in the operation of units throughout the system. . . .
>
> Facilitating Mechanisms
> a) Expediters and Facilitators. The position of Expediter or Facilitator as envisioned here would be equivalent to that of a roving trouble-shooter with definite authority to circumvent bureaucratic impediments . . .
> b) School Support Units . . . /This alternative envisions/ the establishment of support units to work with school faculties more intensively and on a more long-range basis than is now the case with respect to outside consultants or even in-service training or staff development departments . . .[7]

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[7] Daniel U. Levine, "Delivering Effective Education in Metropolex School Systems" in Herbert J. Walberg (ed.), Rethinking Urban Education, (in press, title tentative, a volume sponsored by the University of Chicago Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa in honor of Professor Robert J. Havighurst.)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROBLEMS

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview of the situation with respect to reform in the Louisville Public Schools as of the summer of 1971. As noted above, systematic reform efforts have been concentrated particularly on fourteen inner city schools. While other schools in the district have by no means been neglected, the situation in the fourteen "project" schools has the most important and widest implications for educators elsewhere. For this reason our observations in Louisville were devoted primarily to these schools.

Necessarily, our assessment is largely subjective. We were not able to visit all the project schools during the several days we spent in Louisville, and very little hard data are as yet available on the results of reform efforts. Several kinds of data collected in 1970-1971 have pointed to encouraging trends such as a tendency for vandalism to increase more slowly in designated "experimental" schools than in other schools throughout the district, but in general the meaning of these data is difficult to interpret with any confidence.

It also should be kept in mind that much of the first year of Newman Walker's "reform" superintendency had been devoted to the necessary tasks of planning and tooling up; thus the major reform effort had been in full operation only one year as of June, 1971 - too short a time to expect much empirical evidence of gains. In addition, the first year in a project to implement significant change in difficult settings is bound to be beset with all the predictable as well as many unexpected problems entailed in any serious reform program. Achievement data for the 1970-1971 school year for students in Impact and Focus schools were being processed as we prepared this paper, but we do not believe that such data necessarily are very pertinent or important in assessing projects like Focus or Impact after only one year and we do not anticipate that achievement scores will go up very much until next year even if the projects are successful.

For these reasons it is in no way a criticism of Louisville's urban education reform efforts to point to evidence of serious problems still to be overcome or to say that these efforts cannot yet be viewed in an unqualified sense as successful (or unsuccessful). Just the opposite: had we not found reason to believe that serious problems remained we would have suspected that reform in the Louisville schools was a public relations sham.

Despite these reasons for viewing the assessment in this section cautiously and tentatively due to the subjectivity and incompleteness of our data on the situation in the Louisville Public Schools, we believe it is not too soon to attempt some preliminary assessment of what has happened in Louisville. Even after only one full year of implementation, urban school reform efforts in Louisville simply are too important to ignore.

Accomplishments

Previous sections of this paper already have called attention to some of the definite accomplishments which have, in our opinion, made the Louisville School District a pace-setter in urban education reform. For purposes of review and summary, we can itemize some of these accomplishments as follows:

1. Louisville has done more than any other big city we know of to provide pertinent training and re-training for teachers and other staff.

2. The importance of obtaining exponiential gains in improving administrative leadership has been recognized and acted on in several ways.

3. A serious effort is being made to bring about effective citizen participation in school affairs in general and workable citizen participation in local school decision-making in particular.

4. Concepts for reform in organizing and operating instructional programs as well as in generally improving the utilization of human and material resources in individual schools have been worked out and are undergoing careful testing.

5. A defensible program is being launched to make planning and evaluation activities a central component in many aspects of the district's operation.

6. A variety of significant steps have been taken - particularly the creation and staffing of an Organization Development Office - to enhance problem-solving and organizational improvement capabilities in the system as a whole as well as in individual schools.

7. Most important of all, these discrete components are viewed as related elements in an overall approach to systems change which recognizes that complex organizations like big city schools and school districts desperately need to overcome the dysfunctional conditions typical of a stagnating bureaucracy. It is particularly the acknowledgment and willingness to act on a systems concept of change that has made Louisville important as a case study in urban education reform.

The "problem" of Structure

Other sections of this paper have mentioned several problems which have cast a shadow over urban education reform efforts in the Louisville Public Schools. In the section on "Lessons," for example, we note that shortages in appropriate instructional materials and inadequacies in facilities appear to have significantly hampered program implementation in some of the schools. Rather than here restate every such problem which was called to our attention while gathering information for this paper, we will elaborate a little more on the one problem which caused the greatest amount of difficulty during the 1970-1971 school year. This was the problem of lack of structure in the new instructional programs which formed the heart of reform efforts in the individual schools.

There is little question but that students and teachers experienced very trying times when school opened in the fall of 1970. Many staff members generally discovered that neither they nor most of their pupils possessed the skills to successfully implement an instructional program emphasizing self-directed learning and non-structured assignments and activities such as advocated in Carl Rogers' Freedom To Learn (Rogers' book is cited in literature describing overall reform goals in the Louisville schools as well as the objectives and content of the summer, 1970 training program.) While it probably would be an exaggeration to say that the chaotic situations which resulted brought Impact and Focus schools to the brink of dissolution, dissatisfaction and disorder in several of the schools apparently reached an explosive level. As one would expect, the greatest difficulties seem to have been manifest in the secondary schools, where size of school and hostility among alienated adolescents tend to compound and complicate problems arising from lack of structure.

Once teachers and administrators realized from bitter experience that inner city schools cannot be improved or reformed simply by resolving to make them more humane, actions were taken to restore order and move in a more careful and realistic fashion toward the attainment of this laudable goal. By January, 1971, the district's newsletter to Focus and Impact parents acknowledged that "some students do not function well in more 'unstructured' situations" and described a number of changes which were being instituted to improve the situation:

> To meet this problem, various forms of 'homogeneous groupings' have been implemented in Project schools. 'Homogeneous grouping' means that children are being grouped together according to how much supervision and structure they need. . . .Children are also being grouped according to the degree of their proficiency in such skills as reading and math. However, these groupings are very flexible. If a child shows greater self-reliance or improved academic work, he is then placed with children at his particular level.[1]

As was pointed out in the foregoing sections on Project VIII and on Process Planning and Evaluation, central office personnel responsible for the development and implementation of the Impact and Focus Projects apparently had not anticipated that a substantial proportion of students at the participating schools would not function successfully in the absence of carefully structured learning settings and experiences designed to help them make a gradual transition to more self-directed styles of learning.[2] Or, if the problem was foreseen, it did not receive adequate attention in planning, training, and organization development activities carried out in connection with the Projects, particularly the summer, 1970 training program which emphasized group process and interpersonal attitudes but left little room for the development of classroom teaching skills or the formulation of team teaching plans. The turmoil which frequently resulted - particularly at the secondary level - was responsible at least in part for other difficulties which arose in the project schools.[3] For example, once school officials had fallen into a trap so easily predictable from the point of view of inner city residents, there was lowered confidence in the schools and increased school-community tensions. Teachers and students alike experienced unnecessary frustration, thus fueling tendencies to reject proposals for change as unworkable and to fall back on "tried and true" methods which maintain a semblance of order even though they do little to enhance learning. All things considered, it is quite possible that the neglect of structure in planning and implementing Projects Impact and Focus represented one step forward and two steps back.[4]

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[1] Tall Oaks. A Newsletter for Focus/Impact Parents. January 1971, p. 5.

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[2] For a discussion of the meaning and importance of structure in instructional programs for inner city students, see Russell C. Doll and Daniel U. Levine, "Toward a Definition of Structure in the Education of Older Disadvantaged Students," Paper presented at the Seventh Annual Work Conference on Urban Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, June 19, 1969.

[3] Our observations suggested that several elementary schools made an excellent recovery and were progressing rapidly by the end of the year but, depending on the school, the picture in the secondary schools remained either mixed or somewhat problematical at the end of the year.

But we do not mean to imply that problems associated with lack of structure in the project schools are necessarily insurmountable or that prospects for the future are irretrievably bleak. We already have noted, for one thing, that school officials seemed quick to admit these problems had occurred - which has not always been the case in some other school districts where serious difficulties in a new program have gone officially unrecognized for a period of years.[5] Actions which followed quickly upon this realization included the initiation of Project Star, which provided small, specially-staffed classes for the most frustrated and disruptive pupils, and emergency in-service training sessions run by Gerald Weinstein and other experienced consultants known for their balanced approach to instructional change in the inner city. In addition, numerous other sections of this paper have described gains that appear to have been made in Impact and Focus schools in 1970-71. It is quite possible, in other words, that (as happened in Project VIII) many of the problems in the Impact and Focus Projects will be overcome during the second year, particularly if training activities conducted in the summer of 1971 prove effective in helping staff members work out a productive synthesis between structure and freedom in their programs of instruction.

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[4] This outcome suggests that any project to increase student participation in learning or teacher participation in decision-making must be carefully scrutinized and implemented lest "participation" lead nowhere and participants become disillusioned with the goals sought in attempting to increase participation. As Mulder has recently pointed out:

> . . . people may be engaged to participate in matters which are either completely unimportant or above their level of expertness . . . when they realize that they are not, in fact, contributing anything, they will have learned not to engage themselves in any other, possibly productive and useful, participation activities. It appeared from responses to questionnaires in research in the Netherlands . . . that bad participation was evaluated as worse than no participation at all, as has been demonstrated in earlier research. Mark Mulder, Power Equalization Through Participation?, Administrative Science Quarterly, v. 16, no. 1 (March 1971), 36.

[5] As early as January, for example, school officials were quoted publicly as follows in Education Daily: "We have been forced to re-evaluate our teaching strategies, to underline the differences between flexibility of structure and total absence of structure. Learning cannot take place in chaos . . ." Education Daily, January 19, 1971, p. 3.

It was not by accident that we placed quotes around the word "problem" in the heading for this section. We view the problem as largely an unnecessary one stemming in good measure from a nationwide tendency to swallow whole the simplistic views of certain neo-romantic writers who tend to equate structure and discipline with slavery and even "murder" of students in the public schools. For some years now, competent scholars such as David Hunt have been reporting research indicating that some students tend to perform better in structured educational settings while others tend to do better in non-structured settings. Students from economically disadvantaged homes, moreover, tend on the average to do less well in non-structured settings than do middle-class students. Hunt and his colleagues have shown that students at various levels of readiness for non-structured learning environments can be identified relatively easily and that learning environments with appropriate degrees of structure can be prescribed for each learner.[6] Why not take advantage of solid research of this type rather than the undocumented assertions of writers who see something called "freedom" as a panacea for all problems in the public schools?

Some may argue that the agony of "structureless education" (a contradiction in terms?) which affected many teachers and students in Louisville during 1970-71 is a necessary, cathartic stage without which there can be no true transformation of urban schools. But in the absence of any objective evidence to support this point of view, we cannot but regret that educators in Louisville as in so many other school districts have had to rediscover the wheel,[7] so to speak, when it comes to acknowledging that structure and oppression are not synonymous.

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[6] David E. Hunt, Matching Models in Education. The Coordination of Teaching Methods With Student Characteristics. (Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1970).

Questions

Like other big city school districts, Louisville is confronted with an endless variety of built-in problems which sometimes make one feel that the job of improving urban education is all but impossible. Whether already prominent, emerging, or mostly incipient, such problems are part and parcel of big city districts and there is little anyone can do to avoid their occurrence.

For example, reform efforts in Louisville till now have been met with cooperation, or at least sympathetic neutrality, on the part of the local teachers' association, even though teachers in some other cities have tended to resist certain changes of the kind being made in the Louisville schools. Particularly if teacher salaries do not increase significantly in future years, one can anticipate that teacher groups in Louisville may raise various obstacles that directly or indirectly impede further change.

Related to this possibility are the difficulties of financing education that are as serious in Louisville as they are elsewhere and that obviously have the potential to bring the process of change to a quick and screeching halt.

Still another factor which beclouds the future of urban education reform in Louisville is the issue of racial integration. As of this writing there is a distinct possibility that the federal courts will order major shake-ups to increase integration in the Louisville schools, with unpredictable results on the specific program of reform which has been described in this pamphlet.

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[7] In recent years there has been a widespread tendency to emphasize group process skills at the expense of other teaching skills in teacher-training workshops. Well-known teacher trainers such as B. O. Smith now stress that specific methodological skills must be given due attention and teachers must receive a good deal of help in learning to apply new skills in realistic classroom settings. See B. Othaniel Smith, Teaching for the Real World (Washington, D. C.: AACTE, 1969); and Richard A. Schmuck and Philip J. Runkel, Organizational Training for a School Faculty (Eugene Oregon: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1970).

The questions with which we are mainly concerned in this section, however, do not focus on these inescapable difficulties big city districts typically face with respect to problems such as teacher activism, district-wide financing, and court-ordered integration. Rather, our purpose here is to identify several important presently unanswerable questions somewhat unique to the Louisville reform effort on which the success of that effort ultimately may depend. Three of these questions are as follows:

1. Will the planning, evaluation, and feedback information systems which are being tried in Louisville have a discernible impact in improving the quality of education in the schools?

As noted elsewhere, these efforts appear to be well in line with some of the best current thinking embodied in such terms as "behavioral objectives," "criterion-referenced instruction," and "formative evaluation monitoring." However, it is far from certain that these concepts will prove much more useful or effective in practice than have many other movements which have created a great deal of interest in American education and then rapidly dropped from sight. Indeed, one reason why Louisville reform efforts are so important is that they are helping to provide a test of the value and staying power of these currently-popular concepts in administrative and organizational management.

2. Will the new personnel being brought into the Louisville schools - particularly through the Teacher Corps Internship and Paraprofessional programs - remain in the system for any length of time and will their eventual overall impact be such as to build strong new school units or fracture existing ones apart?

At the present time it is too early to even try to answer either question. The introduction of teacher corps interns, paraprofessionals, and other personnel has comprised an essential and needed step in bolstering staff resources and bringing new points of view into the schools; as described earlier, instructional change in Impact and Focus schools has been built around the assumptions that such personnel will be available and can make important contributions in the classroom. For various reasons which space prohibits treating here, however, it is far from certain that such personnel will remain available to the public schools or that their predominant impact will not be to generate philosophical disputes that further detract from the effectiveness of the inner city school; indeed, experience in other cities suggests that this latter possibility should not be lightly disregarded.[8] What happens in this regard in Lousville may well be decided within the next six to twelve months.

3. Was enough done to improve administrative leadership at the building level?

As mentioned earlier, two of the first steps in the reform process in Louisville were to provide training for principals and to bring new administrators into five of the fourteen schools participating in the Impact and Focus Projects.

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[8] The problem here is closely related to the argument over structure in the classroom. One of the most important general competencies an effective teacher must possess is the ability to utilize and establish a variety of learning environments (e.g., highly structured to non-structured) depending on the needs of pupils and the situations which exist in particular classrooms; thus Bruce Joyce, B. O. Smith, and many other distinguished teacher educators have stressed the importance of flexibility on the part of the teacher. For this reason, the most important quality of the teacher trainee, as Hunt has written, "is whether he can accept a variety of procedures as being useful at different times. Unless the trainee who favors inquiry and inductive lessons can also accept the necessity for structured lessons and didactic presentation, he will be . . . as difficult to change as the trainee with exactly the opposite values." (Hunt, op. cit., p. 72). In our experience, innovative training programs such as the Teacher Corps are particularly susceptible to recruiting trainees who are unable to see any value in instructional programs other than those emphasizing the single dimension of freedom to learn.

Since outstanding leadership far above the norm is a prerequisite to successful reform in inner city schools, the early emphasis which was placed on this variable in Louisville was most encouraging. However, because the quality of leadership we have in mind in using the term "far above the norm" is found only once in perhaps one or two hundred potential administrators, we are inclined to be skeptical about the impact of an effort that resulted in changing the principals in barely one-third of the schools - even granted that a good training program might minimize the need for change in personnel. Based on our experience in other cities, we would not have expected that sufficient change in personnel could be effected without running afoul of state and local certification rules, yet we found no evidence that such conflict had occurred in Louisville. Not knowing the personnel involved and having visited only a few of the schools for a brief period of time, we cannot arrive at a firm conviction on this question but merely want to raise it as an important issue requiring further consideration when it becomes possible in a year or two to reach more definitive conclusions about reform in the Louisville Public Schools.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: MINI-BOARDS

The past decade has seen growing community insistence that lay people be included in the decision-making processes of public institutions. Big city school districts, especially, have been subject to increasing pressures from organizations and private citizens demanding a greater voice in the making of decisions and of policy, particularly as this involves the "local" school. Student boycotts, parent demonstrations, and community hostility have often stemmed from a district's ignoring the community's wish for a part in the way schools are run. It is dangerous, today, for big city school districts to ignore the parents and community when planning educational change.

At the same time, school districts and communities have run afoul of one another when parents and community were allowed a voice in the decision-making processes; so even including parents and community in the decision-making process can be dangerous. Small skirmishes have developed because of community participation and major battles because of community control. One would be hard put to look at any big city in this country without finding at least one major confrontation between school district and community, particularly low-income communities with a preponderance of parents from minority groups. Not all the confrontations have reached the dimensions of the I.S. 201 controversy, the OceanHill-Brownsville debacle, or the Annacostia School-Community hassle.

It seems, then, that a school district is caught in a dilemma. If it doesn't allow the community some meaningful participation there might be trouble. If it does allow participation, there still might be trouble. But the dilemma is more apparent than real. At this point in time, the community must be given some opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. The question is not to allow or disallow participation but to what extent will participation be considered and in what manner will it be implemented. The real questions concern the kinds of mechanisms to be set up, what are to be the responsibilities of the community, the school and the district, are the agreements understood by all parties, in what decision-making areas is the community to have autonomy, etc. The questions, then, concern power relationships, agreement regarding the relationships, agreement regarding the functioning of the community advisory group and agreement on the mechanisms to be set up for this functioning.

The Louisville School District and the Community

Demands for citizen participation have been heard in the Louisville school district and have not gone unheeded, at least in the fourteen project schools. Within the boundaries of these schools the Louisville district is planning on setting up "Mini Boards of Education" composed of parents and community representatives. So, at least for the project schools, the district has made plans for another part of the social system to be included in the systems change.

Despite this ambitious plan, the District and community might yet be on a collision course. There were some grave oversights in the setting up and planning for community participation which, if not corrected soon, could spell the end of Focus and Impact in some of the project schools.

One glaring oversight is the failure of the central administration to convince the teachers and building administrators of the need for community participation and to inform them of the extent to which they will be asked to give up some professional autonomy. Every administrator spoken to in the central office recognized the need for community and parental involvement if the projects were to succeed. But as one moved closer to the trenches, the "troops" were hesitant about implementing the idea and unsure of what was to be accomplished by so doing. Some building administrators were uncertain of the value of community participation while the majority of the teachers spoken to thought parents should be "included" but not in a policy-making capacity.

Here, clearly, is a bfeakdown in the idea of a systems approach and certainly a serious deviation from the "aggregation" model. If the building administrator and teachers don't, in general, feel the same way about a part of the total program as does the central office then the possibility of systems subversion is increased (not necessarily intentionally, and more by omissions than commissions; more by confusion as to means and goals than by sabotage of means and goals). If the local staffs and the community Mini-Boards encounter each other with an initial degree of misunderstanding and confusion then mistrust and friction is bound to develop. This portion of the system, instead of supporting the programs, will exert a strong negative influence.

Another serious oversight was the District's not working toward the formation of Mini-Boards concurrent with program development.* Instead, the district attempted to set up the Mini-Boards after the programs were in operation. The district then went on to say that if the community did not like the programs, they could request that the programs not be in their school. Here, then, was certainly a Hobson's choice for the community. They were presented a fait accompli and then told that as an indication of the district's sincerity in involving community in the decision-making process, the district will let them cut off the extra help for their children. Some community involvement!

If the district had moved aggressively to set up the Mini Boards while the programs were being developed, this cooperative arrangement could have led to better feeling about the programs and more trust for the central administration. As it is, some of the communities question the sincerity of the district.* This sense of mistrust was very evident during a community-central office administrators meeting which was held at the culmination of a workshop for a newly-formed Mini-Board. During the questioning, it became apparent that the community not only had not had a voice in planning the programs, but did not know what were the goals of Focus or Impact. Further, the community seemed sharply critical of the programs as planned. The community felt the programs were too loosely structured and were not academically or socially helpful to the children.**

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*Superintendent Walker "personally conducted community meetings at all of the schools to receive parental approval (or rejection) of schools' inclusion in the new program." Yet, what is a community to find out in one night. Further, there is a major difference in going to a community to request permission for a program to be implemented and allowing the community to plan for a program.

If parents and community representatives had been brought in at the beginning of planning, it is doubtful that there would have been as much concern or confusion about the programs.***

Another serious problem which simply should not be present is that the central administration itself does not know what the mini-board is to do except serve, in a rather vague way, as a mechanism for "community involvement." With the trouble other cities had when goals of the community boards were even clearer than in Louisville, with powers and functions spelled out more clearly, to allow the

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*This is, of course, not peculiar to Louisville. The point is, however, that in Louisville they had a chance to cut down on some of the mistrust that low-income minority groups feel.

**The administrators later stated that the feelings expressed at the meeting were typical of the feelings of other groups.

***Of course, it is possible that if parents had known of the programs' emphasis on "humanizing" as opposed to the basic and traditional approaches, there might not have been a program at all.

the Mini-Boards to grow like Topsy is to lead with one's chin. A community cannot, by itself, form its own board and set it in motion without some understanding of the parameters of power, their tasks, and what the lines of communication will be and what they can expect to be able to accomplish. Direct assistance of some kind is needed for the Mini-Board concept to work. When one of the authors went for coffee at the meeting between community and administration, a teacher from the local school said in a sotto voce, "We need help. No one knows what they're doing. There'll never be any organization." A community person stated, to the agreement of her listeners, "We're spinning our wheels. They don't want a Mini-Board."

It is not enough for a district to have "sincerity" and "good will" in regard to community participation, not enough to state its "good will," not enough to use the jargon of community participation in implementing a concept like Mini-Boards with its potential for serious blow-ups. This kind of floundering which the administration is allowing can only lead to misunderstandings and charges of breach of faith. With no assistance in setting up well-defined avenues of communication, frustrations develop into flare-ups. Further, with little or no clarification of power and avenues of communication, expectations can be built up which neither community nor district can agree to when fulfillment of expectations is called for. To think that simply allowing the boards to form along some ad hoc lines and expect them to be able to deal systematically with their own problems under a reign of benign neglect, is not only utopian, but is playing with fire.

With no one certain of what the Boards are to do, the reactions of the teachers and building administrators can be better understood. If the central office, too, is not certain as to the functions, set-up, powers, etc., of the boards, this ambiguity poses a serious threat to teachers and administrators who will be bearing the brunt of community criticism, experiencing the direct effects of threats to professionalism, and first to be caught in the problems caused by "misunderstandings."

Community Participation: Program Expectations

If we are to believe School District spokesmen when they say the community-administration meeting was typical of others, then the School District is in trouble with projects Focus and Impact, at least for some of the school communities. School District and parents were confronting each other with different ideas about what the programs were to do. For the parents, the programs were to "educate" their children and for the School District the programs were to provide a "humanizing" experience. The parents were asking for achievement gains and the school district, while worried about achievement, was concerned first with telling the parents how their children were undergoing "experiences." The parents were concerned about their children sitting in their seats and learning, teachers teaching, and their children being given the academic skills parents see as necessary to social mobility. The school district was talking about the development of the whole child.

Speculating about this conflict in program goals, one cannot but wonder whether the School District has fallen victim to the rhetoric of the ghetto. For example, the rhetoric cays, "You have taken away our heritage. You don't understand our children and their culture. You have dehumanized our children because you have dehumanized your schools. Don't try to make us over in your image. We don't want to be middle-class. We don't want to be caught in your trap." But in reality, if you probe deeply enough, you will find another more overriding concern than "humanizing" their children's education and "teaching them their culture," although this concern is not voiced as loudly. This concern is for their children receiving academic education and middle class acculturating experiences. The fact is that ghetto parents do want their children provided with middle-class social skills and they want their children given academic skills to experience social mobility and take their place in the mainstream of society.

But in most instances it is the former "humanizing" and "culture" demands found in the rhetoric which have been heard and planned for. Emphasis has been given to "humanizing" education and teachers have been told to let the child "experience his culture."

Too often, then, the rhetoric has been misinterpreted by policy makers who think that parents want the child to maintain a value system which would perpetuate the child's place in his own sub-culture. This could not be further from what is wanted.

True, the parents want the child to maintain a contact with his "heritage," but it does not mean parents reject the idea of their children receiving skills (both social and academic) to increase the potential for mobility and assimilation into the mainstream. They want, for their children, what the immigrant groups wanted when they spoke of retaining contact with their "heritage" or "culture." They wanted retention of the artifacts of their culture; the dances, foods, objets d'art, myths, etc. The immigrant groups did not want their children to retain value patterns and be denied assimilation skills which would doom the child to repeat the parents' experiences. They did wish for the retention of the "romanticized" aspects of the culture which were found in the culture's artifacts.

So with the Louisville (and other) parents. The rhetoric is asking for a "romanticizing" of their heritage and culture and a retention of the artifacts. The reality is asking for their children to be given academic and social skills so their children can beat a child from the suburbs out of a job. Parents want their children comfortable in the mainstream but surrounded by cultural artifacts (maybe attending, once a week, the night of "heritage"dances, that were found in the Polish, Croation, Irish, and German neighborhoods of Chicago, Detroit, or New York).

School districts, university people, and others who listened to the rhetoric, without talking to the people, were led into the trap of planning for the rhetoric. In Louisville the parents were asking for their children to be taught. The school district was thinking it was answering the parents' needs by "understanding" and an emphasis upon "humanization." The parents wanted the children sitting down, listening and learning. The district, caught in the rhetoric of "understand our children" attempted to "understand," and in so doing mistook understanding for license.

The unhappiness parents expressed in the above-mentioned meeting was the unhappiness of parents who could see their children being "understood" out of the mainstream. The unhappiness of the district was that they thought they were answering parents' requests for "human approaches" and retention of "cultural values" and being rebuked for answering the request.

If the administrators had dealt with the community earlier in its planning, they might not have been caught in the rhetoric. They might have seen the communities' wish for more concentration on academic learnings. They might have been able to sort out the concerns for artifact retention from the stated demands of retention of "culture and heritage." They might then have planned more wisely in the providing of structure and come to a compromise on the degree of skills concentration.

As it is they have far to go in their working with the community. It is hoped that, as happened with faculties when problems cropped up, the central administration can back up and regroup, this time really hearing community concerns and not the rhetoric. If not, the Focus and Impact projects will be permanently crippled in regard to community support. The projects might even be eliminated if the district stands by its word to allow community veto power over the projects.

It would be a tragedy if the projects were ended prematurely because of these misunderstandings between the district and the community.

LESSONS

Because the Louisville Public Schools have been on the forefront of urban education reform, some of the lessons that are being learned there have important implications for school districts and school personnel elsewhere. Our choice of the term "lessons" rather than "mistakes" is deliberate; one of the prices of being on the cutting edge of change is that errors inevitably will be made which might have been avoided by playing it safe. But the inclination to play it safe is itself an important cause of the crisis in urban schools, and the decision which leaders in the Louisville Public Schools made to move ahead speedily with a comprehensive plan for change should be applauded rather than picked apart with the benefit of hindsight. Urban educators who may be holding back on reform until they think their plans are error-proof are moving too slow.

Nor do we wish to imply that Louisville efforts at urban school reform have failed. Serious problems in implementation do exist, and some of them might have been avoided. At the same time, much has been done to develop problem-solving capabilities at various levels of the district and it is quite possible that rapid progress will be made in overcoming current problems. Predictions concerning the ultimate success of the district's reform efforts would be hazardous, but we came away convinced that the Louisville Public School District has been moving in promising directions and that the following lessons which emerged in the process of change there have nationwide significance:

1. Training and re-training programs for urban school personnel should include concrete planning components as well as stress on developing more effective and appropriate teaching skills right from the start.

The first summer (1970) of large-scale training in Louisville dealt primarily with attitudes and feelings. Some concentration on affective aspects of urban education and organizational processes undoubtedly is necessary to remove school personnel from the ruts into which they have fallen and to open up real possibilities for systemic change in the schools. Efforts to influence the attitudes of personnel either at the building or district levels sometimes work and sometimes don't - the goal is by no means an easy one. By involving nearly all teaching personnel for a significant amount of time and by conducting an excellent affective-oriented training program, Louisville school officials apparently did succeed to a considerable extent. By the fall of 1970, readiness for change was widespread and enthusiasm was high.

But improving the conditions for learning and teaching in urban schools - particularly inner city schools - is no mean task; if it was, urban schools would not presently be in such deep trouble. Sustaining significant change at the classroom and building levels requires improved teaching skills and intense planning that accompany - not follow - improvements in attitudes and intentions. As soon as the teacher whose enthusiasm has been kindled or re-kindled meets his students and has to solve the real problems which exist in urban schools he quickly relearns some old truths: Love and respect for pupils are not enough; Good intentions and determination to succeed are not enough; Affirmation that pupils can learn and willingness to try new methods are not enough; All these attitudes may be prerequisites for successful reform, but they are not in themselves enough. The crash landing in store for most teachers allowed to enter an inner city classroom flying high mostly on good will and messianic motives can prove little short of disastrous.

2. The format for training and organizational development should be closely interwoven with the regular academic schedule.

Precisely because Louisville has done more than any other big city district we know of to conduct summer training on a significant scale and to give school personnel time for planning during the regular school year, the Louisville experience indicates that still more is necessary if school facilities really are to dig in and solve the problems they encounter in implementing new programs. That is, if serious problems in implementation arise at any level more encompassing than the teaching team - as invariably they will - the faculty may need as much as two or three weeks to really work out school-wide policies and solutions. In other words, blocks of time for planning and program development should be interspersed throughout the regular academic year, so that personnel in the schools can continuously test, refine, and improve new approaches in a context that forces a melding of theory and practice. This is particularly true in secondary schools, where postponing a school-wide effort to solve implementation problems encountered in October until the following summer may be tantamount to permanently crippling a promising new idea for institutional reform.

It is true that freeing teachers for several days or several weeks to work on solving critical implementation problems in a new program is extremely difficult to accomplish. Releasing students will run aground of state laws which mandate the number of days schools must be in session to be eligible for state aid. Utilizing staff development days which may be available for internal planning and decision-making may be less attractive for some personnel than highly ineffective traditional practices which allow a teacher so disposed to sit back and listen to (tune out) a famous speaker or shop while attending a convention at the state capital. Perhaps the most feasible ways to release entire faculties for meaningful blocks of time would be to train a cadre of competent substitute teachers who could take over at a given school for a few days or a week and/or to tie staff development schedules and activities to an extended year plan. In any case, we are confident that school leaders who recognize the centrality of staff and organizational development components in urban education reform and who understand the imperatives required to make new programs work will find ways to initiate more effective formats for in-service training and development.

3. At least in inner city neighborhoods, and probably in middle class neighborhoods as well, the formation of local advisory groups with a real voice in decision-making should precede rather than accompany or follow basic change efforts in the schools.

The reasons for this generalization are fairly obvious. For one thing, if parents and citizen groups are not formally involved in planning and implementing a new program from the beginning, innovative ideas may not be accepted because they will tend to be seen as discriminatory, as a trick of the establishment, or on other grounds. Second, unless a local mini-board with recognized legitimacy plays a significant part in designing and implementing the program, its members - and the people they represent - will tend not to assume much responsibility for the program's success. Equally important, school personnel fired up about curricular and instructional change can benefit from the tempering and pragmatic input of parents who frequently are less inclined to jump off the deep end than are idealistic educators whose theories have not been tested in the crucible of practical reality. All three reasons for establishing a functioning local board before endeavoring to implement a promising new program in the school are particularly salient at the junior- and senior-high school levels, where successful change is more difficult to accomplish than at the elementary school,but it would be unwise to discount the importance of having a functioning local board at any level from preschool to college.

4. Plans for bringing about change falter when key steps are taken too hastily or resources fundamental to the success of a new program are not provided before it is introduced in the schools.

Although this proposition is self-evident, there is a tendency to ignore it in the rush of enthusiasm associated with the introduction of exciting new programs.

In a sense the point is tautological: hasty action taken without adequate resources is an outcome one wishes devoutly to avoid. In day-to-day decision-making, however, whether minimal pre-conditions for the success of an innovation have been established often will be a matter of some uncertainty. A variety of forces may predispose decision-makers to move forward before the foundation is present for effective implementation.

In Louisville, for example, serious problems have arisen in some cases because too few suitable instructional materials and resources were available to allow students and teachers to move into more individualized and student-centered learning approaches, too little change in school facilities had been made or was possible commensurate with the concept of team teaching, or paraprofessionals had been put to work without adequate screening and training. Again, such problems seem to have been particularly acute at the secondary level, where it is more difficult for staff to pull themselves together and make rapid adjustments than is true in the smaller environs of the typical elementary school.

Emphatically, this lesson should not be construed as justifying caution and foot-dragging in reforming urban education - such a reading runs directly counter to the fundamental points we are trying to communicate in this paper. What it does mean is that implementing a new program without establishing the major material and organizational pre-conditions necessary for success does violence to the very systems approach the importance and potential of which the Louisville Public School District has been working so impressively to demonstrate.

In addition to these four basic generalizations, several additional issues of some importance in urban education also may be somewhat clearer as a result of one or another facet of developments in the Louisville Public Schools since Newman Walker became Superintendent of Schools in 1969. For purposes of clarity we will cast these points in the form of questions which we will try to answer based on our observations in Louisville as well as other big city school districts.

1. How much turnover in personnel is required if real change is to take place in an urban high school?

Whether city or suburban, high schools have proved much more difficult to reform than elementary schools. It is not just that high school teachers tend on the average to be more subject-matter centered and perhaps more set in their ways than are elementary teachers; as we pointed out above, the greater size of the average high school creates additional problems in planning and implementing change. Partly for these reasons, though one can find many excellent examples of successful innovative elementary schools, there are few such models at the high school level, and none among public inner city high schools. Most outstanding urban high schools which can be found, moreover, started from scratch with the entire faculty new to the institution (e.g., John Adams High in Portland, Oregon; Northwest High in Shawnee Mission, Kansas).

Experience at Shawnee High School - the only high school among the "project" schools in Louisville - suggests an answer to the question. Although Shawnee has a considerable distance to go before one might consider it a well-functioning urban high school, much of what has been accomplished at Shawnee indicates a real break-through may be possible there if implementation difficulties experienced in 1970-71 can be solved within the next year or two. The faculty and student body have been re-organized into seven "Human Relations" teams for interdisciplinary study in English and social studies. One hour a day is available for team planning and teachers from other departments as well as counselors and other specialized personnel are attached to a team with which they meet about once every two weeks in order to coordinate and integrate curriculum and instruction. Among the problems alluded to elsewhere in this paper, the new organization at Shawnee has been particularly hampered by inadequate facilities and resources and by an ideology that presumes most students can work independently before they have carefully and laboriously learned to do so. Nevertheless, most of the teachers we talked to at Shawnee remained positive about their pupils and had not yet been defeated or demoralized by the serious difficulties they encountered in the first year of change.

In addition to this fundamental reorganization, Shawnee has instituted a host of special programs and projects during the past few years. For example, a "Tutoring in Reading" program in which Shawnee juniors work with junior high students and receive credit in psychology has been initiated, as have courses in Carpentry and Masonry emphasizing the acquisition of marketable skills in these trades and a "Sheltered Workshop" for E.M.H. students. Other notable developments at Shawnee include a "Father Image" program utilizing seniors who work as teacher helpers in an elementary school and a special program in Biology which uses programmed materials, student-teacher contracts, and student selection of materials and units for study. All in all, Shawnee richly deserved the Governor's Award for Outstanding Educational Innovations which Mrs. Spiro Agnew presented at a ceremony in May of 1971.

How much staff change took place before these innovations could begin to constitute a fundamental reform package at Shawnee? Of the 65 faculty employed in the spring of 1970, 59 asked to participate in the summer training and return in the fall. Of these 59, 31 were accepted and returned; the remaining 28 transferred or retired. Thus nearly half the professional staff at Shawnee was new to the school when the new organization was introduced in the fall of 1970. Principal George Sauer estimated that a turnover this large (approximately one-half) was necessary before school-wide reform would be an attainable goal in a high school. Our own estimates of the amount of turnover required for basic change in the average urban high school (excluding those which have an unusual proportion of staff already willing and anxious to make basic changes) is a little higher - 50 to 60%, but still in the same vicinity. It goes without saying that this estimate assumes considerable screening and training both for returning teachers and for those new to the school at which basic institutional change is being attempted.

2. What administrative variables distinguish a big city school district undergoing fundamental change from the typical situation in which reform is purely rhetorical or is limited to isolated pilot projects in a few schools?

The Louisville Public School District differs in at least two important administration-related characteristics from most other big city school districts with which we are familiar.

First, at the top levels of administration, particularly the superintendency, there seems to be relatively little concern for keeping one's job. Superintendent Walker was persuaded to come to Louisville only after members of the Board of Education convinced him they were serious about wanting system-wide change; he does not appear to worry very much - if at all - about the possibility that modifying some well-entrenched practices may generate sufficient opposition from a variety of sources to put his job in jeopardy. Of course, Walker is highly respected elsewhere and probably feels he would have relatively little trouble getting a job if terminated in Louisville; nevertheless, the important point is that he seems far less inclined to play it safe than administrators we have observed in other big city districts.

Second, and closely related to the leadership variable, we observed an underlying appreciation of the potential value of conflict and confrontation greater than we have seen elsewhere except in an isolated school or classroom. That is, Walker and a number of other administrators were not laboring mightily to avoid or gloss over instances or signs of conflict (many administrators we have seen elsewhere have been all but preoccupied with this goal), but instead have worked to bring underlying or potential conflicts into the open where they can be dealt with directly. For example, the district began publishing school-by-school achievement data soon after Walker took office, and much of the first summer's training program was designed to help teachers tolerate conflict and deal with it constructively.

Along these lines, the efforts to create local mini-boards and to give students and teachers a direct and major role in decision-making at all levels were motivated at least in part by a belief that educational problems in the classroom are most likely to be solved if every interested party is actively involved and assumes some responsibility for their solution. Such participation is unlikely to occur, however, unless participants not only are free to express themselves but also have defined mechanisms and obligations to do so and sufficient legitimated power to assure their views will be heard. None of this is to say that disruption and power struggles are welcomed for their own sake, but rather that conflict and confrontation are seen as important, and probably necessary, aspects of urban school reform, though they may initially make the job of the practicing teacher or administrator more difficult and complicated.

Finally, we must emphasize several administrative prerequisites to fundamental change which also have been present in the Louisville Public Schools; without them, reform efforts probably would have been totally ineffectual.

First - overshadowing any other possible source of comprehensive reform in a big city school district - has been the leadership provided by Superintendent of Schools Newman Walker. We have already described several of the most important developments which occurred early in his administration; many of these developments have involved a readiness to accept confrontations that might lead to constructive problem-solving. In general, Walker seems unusually open to criticism and highly determined to identify and face up to problems rather than sweep them under the rug. Equally important, Walker understands that urban education reform depends both on his willingness to act decisively at the risk of upsetting established interests as well as upsetting time-worn ways of doing things. He has been willing to accept the frustrations which arise when all interested parties are truly involved in the painful process of change. "Power and process," Walker says, are twin building-blocks neither one of which can provide a firm foundation for change in the absence of the other.*

Second, it would be misleading to leave the impression that reforms introduced in the schools would be possible without obtaining more funds and other resources than are available through regular district sources. For this reason, Walker, Yeager, and other top-level personnel concentrated particular effort during their first year on preparing proposals for federal and foundation support - even to the extent that they wrote proposals themselves. The results of these labors bore fruit in the second year in the form of sizable grants without which innovation on the scale it has been tried in Louisville would have been all but unthinkable.

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*The first time we met Superintendent Walker was during a conversation in the office of Chairman of School Operations (Assistant Superintendent) J. Frank Yeager. Walker entered briefly to say he was going to use a chair in an adjoining office. The reason he had to seek out a chair was that in 1970-1971, during his second year as superintendent, he had closed out his office at the central board building, turned day-to-day administrative duties over to Yeager, and spent most of his time out in the schools and neighborhoods trying to find out what the real problems were and how matters looked from the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents. During the year he met for several hours each week with approximately forty faculties.

Third, reorganization of management functions has been carried out for the avowed purposes of "flattening the hierarchy" for decision-making and communications and of making sure that central office personnel support rather than obstruct change and improvement in the schools. After Walker assumed the superintendency in July of 1969, a number of assistant superintendencies, as well as the Department of Federal Programs, were eliminated. Ten autonomous divisions designed to provide change-oriented supporting services were established to replace them. Three of the most important of these newly-created units are the Department of Organizational Development headed by Carl Foster, the Department of Research and Evaluation headed by Larry Barber, and the Department of Instructional Services headed by Joe Atkins. These steps toward a flattened hierarchy, in combination with Walker's decision to spend 90% of his time obtaining what he calls "continuous feedback without filter" from the schools, are intended to locate responsibility at the building and classroom levels while achieving better communications between top-level decision-makers and personnel in the field. With the introduction of new techniques for process planning and evaluation (described elsewhere in this report), they constitute an important attempt to develop effective patterns of accountability in a big city school district.

Fourth, a definite effort is being made to ensure that administrators - particularly building principals - provide organizational leadership and do not get bogged down in administrivia. To underline this goal, titles and positions have been modified: the principals are now called Principal Learning Facilitators, and Business Managers have been assigned to take responsibility for strictly managerial functions. (In some cases, particularly effective school secretaries were advanced to business manager). It would be easy for these changes to be viewed as mostly semantic, but the limited observations we made suggested that they signified something deeper. That is, we did come away with the impression that building administrators in Louisville were visiting classrooms more often, working more intensively to resolve staff and group relations problems in the schools, taking more responsibility for conditions in the organization and performance of students and teachers, and otherwise providing more vigorous leadership than we generally have found to be the norm in big city school districts. It also should be kept in mind, that changes in titles, functions, and expectations for administrators have been closely tied to other changes (e.g., substantial turnover in administrative personnel; Walker's insistence on spending time in the field) as part of a larger systems approach to overall reform in the district as a whole and the inner city schools in particular.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper has been to describe some key components in a comparatively systematic effort that has been made to bring about fundamental educational reform in fourteen inner city schools in Louisville, Kentucky. To our knowledge, no effort this comprehensive and intensive has been made to bring about basic improvements in so large and compact a group of schools in any big city school district.

It is true that this group of schools constitutes only twenty percent of all the public schools in Louisville and does not even include all the Title I schools. Nevertheless, the fact that comprehensive reform components have been concentrated in this limited number of schools is itself a sign of the seriousness with which reform has been undertaken in Louisville.* The district made the decision to strive for permanent change in selected schools rather than go the more typical (and more politically expedient) route of introducing reform projects over so wide a geographic area that they have little or no chance to succeed.

It is also true that the goal of revitalizing inner city schools in Louisville, and making them much more effective educationally, has not yet been accomplished and may never be accomplished. At the end of the 1970-1971 school year - the first full year of systems reform - the schools we visited seemed to be in a state we can best characterize as a sort of "high-potential mushiness." That is, instructional reforms had not been unqualified successes and problems which had arisen in implementing change seemed likely to persist until enough non-restrictive structure is provided, particularly in the upper grades, to furnish a better learning environment for low-achieving students.

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*This comment is not meant to suggest that school reform efforts have been entirely limited to the fourteen schools. Just the opposite, summer training opportunities on a significant scale have been offered and administrative and other improvements have been made in many schools throughout the district, including middle-class schools. Still, the full range of reform components described in this paper has been limited to Focus and Impact schools, and it is primarily to this group of schools that one must look in assessing the significance of what has been taking place in Louisville.

But it would be unfair to play up the fact that fundamental reforms being tried in Focus and Impact schools have not yet proved fully successful; after only one year, any other outcome regarding so ambitious an undertaking would be little short of miraculous. By the spring of 1971, Louisville educators had demonstrated some exceedingly promising directions for change and, hopefully, had learned some important lessons about what it will take to negotiate obstacles on the frontier of urban education reform. The quality of leadership frequently was outstanding, many teachers were receptive to change and experiencing some success in the classroom, much had been done to involve parents and citizens in decision-making processes in their local schools, and personnel in inner city schools in Louisville generally were in a position to take giant strides beyond this important frontier.