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ABSTRACT

In 1989, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development approved a 3-year international project to identify programs that have been effective in helping children at risk of educational failure. A conference held to launch the project identified program strategies for serving at-risk youth, determined ways for member countries to improve their strategies, and defined the focus of case studies of effective programs. This report summarizes the papers presented at the conference. Session 1 of the conference examined programs for preschool children. Papers presented in this session discussed a multiprofessional approach to working with preschool children and their parents in Britain and the United States; parents' benefits from involvement in child care in France; and parents' involvement in their children's schools. Session 2 considered promising practices for educating disadvantaged elementary school children. Papers described a program for improving the education of at-risk students and a program to restructure elementary schools to ensure the success of all students. Interventions that target special populations were examined in session 3. Papers described bilingual programs for ethnic minority children in the Netherlands and other countries; dropout prevention programs in Japan; and academies that provide at-risk students with academic training and vocational skills. Session 4 investigated new strategies for addressing the education of at-risk students. Papers discussed strategies for serving at-risk children and youth; the transition from school to work in Germany; and integration of services. (BC)

Conference Proceedings

Children and Youth At Risk

February 5-7, 1990

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Proceedings

of the

International Conference on
Children and Youth At Risk

Sponsored by the

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and the
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Washington, D.C.

February 5-7, 1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

In May 1989, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) Governing Board approved a three-year international study on students at risk. CERI initiated the study to identify programs and practices which have been particularly effective in working with children and youth in this population. The U.S. Department of Education was particularly interested in participating in this project because it supports the Department's initiative to provide quality education for all. The project, which is under the direction of Dr. Peter Evans, OECD, will include the three following activities:

- a review of national policies to assist at-risk children and youth,
- case studies of effective practices in selected member countries, and
- regional meetings to discuss study findings.

Countries currently participating in the study include the following:

Australia	Belgium	United Kingdom
Canada	Germany	United States
France	Netherlands	Sweden
Japan	Portugal	Yugoslavia

The conference on Children and Youth At Risk is the first step in step in launching this three year project. Participants at this conference included representatives of each of the participating OECD member countries, U.S. and international experts in eduction for disadvantaged children. Invited guests included representatives from the Department of Education and other government agencies, foundations, local school districts, professional organizations, advocacy groups, and Congressional staff. The conference consisted of a 1 1/2 day general session in which a series of best practices were presented and a 1 1/2 day business meeting for OECD country representatives. The purpose of the conference was to:

- Identify what is already known about program strategies for serving at-risk youth in different countries;
- Determine what critical knowledge gaps the countries should focus on to improve strategies; and
- Define the focus of the case studies.

The conference was chaired by Charles E.M. Kolb. At the time of the conference, Mr. Kolb was Deputy Under Secretary for Planning, Budget and Evaluation; he is currently the Assistant to Dr. Roger Porter, Assistant to the President for Economics and Domestic Policy.

Mr. Kolb was instrumental in implementing the conference and supporting the Planning and Evaluation Service in its participation in the project. He assisted in developing the U.S. country paper describing national policies for at-risk children and youth and supported the task of conducting U.S. case studies of effective strategies.

Following are summaries of the papers which were presented in the general session. These summaries are based on written transcripts and papers when available. The complete set of papers are currently being rewritten for publication at a later date.

Welcoming Address

Lauro F. Cavazos
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education is appreciative of the fact that so many representatives from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) counties have traveled such long distances to deal with one of the fundamental issues that will shape the global economy and the entire world. This conference is about our most precious resource--our children. If any of them go uneducated, we are the poorer, both as individuals and as a nation.

By the year 2000, one-third of the work force in the United States will be made up of persons who are now described as being "at risk" children. In order for the United States to maintain its economic position, effective ways of educating these children must be developed. Although one reason for educating these children is economic, there is also an important moral reason: because these children are all members of the human family.

President Bush is clearly our "education president," because he shares a conviction that all persons in the United States should be educated to their potential in all academic subjects at each schooling level. The Department of Education's budget is divided almost evenly between early childhood, elementary, and secondary education (48 percent) and postsecondary education (52 percent). Much of the budget focuses on supporting Chapter I programs; making the school environment safe and drug-free; restructuring the President's Excellence in Education Act; and getting parents involved in the education of their children.

At a series of five regional meetings recently conducted across the United States, the key topics of discussion were academic parental choice in education and school-based management. In addition, studies are being conducted to determine the extent to which federal programs are helping to improve education for many children, including Hispanics and American Indians. American Indians are a particular focus in the Department due to the high incidence of dropouts, substance abuse, underachievement, and other ills that plague these two groups.

President Bush, in his State of the Union Address of January 1989, announced his education goals, which included improving the quality of early childhood education in order to ensure that all young children are ready to start school; reducing the dropout rate, in order to lessen the loss of human potential so vital to the economy; and ensuring that all students master the basics.

To underscore the commitment to education for all, President Bush invited the governors and the Cabinet to attend the Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989, which was the third such domestic summit in our history. (The first summit, called by Theodore Roosevelt, was on the environment; the second, called by Franklin Roosevelt, dealt with the Depression.) All three topics--environment, economy, and education--are vital to the United States and to the world.

At the summit, the issues of flexibility and accountability in federal funding were discussed as well as the restructuring of the educational system in the United States. At the conclusion of the conference, the Jeffersonian Compact--a commitment to set national performance goals in education for the citizens of the United States and to develop strategies for achieving those goals--was signed.

The problems of educating "at risk" children are similar all over the world. For this reason, he said, this conference is vital to the common effort to make sure that all persons are educated to their fullest potential.

Goals of the Conference on Children and Youth at Risk

George Papadopolous
OECD Secretariat

Michelle Easton, Deputy under Secretary for Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, Department of Education, introduced George Papadopolous.

This conference is an illustration of the need for international cooperation on issues such as education. Despite the fact that there is no such thing as an "international educational policy," as there are international trade or economic policies, he noted, education is an international concern. Educational policies reflect the cultural and national traditions of each society. Much may be learned as countries share their experience on effective solutions to problems. This conference is one of many efforts by the U.S. Department of Education to facilitate international cooperation, and we appreciate the way in which the Department looks to the OECD as an appropriate mechanism to foster this cooperation.

The OECD is concerned about the 15 to 25 percent of the school population, whatever the structure of the system that falls through the cracks. Because opportunities that are missed in childhood are never recovered, it is vital to take action to prevent this quarter of our population from missing opportunities that school life is supposed to give them. The existence of large groups of people who do not participate in or contribute to society poses important social and economic problems. Demographic changes, he said, are foreshadowing labor shortages, and the vitality of our economies and our societies will depend on our ability to exploit the full potential of our human resources.

Political imperatives also dictate that successful strategies be found for educating children at risk; the contrast between our continued economic growth and opulent society, on the one hand, and the existence of significant pockets of poverty on the other, is paradoxical. Helping at-risk children to become fully participating citizens in the future will be one of the major challenges of the 1990s. The OECD ministers of education meeting in November 1990 have titled their meeting "High Quality Education and Training for All," and the policies of individual countries toward disadvantaged populations are to be discussed.

Many of the problems faced by OECD member countries in the post-World War II period are rooted in the democratization of education and extension of compulsory education to age 16. Most member countries simply made the type of education that had been designed for a small group in society available to everybody, without considering the fact that different groups need different teaching approaches and additional resources. Postwar education problems were compounded by the fact that large numbers of teachers had to be recruited, and many were relatively unqualified.

The conference should focus some attention on educational change. No social change can be achieved on the basis of existing instruments and levels of resources. Two conditions are essential for change: 1) the power structure must change, and 2) new resources must be found or the existing resources must be reallocated. The main problem here is to determine why certain policies that have been applied over the years have not succeeded--and in fact, may have tended to accentuate or to legitimate social differentiation--so that more appropriate policies may be applied.

Even though education is a national concern, bringing together the collective experience of the most industrialized and sophisticated societies in the world is very helpful. There is particular interest in the American experience, and in the way in which U.S. research has guided policy making. One of the goals of OECD was to develop this "marriage" between the research and policy planning.

SESSION I

Programs for Preschool Children

Chair: Francine Best, Chargee de missions aupres du directeur des affaires generales, internationales et de la cooperation

Two complimentary approaches to working with at-risk children will be discussed in this panel. The first approach focuses on age--working with very young children beginning at birth. The second approach is geographic and focuses on integrating services that are located in various places to provide support to families and children. In certain zones in France that are called "priority zones", all human service resources are brought together to aide children and adolescences who are at risk, including health and education professionals as well as family members. These papers should provide us with strategies which will improve our work with these children.

Working with Children and Parents in the Preschool Period: A Multiprofessional Approach
Presenter: Gillian Pugh, National Children's Bureau, U.K.

Research in Britain and the United States has shown that good-quality preschool education is linked to later student success. Although Britain has a rich tapestry of early childhood services, the supply is not nearly adequate to meet the demand. Moreover, many of the services available are not used by those families most at risk, because they cannot afford the service, the service is located too far from home, or they do not know where the service is located.

A small percentage of children at risk attend local government-operated social service day nurseries, but these nurseries usually do not have qualified teachers or nursery curriculum. Most day care programs rely heavily on volunteers; play groups run by parents account for approximately half of the programs for four-year-olds.

Several factors are critical to the success of working with children at risk; these include a coordinated national and local policy for providing services for young children; access to good-quality care and education for all children; identification of successful strategies for working with parents and children; volunteers to provide service and support; and training to develop the skills that are needed by everyone who works with families at risk.

There should be structures at local levels to sustain this integrated approach and to work across all professions. If central and local governments do not develop policies that value and support families, very little progress toward resolving the problems of at-risk children will be made. Moreover, if families lack employment, good-quality housing, and sufficient money to meet their basic needs, even a multidisciplinary approach will be of no

How Do Parents Benefit from Involvement in Child Care? A French Perspective
Presenter: Josette Combes, Association Collectifs Enfants Parents (ACEP)

Child care facilities in France date from the latter part of the 19th century, when they were developed to accommodate the children of women who worked in the factories. In the 1970s, French parents became concerned about the shortcomings of child care and began to band together to take turns in caring for each other's children. One outcome of this concern was the organization, in 1980, of the Association Collectifs Enfants Parents (ACEP) to support and develop these "parental creches". In 1981, ACEP received official recognition and became eligible for public funding. Some 650 parental creches have been created over the past 10 years.

Creches charge fees and serve children up to age three; in contrast, nursery schools are free and serve children between the ages of two to six. At present, only about half the 800,000 children under the age of three whose parents both work have access to approved child care facilities. The remaining children in this age group are in the care of persons and facilities about which little is known. The goals of parental creches include giving children the experience of being in a peer group; ensuring a smooth transition between home and child care facilities; encouraging parents' participation in their children's education; equalizing parental roles by getting fathers involved in their children's education; encouraging parents to learn parental skills from each other; and maintaining innovative facilities that are independent of official constraints.

Creches give children individual attention and encourage friendship with other children and adults. As a result, the creche experience helps to ease the transition from home to school. For parents, the creche is a place to get advice and support for the daunting task of childrearing. For single parents, the group of parents may also serve as a source of substitutes for the male or female presence missing in the child's home.

Another reason for developing a creche is to give children a better start in life while helping their parents become part of the community through their involvement in the parental network. The first experiences in life is important to each child's physical and psychological well-being. Often the children in the creches come from many cultures, and the creche provides an environment that speeds acculturation while avoiding the pitfalls of confrontation. This environment is achieved by alternating professional staff, who primarily represent the French culture, with parents as child care providers. The two elements essential to the success of the creche project are financial support from local officials and a well-trained staff that not only understands the needs of young children but also has skills in human relations.

Parental Involvement: Connecting Families and Schools
Presenter: Marta Arango, International Center for Education and Development, Inc. (CINDE)

Over the past 20 years, the International Center for Education and Development, Inc. (CINDE), has developed a model that focuses on strategies for working with the parents of at-risk children--children who cannot develop to their fullest potential because of poor physical or emotional environments or lack of parental involvement. The CINDE program in Columbia is designed to provide isolated areas with much-needed health and educational services. The program began by having parents attend weekly meetings to discuss a range of topics, including the physical, psychological, affective, and cognitive development of their children. As parents became interested in the health, nutrition, and special aspirations of their children, the program blossomed into an integrated developmental approach.

One of the themes of the CINDE program is to develop a relationship with the parents of at-risk children based on mutual trust and respect. Parent organizations should help parents find informal ways to organize and support each other.

Evaluations of the CINDE program have shown that children whose parents have been reached by the program stay in school longer and perform better in math, language, and problem solving than previous groups. In addition, the mortality rate of the children was reduced and the self-image of the parents improved. The evaluations also indicated that many locations did not need to create new services to provide needed help, but simply needed to find ways to integrate existing services.

Discussant: Clennie Murphy, Jr., Associate Commissioner, Head Start

The Head Start program in the United States for preschool children, funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, currently serves approximately 450,000 families. President Bush has proposed an increase of $500 million, which would permit 70 percent of the targeted population to be served.

Parental involvement and the comprehensiveness of the program are two features that are critical to Head Start's success. From the beginning of the program, parents were given an opportunity to make decisions such as the choice of hiring and firing staff, and this aspect of the program was considered controversial.

Given the mission of comprehensiveness, it is important to tie parents into other social service institutions in the community so that various needs of the children can be met. It is also important to help families become self-sufficient and, if necessary, to obtain literacy skills. High-quality early childhood programs, with well-trained personnel and a structured curriculum, are essential.

The three delivery methods of the Head Start program are center-based, home-based, and a combination of these two. In center-based programs, families spend four or five days in a center with an average class size of 18. In home-based programs, home visitors have a caseload of 10 to 12 families and spend 1-1/2 hours in each home working with the parents. Parents are encouraged to use the skills they learn to work with their children. In programs using a combination of these procedures, parents spend a specified number of days with the home visitor and the remainder in the center. These models were currently being reviewed to determine the best mix in terms of the amount of time the teacher spends with the parent and the parent spends with the children.

Preparing children for school is the primary goal of Head Start. To meet this goal, the program must also work toward alleviating substance abuse, fostering literacy, and building self-esteem for parents so they may become self-sufficient. Children in a good-quality Head Start program with active family participation have been found to be less likely to drop out of school, less likely to be placed in special education classes, and more likely to be competitive in kindergarten and first-grade classes.

SESSION II

Promising Practices for Educating Elementary School Disadvantaged Children

Chair: William Lobosco, Deputy, Compensatory Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

The federal government launched Chapter I programs 25 years ago to address the special needs of children in poor areas because the government believed that local school districts needed help in meeting the needs of their populations. The Chapter I program has grown to approximately $5 billion per year, providing reading, math, and language arts services to 5 million children each year, three-quarters of whom are in elementary school. These funds are evidence of a large commitment on the part of the federal government to support local school districts as they work to educate disadvantaged children so that they can become contributing members of the society.

Improving the Education of At-Risk Students: A System of Checks and Balances
John A. Murphy, Superintendent, Prince George's County (Maryland) Public Schools

Prince George's County, Maryland, located directly east of Washington, D.C. has a program to improve educational opportunities and performance for high-risk students. Prince George's school system is the 15th or 16th largest in the country, and it has many of the same problems that other large metropolitan school systems have.

In 1984, the school system began a program of reform that aimed to achieve the following goals by 1990:

- To make this 65 percent black school district competitive with the finest, wealthiest, white school district in the nation;
- To reduce the gap between the academic performance of black and white students in the system; and
- To increase the number of students taking advanced courses throughout the school system.

To accomplish these goals, an "Effective Schools" approach was introduced in all 171 schools in the county, and the district developed a criterion-referenced test for reading and math for elementary grades and for all disciplines in grades 9 through 12.

Because principals were given the primary responsibility for improving the quality of teaching, they were required to spend more time observing in classrooms. In addition, principals were required to attend staff development classes one day each month and an intensive training session of three to four days in the summer.

Additional resources were provided in the 16 highly segregated schools in the county. Providing these additional resources cost roughly 10 to 15 percent more than what is spent in regular neighborhood schools.

In addition, the district developed strong home-school relations by using the Comer model (named after James Comer of Yale University), which is designed to improve staff awareness and developed their skills to help disadvantaged parents become active partners with the teachers.

Each of the initial goals has now been reached. The district has moved from about the 50th percentile on the California Achievement Test to the 75th percentile. The gap between black and white students had decreased, and significant gains have been made in the number of students taking advanced courses.

Restructuring Elementary Schools to Ensure Success for All
Presenter: Robert Slavin, The Johns Hopkins University

The Success for All program is designed to ensure that every child who participates learns to read. The program began about 2-1/2 years ago in one school for very disadvantaged students in Baltimore. According to Robert Slavin, the program now operates in eight low-achieving, high-poverty schools in Baltimore and one each in Philadelphia, Charleston, S.C., and rural Maryland.

The most important and most expensive component is the one-to-one tutoring provided to first, second, and third graders. The tutors, who are certified teachers, work 20 minutes a day with each of the lowest-achieving children, giving preference to first graders. The kindergarten and first-grade reading program uses phonetically regular materials designed by The Johns Hopkins Center staff. Kindergarten and first grade classes are small and grouped by reading levels. By second grade, students are divided into four-member learning teams in which the children help each other master the skills and concepts being taught. The overall emphasis of the reading program at all levels is to teach students skills to decode and to comprehend what they read so that they might experience success and enjoy their reading.

Another key element of the program is participation in preschool or a full-day kindergarten; these programs focus on language development, using a method of storytelling and retelling. Every eight weeks, the children's progress in reading is

assessed. The results of the assessments are used to change student groupings, to decide who needs tutoring, and to identify children who are not being successful.

In each school, family support teams have been organized to identify problems and handle them in a manner that develops positive relationships between the families and the neighborhood and between parents and the school. Each school also has a full- or part-time staff person who works with teachers to help implement the program, develop classroom management strategies, and conduct the eight-week assessment program. This person also discusses problems with teachers and facilitates communication among teachers, tutors, and family support teams.

Evidence from the first two years in the Baltimore school district, where money is available to hire additional tutors and family support staff, shows that the program has improved reading achievement and reduced retentions and referrals to special education to an extraordinary extent. In programs that are not fully funded and have been used for less than one year, the results are also positive but less strong.

Discussant: Klaus Wedell, Institute of Education, University of London, U.K.

Many countries are looking to education to compensate for what is lacking in the lives of children. This meeting is designed to identify strategies to make educational compensation more effective. In general, OECD countries face many of the same problems despite the fact that they differ considerably in their educational systems. These differences may include different starting and finishing times for schooling, different lengths and timing of school days, different curriculum, different organizational systems, and different roles and status of teachers. In addition, OECD countries often differ in how they organize health and welfare services and the extent to how these services are coordinated with educational services.

At this conference, we have an opportunity to study different national approaches in different contexts in dealing with very similar problems. Examples have been given which show what are the effective components of programs and what preconditions are required that make these programs effective.

One outcome of the discussions has been to clearly indicate that the problem of youth at risk is sizeable for many countries. It is also clear that nations do depend on education as a compensatory resource. In some cases, however, the expectation of what compensatory educational resources can do seem unrealistic.

Dr. Murphy emphasized this when he stressed the need for a systems approach. Both he and Dr. Slavin suggested strategies for reducing the unrealistic demands placed on education. In addition, the demand for accountability exists in many countries and yet schools and teachers often lack the autonomy to enable them to take responsibility. Dr.

Murphy's program shows what can be done if the problem is tackled by leadership from the top.

We have learned that schools can benefit from parental participation. Schools must, however, recognize the difference between parental participation and parental involvement. Involvement may be limited to one-time decision making, whereas, true participation ensures continuity between the efforts made by the school, the family and the community.

SESSION III
Targeted Interventions: Special Populations

Chair: Rita Esquivel, Director, Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education

Rita Esquivel opened the session by having each of the panelists introduce themselves.

Bilingual Programs for Ethnic Minority Children at Risk
Presenter: Jo Kloprogge, Institute for Educational Research in the Netherlands

Bilingual education is controversial because it touches on national language policies, and those language policies are formulated in accordance with more general ideas about how to deal with cultural diversity. As long as there is disagreement about what language policy is most appropriate in a specific situation and as long as differences in characteristics of minority groups are overlooked, as they sometimes are, it is very difficult to reach consensus about whether or how to introduce bilingual programs.

The growing number of immigrants and minority groups in many countries today is a challenge to the educational systems of these countries. Generally, three objectives are formulated to cope with the new situation, and bilingual education is related to all three:

1. Multiculturalism. It is considered necessary for all at-risk groups in a society to live together and to accept one another. Language plays an important role in this process because language is an essential element in culture. Bilingual education contributes to the formation and acceptance of a multicultural society.

2. Second-language proficiency. Proficiency in the dominant language of the culture of residence is a key to acquiring educational qualifications and access to the labor market. For children whose families use a language different from the dominant language in the country, a bilingual program is one way to acquire competence in a second language, but there is much disagreement about the effectiveness of bilingual education as a means to improve second-language proficiency.

In some countries, national policies may be directed explicitly at stimulating proficiency in many languages. In Australia, for instance, English for all is one element in language policy, but a second language for all is another element. So the presence of people proficient in French, Italian, Vietnamese, Japanese, and the like is considered an asset in international trade relationships. In countries such as the Netherlands, the national language is restricted largely to the country itself. English is taught in elementary and secondary school, and many children learn three languages.

3. Equality in education. In the Netherlands, the official policy often aims to achieve educational qualifications for minority groups comparable to those of majority groups. This objective is supported by minority groups. However, many people believe that time spent learning the first language could have been better spent learning the second language or basic skills.

The choice to provide monolingual or bilingual education reflects the importance attached to the three objectives. The following are typical variations among monolingual and bilingual models:

- Children may be taught exclusively in their home language, even when they live in a society where a second language is dominant. This model is used when children are expected to live in the host country only temporarily. This typical "reintegration" model thus fosters neither muticulturalism nor second-language proficiency.

- Children may be taught only in a second or the dominant language. This method is often supplemented with regular language materials used in schools to enlarge the vocabulary of the pupils thus fostering second language proficiency.

- Elements of multicultural education are introduced into the curriculum. This model is the most commonly used in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, equality in education is seen as the main goal, and proficiency in the second language is seen as a means to achieve this. The traditional methods used is first provide instruction in the first language. Later on reading and writing in the second language is introduced. It is expected that having facility in the first language improves proficiency in second language.

The other two bilingual methods used in the Netherlands aim to maintain both the majority and minority language leading to proficiency in two languages. These methods are often very successful for high economic children, however, results are less clear for low economic children.

The results of the educational practices in the Netherlands so far for some minorities--the Spanish, French, Greek or Italian speaking children--have been satisfactory. But for

the Turks and Moroccans, the strategies have not been sufficient. Research indicates that conceptual knowledge developed by minority students in bilingual programs facilitates the acquisition of second-language literacy and of subject matter in general, but it is hard to persuade teachers and others to accept this evidence. In addition, bilingual programs are expensive and complex and few teachers who are proficient in Turkish and Arabic have regular Dutch qualifications. Bilingual education will continue to be controversial as long as there is no explicitly formulated language policy in the Netherlands. It is important to keep in mind that bilingual programs are not equally suited to all minority groups and to all situations.

Dropout Prevention Programs
Kazuo Watanabe, Secondary School Division, Japanese Ministry of Education Science and Culture

The first national study on school dropouts in Japan, which began in 1989, examined both dropouts and delinquent students in six areas throughout Japan. "Dropouts" were defined as students who were absent from school for more than 49 consecutive days during the school year without a legitimate reason. "Delinquent students" were defined as those absent from school for 10 to 20 days of the school year.

To identify which students were considered to be dropouts and which delinquents in 100 elementary and 50 junior high schools, the researchers interviewed persons in homes, schools, and communities throughout Japan. The researchers collected data about the instruction received by the students in general and information on individual students. The causes of dropping out of school were found to be a combination of complex factors found in the school, home, or local society, plus any emotional problems experienced by the student or misconduct in school.

In addition to the national study, case studies of particular students were begun in the first year, and these students will be followed as long as possible in order to identify and develop more efficient instruction procedures. The research, which is regarded as a pilot study, is continuing, and results are not expected for some time.

Because teachers in Japan now receive little information on how best to instruct at-risk students, a guidebook is needed to help teachers provide better instruction to delinquent students and those who are at risk of dropping out.

The California Partnership Academies
Presenter: Marilyn Raby, Director, California Partnership Academies

The academy model originated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the academies was to serve educationally disadvantaged students, mostly minority students

who were not succeeding in traditional schools programs and were at risk of dropping out of school without employable skills. The academies provided these students with strong academic training and vocational skills. The academy program was implemented in a California district on the northern edge of Silicon Valley in 1980. Although the district is exceptionally affluent, it contains two pockets of poverty, one black and one Hispanic. As a result of court-ordered desegregation, these students are bussed to a predominately white school.

The program begins at the end of the 9th grade, when the students are selected for placement into one of the academies concentrating on electronics or computers. In the 10th grade, students in the program stay with the same group of teachers for the first four periods in the morning, where they receive instruction in math, English, social studies, and technical courses. In the 11th grade, students continue to intensify their career education and concentrate on academics. At the end of the 11th grade, students who are recommended by every teacher who has taught them in the academy are placed on a job. During the first semester of the senior year, students continue their academic courses and technical skill development; in the second semester, they work in the afternoon.

The program attempts to provide academic and technical courses that are in accord with the career interests of the students and meet the needs of local businesses. The academy emphasizes small class size, tutoring and counseling services, frequent contact between school and home, field trips, and opportunity for employment both at the end of the 11th grade and the second semester of the 12th grade. Industry, in turn, identifies staff under the age of 40 to serve as mentors.

The advantage of the academies to businesses is that it provides businesses with an opportunity to have input into the education of students and this effort, in turn, helps create a new source of skilled personnel and helps develop a partnership with the education community. The advantage of the academies to schools is that it increases students' motivation to pursue careers in industry or higher education. The academies also reportedly have helped to cut the dropout rate and have served to energize teachers and to encourage them to update their own skills.

There are currently 50 replication sites in California. Although the original sites continue to concentrate on business technology, some of the other sites have become very creative. For example, the Long Beach academy is structured around the employment needs of the seaport, and the Fresno academy concentrates on providing workers with the skills required for employment in the Internal Revenue Service.

Discussant: Julia Lara, Council of Chief State School Officers

The session on dropout prevention programs concluded with a discussion of the nature of the language-minority population in the U.S., the types of instructional programs that have been designed, and the roles of the federal and state governments in meeting the needs of this population. "Limited English proficient" students lack adequate English literacy skills to succeed in regular classrooms conducted entirely in English. Estimates of the language-minority school population range from 1.7 million to 3.5 million. As of 1980, 72 percent of the minority population in the U.S. was Hispanic, 22 percent of the language-minority children spoke a number of European languages, 5 percent were Asians, and 1 percent were American Indians. Although these children can be found throughout the country, there are distinct geographical clusterings, 62 percent of the language-minority children live in Arizona, Colorado, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

Two principal methods have been used for teaching the language-minority population: 1) the transitional bilingual program, which the native language of the child is used as a bridge for two or three years to help the child in learning English; and 2) English as a Second Language (ESL) in which the student is taught exclusively in English, using a modified curriculum that helps the student learn through linguistic clues. In addition, some local school districts are experimenting with immersion programs, although this is not widespread.

A good percentage of the bilingual education programs are funded by the federal government through Title VII, which earmarks funds for bilingual education. Local education systems may also receive funding for educating language-minority populations through the states. State education agencies also provide funds for technical assistance and support services.

Tuesday, February 6, 1990
Opening Session

The Tuesday morning session was opened by Charles E. M. Kolb who introduced Dr. Roger Porter. Dr. Porter is the Assistant to the President for Economic and Domestic Policy. Before coming to the White House, Porter was IBM Professor of Government and Business at Harvard University and Faculty Chairman for the program for Senior Managers and Government. Dr. Porter has also served as Deputy Assistant to the President, Director of the White Office of Policy Development, Executive Secretary of the Economic Policy Council, Counselor to the Secretary of the Treasury, and Executive Secretary of the Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs. Dr. Porter was a Rhodes Scholar and Woodrow Wilson fellow. He received a degree from Oxford, and a MA and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is the author of two books--Presidential Decision Making and U.S. U.S.S.R. Grain Agreement, and numerous articles.

Dr. Roger Porter, Assistant to the President for Economics and Domestic Policy

One of the great benefits of conferences like this one is the opportunity they provide to people of different countries to discuss their experiences in battling the problem of at-risk youth and to encourage everyone to replicate successes.

George Bush came into office in 1989 determined to become the education President, and in the past year, education has been lifted to a higher position on the national agenda than at any previous time in the past half-century. This focus on education is not due simply to the numbers of schools and campuses that the President has visited or the teachers, parents, and administrators that he has spoken with, but to the fact that the debate has been shifted from the traditional preoccupation with the amount of funds being devoted to education and their source to some new ideas and different approaches to using the resources we are already devoting to education more effectively.

Most of the funds for education in this country are state and local funds; about 7 percent come from the national government. Overall, the U.S. devotes more money to education than to any other function of government, including defense and Social Security; in 1990, the government will spend about $350 billion on education. The question is whether we are getting good value for the money we spend in education.

In another departure from the past, the discussion about the education system has shifted from the roles of the state and the federal governments to an emphasis on a partnership role between the two. From the Education Summit came a joint statement that included a commitment to seek national goals and flexibility in the use of the funds made available to states and to the 15,000 school districts.

Three key problems of dealing with at-risk youth are worthy of attention at this conference.

1. Integration of the array of services being provided to individuals by government. We need to investigate wehther the array of services we are trying to provide individuals make sense from the perspective of the recipient, or are there better ways to pool or integrate resources to optimize the benefits for the recipient?

2. Parents. An enormous amount of the education of children takes place outside the classroom. Families who are interested in what their children are doing, have books in the home, and read to their children regularly provide a climate, a set of expectations, and an ethos that contribute to learning. Increasing numbers of children lack a stable family life. We need to get parents more involved in their children's education or, failing that, to enlist mentors to provide general assistance and tutoring to students to reinforce outside the classroom what the teachers are providing inside the classroom.

3. The transition from school to work. The U.S. has a serious dropout problem once children reach the age of 16 because they are more mobile (because they are able to drive a car) and because they are attractive to potential employers for many entry-level jobs that do not require much training and offer no long-term prospects. Many of our students never make the connection between their current and future erformance and these students tend to be at risk. It is important to inculcate at-risk children a "consequentialist" mentality, whereby they understand that their achievement in junior high school will probably determine their achievement in high school, that their achievement in high school will influence the kind of college or university they can get into, and the kind of college or university will influence the kind of job they will get.

We are interested in hearing how other nations go about addressing these three major problems.

SESSION IV, PART I

New Strategies for Addressing the Education of At-Risk Students

Chair: Christopher Cross, Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

The question of how we help disadvantaged or at-risk students succeed in school has been a concern in the U.S. for more than two decades, but it moved to the forefront of education issues during the 1980s. According to an annual survey of state legislators in this country, the second most important issue for respondents this year was how to help at-risk youngsters. Virtually every state has a dropout prevention program, and hundreds of communities across the country have dropout prevention programs.

There has been considerable activity concerning at-risk children at the federal level as well. The U.S. Department of Education's largest elementary and secondary education program, Chapter I, will spend more than $4.5 billion in 1990 in helping disadvantaged children in reading and mathematics. In addition, the Department supports some 80 dropout prevention programs across the country.

In order to improve the nation's understanding of the dropout problem, the Department's Office of Educational Research and Innovation (OERI) is collecting statistics on how many students drop out of school, who those dropouts are, and why they leave school. OERI supports a considerable amount of research through its Center on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students at Johns Hopkins University, which studies the effects of a number of in-school and out-of-school factors on at-risk youngsters: retention and promotion policies; summer school; preschool; coordination of family support and mental health services in elementary school, middle school, and high school programs; parental involvement; and other issues. OERI also supports nine regional laboratories that devote roughly half of their time and resources to helping schools and decisionmakers serve at-risk students and other efforts in this area, including a network of urban school superintendents who publish practical suggestions on how to help disadvantaged youngsters in the inner cities and urban areas where many at-risk youngsters live.

Although much more needs to be done, as President Bush and the 50 governors recognize. Their discussions of national goals are an attempt to tackle this problem.

The new national goals reflect lessons learned from research: the importance of helping disadvantaged children early, setting high expectations for all students, closely monitoring the academic progress of all students, providing tutoring or some other form of intensive help to any student who is falling behind. Educators and others who have been successful in helping at-risk students also point out that these youngsters often have multiple needs and thus require comprehensive services, which must be coordinated. To achieve long-

term success, health care people, counselors, and others delivering services to youngsters must work with the children's teachers and parents on a continuing basis.

Schools should make an immediate and lasting difference in all children's lives, but especially in the lives of at-risk children. No one stands to gain more from a good education than a disadvantaged child, and it is our responsibility to make schools places where youngsters want to be, where they feel they belong, where people care about them, and where disadvantaged children succeed. Research shows that to make this happen, schools must communicate clear expectations and have teachers who are committed to ensuring that every student meets those expectations. That commitment must be strong at the top--from the school principal. Schools cannot do this alone, but schools can lead the way.

New Directions for Educating Children at Risk
Presenter: Patrick Shields, SRI International

Recent research has suggested new methods of teaching disadvantaged children. Conventionally, information was introduced to these students at a slower pace and in smaller discrete units than to other students, and considerable drill and practice ensued. Current research suggests that higher-order thinking skills are improved when the pace is accelerated and students view learning as a whole rather than in discrete units. Moreover, with the conventional method, students may become dependent upon the teacher to break the information into smaller, manageable tasks rather than understanding and handling these tasks for themselves. Today, teachers need to teach explicitly the thinking processes along with the skills.

Conventional wisdom has been to group these students by ability level, and this homogeneous grouping still is appropriate in many cases. But teachers should also consider heterogeneous grouping arrangements, such as cooperative learning, as well as individual tutoring and grouping that is temporary and flexible.

New thinking in classroom management also suggests that teachers need to establish a clear link between the management of the classroom and the academic tasks at hand. For example, cooperative learning sometimes involves more noise and interaction in the classroom than is generally accepted. As a result, teachers need to explain to students the conditions under which more noise and interaction is appropriate and the conditions in which it is not acceptable.

Conventional methods of educating disadvantaged students in the early grades over the past decade has resulted in some very good teaching and learning, but to develop the ability of students to use higher-order thinking skills, we need to look for alternative methods that extend education beyond the basic skills.

Values and Success: Strategies for At-Risk Children and Youth
Alan Ginsburg, Planning and Evaluation Service, U.S. Department of Education
and
Sandra Hanson, Catholic University

American schools have failed to understand the association between student values and success in school and later life; they have been reluctant to attempt to impose values on children because values are perceived as relative rather than absolute. A substantial body of research evidence supports the notion that the development of character and intellect go hand in hand:

- Analysis of some 10,000 high school sophomores from low-income families found that those with high grade-point averages had values and attitudes very different from those with low grade-point averages (Ginsburg & Hanson, 1989).

- Two independent large-scale studies (Walberg, 1984, and Hanson & Ginsburg, 1988) found factors such as parental concern and encouragement contributed twice as much to academic learning as did family socioeconomic status.

- Similar results have been obtained among diverse population groups. Stevenson (1986) observed that Japanese mothers attribute success in school to the idea that anyone who "studies hard" can do well, whereas American mothers believe that success is primarily the product of ability.

This review of research and practice suggests the following strategies for implementing a values approach in the schools:

- Values should be integrated into each school's overall program of student improvement.

- Schools should develop comprehensive strategies that address home and community influences, as well as the influences within each school.

- Opportunity is an essential component of many value strategies, and providing opportunity costs extra money.

- Schools must design individualized strategies appropriate to achieving specific outcomes.

Discussant: Rosemary Gracanin, South Australian Department of Education

All the papers presented in this session have focused on some change--from a review of curricula and instructional approaches to the place of values teaching in the schools

--to bring about better outcomes for students at risk. The papers demonstrate that many of the countries represented here have similar problems and are working hard to bring about the necessary change.

Through the research of Ginsburg and Hanson and the countless strategies for good practice, we have focused here on the role of the student within the school and within the family, emphasizing the need for students to take control over their own lives. Patrick Shields also addressed this concern when he stated that by focusing on family deficiencies, the conventional wisdom misses the strengths of the cultures from which many disadvantaged children come.

From the Australian perspective, seeking alternatives to the conventional wisdom through analysis of curriculum, teaching methodology, classroom management, and ability grouping is very familiar. As schools have become more understanding of and concerned about disadvantaged students, emphasis has been placed on accepting differences in morals and attitudes. Many school-based curricula, centered on the experiences and language patterns of students, have evolved and parents have often become an integral part of the school decision-making process.

Berman has pointed out that Australian schools need to make a greater effort, to put rhetoric into practice, including making higher demands on students and increasing early intervention. Berman believes that if at-risk students are to succeed, they must learn to accept societal values. At the same time, if we value the cultures and differences of the disadvantaged groups, we must avoid turning the students against their own upbringing.

The fundamental change must come in the minds and the pedagogy of the teachers. New content and knowledge must be presented in such a way as to allow all students to connect what is being taught. They must be able to see links with the human condition and experience what is being offered. Organizing instruction in this manner requires teachers to be empathetic with the cultures and subcultures of the young.

SESSION IV, PART II

Co-Chair: Bonnie Guiton, Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs

Much discussion centers around the issue of relevance of education in schools to the transition to the work place. As more children are classified as "youth at risk", it may be considered that almost all children who enter schools are at risk. Without some type of guidance, students are at risk of making the wrong decisions. Educators must recognize the importance and the relevance of aiding students in making the transition from school to work.

Youth at Risk in the Transition to Work in the Federal Republic of Germany
Presenter: Hermann Rademacher, Deutschec Jngeninstitut, Germany

Under Germany's constitution, the educational system as a whole, including vocational education and training in companies, is a public responsibility. The state regulates apprenticeship contracts and determine essentials for vocational education and training within business. The incorporation of vocational education in the education system has forced employees and businesses to take some degree of responsibility for education.

The dual system of vocational education and training in Germany produces some 76 percent of the labor force; the universities account for 17 percent and vocational education in schools only produces 7 percent.

In its current form, the dual system requires young people to attend vocational school one day a week and to complete nine years of compulsory general education. Private employers, using their own criteria, then select workers from among the young people who apply for apprenticeships. In most cases, the criteria include school certificates and exams, but the criteria are not regulated.

Only about half of the persons who complete the vocational education and training under the dual system find employment in a job for which they were trained. To improve this proportion, several measures have been taken; these include counseling and transporting young people from economically depressed regions to more prosperous ones.

Since 1987, an increase in the standards to qualify for the majority of modern vocations has made it more difficult, especially for socially disadvantaged youth, to find employment in those vocations. Regardless of the aims of the program, if employment does not exist, measures to improve the chances of suitable employment for these young people will have limited success.

Co-Chair: Betsy Brand, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education

It is important that we consider not only ways to make sure that all of our programs are working in the same direction, but that we have common goals. The U.S. Department of Education is working very closely with President Bush and the 50 governors to develop goals in all areas of education to ensure that all students perform well. To ensure effective integration of services to disadvantaged families and their children will require that we work from a common vantage point.

Working Together: Service Integration
Presenter: Bill Morrill, President, Mathtech

In the United States, education developed as a function unto itself, although some logical adjuncts to educational activities have evolved, such as guidance counseling, nutrition, and the provision of a school nurse in the school system.

As new problems have arisen, the schools have hired part-time specialists to provide educational or direct services, such as drug abuse counseling. Historically, the school nurse program was expected to take on a much broader preventive health care role, but until recently, school-based health activities remained fairly circumscribed and associated mainly with things going on in the schools, such as immunizations and sports physicals.

That traditional model has faced an increasing challenge from children in disadvantaged communities. The more at risk they are, the more likely it is that their problems are multiple and that the services they receive are low. For example, the drug abuse problem affects not only drug users but persons across all ages, grade levels, and occupations who may be involved with the user in some way. So the problems have multiple and increasingly serious, dimensions.

In response to these growing problems, there has been a rise in decentralized experimentation. Public agencies at all levels have all attempted to find out whether, by coordinating and integrating services, a better job can be done.

Three critical hypotheses appear to underlie the movement toward service integration:

1. Service integration will increase the access to and use of needed services.

2. Systems integration will improve the efficiency, and may, in the long run, lower costs by consolidation of operations.

3. No matter what approach is taken to deal with the problems of school-age children, it is difficult to think about a way that it does not involve the school as

one of the central institutions in a community, either by the use of its facilities or staff.

At the simplest level, service integration may be defined as information and referral services: knowing what services exist and being able to direct school-age children to the services which they may need. At a higher level, service integration is defined as intensive coordination or a serious effort to focus services to meet the needs of children. At a third level, service integration means integrated delivery, that is, delivering a variety of services at a single location, perhaps in school buildings. Case management may be considered a part of integrated delivery, as it is a means of assessing children's needs for services, a commitment to develop a plan to meet those needs, and a system for monitoring service delivery.

The scope of services may be considered to begin with traditional educational services, which are somewhat broader than they once were, as is evident in the efforts to expand school feeding programs, to train teachers in information and referral for social services, and to increase teachers' ability to function as health educators. Service integration also effects vocational education, particularly in integrating basic skills into vocational education.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that workers in the jobs of the future will need those basic skills. Because many children do not do well in the traditional educational setting, it is important to infuse basic skills into applied settings. Also, improvement in the linkage to the business and employer community is an important strand in vocational education experimentation.

Physical and mental health services are another aspect of service integration, particularly the school-based clinic movement. Included in those services is treatment for high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, suicide, and emotional distress.

Day care is a subject of growing debate, and the school response to it generally has been limited to serving school-age children. However, more is being done to create infant day care centers for teenage parents in the hope of keeping young mothers in school.

Job training is a major focus of the U.S. Department of Labor, many of whose programs are designed for potential workers who did not make it through the normal school process. But few of these programs received high marks in a recent survey by the National Academy of Sciences. Job Corps, often described as the most expensive program, was rated as most effective because it did a good job of integrating services for children in residential settings. A number of demonstration programs modeled after these practices are now underway. In addition, employment and training organizations and educators are considering alternative education programs. And there are some efforts to put social services for children into public schools.

Cost-effectiveness is a major issue in any discussion of integrating services. Providing more needed services to underserved populations would drive up costs dramatically. The issue is whether these increased costs would be offset in the long run by the beneficial outcomes that are achieved. Another important issue concerns the complexity of integrating services. Case management is very difficult and expensive, but has proved to be essential to the success of integration of services in the more disadvantaged communities. Other issues include the effects of relocation on services and service providers, the difficulty of providing services to dropouts, the resolution of conflicting and rigid guidelines, and the need to be accountable to parents and to the community.

This long list of issues is not intended to discourage integration of services, because such integration is one of the few alternatives that offers substantial improvement in the lives of school-age children from disadvantaged communities.

Working Together: Service Integration
Presenter: Martin Gerry, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) pays for the failure of the system to provide appropriate services to children at risk. A substantial part of the domestic budget is devoted to long-term dependency programs, which, though inadequate to provide the optimum level of support for recipients are nevertheless the result of the failure of the system to provide the level of support needed by many of the people on those programs, specifically school-age children.

When defining "integration of services to children at risk", DHHS identifies some principal policy objectives. First, the concept of children at risk has to be an inclusive rather than a categorical model. Particular appreciation goes to the Council of Chief State School Officers for its excellent report on children at risk, and for the integrative concept that report reflects. President Bush has, on several occasions, said that one of his goals is the integration of services for people with disabilities in schools as well as in other facets of American life. It is very important that children with physical and mental disabilities be seen as part of the group of children at risk. In fact, the categorical structures that were used to provide federal and state support should not be used to obstruct the proper delivery of services.

Second, the concept of children at risk should include children of all ages, beginning in the prenatal period and continuing through young adulthood.

Third, the concept of a holistic, rather than fragmented, approach to the service needs of the child and the family is crucial to the understanding of what will work. This subject raises some issues about access to service delivery. Services should be located where the children and families are. Schools, housing projects, and early childhood centers

such as day cares and Head Start are the three places where these children are most frequently found. There is a direct relationship between proactive strategies and success. The reactive approach least favors people who have little influence, money, and power. Thus we need preventive and routine health care, rather than more emergency rooms to provide acute care, often too late and often unsuccessfully, but not necessarily inexpensively.

The concept of infant and child protective services also must be changed to a concept of ongoing support for both the family and the child. The current system either takes no action or acts only to remove a child from a family, without providing the support necessary to solve the underlying problems.

Drug prevention is just as important as drug rehabilitation. The underlying reasons behind drug abuse must be addressed. The economic despair that is perceived by people who grow up in environments where drugs are prevalent, along with urban decay and poverty, must be dealt with; healthy children do not come from unhealthy environments. It is important to change the child's view of the world by changing the world.

Finally, education, health, and social services must be integrated in different ways, and Congress has made this vision a possibility by putting a series of these programs together. The Family Support Act, for example, is an effort to provide services for young people, primarily young women, who are recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Those women are, in fact, often the parents of the children who are most at risk. A program for appropriate child care has also been made available. The program for long-term dependency for developmentally disabled people, has removed from the work force a substantial number of people who will be desperately needed as the demand for labor increases. Special education programs without appropriate mental health services are never going to work for the large group of children with behavioral problems, who represent the most challenging problems today for public schools.

A number of strategies have been proposed by which the Department of Education and DHHS together are to address these issues:

1. Applied research related to service coordination and integration is to be jointly funded.

2. Joint model demonstration programs are to be conducted by the Department of Labor and the Department of Education. The creative ideas of both departments, along with some from other countries which are being adapted to American situations, are being experimented with.

3. Significant strides are being made for DHHS to provide technical assistance to schools through the Department of Education. In amending the Education of the Handicapped Act in 1986, Congress required that states develop policies to

maximize the integrated financing of services to children in special education. To date, this provision has not been fully implemented in any state, in part due to the reluctance of DHHS to work with the Department of Education to open up DHHS programs to public schools. DHHS has pledged to do this, specifically focusing on school-based Medicaid, which will provide substantial support to meet the major medical needs of children who are living in poverty and are attending the public schools. It is also important to work with local educators to design school-based health and social projects.

4. The President has asked for a $500 million increase in funding for Head Start. As the Head Start program is expanded, and as the child care program is implemented, DHHS needs to work closely with the Department of Education to develop comprehensive federal policy toward early childhood services and intervention.

5. DHHS needs to expand its direct operational support to schools by reforming its regulations regarding Medicaid, child protective services, and programs for the developmentally disabled.

6. Both departments need to work together on staff development and training, as the type of integrated services that is soon to come about will require new types of personnel skills. Specifically, good university-based programs are needed to train school-based case advocates, managers, and health and social service staff so that they may function more effectively in school environments.

The United States can learn valuable lessons from the experiences of other countries, as has become evident from this conference. It is also important to recognize that anything done in the way of health and human services and education in the United States involves the government at local and state levels, and requires the active participation of foundations and others who have contributed to the development of research and innovation.

Discussant: Barbara Finberg, Carnegie Foundation

Although the presentations in this session addressed two different sets of issues with respect to education of students at risk, at least three common themes have emerged across international boundaries. One theme represents new strategies in education for many of our countries, though not all. (The dual system in Germany, for instance, has been in existence since the last century.) A second theme represents approaches to coordinating services with education. A third represents the intellectual construct of tolerance. Josette Combes defined a gradual process of basic understanding and awareness of the essential needs of human beings. Needs change as societies change, and the

strategies for working with children and their families also must be able to change, whether the problem is remediation, the prevention of school failure, or other problems.

The two kinds of programs presented here involve both the private sector, specifically in vocational education in Germany, and the public sector in social services. Not addressed were services provided by the private nonprofit sector, at least in the United States; that sector includes churches and other religious groups, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, organizations such as Future Farmers or Future Homemakers of America, and social service organizations that use young people as volunteers to work with the elderly, housing rehabilitation, and other programs. Evaluations of the two kinds of programs presented demonstrate that they can be effective: the German vocational education program on a national basis, and the American introduction of health and other social services into schools at least on an experimental basis. In the United States, however, the major question is how to "scale up" the experimentation without losing the elements that make the exemplary programs successful.

Some of the questions that were raised here are as follows:

- What can we do about programs that do not reach all children, particularly those children most in need in the places where the programs are now offered?
- How can dropouts be reached, and why are they dropping out?
- Should social services such as school-based health clinics in intermediate and senior secondary schools in the United States be introduced in elementary schools or preschool education?
- How do we use the services to help overcome some of the existing social inequalities in the education of at-risk students?
- Do we need other services, or do we need to find out how to build into the structure of some of those that exist outside now?
- How can we understand and act on the needs of at-risk youth?

The United States has a higher percentage of disadvantaged youths, youths dropping out of school, and youths not succeeding in school than any of the other OECD countries. Therefore, the United States seems more obsessed with some of these problems, and with good reason. The United States hopes to learn much from the experiences of other countries and, in turn, offers help to others as well.