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ABSTRACT

This report synthesizes the information presented at three conferences designed to develop guidelines for future funding for Follow Through programs. These conferences were part of a series of activities undertaken by the National Institute of Education (NIE) in 1981 to plan for a new set of Follow Through research and pilot project activities. After the foreword in chapter I, chapter II discusses the concept of Follow Through from 1967 to 1972. Chapter III focuses on planning for Follow Through, reporting NIE's suggestion that systematic change be brought by having pilot projects focus on implementing and managing proven procedures rather than on developing new curricula or instructional practices. Also discussed in this chapter are four crucial problems in the management of compensatory education: (1) improving the instructional process; (2) building internal support systems; (3) utilizing external support groups; and (4) seeking selective evaluation. Chapter IV describes evaluation strategies for Follow Through and provides discussion of the value of conducting a "multiple case study" to measure program effectiveness, instrumentation, effectiveness of studying one system, and the value of conducting a multi-site study. Concluding observations are made in Chapter V. A list of 29 background papers prepared for NIE are included in Chapter VI. (AS)

Planning for Follow Through Research and Development

A Report of Three Conferences to Develop Guidelines for Future Funding

By

Beatrice Gross and Ronald Gross

National Institute of Education

1981

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I. FOREWORD

This report synthesizes a series of activities undertaken by the National Institute of Education in 1981 to plan for a new set of Follow Through research and pilot project activities.

Under an agreement signed in June 1980 by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Eduation and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, NIE was directed to use a small portion (4 to 6 percent) of the Follow Through budget to fund research that could benefit not only Follow Through, but other compensatory education initiatives as well. NIE will, in collaboration with Follow Through, encourage the development, testing, and dissemination of improved compensatory education programs infused with research-based knowledge. Rather than develop additional curricular or learning models, the NIE activities will build upon available knowledge about what makes education effective.

In August 1980, $400,000 of Fiscal Year 1980 funds were transferred from Follow Through to NIE so that the Institute could commence to plan ways in which to obtain the best thinking possible about the direction of new Follow Through R and D. NIE initiated a variety of activities, including commissioning papers, holding three invitational conferences, and conducting two hearings at which representatives of the public expressed

their views about the future of Follow Through. The conferences and hearings all occurred in February 1981, timed to coincide with the development of procurement guidelines for 1981-82.

The first of the conferences, hosted by the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools, and the second, hosted by the School District of Philadelphia, focused on programatic issues. The third conference, hosted by the Austin (Texas) Independent School District, focused on documentation of the approaches. Many experts who had been commissioned by NIE to write papers on Follow Through attended these conferences and shared their findings. The 100-plus conference participants included persons with prior experience with Follow Through and similar programs, representatives of constituencies served by Follow Through, and individuals with broad interests in the field of compensatory education. Participants were jointly selected by NIE and the Follow Through program in collaboration with the host school districts.

The authors of this report, Beatrice Gross and Ronald Gross, were commissioned in 1976 by the U. S. Office of Education to write one of the American Education Bicentennial Essays "A Nation of Learners." They are co-authors of several texts in the field including Will It Grow In A Classroom?, The Childrens' Rights Movement, and Radical School Reform. Future Directions for Open Learning by Mr. Gross was published by the Institute in 1980, and his The Arts and the Poor was published by the U. S. Office of Education in 1968.

II. WHAT IS FOLLOW THROUGH?

"The Follow Through program began in 1967 with the broad operational goal of making schooling more effective for low-income children and improving their life chances by building upon the gains these children had made in Head Start. The intent was to maintain those gains by an extension of educational intervention and comprehensive services through the third grade. The program was to be a major service program, as extensive as Head Start, but focusing on older children. Funds for Follow Through were provided in the legislation for the war on poverty through the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), but OEO transferred the funds to the U. S. Office of Education (USOE) which had agreed to administer the program.

"In 1968, it became obvious that the nationwide service program initially envisioned could not be carried out, due to the small allocation for Follow Through made by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The emphasis was shifted, therefore, to a focus on research and development with the maintenance of service in fewer communities a subsidiary goal. Follow Through's research and development effort was to be directed toward determining what kinds of alternative educational models could make important differences in the achievement of young, economically disadvantaged children. The research methodology adopted was called planned variation. A unique concept called model-sponsorship was developed, and the variety of educational alternatives generated by model-sponsors with different philosophical

Excerpted from: Follow Through: Forces for Change in the Primary Schools. © The High/Scope Press, 1980

and theoretical orientations was to constitute the planned variations. Evaluation and comparison of the results of model-sponsor's efforts were to be conducted by the USOE and its independent contractors.

"The variations among the educational models included one using a token economy, another stressing direct instruction and drill, a third employing a cognitive framework, and so on. Models based on the use of open classrooms, concepts of developmental interaction, partnership between home and school, parent education, parent supported diagnostic tactics, bilingual curricula, interdependent learning games, cultural-linguistic and cultural-democratic approaches, mathemagenic activities, non-graded organization, and responsive environments were tested, as well as some combinations of these different strategies. Theory, research, and practice were combined in an unique effort to empirically test how each of these models, as implemented in local schools, affected the learning of economically disadvantaged children.

"At its peak in the early 1970s, the Follow Through program included 22 model-sponsors, 173 local-projects, 50 state education agencies, 84,000 children and their parents, more than 4,000 teachers, teaching assistants, and home visitors and hundreds of school principals, building supervisors, and other administrators. In addition, hundreds of parents, along with representatives of a variety of community agencies, served on policy advisory committees in support of this national program.

"The various participants in Follow Through shaped the way in which any one of the given educational models was implemented at a given site. The experience with this process of assimilation and accommodation has become one of the significant contributions of Follow Through. Variation in both implementation and effectiveness from site-to-site is a theme that underlines the difficulties inherent in the educational change process.

"In spite of many difficulties, the majority of these model-sponsor/local-project relationships still exist. The Follow Through program is one of the largest, longest, and most often studied educational intervention efforts ever conducted under the auspices of the federal government. (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act— Title I program is mammoth compared to Follow Through, but that program was designed as a service program and not as an experiment in education.)

"As early as 1970, concerns regarding the national evaluations were voiced by federal officials, model-sponsors, and local-project personnel. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Education, and branches within the Office of Education were unable to agree wholly on which Follow Through outcomes should be evaluated. Concern about a program phase-out initially scheduled to begin the 1974-1975 school year led

many Follow Through parents and others to make strong stands vigorously attesting to the worth of Follow Through. As a result, in 1973, the USOE reversed its earlier phase-out decision and continued to fund entering classes of children each fall.

"Gradually, decisions were made concerning the evaluation plans for Follow Through. The focus of the evaluation was narrowed considerably as child outcome measures were reduced in number and model-sponsors with too few local-projects were eliminated from the national evaluation (though they continued to function and, in fact, have provided some sponsor-specific evaluation data.)

"Beginning in 1972 the Follow Through program became a year-by-year program. Both model-sponsors and local-projects were led to believe that each year was the last. These uncertainties contributed to instability of both model-sponsor and local-project staffs and made planning for research and development less systematic than it might have been with concerted long-range planning."

Currently, the future of Follow Through, like that of all federal social programs, is uncertain. Specific questions are being raised by the legislative branch regarding whether Follow Through, in particular, is sufficiently unique or successful to merit continued funding.

III. PLANNING FOR FOLLOW THROUGH: THE FIELD RESPONDS

> Faced with this challenge of planning for a research and development program, the NIE, ten years ago, would likely have done all the planning itself, from Washington, with a few consultants, But we've learned to listen to the field. That's why we have come out into the field to join with practitioners, theorists, and researchers to device the best strategy. We're here to listen, and to learn.
>
> Charles Stalford, NIE
> Opening Remarks to
> Portland Conference

A. FOLLOW THROUGH: A TRADITION OF CONFLICT

Can Follow Through generate enough consensus on key issues to survive? It must, according to Portland's opening speaker, Douglas Carnine, director of the University of

AGENDA

NIE FOLLOW THROUGH PLANNING CONFERENCE

PORTLAND, OREGON
February 4-5, 1981

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
February 10-11, 1981

Day One

8:00 a.m.	Registration
8:30	Local Introductions and Welcome
9:00	Introduction to Present Follow Through Program
9:15	Overview of NIE Follow Through Activities, and Conference Purpose and Processes
9:45	Discussion of Systemic Change, and Charge to Small Groups
10:00	BREAK
10:15	Convene in Small Groups to: Introduce Yourselves, Discuss and Reach Consensus on the Systemic Change Concept, and Revise the NIE Statement of Systemic Change
11:30	LUNCH
1:00 p.m.	Reconvene in General Session for Reports from Small Groups and Discussion of Systemic Change
1:50	Instructions for Small Group Sessions
2:00	Reconvene in Small Groups for: Brief Summaries of Commissioned Papers, Discussion of Responses to the NIE Questions, and Generation and Discussion of Additional Questions
4:30	Reconvene in General Session for Progress Review
4:45	ADJOURN

Day Two

8:45	Reconvene in Small Groups to: Answer Any Remaining Questions, Prioritize Suggestions, and Discuss Report to General Session
10:45	BREAK (Group leaders and reporters prepare report)
11:15	Reconvene in General Session for Reports from Small Groups
11:45	Discuss Reports and Issues
12:30 p.m.	General Session Adjourns

Oregon's Direct Instruction Follow Through model. But considering its history of conflict, and the temper of the times, this will not be easy.

During the late 1960's, with the War on Poverty and Great Society programs, educators had high hopes that they could find sure answers to the question of how to educate the disadvantaged. By 1970, over 20 program development groups (called sponsors) representing the entire gamut of educational philosophies were participating in the Follow Through program. Each sponsoring institution believed it had a methodology that would work. With government officials coordinating the efforts, sponsors sharing their expertise with skilled educators, and involved parents helping to motivate students, everyone expected that Follow Through students would surpass the students outside the program and that the program would be an unquestioned success. Although problems in the evaluation procedure made it difficult to determine the success of Follow Through, and disagreements still exist over whether the national evaluation accurately reflects the results of the program, most people agree that the program has not produced the kinds of dramatic change that had been anticipated.

"Conflicts arose over resource allocations, over program materials, over time allocations for the program, over goals of education," recalled Carnine, who believes that members of the Follow Through community must now focus their research on certain crucial questions. Why do some sites fail to implement the models while others succeed? Are some sponsors more successful at transmitting their models and, if so, why? What is a reasonable compromise between fidelity to a prescribed model and a local adaptation? Can local innovations be effectively institutionalized? Must Follow Through programs involve the formal school organization, or can they bypass them? Can sponsors be faded out with some essence of the innovation left intact?

"Follow Through has a potential for great success and great failure," concluded Carnine. "Success will come from solutions addressing consensually based needs. Follow Through must generate at least a limited consensus on certain key issues, for without some resolutions I don't believe that Follow Through will survive."

The very question of how successful Follow Through has [redacted]is itself part of the conflict. After a brief recital of [redacted]istory of Follow Through, Patricia Olmstead, director of [redacted]niversity of North Carolina Follow Through program who opened the Philadelphia conference, pointed out deficiencies in the national evaluation. Components like parent involvement and its effect on children's social and psychological

well-being were slighted in favor of a narrow focus on children's academic achievement.

B. IS SYSTEMIC CHANGE THE ANSWER?

Educators have learned a great deal from the last fifteen years' experience with compensatory education programs, despite the many still-unanswered questions. NIE suggests that to capitalize on this hard-won knowledge, the pilot projects focus on implementing and managing proven procedures, rather than on developing new curricula or instructional practices.

To elicit feedback from the field on this strategy, NIE presented the following statement to the conferees at Portland and Philadelphia and asked for reactions and suggestions.

> NIE believes that the first wave of new pilot projects should not focus upon new curricula or instructional practices per se. Basic research and earlier experiences in Follow Through programs indicate that there are many instructional practices that can be effective, if managed or implemented properly. The first new Follow Through approaches will therefore focus on demonstrating new ways in which LEA's (Local Educational Agencies) can overcome barriers to effective instructional management and implementation.
>
> Illustrative themes around which pilot projects for the New Strand 1 approaches might be organized to use such knowledge include:
>
> - Means to increase instructional time in Follow Through classrooms through improved management of services;
> - New patterns of staff development and selection of staff to gain better instructional management; including cooperative agreements between schools, teacher education institutions and teacher associations or unions;
> - New ways to systematically involve parent and community groups in planning and conduct of Follow Through programs, including the use of parents and families to provide instruction in the home or community;
> - New uses of information systems, including assessment and evaluation results, to bring better diagnostic and prescriptive information to bear on Follow Through student learning needs;

- New ways to facilitate support of school building and district administrators for substantial changes typically required by innovative Follow Through procedures.

NIE believes that the new pilot projects should focus on systemic change. That is, they should not deal simply with changes in the classroom or other single component. Rather, they should be designed to bring about changes in the whole system required to deliver instruction and should result in increased coordination and support within that system.

Documentation and evaluation of the pilot projects will be of major importance. NIE expects to provide support to each pilot project to assist them in the design and execution of a documentation and evaluation system. The system should help the project identify weaknesses so that these may be corrected and provide information that external audiences interested in using all or part of the project can use to determine its effectiveness. Of particular interest in the documentation and evaluation system will be methods of determining how well the project is implemented.

Systemic change might be a fruitful focus for the next generation of Follow Through programs, but, according to the participants at Portland and Philadelphia, the concept must be limited by certain constraints, controlled by certain values.

Some were fearful that what made Follow Through distinctive—the comprehensive service component—would be lost. Others were clearly repelled by the idea of a top-down, system-wide mandate. Not one of the work groups accepted the rubric of systemic change with enthusiasm. Since each group member had only to look across the table to find someone who held an opposite educational philosophy, it was easy to imagine that any system-wide mandate could outlaw or impede an individual's own preferred teaching style.

If systemic change was to be the theme of future Follow Through research, participants at both conferences demanded assurances that staff and parents would be involved in planning new models and that programs would be assessed more accurately than in the past:

- "No curriculum model or systemic change could be adopted, even if it promises speedier basic skills acquisition, which excludes parents or disregards the importance of teacher commitment or downplays children's physical, social, emotional, and cultural needs."

- "Staff consensus is the best assurance that the program would be implemented."
- "The learning and cultural style of the local population should be considered."
- "This time, require entry data, better assessement and more accurate evaluations."

The case for popular acceptance was most dramatically articulated after the first day's meetings. "Say we knew children drilled in multiplication tables 10 hours a day would be brilliant math students within the year," said one Portland participant. "What could we do with that knowledge if we also knew from experience that: one, the kids would resist coming to school; two, teachers would quit because their jobs were boring and the hours were too long; three, the unions would back the teachers; four, the school system couldn't afford it; and five, the community felt that increased reading and social skills were priority goals for early childhood." Her example was the most concrete formulation of a frustration expressed by practitioners who wanted the next grant to be at least as attractive to children, parents, teachers, and school systems as it is to researchers and developers.

Taking exception to this position was an articulate minority of research-oriented behaviorists at both conferences. They asserted that a radical change in the schools is needed and the kind of a change is obvious to anyone who looks at the Follow Through evaluations produced by Abt, etc. "We have proven that dramatically higher basic skills competency is produced with the direct instructional model," said a leading behaviorist. "If we set up a coordinated model including the organization of instruction to increase time-on-task, and if we select and train teachers who use our tested and proven teaching methods faithfully, we can guarantee success. We have found the way to eliminate dysfunctional teaching styles. The method is teacher-proof. The kids all learn to read and compute."

Philosophical differences emerged in all work groups. In one Portland group it took several hours of sparring for discussants to find a common ground; they agreed to urge NIE to fund a research project that would "yield valid results." The group suggested a new, controlled five-stage research study.

> STAGE 1: The search for exemplary programs "that help children learn better than anyone could reasonably expect" which could be models for funding. This would

include particularly successful existing programs and untried models which Follow Through experts believe have the elements necessary for success.

STAGE 2: A detailed description of the successful programs; all of the factors which might help explain their success, as well as detailed descriptions of the schools, the districts, and communities (i.e., political, social, economic factors) in which they exist.

STAGE 3: Development of a verifiable theory of effective early primary education (EEPE) including necessary adaptations to student differences and other system variables.

STAGE 4: Implementation, and replication of alternative models of EEPE.

STAGE 5: A study of the factors that make for effective replication.

"Without a well-defined accurate description of the model we don't know what happened or why it happened," began Walter Hathaway, the evaluation specialist from the Portland Public Schools. "Without a look at the context of where it happened and how it happened we don't know what went into making it happen.

"We must know the 'where, how and what' to know if it can be transferred from one site to another or if it can be generalized at all. So after we understand the model, we have to take a look at 'receptivity' of the receiving system (the management, the staff, students, parents, etc.)." Walter Hathaway called it a "holistic model," or systemic change, and diagrammed it for the assembled conferees. This group's suggestion that the "ecology" of the successful site be thoroughly described was elaborated upon by the Austin conferees. The consensus by those most concurring with the transportability of a successful program, was that if detailed descriptions of implementation included "climate" of the school, the school district, and the community, replication elsewhere would be predictable.

Most east coast educators at the Philadelphia conference advocated building on the existing Follow Through system. No work group in Philadelphia developed a "start over from scratch scheme" comparable to the five-stage one just described. In fact, they were skeptical of any such effort, as indicated by ETS based Marianne Amerel, who commented, "There seemed to be near consensus that the best way to waste the

available funds would be to mount several new pilot projects that would take two years to 'rev up,' and would be ready to function just in time to be cut off from further support. This will teach us once again that it takes at least two years to rev up a project."

The four work groups meeting in Philadelphia cited five priorities higher than systemic change:

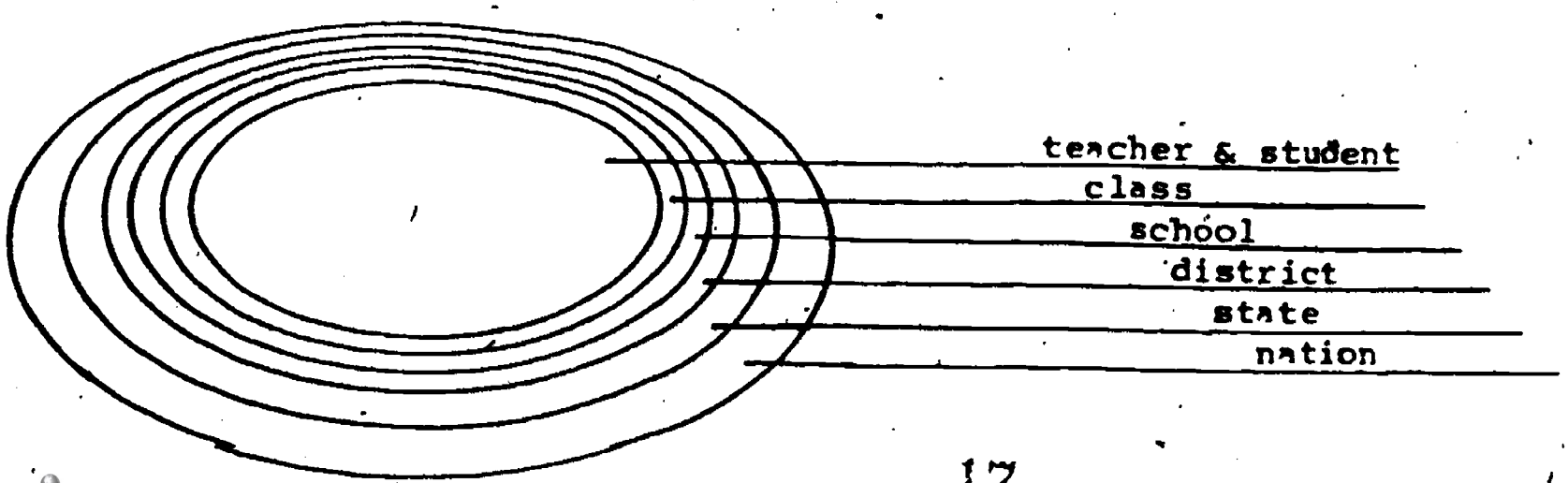
1. Better Coordination of Federal and State Programs is a priority management issue, especially now, when money is in short supply.

2. Research on Perpetuating, Maintaining, and Replicating a Program in a state of high excitement and productivity is equally important. Following a study of why certain programs work over a period of time, research should focus on how to replicate that result in other systems.

3. "Uniform School Learnings" should take precedence over systemic change or time-on-task. Although the federal government cannot mandate "common intentional school learnings," a concept described in John Porter's paper, school systems applying for grants could be required to come up with such a list. A well-thought-out compendium of expectations which clarifies what is expected of teachers would enable them to plan their class time more intelligently.

4. Parental Involvement and Comprehensive Services are essential to the integrity of the program. Although participants did not expect NIE to fund them, they did hope some funding could be arranged.

It could be argued that some of the priorities listed are examples of systemic change. Definition was a problem with which each group grappled: how many systems within a system had to be affected for change to be considered systemic? One group drew the following diagram to show that many systems existed simultaneously, any of which could be targeted for change.



C. TOWARDS BETTER MANAGEMENT OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

Any effort to improve schooling for disadvantaged children must address four crucial problems; these were explored by work groups at the Portland and Philadelphia conferences:

1. Improving the Instructional Process
2. Building Internal Support Systems
3. Utilizing External Support Groups
4. Seeking Selective Evaluation

1. Improving the Instructional Process

Three pillars support the achievement of good results in compensatory education, the conferees affirmed: good, well-trained teachers; a "team" approach that involves teachers, parents, administrators, and curriculum resource persons; an eclectic pedagogy that respects the need of children to work and succeed at meaningful classroom tasks.

Recruit Committed Teachers. "Court the teachers. Tell them what kind of assistance they will get. Tell them what kind of staff training will be involved and how much time it will take. Tell them what new skills they must master and if those skills will serve them after the project is over . . . Treat them with respect . . . Get them to volunteer for the new program." These were among the provocative guidelines suggested by Robert Stahl, of the California Teachers' Association. "Unless an enthusiastic explanation of what the project can do for a teacher is given, expect reluctance in implementing Follow Through or any other innovation," he cautioned.

After selecting the best teachers and before beginning inservice training, programs should develop methods to maintain teachers' commitment to Follow Through, the conferees advised.

- Give participants "a piece of the action" by involving them in planning the inservice program.
- Find ways to get teachers' honest reactions to the training as it proceeds.
- Consult with participants about scheduling staff development programs and be prepared to offer training during the instructional day or to pay teachers for their overtime.

- Invite professional collegial interactions among participants.
- Focus on what teachers do, not what they are.
- Build the program around what is already working effectively in the school.
- Make the staff development program responsive to a school needs-assessment in which the teachers participate.
- Provide a plainly written explicit description of the program goals and practices.

Staff training itself should be planned carefully. After selecting teachers who are committed, treat them with respect and consider their needs, urged the work group.

- Keep meetings short and distribute a written agenda in advance.
- Include both theory and practical ideas for the classroom.
- Spend some time on the technology of the instructional model and the management of class time.
- Keep the expectations and capabilities of the staff in mind when training them.
- Bring in an evaluator to help define the project, to work with the teachers to decide on the scope and size of the experiment, and to design the formative and summative evaluations.
- Give teachers the tools, the time, and the training to enable them to observe and diagnose children and make informed decisions about their learning needs.
- Train substitute teachers along with the regular staff.
- Recognize that programs will vary from site to site.
- Advise teachers how they can get help from outside resources such as Teacher Education Associations, Teacher Resource Centers, Networks for Teachers, Teacher Exchanges, and Trained Volunteers.

Increase Engaged Time. Conference participants in Portland and Philadelphia insisted on a broad interpretation of the time-on-task focus of the statement provided to them by the NIE.

"Time-on-task equals the minutes per day the child is working at a high success rate," stated one group. "Time is not the product—student achievement is. We should be measuring the quality of the time and the results it produces," concluded another group.

Arguing against a narrow definition of time-on-task, William Spady, director of the American Association of School Administrators' National Center for the Improvement of Learning, admonished, "Look at the individual child and meet the needs of that child. Timing—not time-on-task—may be the most important factor for achievement. If the task is appropriate . . . then the time spent will be fruitful, engaged time. That's what we should measure."

Both the Portland and Philadelphia groups agreed that increasing engaged time was urgent, and they suggested ways it could be accomplished.

- Change the teacher's role to get students working independently and interacting collaboratively.
- Refine the definition of "task" to apply to clear, reasonable, and attainable goals.
- Assess the performance of students and teachers in relation to the achievement of the tasks.
- Install a management information system which helps the teacher to keep track of the child's skill level and indicates the next appropriate task.
- Reduce interruptions of learning time that occur when children or teachers are required to leave class.
- Match instructional strategies to learning objectives and children's learning styles.
- Provide varied approaches, adequate practice time, and multiple opportunities for learning and success.
- Emphasize that children come to class with cultural and personal histories that must be taken into consideration when designing an appropriate curriculum.
- Refer staff to NIE publication Time To Learn by Carolyn Denham and Ann Lieberman, published by the U.S. Government Printing Office.

Involve Parents. Follow Through programs would do well to consider what kind of parent involvement is desirable and to plan how to achieve this. All the participants who focused on parental contributions were enthusiastic about this component of Follow Through, and several at the Philadelphia meeting were personally knowledgeable about the successful collaboration between school personnel and trained parents that has been documented in such places as Richmond, Virginia; Jacksonville, Florida; and the state of North Carolina.

In contrast, the Portland discussants suggested undertaking a study to "prove" the effects of parent participation on their children, if only to validate "what everyone feels."

As a result of a thoughtful task-analysis, discussants in Portland and Philadelphia listed six distinctive kinds of parent involvement.

- Political goal setting, including lobbying for national funding.
- Setting the direction for actual programs and collaborating with staff in making decisions including budgets, proposals, staff training, and curriculum.
- Participating in the delivery process, by serving as instructional aides, and relieving teachers of clerical tasks.
- Supporting the school program by helping children study at home.
- Learning, as students themselves.
- Training in skills such as decision-making, so they can model the kinds of behavior that increase one's effectiveness.

2. Building Internal Support Systems

Teachers need assistance and positive reinforcement from on-site resource people, from administrators who are trained to understand the program and its goals, from peers who respect their work, and from the parents of the children with whom they are working. The Portland and Philadelphia work groups that focused on Internal Support Systems suggested ways to ensure that teachers receive such support.

Administrative Support. Conference participants emphasized the crucial role of principals. They must be open, sensitive people, able to lead and yet share responsibility, professionals who understand compensatory education programs, early development, and the importance of a supportive educational climate. In shifting staff for the Follow Through program, the principals must consider the welfare of the children, the teachers and the program as a whole.

If principals are to cope with additional responsibilities, they may need relief from some chores, and recognition for their new efforts. Other certified persons may be able to share some of the day-to-day duties like budgeting and scheduling, and district administrators should agree to evaluate principals not only on management skills but on educational leadership.

Peer Support. Both for the morale of the teachers and administrators engaged in the program, and in order to encourage system-wide change, staff in the Follow Through programs need support from their colleagues throughout the local system, argued the work-groups. In some schools, Follow Through teachers have been assigned to separate dining rooms. To avoid jealousy and misunderstanding that can lead to this kind of isolation, it is essential to disseminate information on Follow Through goals and programs throughout the local system.

Parent Support. Confirming the opinions of their colleagues who participated in the work-groups on Improving the Instructional Process, members of the Internal Support work-groups emphasized the importance of having parents collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop and implement plans for the Follow Through programs. They advocated the use of parents in active, productive roles and stressed the desirability of providing training to parents.

Community Support. Publicity can aid teachers and administrators by providing volunteer assistance and positive reinforcement from the community, but only if the information is transmitted in a lively, understandable form. Churches, neighborhood associations, and local radio and TV stations are willing links to the community, declared the Portland work-group.

The Philadelphia group proposed an innovative alternative to the Portland suggestion of sending out news releases. Communities could study their own programs (surveying the community pupil data, etc.), turning dissemination into an active process, and by directly engaging in the research, heightening their interest in the results.

Guidelines for Judging Grant Applications. Asked to suggest RFP guidelines regarding the Instructional Process and Internal Support Systems, the work-groups proposed that applicants address:

a. The attitudes and expectations of the staff, with special attention to the involvement of the principal.

b. The organizational structure and procedures including student/staff assignments, time allotments, and role responsibilities.

c. The system of incentives and rewards that will be used to encourage high level performance.

d. If and how teacher associations will be included in the negotiations.

e. If and how the local Board's commitment to the new model has been assessed.

f. How the applicant plans to introduce new materials, new structures, new teacher behavior, and new values.

g. How the applicant plans to work with the staff so that new structures, behavior, and values are "internalized" by the staff.

The work-groups further advised that proposals include provisions for:

- Sufficient financial support to cover the cost of the innovation.
- Exploring multiple funding sources which would guarantee that the project could run for two or three years.
- A plan that is responsive to a demonstrated local need.
- A well-thought-out delivery system which includes the training of parents.
- An effective management system.
- A plan for involving sponsors or outside advisors who can help maintain the quality of the curriculum, train staff, and work with teachers and parents without causing conflict.

- A staff member to collect data on program implementation, so that what is learned from this experimental program can be used by others who might want to replicate it.

3. Utilizing External Support Groups

In one of the few instances of divergent outcomes from Portland and Philadelphia, two very different reports emanated from the work-groups discussing External Support Groups. Philadelphia's report focused on "Involving External Support Groups," while Portland's report on the role of sponsors could be appropriately titled "Phasing Out External Support Groups."

Involving External Support Groups (Philadelphia). Schools and school systems need more resources, and they need to learn how to use what they have more efficiently. Schools are not always able to take advantage of the myriad federal, state, and local programs designed to help them provide services to children. Sponsors can offer services and resources directly and can link schools with outside resources.

Another key role for sponsors should be to publicize Follow Through's discoveries. If their students and supervising teachers know about the program, teacher-training institutions with students in the field can sow the Follow Through seeds in other public school systems with which they come into contact.

John W. Porter, president, Eastern Michigan University, suggested that public schools might supplement paid staff with undergraduate volunteers as well as students getting credit from teacher-training institutions. Youngsters who require more individual attention than they can get in a standard school day profit from the arrangement.

Members of the Philadelphia group emphasized the reciprocal relationship between the university sponsor and the public school. While sponsors can provide schools with services and expertise that the schools themselves lack, sponsors learn the techniques and information they must transmit in preservice education from the schools they work with.

Phasing Out External Support Groups (Portland). Now is the time to begin the process of phasing out the technical assistance that sponsors have been providing, before the funds are cut, suggested the Portland group. By making themselves available on an "on call" basis, rather than routinely doing [redacted], sponsors can help shift responsibilities to local sites

The Portland work-group considered the implications of their recommended phase-out of technical assistance. Rural schools that have counted on their sponsor's liaison with state and federal agencies will probably have a particularly difficult time learning to go it alone. Sponsors anticipating this problem should help these systems to fill the gap. As Follow Through programs attempt to become self-sufficient, cost factors will have to be considered in making the choice of an educational model. On the plus side, increased coordination with other federal programs within a school system, which has always been advocated, will probably be sought in a systematic way, now that programs find they must coordinate their efforts to balance their budgets.

4. Seeking Selective Evaluation

Follow Through evaluation studies have been characterized as limited in value because of the flawed program design and the restricted range of measures. The Philadelphia work-group on Evaluation considered what components are desirable in future evaluation procedures and agreed on six priorities.

a. "Long-term effects should be evaluated," stated Robert Egbert, who was the first national director of Follow Through. Children should be studied over a ten-year period, with special emphasis on social behavior as in the Lazar research on long-term effects of pre-school education. "Such a study would include the number of students repeating grades, those assigned to Special Education, those who engaged in acts of delinquency, etc. Long-term measures on Follow Through graduates should also include traditional achievement tests, measures of progress towards formal operations, measures of conceptual level, etc. In view of the extreme variability of results from project to project, institutional case studies should be made of a few carefully selected successful and unsuccessful projects."

b. Evaluation should go hand in hand with program definition and development to avoid repeating the flaws in the national Follow Through evaluation. "There was little match between our methods and theories and the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) test battery," pointed out Lorraine Smithberg, director of the Bank Street Follow Through program, in her paper. "We would have welcomed a study of the incoming children that would have told us more about their language level, motivation and maturational needs." Smithberg also expressed a need for large-scale documentation

at each site that would describe the starting point of staff, children, and parents; the interactive dynamics; the behavior of the power structure; etc. This data would make all change detectable; growth of any aspect could be monitored; and mechanisms that produce growth, identified.

c. Documentation of programs should indicate what a program is in reality, not just in intent, and how it survives replication. "There has never been any major, separately identified funding for a study of the degree of model implementation at the classroom and project level," declared Egbert.

d. Studies of consumer satisfaction should be conducted, and an ongoing record of sponsor/site communications and relationships maintained.

e. Parent involvement should be researched.

f. All major aspects of the supportive services need assessment.

What Evaluation Data is Useful to the Field? Does collecting massive amounts of data—on incoming students, the progress and implementation of the program, the health of the children, children's in-school and at-home behavior—put an unusual burden on the school system and on the teachers? Does collecting such data perpetuate an unreal sponsor/federal world that has nothing to do with school reality? Should principals protect teachers from this kind of evaluation effort so they can be free to concentrate their best efforts on teaching?

The work-group on Evaluation examined these questions and concluded that the field should not accede to unquestioned evaluation designs simply to satisfy government personnel. Rather, it should insist on the kind of quantitative and qualitative data collection that can be directly useful to teachers, as well as to sponsors and to federal officials. All projects do not have to have the same tests—they merely need to use ones similar enough to permit comparisons. Perhaps a major effort should be made to develop "testing systems" that revolve around matrix-sampling, Rasch (latent trait) Item Banks, and case studies.

IV. EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR FOLLOW THROUGH

To maximize the usefulness of what is learned from a new wave of Follow Through approaches, the design of both the pilot and its evaluation should be grounded in reality.

Jane L. David
From the conclusion of
"Making Evaluations of Follow Through
Useful to Decision Makers"

A. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT SCHOOL CHANGE

"The Single school is the largest unit of change," asserted Stuart Rankin, assistant superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools. "If more school districts would recognize this, more programs would succeed. The underlying reason is probably linked to the concept of ownership."

Energized by locally developed tests, Rankin claimed the best features of Detroits' "measurement-driven" instructional program could easily be adopted and adapted by other districts and be as effective at lower grade levels as it is on the high school level.

Drawing from experience, he affirmed that "National evaluations of programs are less important than evaluations designed and conducted locally for the purpose of improving local programs," a point that was reiterated during the two day conference of evaluators and school administrators in Austin.

Commitment and collaboration are as important at administrative levels as in the relationship of teachers to students. For that reason, said Rankin, "if the district will make no financial commitment, then there is no commitment—just as if the teacher isn't convinced that the disadvantaged child can learn, then the classroom program will not be a success."

What would a school look like, in terms of its specific policies and practices, if it fully embodied these beliefs and commitments, and were informed throughout by a "measurement-driven program"? Such a school, Rankin suggested, would have the following characteristics:

- Strong instructional leadership provided by the principal
- Schoolwide emphasis on basic skills.
- Clearly defined school objectives that are known by staff, students and parents
- Carefully monitored student progress and regular feedback to students
- High teacher expectations which, vividly communicated to students, stimulate peak performance by both teachers and students
- Little or no ability grouping
- A positive learning climate in school and parental support of child-as-student out of school

Localism as a key to success was underscored by Walter Hodges of the Parent Support Diagnostic Model developed by Georgia State University. Schools that opted to go into the "marriage" voluntarily were more successful than schools that were selected to participate in an experiment; on-site

AUSTIN—NIE CONFERENCE

February 19-20, 1981

SESSION I: February 19 9:30-11:30 — What have we learned about implementing and sustaining school innovation in early programs for the disadvantaged?

Papers: Walter Hodges
Stuart Rankin

Discussants: Tom Krueck
Linda Ballatas

SESSION II: February 19 1:00-2:30 — What have we learned from working with schools and programs that should be considered in future program evaluations?

Papers: Eva Baker
Michael Fullen

Discussants: Isaura Santiago-Santiago
William Rutherford
Robert McClure

SESSION III: February 19 3:00-5:00 — What should one consider in the design and methodology of an evaluation in light of the multiple audiences and in light of policy implications?

Papers: Mary Kennedy
Jane David
Tom Cook

Discussants: Henrietta Knapp
C. Lavor Lym
G. Thomas Fox, Jr.
Ann Lieberman

SESSION IV: February 20 9:30-11:30 — What have we learned from past evaluation and program experiences with regard to instrumentation in large scale program evaluation:

Papers: Robert St. Pierre
Richard Jaeger

Discussants: Ming-Mei Wang
Gary Borich
David Doss

SESSION V: February 20 1:00-4:30 — Working Group Sessions

sponsors did better than those who had to travel. The smaller the unit, the more effective and long-lasting the change, indicated Hodges on the basis of an extensive review of the literature.

Experience and research also demonstrated that the smaller the unit, the more amenable it was to change. The child/parent learning environment was found to be most responsive, the classroom less so. The whole school was still more difficult to change and system-wide change was most difficult.

Among his excellent suggestions for second generation studies, one which seemed especially timely, was a study of what happens when sponsorship is removed to determine how that process can be eased. "It's a dirty trick to reach someone to walk with crutches," he concluded, "when after they have learned you intend to yank back the crutches."

B. UNDERSTANDING HOW AND WHY SCHOOLS CHANGE--OR DON'T

Research and evaluation studies of successful programs are of limited use, unless some school system chooses to adapt or adopt such a program. The first problem is disseminating the findings in such a way that provokes interest, the second is assisting in its adoption.

"How do we provide support, and information, to improve the effectiveness of education and maintain respect for the unique character of individual schools and their needs?" was the question posed by Eva Baker of the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation at Los Angeles. "No educational policy will make much difference in students' performance unless it connects to classroom reality," she answered.

"Let's start from our desired goal," said Baker. "We want students who not only are competent but who are good at a whole range of intellectual endeavors. We believe we can get such students by high-quality, high-standards instruction, and we have enough examples to know that it is possible. We also want schools to do what they can do best: teach and to share responsibility with parents and other institutions. We want to credit teachers for what they do or are ready to do with students. One powerful option is to provide information back to people, with some additional analysis of technical assistance, to help them improve their efforts."

Evaluators can help schools make changes they want to make by holding a mirror up to the schools so they can step

THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

(Michael Fullen, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)

FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION

THE CHANGE

A new program or model

↔

A. Characteristics of the Change
1. Need
2. Clarity/Complexity
3. Materials Quality

B. Implementation
4. Adoption
5. Staff development
6. Time-line
7. Internal/External

C. District Factors
8. History
9. Administration
10. Parents/Community

D. School Factors
11. Principal
12. Teachers

E. Extraneous Factors
13. Unanticipated events

↔

IMPLEMENTATION

Changes in:

1. Materials
2. Structure
3. Teaching
4. Beliefs

(involving teachers, aides, and parents in instruction)

↔

OUTCOMES

Achievement Attitudes

"Implementation means changing practice, and its complexity is suggested by the diagram above. The mind will be excused for boggling at the problem, since it includes all of the above issues and more: measuring all the inputs, measuring the various aspects of implementation, testing for a variety of outcomes, interrelating all three sets in order to compare very different FT models and going beyond that to compare them with non-FT classrooms. My own approach would be . . . (1) to develop common measures of the inputs, (2) to explore some common implementation measures, but also rely on custom measures of implementation unique to each model and (3) to use some common outcome measures, but also rely on some custom measures unique to each model which will contribute to broadening the range of outcomes measured."

back and study themselves. "Right now," claims Baker, "the evaluators' mirror comes from the amusement-park fun-house and it is pointed at only one arm. The reflection is limited and distorted."

But we are not stuck with the distortion. We can set the mirror up to reflect local priorities. We can amass information that teachers can use to improve instruction. We can find out if the school works well..

To be "realistic," she cautioned, "we must not seek a single set of instruments which applies to everyone. "Rather, measures should be selected that conform as closely as possible to the physical and psychological features of the school, emphasizing what the local agencies want," she concluded, echoing the principle affirmed by Stuart Rankin.

C. WHAT SHALL BE EVALUATED? AND HOW?

What kinds of evaluation of new Follow Through approaches would provide local decision-makers with what they need for intelligent adoption and adaption? Primarily, they need to know what is likely to work in their own situations. To provide just this information, a "multiple case study" approach which "can generate useful information to school people," was proposed by Jane David of the Bay Area Research Group.

"Such case studies blend the structure and generalizability of the experimental paradigm, with the richness and usefulness of information gathered through the more meaningful case study." From them, one can draw valid conclusions that matter: "x is true in large districts," or "y is true in schools with strong principals."

Basically, the method of conducting such multiple site, structured case studies begins with "mapping" the "treatment" to be investigated and the context in which it will be observed. After a small selective sample of varied sites is chosen, field researchers are provided with an interview guide or topic outline to guide their observations. Each data collector returns from the field with similar types of information gathered on the same topics, yet these data also reflect the unique characteristics of each situation.

The data is then analyzed rigorously, to make comparisons in which tentative conclusions based on one case are systematically tested against each of the other cases. If they do not hold up in their original form, the conclusions are modified so that they do; if the amount of modification required to make the conclusions hold in all instances is excessive,

they are dropped as ungeneralizable site-dependent phenomena. "The conclusions that remain after this obstacle course of pairwise comparisons are finally presented with illustrations drawn from the cases," according to David. "Overall, the multiple case study approach maximizes the likelihood that the evaluation will be both relevant and meaningful to those closest to the difficult task of bringing about school change."

The research priorities suggested by the NIE in their plans were too narrow in two respects, argued Thomas Cook of Northwestern University. First, they would use panel measures only during the time the children were in Follow Through, and second they would measure only implementation variables.

Cook argued that the "panel study method," described in his paper, could be used to answer more important questions with no undue cost increases: questions such as, "How effective is the program, what kind of an impact is it making on students" and, "What elemtnts in its implementation are responsible for the results that are being observed?"

He points out that misguided research, even if successful, may document the implementation of services that are of little utility, i.e., children spending more time on ineffectual tasks.

"If ever there is or was a time when school districts were not interested in trying new innovative approaches to education, it will be the decade of the eighties," said Mary Kennedy of the Huron Institute. She cited the severe decline in funding, and enrollments, and the primitive state of the art of evaluation (which to date has devised few acceptable instruments). Therefore, the best use of the NIE research funds, according to Kennedy, would be to increase our understanding of "disadvantage," the process of innovation, the process of implementation, the social settings in which innovations meet disadvantaged children, the effects of federal regulations, and the nature of incentives for change in school systems.

For example, a study into the nature and implications of disadvantage might use intensive case studies of individual families in individual Follow Through communities to learn how schools, and Follow Through in particular, are perceived by poor families. Specifically, how a program that offers comprehensive services to poor children, and attempts to make their parents more self-sufficient, interacts with and influences the poor.

Studies of how to improve the administration of services might focus on the nature of inter-agency agreements that are

necessary to coordinate services, or the best way to reduce delivery costs without impairing the quality of services.

These suggestions were offered by Kennedy as a "way of emphasizing that there are a great many important educational questions that can be answered that do not involve the testing of educational models, and they are questions that can be addressed through a federally-coordinated research program."

D. CAN WE BUILD ON THE DATA WE HAVE ALREADY COLLECTED?

"No single standardized achievement test should be used for overall evaluation of the Follow Through program," asserted Richard Jaeger of the University of North Carolina after reviewing the testing literature in the field. Such tests are not valid for assessing the impact of the diverse curricular approaches represented in Follow Through, he argued. Moreover, they differ markedly in their detailed content and in their congruence with the content of the basic skills curriculum materials widely used in the schools. An extensive review of the literature by Jaeger revealed that while there was never more than a 60 percent overlap between the test items and the curriculum materials in some cases, there was no overlap at all in other cases. Finally, he pointed out, there is a "tendency to overinterpret standardized test results when judging the merits of compensatory education programs."

Of course, the major content validity problems could be avoided by using a number of properly-equated standardized achievement tests for evaluation of the Follow Through program, rather than using just one test. The advisability of conducting such a major equating of tests was examined thoroughly in Jaeger's background paper. Reviewing the major ETS Anchor Test Study, designed in 1971 to improve national evaluation of ESEA Title I programs, the author noted that although this effort did not prove to be useful for ESEA evaluation (because of a change in the federal approach to Title I Research) it clearly established the feasibility of equating the reading comprehension and vocabulary subtests of different test batteries, even though they were not designed to be psychometrically parallel." Jaeger asserted that a study equating corresponding subtests of test batteries could yield "substantial benefits" if the use of standardized testing is still pervasive and if relatively few tests are widely used in the early elementary grades.

Everyone agrees there is more to be learned from Follow Through. The question Robert St. Pierre of Abt Associates asks is, "What research is most cost effective?"

Two areas of future research were recommended by St. Pierre: (1) the potential delayed effects of Follow Through, and (2) research on sponsorship as a mechanism for change in schooling.

"Potential delayed effects" commends itself for study for several reasons, the author contended:

- Since a better chance at life success is the ultimate goal of the Follow Through program it should be investigated
- Follow Through sponsors who predict salutary long-term effects favor such a study
- The data to perform delayed effects exist in a reasonable form
- Studies of post-Follow Through effects would be relatively inexpensive, and could provide information in a timely manner.

Studying sponsorship could lead to generalizable strategies for educational change, according to St. Pierre. "Sponsorship is perhaps Follow Through's most creative contribution to educational change. Yet Follow Through has been so focused on child outcomes that very little effort has been devoted to understanding the key concept of sponsorship, defining it, or comparing it with other mechanisms for change," he asserted.

1. What Shall Be Measured? How Shall We Measure It?

All new programs should have tests and data that are tailored to the site yet which can be compared across sites, indicated the work-group on "Instrumentation: Issues Related to Measuring Program Effectiveness."

The choice of instruments can be eclectic—(surveying, synthesizing and traditional evaluation instruments can all be useful) if they serve "to take the temperature of the school." Because a program's success is many-faceted, it should be monitored on many levels.

To monitor students: Consider achievement tests (non-paper and pencil as well as the more traditional forms); self-concept scales, and tests that measure students' attitudes towards school and learning. (The tests should measure development over time.)

To monitor teachers: consider instructional practices, management skills, attitudes such as expectations and openness to change, academic standards, relations with students and other school relationships.

To monitor principals: consider management skills, information acquisition, leadership.

To monitor school environment: collect climate data such as safety, violence, referrals, substitute attitudes, teacher-absenteeism, program coordination.

To monitor classrooms: consider tracking-data, evidence of planning, the resources available and the resources used.

To monitor parents: consider their stated satisfaction with the quality of the school and their children's performance, their awareness of problems, their involvement in school activities and in school decision making.

The group rejected the notion that an appropriate common instrument for judging quality and standards across communities exists. But they did suggest that with NIE's help, school districts could enlist technical assistance to adapt or develop measures that would meet local needs.

2. Can the Study of One System Help Others?

Based on the assumption that a detailed, thorough study of one district's attempt to implement change can help others, the workshop on "Local Evaluation Considerations: Issues Related to Designing an Evaluation Responsive to Local Formative and Summative Needs," made the following recommendations:

1. Districts should be studied in depth. Rather than funding many districts modestly, NIE should select two districts and fund them at one million dollars each, to do a thorough job of evaluating their capacity to implement, and the process of implementation.

2. The program to be implemented should address whole schools rather than selected classrooms.

3. Each district chosen should have a demonstrated record of successful evaluation and research efforts as well as a strong longitudinal data base.

4. The study should adequately measure the school's "Ecology." Attitudes, school climate, etc. should be so well documented that others will be able to use the information for purposes of transportability.

5. The study should be funded to last at least five years.

3. Would A Multi-site Study Be Preferable?

A responsible study should have more than one site per model, each site should have one or more schools, and each school should involve all K-3 classrooms, advised the group discussing "Cross-Site Considerations: Issues Related to Designing An Evaluation Useful for Program Adoption/Adaption Decisions."

Sites should be heterogeneous. Ideally, this project would examine three distinct models with three sites apiece, which differ from each other in ethnic mix, size and location (rural, urban) which will help evaluators determine the transportability of the models.

Local districts could be involved in developing Follow Through models in one of two ways: a single site could sponsor the model as has been done in the past by Follow Through self-sponsored sites, or a group of sites could form a consortium to sponsor a model.

Questioning the advisability of NIE supporting local evaluation, the group pointed out that local evaluations are often done poorly except for large districts with specialized staffs, and even when done well, they are mainly useful for the local district.

If three models are funded, the group would suggest allocating the $2.5 million as follows:

$500,000 for each of the three models

$500,000 for an external evaluation

$500,000 for other NIE research, evaluation, analysis, etc.

A two-pronged effort that would capitalize on what current Follow Through sponsors have learned was proposed by the group. By evaluating a number of existing Follow Through sites where sponsors have had several years to develop their models and have strong working relationships with site personnel, the study would give compensatory education the best possible chance to fulfill and demonstrate its potential.

In order to address NIE's desire to fund low-cost, transportable programs, it was proposed that the three-sponsor,

three-site research program described above include an element of sponsor withdrawal. The evaluation would follow the start-up, the implementation as it proceeds and the process of sponsor withdrawal after two years of the program thereby documenting the relationship between implementation and outcomes throughout the process.

4. Getting the (Documented) Word Out

A program succeeds in District A. What can be done to get District B to consider it?

That was the focus of the work-group on "Communication/ Documentation: Issues Related to Increasing the Utility of Evaluation Documentation."

Inducements in the form of grant support is one method of getting new programs into the schools. It induces schools to try new programs which might succeed sufficiently to be absorbed into the system. But the problem with this procedure, noted Eva Baker, is that although schools and systems may jump through hoops to get money, such programs are often regarded "more as an obstacle than as an integral and useful practice for the school." People may comply with the required procedures mainly to get "kidney-shaped tables and chalk," but if the program is viewed as a means to another end, it probably will not contribute to enduring local reform.

Communication may be the answer—if each subgroup in the audience of decision-makers is treated separately and the approach to each is individualized, the group advised. For example:

- When addressing the general public, focus on outcomes and use simple percentages rather than complex statistics. Make it as clear as a Reader's Digest piece.
- When addressing the educators, parents and community decision-makers, be specific about student outcomes, cost-effectiveness, and how the "target" populations will be selected. Tell them what teachers will be expected to do differently, demonstrate the programs' operation and materials and, above all, pitch the talk at the language level of the group. Avoid jargon.
- When addressing district administrators, be specific about expected outcomes and present in detail the additional requirements or impositions of the program. Demonstrate the materials and present the research results in nontechnical visual way.

- When addressing state Departments of Education be specific about how the program will or will not be in compliance with state regulations. Tell them what kinds of dissemination the district will engage in, and, if possible, get a district superintendent to do the presenting.

- When addressing federal administrators be specific about the cost-effectiveness and how the program is to be monitored at the site level.

A final bit of advice from the group: When possible, have an administrator address administrators, a teacher address teachers, etc.

A program is being implemented in District A. What can be done to get the staff to cooperate enthusiastically?

Communication for Improving Practices can be improved by focusing on its key function: to help practitioners know if what they are doing is consistent with what they are supposed to be doing, and that their work is having an effect on the students. Therefore, good communication is frequent, timely and appropriate.

Tests should help teachers monitor themselves by comparing test results with objectives. School people want to fix things day to day when they go wrong. The evaluators and testers should be on location, and the test results should be available to practitioners within a day or two of the assss-ment.

V. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Rarely in the history of educational research funded by the federal government, has a new program been planned in such close consultation with the field and with the parties of interest. Among the participants at Portland, Philadelphia and Austin, and among the national experts who prepared background papers, there was widespread approbation of the Institute for soliciting such input and feedback. "In fifteen years of monitoring and appraising federal efforts in educational research," said one veteran observer of the field, "this is the most sincere effort I've been or heard of, to really listen to what theorists and practitioners have to say, and build our convictions into future funding priorities."

The preceding pages have endeavored to give a readable and faithful account of the significant things that were said at each of the conferences. Looking back over the entire series, a few themes call for concluding emphasis. As might be expected, these are not radical or astonishing. Rather, they are convictions which seemed to pervade much of the discussion.

The focus throughout on the better management of early childhood compensatory education programs, underlined the widespread conviction in the field that, regardless of the particular pedagogical approach, if what is done, is done well, the system will work to benefit children.

But how does one get a system to work well? It would be a relief to find a perfect program and implement it wholesale, but no such solution is feasible. Any educational system deals with human beings who bring their personal ideologies, their life experiences, and their own teaching styles to their work. No matter what their training, they bring themselves into the classroom, and they interact with children who also have distinctive life experiences, learning styles, and histories.

The one predictable element of implementation is that researchers and developers must be prepared to work with these variables. They must learn from past experience that no single model can satisfy all interested parties. Moreover, unplanned disruptions are inevitable: children relocate, teachers leave, and school systems close for lack of funds, snow days and strikes. Clean scientific research falls victim to these messy realities.

Despite this, members of the Follow Through community can offer helpful advice to contemporary education programs of the future. For example, experience shows that interested parties will be more committed:

- if they are consulted.
- if they have the solid support of their peers
- if the program solves problems they themselves have found troublesome
- if they fully understand the point of the program and have a stake in its success
- if the program does not violate what they "know" about the world.

Perhaps the most important point that "went without saying" was the crucial—one might even say crushing—role of poverty. The subject was not insisted upon in the discussions or papers, yet it was a clear undercurrent in many of them. For example, parent's renewed sense of self respect was widely regarded as essential to encourage better learning in their children. Out-of-session conversations preoccupied with the loss of CETA funds and the coming cutbacks in health and social services to the struggling poor, clearly revealed the relevance of such economic and social conditions on the educators' success with disadvantaged youngsters.

When hopelessness surrounds children at home and on the streets, they suffer as learners. Resignation to an unfulfilling

future of diminished life-opportunities saps motivation. Neither new classroom techniques nor better management can overcome minds afflicted with despair at an early age.

VI. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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