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ABSTRACT
                In 1981, TDR Associates, a private, independent
research organization in Newton, Massachusetts, began a two and
one-half year study of "Knowledge Utilization and School Improvement
Through Staff Initiated Inservice Programs." This study was funded by
a grant from the National Institute of Education and conducted under
an arrangement with the Commonwealth Inservice Institute of the
Massachusetts Department of Education. More than an attempt in
bridging the gap between research and practice, this effort has
resulted in an example of mutual adjustment, where application of
practitioners' situational knowledge or social intelligence has
improved and informed the research process. The central hypothesis of
the study is that participant needs and engaging workshop process are
important, but that alone they comprise an incomplete account of
knowledge acquistion/use in staff inservice. In addition to
participant and workshop characteristics, this research explores the
role of such contextual factors as school and district climate,
supervisor support, peer relations, student needs, and job
satisfaction in inservice outcomes. The research combines
quantitative and qualitative methods and has proceeded according to
three interactive and interdependent phases. (JMK)

Using Research To Enhance Staff Development:

A Collaboration Between A State Education Agency

And An Independent Research Organization

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Introduction

Over the past decade researchers in education have become increasingly concerned with the relationship between research and practice. This concern was recently expressed by Maxine Green, former president of the American Education Research Association (AERA). While noting that the AERA has succeeded in conducting quality research, she concluded that it had failed to ensure productive use of that research. "Those who are most likely to profit from research typically have been the least likely to read it" (March 1982). Indeed, the association between the creation of research knowledge and its application (knowledge use) has itself become the focal point of numerous national and local studies. This paper presents a description of one such study, and the way that researchers and state education agency personnel have attempted to use research to "enlighten" (c. Weiss, 1979) policy and "improve" practice in local school districts (Guba, 1967; Guba and Clark, 1975).

In 1981, TDR Associates, a private, independent research organization in Newton, Massachusetts, began a two and one-half year study of "Knowledge Utilization and School Improvement Through Staff Initiated Inservice Programs". This study was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Education and conducted under an arrangement with the Commonwealth Inservice Institute of the Massachusetts Department of Education. What began as a cooperative has evolved into a close and mutually beneficial collaboration between two separate and distinct organizations, one private and one public.

More than bridging the gap between research and practice, this effort has resulted in an example of mutual adjustment (Whetten, 1981), where application of practitioners' situational knowledge (Chin, 1966) or social intelligence (Westrum, 1982) has improved and informed the research process. Because

of the importance of the issues involved: research into factors and conditions associated with knowledge use in staff inservice programs; education change and improved practice; the utilization of research; and the characteristics of this collaboration between a SEA and an independent research organization; this case may be of interest and value to educational researchers, policy makers, facilitators, and practitioners in other locations.

The Setting

Massachusetts contains some of the oldest public school systems in the United States. Traditionally, the financing, governance, and control of these systems had been in the hands of local, autonomous school committees, resulting in a state with over 430 separate, highly diversified school systems. Recently, the growth of state and federal regulations, demographic decline, shifts in the economic base, and changes in the state finance structures (Proposition 2½) have caused what might be characterized as a dramatic reorganization of educational finance, regulation, and governance in the Commonwealth.

The shift has been coupled with four important trends. First, declines in student achievement have precipitated a demand for greater accountability from the schools and a focus on basic skills. Second, there has been a demand that the schools address the high-technology phenomenon through new programs in computer literacy and the use of new educational technologies, particularly in math and science. Third, the recession, tax-limiting legislation, and the changing economy have required that many school districts cut back programs and offerings to "bare bones". At the same time, schools are being required to serve increasingly diverse populations and respond to a complex array of state and federal mandates and programs. Finally, as a consequence of demographic and fiscal decline, over 4,500 public school teachers have been laid off in Massachusetts in the past two years, resulting in an older, more senior teaching staff. This massive "reduction-in-force" has taken place at

a time when evidence points to an impending national teacher shortage, particularly in the math and science areas.

In summary then, recent changes in education in Massachusetts have resulted in schools being required to respond to increasing demands, accountability, and new technologies, with reduced budgets, programs, and professional staff who are older and often teaching in areas of secondary certification or proficiency. The impending teacher shortage may only serve to exacerbate this problem and require that current teaching staffs acquire more and different competencies and skills.

Professional Development & Inservice:. The Commonwealth Inservice Institute

Faced with these demands and an aging professional cohort, staff development becomes of paramount importance for public education.

> Since the essence of educational change consists of
> learning new ways of thinking and doing, new skills,
> knowledge, attitudes, etc., it follows that staff
> development is one of the most important factors
> related to change in practice.
>
> (Fullan, 1982, p.18)

Within the possible range of strategies for professional development, staff inservice holds a preeminent position. It can be individually or organization-ally focused, has a high potential for being cost effective and relevant, and provides school districts with a mechanism which can enhance their educational programs, professional staff, and complement their organizational mission. In Massachusetts, the Commonwealth Inservice Institute is a state agency which provides such a mechanism.

The Commonwealth Inservice Institute (CII) is a unit of the Massachusetts Department of Education which provides funding and technical assistance to public school districts throughout the state. More specifically, the Institute

provides grants and assistance for staff development programs which are
designed by and for school staffs to improve classroom teaching or specific
education services in a school, department, or school district. The
Institute's policy was developed in 1978 by a group of Massachusetts'
educators and concerned citizens who believed, based on experience and
existing data, that staff development programs must involve a relatively
small group of voluntary participants, each of whom has a stake in the
inservice program.

The Institute's designers conceived of an organization that would
break through the bureaucratic barriers of standardization, excessive rules,
requirements, and complicated procedural structures to provide public school
personnel with funds and assistance to meet their immediate inservice needs.
Initially, it was hoped that the process would consist of "a nod and a handshake",
and while the entire proposal-funding cycle involves considerably more than that,
"a nod and a handshake" remains the ideal.

The initiative for developing an Institute-funded program rests with local
school personnel at all levels who, as a group, have an objective and plan to
address that objective through on-site inservice education. The requests for
assistance or "proposals" must come from a member of that group, called a
program convener. Additionally, the other members of the group sign the
proposal, thus indicating their interest. The Institute's guidelines suggest
that the group include:

    all or most of the staff who will be directly affected
    by the changes the program is designed to bring about; and
    all of the staff (teachers, counselors, administrators,
    paraprofessional(s) whose active support is needed to
    make these changes.

Operationally, the Institute works through the six regional education centers and is coordinated through the State Department of Education's central office. In each regional center, one staff member is in charge of Institute activities, and several others staff members participate in deciding which programs to recommend for funding. Generally, the process of obtaining an Institute program is as follows--local educators, interested in receiving Institute assistance and grants contact the Institute staff member located in their region. The staff member will discuss the program with one or more of the prospective conveners and other participants. Together, they will review the program's objectives and organization. Interested educators at a local school or school districts call the Institute staff member in their region, discuss the program's objectives, check to see if the Institute's requirements are met, and determine if funds are currently available in that program area. Finally, the Institute staff will help the local educators in completing the brief, simple proposal form called the Letter of Agreement.

If the proposal has a reasonable education objective, every attempt will be made by the Institute staff to assist local school personnel in developing a fundable program. Staff, in regional offices, meet monthly to review and recommend proposals prior to sending them to the Department's central office for a final technical review. Once recommended, a program will generally receive formal approval by the State Board of Education during the following month. The entire process takes approximately six weeks. Once the program has begun, the Institute can offer a limited amount of assistance in solving unforseen problems, but basically the participants are responsible for their own program. These programs may take place during the regular school day, with consultants and participants observing or team teaching or they may occur after school, during released time, or on weekends. However, the Institute will not fund "one shot" programs.

The Institute pays for consultants, materials, and, occasionally for the use of a special instructional site or participants' travel to that site. The Institute will not pay stipends or tuitions, nor does it pay for substitutes or meals. Grants are relatively small, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars.

When the Institute began its operation in 1978, it had a $155,000 budget consisting entirely of categorical grants from the Federal Government (Special Education, Occupational Education, Nutrition), and the Rockefeller Family Fund. These were used to fund 40 inservice programs. Over the years, these funds have been supplemented or replaced with Federal funds for Title IV-C, basic skills and gifted and talented programs, a major grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. In 1982, the Institute was finally included in the State's educational budget. Its operational budget for 1982 was $732,406 and it provided grants for over 470 inservice programs.

TABLE 1: The CII 1979-1982

	1979	1980	1981	1982
Operational Budget	155,000	486,079	679,384	732,406
Grants Awarded	40	260	357	472
Number of LEAs Served	29	166	187	218

At this point in its history, the Institute has served over 90% of the school districts in Massachusetts with small grants (between $200 and $2,000) that have supported inservice programs involving close to 30,000 teachers, specialists, administrators, parents, and paraprofessionals. In its current year (the 1983 academic year), the State Board of Education is expected to approve over 500 Institute-funded programs. While Institute grants have been made to all types of schools, nearly twice as many programs have been funded at the elementary level as have been at the secondary level.

TABLE 2:   Types of Schools Served by CII Programs

Type of School	Number
Elementary	391
Middle or Junior High	92
High School	138
Regional Vocational Schools	14
*Special Schools	43
*Other	56
*District-Wide and Multi-District Programs	88

With the advent of new non-categorical funds, the scope of subject areas addressed by CII programs has widened considerably. Not suprisingly, these areas reflect current needs such as computer literacy and alcohol education, but unique concerns are also being addressed, such as how to make use of a local museum that abuts the property of a small elementary school or how to help newly emigrated Southeast Asian parents cope with their children's American schools.

The TDR Study: Inservice And The Problem Of Change

While the Commonwealth Inservice Institute has provided a mechanism (and a model) whereby the issues of professional development and staff inservice might be successfully matched, the potential of such a union has often eluded educators, thereby contributing to the concern over knowledge use and school improvement.

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*Special schools include alternative schools, day care programs, community colleges, programs for handicapped, etc. Other includes collaborative staffs, prison programs, etc. District-Wide and multi-district projects were primarily for programs for superintendents, specialists, and parents.

...very few of the efforts make any difference. Teachers

come to look upon any new proposal as almost certain to

add to their burdens and to drain their energies without

benefit. They want desparately to be left alone. Posing

a problem to be worked on becomes a threat, not an

opportunity.

(Runkel, et al., 1978, p. 18)

Much of the research on knowledge use in school improvement displays

a research-development-diffusion model bias (Rogers, 1962; Guba and Clark,

1975), as investigators have focused on outside initiated improvement projects.

The impact of such projects appears to be modest and highly varied, and much

attention is centered on the reaction and resistance of teachers to various

interventions (Corwin, 1975; Firestone, 1980; Wolcott, 1977). Furthermore,

research has tended to examine limited aspects of the knowledge use process;

i.e., participant characteristics and various aspects of improvement projects

or inservice workshop (Hall and Loucks, 1978; NTS, 1979). Recognizing that

teachers and purveyors of change differ in orientation, value, and style,

and realizing that knowledge use occurs within a specific psycho-social

context--the school, the district, and the classroom--the TDR study focuses

on staff initiated improvement projects; indigenous conditions and processes

of knowledge utilization in schools--"natural" change.

Evaluations of staff inservice projects consistently reveal that some

participants fully learn and use/apply what is taught, where others rate the

same inservice experience as "a waste of time". It is curious that such

variation in staff learning/use/application is typically viewed with alarm,

while parallel variation in student learning/use/application is readily accepted.

Conventionally, there are two general approaches to this problem. The

first approach is to build the inservice project around staff needs. By

conducting a careful "needs assessment", it is hoped that the participants who are selected or volunteer will be highly motivated to attend to the topic of concern. The second approach is to structure the inservice experience well, choose a dynamic consultant/presenter, and employ a varied and engaging workshop process.

The central hypothesis of TDR's study is that participant needs and engaging workshop processes are important, but that alone they comprise an incomplete account of knowledge acquisition/use in staff inservice. In addition to participant and workshop characteristics, this research explores the role of such contextual factors as school and district "climate", supervisors support, peer relations, student needs, and job satisfaction in inservice outcomes. The assumption here is that the extent of knowledge use which results from staff inservice is highly context specific--that its half-life over time. depends on a compatible interaction among many school, district, participant, and workshop characteristics.

The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods and has proceeded according to the following interactive and interdependent phases:

Phase I: a post-only questionnaire of approximately 80 completed
             inservice projects (N = 647 participating staff and
             administrators)
             site visits to 14 of those 80 projects (N = 124 participating
             staff)

Phase II: a refined/revised research model based on analysis of
             the questionnaire analysis and the case studies
             a pre-post survey of approximately 36 new startup projects
             (N = 464 pre; 365 post participating staff)
             Intensive simultaneous case studies and cross-case
             analyses of 3 of the 36 new start up projects

Phase III: a follow-up survey of all staff participating in the

pre-post survey (365 staff representing 36 projects)

follow-up site visits to case studies sites and 8 of

the 36 new start up projects

total data synthesis and dissemination

The original approach taken (Phase I) conceptualized the problem of knowledge use in staff inservice as a complex interaction among groups of variables: individual's concerns, needs, past experiences, and expectations (Holzner and Marx, 1979; Hood, 1978; McClelland, 1975; Paisley, 1968) and the school setting and inservice workshop itself (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Moos, 1976; Walberg, 1979; Zaltman, 1979). These variables were organized into two sets: Less Alterable Variables (LAVs)--staff background, staff psychological traits (needs and concerns) and school characteristics; and More Alterable Variables (MAVs)--school climate and workshop features. The data collected in Phase I were subjected to various forms of statistical analysis. The workshop participants' ratings were placed into the two variable sets, regressed on and correlated with workshop impact. Through step wise regression, the original model appears to have accounted for 64% of the variance in participants' ratings of workshop success and impact (see Figure 1, p. 11).

A series of site visits and follow-up interviews with participants in selected projects indicated several areas where the Phase I questionnaires and conceptual approach could be refined. Furthermore, examination of current literature on knowledge use (Larsen, 1980; Lehming and Kane, 1981; Rich, 1981) suggested that the conceptual framework might be revised to better understand the knowledge use process itself. As a result of this research, a new conceptual approach and pre-post questionnaire was developed for Phase II of the study (February 1982 - July 1983). This revised conceptualization is illustrated in Figure 2 (p. 12).
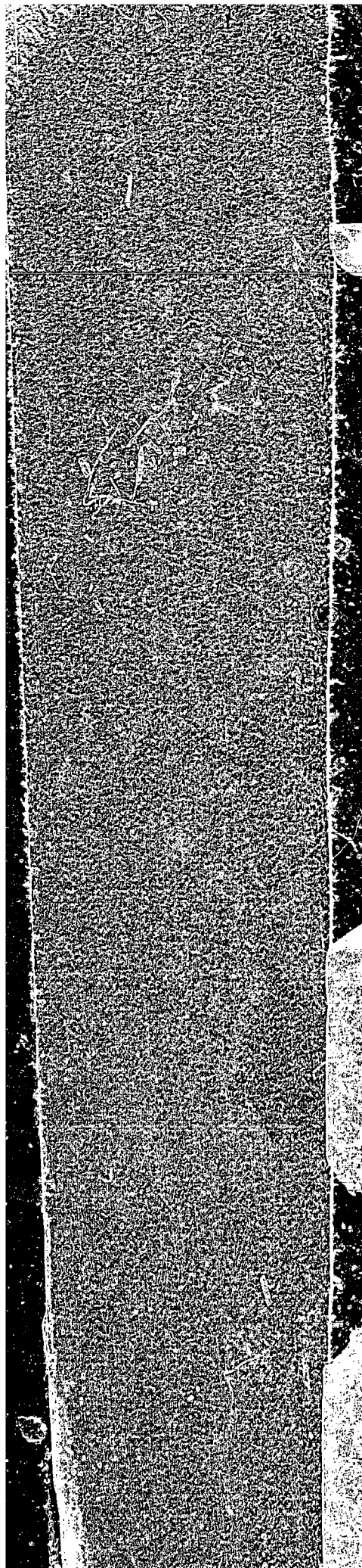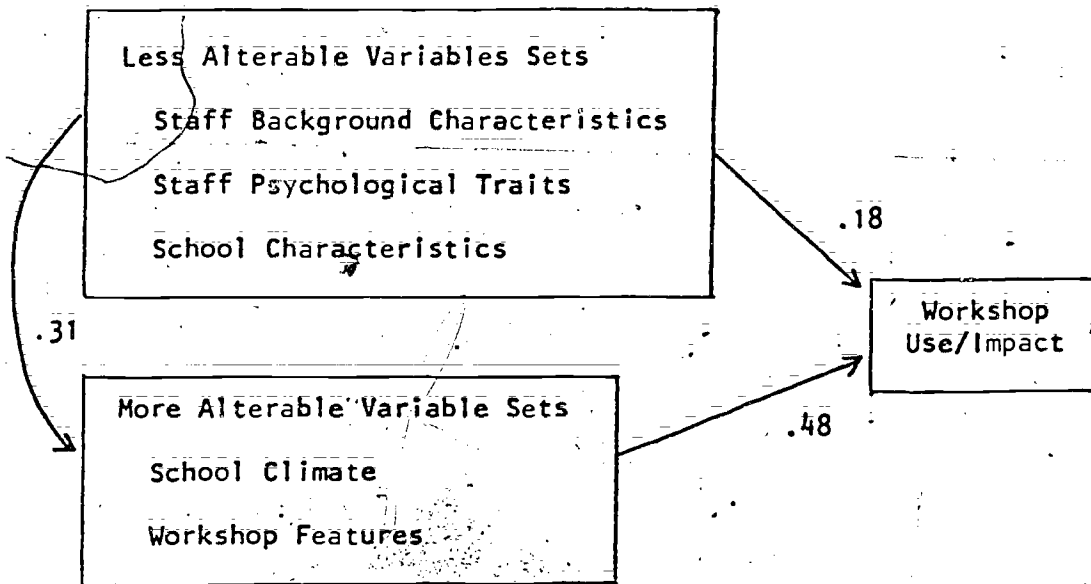
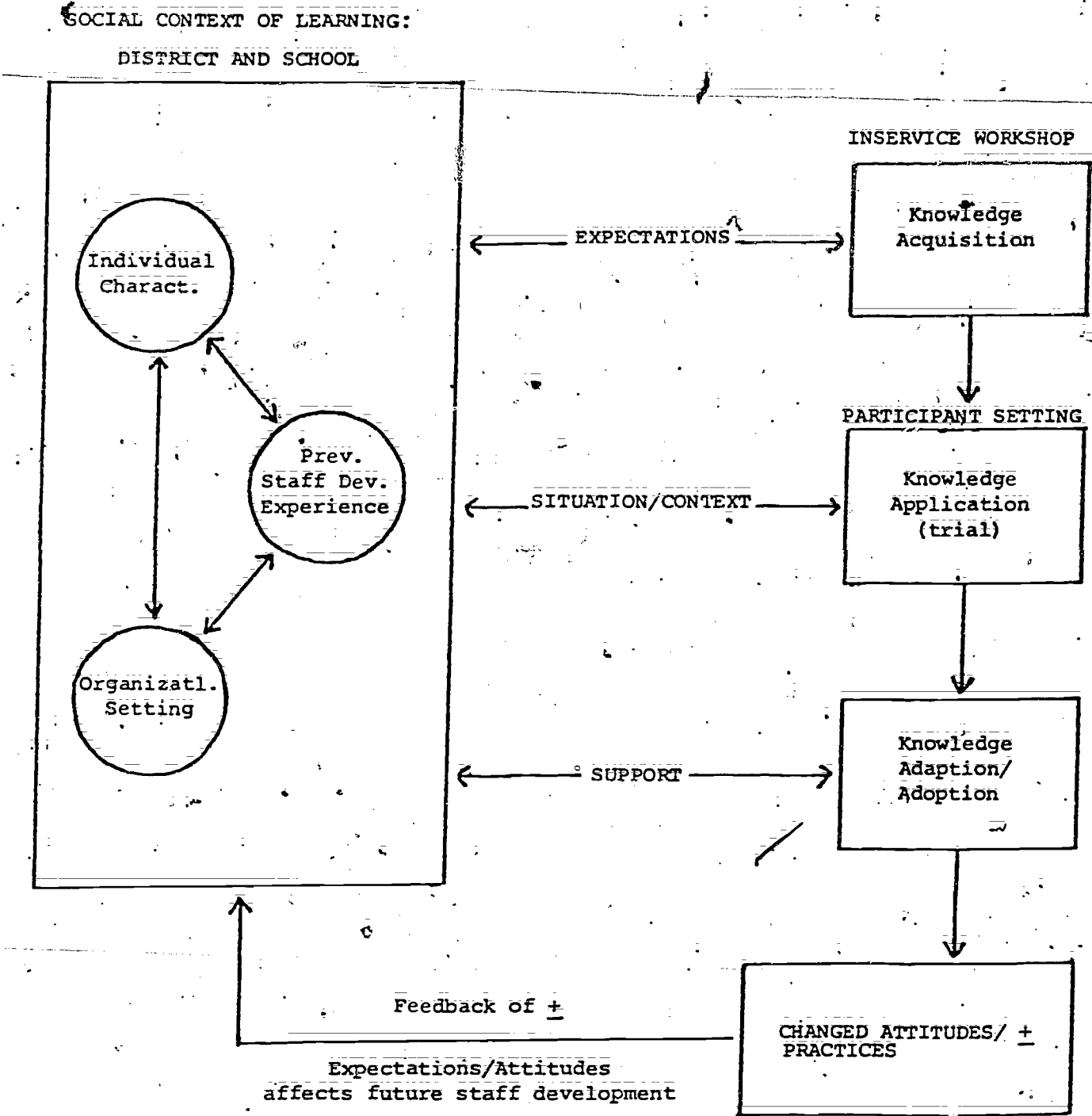FIGURE 1: Cenceptual Framework (Phase I - 1981)

Path diagram of possible influences on knowledge utilization
(workshop impact). Values given equal variance expressed as
R square.

Simply stated, the new model is complex, interactive, and iterative.
It is based on the notion that individual staff function and learn in a
complex psycho-social environment. This operative environment is shaped
by the interaction of individual; organizational; and community norms,
values and expectations around issues of staff development and knowledge
use. We have labeled this the "Social Context of Learning".

These needs, values, experiences, and expectations are brought to the
inservice workshop, where certain factors interact to create a learning
experience--with a potential for an information/knowledge exchange or
transfer. Depending on the mix and match of the workshop features with
participant needs, values, and expectations, the workshop will have an effect
(Inservice Rating). The actual amount of information, etc. acquired will
vary depending on the inservice experience and individual or organizational
needs/style of learning and motivation. The result of this interaction will

FIGURE 2: Phase II Conceptual Framework
The Knowledge Utilization Cycle In Staff Development

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING:

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

INSERVICE WORKSHOP

Knowledge
Acquisition

Individual
Charact.

EXPECTATIONS

Prev.
Staff Dev.
Experience

SITUATION/CONTEXT

PARTICIPANT SETTING

Knowledge
Application
(trial)

Organizatl.
Setting

SUPPORT

Knowledge
Adaption/
Adoption

Feedback of ±

CHANGED ATTITUDES/ ±
PRACTICES

Expectations/Attitudes
affects future staff development

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result in the participant acquiring new or additional information, skills, etc. (New Knowledge) or reviewing/revitalizing previous knowledge. Important to the acquisition question will be the question of whether or not information, skills, etc. are applied to the participants' own setting (Used). If there is no application, it is likely that knowledge acquired may soon be lost or fall into some state or disuse.

Clearly, some application is essential to create substantive impact on students or staff (Impact A). However, the inservice experience may have a psychological impact which creates a more subtle but important effect on the participants' outlook, needs, or relationships with others (Impact B). The model hyphthesizes that knowledge utilization is a result of the interaction of all these factors and the changing needs and concerns reflected in the participants' "social context". Once acquired, knowledge may or may not be used, and if used, that experience may or may not be successful. Therefore, total knowledge use/impact will depend on a complex process of learning, doing, and feeling within a specific context, over time.

Lastly, the revised approach proposes that long-term effects of inservice training (Future Use) will depend on the extent of which the knowledge acquired is adopted (used without modification) or adapted (modified, altered, or adjusted to specific situations) by participants (Adapt). The adoption/ adaptation process will depend on several factors: knowledge acquisition, application, impact (both substantive and psychological), the level of organizational or professional support, and the level of individual staff investment in the utilization process. The process feeds back into the "social context" through changed behaviors and attitude, future expectations, and values. The model will hopefully explain how knowledge use changes over time: Does it become absorbed into a complex repertoire of staff practices and behaviors? Does it fade? Does it affect change in the "social context"?

What factors accompany this process?

To complete the data collection a second follow-up questionnaire was collected from 260 of the 1981-1982 (pre/post) sample in December of 1982. This instrument repeats several of the inservice impact questions used in the first, post-workshop questionnaire. By comparing the partici- pants' immediate and (six months) later post-workshop responses, the research hopes to ascertain the "half-life" of use/application of teachers' learnings from their inservice experience. Follow-up site visits are being conducted in the early spring of 1983 to further investigate the questions above. -

From Cooperation to Collaboration

Early in the proposal formulation and writing process, TDR's researchers identified and approached the staff of the Commonwealth Inservice Institute to seek out their cooperation by endorsing the research, and providing access to teachers and staff inservice programs. Aware of the philosophy and mission of the Institute, such an arrangement seemed ready tailored to the issues and intentions of the proposed research. It might even be argued that the very existence of the Institute and its purpose permitted TDR to conceive of and approach the knowledge use question form a perspective of its relationship to staff initiated inservice programs. Certainly, the presence of such an agency was a great convenience and potential resource from the researcher's point of view.

While cooperative agreements and letters of endorsement are often appended to research proposals, Institute staff participated in the TDR proposal development by reviewing and critiquing several drafts and revisions of the final proposal. During this process members of the Institute were able to inform the researchers of the more subtle aspects of these inservice efforts and improve the research process (as distinct from the methodology) by suggesting: honorarium be paid to participants who completed the survey

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instruments; that letters of request and study abstracts be sent to LEA

administrators. In the case of providing an honorarium to participants,

this has been viewed as partially responsible for the high voluntary par-

ticipation and response rate that has characterized each phase of the study.

Indeed, the use of their good offices and insights into the real politics

and protocol of the schools was very helpful in providing the researchers

with access to participants and school site cooperation during the intital

months of study.

For their part, TDR agreed to present their research to the Commonwealth

Inservice staff at regular intervals as the study progressed. Although both

Institute personnel and TDR research staff were concerned that there be a

useful exchange of ideas as a result of the study, neither had a clear idea

of what form that "exchange" would take. In fact, TDR's early presentations

of the study's design and conceptual approach were characterized as "researchy"

and "convoluted" by the practitioner-oriented Institute staff. As one Institute

staff member put it: "If I saw one more arrow or box or circle I thought I'd

scream." Despite the good intentions, these early encounters had all the

markings of the two-communities perspective which typify researcher-practi-

tioner interactions (Caplan, 1979; Dunn, 1980; Walcott, 1977). Institute staff

later revealed that the use of such jargon and conceptual models tended to

intimidate and alienate them, with the unfortunate result that they tended to

withhold valuable insights and situational knowledge (Chin, 1966; Westrum, 1982).

The TDR-Institute's relationship remained cordial but distant for most of

the first year of the study (Phase I). A presentation of the survey data and

analysis only served to widen the culture gap between the potential users and

researchers. "Too many numbers and too much talk about variance and scale

scores and levels of significance," complained an Institute staff member.

However two events happened during the study's first year (February 1981 -
February 1982) which had an important effect on this relationship and the
ensuing collaboration.

In the summer of 1981 (after the Phase I survey development and data
collection) the TDR research Associate Project Director resigned and was
replaced by the current Associate Project Director. These two individuals
differed in two important ways: 1) the new person was a former colleague
and classmate of the Director of the Institute; and 2) the new person differed
from the former person in previous experience (he had been a former teacher
and administrator, she had been a psychologist and academician) and in their
view of the nature of the researcher's role. The effects of personal affilia-
tion and shared experience (Caro, 1971; Corbett, 1981; Johnson, 1980; Patton,
1978; Yin and Gwaltney, 1981) and the researcher's experience and perception
of the role of research (Caro, 1971; Dickman, 1981; Suchman, 1967; J. Weiss,
1979) on the relationship between research and knowledge use/impact have been
noted.

The second event occurred as part of the research design itself. The
Phase I follow-up site visits permitted the new Associate Project Director
substantial exposure to the school settings (14) and participants (over 80).
This enabled him to test and refine the study's original conceptual approach
and also acquire insights and experience which enlightened him to the situa-
tional realities and latent functions of the "staff initiated" inservice projects.
Thus, in February of 1982, at the beginning of Phase II of the study, the new
Associate Project Director made a presentation of the site-visit findings and
a revised conceptual approach. Although quantitative data were used, this
presentation was vastly different from earlier encounters.

The Associate Project Director had involved and informed the Director
of the Institute throughout the two-month Phase I follow-up site visits. It

was clearly an example of surprise and sense-making for the researcher, and while there were a few surprises for the Institute Director, the researcher's experiences tended to clarify and confirm her (the Institute Director's) perceptions and notions of how various LEAs were conducting their programs and using the Institute. They jointly prepared a presentation for the Institute staff. It was practical, anecdotal, and used site visit quotes and insights to illustrate and inform the Phase I quantitative data. Most of all the style and format of the presentation invited Institute staff participation, comments, and inquiries.

At subsequent meetings this initial exchange blossomed into a collaborative and highly interactive process. Issues of relevance to Institute staff's concerns and perceptions were, and continue to be tested against the data. The structure of the process and research design complement each other and reinforce the dissemination of research. This process conforms to characteristics of both the structure-contingent and process-contingent models of knowledge use described by Dunn (1980) and confirm the importance of designing research studies to incorporate structural linkages and continuous feedback (Blumer, 1981; Dickman, 1981; Rich, 1981; Rieker, 1980).

By and large, the use of the research has been to clarify and "enlighten" Institute staff's knowledge of issues and factors which characterize effective inservice (Caplan, 1979; Deshpande, 1981; C. Weiss, 1979). However, there has also been an "action" or policy effect to this process (Blumer, 1981; Guba, 1967; Janowitz, 1972). At the invitation of the Institute, TDR made a presentation of its findings and recommendations on inservice to the Massachusetts Board of Education. To date, several of the policy-oriented recommendations have been or are being implemented by the Institute.

However, the most promising and extensive effort has been in the dissemination of the study findings to LEA administrators and personnel. During the

Phase I site visits, and through a refocused survey instrument in Phase II, the TDR research indicated that the scope and level of the administrative involvement in these "staff initiated inservice programs" was far greater than formerly thought. Furthermore, the analysis of the data suggested that this involvement hindered the effectiveness and impact of these programs in certain settings. Specifically the research indicated the following:

- Administrative Involvement: over 100 respondents (almost 25% of the 1981-1982 sample) felt that the inservice idea came from their supervisor, building principal, or district administrators. Almost 200 respondents (48%) felt that their administrator had placed "high importance" on the upcoming inservice project.

- Inservice Experiences: when asked to rate the quality of past inservice experiences offered by various sources, respondents indicated that those offered:
  - at universities/colleges were of moderately high quality
  - by the Commonwealth Institute were of moderately high quality
  - by their own district/administrators were of moderately low quality

- District/Administrative-Run Inservice: Curriculum Days-- based on the initial results above, the data on staff responses to statements concerning school/district administration attitudes toward staff development were examined with the following results:
  - "Administrators don't understand what teachers really need/want in inservice programs": 44% agreed.
  - "Administrators here are unaware of teachers' professional needs and concerns": 38% agreed.

"Staff development is given high priority by

my school's administrators": 50% disagreed.

"Administrators in this school make you feel

enthusiastic about teaching": 54% disagreed.

Multiple and step-wise regression of the responses from over 800

participating teachers also indicated that the school and district

characteristics and climate accounted for a significant amount (about 36%)

of the variance in participants' ratings of their inservice, and amounts

of knowledge acquired and used. Thus the impact and influence of admini-

strative behavior was considerable.

The TDR and Institute staff agreed that administrative involvement

was too important to overlook, and too pervasive to avoid through policy.

Therefore, it was mutually agreed that the TDR Associate Project Director

would present workshops and seminars for administrators throughout the state

on "Professional Development and Effective Staff Inservice: Lessons For

Administrators." The general purpose of these sessions was to disseminate

the research findings, but beyond that they serve to inform and enlighten

administrators to the importance of their role and behavior in shaping a

social context for professional development. This finding is also noted by

Paul Berman in his study of the California School Improvement Project (Berman,

1981). Here too, interventions have followed presentations, and the TDR

Associate Project Director has made individual presentations to LEA admini-

strators and staff which have promoted renewed staff development programs

or the development of new policies and programs for staff inservice. In

these districts and schools the result has been to enhance staff development

efforts at the local school district and individual school level.

Throughout the development and presentation of the dissemination seminars

for administrators and LEA directors, the Institute staff have worked closely

with the TDR research staff in arranging, preparing, coordinating, and evaluating the workshops and programs. Through the process, the research has taken on greater relevance and importance, the Institute has been able to focus on important areas, assess its growth and impact, and improve its delivery and support system. Participating LEA staff and administrators have received focused, practical information which has enabled them to improve a vital part of the professional development process, effective staff inservice.

Conclusion

One factor must be kept in mind in considering this case, the research was designed to examine factors associated with the acquisition and application of knowledge through staff initiated inservice programs. It was not designed to be policy research or evaluative research focusing on the Commonwealth Inservice Institute. The Institute was a means, a background, not the focal object of the study. It provided a common structure and a convenient mechanism from which to recruit subjects for the research. Conversely, the Institute and its staff were only one of several interested groups who reviewed and advised the research. While additional questions and issues of interest to the Institute have been added to survey instruments and the interviewer protocols, the basic thrust and focus of the research remains unchanged.

Several factors characterize the collaborative relationship which has developed between the Institute and the research organization. These might be summarized as:

: expectations of mutual benefit arising from the relationship

. the development of a common or shared perspective

: mutual respect for the problems, purposes, and politics each organization must deal with

    . the personalities and nature of the relationship between

      key actors in the process (personal affiliation)

    . the presence of an effective, pre-existing network which

      can provide linkages for research dissemination

    . commitment to realistic, practical application of research

      to "enlighten" as well as improve practice

    . structural characteristics of the research design and process

      which promote communication, feedback, and cooperation

Each of the above factors was important in this case. The relationship has

grown and developed over two years. It began formally and cautiously and

had its highs and lows. Ultimately it has evolved into an informal, open-

ended collaboration in which all parties have profited. Though still ongoing,

this collaborative effort has already yielded benefits which have far exceeded

the expectations of researchers, Institute staff, and practitioners alike.

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